

# *The Decline of Empire*



**A Fiction**  
By Amos Gambol

*cover painting by Harry Sunter painting circa 1885  
from SDC Galleries*

## *PREFACE*

The names, characters, businesses, places, events and incidents are either the products of the author's imagination or used in a fictitious manner. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events is purely coincidental.

*This novel is dedicated to Julius D. Campbell*

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## **Tempus Perdue**

*I am white haired and have hearing aids. I am old enough not infrequently to forget how old I am but I remember well years I spent a friend of Amos Gambol, whom I came to know as a local lawyer resident many years in rural Maine. He entrusted to me the following manuscript, when I last saw him. He explained emphatically he had tried to create a novel not an autobiography and ... to capture the feeling of love in the midst of its betrayal. I found the story and still do: haunting.*

## **THE DARK AGES -1950s**

“Do you want to be beaten like a gong?” asked Mr. Parrott, my boarding school teacher, as if incredulous, when I sought his help. In fact, they beat me like a gong. Those smooth, sarcastic, rich, cruel Long Island bastards.

"Honor, duty, service," in other words, responsibility. The ledger sheet of freedom. The other side of the balance. Only, despite all the advantages, I had never known freedom. Always constriction and expansion, movement and rest, coming together and blowing out. That is the way it is.

Amos was fourteen years old. ...wore the Gold emblazoned

school Shield upon his blue blazer, and school tie. Now, during my time, these things have become a matter of commerce. Then they were a sign of aristocratic privilege. And service. We allowed a few qualified negroes in. No women. No openly homosexual males. All us boys had closets full of clothes, like prisoners, who adorn their cells with pinups, we dressed in Madras and had Bull fighting Posters. ... The young men were impressive athletes. Amos became one. Joshua called Jocko for short, one of his elder brothers, drew and painted these young men. And mastered an immense sense of action in the drawn line and a flowing and graceful cursive in his writing...

... Amos is new at the school, settling into my assigned dorm room... Across the hall, scion of a very rich family, one Nick Von Schmidt from Gross Point, much favored by the Assistant Head so called, who liked to visit there, had had hidden the radio tubes from the radio his assigned blind roommate, Newt, was building. Newt, futilely searching, timidly bashed around the room . Sychophantic, strong but not muscular, handsome and attractive enough maybe to get a girl, but most surely able and happy to inflict punishment - Nicky's sychophantic friends they put furniture

in Newt's path, and blind Newt got more and more furious.

These cruel kids were scary. Amos leaves the room, but it is horrible to hear blind Newt squeal like a trapped pig, as him behind closed doors they poke and make fun of him... Later that evening as every evening, we go to Chapel, a hymns and some prayers ...

Blind Newt like many blind people didn't know what he looked like. He looked funny. He looked like Tweedledum - round and fat and overweight... Tapping around with his cane, expressionless, until eventually he got a seeing eye dog but he treated the dog with iron discipline, and worse than his school mates treated him. Newt was not so likeable. Amos was across that hallway from blind Newt for a year. Watched, listened as the torture continued. Newt would hobble around his room, thrashing, trying to find his assailants, who, in the surrounding blind darkness, would poke and jab him. Someone gooses him. He swings completely mad, thrashing, kicking, swinging and wildly missing the invisible assailants .... The bully had his point. But Karma dealt him years later, Amos heard, a painful lingering death of gut cancer.

Physical differences were not an advantage at Boarding School. Kids at that age are conformists, barely over the age where they have crushes on each other.

In grade school, Amos had been called "Fuzzy" and "Rat face" for years when his two front teeth came in. He was dubbed "Bald Eagle," when he failed to reach puberty until age seventeen. It was quite obvious in the showers that I had no pubic hair. Miles Lansky, a particularly cruel young man made him bow even from across a big school room at the snap of his fingers. If Amos had not kowtowed, he would later bend Amos arm and ridicule him. Amos was miserable and terribly homesick for the first year away.

Unlike his contemporaries, even though they were unsuccessful in their attempts, Amos could not have sex yet if he had wanted to. Not that girls did not like him; he was cute and easily fell in love even though the transition to a man had not fully taken place. *Oh Youth, indeed, the beautiful side of life, the most beautiful side of love!* Even unrequited.

"Intermarriage. The same blood. Why, they are all cousins, the Germans, the English, the French." That's what

Joshua Calvin Gambol, "the old man," or "Pa," as Amos' called his father from the time he read Huck Finn on, from upstate New York, had to say about Royalty, including his Scottish and British antecedents. His uncle, Amos' great uncle Graham Forbes, at the turn of the Twentieth Century had run the Gambol Gaulscott Mills until debt, to so called Factors, financiers of the business, ran the Mills into the ground, as all the wool business went south where labor was cheaper

... Jane, Graham's wife, outlived him and belatedly moved to New York City, where her brother, had been a broker on "the Curb," the American Stock Exchange. Amos' father would proudly speak of the honesty of these markets where with a hand signal a sale or purchase for thousands of dollars would be made and honored. James had become very wealthy trading on the Curb but then lost his fortune on Black Thursday in 1929. when, having ordered that no one contact him while he spent the week with his young and beautiful French ward, no one could find him as the stock market collapsed.

James and Jane shared Christmas and Easter meals with Amos' family. Jane's false teeth clicked and clacked. Jane loved

to talk. False teeth didn't fit very well in those days... James taught Amos to play chess and took him out to lunch at Larree's French Restaurant near the Plaza at the bottom of Central Park. Uncle James wore spats and drank martinis until he could barely totter home.

The Gambols moved down from Upstate to the thriving metropolis of New York City after the Second World War when everything up state was still pretty broke. There, Amos' father supported Uncle James and Aunt Jane. Amos' mother Sofia, like his father was pretty happy to get out of Upstate to the City, where she was a member of the very social Colonial Cosmo Club, and could entertain friends. There Amos as a boy attended dancing school in the Cosmo Club ball room, under the watchful eye of Instructor Count Kosimo VonderPoot, and his stylish wife Melania. Kosimo was known for having held one miscreant boy upside down by the heels disgorging water pistols from his pockets as they slammed to the floor. Kosimo had black tie formal dances at the end of each season's set of classes where, after the evening's foxtrots, waltzes, tangos and sambas, high society bandleader Lester Lanin passed out his famous brightly



colored beanies and as if by magic, these hats suddenly appeared, atop the heads of boys and girls as the band played Good Night Ladies, and couples glided around the dance room, cheek to cheek, sprayed in swirling colors like iridescent autumn leaves by the whirling ceiling lantern. Kosimo even had the the Everly Brothers come to sing at one of the dances.

Sofia Gambol offered the advantages of Society to her youngest son, Amos. Amos drilled and marched with other scions of wealthy New Yorkers in the fashionable Knickerbocker Grays, run along with Adirondak summer camp, where the entrepreneurial Major Warble was also the grand sachem, appearing and presiding in Native American Headress on a cliff above the awaiting boys at a firelit night ceremony where we were initiated by walking across hot coals. Amos was in. Sofia Gambol was listed in the New York Social Register, listing, which was rigidly controlled by two unknown dowagers, who determined who was socially acceptable. If you were in, you were in. But you surely weren't black, pretty surely weren't Jewish, and probably were a snob.

The question of drugs had not materialized in the world of

Amos' youth, 1940s, except in Jazz and the Jazz dives of the City. Men just drunk themselves crazy. Maybe women were out of it on pills but it was not talked of. Prohibition of the 1920s and 1930s was gone. Joshua Gambol was not particular but he never showed an objection to whisky. With ample excuse, given everyone in his family had gone bust around him before and during the First World War in which he served, that he had lost an eye, been cut open for a tumor, and had tuberculosis before he reached forty years of age, he drank without apology. But drinking meant terrible fights of words with Sofia, which usually ended only when he passed out. Amos was in the end grateful for boarding school.

Leaving home for Boarding School at a young thirteen, or was it fourteen, years old, Amos endured a singular and awful homesickness, a trauma as far as he could tell, beyond anything he or anyone who knew him had ever known or understood. He was reduced to a crying wretch, wanting nothing but to be near his mother, whom he dearly loved and missed beyond belief...

### ***Tempus Perdu***

*"Everyone should have one," Amos' brother, Stewart, toasted at*

*Sofia's eightieth birthday party, in New York City, many, many years later - 1980s- and after the events Amos recounted herein,... Indeed I was present. Stewart sounded very sophisticated. Stewart was very sophisticated; Everyone laughed at his mock naivete. All Sofia's family were there at her eightieth, Taylor, Sofia Marie named after Amos' mother, and Melissa, a daughter from a subsequent marriage, Amos' Gambol's three daughters.*

### **SOFIA DARBY GAMBOL**

Born on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> of May in 1900, Sofia Darby was born when William McKinley was President of the United States, Victoria was Queen of England and the Tsar still ruled Russia. Her parents were born in the 1860s shortly after the Civil War. She grew up on Genessee Street in Utica NY near her later husband, Joshua Gambol, who grew up in New York Mills three miles away, whom she married in 1923, after spending some years in New York, where she went to Finishing School, living in an apartment near Fifth Avenue next to the then relatively unknown Sergei Rachmaninoff, by whose piano practice she was enrapt, but that is another story.

Sofia's forebearers descended from a Revolutionary soldier

who came from Connecticut, and settled in the farms of the Mohawk River delta and along the Erie Canal, where textile mills had boomed until the 1920s. The Western frontier in 1780 was Fort Schuyler which later became Utica.

Sofia had two sisters, Claudine and Camilla, known as Cameo. Claudine early on set her goals high and married a distant member of the Rothschild family. A scion of wealth. And Princeton graduate; he did not have to work. He had inherited a seat on the New York Stock Exchange.

Camilla married into another old revolutionary Connecticut family, the Pugleys, who were very nice but looked down on anything outside Connecticut. George A. Pugley, a dapper gentleman prone to flowery bowties, referred to the outskirts of New York City in lower Connecticut, which had become more and more black and Hispanic in the 50s and 60s, as the Sudetenland, that area of Europe which Hitler in the 1930s, the early years of the Nazi take over of Europe, annexed to the Third Reich on the trumped up allegation that Germans were being treated badly and wanted to be part of the Third Reich.

Coming back to Utica from New York City, Sofia in 1923

married Joshua Gambol, who had served in Europe in the First World War, and recently returned from Europe. A voluminous smoker since he recounted 1912 and drinker, despite Prohibition he had at that time good health. I emphasize redundantly the term “married” speaking of Joshua and Sofia because they were the real thing, a couple who were as good as “one.”

Sofia had four sons during her life. Sofia and Calvin moved to Whitesboro and built a small house next to her parents’ home on 40 acres, 20 of which were leased to a neighboring dairy farmer. But this became only a summer home as Joshua had to work in New York City, where they moved and where Josh’s business became very successful and spread as far as California. Josh’s partners, directors and business associates routinely stayed in the City with the Gambols, as over the years did children, grandchildren, great grandchildren. Eventually they sold the home in Utica and bought a summer home in the Town of Old York Middle Maine.

Sofia ran a dress shop and from the earnings paid for the costs of Boarding School for her sons.

### **AMOS GAMBOL**

Sofia Gambol adored Amos, the runt of the litter, her last baby, the last chance she would ever have at having a girl, but instead, and still proudly, she had four boys.

Sofia was there to pick Amos up when he fell. Indeed, as a child he had been one of the rougher boys, always playing War. After all, his brothers were then Army officers, off fighting Germans and later North Koreans. It was natural for this young boy to think of conflict and war.

Scouting in the woods, with his cap guns and BB rifle, like Daniel Boone. Making spears, with tong tying the spear head, in accordance with the instructions from the Nabisco Cereal Box. In grade school, getting under the desk for fear of Atomic blasts, as they did in schools in the late 1940s...

Amos remembered in Boarding School a gawky six-foot six kid we all called "Spasmo," very strange kid, who used to be grabbed by the suave Long Islanders, and thrown, doubled up into the trash can. A broom handle was shoved through the top. Spasmo's angular head sticking up one side and his awkward skinny legs sticking out from the top, he perched precariously, balanced on the top of the stairs.

Another kid was called "Faggot." Kids kept remarking about the size of his long penis. Maybe he jerked off all the time, a pleasure as yet unknown to Amos Gambol. Kids made cruel fun of Faggot.

Long Island gentlemen, Grosse Point, Michigan boys, beautiful as men wearing Chemise Lacoste, the alligator shirt in advertisements. The boarding school sensuality which Madison Avenue later took nationwide had not yet radiated from the upper class outward. Health insurance was a luxury of the rich and no one else ever thought of it. Socialized medical care was an idea whose time had not even dawned in the U.S.A.

Senator McCarthy and his hunt for Communists in the Government was only recently past. The hunt for organized crime was just gearing up. Amos Gambol had wondered, as a child watching those gangsters on TV during the Kefauver hearings take the Fifth Amendment, why they were allowed to refuse to incriminate themselves?

And he had watched as the French were airlifted from Dien Bien Phu, an isolated post in Indochina, as Ho Chi Minh and the North Vietnamese moved in and on. TV was still new itself, and

Amos had been reared on Captain Video. "Inner Sanctum" and "the Greatest Story Ever Told," ... "Only the shadow knows..." had been his staples after identifying German War Planes when he was really a little child.

Amos' favorite teacher, Churchill Watkins, it seemed always blinking a bit to clear his always watery eyes, in order to see even more acutely than he gave the impression that he always saw, if absent mindedly, anyway, was a bit out of fashion that day at the Boarding School. Sporting a faded purple turtle neck sweater, slightly unshaven, a day's growth of beard anyway, seemed fairly radical in this day, when all the teachers shaved, and wore tweed coats. The older man taught Amos about romantic love. He claimed that "Romantic Love" between man and woman didn't even start until the Seventh Century in Europe, where wandering Troubadour poets learned their songs from Arabs, Muslims, when as part of the commerce of the Crusades, these wandering poets travelled through the Mid-East and through Moorish Spain. The Troubadours drew their songs from the deep wells of Hafiz, Attar, and the wise men of the East. And they sang to the lovers, the women they had left at home.



Amos Gambol refused to believe that there was something created about man-women love, not eternal, not inherent in the human condition, but recent in origin. I mean didn't "romantic love" actually come from God? The teacher would not plumb the depths for an answer to the question. Some things are learned by experience.

When most of the school was watching Saturday night movies in the gym, Amos could sometimes visit the old master's suite, where a chosen few might by invitation gather, to sip Brandy, to smoke cigars, to play bridge. The old master was not a chess player. For that Amos relied upon the teaching of his father, Joshua Gambol, when sober, and upon his brother, Josh, called Jocko for short, who was a brilliant player, drunk or sober. This was in the days before the modern Puritanism had set in, and liquor was a socially accepted, if unreasonable answer among the upper as well as lower classes, to the problems of life. You could be a leader and a heavy drinker all at once.

Boarding school, Amos mused: "Most days, I recall snotty noses, colds, oppressive rainy days, uninteresting voices droning out there daily tasks, dull black boards, chalk figures, shuffling

feet, along the linoleum corridors, noise, the screech of chalk across the slate black board, sometimes glossy reflections on text book pages, the broken sounds of monotony, florescent lights.

***tempus perdu***

*These Private Schools, beloved in memory for where else could the pitons of memories dig such a hold into the mountain of life we must climb. Indeed Amos had much for which be grateful, and yet...*

Amos agreed with the First World War poet, Robert Graves, who, in *Goodby to All That*, said, "Nothing could be worse than Boarding School." At least, it got Amos away from the terrible fights of home. Sofia and Joshua were in deadlock about Joshua's drinking. Maybe it was even better than the tyranny of middle class living in suburbia, going to high school, being surrounded by girls and boys. Amos still didn't know years later except he remembered: adolescence had many aspects of some kind of living hell. So did childhood, but he had loved it, the woods, the camping. In those days before the great fear overshadowed Western advanced societies, as a boy, you could just pick up with your buddy on your bikes, with your pots and

pans, and water bottle, pup tent and blanket roles, and go off tenting to land miles away in a spare field, and cook hot dog's, and explore, new cow ponds, new old family graveyards, grottos, enchanted woods, ghost stories, and the fire burning into the night.

No one does that now but those who grow up poor without water and electricity and whose lives are like camping anyway.

### **THE BIG APPLE**

Amos' mother and father lived in a two story penthouse at the fashionable East side Butterfield Eight telephone exchange, at 1066 Park Avenue in Manhattan, New York City. There was still a middle class in New York City then, along with the very poor, black and Puerto Rican who lived in the unenterable ghetto's uptown, and the very rich, interspersed in Town Houses, Penthouses, and lush apartments from Greenwich Village to the upper East side. Most of the household help, the lower classes, the laborers, the Irish maids, the German doormen, the Italian shoemakers, and the black cooks, the school bus school drivers to Public School #36, nearby Amos' home, full of boys and girls he had met only when his mother invited the servant's children

over for the day. Shane, Kevin, and these Irish boys, who were sons of the maids who helped better off families, and he would play in the rubble of demolished buildings awaiting building of new projects.

The clerks, mechanics and grocery store owners lived outside the central city of Manhattan in neighboring Flushing, Belle Rose, or Brooklyn. Then there were the Jews, increasing numbers of them. They lived on the West side. There was no mixing but buildings were segregated by race. Let one in and you have to let them all in was the philosophy. They were nouveau riche, gaudy, tasteless. They talked different and they were loyal to their own. "He's Jewish, you know," one would say of Amos' classmate, whose father was a Hollywood movie mogul. Joshua Gambol expressed mild surprise and respect, despite his prejudice, at their great success.

Amos' elegant aunt, Claudine, Sofia's eldest sister, lived a few blocks down. Her plush and elegant duplex overlooked the great rectangular thousand acres, in the midst of Manhattan, called Central Park. Glittering lamps, lining the park pathways below, a false Canaletto ( she did not know, hung over the

fireplace) sparkled, like stars in the Christmas season night, as Amos, a young boy, sat in the mahogany inset windows, staring down at Central Park and the Killlabor Museum, and dreaming of somewhere else he could not yet define. A goal of place somewhere? Sometime down the road, ... later in the future,...

### **AUNT CLAUDINE**

Memory is a strange thing. Was it 1972?... When Aunt Claudine, over lunch with me and my second wife, Margarita, Claudine observed, “Oh we all come from inheritances, don’t you know?” A particularly untimely comment as Margarita had grown up in the Bronx to parents who had very, very little, and who had worked for a living from her teens on. Claudine had a gift for such comments. “Oh you are such a sweet little Jewish girl,” she had said to a little girl in her son’s class, which she had been asked over to swim at the pool at her elegant home in Princeton.

... Even then, in the 1940s, caution was demanded in the great park of New York City. Someone could easily knife you for a five dollar bill, or less, probably would in the dead of night. It was dangerous to walk in the park at night. Some New York City aristocrats wouldn't walk unattended ten feet away from the

entrances to their apartment buildings, attended by the liveried door men, in the day! This eight year old would wander far into the great Central Park, get lost, and get the policeman to take the boy back home ...

As Amos surveyed the Park from Aunt Claudine's window, high above the traffic, Sunday afternoons after the families had gotten together for lunch, green and expansive, Central Park looked beautiful. A painting by the great Venetian Renaissance painter, Canaletto hung over Claudine's deeply oiled soft wood paneled hearth: Gondoliers, barges with sails like great drapes, canals, great squares, fantastic architecture, palaces, cathedral domes rising into the magnificently relaxed and billowing clouded blue canopy of sky, above Venice when culture was reborn as Europe emerged from the dark middle ages.

Across the room, sunk deep into an antique blue Italian chair, Claudine's husband, a Princeton College man, grunted occasionally, audible if not entirely visible to the young Amos through his billows of cigar smoke. Claudine and Sofia Darby Gambol conversed at the other end of the divan, speaking in memory of friends in rural upstate New York, of Hearts Hill where

the Darby girls had grown up at the turn of the century and still returned for summers; at least Sofia did.

Cludine's husband had obviously learned to keep out of Claudine's way, to enjoy his cigars and leave her to her ongoing courses, even to old age learning new languages, to fly an airplane, to give way to her personal culture, which involved frequent enemas, mostly stewed vegetables, and contacts with her European friends, countesses and nobility.

Claudine could not say that "some of her best friends were Jewish." They were not. Living off an inheritance was a given in her way of life. "We all do, don't you know," as many years later Claudine had confided to Amos. But it was her husband's inheritance, not Darby money for the most part. "What we all did" came as no little surprise to Amos as he didn't. While Aunt Claudine and family may have had that kind of money, the Gambols did not. If there were to be an inheritance, Amos knew it would be modest... Aunt Claudine was always a little out of touch and as a result succeeded in living a naive life, or else she concealed her corruptness very well to the very end, when heavily rouged, her now more sparse yet blond hair - all the girls

had that soft clean appearance of style that women had in Breck Shampoo ads - gave up the ghost....

### **A YOUNG MAN'S FANCY**

The city air is almost gaseous and heavy in the hot August sun that saturates the summer sky with heat and light. Red blossoms and dark dirt stained green hyacinth bushes growing from boxes placed upon over the faded red tile roof floor. The evening air rustles the leaves so cool and calm. Breaking sounds from vehicles below, great exhausts of buses, horns all mixed together. It was hard to distinguish one sound from another as they meld in a great foam.

I recall thinking about pretty girls with firm nipples round breasts, dancing under striped marquees, catching the wind in their dresses. I cupped their breasts in my palms in imagination.

That summer I was invited to all the Coming Out parties of all the finest families from Long Island, New York City to Bar Harbor, Maine. On the way to mix with these lovely seventeen year old Debutantes, Amos often had to drive through twenty blocks of New York City slums, called Harlem, populated by Puerto Ricans first, then the black, the negroes. The parties



were great, free flowing champagne, Scotch, Gin, Bourbon, Rum, whatever you wanted to drink. Yet, Amos pondered, if these were the finest girls at the parties, then why does my being, my imagination turn to these negro women, with dark flashing eyes and large breasts, in tight skirts about their fertile round and shapely hips? Amos languished on the porch for hours fantasizing about the beautiful black woman he had seen on the way.

### **ON TO COLLEGE AT HARVARD**

The young student was sitting there in his freshmen room thinking about time, and in walked Melinowsky. He kind of half slunk into the room uttering a weak hello his suit case in one hand and a bottle of ancient age bourbon half hidden in the other. Pardon me young man he began But I'd like to tell you about my plan to get me though collage by selling time magazine you see I come from Kennebunk port and my family that can't afford to put me threw school. Oh yeah said the sad and lonely freshmen I know what your going to say, but my father has already signed me up for that. Oh, Have you read the latest issue? Will you let me know when your subscription is about to

expire then? Sure he responded I'd be glad to do that.

***tempus perdu***

*Jocko's wife, Muriel, deceased 2016, wrote that paragraph for Amos in 1956. She had pretty much worked her way through school. She smiled conspiratorially and laughed with him, he said, with a touch of irony, when she created the word picture. As she spoke the words Amos wrote them down. Good not to be working our way through anything ... I think she thought too. Amos surely did.*

***MELINOWSKY I***

Melinowsky spent the next three days in his room with his unpacked, suitcase skipping all the introductory lectures and good fellow shipping meetings with other members of the new class, our class to get drunk. Finally he emerged, disheveled and hunched over, kind of sauntering and looked mainly down at the floor, except for darting subtly defiant glances shot at you from under his imposing high forehead with tousled strands of strawish hair above he didn't say much.

He was clearly not a mid western asshole who felt like Mr. big for selling time with an Ipana smile but a person who could get drunk, who could allow himself to get desperate or at least

pretend. What a wonderful thing, a person with some life in his flesh, some presence in his saunter, and the world could go fuck itself, along with the Harvard class meetings and running the freshmen blood donation drive. He was a tall sophisticated man. He was not very big but his shoulders appeared gigantic because of his tiny waist narrow hips and long stringy legs. I was so happy to be free finally in this great university and with this different friend, seeking something secretly better than ordinary reality offered....

### ***tempus perdu***

*Amos mused, he told me, whether the surreal could exist independently. Could there be corridors of knowledge, and experience, like chords and harmonies on the keyboard, different, fuller than conventional reality? He mused during his first year at Harvard College, 1959. He did not know that not far across the Yard, Professors Leary and Alpert were doing Psychedelic Mushrooms, mentally imploding, connecting Spirit, body and mind in a transcendent way... I think Amos was fortunate in the long run to have smaller adventures, to taste the breeze carrying petals and sweet scents of Rose and Lilac.*

### ***MELINOWSKY II***

We got to talking one warm breezy fall evening. This was 1959. JFK was President. Melinowsky pretended to hate, or did hate, Amos could not know then which, the boarding school routine (Melinowski too had gone to Boarding School) it's hypocrisy. The hypocrisy of the world at large he felt more deeply than Amos had imagined possible. Melinowsky did not act as if it were worth changing.

When young Democrats, young Republicans, young Socialists, young pacifists came to him and with their ruddy faces expressed concern, trying to get us new boys into the action, Melinowski would go into his room and close the door. He would not say they shouldn't be doing what they were doing or that I shouldn't go out for soccer; on the contrary, he'd say it'll probably be good for you. Or he'd joke about my scoring an unprecedented ten goals in the last five seconds of the big game (an impossibility) and becoming immortalized in the Harvard athletic annals.

Funny when he said it'll probably be good for you, you just couldn't help but laugh. It was incongruous coming from this self styled renegade whom you'd hardly notice as he sat there sipping

his ancient age giving the impression of a pile of leaves lying on the ground. Maybe he'd be lying on the ground hunched up in an old blanket. His presence as if he understood somehow and could be himself.

It turned out that he had been laid (layed?) by his cousin at only twelve years old. Oh how deeply I envied him. He had also worked in a body shop many summers of which he was quite proud as to get along there you had to have your share of fist fights. He told me how he busted up a colored whorehouse one night along with his buddy shop friends in a big drunk.

***tempus perdu***

*Would we call this a Hate Crime today? Amos' brother, Jocko, told him that he and the athletic types from the Crap Club at Harvard would go as youths of an evening to the Irish bars in Boston and pick fist fights with the Irish Townies.*

To Amos, Melinowski was James Dean, a rebel without a cause-- but an intelligent one. Melinowski brought a revolver to College in his suit case. For that first three months of college he went for long walks at night with it and of his bottle of Ancient Age Bourbon. He burned scars into his hands, grinding out the tips of

many cigarettes.

### **THE OLD MAN**

My father was a wonderful man, he had also gone to Harvard but he had to leave with the American expeditionary force to France to fight the first world war, and while he was gone the family empire collapsed and as a result he never returned to Harvard. Much later after sending four sons through Harvard he became a millionaire again, at least on paper. Selling widows and orphans stock short some supposed, I even wondered. Maybe that's the guilt that drove him to drink himself to death in the end. He took our mother back to Europe, which since the war he had derided. His family never admitted that they had come from anywhere but the U.S, perhaps because great, great grandfather had been an illegitimate offspring, and as it is in royalty their embarrassment was so great that they kept his father's portrait, who was some Duke, hidden in the attic never to be displayed, indeed until my generation I don't think even one soul looked upon it.

Father had little sympathy for example for my aunt's friend, "Sir" Hawksley who had moved to Long Island from England and

raised horses and hounds but maintained his title! The title just destroyed my father but my mother rather liked it. My father spoke of the war of the VD prisoners as if it were very off color to speak of such things to me-- American soldiers with the clap, penned in behind lines of barbed wired fences with VD emblazoned on their shirts as prisoners to keep the disease from spreading I guess. When he and my mother got off the boat he said some man who had come up to him forty years before in 1917 came up to him again and tried to sell him dirty pictures. All they did that trip was eat kidney pudding, go to museums, see the opera, where at least he could see the conductor get some exercise. My father always thought there was something effeminate about the opera, and most certainly ballet.

Most of the time I knew the man, he worked on Wall Street the financial capitol of the world. The benevolent gazes of Joshua Calvin's grandfather and grandmother stared down at Amos from the portraits on the wall. They had not always seemed so benevolent to Amos. As a young boy, Amos thought most certainly that his great grandfather's and grandmother's eyes followed him about the room.

Amos' aunt, Claudine, the first of the sisters to leave Utica to marry a wealthy Princetonian, and the younger sister, Aunt Camilla, proudly a Daughter of the American Revolution, were tied to their bloodlines. Until they built the thruway though Camilla's house years later in the 1960s, Camilla and Jeff Pugley, my uncle by marriage, a Connecticut Yale Man, surely acted as if the world began and ended at their home in Growtoom, Connecticut.

Pa was a good man though and loyal to his family supporting in later life poverty stricken cousins aunts uncles, both his mother and my mother's mother -- indeed even both my mothers and his own mother during their last years. Often sodden at night by untold bottles of booze yet he managed to meet the discipline of work each day, to sleep in the hot city without air conditioning and daily to take the black sooty roaring subway lurching under ground. Sober he was delightful and could keep you laughing with understated and natural wit.

He lived through two world wars, the Great Depression which destroyed what was left of the family mills and fortune, then the Korean and Vietnam Wars. His forebearers were, I



suppose, country aristocracy. It was considered most radical that he be sent as a young child away to school instead of being educated at home by tutors. He lived through tuberculosis, loss of an eye due to glaucoma, through more bottles of booze than could easily be estimated, and raised four sons, all going to Harvard and all Army Officers, and though a fifty five year marriage to the same woman. He cheerfully if drunkenly did what was expected of him. He died mourned.

### **RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS**

Amos' father had hoped for him to become the manager of the Harvard football team, at least by his junior year. Not happily, by the time of Amos' graduation he was slurring "We haven't had a pansy in the family yet, " ominously suggesting Amos was one, which sickened Amos with embarrassment because he wasn't, as Pa well knew in his nobler sober moments.

### ***tempus perdu***

*The fourth or fifth week at Harvard, brother Calvin visited Amos and they went the Cronins Saloon, which had been in Cambridge also when Calvin attended Harvard in the Nineteen forties. I found a poem Amos wrote many years later:*

*"Red moon rising for one evening alone  
One brief night before the earth eclipses the crescent  
the red moon will rise again eighteen years from now.  
three red moons ago was it?  
my brother and I drank beer  
in the hallowed booths of Cronin's  
off Harvard Square  
Now gone*

Amos was out for soccer for a few weeks anyway during the beginning of my sophomore year. Then Amos walked up to the gnarly little coach and told him that he would`'t be making it anymore because he had to much work to do. He looked at Amos and said in a soft slow voice so at ease so sincere "Come out and join us if you get the time, and he paused and added and "or the inclination."

Sure, Amos, starved by too abbreviated an adolescence, had quit to pursue girls, at least he hoped to and to pass time with his unathletic friends. Betraying the team, the family tradition and his own future and somehow the Coach knew it, the gnarly little man with a bag of soccer balls swinging over his

shoulder, with his clear blue eyes and kindly but assured gait, now strolling out of Amos' life. Guiltily Amos almost ran after him to cry "I lied that's not the reason, I'm lazy." But of course he knew. It doesn't take much effort to play a sport.

Amos' three elder brothers had served as officers in the service during the second world and the Korean war, Calvin had been taken a prisoner and escaped after spending something like a week in the branches of an apple tree. He had escaped from a collaborator who befriended him only to call the gestapo.

Among Amos' earliest memories are of drawing pictures of Nazi and Jap planes to spot them in case they came over. When Amos had a city friend up to our home at hearts hill he finally went up to Amos' mother and asked if he could stay with her and not play army with Amos and his friend Eddy because Amos kept putting his city friend "On Duty," then Ordering him to march off to get us all cokes or fix our battered bikes, poor bastard. Dressed in his brothers old World War One outfit Amos became a martinet, fully enjoying his high and self appointed Rank.

Amos came from a long honorable tradition thus entered the Harvard Reserve Officer Training Corps. No one then

expected, except it seemed Amos' family, another war to happen. It was early Kennedy years. Only about twenty men entered in the course. Harvard being what it is, long haired and questioning of everything anyone ever presumed to know or value, Amos was very uncomfortable having to cut his hair every week, having to march around the football field every monday, in olive drab green overcoat, and having to accept some crew cut upperclassman berate him about about how his spit polished black boots weren't shiny enough. It seemed absolutely juvenile and simple minded to learn by rote the twelve principles of leadership, from the Professor of Military Science as the Officer assigned to Harvard ROTC was called. The first day Amos walked around in uniform was sheer pian. What was he doing, becoming a cog in the organized murder machine? "You'll regret it if you don't do what your brothers have done." His fathers words drummed through his mind. His body bridled at the march.

Somehow inured to the process, not a little by the shame that dropping out would cause his father, Amos later was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army Infantry the with a questionable compliment from my training

officer, " He'll make a decent officer... but just barely."

His training officer was five foot six. Amos attributed his attitude to a Napoleonic small man complex. No way the little man could ever think critically, as Amos did: If people could only give up machines and defend their own lives... But Amos' existential challenge was alloyed with figuring also that the ROTC was the easiest way of avoiding the draft, if there were going to be one. The Vietnam War was just getting started with an American Advisory force in Indonesia.

Monday afternoons were dreadful. This monday Amos skipped ROTC drill. We were having a brilliant thunder storm. It makes the blood rush in the veins and the flesh to become electric. Sitting on the window ledge looking, as the rain thuds down in silvery streaks, from low rolling clouds as an updraft of warm air blows into the open window, bringing with it a wonderful warm melancholy feeling.

### **THE COW POND**

Amos remembered a hailstorm we had in Hearts Hill when he was very young, about the time his grandmother, who lived with Amos' family, had taught him the Lords Prayer, and when in

a crashing hail storm, a magnificent wind surged across the farm land and when in two splitting blows of thunder fifty poplar trees were struck to the ground at once around us!

They were our poplars. It was our land. The storm and thunder were almost ours. The weather was Ours as was the Land. Hearts Hill was a beautiful place. The house was surrounded by acres of green grass and hay fields and red Robins.

When Amos was very young before he learned to understand even the most rudimentary aspects of gibberish which most adults talked, there was a secret door in the house through which he would sometimes go ... into the same house but where somehow everything was transformed, radiant. Outside was a pathway through what to Amos seemed a vast forest, peopled with scotch pine trees, dead to the tops, where they made a shadowed canopy. Amos' grandfather had planted them too close together. The pathway lead through the dead part of the woods a corridor blackly but softly walled by pine and fir tree trunks, the live branches above absorbing all the sun, making dense roof, below a soft floor of matted old branches,

and pine needles and twigs. Then at the end of the corridor shortly before the lush green woods of maple and oak was a sun drenched circle where sun brilliantly penetrated the otherwise dark forest.

One day in a dream Amos wandered through Hearts Hill up one a country road with a girl with entrancing blond hair and my attention, I was completely captivated by her beautiful enticing pubic area over which she wore nothing. Amos was ecstatically happy in his concentration. We walked hand in hand across the field of my friends and Amos worried about his mother. She might see him yet Amos could not bring himself to ask his love to be more modest. Amos and the girl came to his friend's house where somehow she wrapped some sort of scarf into a very unconvincing pair of Bermuda shorts. She smiled slightly as his eyes met hers while they waited for someone to let them in. A big old country maid, broad shoulders, frowning face, let them in and Amos saw a queer little room with a dropped down floor and a small table where the dining room used to be. They were led to the living room where a small child, who was playing, joined him and shut the door. Looking once more at the beautiful girl ...

Amos awoke.

In reality, Amos actually did meet a young girl that year. She stayed with the neighbor, a farmer named Benson, and she would walk down and stand by the cow pond in the field between the Gambol home and the Benson farm. Amos shyly got as far as once to ask her name. Her name was Donna. Amos and she for some weeks met to gaze at each other, the cowpond between them.

### **GLUED TOGETHER**

Back at the room things were better after leaving the soccer field. Here the team letter downer the man who didn't live up to his own ambitions was right at home Hah! My friends were sitting there with a good old bottle of Gilbey's Gin. Here was where the real education was talking with friends and drinking gin. As I walk in I hear Melinowsky say "Sit back and read you damn intellectual." as George Spender, our roommate from Mississippi, got up from studying to have a cigarette. "I'm going to go to law school and make a lot of money," he responds as he lights a cigarette and sits back down to study. Melinowsky, pretty drunk and with good humored sarcasm adds, "I'm going to drink



a lot."

That's what this god damn English majoring does for you," replies Spender. Melinowsky is an English Literature student by now. "I tell you," continues Spender, "I don't think anyone who hides behind the skirts of metaphor and simile in Shakespeare is a man. Yes sir it's a question of gutlessness, of virility. You're no man,. Pretty soon you'll end up a drug eater. Just as he's getting into the eloquence of it all: "Glug. Glug. Glub..." gurgles Melinowsky's gin bottle as he drains it in reply, and everyone laughs ... "Every day in every way we learn a little more," croons long and lanky Wayne England, our other somewhat indescribable roommate, and "Hey, Hey peanuts! I wanna know if you'll be my girl?" beats out the radio, before "Drehum Baby," Here Amos felt at home, and a restless sort of peace.

Weekend with Harvard football games were more collegiate... taking girls to the games marching back and forth from the stadium across the river bridge in the victorious throng led by the college band and on into the cloistered atmosphere of the Kidney Porridge club, then a white male Anglo-Saxon establishment, where one might say Gentlemen drank Whiskey

Sours. After this the excitement of The Game, the privileged atmosphere of the Club, the stimulation of conversation, Amos' date says:

"Oh, boys you are so damn creative!" Expectantly Amos waits for something about himself, about his creativeness! His date adds, :You're such a phoney. You're only good for a good time." And two weeks later he sees her whipping along Memorial Drive hugging the back of some guy driving a motorcycle! Ugh, Amos envied Melinowsky, who, while Amos tried, in this collegiate side of paradise, to become involved in Fitzgeraldesque activities, would almost never go to the football games, never go close to any Club, but would retire into his bedroom for the weekend with some girl, and Amos would hear with envy and with curiosity periodic groans of delight.

We had a party for one of our friends, it was his twentieth birthday we gave him a bag of balloons, a ping pong racquet, a gigantic brandy glass, with a gold fish in it,( which Melinowsky ate) a birthday cake with some obscenity beautifully squeezed out on the top, a chinese dictionary, a two toned kazoo, and a fifty pound bag of potatoes.

Overjoyed the recipient with monk like grace played the kazoo throughout the party while potatoes were being thrown all over. It took us weeks to finally clean up the mess. And I even changed my three month old sheets not having, succeeded in freshman year in beating Melinowsky's seven month record for not changing the bed sheets.

The last year we had a party, imprinted as an event upon my mind. There were eleven of us then girls and boys. All friends very close we spent most weekends together. Melinowsky had become engaged to his girlfriend much to everyone else's amazement. We made a big deal about how they should try having intercourse before they firmed up this big step and accordingly we rented a small motel room and the girls fermented a big vat of fruit punch for a party, three days ahead of time. Mostly everyone sat on the big double bed in the motel room and the rest sat on the floor. By the time I was there a half hour I was hearing poor Mary she'll be all right I think she's pretty drunk and feeling sick at the same time. And someone was taking a shower with someone else while someone else was getting sick outside. Indeed, to who ever was on the pot had to my dismay walked

away with all the toilet paper too. Ha, ha! You can't do that I'll have you ejected from the place. In two hours the party was over and everyone was so drunk that no matter what anyone said it all seemed to connect.

Wolfgang with his always leering smile, crescent moon face and baggy blue jeans used to sit on the pot two hours a day playing with the banjo. Once spent two days in his volkswagen listening to a scruggs and flat banjo orgy, every so often stopping to pick up a chosen friend to drive around and drink beer and listen. He, like Melinowsky had chosen to be himself, crazy as that was. After college he ended up studying forestry and living in a log cabin in the woods with a neon sign outside greeting you as you came up the dirt path "prepare to meet god". A serious student he got some amazingly easy courses of study which would allow him to spend weeks of school driving down to west Virginia or Tennessee then to come back and write in sociological tones about folk music. Really all he had done was sit on some old okie porch and fling the shit with the old banjo and harmonica players. One summers after one day of Harvard summer school he drove in three fast days to San Francisco,

where he met Erick and me. Whatever he did from changing his jeans in the middle of the main drag in Reno, Nevada to eating potato salad Wolfgang did with single minded enthusiasm. It's not bad being free, white and twenty-one, and rich.

Wayne was his disciple as much as I was Melinowsky's. His mother suffered no end of grief when Wayne returned home that summer and she found Wayne's girlfriends diaphragm in his suitcase. It's nice to have a mother to put your clothes away but then... Wayne loved to look at himself in mirrors and with too much belief conceded that he was god providing you asked him about this matter with a due sense of deference. He painted wonderful pictures of people who although he could never see it without exception looked just like himself. He tiptoed through college absentmindedly getting A's in all his courses. He was charming to everyone he knew because he knew they were below him, Except for Wolfgang, with all his American Jack Kerouac Ken Kesey like vitality, telling you about each sign along the cross country great plain route 66 out west Harrah's club just 2000... 1569...500... 20...2.. one mile away! Adequately impressed and perhaps slightly concerned for his own manhood

Wayne donned for his Harvard career a green and black checkered lumber jacket jeans and a silver aluminum hard hat. He tiptoed around campus attending advanced graduate economics courses, stirring his coffee with his thumb and speaking eruditely with a faint british accent complacently superior, always. The old man would have thought Wayne was a kind of a fairy, I guess but it wasn't that. It was like his drawings. He tried portraits of his friends. They all looked like him. It was that.

There was magic in our circle of friends. If you had a dream one night and that dream you sensed somehow an exquisite difference between chinese and japanese sensibilities, aesthetics, and when you awoke you glanced at the arching branch of a tree outside your window and in the distance you saw a sparrow flying off into space and in that glance you somehow wonder of your dreamlike insight. Then you go have breakfast with your friends, still a little soggy with sleep heavy eyed against the rays of sunshine but relaxed. Your friends all sitting there at the table reading the paper sipping coffee looking outward's through the big glass window, somehow they felt what you felt

and no-one had to say anything but shit or pass the coffee. None of this bullshit class discussion stuff none of this weird ping pong argument no need to impress your insights on one another just on understanding, a consideration a knowledge that shit is enough. It got so that we never ate with anyone else.

One day this kid with a half moustache, who used to follow Wolf gang around a lot, and never seemed to know what was going on around him, very seriously introduced us to him. Didn't he know we had been room mates nearly three years? It seemed at times as if we were all mixed up in each others lives, living as one person sometimes getting drunk and talking of great ideas, great writers, great men, little men, as if the ideas and facts and people were in our own lives or about ourselves. We would have laughed out loud to say anything so pretentious, but there was in the midst of all this something provable, indeed which would fade away if challenged but which was demonstratable to oneself in oneself should a desire to see a little further as if to remember... something else, and we had it.

Wolfgang did primitive paintings of women, some of Ubangis, some of pregnant girls and some of pseudo

Modiglianis, all of which were nude which he displayed on our walls proudly, of course they weren't as good as Wayne's but the subject was more interesting at least, he thought. Once a young girl came up took one look starting getting nervous and almost left before she got there. There was a print of a Modiglianis girl that was particularly good, her warm flesh tones long brown braided hair sensuous, seductive eyes... and a big red oriental rug.

There were a lot of black days when you felt smothered and helpless stuffed up with desolate self disgust, at being just another nose picking student, undignified, unfucked, slave to daddy and mommy's money, reading other people's books, reinterpreting there interpretations and feeding what you read to an uninterested, dull, effeminate lot of teachers. Sometimes turbulent and angry inside, destructive full of hate with no out let.

There was despite the good times a lot of time to kill. Walking the streets of Boston some nights tired and confused, sick, feeling, nervous looking for something or someone to come and give you some light, someone who never came. Murky dark streets lashed by the bright headlights of cars, heavy blocks of



jagged broken cement sitting on the side walk. A construction sign" dig we must but we'll pick up and move away." Walking along through the fog and rain feeling barren depressed scraping into your pocket to find change to buy cigarettes. Close parked bars in Scolly square bright lights screaming, hard pavement below ones wet feet, blobs of bartenders visible in the windows. Catch the subway back to school disgusted and morose one could still feel... profound... in one's depression because one had friends who felt nearly the same way.

If life felt shitty that's because life was shitty and you had to be profound to realize this. A lot of people were to stupid to realize how bad life was so they ignorantly went on enjoying life. With friends one could luxuriate in contemplations of death, of the end of desire,--safely, complacently enough, contemplate suicide, falling from some high place, as green trees, living grass tug toward you futilely and the ground swells up and everything is little triangles, jangling together, apart, a game one see's life for a moment then ones veins spread into the unknown and blood waters cement. Airless breath, water-less waves, loneliness, death. Do you remember me?

Wallowing in shit with ones friends pretending profoundness was good. Girls, girls, girls, sing the Everly brothers, even if you didn't get to lay them, just got to dream of them, hope for there affections write them poems imagine them and there lives with yourself... and the pursuit of women fitted in wonderfully with doing nothing but sensing oneself and talking and getting drunk. On a tepid spring night the air like liquid currents softly pushing by. Lying half asleep limbs feel half solid, and to pull them into the world is an effort. Sweet nicotine and bitter coffee like smell of fingers. So get up pull on your coarse blue sweater, the symbol of truth then go down to the mount Auburn 47 folk singing cafe where smoke trails through the darkness shot with translucent columns of soft light red and blue. Long tousled strands of hair quietly writhe down the aquiline tanned necks of girls and softly, ever so softly curved backs of girls in pale colored muslin dresses with bronzed beautifully besandled feet. It felt weird and mystical to be in that place hearing some banjo song with those beautiful unknown young girls.

That fall, Amos Gambol attended Harvard College. Calvin, his balding oldest brother, bent over backwards to get him into

the socially exclusive Crab Club, to which all three elder brothers had belonged when they in years prior had attended Harvard. Amos' father, who had not belonged to a so-called finishing club, observed, "You want to do what your brothers have done. Why not join? It's nice to have somewhere to piss when you come back."

Despite a barrage of letters to all the members, pressure from the trustees, and many uncomfortable meetings, the undergraduate members repeatedly rejected Amos Gambol. Why? This was unheard of. The Gambol clan was insulted. Calvin wrote:

"Amos the point is that don't let them get you down. You should take the attitude that the effort was made and with good humor, if they didn't care for it. You don't bear any hard feelings. There is, by the way, a meeting next week and both your brother, Stewert and I have been asked to help out. I understand I will be toastmaster. You may rest assured that this will be an uncomfortable meeting for the undergraduate members of this club. The four of us don't intend to make a vendetta out of this but there is no harm

in letting the young men speculate a little on the possibilities for their future disadvantages in the rash action they have taken."

Calvin continued that perhaps the friends I kept had something to do with my not getting favorably received.

One wonderful night I met Rebecca there. She was shy and had a tiny body with wonderful little breasts and hips that I'd just lie against for hours with a hard on. She wouldn't fuck me but I knew she liked me. She'd just look up at me in a melancholy way and I'd just look at her and we'd feel happy and sad at the same time together. I'd sit there smoking my long clay pipe from San Francisco when she wasn't there and try to think of her, capturing this cool beautiful feeling of abandon, knowing there was nothing in me on which to ground my cool creative self image except the ridiculous glorious misconception in the mind of this absurd girl who needed an artist poet hero to believe in, to feel in.

Sometimes we'd walk through the small wooden housed back streets of Cambridge, and Rebecca would brightly exclaim, as we passed a dogwood and apple tree grove, "Comfort me with

apples!" I was a poet artist, happy in abandon, in free carefree change, from dream to dream, in unity with the sun, the early morning. We'd drive down to the Boston wharves and look out across the waters at the big electric generators on the other side and pretend it was Versailles palace, all lit up in the night, and drink bottles of red wine. Were we would contemplate killing ourselves in three weeks, and whether or not the stars were really only reflections in the window of the car. Smoking cigarettes and recreating the world in our smoke. Smokerings are sadness, clever girls are hell, Wednesday you loved me today you don't, never did, never will... I was getting tired of Rebecca's refusal to have sex, I really needed it or at least so I thought. After consulting with Melinowsky I through a wine bottle at the wall and screamed, "your killing me!" Melinowsky had advised that this was the never fail tactic of getting to dip the meat into the honey jar!

Somewhere, somehow, something went terribly wrong. Rebecca obviously didn't know she was supposed to melt in my arms and sob that she was sorry for torturing me and give herself to me at last, instead she merely noted that I was crazy, ran out

of the room and refused to see me again for a long, long time, or so it seemed back then.

There were a lot of girls up there. One's with big round smile as sweet, as the song went, it would make stars rise in the sky, her long blond hair radiating from her face like the rays of sun, once told me about an acid trip she had once took. She said she could feel the wind like colors and she sat on a hill looking at flowers, knowing all along that all the atoms in her body were as just happy as the flowers. She was beautiful, and I knew I could have had her that night but as much as I wanted to I knew it would be the end of me if I dared to mess with her. She lived with a mafioso or heroin addict or some other thief of not a noble path who would surely have killed me.

Then there was another girl with a long thin nose and sunken dark shadowed but piercing eyes, who shot heroine. She told me claimed she was as promiscuous as a guy if the guy was groovy and she dug him, she would ball him. Melinowsky took her travelling with him one summer to Mexico and later told me though that it was one of the blackest times he'd ever spent in his life.

Four years had nearly passed, where was that football playing good citizen that Harvard was supposed to make of me? All I had was a few friends.

Little did they know and soon I too would forget, in their company that I spent many half crazy hours wondering how the hell I could adjust to money making, daily work at prosaic jobs, the daily death culture, working with people like Kevin that summer at the brokerage house, who at 21 in his blue serge pants, cuff linked shirt and shiny black shoes was going to night school to study accounting. He always said if there's one thing I respect it's money. Christ man so do I, so do we all, but how about life? Working with people thick skinned like rhinos working under my fathers millionaire friend, a man with an over sized bloated head and a bowl legged waddle, who liked to flash his money around, watched the stock quotations every day. I wondered if he ever thought of the human sweat they represent, religiously you might say, held god knows what secret vices, under the sentimental slop he affected. I would have been better off later if I'd grown up in such offices, I guess, but my heart was in Hearts hill, not some damn commercial establishment. The

closer graduation came the more stolen the time seemed, sitting around friends, drinking, smoking, getting a feeling together.

It was torturing to think of the prosaic possibilities life had to offer after school. My fate was preordained, to be responsible, to serve, to work, to make money, for myself and for others.

One day while walking down by the river I met this boy who told me about his venomous hate for his mother and his love for his dog. He also said that he found himself running when he thought he was walking time and again. His manner was obsequious, insipid; his appearance pathetic and repulsive.

Thank God I was not like him, I thought, I am able to do some goodness in this world and yet if only I could feel like him, I am really human. Calvin wrote:

"My own conclusion is that man is a free lance being but no more than a savage if he does not, after realizing that he is free, impose on himself the most rigid discipline and exertions. If he does the latter or tries to he has some chance of doing some good and getting some self satisfaction, but not otherwise, and in all of it, he must keep a sense of humor. In your case, this means working harder



and expanding your horizons, both to enjoy yourself and to prepare yourself as best you can for as many opportunities as you can. The family the country and the world need your maximum effort, taken with sense of humor, and you are letting yourself down as well as others unless that is what you give. Any mistake can be corrected except for the loss of time. It is perfectly easy to relax and at the same time to carry a heavy workload eleven months a year.”

Albert was referred to jokingly by my cousins as Jesus and my father was dubbed the chairman of the board. More than twice my age, he had political power and was a much respected lawyer. Despite his heavy workload he would write me weekly and whenever he could would come to see me... and suggest that I get a hair cut. But strive as I would upwards, somehow I could not wish to be, never could be as good as he. When he visited for days or weeks he'd breathe the spirit into me but then the exhalation period came and his breath would not last, the space of empty time would rise up.

Did he ever consider that good action, right action is

nothing if unconnected with felt and living good intention? Is nothing if to make it we must ignore the spring of action, oneself? Could he understand that real discipline of self, self knowledge, in the striving for which, from the myriad emotions and events of the day, one might try to draw just one feeling which, of itself, approached some perfect realization of, something else.

Such dreaming was more laziness to him. A way of life dependent on living off the surplus, he would say, if you worked for the kind of outfit that I do, you'd realize that what requires the work of six men anywhere else would be done by one-- and with luck we could replace him by a machine. Exactly, brother but is that man's aim, to be a machine? Maybe instinctive man, but I am not so attuned with my instincts. As I look at the world your instinctive successes work out, so I'm not guilty about it. It's just that attitude which makes the world have it's problems he'd say. Can you think of anything better? How could one fight this man? But hell how inconsistent he was with my magical friends, like they eroded, his effect off from me, leaving me again with the agony of making a decision about who I was, what I would do? To be a big shot like him, yes, that made sense to me, but not his

way. Rather I felt what Humphrey Bogart reportedly said, "the only reason to become a big shot was to tell other big shots to go to hell." An idea so alien to my brother. He didn't believe that I felt this way. I had conned him too, and as usual, into believing I was he and he was I, and into the giant anxieties that arise when reality, living, kept forcing me to accept, if not realize or understand the fact that I wasn't he. Giant anxieties over unreal decisions over insoluble conflicts.

My suave and sophisticated brother, Stewart, also twice my age, was not such a damn saint. He even seemed to envy my freedom as an undergraduate, like he would say, "man some swinging pad you got here" when he came to visit, only half in jest and with a genuinely curious interest, but then when and if you tried to explain to him how you felt and what it was all about, he'd start talking to you about how some guy my age really made it by taking film in college and developed some new theory of visual perception and sold it to acme soap and at twenty-one was worth a million dollars and living in Vail Colorado, getting paid for his college degree too. Stewart had command presence, a certain calculated informality in dress, a gracefulness and charm

in his humor and in his bearing, was the kind of person you looked at when he entered the room, was the kind of person men respected and women liked. He lived in elegant apartments had made a lot of money, at least on paper, was married to a flashy girl and went skiing in Austria. He wore double breasted suits and had long sleek hair. He even competed with my father in business, supporting opposing powers and factions, more modern up to date computerized techniques of management and groups of executives who wanted to retire the old man. My father never criticized him much for this. He only occasionally chided Stewart for too much damn foreign stuff like double breasted suits. Stewart was friendly, at least, but you could just feel and see that inside him he couldn't really be friendly, he didn't want to give up the power, he was out for the realm of gold, not the wealth of friends, in his heart.

Jock the youngest of my older brothers, my senior by ten years, was the only one who came close to understanding. He had written a good bit, but he could never write a book, he said, unless he was so broke he had to, like it wasn't expected of him, he didn't feel it in his gut, the family womb too pleasure giving,

after all for him to descend that low. He had spent the last eight years, since the time he had served in the Korean war, where his three oldest best friends were killed, in the Harvard club drinking and playing chess. He wrote me:

“Your letters have stirred up a lot of thinking of what's best for you. With the above in mind, it is my opinion that you should get in the army before graduate school. The infantry training is no joke and would be good for you, although it will be relatively easy for you as a commissioned officer. Sooner you get it over with the better, and the later you take it, the harder it will be... No matter how much beer, cigarettes, you have slurped down up to now, you are still in better shape than most of the people you'll be competing with.”

At least he wrote something real: at least he was able to act like he might understand just a little, ones fucked up feeling. He slugged some guy at the Crab Club dinner because they hadn't accepted me, he liked people better than institutions and roles.

We used to sit out on the porch in the sun with my father and play chess. I remember later, Jock at thirty four, after five

martinis, declaiming in an emotion filled voice, "I'm going to Hawaii! and my wife is coming with me! I have finally gained courage to break with the family, which no-one else has. I have fulfilled my duty here and I'm sick of the mess."

Uncle James, an eighty year old man, who depended on my father to live, although he had stashed away some thirty thousand his will revealed on his demise, to my father's amusement, whose main thing in life was to go daily to Larre's French restaurant, where Jock would join him and James would drink shaken- handedly slopping half of each martini on the table.

Grandma, a ninety-seven year old woman, who lived the last ten years of her life, blind, deaf and at ninety pounds laid in her bed at great pain and who probably would have died if it were not for the fights with my mother and her other daughters, and whom although he didn't work and make money, Jock would visit daily, and the rest. "I am leaving and making my own life my own!" Would that it was so easy to make ones own life one's own, I felt really that he was running out on me. He continued in his letter to me:

"Furthermore being an officer in the army of the

United States is a far bigger deal than you realize. Some of your classmates will probably end up in the peace corps, which I think is good, and highly worthwhile. However in the event of any trouble, some ROTC second lieutenant will be put in charge of one or two hundred peace corps men. I know all about the ROTC at Harvard. It is a rather desultory affair and in direct conflict with individualism, and sometimes rather antagonistic ideas that Harvard seems to generate by making its students think. In spite of this the Harvard ROTC is one of the best in the country, and though I admit this is hard to believe, Remember that you must give the first enlisted man to salute you one dollar. Some sergeant usually makes a good thing of this custom, which is nation wide. We seem to agree in essence. Do not let the stultifying aspects of the military bother you. As a junior officer, you will find that there are many advantages.”

### **THE MAGIC GARDEN**

Cambridge was a magic garden those early days. Leary and Alpert had just discovered the magic mushrooms, all of which has been written

about, and sadly, forgotten, or misunderstood... Imagine those mushroom vistas, and girls in spring dresses... The foundation for internal freedom, Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert's organization formed as a result of their explorations with consciousness expanding drugs, which later led both to expulsion from academia, Alpert went to India and guru hood, Leary went to jail and exile. Leary-- the one intelligent graduate of Harvard's history. Alpert gave a talk one night shortly after he and Leary had discovered the properties of psychedelic drugs, in which he described Herman Hesse's novel, *Steppenwolf*, as a visionary guide book to internal space, as a preparatory manual for the user. ( I later discovered the truth of Alpert's statements.) I had read *Steppenwolf's* little read novel, in which the hero, Harry Haller, is tormented by his awareness of himself as Harry, cynical, bitter, attracted despite himself to the comforts of the bourgeoisie world, and half wolf, lonely, glaring, voraciously seeking half forgotten steppes as he haunts the taverns. One night as he walks the streets, he is handed this pamphlet, " for madmen only," in which his self is brilliantly portrayed not as half Harry, half wolf but as ten thousand selves, a magic theater which he enters.

Here was Alpert, about thirty-five years old, sitting in a big college common room, telling people about *Steppenwolf*, LSD, and himself, about



how he and Leary had they thought, stumble on the discovery of the age, just sitting there under his high domed forehead, tousled and very conventional looking on a warm spring evening, talking in a hesitant friendly manner, not down at you the way professors often do, about how he had seen through his role as a psychology professor and behaviorist, How he had been playing pointless games all of his life, and how although he was frightened, he was entering on a new journey. And about this drug, which seemed to offer instant enlightenment, instant mysticism, psychoanalysis.

At the age of about ten I had read this book on zen in the drug store and wondered if a pill could offer me the same thing and if there was one, would I take it? It took me five or six years after listening to Alpert before I tried it. There was something about that event. Young people were listening about forty of us, serious, attentive, pretty Radcliffe girls. There was a freeze in the air outside, it was warm and the trees were budding, and the spring made one wide awake and excited, but still left a relaxed feeling of well-being, and there was this man saying there was a cure for the anxieties and neuroses of our time, which as ivory tower students we felt more especially threatened by upon graduation.

He said the mind was like a record when only five or six grooves

were used. Psilocybin and LSD, he described, expanded consciousness to the point where the whole record was heard. Far eastern mysticism, supported such cultivation of the mind, where as western and american civilization was directed mostly toward action and the first six grooves of the record. In this there was the danger that all would, or even had already become a group of automatons playing complex games. Was he not speaking of the calvinist, work ethic oriented, good citizen, football playing, action man spectra that had haunted me, protector of the half dead institutions, exponent of the earn to spend to earn to consume acquisitive society? Alpert claimed that LSD provided a wonderful alternative, a possible salvation for richness of contemporary commercial civilization, totally composed of many sick neurotic individuals, full of drives, instincts, desires, so unnaturally repressed and perverted in their channels that we were on the constant brink of nuclear holocaust, and domestic racial and class conflict. Alpert more over seemed to sense my anxiety--after all, I was in the reserve officer training corps and planned after all to fit into my preordained establishment role.

Still I rejected most of our revered and sacrosanct institutions. He had lived communally and reportedly gave drugs to harvard students after promising that the university would not. Melinowsky agreed with Alpert's

condemnation of the world we lived in, on the illness of our civilization.

Melinowsky too much felt the cold plastic cardboard un-spontaneousness of the persons composing our wonderful country, how un-alive they all are in their conventional life games, in their sellout to security. Too much too had felt how un-alive they made one feel about themselves, in their phony helpfulness and pretenses at feeling, all barely hiding the dagger of hypocritical judgement and condemnation of any man who dared to be himself. He knew how extreme repression in our society of human impulses led to dog burning and incorrigible depravity. Get that nigger! Man you ought to have a gun, blow the heads off from the next nigger who breaks into your house. Get those fucking commies, we ought to have dropped atomic bombs on Hanoi long ago! He had felt, he knew this shit filled world, but grasped that a single strand of hair from a women's head was worth more than all the great ideas of the world, as Camus said and had lived. And now he sought meaning in the lesser frustrations of life, in his personally found convictions, in the residual pleasures of a cigarette, an endless glass of wine, countless bottles of beer, and a good fuck! He accepted, yes he had made this leap to faith.

Alpert's thinking, to him was Utopian. Alpert he said, wanted a world of gurgling happy idiots, a big soma filled with collective unity where

personal conviction was absent as it was in the security seeking, money oriented civilization of would-be fat happy pigs. He disclaimed with drunken but good humored mock serious vehemence that Alpert's Utopian ideas stemmed from a suicidal impulse. Recalling Haiku, he quoted that "the world of dew is a world of dew, and yet and yet." He felt that Alpert, Elliot and other theorizers had gotten lost in the and yet and yet. Self knowledge comes from simple actions in the real world, ugh! To me Alpert, Ilf and the castalia foundation, Ilf's successor organization, then seemed to envision something different than Melinowsky's suicidal characteristics. Maybe it was just that I came from a family which thought big, who saw the world as ones personal stage. So I could identify with the big talk of Alpert and Leary. Their big ideas provided a big enough delusion to counter balance, and seemed like a salvation from the weight of conventionality that my family seemed to bear down upon me.

Alpert and Leary did seem to capture some of that absolute virginity of the world flavor of which Camus had written, and that Galahad searching for the holy grail air about them, as if harvard and Cambridge were not for them simply institutions where students learned their arithmetic to go out and become good clerks, or learned their politics and economics to go out and become good bureaucrats and congressmen, but

rather, it seemed Cambridge and harvard were for them part of the magic forest in which they were searching their way. We know the truth and we are searching for further truths, said Alpert.

We left the Maine beaches today and the little village where we have spent so many weekends. A warm ocean wind washed over on the back edge of Melinowsky's old red chevy convertible as we made a sunset drive back to Cambridge after a weekend collecting mussels from the river bed, drinking beer, smoking cigars, getting happy under the black night sky and stars, looking over the beach cliff across the ocean in the wind, our last weekend together.

Melinowsky and I got drunk together for one of the last times. More poetic these days, more confident and together than those first days of college, he had pulled himself together during those many weekends passed in his bedroom, and now he talked more, quoting Camus, from the Rebel:

"Those who have not insisted, at least once, on the absolute virginity of human beings and of the world, who have not trembled with longing and impotence at the fact that it is impossible, and have then not been destroyed by trying to love half-heartedly,

perpetually forced back upon their longing for the absolute, cannot understand the realities of rebellion and its ravaging desire for destruction."

Melinowsky embodied all Camus said, as far as I was concerned. I had watched him spend these immense amounts of time alone, had watched him avoid confrontations and protect his feelings, had watched him not enter the typical college debates about this and that, say little except with his friends, and then in drunken jest, and always with apology for the pretentiousness of saying anything. As for the virginity of his vision, it was worth more than anything else. I loved him. How many quarts of green Ballantine Ale had we drunk together? And yet, from his quietness, I had seen him lash out and hit an assailant as if to persuade himself he was a man. I had driven with him around so many hairpin curves at ungodly speeds as if death were of no concern. Quiet, desperate. Secretly, an incurable romantic. So he said to me, "I want you to think, write, and feel," in flamboyant drunken tones from his hunched, uncombed, just happened to be there frame in one of our last great drunks, shaking out, "the great writers that do not give you a feeling of wishy-washiness are those involved in life in a completely personal way -- a way concerned with small things -- an egotistical way, a somewhat destructive way --

Lowery, Dostoyevsky, Behan, Lermontov, Celine. They chase things when they become possessed by them and get drunk and kicked around.

Their lives are not intellectual like Orwell or Elliot. They do not calculate and try to become something emotionally because they desire it intellectually. They do not become involved only in intellectual political commitment like Sartre or like Elliot, "The world is wrong, I am right, there should be more me's, Salinger too... no good. The really good writers live and yet can reflect on living. Lermontov, Hero of Our Time, duelled, was a soldier, chased women, and lived in the small things of life and felt them. Behan, Borstle Boy, and Celine. These people have lived and known what it is to wonder whether to pull the trigger at their own temple or at the nearest man and can talk about it honestly. They have lived and felt what it is to be a man. They haven't calculated it." Hovering Blue Mountains, Disillusionment fleeting, Into the red dust. He wrote after college from Spain.

Graduation came and it was a relief. Four years is a long time to daydream, to cultivate one's symptom's, one's garden, early enough to smother the plant. Enough time to want to love a woman but be afraid to. Enough time anxiously to consider, unconsciously to contemplate, whether Hearts Hill, Rebecca, New york City, Miami Beach, Melinowsky and

Harvard involved totally irreconcilable values. Enough time, dabbling in truth by debunking, when, if I had seen the truth, I could not have faced it.

My father had written to me that he had:

"... no judgment on painting or the arts (they missed me entirely).

One does have, I suppose, to give thought to earning a living.

Anyway, I think you are doing a lot of good thinking and a decision is always tough. They do have to be made -- right or wrong. I read the book you gave me on Montgomery the other night. The guy was sure he was always right. Anyway, we have a bit of time to help you with a decision which is, in the end yours alone. However it ends up, with three brother officers, I doubt you would be content with less. Write me or call anytime. Affectionately, Pa."

### **REBECCA LOVE**

Rebecca went to Europe after our abortive little romance. She wrote to me saying, "The sun is a hot haze, wisteria hangs purpling and heavy breathed from the arbor skeleton. An old man dusts the bench and sits himself down beside me. The sun burns through. It's not so boring to say the same things so many forgotten times." I recalled the quiet walks with her down country paths where she would point out the blackberry and



bittersweet and burst into spontaneous laughter, but mostly remained quiet, in herself, except to look up quizzical, melancholy. It seemed as if she was the only girl at school who had really seen something poetic, artistic, artistic in me her troubadour.

While travelling in Europe myself after graduation I found that she grew and grew in my mind, and one day, it suddenly occurred to me that I had then possessed her mind during those early college days and yet treated it and her unkindly, sadistically even without gentleness, I tried to make her accept everything about myself, and never even looked at her. The same gentleness I longed for deep down was what I refused her. Why just because I thought what I wanted was sex and sex was the one thing she refused me yet I knew she really liked me, only I couldn't value it then, perhaps had I been more kind.... Now my mind became possessed as I walked into the sunshine of piazza del Roma to the airline office bought a ticket and flew back to the U.S to find her, dreaming of the good times we'd spent together and of how good it would be now that I had the realization that she and I were destined to be together and now that I would treat her like a human being and wait however long I needed to for sex. I remember when we watched football games together and she would say to my amusement I can never figure out who's winning but I'm

fascinated by the hunching coaches and kids who stand and watch, all gelid and hands in pockets. Her room was all strewn with branches and berries. I was a graduate now, A "member of the community of educated men and women," as my father with half-serious, half-joking tone would say to me, no longer a dreamer at Harvard, but about to become an army officer.

Renewed, responsible more heathy myself, now I would return to Rebecca, to get her forgiveness and start again. Alas she was not there, she was still traveling, a friend of hers said in Spain. They had seen her in Barcelona and then again somewhere else briefly, but time enough for her to say she was not returning to the U.S.

The words thrust viciously into my heart and brain like a knife and dashed my dreams of happiness to bits on the sharp edges of reality. She must have found someone else! A greek, a spaniard, I envisioned her now healthy, having found herself with a radiant countenance, dancing to Bozouki music with some greek man, a gold cross shining from his black and hairy chest. The thought drove me to incredible sadness and jealousy raged within like a warrior fighting for his homeland, his life itself. Some people change she had once said those words echoed in my head. How did that last part go? The sun and the stars and even ones own insides,

although they are the same, can be different, wholer, in a different place. But the friend had been wrong, she had returned only with bigger breast and her hips fuller, still withdrawn though, and unhappy with in herself, unhappy in a worldly, disillusioned way. Even with the color of countries in her lips, she now sensed, she said, in America a duller air, a less confident sunshine, a desolation, a greyness hovering over once friendly streets and sidewalks... Still there was that spark, that spontaneous laugh, sometimes... I could penetrate that mysteriousness and bring out her happiness, a more confident light, I in my new health and maturity and realization of what a dog I'd been before! I brought her down to meet my family and the whole bit, I treated her with tenderness I didn't push her to have sex, still I hoped that after I showed her all these considerations that she would.

Later she wrote thanking us all for" the kindness you all gave me feels warm and real. I did enjoy visiting you all, so strong rooted, so like a family. Hope! At last I hoped. But damnation she would still not sleep with me. Instead she wrote:

"Time is long isn't it? and so short too. Or maybe it isn't either. I mean, no distance or dimension, just speckles, inside and out. I do mean to say quickly a thought I do love

you in a spotted coincidental timeless way, I don't know quit  
who you are, but know you because we are on the same  
spot of time, kind of hitch together and what is not  
experienced together is not to far off to be perceived and felt.  
So then maybe you can understand the next step -- like  
yours which is that I love a lot of people, I know that's not an  
uncommon situation ( even desirable). Yet I've never had it  
so far down before, never loved people enough because I  
don't love myself enough and wasn't strong enough to take  
the risk of being hurt. I'm not yet but I am getting stronger.  
I'm still muddled and I dare not think and think and dissect,  
and murder and build cathedrals and bridges and songs and  
infinities and hydras and it's all too complicated. I just want  
to know a clear place somewhere soon. A few minutes and  
it can get exciting again. but my back hurts and head aches  
and I don't know who's who or what. Everyone thinks I'm in  
control and capable and even happy sometimes-- related  
and communicating-- But all I can think of is there must be  
no such thing if my part is missing, yet they all feel for me.”  
The perspective young army officer felt strange with her, as if torn

apart in soul, wandering some alien dreamland shores. Like I wanted to say wake up but her soul hurt, because she would be with you and you knew thinking of someone or someplace else. It was as if she had slept with my best friend and later said carelessly, quickly, forgetting that it was you " Ah yes I slept with him once. Of coarse she hadn't slept with anyone, or at least not that I knew about, but that's the way I felt, betrayed. I felt like I was saying hello and goodbye each time I was with her or heard from her. In one letter she wrote:

"The haunting I should write and want to but cannot. Life is too big sometimes, hell almost always. Being these roles actively instead of deep inside only takes three times as much energy. This fall has been a sewing up gathering, sorting, seeing time. Horrors of feeling still perhaps deeper than before, but I survived.

Most every letter starts with a deathly kind of drugged apology for not writing. With all the paraphernalia of despair and work and people that is I get through them on my own, attached to no external chimeras. At least not solely, so don't get depth depressed so much, there are strong threads that sort of hold me up. Like a hammock... My own stubborn blocks against analytic clarity and all the jargon and formulae. Early fall was an absolute inferno, growing

paranoia and all evaporating into an experience of something."

I felt like I was saying hello and goodbye for ever to her each time I was with or heard from her. Finally, she told me she was going back to Syracuse, where she was from, and were there was some guy "whose children she'd like to have." Guarding roaring feelings I couldn't even identify, I replied harshly, threatening, "You will be getting in touch with me next time. I hope it's not too late." she said, " You have taken me too seriously." "I am serious about things I guess." "But you don't know." " I know myself." "do you think you're in love with me?" "You don't know anything, do you?" she said.

My mother wisely counselled me: "You can't think other people's lives out for them, you know." And I sat silently weeping inside. Morbid, introverted, and fucked-up was our relationship.

Rebecca called several months later to say she was getting married. I wrote, "As of saturday morning,the sun softly seared the flesh, and the most gentle wind, with immense care, coolly washes away the fragile warmth of the sun, all in a second and continuously for some hours. It was a spring like february day, a low winging bird caws, and a fat calico cat,ears acutely twitching at tandem, rolls upon her back, inquisitively toward the sky. The sound of your voice last night was good, followed

later on by a part of a hundred climbing, falling, tumbling emotions, seeping, seeping into the intellect to turn the world over and over. " She had shown poetry in life, to me --something no-one in my family had ever done.

I was, after all, and in accord with the tradition, commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the U.S army and gave a dollar to the first Sergeant who saluted me.

### **SOLDIERS**

The U.S army made me a man -- an imperfect man, but a man non the less. I went through the physical rigors of infantry school, where introspection or even perception was a fault, not a virtue, was a threat to one's survival and the survival of others, where virtue was to be a mean, tough, effective killing machine. Where physical endurance and attention to mundane realities were the key to success. I was treated as an officer and leader of men and was expected to behave like one. I was saluted and addressed as Sir. Eventually I was given command over thirty men and learned to treat them as machines. I grew in confidence, in it's reality and in appearing to be confident. But inside, I felt like a piece of shit. I was tired, morose, and sick. It's just a wonderful thing to sit there on the hill looking out at the streaming trails at night of tracer bullets flying from

your machine gun, at the puffs of mortar shells clouding the green fields.

To watch someone get killed in the thud of the artillery. Bright flowers of bursting shells. You get used to it, I guess, or maybe you just become numb to it, forget that if it were not for the war you could well have been friends, people your own age kill or be killed. I remember Private Jones' story:

“...Private Jones had never cared for violence to begin with. To to be assigned as a machine gunner was the last thing he had wanted. As they flew over a small village on a search and destroy mission, the helicopter dropped. A Vietnamese women appeared in the field below. "Fire! She's Viet cong!" the Sergeant said. "Brrraddt," Jones heard, as he bent the trigger. Jones saw the woman's body sheared in two. The worst part was the pilot then insisted on landing. Jones saw top half of it trying to crawl away.....”

Inside I hated the whole system, except one thing, maybe and that was the foul mouthed major who could never seem to get out more than eight words without four of them being fuck. For him to even use the word fuck was a travesty because he literally smelled, had a psychic aura you might say of Khaki shit about him. Shit not Jock, he had one virtue-- he stood up for the men under him. But what was best about him was in his



shit headed repulsive self was that he reflected beautifully, honestly, the reality of the system, and he was not afraid to be himself miserable as that might be.

Honestly, I miss his presence even today. And yes I liked the friendly pale green fatigues too. My eldest brother Jock, an army artillery officer wrote:

"As far as I'm concerned you have made the grade. I am proud of you, as are the rest of the family. No doubt you are too busy coping with everything thrown at you to fully realize either the agony or the joy of life at the moment. Probably it will seem fairly nice in retrospect, however. "

He was wrong in all aspects, but it was a friendly welcome letter none the less. Now I can reminisce about army times with people at large. That is useful. That is a nice power piece to be able to play. He continued:

" What is the newest argument that the M-1 rifle is a more accurate, reliable (in all types of weather) and better weapon than the new automatic jobs? ( An interesting question.)

"Also whatever happened to the idea of infantry airborne by

some sort of jet or personal helicopter strapped to the individual's back? (An interesting, fantastic question.)"

I know what happened. No-one was romantic enough to give a damn. The fucking bloodthirsty, shit-headed, vicious, evaporated, hard-headed, bastard fools who run the military were all full of using tactical nooks and how nuclear weapons could be integrated into war.

I met two interesting people in the service-- one the chief of army chaplains, who when I asked how he could be a chaplain and in the army piously said Christ said I come not to bring peace but as a sword. What a mind!

Secondly, I met Kenneth Saunders, First Missioner of the Church of Judas, who at fifty, long robed towing a golf cart and carrying a cross, was walking his way across the U.S. When asked how he had the guts to be a conscientious objector during the Second World War, which he said he was, he said well if my friends were brave enough to sacrifice their lives for what they believed in, "I.it was not much for me to spend a few years in jail." We talked about the Beatles, how his feet were sore and how he was walking route 66 in November, and how he knew he looked like a damn fool, but it was his calling, and how no church had ever been founded before on Judas Iscariot's name, even though to love Christ, one had to

love Judas, because each man was a Judas. I did not pick up Kenneth's cross and follow him.

I also met some wonderful alcoholic scholars and degenerate fun lovers, who would drink and party all night, including a girl named Angela, who loved to fuck, and of whom it was said, "She fucks like a rabbit and don't make no trouble." When I heard this, I had looked forward to meeting her.

Another spiteful friend from Harvard, Eric wrote, "if I ever saw a ripe victim for alcoholism, it is/was you. Though I owe you an unpayable debt for that night we spent in your club."

We had spent an evening in the Crab Club, a club which I eventually joined at Harvard, and he had gotten very drunk and pissed out the window. He was from Brooklyn, a would be artist, and not a White Protestant snob like me. Evidently it was a good piss.

"I'll be an interloper in this bitch blood life and at least I know an interlopers gratefulness. Which thoughts bring you to hating roundly for your hollow pretentiousness and Bohemian leanings. If you have artistic sensibilities which are not developing, "may they dry up in you, like an old man's sperm." Here, in Santa Domingo (where he was working), "the term for male change of life is

jubilant. God these Latins have a sense of humor. If there is any kicking to be done, I'm sure it will be the urchin who will kick your skinny ass. These urchins wear tiny pointed shoes." Which reminds me -- ARE YOU A JEW? Who knows, I hear then even old Ben Gurion hedges around that question by saying he is an ISRAELITE. Well, let me assure that I am a JEW. I've tried to hide the fact for years, but that's nothing. My mother is a MARTIAN and my father was HITLER'S personal barber and used to give Confucius blow jobs. But don't get me wrong. I really do feel it takes all kinds to make this world. JEWS, MARTIANS, HOMOS, and CHINESE."

Brutal, bitter, vicious, friendly, full of hate, full of more reality than I would realize in two decades. More gently, as always, Melinowsky wrote:

"While futilely searching for your letter this evening, I reflected that even if its manifest content was so questionable, it might be best, instead of responding, to start the whole correspondence anew. In this way, I thought, it may be possible to raise the intellectual and spiritual to a degree that will not only be more enlightening, but also be more pleasurable after the masses when they

peruse such letters after we have all passed on, on to that further Harvard in the sky. It slipped my mind. When do you leave for your first secret mission? I was by then a Us army intelligence agent, and making the best of the image. For some reason I suddenly felt that there might be some urgency in writing now-- before it's too late. And by the way before you go, have you read...."

The book came highly recommended by Salem, a writer friend of Melinowski, with whom I had once played cards and gotten drunk, so drunk that I vomited much to my shame the whole two quarts of beer on Shawn's coat, and seen a few times after.

I recall how Shawn had stopped by on his way to serve the "Piece Corps," as he liked to refer to it. Melinowski wrote how Shawn had stopped by, writing:

"...As usual he was full of wondrous tales of battle, dope and drunkenness, spiced frequently with episodes of bizarre lust crazed sex. Our dialogues also concerned with literary problems and deprecations of one or another career choice, which eventually carried us over the nearby cemetery wall. I was so sick the next morning that I stayed home from work and we continued. Ours

had a functional arrangement which allows one to sit comfortably on the edge of the tub while depositing one's lunch into and around the toilet bowl, how convenient."

After Melinowski left Paris last summer he reecounted that he and his wife proceeded to Dublin where they had a very fine time and then moved on to the Irish islands. Spent their days strolling along the giant cliffs on the western side and their nights in a little thatched roof cottage-- whose john he claimed was fifty feet down wind from the cottage and this necessitated him having to deposit his lunch beside the bed or at some equally inconvenient place.

Melinowski wrote latter:

"I am writing this from the outside, while meditating in a lazy fashion and basking in the sun. All around me is this beautiful hilly country, long fields some good dark woods, and a swamp with tall dead trees, not dramatic but it feels good to me. The human stuff around me is pleasing to the eye; a rusty railroad which has one crawling clamorous freight a day usually carrying straw (and under the straw?) Just down the tracks there is a negro country church, with wooden doors that were painted red and up the hill toward a

neighboring farm one of those tailed, windmill devices over a well. This is all probably sounding vomitously picturesque, which it isn't ... I even find myself arising early in the morning with some eagerness, practically leaping up to dig the sunrise and early morning bit. Anthropology at least offers an opportunity for pleasant speculation and philosophizing about behavior of the human vermin. Likewise, there is the withdrawal and protection of academic existence ( the evils of this aren't necessarily necessary) along with things like the actual and the present, travel, field work, romance, adventure, financial reward, God."

Wayne wrote me the next day:

"As the poet self appoint to bemoan the passing of the cool, I mope with you except that I am part of the passing and so I guess I mourn myself, I always was selfish ... but perhaps that's part of being able to face life, shit that it may be, but only glorious if you don't know how shitty it is and this is best for others. Unfortunately our brand of conventionality involves seeing the shit if not rolling in it... Well, all this is trying to justify to the fact that I've given up smoking, but I

don't really feel that much better and I miss smoking.

Without a doubt if two years ago I could have known that I'd quit smoking now I think I would have rejected myself as a fink, but I haven't given up drinking as right now I'm rather dreadfully hung over and my mouth feels as if about four flies were buzzing around inside it. Well, I guess the big news with me is finally taking the big step and asking Betty to marry me. ( I knew I should have given up drinking before I damaged those last two brain cells, oh well)"

I don't know what army leaves are like, but imagine the sensation of young cadet Combat Gambol taken for a European skiing holiday during his leave. Seriously, there's got to be at least one English speaking person to hold my hand, and I've always thought you were cute. Seriously, London is beginning to get me down a little, or rather the stupid bachelor sort of life that I thought I'd gotten rid of by sophomore year at harvard. Just wait Amos and don't feel you have to impress your wife with being extra cool. You just wait. I enjoy your letters though I must confess I thought they were a little better when they used to be a group effort! "



Wolfgang wrote too:

"It was refreshing to get a breath of Gambolian- existential-  
dostoitostoisism after a long silence. The half ass backward  
crammer sounded like you were trying to be the grand  
dragon in all his mystery from Tusaloose, Alabama. That  
possibility of going vietnam doesn't sound too heathy for any  
of us. When your name appears in the Memoria column of  
some alumni journal, they'll all say and he had everything to  
live for and was so happy and the whole thing will tend to get  
pretty sickening. It was filtered back to me that you have  
become an intelligence ace photo recon pilot. That  
idiosyncrasy of your greatness is that you refuse to fly any  
modern new fangled aircraft. But insist on using a battered  
old english spit fire, and are always the first plane to come  
back with excruciatingly tell-tale large scale pictures taken  
from less than fifty feet over the enemy's most strategic  
positions, and not content with these feats alone, you whip  
out your pocket stereoscope back at the base and interpret

your photos down to an accuracy of how many of the foot soldiers have warts on their balls. Anyway, if there is any way of avoiding being sent over, I hope you will do your best. Your mother and I will appreciate it. The other night we were wondering about some sailor type bars in Charleston talking to a lot of whores, little ones and a big ones, young and old I wish you could have been there to quickly penetrate their dumb outer gloss and engage them in deep existential truths, perhaps reform them or at least make them proud and happy of their work.

We had a funny South African who's a lot like Wayne, he kept getting suckered into buying colored water for the bar girls. Howard is getting married in June. This is very good because I was getting sick of him living in dirty little rooming houses in his tattered grey underwear. It is also pretty nice that he is savoring some nice vaginal warmth. She is at the minister school with him. Her folks were missionary people in China, so when you're doing your routine Viet cong hunting next week. You might check them out."

Shortly thereafter, I heard that Wolfgang had found his wife in bed with some other guy and busted the guys jaw. They ended up getting a divorce and both had gone to analysis. Someone said that the had driven each other crazy. Then I hear that Wolfgang is out somewhere living with two women and playing the guitar in an Indian band. Vaya con dios.

We were all going through changes. One half of me felt like the world was a dung heap and I was a piece of shit. Only there weren't any other warm turds to share the feeling with. Daddy wasn't footing that bill anymore.

Another half felt poetic and thought of Rebecca. I had a short dream of her; she was strange, about seventyish in her features, an old woman like the old ladies in pale beige coats and berets in Cambridge that she always liked to look at, wrinkled, leathery unsolid flesh face, but those big tortoise eyes peering out still, had an old lady's shapeless body, but she had vitality! Her face had the feeling of only an image about it, of only being one of the many manifestations of the spirit of the person underneath, and, as we sat there talking, I was, with a vague fear of being turned down, musing over marrying and making love to her. Bloody well I know I may never see Rebecca again, most likely anyway, perhaps in dreams we have lived together into old age and death and are free of each

other, perhaps.

Soon there would come a new women, and the room she lived in, which was infused with her, and her room presented, a musing over mixed emotions, deep red, yellows, greens rich moisture of her skin. It would seem then that the tides of fall were washing me open and my wounded feelings, it would be good, the diffident heat of the summer would be given breath.

Melinowsky wrote about how fashionable despair was getting to be and how he was into happiness now and felt contempt for the fashionable existentialists who felt nothing, but played the act big, now that it was the current thing to do, and how the only way to define oneself was in opposition. Somehow all this made me feel so good, my scared shitless self was going to be a lawyer. Maybe, I wasn't just selling out by becoming a big shot, by following up on my new confidence, maybe I was not following the fad, was really defining myself by opposition. Yes, My big brother Albert was pushing me toward law school. Maybe he was right. Dag Hammerjold had said that the path to holiness in his age led through action. Only when I put this in my resume for law school, my brother testily warned me that Hammerjold was considered by some to be a fairy, so I better not. A more formal straight non-narrative resume was preferable he

thought and so he provided one for me. But Hamarskjold's views did seem to make following my brothers path less obnoxious.

Yes potentially we all could take a number of different ways, plunge ourselves into them, but to take a way of will, decision, consistency, to embody the things that made a man, the closer you got, wouldn't it be harder and harder, wouldn't it be the path of necessity and not of dreams, a path where one's will had to forge a way? Hadn't that most hated of institutions by me, the U.S army, built confidence and will, so too wouldn't law school as opposed to some romantic path? It was true that the specifics of law only made my mind wander, but wouldn't the will overcome this youthful failing, if only I tried, and here was a way to serve man, a way of power to use and perhaps change the existing order?

Yet, sitting out by the old sixteenth century palace park in the center of Washington D.C. , where I was stationed, and where my term of military service soon would end, with Shagnessy, literature professor and only resident guru in Washington, who later gave all one class A's and all another class F's and was taken away in a straight jacket after too much LSD, and after toasting "Health education and welfare, and shit, piss and corruption," and breaking champagne glasses. One bent glass screams, reverberating, but will not break, against the stone balustrades which line

the path, and talking of his feeling of liberation, as if before death, when lost in the desert, gazing hungrily at a horse's skull,--then one had second thoughts.

Thoughts of Doctor Dave, a Rabellaisian friend, and friend of Sapphire, who when hospitalized for liver complications caused by too much vodka, had not been able to keep an eye on his girlfriend, Rose Marie, who had seduced me, and when I remorsefully but honestly bared this fact to him, the contemptuous DR Dan said there are two kinds of betrayal, you know, betrayal of yourself and the betrayal of others. Like Melinowsky, he had said the little things are most important, they are the bread and tea of life, and if you can have jam with it so much the better, but so what? Doctor Dan and Shaunessy gave one second thoughts about that life of service. Old major "fucking" Mayhem was the only one who shot straight to the heart of the matter. He told me about how once there was this fucking cat, who had its tail over the fucking railroad track and when a fucking train ran over the fucking cat's tail the fucking cat got fucking ass mad, and leapt up to bite the fucking train, and lost his fucking head. Get the message? Don't lose your head over a piece of ass. But in only two short days from now I would meet Milinda.

## **MILINDA**

Two of my grade school teachers, wonderful old gentle men of the British schoolmaster tradition, Manders and captain Frye, died this year fallen prey to the thousands of shocks to which natural flesh is heir, as the captain, who was fond of shakespeare used to say. It was saddening but quick passing for me, caught as I was in something else. I guess love was the natural thing to have happen then, for here I was a U.S army officer a man of rank ( and rank the captain said does have it's privileges ) a man of the world, reckless, with that devil may care attitude, free white, poetic and intellectual, and yet a man of means, educated, and from the right kind of family. So it must have seemed to Milinda.

One night, Milinda and I both drunk, met at a party, both lonely, somewhat discouraged, we talked, drank, felt warm, as if at last here was someone who was sexy and mental too, who came from a family, someone who had nobility but didn't need it, we both felt it without speaking it. But mainly it was the warmth of touch and drink and laughter. We would lie in bed in the quiet steaming night listening to the crickets sing in the long green grass of the back yard, fuck, perspire dripping down our backs in the cool night air, shower then return to bed dripping wet to cool each other and fuck again and again until dusk or sleep. Sometimes she was tight or I was soft, but she would help. I was very young and had

never had a woman who would help before. She described herself to me as sexual matter, a moral dilemma, and a mental case and said I could make you love me very, very much or hate me very, very much, little did I suspect. Often she was restless and unhappy, there was no way to talk about it. It was just there. She would drink or pace it off then come back to bed and we would lie there listening to the weird sounds of cats in heat screaming during the night, we knew how they felt. We were romantic and happy.

She smelled that underneath all this that I was rich! Before I had known the woman three months, she asked me to marry her! She was going through the process of flunking out of school, fucking a few people from time to time but was basically a romantic girl, she had only had one or two big loves, and had taken to drinking scotch and writing poems. Her parents lived nearby in Maryland and she hated them, ( they were not giving her enough money was the reason though she couldn't see it.)

Her mother Francene, was sixtyish, white haired, elegant and had a quick wit. Her father was a quiet somewhat defeated man, he didn't earn much and liked to watch football games on T.V In his youth he had travelled the world and done wondrous things, the things which young men do, but somehow money never came, you could feel that he was secretly



perfectly happy this way, he understood quietness. Francene, you could tell, was disappointed by his style or some would say lack of it. She had been raised in the deep south, among the magnolias and cypress a southern lady, and when she drank her mighty martinis it was of the south that she nostalgically spoke. She wanted you to know that she was not just a woman, she was a lady, improvised aristocracy, you know, antebellum. Our families hit it off, although my father had a little difficulty with her mother's southern accent.

Francene thought my family was secure, rich, powerful, made a good match for Milinda, and it would get her mind off this foolish bohemian kick she was so dangerously into. Even Milinda sensed this underneath too. She had been drinking eight scotches a night, and eating diet pills by the handfuls, but was still gaining weight, and college somehow just wasn't working. In me was the answer to her problem. I embodied the aristocratic princely nobility from which she knew she had sprung, and yet I had a mind like hers, bohemian! Like her mother I had manners. There was a lot going for us. Back at the house where some other lieutenants and I lived the evenings were pleasant. Out in the back yard, tiny flashes of light, fireflies in the night under the darkening lavender sky. The trees slowly turn vermillion and through them shines light from the pasty red

brick suburban apartment houses nearby.

The cat, a smudge in the grass , stalks the fireflies, scratches her ear licks her paw, curls her tail, crouches motionless, crawls, creeps, now leaps, raindrops fall.

Soon after we met we went away for the weekend together to Harpers Ferry. Having travelled through the backfires and jarring notes of rush hour traffic, never the less managing to run a string of red lights, I arrived at Milinda`s one room flat on time. Milinda was preoccupied in the tasks her one room could provide, washing dirty dishes, doing her coiffeur, polite but in a careless sort of way, un-talkative. I sat down poured myself a drink and made hers a double, a bit afraid of discussing what ever it was that was bothering her. Afraid of the blank stares I would probably have given in response. There was no real need to fear, as she seldom discussed what bothered her.

The drink worked, Milinda sat down next to me and poured herself another double then off we drove to the mountains, with a bottle of chambray retina. She looked beautiful, the way she dressed, always in a slip or some jeans so tight I would get a hard-on just watching her, or tonight in a super sexy white lace dress that fit snugly around the waist and had a revealing but modest bust line I wanted to just rip it off her and

taste her sweetness until this feeling of lust was satisfied.

She had to have four drinks just so she could go, she said, but now she was happy, the blackness of her earlier mood was muted. That gnawing un-ease I felt when she would not talk to me, or sit close to me, or would seemingly avoid me to become involved in household trivia, had ebbed. The gnawing dull sting of pain, of dislocation, and that void that came with the feeling , so often felt between us, of peace and wholeness was distant, when she was cut off from me, was lost in our brushing of limbs, or in tight hugs, or in the bottle as we clung to the steeply rising green hills in our little car. She smiled and lay her head across the seat, resting her head upon my leg and as the radio played she slept. We passed a bridge over a gorge and a narrow rushing creek on through the mountains to the confluence of the three rivers above which lies Harper's Ferry, set amid the Appalachian ridges, steep and treacherous to climb, yet not wholly ungentle, for too there was rich farm land and corn fields near.

The town was studded with white shingle or board houses, greying paint peeling from the sides, the kind of town where you see tough fugitive talking hood-like youths in motor cycle boots on the streets glare sullenly at you. But it is also a picturesque town, better kept up than most

Appalachian towns, because it was designated a historic monument.

Milinda sat up slowly, smiled softly, and moved over to me still half asleep but punchy and good humored.

"We are here," I announced. Below we could hear the rustling murmur of water running over the rock slab floored rapids. We passed a small store of antiques, one sign read 2000 books. The shop had black shuttered windows and a pale yellow light that hung out over the streets. The town lay quietly around. The car bore us to the hill, where we turned off along an unpromising side road, lined with remote sleeping houses, crested the hill and to our happy amazement saw a great spreading structure, a long low roofed porch across the front, peaked victorian roofs, with a great yellow bulbed sign, like a Broadway movie sign shining in the early night air that read hotel.

Should we say that I was a writer and she was my mistress or that we had gotten married in such a hurry we hadn't had time to get a ring, we mused happily, wondering at the great hotel sign. We wondered, did we seem married? There was that matter of factness about us. It had been like that from the beginning. We ended up signing in as MR and MRS somebody. Someone else was playing the piano in a big room off at one end which served as a bar. Milinda smiled gleefully as we went up to our

room. Our room was hung with a crazy mauve and yellow flowered and wholly dilapidated wallpaper. She was so good at things, the way she carefully put on her nightgown, perfume, let her hair down to flow freely and fixed her eyes upon me seriously. We had finished the bottle by morning. She felt sexier the more she drank. Looking at our legs intertwined we wished we were one body. What a wonderful feeling when the honey in her warm vagina flowed, to feel myself slowly pushing into her warmth and to hear her cry out and shudder as she came. We slept most of the next day except to go out and buy some tiger gin, locally distilled in the town. It did good things.

That night we met the retired colonel, Steve now a horse farmer, long haired, lecherous, always drinking, winking, at the bar, with whom I discussed the local terrain and infantry tactics, and watched across the valley as a train went through a tunnel, engine roaring in the black night. "Some day that's going to take me," he said dramatically. He told Milinda how much like the late young president I was and what fine people we were. I liked him until Milinda told me that he had said I would not make a good husband for her. Nevertheless, I continued through the weekend to play the part of the young officer drinking in his wisdom.

Milinda was playing the piano down in the empty dining hall, self

engrossed that night. She was restless. I was angry when we went to bed. "Christ I'm drunk," she murmured over and over again with an abandoned tone, then came a self mocking laugh, and she pulled me toward her, her broad shoulders and hips engulfing me and before I knew it I was in her, my arms around her back, lips in her ears, her shoulders pushing upwards into me.

Christ, I was either too drunk or too tired to come that night. I pulled out momentarily and she closed tight and I couldn't get back in. "Jeezuz, oh nooo!" She cried as she clinched her fists, and gritted her teeth.

She did not know whether it was because she wanted to come so much, or because she wanted me to come, or because she was so close to coming. If we fail now, we'll never be able to come, she kept thinking. Am I frigid? Is that what I'm afraid of? Is it that I love him? These questions whirling in her mind like wind going fast, going nowhere.

We drank more magic Tiger Gin, smoked in the dark, and cursed. I forced her ( she wouldn't always help) to feel my penis with her hand, to help me get back into her, but she was too tight or I was too soft. Christ, did I want to get into her, to affirm in blood, in sperm what we meant to each other.

"Slap me," she said. Smash!

She was tense, head down, bent in, body turned away.

"I did not tell you to hit me!" She reproved me sullenly, bitterly, as earlier, she had bitterly reproved me, saying, "You never looked at me, even once."

She just angry, hurt, sad and wanted to get away, Christ, and to drink. I lay, speechless, without feeling. "What do you want?" We lay separate for what seemed an awfully long time.

Slowly she came back to me, whispering, "I'm sorry, forgive me."

"I can't," I said, "I don't know what to forgive you for."

The next morning we lay in each others arms, beautifully made love, and smiled proud of ourselves, and drank off the last of the Tiger Gin while we joked about the babies we could have made, and sneaked a can of tomato juice and some ice out of the kitchen with the help of a young waitress so we could spend three more hours drinking in bed. "Coffee by the pot, tomato juice by the can, she drinks!" said the little waitress, self consciously smiling at having been our accomplice.

Milinda moved in with me the next me the next day, and we fell in love. We shared this little room, with a big mattress on the floor and kept candles burning during the night. During the day, I did my military work

and when that stopped, commenced law school. Ours was a love story. She had asked me to marry her, and a month later I did, knowing that I was crazy.

Milinda left me little notes all over the place, in my clothing or in the bed, which I would find at the most unexpected times.

"Goodnight, goodnight, goodnight Amos, Amos, Amos" was one of the ones I found when she went away for the weekend. There were many others.

"Dear Amos, this is the last nights me, still very much a sexual matter, a moral question, and a mental case. I hope you are thinking of me right now, we will never know," found in my pocket at work one day while getting a cigarette. It went on, "I love you, lovey, and wish this piece of paper were me so I could be with you right now. Good luck on your exam!!!" Another in my brief case: "Dear Amos my love, my Amos, my God! I love you so much. I love to get up early at times. I had a ceremonial letting in of the cats ( I don't think they are overly fond of the cherrio-type victuals you feed them.) And now us girls are sitting around missing our men. Wonder if the little one knows what she's missing yet? I'll see you again, or at least call you on Sunday night-- bye-bye-bye I love our bed, was found when she went to visit her parents for the weekend."



More found in my suit case while I was away on business, "I am so happy that autumn is here, the brisk whistling autumn. I am so happy that I slept through the alarm. I am so happy that we slept warmly, soundly, and sexily. I am not so happy that you took all the cigarettes damn, damn, damn love Milinda. P.S I swiped some Salvation Army stamps from you to promote the cause. And I love you love a bushel and a peck a bushel and a peck and a rope around your neck cause you don't play with me like you used to."

Then she used to hand me little notes while I was on the phone that read, "Tell this obnoxious mother fucker that you've got to go fuck your young bride."

Meanwhile my father would call once every couple of weeks to ask how the cat was. I returned home one day and found this note late at night from skiing in the mountains:

"Dearest Amos-- for some reason I've missed you so much today. I painted the window, cleaned out the ash trays, cleaned the kitchen, washed my hair, and waited then I wrote letters to people I don't know to thank them for thinking of me ( but they don't know me.) Your father called today and sounded terribly old, I was as sad as he was, I had to tell him you were skiing and I was not. I

wonder if he understood why? He asked you to call him when you get home. That seemed strange. I said I'd have you (the you that is skiing and the you that I'm missing) call him when you (the real you that'll make everything normal and O.K. by your presence) gets home."

One day she asked me, "How did you ever get so nice?"

Love notes, lots of confessions of love that seemed too good to be real:

"Now I'm waiting with a roast in the oven. In twenty minutes, if your on time, you'll be home. In twenty minutes I'll laugh and wonder why I wrote this letter to you. Because then everything will be all right. Hurry, hurry, hurry- home to mama. I love you so much that I shudder when I say the word 'love', I can hardly wait till you are in my arms once more to feel your lips caress mine to lose myself to your manly charms oh nothing could be so good.

Maybe I had to be crazy to marry her. I could not quite believe all these professions of love. It was beautiful, it was fresh. It made me feel great, but inside deep down inside this feeling kept creeping up.

Trepidation, nervousness, no: this cannot last, she's dreaming or I'm dreaming but, Oh what a wonderful dream it was. I liked her, hell I really

was beginning to love her even, but it was harder, tougher than these notes suggested. She was too much, but I loved it. Notes and love kept coming.

"Tonight is a night, very much like a night, many nights ago. For me, for him, for him, me. Then, now, many nights ago--and again will come until nothing -- night and again come once and for always," she wrote.

We may discredit later, with the best of reason, everything we did then, before, but it will mean nothing, because all that we went through before was more intense than anything again ever could be. Not that it was deeper, but that it excluded all else .....

### **MY YOUNGEST OLDER BROTHER**

One of these times Jock came back to see the Old Man, who was fast declining in health. He was back from far away Hawaii, where one could sleep under the banyan and pandanus tree to wake to sounds of tropical birds, and look out at a vast ocean and feel the waves touch your feet which he said, had come from three thousand miles away. My wonderful brother who had left to find himself several years ago. Still he was broke, still he was drinking, still he had the idea he would make millions.

My father spoke of him with worry, what about his wife and child, what about him? My father said he used him as an excuse for drinking. I don't know what I'll do about him, he'll always have to be supported. Drunk from head to heel, the old man would lament. But then he would always laugh and say there always was one Gambol in the family too good to work in each generation, recalling Uncle Robert who returned from a trip around the world to tell my father, who was then only a little boy, "Stewart, I think I'll go to the club and have a sweet martini to settle my stomach," which he did and then went around the world again.

My brother drank and drank during his entire visit, yet he talked as if he were on the verge of making a million dollars in his job as a salesman, hard hitting bastards, not sensitive and feeling men, comfortable in themselves, not real men out to help the real human needs, but men out to make money, not gentle men, but hard men, ready to tell you that you had a need for whatever it was they sold, weather you had it or not. These men in there spare time read actuary tables and talked of business.

Jock as always read a well thumbd though paper back novel. He talked not about business but about our father, who would not make it until he was old, so why not he too? And he talked of children and family and of the ocean and the races and wars of life. He was not despite what he

said like my father.

My father had worked his balls off, almost literally, all through his life, to support a wife who had not exactly social pretensions. She had too much love for that. Not a bitch. She was to great a woman. A woman who saved my life again and again no matter how much she might have been overprotective when I was a boy. But my father's intellect and comprehension I thought soared above her. He worked nevertheless to keep her, and to keep the joy of his life, his children happy. Indeed he succeeded, for even twenty years after his death his pension yet supported Sofia and well enough that she could help their sons and her sixteen grandchildren.

My brother Jock had tried astutely to avoid work, and drank not to escape a bitch (at least initially), nor to assuage his protestant ethic guilt over making a million instead of two, but, because he liked drinking. Maybe that was why Dad did too. As I get older, I know less....

Not that Jock would ever admit that he drank because he liked drinking, of course. Instead he claimed to be just like my father. He claimed that he wanted to succeed. He acted the role consummately. Underneath at any rate, I think he knew it was but a role. Crazy, drunk, polite, peaceful, living a lazy life, receiving pity and money, never expected

to succeed but always expected to want to succeed-- What a brilliant way to defend a simple life in a crazy power mad family! At least so the psychologist might speculate.

I was young, married, with a small child, working my ass off at law, expecting a brilliant future. I expected to become that most wonderful thing, a marketable product, and I looked then with pity and condescension upon this brother, not knowing what courage to leave they took yet, to leave fold, to dare to adventure, and to con the system.

Amos wrote a poem from his reeling feelings after the visit:

"The return of the warrior king, with a circle of dancing demons for a laurel wreath, neither the king nor the warrior, not even the adventurer, this opaque fellow who will not admit that he is not a salesman and will not succeed, nor admit that he is guilty, full of transparent assertions and false pride, living on drunken illusions and illumination's funny humor, in a posture of impeccable grace and cool reality, who refuses to reduce to the common mean, but stands on his own despair. Look here! It takes time to be a hero, and it's later than you think, and despite the relativity of things, facts are facts-- you are forty and without a cent!"

Here I was, his younger brother, well on my way to being a lawyer.

I felt like saying it. I held back. I had the feeling that this man had felt the things I thought. My mother would have loved me to give him a good talking to. My father like Tar baby didn't say anything.

## **MILINDA TWO**

I had told her many times to get a diaphragm. Finally she did but she wouldn't wear it. So it was really no surprise when She got pregnant. She wrote:

“This brown damp day of summer's end promised nothing at the start. You came back to bed, having stared at the roundness of my belly, having forgotten your reason for getting dressed. And we quietly lay there, just staring. Your mind would drift and you'd resent your new refined position, I'd try to kiss your eyes aware to reassure you that it was all O.K that this was only an extension to our love, of our life mixed together forever, and that though it was sooner than you would have had it, it would all work out fine. Hadn't we after all talked about the children that we would some day have, well the say is closer than you thought, that's all. My belly fit yours and for awhile we forgot the stranger guest. We made love luxuriously, laughed a lot, waited for nothing for quite awhile until you had to go to ponder past happenings and chart the

future. We planned our evening together and you left. I turned to wifely things, to cleaning out our drawers and throwing nothing away-- I noticed your letters and thoughts and drawing in folders, and read each line carefully. One whole book of scriblings I found and in it your words to me, I love you like the night air, coming in soft waves of wind, caressing, billowing out sometimes pulling me in under the white sheets, pregnant with perfumes and familiar scents. At first, it was different, I did not care if I lost you, now I do care but strangely cannot lose you, you are in the surrounding night and I love your meaning."

She still felt good about me she still found nice things to write. Connecticut avenue is chilly. There are funny shops that were once houses all lined up and down the street watching the cars race from the underpass. A car leaves it's meter and others stop for lights and start again and stop. Patches of browned grass in the park surround the white marble venosus laden with buckets of white water. A man walks by, his head bent low and in his trembling hand he holds a cigaret. He stops, looks slightly up and across the street and continues on, to where I could not guess. Probably a shelter if he is lucky, I thought. The windows are all



dark. The stores are all closed. It's another Sunday. The wind, it seems, is blowing the daylight away and bringing in the night. If the cars ever stop speeding, spring will come...

I found when I got back from night law school a note Melinda wrote: "Tonight was a cold night and it seemed as if the wind was blowing. I was able to warm up my feet in our big lonely bed. Without you, it was too big, so I got up to sit before the smoking embers of the dead fire."

A half cord of firewood was stacked on the porch out front. I'd sit and study, secure among my books. On the wall, a water color of a junk or Venetian trader vessel, curious mosques in the background after stretches of blue water.

Happiness may well be a warm spouse, enough money, a big bed and days spent in big books. Who wrote: "He who finds his way in the morning dies content in the evening." Amos luxuriated on the idea of the happy death, as he sat secure before the big fire with expectations, satisfied, content. Too many nights, however, something was going wrong. Was this a passing thought?

One night I sat poring over a frozen beer which was gurgling on top of the radiator. The damn icebox always froze everything and all liquids had to be put on the radiator to warm up.

I fingered a letter from Milinda to her mother that was lying on the table, I had seen it once before, having chanced upon it when trying to locate a dress shirt one evening. Obviously over tired and overwrought, Milinda complained to her mother about the absence of bliss she was feeling in our relationship. She had never mailed the letter and absent mindedly had left it out, or was it on purpose, I wondered.

It amused me when I first saw it because usually when she felt like that, she later felt guilty and would act really overly blissful and happy for a few days at least. I smiled at the thought. "Glugle," the beer unthawed and bubbled over, so as to spill over, even as I picked up the can.

We were still in love then three weeks before the birth of our child, but it was funny, now I was writing her little love notes. This was the first epistle she had written in months. I had not noticed the fall off, it seemed more real, less sentimental to live without these constant affirmations of her love. We had settled into a happy life with me working at law and her tending house and doing part time jobs. We differed over some little things, she would get concerned and angry at me for accepting my fathers financial help to get through school and to help us support our lavish apartment. She claimed That I didn't wash enough but all things

considered we were happy enough. Each day finding a way to live, and most nights we slept contently.

Weekends, We'd sleep late in the mornings, wake up ponderously leaning on one elbow look around heavy lidded, then lay back on the fat pillow. The telephone rings. Right number, wrong party, hang up. Out of bed into the pillars of sunlight! Shooting, shot through the latticed window, bathing the bedroom in light! Refracting bequtifully through the cigaret smoke. Fresh coffee perking. No more marching now! No more subjective Harvard thought stringing! No, now, the life of the Chinese gentlemen, model of decorum during the day, relaxed and slightly intoxicated evenings. Books of glossy photographs spanning different periods in our lives lay upon the heavy antique table. A warm fire during the evenings laconic sleep, sometimes interrupted by sex.

As the child grew inside of Milinda, I grew to love it. I could feel the movements now strong as she was coming closer to the world. I worried though would I be able to support a wife and a child while still in law school, I knew things would be tough. That is the only reason I was so upset in the first place when Milinda had told me she was pregnant and though I was definitely not angry anymore about the unexpected bundle, I was still very afraid.

Was I ready to be a father? Afraid too, knowing this would tie me down to Milinda even more. Is that what it was all about in the first place, my insecurity about our relationship, which I felt, deep inside, was cooling off? But maybe this child would save it. Somehow maybe the thing that I feared the most would turn back the time and our love would be like it was in the beginning. Tangled thoughts flowed through my head, like webs that you cannot quite get rid of for good.

I decided to take Milinda to the Hotel where we had first gone, in hopes of making her feel the same again, but instead the notes she wrote were of a different nature than the past, as if not by the same person. She wrote:

"We return to the hotel but this time gracefully, familiar with the hotel sign in large letters which can only be seen from the rivers rocks way down below. We won't see it if it keeps on raining, but we know what it looks like. Our room is somewhat cleaner and larger is shown to us, but it really is not much fun, this room. It is legally reserved and filled and the Amos Gambol that came with me last year is no where to be found instead there is this imposter posing as my husband, but for whom the fire has died. Before we wondered if they knew who was really in 36. The nice little waitress

remembers us and I feel she senses the change that has come over us. She looked like she had become quite a hussy. I had nothing to say so we moved in to have dinner. The same old ladies were painting the same old flowers and had received honorable mentions meriting a spot on the dining room wall. The dinner was balanced, easy and sleep inducing. Then to read, to the air conditioned room and to sleep peacefully. Amos lays in the big three quarter bed, our bed at home is bigger, maybe tomorrow I can sit in the sun."

Milinda also wrote about the unborn child that lay sleeping in her womb.

"You are shape lacking the clarity of shadow, movement contained by your position. For nine months we have watched. I felt your growth and am not able to determine your size. You quickly consume nutrients from my body and give back life. We wait to meet you, you who have been so close to us for nine months. You will bring me pain but also great joy and then we will love you. The day fast approaches it's term, after the birth I'll see what I've felt for so many long hours."

Later that same day her water broke and I rushed her to the

hospital where she spent twelve long hours in labor to bear our child. I kept wanting to say, "my child" these days. The birth was breach so she had gotten no sedation until the child was one foot out of the womb.

I remember her screaming and that fleeting fear that Oh my God she's going to die! I was afraid and mixed up. Is this what I had wanted? And then the baby was here.

We'd talked ourselves into expecting a boy but once we saw the beautiful girl we had gotten we knew that was exactly what we had wanted all along.

Milinda said she vaguely remembered the nurse telling her that she had a little girl but she thought she was dreaming and that she better hurry up and go back to sleep before the baby came. Then it was true and there I was with her mother beaming with pride and the baby was a girl after all, how wonderful!

Milinda's mother cried when she heard the baby's name Miss Taylor Francene Gambol. Then later that day Milinda cried when my mom came to see her because everyone else except for her had seen the baby. Taylor was still in an oscillate and She could not get out of bed because of the unprecedented reserve approach. ( how like a Gambol to try

everything backwards and unorthodox) Then the nurses put her in a wheelchair and pushed her down to see the Taylor and she cried again because the baby really was as beautiful as everyone had said.

Milinda wrote about her first feeding;

"Today they brought you in for your first meal and I don't know which one of us were more excited. You took to my breast like an old trooper and I was so proud of you, I still can't believe that you are all mine, all mine and Amos's that is. I will bring you home all bundled up in ma's pretty knit things, I am so nervous Amos is nervous too. Although there is nothing to be nervous about you were such a good baby, you made it easy on us both-- you were so well behaved. Weeks passed quickly and the post-partum blues I had experience were nearly gone, I only cried once today, when Amos started speculating on when you'd lose your virginity."

... One day in early in May, when it was 70, I just couldn't I couldn't resist taking you outside to see the world, I bundled you up and we sat on the porch. You loved the feel of the breeze on your cheek. Ma and Pa came up to meet you on a more formal basis and fell in love with you at first look, who could blame them? You

were the cutest baby in the world. I had you all dressed up in that nightgown that Amos bought you and you looked like a little doll, so perfect in features, from your round face to your little feminine hands truly a work of art. It was hard to believe that Amos was capable of producing such a lovely thing, but then maybe and probably you got it from my side of the family. My father said well in a few years we'd be walking you down the aisle..."

Jock's wife wrote, "I think it is one of the best things in life, having children." My mother noted that it had taken her four sons to learn to feed them when they cried instead of opening the window.

Milinda had the prettiest grin after having Taylor, kind of toothy, like a mare neighing after her filly. I would always go to Taylor's room an hour after she had been put to bed and would just stare in amazement through the darkness. As Taylor quickly got bigger she would clap and pull the knobs on the table and emit little eeghs and aaghs and monosyllables. Taylor loved to ride in her carriage and looked curiously at the snow. Sometimes she would lay on the changing room table as I changed her and you just knew she was in one of those moods where she was going to stay up all night, full of energy. It's going to be another sleepless night I know.



Milinda is out in the kitchen swearing because the trash bag just broke and trash got all over the floor. Milinda and Taylor went for a long walk earlier during which they bought some daffodils. Taylor had a hard time keeping her eyes open tonight, she waves her arms a little takes a few sucks of breast milk then drifts to sleep.

Sounds, names ideas words from the past which transform themselves into essences of now. How frightening that such distant remote vibrations should recur as vibrantly as before. I have one child, now nearly a year old, how quickly time has past, will another be far off and then another. Presenting life in such form, a surviving being, vibrating, it is such a fantastic thing for these little ones will also feel so very strongly those past pulls on one's own life. I still remember that beach ball that Taylor got for her first birthday How I would throw it to her and she would giggle hysterically when it was thrown to her, how she would laboriously bring it back to me, the ball was about twice her size, how she would roll over the top of it, fall flat on her ass and get right back up with that determined look in her in her eyes, so much like a Gambol, and try again until she did it. Taylor was constantly jabbering these days, sometimes, getting words attached to the right things, like doggie, or birdie that is what she called the ostrich at the zoo.

Everything had changed with the coming of this wonderful child. She is all that matters, beautiful little human being. I never imagined. This was the biggest change for me, even bigger than getting married and I had thought that, that was the biggest step I was ever going to make, how wrong! Being a father, you are no longer in first place, and you don't want to be. Milinda had changed too, now she had a purpose in life, Sure she doesn't want much sex but I hoped that would pass, being a threesome does take a heavy toll on romance though. Milinda is more self contained and not much in need of my affection, it seems.

Sometimes It seems as if she's reorienting herself to me with a new heartless objectivity. I should be more humble now, understand the pressures on her of having twenty-four hour a day burden on her, I shouldn't resent it, but her coolness to me, is almost like an odor a very strong odor that you can't get out of the house. More on my part is what is needed clearly. Instead of wanting what love has been to me, and wanting her body next to mine, her physical presence, laughing with her, talking with her, missing her and thinking of her, rather it, the language of love was to make her happy, that is the thing to do. Not yet have I mastered this art of unselfishness though it is not from lack of desire. Taylor continued to grow fast and Milinda worried about regaining her pre-

pregnancy figure. Being a father was a much bigger adjustment than I expected.

That summer we both got jobs in New York City, working for an insurance company, me in the subrogation department, she as a secretary. My old school buddy's father lined the jobs up for us.....

New York City, summer:

Milinda was tired and lay all curled in a ball, her head slightly visible above the covers, all pin-curls, waiting for tomorrow, then back to work and she thought curls made her look better. I resented her sleep, as I would have preferred to be asleep by her side. Those pin-curls were aggravating too. She seemed to be able to think of work too easily or of her family or one thing or another. That was natural enough but I felt as if there was something more important that I wanted her to think of, perhaps it was me that I wanted her to think about.

Earlier a friend of Milinda's had called as she laid half asleep, half feigning sleep, in hopes of sleep, inert, and I said something or other that was not particularly appropriate. Milinda quickly turned half away from me looking over, with rebuke in her eyes.

"Tell her I'll call her back tomorrow," she said emphatically, and before the receiver was on the hook, she lay inert again, snoring.

Perhaps it was resentment that made my mind unwillingly turn back to the letter she had written that spring in Washington to her mother. How much had changed between us in our year of married life? Quite a lot, I thought as I sat there, irritably awake. I had felt irritable all evening, but knew there was no way to explain it to Milinda because tomorrow, a sunny day perhaps, or a day with new fallen snow, full of thoughts and things, she would have forgotten the prior evenings' malaise and would throw it off with a cursory remark attributing the whole thing to an unwholesome mood on my part. She did not need, did not want, to trouble herself with these things. Milinda strangely enough was laughing in her sleep in the next room. Somehow it didn't sound as if it were about me.

Perhaps I am awake, I naively pondered, because I had wanted to fuck her earlier and did not. I was about to plunge in when she remembered she had forgotten her diaphragm. That betrayed any excitement I had. It was if she had said, as she could, "Yes, but watch out for my pin-curlers," or, "Yes, but wash your thing first."

So now, Milinda was sleeping fitfully in the other room. I went back to bed and rolled over to her warmth. I wondered why I was always the one to roll over to her, and why it was so seldom the other way around. Milinda grunted and I rolled back over to my own side of the bed. It was

like lying next to a corpse. Later, Milinda rolled over to me, but just long enough to get warm, just long enough for me to get a hard-on and stir up all the feelings that had barely left, then quickly away to her own side of the bed. I lay there, awake, wondering whether there were women out there, other places, that were not that way and what I would do if one of them ever came along. A cigaret lay, smoked out in the ashtray. How like our love it seemed to me. The night glared up casting awkward shadows in through the window.

### **MILINDA THREE**

Back for the third year of law school in Washington, D.C.

Stale bananas, rotting avocado, dead cores of oranges, old tangerines lay in the kitchen. Rich inhalations. Strangely I enjoyed the scent. An avocado plant, "Cado," we called him. "Penis plant," once Melinda had said, bloomed and opened up to the sun.

Milinda went down to the Arabian Nights Restaurant, in the basement of our big old apartment building on Connecticut Avenue next to the zoo, where we sometimes ate, to buy a pack of cigarettes for thirty five cents from the shiney cigaret machine. It was handy to have both a restaurant and a cigaret machine in the building where you lived.

Milinda ran into our landlady, Mrs. Tasmaguru, to whom she politely

said, "Hello," walked over to the shiney machine, perused intently over the many titles and plopped thirty five cents into the machine. It was hard to choose from the many exotic Arabic titles. Then it dawned on Melinda that this was not the cigaret machine after all, but instead the juke box, so she had to borrow thirty five cents from Mrs. Tasmaguru.

We received the New York Social Register (secretly gratifying to receive this list of society families in which we were listed) and Milinda thumbed through it, noting this and that, listings and de-listings, little ironies. Pretentious little book, for those who would like to be better than the world. This book that opens some doors. The best thing about it were the hundreds of millions who aren't in it, as if it meant something.

It reminds me of aunt Claudine who said to me once, "Amos, don't be a fool, you are ridiculous, do you know that?" when I questioned her on how people made enough money to support their styles of living in the upper class.

"We are all living on inheritances. Of course we are," then shaking her head, she tried to tend to the failings of the evening meal table, caused by the inadvertance, bad training of one of the servants. It was so difficult to get decent help these days. Ultimately, she blamed it on the

Communists. The chauffeur was late again and his wife, the maid, had taken the day off, against instructions. Neither spoke English.

Milinda went to bed, all tight nerved again, taught muscled, tense, cold rolling over away from me, hot restless, nervous, clenched fingers, lightly pounding wrist, uneven sounds. Unconscious of the cause, refusing or unable to communicate, she lies there, and there are so many ways to communicate-- sex, talk, touch, mind, eyes, expressions. When? She is so self contained will she ever allow communication between us? Will I be done in first? What am I thinking?

Sitting on a park bench during lunch break from school. I work in the day as a Clerk for the great Government bureaucracy, still attend night school, having won a scholarship and having the G.I. Bill to pay on top of my tuition and work we get along. I am reading something about rigid personality structures. The trouble with all these mid-Westerners is that they are inflexible, un-absorbing, brittle and rejecting.... Reading about peoples secret desire to be eavesdropped on just so they will know that someone cares.

Warm heat white light of the sun on closed eyelids, the muttering of city noises, speculations about how difficult it is to stretch out on a park bench, inhibitions against laying out flat and comfortably. If I were sun-

bronzed and leather skinned from travel, a visitor here, instead of a clerk,

One poor disheveled pigeon stands motionless on the black asphalt, with blind protrusions where there once were eyes he would not last long, I thought, and felt sorry for the little creature that was no doubt the effect of some cruel boys prank. I gave the poor thing the last bit of my sandwich and he hurriedly ate it up while I kept the other pigeons away by standing very close. I had a feeling deep down that this would be his last meal, and I knew there was nothing much I could do.

Nearby the group of pigeons, with green and purple glowing necks, coo a heavy, pulsating sound... Sighs of the breeze in the heavy hanging air. Thick green leaves of nearby trees flow gently to the ground. Formless glimpses in the black pool... clouded sky above, the feeling of death around and deeper within kaleidoscopic brilliance... a swell throated pigeon struts, dancing and wobbles away from the blind pigeon, leaving him standing absolutely still except for the agonizing motion of his head.

I graduated and got a job with a white shoe, they called it, Wall Street Corporate Law Firm, Wingum, Stingum, and Robbem, we called it. A good place. I remember interviewing for the jobs, crusty old partners questions: "Oh, you say you like all sports, you say, Well, how do you like polo?" "Polo, I didn't mean that," I respond. "Oh," the old bastard replies



sarcastically. "You know, you'll have to get your kicks out of the law, if you work here," one reminded me.

Milinda helps me to live in the path of my brother Albert and of my father: I do it for her, she doesn't talk much about any ideas with me, not even my work, but she keeps me working. Taylor loves me and needs me and she needs security and she needs money, so she keeps me working.

She is often delightful, but it is as if any complaint, any self expression, now must be suppressed. Wifey is in reality now. She knows she's got a child and ideas, so self complaints are spoiled. The child that loves me, the child that I love seems to be the biggest curse to me, a curse to my spoiled self. Wifey and I can't sit around and complain about life at all now. But she can be a bitch to me for not dressing better, not being more polite, not being nice enough to her, and damn it, I can't defend myself. What am I thinking? More bourgeois values and perceptions, less laziness and carelessness and inattentiveness, less wildness, more conventionality, will help Taylor, will build my stature in the community. It's all very real and I must. It's a support, living for reality, for Milinda's reality and for Taylor. It gives me purpose in life, an excuse to avoid plumbing the deeper fears of existence. Everything is going to be all right.

Working as a Wall Street lawyer during the day and at night going to the Bar Exam school, real fear of not passing the Bar, not getting my license, the intense drudgery of studying every night, ignorance of the material, dislike of study, mind wandering, working now for a law firm, on big stuff, interesting at least provided the right frame of mind, so I'm playing the game.

Milinda at Sunday lunch with my aunt Claudine in her living room, aged wood panelled with a real Canaletto, the great Venetian Square of St. Angelo where they feed the pigeons. All is so polite and we pass conversation as we sit next to the grand piano and sip sherry while the French cook cooks the meal, later to be served by a silent Italian maid. Milinda remarks that the real difference between us and them is not of gut experience of living at all but of mannerisms. They were raised to converse, that was what there was to do, and they can, empty formality of wit as it may seem to us. They are of the era of the tea party; we are even post-cocktail party, the TV generation; our talk is self centered.

I worked to support my wife and child, that is my job, to be a pillar of the establishment. Living on the basis of the past for future security, for keeping that past alive and getting some of it's benefits in the present. Responsibility, love, and care for wife and child; it is good. Milinda checks

our bills, keeps the money straight and makes sure we have friends over for dinner who have had us over in the past.

Milinda and I spent the weekend at Harvard with Melinowsky and Wayne and their wives. My God, it is fifth reunion. Little did I guess where I would be my Twenty Fifth... It is really a triumph that late still to be alive... It seems so young looking back, but then I felt so old, so grown up....

Both of my friends were now professors. Melinowsky was about to go to Polynesia to live with the natives. I am envious of him as he talks of life being short and only what you make meaningful to yourself mattering. He said, arguing to put me down and himself up, playfully (we both know how far to go), "The law is living in a system a set of games and rules, it is like dying." He recounts too how Wolfgang is living in a Hooverville type hut, somewhere on a cliff and chasing girls born after the Korean War (1952-4). It is hard to believe, sitting up here, together in Wayne's house, on his big brass bed, that we have not just dreamed up the last five years, that soon we will not retire to the college dining room to settle over a long sickly meal of fisheye glazed process softened meat.

Walking down the street with Melinowsky, kicking yellow crumbling leaves, we know it is as if then were now. It is good to be with

hypochondriac Wayne, who knows every small germ which is killing him, because maybe he will be the sacrifice to the Gods and not you, to know that the fact of his hair curling still bothers him, and to see him walking on the toes of his feet, bobbing up and down. It felt good to be sitting with friends drinking out of the same case of beer, discussing my psychic disorganization, Melinowsky's weed garden in the country, and we talked about fucking.

Yet this Harvard world is one that no longer exists. Why should being here devalue so much the interim decisions of the past five years? Why should the future I have projected as a lawyer, living with Milinda, working, stare so oppressive and bleak, like these yellow winter skies?

It is five minutes from darkness outside. Returning from the weekend, it all seems to have been to have been an illusion. The immediate future seems dry and brittle. The flight back was through heavy cumulus layers and flowers of clouds, bumping. Milinda got airsick. I read the paper, meaningless sentences I did not understand. The silences and talks together with friends of this weekend seem to have evaporated, leaving an unpleasant nauseous vacuum.

But here is Taylor, whom grandma, had taken for the weekend, and has brought back to us, is now crawling about the floor, recognizing old

chairs and sofas, making her own little sounds of remembrance, now eating pabulum.

She is better than all my friends, more real more love. She gives to my life a measure of innocence, of happiness, of decency, of self justification. Hear her beautiful small laughs. Making the mold I live in, which seems to be increasingly unnatural, less like bad karma to be lived though.

Melinowsky was wrong. Despite all, I have seen more of the real side of life. The U.S. army where the dignity of one's individuality and the solitary heights of contemplation and feeling, or depth, are a deficit because they fulfill no survival function, indeed sap ones will to survive, are a luxury; the U.S army where one must conform and out conform to lead and save others for their assigned work... Law School where individuality is a help, but only inasmuch as it hones ones understanding of objective social facts, providing perspective to find workable solutions to real conflicts...

People who have failed competitively and suffered from soul paralyzing guilt, or who have suffered incurable physical disease and yet borne on, not from any depth of existential understanding but from sheer guts and humor and care for others... Marriage and having a child. Their

future depend on my ability to provide in the present and future, and the slave like existence of working to pay for law school... Now that I have more self confidence, I can see that the institutional framework, the security oriented middle class is not they-- it is us. Only by living in it does a man develop will. Affecting others, doing his job, becoming a man....

#### **MILINDA FOUR**

This living in a cement city, dirty pavements all around, gray skies, dirty windows, door men at the entrance to our building, working on Wall Street, the financial capital of the world still, with Stewart, on big stock deals... It hurts to hear pop songs... the lyrics go, "Oh gentle people, ...." do all the suffering. We have been here before. My brother Albert talks to me about my perhaps becoming a federal prosecutor, this "me", who is working late hours into the night on bond debentures, who is wearing three piece suits. Split. There is nothing real in this Wall Street law work, just endless hours at \$50.00 or \$100.00 dollars an hour..., looking up law to justify decisions already made by giant international corporations, finding tiny points of law to justify hundreds of hours of work, to justify hundreds of thousands of dollars of fees, just in case someday ten years hence some government bureaucrat or angry stock holder raises a question. At least, it is very comfortable in my law firm, in my own office, my own phone, yes

sir, no sir.

Milinda takes care of Taylor, walking her in nearby Central Park nearly every day, but has no friends. We went to a very social dance at the Knickerbocker Club, Rockafellers, Mellons, and so forth, where we met: no-one.

Melinowsky visited here, having unexpectedly returned from Polynesia after his wife took up with some native. He was travelling by himself, distraught, and not knowing what to do. His wife had returned to live with her family. He asked if he could stay with us for awhile. We talked of his experiences in Polynesia, of magic shaman doctors, about things, he said, "You may not wish to learn."

Listening to the sound of the Big Pink, a band, the record of which he had brought with him. I worked all day while he stayed with Milinda. Not so dark and confused after a few days, he turned on emotionally, self dramatic, worthy of the sympathy he was seeking, all of us drinking a lot of beer and listening to the radio when not listening to the Big Pink. I went to bed early, as I was tired and had to work twelve hours a day.

I hoped that Milinda would be in soon but I didn't want to get embarrassed by asking her to come to bed with me so I left her there to console Meliknowski and went to bed. I half-slept restlessly, waiting for

her. I could not find sleep without her. I got up. I found her lying there on the sofa kissing Melinowski.

What made this so awful was that I had been lying in bed, wanting to fuck her! Out of kindness, damn it! Kindness, I had left her to talk with Melinowsky, who seemed so sad. It was her, her I was angry at, not him. He had been hurt, I could understand.

Milinda the bitch! She never once, with feeling, said that she was sorry to have hurt me. My friend, Melinowsky on the other hand, never ceased apologizing. And he understands, it is not the act. It is having gotten caught and having hurt a friend. Like my older brother Jock, he was. He had cultivated the art of being a beautiful liar. He kept saying he was sorry and that he didn't know what he was doing. I could believe that he was sorry, but I certainly didn't believe he had kissed her by accident!

Milinda, the bitch, realized nothing and tried to claim I was making a big deal out of nothing. "What do you want me to do? Go out and find a lover? I can't. I have our child. Your friends are the only men I meet. I can't help it if I get attracted to them sometimes. Would you want me to be dishonest? Of course I did! Honesty is a pail of shit.

After that, Milinda kept telling me to get a mistress. Christ I don't want that. I love her and the child, they are the meaning and justification of



my work, my life in this dreary city. Christ, she is the one who wants this damn doormaned and expensive apartment near the park so she can walk Taylor and have an elevator, not me. She locks the doors every night, afraid of burglars. I don't have time for a mistress, working as many hours as I do.

My poor father, sick and wasting away because his liver is sick and riddled with cancer, sits on the porch ten blocks uptown in the penthouse, smiling out, looking with his one eye (he had lost the other eye to glaucoma years ago) hands across his lap, legs crossed and very, very boney thin, withering away. I try to see him and talk but my problems seem small and I don't know what to say. Milinda loves him and his humor and takes Taylor to play at his feet.

A series of unhappy weekends. I recall the time when I couldn't wait for them so I could spend time with her but now I almost wish there were no weekends left, except for Taylor. I love seeing her when she is awake playing now with dollies and dressing up stuffed animals. Milinda and I don't get along, or we have to do things we don't want to do, or we have unwanted visitors. All much aggravated by the restlessness coming from being locked up in this city. Milinda has been getting colds or stomach aches lately.

I took Taylor bicycling on the little back seat behind the bicycle, in the Park, all around Manhattan. The afternoon is smokey and gray, the air moist and cooling like sweat. Lots of people walking. Teenage girls and boys, long haired and ragged, walking along the East River as the salty air blows in. I find myself championing bourgeois values with them. Protecting my position, my apartment, my child, my disenchanted wife! Someone has to protect my life, something! We'll get through this, somehow we will.

Milinda's fire "burns coldly like a gem," I was once told by someone, quoting someone. It was true, she was cold, but she has light. She keeps me going. She denies me much love and affection, but she cooks my meals, gives me a fuck once a week, and spends all her time with our child, Taylor. She is a good mother. If only we could get through this period, if she can pass the test of dissatisfaction. If only she would put out a little.

Returning home, as I climb the stairs, I see a child with a mask on, screaming as the crowds stream rushing by, " I can't see, Mommy, Mommy, take it off! I can't see, Mommy!" A siren wails despairingly in the distance. My heart sinks as I think of my Taylor and the horrors of being a child without a Mommy or Daddy nearby to help.

Amos wrote:

"Yesterday I saw an urbane, perfumed looking man on the subway stand, Wall street lawyer... with all those office secretaries, with their carefully coffered hairdos, whose big deal each day is the coffee break, and who would just about die if you suggested that you go have a fuck together in your office. I felt strange as I looked at him, as if he were what I would soon become. Already there is wall to wall carpeting in my big office, large glass windows, a littered desk, papers for fifty million dollar bond debentures. This man, he bars my far up window and looks upon the sky. No less are iron bars for wearing graying faces and shitting small black print, softly ringing telephones, above the teeming, hustling crowd, gobbling hot dogs with relish for lunch."

Walking out in those crowded wall streets during the lunch hour, seeing all those people, slaves, soon to go back to their desks. Any man who can work eight hours a day at his post, at his desk without deserting, is indeed a hero. During those lunch hours I cried inside: I cannot, I will not be your slave! But I needed the money for my wife and child.

Milinda wrote:

"What have I done to you? Castration is too finite a thing. And what have you done to me? Boredom too hazy a concept. For some reason we hate to love each other. The determination has gone out of it, the effort is effecting our marriage. All the humdrum blues in the world and it has not by passed us. We made a child we have learned to love the child, but maybe to hate what it will mean eventually: a reason to stay together. It's the necessity of it all which is so oppressive. Why can't we, out of spite, laugh at the enemy, turn negative into positive, or even maybe? I love you is to easy and to remedial a phase; I hate you too cathartic. Maybe is the answer, the beginning, the progression, the challenge."

Sitting in dingy New York city, with a fine human being as a brother in Hawaii, who was drinking away the money he wants so he can cop out, a wonderful father dying, a mother, a beautiful child, whom I adore, a bitchy wife, and a wonderful job that I hate, memories of sadness and of blissful love, a kind of half assed mystical inclination, and a few old friends, scraping along, trying to hold it all together... Such was real life.

Compounding the problem are the times. They are fucked up. The

feudal tribal structure which held our family together, which had produced our family warriors to help win the Second World War, which had stocked Wall Street; despite Albert's ethos, just was not the thing anymore.

Vietnam was part of the changing times. It became honorable to resist service, not to live for honor, service and duty. And too, the television, affluence, the technological society, was really changing things. The hippies, the flower children, roving youth with long hair, and the Beatles, the Counterculture (laced with L.S.D and marihuana) had come into it's own. Wear a flower, "turn on, tune in, drop out," "Make love, not war," that was what the younger people were into, and getting away with! Here I was a Wall Street lawyer; yet in my heart I wanted to be a hippy.

Pastel colored dawn and the feeling of not being locked in, today. In this dark fummy city where I practice law, wandering in the park with my daughter, I thought I heard the sounds of tropical birds, as if calling from the future. Recalling the past and Rebecca, despairful that time was running out-- as if reading along a receding arrow, pointing back to how I loved you once with labyrinthine prose and multi- dimensional poems, recreating once hoped for co-inherence, reaching for the timeless moment, again recurring....

"I do not know today what I will be tomorrow, nor whether

there really was ever that day when I knew you, in the spring of life,  
very green with girls in muslim dresses and azure waters of clear  
illusion....

Is there a Master here? Is there a Master?"

Amos cried inside for someone. Someone, who can teach me how to  
live. I have a very, very small life, and I want a bigger one, someone teach  
me....

When Amos was about to get out of the Army, he was primed to  
drop out, but then Milinda came along, and he had to get married, and  
have kids. He would never know what it was like if I hadn't....

#### tempus perdue

*Some years later in the early 1970s, Amos found David Shah, an  
unequivocal master, Amos told me, referring to DeRopp's book the Master  
Game. Shah presented to Amos forcefully the question: "Do you miss your  
father?" Not until five decades later Amos said did he realize the obvious  
answer.*

#### **MELINDA FOUR RECURRING**

A man must prove that he can hold a woman, so I got married. In  
the back of my head however, I had begun searching, the becoming of a  
real man, the path. Law school, the Army, marriage, offered no escape.

During these years, with the us under thirty, I too got into marihuana and hashish. We all had dinner together one night after I smoked a couple of joints, enough to understand the disorienting effects of these substances and what being high was all about, that is, that you had to believe in being high on the drugs to get there, instead of just feeling fucked up, tired, or scared.

Someone noted how Maharishi, a visiting Indian holy man, con man some would say, (by whom Transcendental Meditation University later was formed) had said: "Psychedelic drugs are nowhere." A great place, a wag replied, if you can find it. It will be fun to do it again, to get high, I thought. Somewhat nervous, the circle of friends, Milinda and a few others, seemed like a cabal to me. I thought of the father of a young run away who on asking what they did all the time, this floating flotsam and jetsam world of hippies, flower children, and other degenerates, had received the reply, "Oh, we have fun."

Milinda, after smoking a little, complained how stuffy her nose was, "Ugh, this sinus feeling, the unseasonable weather brings on." Judy, a friend of Milinda's remarked, "I'm not high. I do feel a little funny though."

We were listening to Sergeant Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band.

Judy's boyfriend said, "Yes, yes, yes, it's beginning to take effect. Just let it grasp you."

"This is really ridiculous. I'm perfectly normal, you are all the crazy ones here," Judy remarked, taking another toke of the wonderful weed.

It's funny how Milinda feels dizzy, how aware she is of her own voice, how she hears each word, how dry her sinuses are. "I must stop this nicotine habit," she says.

I notice the curtain blowing in and sinking back, wavering in the breeze, undulating from the open window. "Pass the pipe," I ask.

"Stop yelling at me!" Milinda unexpectedly exclaims, not unfriendly, but taking me by surprise as she always spoke so softly. There is astonishing silence now, all around. Smoking embers burn in the pipe bowl, reddish, beautiful. Wispy smoke curls upward. Milinda's face looks so three dimensional.

Smoke inhaled, down through the grand tubes of the throat, in one powerful liquid flow to the lungs, which inflate so slowly, like a big expanding balloon. Holding her breath-- such a long time, ah we all knew that trick to intensify the effects of the mighty weed, we had all grown to love, most of all me.

A loud knock on the door! Adrenaline pumps. The cops? Who is it?



We all freeze.

It is only the knocking of pipes in the old radiator... This wonderful thing of breathing we so mechanically each day, day after day, never stopping to think of it. How changing and how under our own control.

A variety of little things dance through the brain. Funny little sequence of images, running like a motion picture reel, film of thought, projected from the mind, upon the mind, upon the world out there. The candle beam is broad and composed of many slight variations of vibrating light and shadows, softly illuminating the great large room.

The orange jersey of the woman sitting in the dark shadowed corner, her shadow looming some seven feet tall upon the wall, behind the candle reddening... Flesh color of her limbs no longer part of the limb, part of a big design, a living surrealistic painting. Consciousness is fixing. It would be so painful to twist it out of this beam...

Calling from the record, a voice so remote, yet unbelievably clear and crystal voice. Traffic noises, intruding so unexpectedly to make you flip your eyes open, to assure yourself the Whoo-oosh is not right in your own head. Such a distant voice, so pitifully alone out there...

I look at Judy's friend, amazed at how clearly and rationally and

irrelevantly he is talking about the dancing table.

The clock tells us amazingly that a half hour has passed.

Like a bunch of idiots we all sit around giggling, so funny. Feel each little effortless laugh bubble out, never knowing what it is that we are laughing at. There we were sitting like a bunch of chess pieces on a huge board. As if hundreds of yards away from each other, filling the pipe bowl, as a ritual. Strange, looking across the candle, how many forms and faces one shape can turn into. Sergeant Pepper, going on, infinitely slow, and yet more slowly as each phrase is sung.

Verbal communication, simplification of feeling, analysis, so easily breaks the continuity of the high, and takes one away from the source, somewhere deep inside. I step out for a piss, hearing my friend say, "I must be careful just to pick up the cigarettes this time, and not the table." Drinking a beer that tastes like dishwater, looking in the mirror, eyes look like little road maps of veins, but the face, my face, is unfamiliar to me. As I see myself objectively.

Piss cemented to so sensitive penis, one solid tingling stream into the smelter pool of the pot. Feel whatever is myself falling backwards, vertigo, into chair like thing, a chair, it is sitting on. Moving the foot, is it the foot or is it part of my foot? Psychedelic patterns on the surface of

eye, a great dome of sky, ears listening to notes and time so long ago, between, and of music.

"All you need is love, love,... love, love ... is all you need ...," plays softly on, while little particles of "Lucy in the sky with diamonds" dance across the eyes, dissolving into a so immensely vibrating, electric field. Peripherally, with effort, one is aware of ones self, sitting with legs crossed on the floor.

"Well I'll have another beer" said Milinda. It was so amazingly clear that she was a bitch. I wondered how I could have missed this small detail when I first met her, but of course like all good bitches everywhere, she cleverly hid it until after we got married. It was no wonder that she was in such a hurry to get married.

I realized there was something to being high, a certain perception of reality more intense and fulfilling than the normal. What I couldn't figure out, what eluded me, was whether the experience had any real value. I didn't learn for a long time what an incredible thing it could be for fucking.

There was a friend, a friend of Melinda's, who babysat for us. I smoked with her one evening. We had this eye thing going with and though we had never spoken of it, we both just knew somehow that there was something between us, something sexual, as if we were high on each

other's eyes even when we weren't smoking. If her eyes could speak to me they would speak of passion I just know it, of passion that I have missed these long months, years, and if my eyes could have told her of the desire burning inside of my soul and how much, sometimes, I wanted to make love to her... Somehow, our eyes said these things without words. Still it was well understood. We talked of life, and she said, "If you could only realize that the littlest things are the biggest things."

Grass changed time, made you see that Malcolm Lowry, author of Underneath the Volcano, knew of what he spoke. About then, I read his letters, in which he wrote:

"The sense of time is merely an inhibition to prevent everything happening all at once-- brooding upon which it is pretty difficult to avoid some notion of eternal recurrence-- inevitable destruction is thus simply the teleological end to one series of the horror . . . would seem to exist in the possibility that this is no longer true on our plane and absolute catastrophe has fallen in line with our will upon so many planes that even the other possibilities are for us gradually ceasing to exist. This, I may say is not very clear, as I have expressed it, so you better forget it. Anyway, I don't believe it for a minute. Personally, I have a fairly cheery view of

life, living as my wife and I do in the brush anyway."

Also despite impending exams I read Colin Wilson's The Outsider. He wrote of what he called the "St. Neot margin", concluding, there is a margin of the human mind that can be stimulated by pain or inconvenience, but which is indifferent to pleasure. Freedom, the moment of vision, of poetry, is due, he said, to certain unconscious discipline of the will, but it's nature is latent and negative.

He wrote of mescaline and how it's effect was like a man who had been driving at 50 MPH, with narrow headlights beaming ahead, who has turned off the headlights and is now driving 5 MPH.

Before, he was travelling so fast he could see only the narrow beam of light, an isolated indistinct narrow path through the darkness -- a world of darkness. Now his world expands and he becomes aware of the shapes of trees, buildings looming ahead and to his sides -- a far more interesting world. But he is forced to drive at 5 MPH.

### **A CHAPTER IN THE LIFE OF AMOS GAMBOL**

Doing nothing, getting the mystic something together, getting high, was obviously a beautiful thing, but it didn't help one get "Will", that Protestant ethic thing, together.

There were a lot of different highs. Sometimes there is this attenuation of sound and mild paranoias and confusion, like you never know, and you are disintegrated. Each smell a memory, an incarnation. Somehow, you understand what that hippie on Mac-Dougal street meant when he said, "Man I'm fucked up." I sat down there on the steps of LeBaron's stoop, after we played chess, stoned, just looking... at the girls go by.

You think: Space exists only if there is something to go into it, this karma to fill space and time-- this frozen time we usually live in, this condensation- crystallization of past, future and present, which consciousness enters. And man, you look at the girl's face, and see so many faces, you see what it is like to be her, see with your eyes what earlier you had perceived only with your intellect, the face a changing mask of personality underneath and beautiful being.

Then you realize that those perceptions, memories, visions, illuminations, all those pieces, all this untied together stuff of the high is you. It is you who is breaking apart... going ... And you realize never to let anyone in you, never to tie anyone to yourself, unless their being is with you, or they'll hurt you-- they can't help it. That to make an enlightened way, you must sacrifice one thing, yourself... respect, must quit fearing...

loss of self esteem... and want this inner level... more... than... others.

That deep inner space, lost among constellations of personality, you might realize what you had done, a little sooner, like before you did it, and that there is too much meaning here. That you need a vacation.

I pondered and did not understand then even the relative truth that all these kinds of thoughts were simply mind fucking. The big ideas scared me, posed insoluble contradictions, inconsistencies in myself with each other.

What had Alpert said? That existentialism is O.K, except it is misused by those who wish to escape responsibility. Fear, fear, fear, fear. Caught in fear of big ideas in my head, big perceptions, unrelated to my work, my life, ideas which demanded laziness and freedom to explore, independence from my current establishment and family obligations, so I would not be hurting others if my path was self destructive. And fear, because I knew there was no escape from hurting others, that maybe it was my own self esteem I was afraid of losing, or worse, I was afraid of losing my own life, or worse, I was copping out, afraid to take a position, because I was into something but preferred to live by the lies and security I had been brought up with, rather than stand on certain perceptions.

But maybe not, because of what value was the high? Did it help

one help others to live responsibly, and wasn't life on this planet all about that? Did the high really keep you in touch with the way things are, as Rebecca used to say?

These ideas can drive you crazy.

## **THE WORK**

They say, when you need a guru, then you will find one. Sometime back in here, Amos met one, his first one. What is a guru? Amos didn't know. It had seemed to him, a real guru, is like a zen master, some big shot who runs a monastery, or a yoga master, who runs an ashram, and like he has something special, can get off into the universe, and even other worlds, into harmony with the universe, or someone like Christ, maybe. Amos did not know.

It may be, in reality, a guru is just anyone who teaches you, any father figure, like this hip drop-out figure to whom I talked recently, Amos recalled later, who said that Kesey and some other underground figures were his gurus, because they taught him how to live in the counter-culture. Couldn't anyone be a guru then?

Like, would you recognize Christ if you saw him walking down the street...? Maybe the guru is in your own mind, a function of it you can turn to? Like that guy with half a moustache turning on to Wolfgang and



everybody else.

Protestant ethic, action oriented family that I have come from, with my super ego, I have always thought a real guru was something more than just any teacher. Someone who had "it". (Whatever it was I was not quite sure.) Who was physically organized on many planes, at the least. Now I know none, but then, when I met this guru, I didn't know that I was meeting, or even that really that there could be such a thing as a guru. I had succumbed to Melinowsky's bitter-sweet happiness in despair with a reckless devil may care attitude, for a world view.

But in my head was still big ideas. My family always did think big, and they, the big ideas, were waiting to be tapped. Milinda and I were at a social event, in York, Maine, where my mother rented one of those old Victorian sea cottages on the coast for the summer; an end of the summer country club gala costume ball, called "The Mystery Party."

There was a crowd there of Social Register types who year after year created the costume party. We were there costumed, and in drunken spirits. Toasts at dinner to the younger generation, by the rich old turds, without minds, or guts, or sympathy for what really was growing in the younger generation...

Feeling of sickness, of frustrated anger... What have these old leather bags done to deserve this sun, sea, and sand, up here, this beauty? Do they really appreciate the gaiety of this place? Foolish youth I was. I figured that I knew better than they, that there was an objective truth they should be persuaded of, greater than their own lives, that their peace was a sellout greater than mine, that they would have to change to understand.

That was a mistake of the counter-culture of those 1960s years, to think some outward change somehow miraculously is going to occur, is necessary, when something much more simple and obvious is required. The counter-culture flower children as paranoid and powermad as their parents, trying to force change in outside things, in society, in the older generation, mirroring their parents, that older generation, who run the government, were arrogantly trying to change countries, like they know better about Vietnam than the Vietnamese ...

At the party was the awkward midwestern fellow with a big grin on his face, just standing, gawky, watching, dressed in a pirate-like garb, a bandanna around his head. I went up and said hello. We made quick friends. Egon Heard, (who later would form the disastrous Earth Dome on the Melon millions) had married my neighbor, Tricia Melon, daughter of

one of these Social Register families, to their dismay.

Tricia had talked to me of grass before I even knew what it was. When I was experimenting with grass, she was turning onto speed, killer drug, and got over it. She had been travelling around the world and met Egon in Vietnam where, where Ego, having just returned from India had spent some time living and begging with an Indian holy man, he was helping build a hospital. I helped this man, Mike, learn the foxtrot, and the social graces, told him just to "cut in" on and dance with whatever Social Register vestal virgin at the party he wanted. He did, dancing in great square boxes, talking midwestern, and he had a good time. We went back and talked on the porch and inside next to the fire throughout the night.

Mike sat by the fire in my mother's cottage that night, and told me about begging and how rough it was. He was about to throw it all up, hungry, dirty, starving in India, long bearded, when this Western woman in a sari, Indian dress, comes up to him, a beggar in the crowd, an unheard of thing to do in India, and asked him to stay at her home, nothing else. Going in, he passes an old man who yells at him, growls, and is very unpleasant, nearly making him leave.

But he stays and it all turns out to be a test. For twenty-one days he lives with this guy and they go out daily and mingle with the people and

he showed my friend something new every day. I didn't understand then how much he had said, to be shown something different, new, every day...

I didn't understand in reality either how much or how little it meant, as a Westerner, to have to become a beggar on the streets of Calcutta... I lacked respect for the simple.

We spoke of the Mandala. I did not know what a Mandala is, even when he described it, these Tibetan symbols. Only later, once when looking at a yin yang symbol, a reverse curve in a circle I had drawn in the sand, I saw in that simple circle, the specific incorporated physically something on a far greater scale, physical yet not just physical, material yet not just material, a bigger, finer energy pattern, the universal, one and the same with simple physical reality, yet more, physical reality endless, correctly perceived...

Mike had at one time had two wives, gone to Colorado School of Mining and the Harvard Business School. Both of his wives died I think. He had two children, but he abandoned them. Later I was told he came from a mother who always told him to be the best at everything, so there was some hang up there.

He had mined all over the world for big corporations, at one point been a radical political organizer, unions, on Chicago's south side. He had

been close with the Native American Church, eaten peyote, and allowed as the use of drugs was alright if necessary... "It is like drawing from a bank account....," he said.

One day working in Africa, Mike just walked out and made his way to India, where he achieved some kind of enlightenment, I surmised from what he said, and from there he went to Vietnam, where he met Maria. He had come back with her, and they had run a coffee house in San Francisco, and then came to New York, where he was down on his luck again, then this girl walked into Feehan's Cafe, down near LeBaron's, where I played chess and remembered so clearly that day getting stoned. Mike said she asked him to this party where he met Alejandro, who was running a New York "Gurdjieff group". He was currently involved in that.

Mike was not terribly popular with Maria's family. Maria's brother Harley Jamison, a rug salesman, did not like Mike's assertion that people like Mike should be supported by the state. Harley sneered that Mike was just a bum. Harley categorized people into, "ants, cockroaches, and occasionally butterflies." Mike was definitely a cockroach. An insect of the type that, no matter how hard you try to kill, they keep coming back.

Harley was proud to be an ant and said to me, "You'll see as you

get responsibilities, you're an ant, just like the rest of us." Harley chided Mike and Maria for always looking for answers instead of asking and understanding the questions...

After we left the party, Mike and I talked all night. We talked first about getting drunk. Was I drunk or was there something unusual about Mike? Maybe both. Mike's face was deceptive; it kept changing as I looked at him, first clownish then fiery, then a with a mocking smile, then serious, with profound eyes, then looking like an old Chinaman, and then like a Negro.

Was my attention on him being reflected back on myself? Was I unable to attention to myself? Was I projecting my own ideas on him? So it seems in retrospect but the experience was uncanny. We discussed how nice the Vietnamese cops were about letting you have sex at public places. About how the helicopter pilots in the war were like medieval knights. How the U.S. was the greatest culture, with the tremendous things to give the world.

Mike was into reality. There was no doubt about it, not a half assed counter-culture faggot. A kind of reality anyway. He thought I should volunteer to reup, go back to Vietnam and become a pilot! He made Albert seem like Elmer Fudd. Quoting Roosevelt quoting someone else,

he emphasized: "There is nothing to fear but fear itself"

"My philosophy, Mike said, "is in favor of the complete independence of man, of the acceptance if not mastery of living upon all levels. I believed, like Nietzsche -- to unleash power. The tendency of Western peoples is to suppress power in man... I hate bourgeoisie culture."

And yet he was aware of the Communist threat. He saw the U.S. as the greatest nation in the terms of power, but as the most crippled by fears, open and hidden, on many levels. Crippled by superficial fears of loss of security. Unconcerned with real fears, fears of problems besetting the world, hunger... Mike observed about the war and politics that "what was Caesar's must be rendered unto Caesar", and quoted from Mohammed, "Destroy those who would destroy you first." And mentioned Christ tipping over tables in the temple and saying, "Mother I am not of you."

Mike removed another brick from my fortress, opening me toward new roles. Indeed, we talked of how one learns by imitation and how little geese for a few months can learn from following their mother, but only for a few months, at a certain age, never younger or older, the process of learning called imprintation. But his face, it kept changing. It was grass

either. It was real. We discussed "the way" and how perhaps little old men unknown to anyone in far off lands somehow controlled everything...

Mike sought not the enlightenment of passiveness but of violent involvement. "Man must live," he said, "to the extent he can on the level he finds himself." Mike believed the Army was the only democratic institution in south Vietnam and that the U.S made an error on overthrowing the dictator...

I felt he treated me simultaneously as his student, and as his teacher, and as an equal... I do not believe I had ever had such a conversation before. I had talked to a person who actively sought the mystic in life, and yet was just a natural man, dealing with the same practical problems of life we all deal with. A philosopher, and yet a man of action, whose presence conveyed the perception that ordinary reality was not all there was. When I asked him if Maria did not expect him home, he said, "She is my mirror. She does not bug me. Live and let live." He advised me: "Seek as many masters as you can." We embraced and then he left.

Milinda later accused me of hero worship-- first with Melinowsky and now with Mike. It was true, during these times, I used to see myself consciously imitating one or another of my brothers, in style, in aim, even



in tone of voice, changing back and forth depending on who was influencing me. Melinowsky had removed the first brick from the structure I guess. Mostly I had tried to imitate him the past years. Mike had removed the next.

It was kind of scary, this talk. These objective ideas. To make them so personal. The Chinese say, "Heaven and earth are cruel." Gurdjieff spoke of "The terror of the situation". The Sufis say: "To be a sufi is to realize what may happen to you." As if, suddenly to realize one must do something, give up everything, travel the earth, homeless. Like the son of man, who has nowhere to rest his head...

I visited Mike in New York City that fall. He was into what was called "The Gurdjieff work". So was Maria. She had read and valued Steppenwolf, and they turned me onto Ouspensky, Gurdjieff's one great disciple.. After we spoke, I spent seven days reading The Fourth Way, Gurdjieff's disciple's book. Just reading it offered me a high, different, maybe better than grass, more together, more survival oriented. As Mike knew and taught, the first point of life is survival. Albert's viewpoint too.

Mike used the a Enneagram, a symbolic diagram, a teaching device, as they would say in the Army, perhaps a rather crude one; words

and a chair, simple talk, is enough in itself for most of us. But Enneagram, the symbolic diagram, that gives authority, as the priests say of the church. I had just read Hesse's Demian and Alan Watt's The Book, the one outlining certain weird correspondences in a man's life, certain apparently magical happenings, such as I felt talking with Mike.

They talk in many mystic disciplines of piracy or theft, stealing the light in Chan Buddhism, theft of the golden cattle in the myth of Hermes. Watt's wrote of how the human mind perceives in terms of yes or no, in existential decision making ways, where as it should operate as an analogical computer, in terms of analogies, like the mandela, you have a positive pole and a negative pole on a battery, but the battery works only if you add one thing, current, or like a rainbow, it should be thought of not as something seen and separate from the observer, but as a process requiring three things, the observer, the rain, and the sun at a certain point in the relationship. It makes no sense to ask if the rainbow would be there without the observer... The dualistic reflects, Watt's noted, the mechanistic, inorganic attitude of western culture, the attitude of man controlling everything, and the result in the west, man's rape of the natural environment.

Instead man, Watt's said, should see himself as part of the

environment, as part of one process, one I... Later, in psychotherapy, East and West, I read about the therapy process and about the zen process and about how a man living in a culture such as ours, by it's standards, under its mind sets, who at the same time realizes and lives by the greater realization, understands "I" to be something different from what most people think, may in a sense be called enlightened. But for one who needs a vehicle...and effort. Watt's wrote two other interesting things, how culture or society imposes a grid, a measuring system, which as cultured beings we impose on reality, and how this grid like three dimensional perspective, is not really real at all. For example, a man seeing a cat through a chink in a wall, the cat walking by several times, but the man is only able to see the head, first pass by, then the tail and would deduce that the head caused the tail, or that the tail caused the head, when in reality it was one living cat. His grid would not correspond with objective reality. It would see duality where in reality there was oneness, process.

Ouspensky brought Watt's and Hesse's together in my mind. Like Hesse had talked in Steppenwolf of Harry Haller as being in reality 10,000 persons, 10,000 I's instead of the two I's that Haller thought of himself as. And Watts too spoke of a bigger I greater than the existential decision making mechanical controlling I with which I was so familiar. Both

recognized the existence of weird phenomena, of reality perceptions transcending the normal, but Ouspensky brought it all together in the forth way, so called. Indeed, he read like a pure Hesse. Ouspensky said that in fact man deceives himself in thinking of himself as one I.

How right I thought, thinking of my own imitations of my "brothers" and my family. In fact, there are many I's and each comes up or arises as we are influenced by external circumstances to which we react, then vainly say that I did this or that. In fact we do not have a permanent I. We do not remember ourselves from moment to moment we change as if becoming wholly different people and only by remembering ourselves can we establish a permanent I. Remembering ones self was a new idea to me. I tried and tried and it did seem to work, I would realize that I had changed and had failed to remember myself. As I did this I noted a magnetic quality in my attention, realized that my attention was constantly being stolen by things happening around me. That I could not remain quiet and relaxed and perceptive for very long at all.

Ouspensky wrote that the beginning of self remembering was the development of a magnetic center. By remembering ones self, one developed this center. Man was divided into four centers, instinctive, moving, emotional, and intellectual. Between these or from these or from

one or the other his energy ran. It seemed true. Playing football on the beach took energy, love for my wife took another kind of energy, fucking and jealousy another kind, thinking and perceiving still another. My being fluctuated. To develop, to get to higher functions, one had to have knowledge and being. Only with both could one truly understand. And that these could be developed only in a school for most people. Mike was running such a school. Evidently I was developing a magnetic center because I kept running into people who knew Gurdjieff, finding that friends of mine I had never asked, had been one way or the other into this field. But I was not ready for a school then. As my father used to say, I have been to boarding school and in the Army already, I don't have to do it again. Never the less I was tempted. Ouspensky wrote: You don't value what you don't pay for, and for me, school would involve sacrifice, a price. He also quoted Gurdjieff that the last things that a man will give up is his own suffering. Was I not insisting on suffering by bearing the yoke of my family, of obligation, of responsibility? But then again I read Gurdjieff himself had said that what he did was for his time and place and might be wholly inappropriate for later times. The whole Gurdjieff school seemed a little out of place in these times, sort of like the institutional church. Then too, what interested me most in Ouspensky was the way he said man

developed himself, how he could remember self, which was to see himself, that is to note in himself negative emotions, fear, anger, jealousy, hate, and not express them, to see how his reactions reflected identification with things happening around him, to see himself imagining, day dreaming, to recognize this happening to him, to see how he lied, if only in saying I, to recognize how much idle talk he indulged in, and to see how internally considered his own feelings of those outside him, etc.

For seven days I sat reading and doing what he said. I say doing, but Ouspensky noted that it was impossible for a man who did not remember himself to be doing anything. Such a man was called man number four. He unlike the ordinary lot, was not in a state of waking sleep. By remembering himself, he was awake in relation to the ordinary man is to the sleeping dreamer. Man number five not only could remember himself, but could properly be spoken of as doing. I sat there trying to remember myself, to pick up on what my I's were doing, I noted mostly how lousy I was at external consideration, and my family were much better at it than me in many ways, although they expressed a hell of a lot of negative emotions. It may be as Ouspensky said I figured, that a school, a group is necessary, so that each person serves as an alarm clock for the next, but my family and I seemed to consider a good deal more than any

Ouspenskian I had met. So I didn't join a school. I sat and tried to remember myself, and noted the magnetism of my attention. So I started staring people in the eyes real hard till it felt magnetic, like with grass, not realizing at all that all I was realizing was my own fear and how I frightened others and they me.

### **MILINDA 5**

Rome was not destroyed in a day. Brick by brick it was taken apart. The fear the Ouspensky and all this reading endangered in me, it makes me shudder to think, to feel...

So, we sat on the porch, looking out at the sea. Mike and Maria left on there appointed rounds, like ones who as is said in Jodorowski's *El Topo*, seeking the light in the midday sun... Milinda and I, my aging father and mother. Then my brother Stewart arrived. One day before Maria left, indeed at a Mystery Party, we locked eyes, it felt wonderful, sexy as hell, and later I walked her home and kissed her on the cheek, as if to say we were about the same work, good luck.

I told Milinda about it and she became jealous, She had reason to be too, because there was this blissful feeling of light I got around Maria. Yet, I would never have thought of leaving Milinda; it was just passing fancy. Milinda didn't take it that way, but she didn't tell me how jealous she

was until much later.

A black spider in it's web on my bed, no doubt brought in upon a shirt laid before upon the beach, yet strangely after a night of my urbane brother, Stewart, making passes at my wife... For three nights this went on and I just sat there and took it, controlling my negative emotions, and actually kind of fascinated. That is the problem of getting into Ouspensky when you don't have an ego. You are likely to lay yourself wide open... Finally jealousy was too much. And that bitch Milinda she would never open up and tell me what was going on. I smashed her about the room with open fists, then flailed about the hall, beating up comically upon Stewart, hitting him in the fat protected stomach first, Till he replied, somewhat amazed: What's this all about? Bang, I gave him one on the lip with swelled up as he tumbled down a stair or two. Milinda breaks us up, and we all go down, to the kitchen, nervous and hysterical to drink some beer. What a weird comical incident! How naive of me to think that not expressing negative emotion means not protecting your woman, not possessing when she behaves indiscreetly and hurts you. What you don't know can't really hurt you; but what you do know sure as hell can.

A grey cat skulks sliding along green grassy fields of lawn, upon which lies a red key, formerly belonging to some child, who later



confronted me later saying, "That key is mine!" A found red key, so yellow ambient evening light, sparkling stars of sun and moonlight on the ocean, shadowed dashes of black, marking waves on the sea, indicating the blueness of sky and sea, driving, whining pulsation of crickets, soundlessness of silence in obsidian darkness, billowing up between the crashing of the breaking waves...

Flowers on the path, little Taylor now nearly four, calls out "Bloweess!" On the cliff, yellow ragweed, fantastic green sumac turning autumn red in the clear fresh air, blue something's, Seagulls, "birdies," Taylor calls them, in the sky, flying above the sun-drenched beach. "Hi!" calls out Taylor, as she casually eats a flower.

Extra dimensions of physical and mental space, creating deeper perspectives, possibly of no help on the shallow but important survival plane, I muse, and yet, are these states I am getting toward hand holds or foot holds, perhaps useful, in the spiritual world? What is chopped out may be fear, anxiety, and labors, which bend my back. Maybe I am getting through the double binds of conventional thought and morality, of culture, which have been imposed on me by some hypnotist whom my fear prevents me from seeing. Some hypnotist who does not understand what

it is to be alive.

Taylor seems to have captured the meaning of life as she wanders about gardening, eating sand, running in the tide or down the path to the beach along the cliff, without a care in the world. How is it that children seem to be the only ones who really know how to live?

The gray cat slides through a sea of green grass, stars and sun and moonlight painted as if on the ocean, but what is the ocean painted on? Gentle vibrations of sumac leaves indicating space of blueness of sky and sea, sometimes observed through this door, open, ajar, as a psychic painting.

Great fears, one night, having smoked grass and hash with friends, overwhelming fear of my drunken father discovering that I, his son, was high, with his unintentional moral visage of a judge, somewhat deathly psychic picture the judge presents. He only says, "Hello," asks how I am doing and remarks on the coldness of the water, and on the wonderful fresh air, but I know he knows, what a terrible feeling. Of course he did not know. It was only my mind playing tricks on me.

Great touch football on the beach, throwing, catching, blocking, bare foot running, pitter, patter on the sand, awe at the grace of the great physique, the athletic body of my friend, who was constantly stoned.

"Nobody bugs me," he said. I felt at last connected to self and nature and health and it felt so wonderful, even though it did not last.

This year we went to another Mystery Party in Maine. The Martini family had many brothers and came as the twelve disciples at the last supper, all the disciple's were eating T.V dinners, one holding a light bulb, lighting up over Christ's head, who was portrayed by the eldest of them, all in white robes, beetle wigs, girls and boys alike. They all looked like a bunch of fags and dykes.

We arrived as the attempted assassination of Andy Warhol by Viva Superstar taking place. The attempt proved unsuccessful. Portrayed by the inmates of the Gambol asylum were Stewart in a tomato soup can outfit, Milinda as a cowboy with a water gun and myself dressed as a kings jester. I was chewing a piece of grass.

I Recall that feeling of being seduced by peace, of walking into a sunlit room in which Milinda lay asleep in the nude. I was drawn to her soft brown eyes... Oh how I longed to make love to her then. Milinda's summer tanned body, sexy, sensual her hooded snake like eyes. How confident she seems here at the beach, how mysterious and dangerously powerful a feminine creature she is. How dreadful my need to possess her...

"Don't let the system get you," says an old woman down on the

beach. The spindle out at sea, black globe on a long iron pole, stands out a needle like from the waves. Atop a sea gull perches hawklike, ominously, emanating all together a sense of doom.

"Remember the bread lines during the depression," warns my father.

Milinda says she lost her love for me in law school, as I changed from wild man to hollow shell, from open to closed, from play to work. And it was for her I did it, damn it. Why couldn't she rise above me and help me even instead of going along always and then becoming angry, resentful, self contained!

But this summer beach and sun is bringing me back to life. Who said: the greatest test is hurting those you love?

Three feet high at most, Taylor was about the size of the small boulder that she was sitting on, after she wandered on the beach in her little blue bathing suit and red striped T-shirt, with her curly blond hair flowing down her back. She was always emitting expressions of wonder, while clutching somewhat madly her small shovel as if it could fly away. She keeps her footing, laughing and smiling as she runs wildly on hills of sand, tumbling, weaving up and down.

Maybe the world is going through an evolutionary change, an entire

remolding of the conventions of life, look at the big changes that L.S.D, the H bomb, germ warfare, the population explosion, and T.V., were making. Maybe man must change to get it, to get back with the earth, his environment. Even the real movers, the husbands of these New York City Social Register types, the older people, who have to keep things going regardless of what is happening, even they can't communicate with their young.

Milinda with her thick tanned summer sun bronzed body and her smile was so sexy. She was in a good mood lately so one night the when old root swelled up to tree trunk size and could not stand any more, the urge to dampen itself in the moss as it moistly crawled up the sides ... I nearly screamed out loud in pure joy, that night as Milinda made love to me. She was so hot and willing and actually appeared to be enjoying herself, instead of acting like it was a big job she had to do, as she had for so long. It reminded me of how much I had missed the way it was in the beginning, New hope! That night I felt so satisfied as we drifted off to sleep after. I hadn't slept so well in months.

Experiencer and experienced, experiencer us as one pole, the facts of existence the other, consciousness the current between them. One must perceive the illusion of separating I as experiencer from the

experienced. Vedanta.

The perception will cure a lot of hang ups, stop I experiencer from being so afraid. But this thing, this process, has to be lived. One must live without fear of losing this consciousness of I experiencer. Isn't loss of that fear like death? Or is it faith?

Is it the leap to faith? Isn't it like saying I don't exist? Wouldn't those I love be hurt by my disappearance? Or is it not true too that they would be hurt only to the extent I project my own hurt onto them? It's hard to think, to feel, to sense, these thoughts, these modes, without help...

We made a movie on the beach, "The Three Beach Freaks Meet Death," based on Chaucer's *The Pardoner's Tale*. Freaking around, we get the local citizenry on the beach to join the movie, rising up to yell: "Hate! Hate! Hate!" at the caballing beach freaks...

If only the local citizenry knew ... we think, their acting might become more the real thing... With shaking fist and a nervous smile, all those Twentieth Century foxes with plastic boxes made angry gestures at the beach freaks!

The freaks whose magic made the children be insane, waiting for the sun to rain, as the Doors sang. The leaves and grass are wilting, the tides are high, the fall is here.

## **SCHOOLING**

Later in New York city, late 1960s, Milinda and I met with Maria and Mike, who ran a self styled "Three Month School" on Karma Yoga, the Fourth Way, and anything you could name, including Oedipus Rex. Still looking for answers, never questions. They had a house in Brooklyn, twenty followers, Mike with Enneagrams| on the wall, no music allowed, a big kitchen, where they had Sunday suppers, a different motif each Sunday: once it was cowboys, and everyone sat around singing cowboy songs. Outside in the back yard, Mike said, was the tree of God. It was an awful scrawney tree to live up to the name.

Milinda, Mike, Maria and I ate dinner and drank a lot of wine. Maria and Mike had spent the day working on their Oedipus Tyrannus ballet, "the front" they admitted for the being group. After this Three Month School, and the Oedipus drama, they were headed West to set up a place to be called Psychokinetic City.

As we conversed, Mike told me that Hesse came from an esoteric school.

Mike felt that the old cultures, like Buddhist sects in remote forest and jungles of Vietnam and Burma, were beautiful and objective, but that there adherents lacked the psyche to with stand the onslaught of the West

or of Communism...

The "City" was to be on one level, an attempt to preserve the beauty, and to build within the frame of industrial western society, as in Greece, where there were three eternal polises to which leaders of other countries came regardless of politics, a place to be renewed after technocratic games. Where - I supposed - as Mike's guru had done, Mike would "make things happen."

Mike referred to himself as a "Man Number Five" in Ouspensky terms. Man Number Five "does" things in reality, not just has the illusion of it; he has already learned to remember himself, to have a "permanent I."

It seemed all a little out of place, his self characterization. The idea in Ouspensky was realizing that you were not, and only in that could you be what you were... Or did my view demonstrate, as Mike had said, that I lacked "being"?

Psychokinetic City was to be set up somewhere under a front-- they wanted no civil right battles, but rather just peacefully to do their "line two school work." They needed a lawyer they said. Someone who could speak two languages, their "being language" and the functional language of the everyday world. To hire just an ordinary lawyer would bring them down from their high level and the purposes they manifested.



Mike really liked Milinda and felt her to be strong. I found out later, he had made a few passes at her, to which she was not very resistant. He said Milinda and my tie was intellectual, rather than sexual, and that we were holding each other back. I did, I had to admit, feel that Milinda held me down to the duties of home life, money making, conventional behavior.

We talked through dinner. For some reason Mike's face, and Maria's face, again seemed to keep changing, as I looked at them, hers into a pudgy old woman's face one moment, then into something like her mothers face (I knew her mother). Mike's face into a kooky young man, into an old man's face, very old even decomposing, and then into a more handsome face, then clownish. The air was charged with magnetism.

Milinda laughed at me. I had vehemently asserted, she told me, that under no circumstances will I incorporate psychokinetic city! No, said Milinda I will not act hypnotized either. Mike noted to me that my absence of curiosity over this phenomena was why I would not attend their school. It was funny, during the time I said whatever I said, I thought I had been communicating on a kind of nonverbal level with Mike, saying something to him like: "You must be destroyed because you know too much." Or like: "What makes you think you are not insane?"

I was shocked indeed to realize that in the course of my sleep, I

said things of which I had no recollection! Well, Mike had said he existed as man number five, a level or two above the existential decision making level. Maybe in fact he did.

One night I did attend their school. Someone asked Mike, "Who are you?" Mike answered angrily, "You must learn when you want to enter a man's house not to try to break down the door!"

Mike had begged in India but so what there are many masterful beggars right here in New York City parks, "Why did he have to go to India?" And, "Money," he said, "... wasn't a problem." But he sure had some rich followers that gave him money. I wondered how in the hell did his kids got along? How in the hell do you get a community to survive without persevering commitment? How can that be done when you're just playing?

The inner work, the learning to suppress the existential level, the level of anxiety, of paralyzing decisions, was a great idea, but no-one in the group seemed to have many responsibilities for anyone outside themselves, and that's where the real existential decisions come in, isn't it?

The really painful decisions, anyway, at least it seemed so to me. How could real decisions involving the welfare and help of others be made less "yes or no decision" and more simply a flow of being action governing

itself? Obviously, only through a persons developing great external consideration, consideration for the position and feelings of others.

It seemed to me that people outside the group had more of this Ouspenskyan quality than those in it...! And getting beyond one's cultural level, this seemed like a great idea! But I noticed little things, like how seldom Mike ever said "Thank you," to Maria, or ever showed ordinary politeness. Was this transcending the cultural level, or was transcending the cultural level just a rationalization for acting selfish?

Sure, in psychokinetic city, most medicine would be preventive, but I noticed how the one kid in their group lived in dirty rags in the basement.

Mike, after all, had gone to the dentist. Mike thought that men running the establishment lacked being. Right, but what were the men "with being" doing to help the kid in rags, in the basement? Nothing!

Despite the phenomena of the changing faces, despite the magnetism, and the surpassing of the existential level, And Mike's strength, I did not join the group.

I loved my father who was slowly dying. I had to live up to what he had given me during his last years, or hurt him terribly. And I loved Milinda and Taylor, even as dull and common place and unhappy as our life had

become.

Mike's way was not mine, but what was done could not to be undone. Mike, his thoughts, remained on my mind, along with all the mixed feelings he evoked. For all the objections to him I felt, somehow, it seemed to me: he too applied them to himself. Yet, against great odds, he still tried to follow a certain path, to be a certain kind of person, to meet a very high ideal, one greater than the bourgeois work responsibility ideals of my brothers.

How un-spontaneous, how unfilled with real relationships, were most people's lives. How they protected themselves from the fears and jealousies and losses any real openness might put upon them. How frightened they were of a real lover, a cockroach, or a misplaced tie clip. Here was a man who at least tried to live beyond those limits. Maybe he didn't do very well; maybe he didn't succeed, but then he didn't have the whole system of cultural lies and mind sets to get people to follow him, like others. So he might be somewhat of a con man, but there was something saintly in the kind of con man he was.

They say you must "steal the light", and that today's Indian "Holy Men," were Bombay gangsters during the Second World War ... Perhaps the worst action, if done with a higher aim, may be better than what we are

told are good moral actions? Judas may have been the most intelligent disciple... but I wonder...

Mike told me to watch out for myself before he left. All these ideas of Ouspensky and "The Work," he warned, were directed at the subconscious.

Obviously: action and morality and decision were the meat of life! Yet the cultural grid, to me, was becoming dead. There was something beyond what my way of life was. What path should I take? Stuck in the sediment of my marriage. I was unable to take any path: it was enough to cope with the problems of my marriage, with the jealousy I felt for my wife, the insecurity for myself in the face of her coldness, and with my hate for her disregard of me.

Lost in ideas, I dreamt one night that I had gone to meet Mike at his loft and passed some sultry time, waiting and watching his uncommunicative friends. The loft looked surprisingly similar in dimensions to my own living room in N.Y.C. In walked Mike, looking like many people: like himself, masculine, healthy; then, like some motorcycle gang member, like a Hell's Angel motorcyclist, and he offered me a pipe of weed-like stuff, with raisins in it.

"Can't this make me psychotic?" I say. Rather demonically, with a gleam in his hypnotic eye, he replies, "But of course!"

"How long will it last?" I ask. "Two weeks," he replies devilishly. I watch him sit silently, while I am trying to decide. There is nothing I can say, and here he is, silently contemptuous. More kindly, he adds, smiling, "I'll have you out of here tonight."

Now his Hell's Angel's face, blond hair and beard, devilish gleam in hypnotic eyes, rising eyebrows, quizzical, changes to a clown like face, then to a pirate like face. I know, as I puff deep, that this is the absolute end of me...

I wake up to the sound of waves, and recall that he said somewhere that the pipe was filled with Peyote buttons and pot. I remember, hearing, in school, of Chinese Emperor Chi, who once dreamed he was a butterfly dreaming that he was a man. Then he awoke. Ever since then he was never quite sure... And then again I dreamt of Mike. This time he seemed somewhat repugnant and effeminate...

Several weeks later, smoking grass, I see some beautiful trees and a space in central park and think somewhere in my mind I hear Maria's soft sexy voice crying out to me, to sooth her yearnings, and fulfill her desire...

Milinda and I go to church sometimes, to try to tie things together,

somehow. It's all kind of a simple matter to her. She prays, and looks like she really wishes she could be better, but then she flicks all this heavy stuff aside with a turn of the head and gets into talking about something or other with a parishioner at the coffee meeting after the ceremony, nervously wondering how the kid is doing upstairs in the children's Sunday school.

I wonder, doesn't this heaven and hell stuff, this eternity, this that-which-is-beyond-us somehow have to be: "Right Now" Isn't that what "faith" is about accepting? Does that acceptance have to do with the life of perfect service they say Christ led?

### **THE TRIP**

Suntanned, bronzed, more relaxed at last, Milinda stayed in Maine that summer with Taylor. We had gotten in thick with the younger generation. They were all smoking grass and having fun, as it was. It seemed to give Milinda enjoyment. She'd liked to get together with my friends and get drunk, or to go to rock concerts and get stoned. My friend Eric who was some ten years younger than me, and who I considered somewhat wimpy, had just got back from bumming around in Europe, after four years absence, was there. Wearing blue jeans, tanned, long haired, and into grass.

We spent some time together. Eric had no family to speak of. A dead mother and dead father, a dead grandfather and a living grandmother. the presence of the dead seemed a part of that family of memories. So he hung around our place a lot.

My mother was "an angel," he said, "the way she looks, standing on the lawn in front of the ocean in the morning sun." It was nice having friends. One night we went off to try what he said was "LSD", in a rented hotel room. I tried it, and it didn't do anything for me.

Eric seemed pretty far out and claimed he was lonely and wanted to get in bed with Milinda and me. Uncomfortable but naive, I assented. As I lay there, I could not but realize he surely was sleeping too close to Milinda. He was between us now! Control your negative emotions, be open to life... I kept trying... but I couldn't take this. Milinda and I left and left him there.

When I returned that week to New York City to work, I had my fortune told by a Gypsy palm reader. She told me that if I was going through woman trouble, "Not to worry about it, it would be all right, just passing, my wife loved me."

Hell I didn't have that much trouble, the marriage was together, I didn't worry. Then she told me I had some people who were acting like



friends but were not. And she said, "Be nice to your brothers. They are good men. You are going to run into a man who is going to make you very rich...."

I asked her about drugs. She shuddered, "Do not use them more than a few times. You'll end up a beggar on the streets." I asked her how I could become more aware. She looked at me quizzically and said, "What do you mean? It's all here, all around you...."

During the summer, in the city alone, while Milinda stayed in Maine, I had to run into this tall thin girl, Rose Marie Farrer, Who was making a movie on marihuana with her blond haired boy friend, Mike Lapoint, (later a missionary in Melanesia).

We got very stoned together a couple of times. Very stoned ... and she could talk so beautifully stoned. She wasn't into power and frightening you, when you were stoned, with power games, but she really began to make sense stoned.

They had raised some hundred thousand dollars. They were hitting their rich, successful college friends to invest in what they called the movie, and they needed some legal help. Rose's mission in life was to legalize grass in the U.S. That was the purpose of this movie. I was all for that. It seemed to offer proof of the unreality of ordinary life, of the division

of personality into different selves, to point toward the existence of a higher plane of experience, to the relativity of space and time, to show the lifelessness and mechanical nature of ordinary daily consciousness...

The heightened perception of color, space, time, of the grass experience, the intellectual possibilities of using it to explore one's own mind, by experiencing perceptual or thought connections and insights of a different nature...

What would the members of the board of my corporate clients think of their legal counsel now? Had they known my thoughts, I would have been fired on the spot, no doubt.

Rose had also been into Ouspensky and had spent three months "recrystallizing" her personality, alone in the mountains, where, she said, she had shed her mechanical self. Notwithstanding, I noticed her personality was subject to rapid changes. Sometimes it seemed as if all the life went out of her and that she would get a flat metallic tone in her voice, angry and deathly. And sometimes she would have an electric exhilaration about her, like a cat purring. Sometimes she was just cute and friendly, mostly when she talked about buying clothes. And just as quickly, she would turn angry when people didn't do what she wanted them to do for her. I found, from reviewing her legal dealings, that she had no

sense of obligation to pay back money, but it was, as if she didn't understand, as though money would take care of itself...

Stoned: it all made sense. Even she made sense. Rose had intellectual control, consistency, and her talk all seemed to make sense on a higher kind of level. There, whatever we said to each other worked. As if there were a system of analogies behind all our words into which we were tuned. Whatever she said would fit with whatever I said, phrases fitting together as in a cross word puzzle!

They invited Amos to Max's Kansas City. Everyone there seemed like characters in a Motion Picture and reality it's filming. We formed this corporation to produce this movie dubbed "Picture of Truth," or "Pot" for short. Different people, the idea was, would participate and just become members, put in what money they wanted to and somehow get out what they wanted, except it would not be money.

This corporation would be a kind of open end togetherness organization. "Pot" and other clubs like it were something like basic survival units which would live, as the old conventional world died around us and as anarchy broke out, with everyone doing their own thing...

No longer would the world be composed of the robot types we see now. It was a little like Psychokinetic City. Maybe like Biosphere II later

would become before the U.S. Marshalls took it over, maybe not .... It was somewhere else, but also it was here and now. You just had to be synchronized to this other level. The thought occurred, maybe it's here all around me and I just can't see it. My mind raced back to what the Gypsy had said.

The unusual thing about "POT" corp. was that the shareholders had no rights. But hell they didn't give a damn, the organizers, they figured it would work anyway. Well, we had all these buzzing vibrating evenings together, stoned and getting into this thing. The grass was good, even if it didn't leave you to clear a sense of focus of the specifics... you grooved...

Toward the end of the summer, the night after I'd gone to see the Gypsy lady again, I stopped by to see Rose. She was there, with her boyfriend, Mike, and a bunch of others. We all got talking. They were into how wonderful that all these Egyptians had built the pyramids. Mike didn't think it was so bad that they were slaves. Then he asked me if I knew a heavy lawyer who would be able to do anything for them so they could keep this apartment that they were into.

After I agreed to try, he talked about how he had done some time,

which he thought made him cooler. Mike was a friendly handsome young man. He had "Flash" someone said. Anything went with him, and everything was up, it seemed. H asked Rose for his paper bag and out he came with some Cocaine. As he started sniffing he offered me some but I refused. I had heard scarey things about cocaine and I didn't want to take any chances.

After a few minutes of Mike doing it though, I noticed that he didn't blow up or disintegrate. Mike kept asking me if I was sure I wouldn't try it. The look on his face implied I was a scared baby, so I changed my mind. What a rush! What a turn on! Everything, everything, on one sniff, had the dullness and pain, of which I had not even before been aware, taken out of it. Everything came through so rich, so good! I felt the most universal transcendent and beautiful euphoric love for everything I have ever known, and everyone!

Nothing but that feeling mattered. Nothing. I ran around kissing everyone.

"No, he's not queer," Rose assured her friend, Steve, who was somewhat shocked at my behavior. I kept sniffing and sniffing. Man, there was nothing to sweat; everything made sense; you could take it or leave it; all you had to do was be there; and you were where you wanted to be. All

pain was anaesthetized...

Then we dropped acid, pure LSD-25.

Vaguely, some things started worrying me, I recall. Steve was saying I thought maybe about me: "Yeah, yeah all we got to do is get him in shape." Before when we were straight, he had suggested that I get my brothers to invest in "Pot", without any cheating overtones, but nevertheless, the thought was in my head...

I began to have a never before (or since) so complete sense of clarity.

I began to have great attention to the here and now. Remember the myna birds in Aldous Ruxley's last novel, *Island*? ... Who repeat to the inhabitants of this Utopian Island: "Attention..." "Here and now!..."

Remember the room in the beginning of the book? Lighting up, neon sign outside, alternately green and red, on/off, green/red... Porous surfaces

Suddenly it seemed I noticed: Whooshing changes in space... The same ten feet suddenly had the feeling of a hundred feet... Sound near, instead coming from great distance...

It started happening: everything, like in a photographic negative of

some kind at first, green... red... normal... red... Rose's big chair, each thread, lit up a thousand electric colors, vibrations! The design on Steve's psychedelic shirt danced with currents of light and energy, running, running through it, and we started talking, so fast...

Suddenly I was into Hesse's *Magister Ludi*, into playing the supernatural game, the Glass Bead Game with him, analogies, analogies on analogies, everything we said locked and interlocked on different mind levels. There was one transformer, an equal sign between us, and one could leap from one mind level to the next, back and forth, through time, colors, through ascending and descending levels of duality and dualities, everything...

I closed my eyes and it seemed as if my mind, my self, was divided into many rooms and tunnels, all composed of the stuff of ordinary reality, yet so much beyond that ordinary reality, so different in reality... On one level, all was vibration. On the other, there was some sorting of vibration... ( remember in Gurdjieff, how he wrote or talked of "finer energies"? ... On another level, we could even talk, even focus, so difficult now, on the everyday world.

Then, it occurred to me, everything is indeed possible. And on one level, it is all in your mind. At the same time, ... on other levels, it was my

mind, french frying, being barbecued by indescribable energies ...

At the same time I felt this great love for Mike, who had turned me on to, into, this great generator, pulsing energy through me, which was me-- aware of all these vibrations pouring through me, of which I had never been aware. ... Perhaps this explains why Mike later became a Born Again Christian Missionary in Malaysia . . .

What he had said about slaves... The straight world: it was a group of slaves building pyramids.... How they claimed cocaine was an addictive drug, although he didn't think so, at least for conscious people... (he was not quite right it seems) And how my love for him was at the same time love for the drug and how it might be slavery of a sort. Was the drug dealer/addict relationship the same as the master/disciple relationship or master/student relationship, each involving complete sacrifice of the will of the addict to supplier, or disciple to master? It all seemed analogous and real.

I kept refusing to admit, however, in my will that it was possible to achieve total enlightenment by becoming an addict. Still, it was clear that some of the most enlightened people in the world were probably addicts, people really tuned in... Complete sacrifice of yourself would put you there... and it occurred to me that I could die in any one of these games... I



said to them," to follow your path, all I must do is accept drugs."

Mike answered: "Right."

He could talk on anything, any point. It was incredible. Mike said, "Sure, all you do is find a point. Just talk about it. It's easy." He kept telling me that "I felt good and interesting." Mike tried to get me to sign my name to a statement saying, "I am Amos and this is my trip. It can be whatever I want it to be. I am interesting."

I was terrified. I would not sign. What was he trying to get me to sign, anyway? Was this a tactic to give me a good trip, or to addict me? I didn't know, and even if in his mind it was one thing, on another level it might be something else ...

Up, up, and up, this little man was captaining madly a karmic travel ship where we kept getting into and out of all the phenomena around us... On one level I was he. Only I couldn't accept every possibility, I could not consequently...consequently could not die...

On another level, I was just not quite open enough to becoming and experiencing everything as vibration and energy, to seeing, to searing it opposed living it...

Rose kept saying to "see it," and I kept saying:

"No, I have to live it."

I couldn't get off the decision, on/off level. Some connections seemed to exist between suicide and enlightenment... I was on the on/off level. Every thought involved a contradictory thought.

Amazing at first, I realized: *What made me feel enlightened were my down thoughts, my thoughts of getting off the trip...*

By now, me was a wholly relative concept, an alter ego, varying, depending on how far out I took myself, the spaceship, and the room was the spaceship too, opening out onto the outside garden, a garden of flashing lights and luminous colors. Rose and Mike went to bed.

I was alone and suddenly became aware of myself. My blue pinstripe suit, in which I looked like a gangster, a killer, a Mafiosi! Somehow, my limbs were all shortened, dirty, and ugly. This bad body, this flesh, kept changing colors, going in and out, the flesh almost dissolving. My skin was worse than that of a Charles Adams cartoon character, as if decomposing, bruised, red, dark, green, much dirt, and my dimensions all cruel surrealistic distortions. I had a really bad body...

Then came: cellular vision. Remember the end of *Steppenwolf*? If I allowed my eyes to work, I could see my cells, moving around, my blood pulsing under the skin, red and white blotches, tiny cells, puffing in and

out, living a life quite independent of mine. How ego-less, "I" had become, how much solely ... Awareness!

The trip got bad and no-one was with me! I was terrified of addiction and going home, past the doorman or anyone I knew. I couldn't function alone in the world, in the world where I lived among structured obligations and duties, ethical responsibilities ... in this strange state. On another level, I was afraid. Can I ever be alone and myself again? When Rose came out to talk with me, my lips were chapped and my nose was running. My clothes were wrinkled and I was dirty.

Somehow I felt all her downs. They were the same energy, it seemed, that gave me my fear, and put me the bad body that I was hallucinating. She talked to me about how sad she was that I was having a bad trip and how "the day trip" would be better, about "recrystallizing."

... I felt, and saw, my skin and the cells in my skin and in my body reforming on me all the time .....

I didn't want to do it, to recrystallize her way, because she was still a downer, full of hates, of fears, and somehow she and Mike, now both asleep, seemed to have missed the good energies, the really powerful guide energy, of love. The only way back to contact with my fellow man, the only way to help, to do good, was the path of action, of love, of living,

of action, not just seeing. So I really became afraid of her.

I had this funny feeling that maybe I had "seen too much," and would have to pay... The biggest fear was of *never* coming back to my ego.

*tempus perdue*

*Perhaps Amos never did ... Transcendence, LSD is a mysterious trip ... perhaps Amos and the world shifted, made a subtle shift into an alternative universe...*

The next fear was of addiction. Amos began to get really afraid that they were trying to addict him. At the same time, Amos was afraid to be alone. Soon, it all turned into pure paranoia. Awareness of his own mind as fear, and inability to do anything about it. Maybe love from someone would have helped. Amos thought of Milinda, but wondered.

Finally he succeeded in getting out the front door and exited onto Park Avenue. "A fresh air!" Amos walked up the East Side of Manhattan in the early dawn. Each leaf had a wonderful pastel glow to it. Amos saw a baby. How wonderful the baby was. How open and clear in attention!

Amos saw the movement of a dog. Amos saw women, sexual, alluring, seductive. And Amos heard music in all sounds, as if celestial, Raja like, and space, it seemed endless! Walking around the great

Manhattan Reservoir in Central Park, Amos really didn't know where he was. The space became more real than the objects in it. Somehow it was all as if the dome of a parabola, of his own parabolic mind, his own mind, like a rubber band stretching, that will never be taut again. The world like an opened clam shell. His mind a great piece of putty, everything his attention was on. Amos noticed the incredibly subtle and beautiful vibrations of flowers.

There was and is no questioning this experience. This experience was in fact all that Ram Dass Rub a Dub Alpert and Professor Timothy Leary had written, and it is beyond description.

Amos called his brother Calvin, daring at last to talk to someone...

Amos was so afraid he would discover me as he was. Calvin's secretary put him through. Amos explained.

"Don't worry about it," he said.

"It's just a hangover, you've got to get to work, you know. Don't take it so seriously."

That helped Amos to feel better. Suddenly, for a moment, he was back down! He walked on... Again I saw a baby, just picking up all the vibrations around him... Amos was really out of his head and scared. He walked on. It occurred to Amos: I wonder if there are people out there

consciously sending out vibrations? ...

Finally I got home, past the doorman, inside, but I couldn't sleep. It occurred to me that Rose would call. As quickly as I thought it, she did.

Then her friend Steve called. I was scared to talk to him. I didn't know what he wanted out of me. There was something sinister about him. Like the bad body sensation. I raced out of my apartment, afraid they would find me. A taxi to the airport, where this Airforce crewman kept being friendly with me, like I couldn't get rid of him. I was sure he was trying to sell me cocaine...

The beautiful hum of the plane motors, Rajah Sitar music again ... every sound was music....

My mother, Sofia, whom I had called, picked me up at the airport, and we drove to West Harbor, Maine. It seemed better. All you have to do is have good thoughts, good feelings. That is equivalent to enlightenment, because then no fear, no negative emotion can zap you out of your energy and bring you down. One must be good. Don't fear what you can't do or even try to do it... The crickets made beautiful sounds along the highway as we drove. My mother warned me not to tell Milinda about this appalling thing I had done, something about she would want a divorce....

## THE SEPARATION

I know what a lot of bullshit all this sounds like, all this wild introspection and criticism and complaint I've written about and it's all lies except these ideas, and all this tension was in my head for as long as I can remember, disorganized, projected, and shooting out all over, so I never felt very secure or confident except in my daydreams.

It was all in my mind and external circumstances, my family, work, my father, school, my wife, kid... Everything held me up, like Rebecca once wrote, like strings of a hammock, and despite my inside thoughts and anxieties and all, outside in reality I had always performed well. I was a success and everyone thought so, and the realities of all kinds in life got of my attention, and protected me from the wandering of my own mind and feelings. I remained the type who can clear it all up by going out for a run, a game of football, or tennis. They would always put me, these things, or a movie, or a talk with someone, back on the track, living a responsible life, and back to so called making it.

This Trip, getting on the trip, may not sound like much, but for the first time I was utterly shaken up. Other ventures of the mind were kid stuff by comparison.

It was like, like I think Steve said, throwing an amateur into a big

league football game. The trip was really realer than life, with no question. It was... Life.

Like I had seen myself and my insane projections and how myself was what I made it, not just intellectually but in every way... and I had seen a lot I didn't like, even the possibility of death in myself... had seen that my whole view of self and life up until then had been a kind of optical illusion. All the Ouspensky reading was superfluous, just intellectual constraints, nothing compared to actual living in reality... The closest description of the Trip was, indeed, as Alpert had said, in *Steppenwolf*... but even that was just a book...

I had gotten into nearly absolute present time, or timelessness, eternity, and my God: I was afraid! In that fear, that paranoia, like there was no separate reality, no grid system to rely on, one was one's own grid system, one created one's own reality and limits... and you knew as you came down, back to consensual conventional reality, you were not leaving. The trip-- it was still there and you were on it-- you were just closing your eyes, putting the blinders on, so you wouldn't see what you couldn't face...

The only thing to hold onto was love, at least making the effort to love. This is the only way to get humanity, company, help on the trip, and I seemed wholly removed from this energy in my fear. It occurred to me



out of the depths of my fear how much, how much I needed and valued Milinda and Taylor and my mother... I seemed wholly removed from this energy in my fear. Out of my fear, I realized how much they were a chance for me to get back my life, my ego, my work... How happy I was to see my mother in Boston!

Talking with her, getting some understanding, some love, listening to the vibration of nature, and the crickets, driving to Maine was good...

### **A PART OF THE WAY**

I got a little confidence in life, in reality, back! I was not alone anymore. Not just empty fear, not just a mirror, reflecting what it perceived, not just a radio telescope picking up distant vibrations, but a person, alive, well, after all...

Humbled and awed, I had without a shadow of a doubt, seen something ultimate, and that, whatever it was, was part of the real process of life. The mystical realities for me had become by personal experience hard won part and parcel of the fabric of actual living, the same thing. I had also realized that I was tremendously afraid and in need of my family and of help... For all my weaknesses, I knew with certitude, I had seen a part of the way...

Reality, the world, my life, people, continued to seem frightening to

me; the addiction paranoia was still on my mind; fear was still up and I was afraid to talk or be with people for fear they would see my fear; for fear I would just beg them to help me... And they wouldn't. Or of what this all, would do to my position, to me, to my ego! Man, I just needed someone to get me back, back into the reference system of the world so badly....

I really needed it, because despite the insanity of my unreal fears, some of the fears were grounded in reality. I had really seen the stuff of life and of death, that it was bigger, and greater than I... It's not that I didn't know this all along, but I had not experienced these concepts in reality, had never realized the extent of it's truths.

### **MILINDA SIX**

It was great to get to Maine, to see my wife and my child after the long, long summer away. Oh how I had missed them being with me all the time. Even though I spent as many weekends in Maine as I could with them, as possible, but between my work and Milinda's not really wanting me to come up, it wasn't nearly as many as I would have liked.

She had said that she needed time alone to think about the pregnancy. She at least had decided to keep our new and coming baby. I was worried that she would have an abortion, so I tried to stay out of her hair as much as possible.

It was so nice to be able to see my father again. I wondered how much longer he would last. He looked like he had gotten even worse than last time when I saw him. He was happy to see me. "How's it going," he asked. "Fine," I said, not wanting to worry him with the problems I was facing, the trouble I had seen, the experiences that I had endured and sometimes enjoyed.

Milinda said it was awful the way I looked and she was right. I looked really mad, like a crazy man. She sat with me a little, and I tried to tell her how awful it had been, and how goddamn scared I was, and how much I needed her affection, but it didn't seem to get through. She just kept saying how bad I looked, and how I should get cleaned up.

I tried to tell her of the awesomeness of the experience, how the doors of perception had opened... She didn't seem to understand, or to be too interested, like she thought I was talking about it too much, tried to get me to talk about something else. Only I was really interested in what I had been through. I wanted to talk about it, to get someone to understand...

The sea breeze was blowing in, cool and comforting. There was that. My kid was upstairs asleep. I was still scared, scared somehow, that Rose's friends, Mike, or Steve, would arrive, or Rose would call, or someone from the Trip pursue me...

It was good to be in this house with my family...

My wife, my child how much I had missed them and now it was over. The long wait had ended and we were together again. Taylor had grown so big, changed so much it seemed, or was it me? Yes I had new understanding of life, yet I didn't quite know how it all fit together, but I was close I knew, so very close to the answers that I had so desperately sought, or was it all a part of a dream? Had I made what in my minds eye I wanted to think was reality, reality? At least it felt real.

The next day, Steve came over. I talked to him about it a little. He had done all this dope stuff, he had told me. Yet, as I spoke, he didn't understand a fucking word of it!

He had never tripped, obviously, although he said he had. Steve stayed for dinner. Milinda and he and I sat outside. I was still scared and disoriented, but I felt a little better. Reality was a little more reliable; the old grid system was coming back; I more or less knew where I was and who I was and that it was OK, and that what I saw was going to stay what I saw, and not change as a kaleidoscope does, nor suggest myriad associations I did not expect, or whatever... We sat on the porch into the evening.

I said again how I had really seen "IN PART ... PART OF THE WAY!"

"Your crazy, man, you know you're really crazy," Steve said, sitting next to my suntanned wife. That was just what I needed. I said something or other to indicate that I wasn't crazy. Then my wife said, "You really are kind of crazy." Just what I needed, a vote of sarcasm.

Milinda had changed a lot this summer but the difference was not definable. She just looked different. Her facial expressions had changed but I attributed it to her pregnancy.

Steve was saying how much he liked my wife, how they really got along. I felt kind of uneasy and a little angry she wasn't defending me. "Yes, but she's mine," I said.

"You know, she doesn't love you," he offered. Now I was angry as hell. Maybe she didn't act like she loved me, but I knew she did. In the long run she did, and who was this punk to tell me things like this, especially now, in his goddamn blue jeans and open shirt, and tanned body, a real cool little boy. In his big grass-buckled belt and jeans, never wearing any underwear. Who the fuck was he kidding?

Milinda chimed in with the fact that, "Really, thinking about our life, how isolated we are from each other. I have to say I really don't want to fuck with you. I don't think I do love you..."

"Well ...well, what about Taylor?" I shot back, really shaken, and hurt,

and angry.

"I could take care of your kid, you know," said Steve. I stomped out and went upstairs. Black, black, black feeling, like in a big black void. One thing: I was so nervous and angry and hurt by the reality of this situation I didn't have time to worry about being insane.

I still had that cocaine smell in my sweat... I just could lie there desolate, tears in my eyes, weak, sweating and ... I felt crazy enough and still scared, but mainly now just exasperated, emptied, and deeply hurt and unreal, crippled. Amazingly Milinda came up to bed shortly after, but for what to torture me?

I turned toward her almost crying and asked her why this? Why now? She retorted saying it was nothing, that she wasn't involved with Eric, that she was sorry. I held her awhile. Then she rolled over and fell asleep. As I laid there awake wondering what to do, she turned and laid her arm across my chest, tossed and whispered his name. Everything just let go. I hollered and yelled and cried and cried and yelled as the waves and surf below waves pounded in high tide.

The next day Milinda and I had dinner with my mother. I got up during dinner and went outside to cry by myself. It was weeks before I was able to get a decent night's sleep. It felt as though sleep was, when

accomplished, just like being awake. The dividing line wasn't so clear

Somehow I got back to New York City by myself. Milinda would be coming back in a week. The whole scene was beyond me. I couldn't understand. All I knew was that I was hurt and depressed and very angry, at the least paranoia of the trip had worn off.

All I wanted was to keep working and to keep my family together, lifelines to keep myself together. It was just unbelievable, just beyond belief, what had happened in Maine. Milinda was pregnant. In a few months, she was going to have another baby.

Sensing the strain between us months ago, hoping another child would bring us together, I had gotten her to agree to have another baby, and too, our child Taylor was getting awfully spoiled. She needed a little brother or sister. It was the right thing to do. Milinda couldn't feel this way, but couldn't go through with a divorce when she was about to have a baby. Everything was all right, was going to be all right, I was sure.

### **MILINDA SEVEN**

I called my brother Calvin regularly now. He was a support, a rock, and he cared. He could talk with me when I called up, crying on the phone after Milinda had again and again rejected me, and he could tell me: just to get back to work. "It's like being the captain of a ship in war," he would

say. "You have got to hold it together." And he would give me legal advice too, how not to argue or say anything, let her do what she was going to, and just be polite, and treat it like a soldier would.

Only he did not realize, I had not been trained to be a soldier in emotional matters! I'd be alone, and feel this hatred coming from Milinda, this total freeze toward me. Who gave a damn about captaining a ship? Whenever I saw my child and thought of the marriage breaking up, tears would just well up and stream down my cheeks, and my insides would turn, for hours on hours...on hours.

"I'll give it three months," Milinda said, "and then, I want a divorce, if it doesn't work." But she wasn't doing anything to make it work! She would go to bed, turn aside, never towards me. I wouldn't even move toward her any more. I'd just try, try, exhausted, to sleep, take pills.

"My back just aches, I don't want to make love." When we did, she wouldn't even come. And she would look away from me. Goodnight Milinda.

The next day, she said: "I wish you weren't home so much" ...

One night, walking down the street, after I had just picked Milinda up at her friend Judy's, I saw a man hustling down the street past us. "Steve! Steve!" I called.



The shadowy figure bent his head down, speeded his step and passed by, refusing to answer. I ran after him, grabbed his arm, and spun him around. It was Eric. I knew it. He looked up at me, guiltily. That goddamn slinking manner of his. I thought a moment, then no more. I hit him three times. He just stood there, bleeding redly, at the mouth, waiting, as if he would like to hit back.

Milinda raced over, "Stop! You've got to talk this over. Stop it Amos!" she cried. Panic flowed from her eyes as her face turned ghost white. I think she was afraid I was going to kill the wimpy little fucker. I turned toward Milinda and when I saw how frightened she was I stopped, stepped back and composed myself a bit, not quite sure what there was to talk about, not quite sure if I shouldn't just finish this creep off, who was stealing my wife and get him out of the picture.

"I can't talk to this madman," Steve chimed in, blood still flowing down his mouth, I started walking away. Milinda just stood there, the stupid bitch.

"Are you coming with me or going with him?" I called back violently. She hesitated a moment then came with me, her head bent down, looking very hurt.

"I'll never forgive you for what you did, you bastard," she said in a

low, but determined voice and somehow I knew it was true. There was something in her tone.

"I told you not to see him anymore, and if I ever see you with him again he'll be dead," I responded.

"You are a prick. You're lucky he didn't kill you," Milinda said. I nearly laughed out loud.

"He's the only person who ever made me feel like a real woman. You wouldn't know how to treat me like a person if your very life depended on it. Your life, your mind, yourself is all you care about. You never cared for me! I might as well be dead, living with you," she added.

"Well, why don't you kill yourself then? Just jump off a train. See if I care, and I'll take care of Taylor and the new baby myself. We don't need you. She doesn't need a mother whose a tramp anyway," I responded quickly. I had only hit Eric to impress her anyway, the bitch, to show her I was a man and whatever part of me that was man I would use and risk to possess her. There would be no more of this goddamn control of negative emotion bullshit.

Shit hitting him even though I had done it out of emotion at first felt so good once I had gotten into it. It felt good to get some my anger out on

my betraying false friend. I would have liked to squash him like an ant, the little pisshole. I felt she should have been proud of me, at least I cared, but of course that would be expecting too much; that would have recognized the fact of my existence, that I too had feelings.

All Milinda could think was how can I stand him? He who has hit the lips that I love to kiss!

It was funny though; I still liked Eric deep down through all of this. The bastard, why wouldn't he talk? He thought he was too fucking good, I guess. I liked him, but not that much! I wasn't about to share my wife with anybody! Once someone turned against me ... he was asking for it. I'd probably cut his throat for a nickel today.

The bitch Milinda wouldn't even talk to me for a week. All she would say was, "You've been crazy ever since you tried LSD!" And she would add, "Why don't you run away and join a commune, and go use LSD?"

The conniving little wench, all she wanted was to get rid of me so she could have her precious little Eric and the kids all to herself. Well I wasn't going to make it that easy for her. If she wanted a divorce she was going to have a fight on her hands.

I recalled sadly how she had once said, "Amos, I could make you

love her very, very much; or I could make you hate me very, very much."

It was true right now. I wished she was dead. I would have liked to kill her.

Then I'd see little Taylor. We'd eat together. What a beautiful child. I felt so much love for her, tears would just well up in my eyes and roll down my cheeks. "Please, please, won't you just try?" I begged Milinda.

"You know you are only making me hate you more," she replied.

Crazy, I guess I was going crazy, and it wasn't just the LSD it was her. There was just no way to please her, no way to make her happy, no way to make her want to stay... I was becoming full of dissolving and violent emotions. Day to day it grew: anger, hurt, and despair filled my heart. I didn't know how much more I could take. Shit, I didn't even know if I could handle how much I had already.

I'd go to tuck little Taylor in bed each night. "Goodnight, daddy," she would whisper. Christ how could Milinda be acting this way, when we had this little kid who loved and needed us both? I had to keep it going! I had to find a way! What bad karma to break! How would I make her see what she was doing? That what she was trying to do would hurt her too?

It seemed as if really it would be better if I left though. I wasn't able to spend any more nights or weekends in tears, not many more sleepless

nights. But the kid kept me going, somehow. Oh why wouldn't Milinda put some commitment into this marriage? It was so damn angering, and yet, I couldn't get angry.

I was trying to make this marriage work, and I was paralyzed, nearly in checkmate. I loved the child more than life itself. Deep down I think Milinda knew she couldn't see the consequences of a divorce now. How the hell would she cope with raising two small children on her own? What would it do to the kids?

And I, I couldn't fit into that divorce status. I just couldn't. How would I ever get along with no reason to continue working? No reason to continue being that super responsible super model member of society, with all my reasons gone? I couldn't without my child's love, I would end up dropping out and Christ Probably taking LSD again. I had seen that reality and it drew me toward it. What in the entire world would hold me down without Milinda without Taylor? That all meant that the kid would really have no father! I was scared to death of losing her. "Goodnight daddy," her voice echoed in my head, torture, it was pure torture.

I continued on. I would beg Milinda night after night to lie a little closer in bed, hoping against hope that she would feel - something, that maybe just a spark of what used to be a raging fire would shine. Then I

could carefully make it glow again somehow but she would only say, "I have no feeling left for you at all."

Teardrops fell night after lonely miserable night as she coldly clung to her side of the bed.

### **MY FATHER AND MOTHER**

Milinda stayed with Amos until after his father died. She told him later that she just could not leave him before that as she loved him so much. So our love was the story of the love of a boy for his father, missing as he might have seemed, and of the love of his wife for the father of the boy in him. As Jocko once reminded me, a great writer once wrote, "No man is a man until his father has died."

It's too bad, Shah said, that when he died my father didn't leave his me his money right away. Maybe Milinda would have stayed. There was no denying that she liked the good life. A trip, or living apart for awhile if we could have afforded it, might have saved everything. All that money for Milinda's security and the children's security, yes, that might have changed her mind. Maybe then she would have felt less resentful and more competitive with all the other rich New York City girls she had to live with.

After all, she had perhaps not consciously married me for my family and my family's money, so it seemed to Shah. It was all these rich kids,

like Eric and Melinowsky, with trust funds, that she liked; rich kids who could afford to go whimpering for a mother and feeling hurt and sentimental and rich enough to act romantic...

I don't know. My mother could rarely keep a secret. She had told my father about my difficulties with Milinda, whereas I had been afraid to hurt him with the news. Funny, he didn't seem hurt at all. Just said sorry to hear about that. Of course, at the time he was dying and had a few other things on his mind. "Well, Amos," remembering the bread lines, he repeated. Of course, we all still then in the seventies expected, in my generation, endless progress, prosperity. The old man said: "You've got a good job, so keep working, it's tough but there's not much else you can do."

I think he understood. After all, he had lived all these years with a gold digger too, someone who wants you to work your balls off to keep her happy and in a social position, who likes to work you to drink or insanity, then cut what's left of your balls off. Some would have said that. The psychologists rap. But it was not true. In fact, she was sainted.

"Amos, do you remember all those evenings...." my mother would muse, twenty years later, after her second husband and nearly all her friends had died, and as she faced her last years, surrounded by family

and friends, yet alone: "... All those evenings when Joshua would bring back his partners, home, and I would have to feed them, night after night, drunk. Oh, it was awful. And he was like a baby. He could never make a decision without me. Of course, they all had so much money, and he had none, and he couldn't take any risks."

And it was true. He had been nearly bankrupted young. And then he had gotten tuberculosis young and had to live with a tube hanging out of his chest and move West.

And we were a heavy drinking family. I say heavy drinking, instead of the pejorative, alcoholic because heavy drinking or not, we understood pride, and we understood the level we had reached of service, of duty, of nobility. We were educated, we served, and we earned, and not only for ourselves, but a surplus. Go get fucked, you people who model life on damning the alcoholic, the addict, and model health on the cure of alcoholism or illness. You Scott Pecks, you Bradshaws, can shove it up your ass. You are ruining America by modeling health on the cure of sickness. By living life from the fear of addiction. Better far the path that looks to Ouspensky's higher level man Number Five, if you must look so low. Or to man Number Six ..... Ah, as finally I rewrite these terrible memories of sadness and pain, thirty years later, I have changed a little.



Maybe a little smarter, but not much. But it was tough. It was tough, coming from this family, from a Mom and Dad married fifty five years, from my loving brothers and my nephews and cousins, to have come back and now to be forced out, humiliated, divorced and to put the pieces back together... At first I blamed everyone, including my mother, the woman who trully loved me.

At least, mother had the decency to stay with my father, when he was sick and ailing, right up until he died.

"Your father always liked me. I think he knew how hard it was for me to live with you," Milinda would say, in her more kindly, sentimental moments. That was true. He did like her. He had many a chuckle at her, and he saw her clearly for what she was when she and I were in love and when he saw we weren't. Maybe, only maybe, that's why it seemed as if he were really happy when I talked to him about her wanting to leave. Or perhaps it was just that he was too sick to take on another worry. Only as I have grown older, have I learned how ambiguous life may be...

*September Song*

*"September short*

*One hundred years gone fast*

*Angel grow mustache*

*Half turn white*

*I ride six dragons round sun*

*Stop. North star, drink.*

*Crazy dragons very drunk.*

*Dream is nonsense.*

*Enjoy self."*

*Li Po*

My father was a good old man, so tired and so suffering and exhausted with life by then that probably he couldn't even think about my paltry problems much.

He knew, as he had said, where he was going: "to dust." To dust. All living things will soon be but dust. He didn't seem to have a problem with that. He hadn't been around the home much while I was growing up and my mother ruled the roost, but he had given me and others everything he had to give, despite his many afflictions, poor health, despite fate and circumstance. He had a mind. He understood people.

Sometimes, I used to wonder how he could be happy with a woman like my mother who was smarter than anyone knows and yet at the same time so often stupid. Smart in the sense she would have understood this book, as about the worst in me, understood with distaste, about insanity,

about what it is like to be like Aksei Akeseievich, Dorstoyevsky's "underground man", a man who starts off saying something like, "I'm a spiteful, sick man, my liver troubles me ..."

Smart enough to understand and love, despite his immense faults, my father, "... a man weak enough to feel, to feel and to act out of compassion, who somehow could live strongly, perhaps ruthlessly and a drunken man... in his later years," as he once quoted from his own hypothetical obituary.

"Do you want to stop the world and get off?" he would reply, a little sarcastically to my comments about disliking school or work, a smile just visibly playing on his lips, reflecting a not wholly suppressed pride for having remembered and alluded to the title of a Broadway hit show.

Funny, he couldn't stand most of them, but my mother loved to go to the theater. It was a real treat for her, a change from spending the evenings with a bunch of drunks. During the year or so since my father had seen, "Stop the world I want to get off!" he had alluded to it more times than I cared to recall.

My father would fix his glassy one eyed stare upon me, and say "You've got a good job, a good education, what else do you want?" that glassy stare perhaps narcotized reflected the most sensitive common

sense in the world. Whatever booze did to him, the inner man was a giant.

"I just don't seem to care about making money on Wall Street," I'd reply weakly. " Look, son, that's life and it's better than some hick town."

He knew what it was like to have to work with stupid people and not to have money. Many times he had to travel upstate to some hick town just to borrow money just to meet the payroll.

His eyes would tear up a little as he thought of how well, despite his many struggles in life, he had done. Four sons, all four Harvard graduates, all four military officers. Sixteen grandchildren now. And how despite all those small town hicks who thought little of him, the nouveau riche who had taken over the Mills, the Country Club, everything he had been brought up with to think of as "his," he was the one who had made it here in the financial capital of the world, not them. He hadn't done so badly. Maybe he did drink, but Christ, a man had to relax, And he did love us all as well as his wife of forty five years. Not many men could boast of that.

"You make money to help other people with it. That's the pleasure of it all," he asserted. The deep wisdom in my father's statements still escaped me. I thought of the damn dry lives of my brothers, the absence of warmth, despite the security. They were warm, but they didn't have that

open heartedness, that spontaneity I sought; the life my father recommended was too planned, too sophisticated, too damn establishment oriented.

Jocko, the exception for better or worse, was off drunk in the boonies somewhere, dying of guilt, at not being coldly, richly successful. It's not that the others were so bad; they were doing the best they could. Whereas the world goes very good people, but they weren't good for me. Like they had stolen all the love, the fire for success and drive for money before I came along. They had it. Why should I have to be like them?

I think the old man sensed or realized this as Jocko's problem and that this was why he was supporting Jocko, as if he knew the problem, but he knew too that it was better, easier to have money and make it. The old man, despite failures and setbacks and pain and worry, felt good about his family.

Rome was not built in a day, you know, he would say. His wisdom was unquestionable, but the fact that he was quickly sinking into a sloppy and sentimental euphoria as he always did when he was drinking, made me feel like retching. How quickly, I knew, this sentiment could turn to bitter anger.

"Not a bad dump, we got here, don't you think?" He hoarsely asked

of our Fifth Avenue Pent House duplex, one good eye peering at me. My mother winced slightly at the old man again as he repeatedly did calling her home a dump, how many times had she begged him not to be so vulgar?

They were after all in the New York City Social Register, My mother tired but nevertheless with a spring in her step entered the warmly lit room, "Oh, you don't know how nice it is to have you home dear" she said as her hand brushed my knee. "Here's a demitasse for you", she continued with a cute little accent, placing the coffee tray on top of a magazine littered table, as she sunk with a thump into one of the heavily stuffed flowerslip covered armchairs which lent to the living room it's comfortable, lived in appearance.

I looked away from my mother's loving blue eyed glance, affectionate, a little haughty, socially aware of herself, as with a playful gesture she places a demitasse down near me. Awkwardly I take the cup. I stand up. She extends a cup to the old man, who with a look somewhere between disregard or disgust, motions the cup away, in the process of dumping the long grey ash from his smoking cigarette onto himself and the carpet. "Oh Joshua, I made this coffee just for you! " she exclaims, ill concealing her tiredness and anger.

True, he did always ask for hot coffee then not drink it until 3 hours later when it was cold, after he sat up all night by himself dropping cigarette ashes all over, and stumbling about after he took a sip or a gulp from his bottle depending on what mood he was in.

"Can't we just have one nice evening while Amos is here," she pleaded, a hint of tears in her eyes, yet with a tone of voice suggesting barely suppressed fury. After some delay, "And the second lesson is like unto the first" the old man mumbles, looking at her with an ill-concealed hatred. Then, head dropped, he sunk into his chair, saying nothing, his large lower lip protruding, the defeated look of a bad boy caught stealing cookies from the pantry, in his expression.

She knows damn well though he's got a lot of fight left in him if she just goads him a little. Then she could vindicate her hurt and make him feel bad. He's got to change, she thinks, how can I go on living with a drunk like this. After all, I deserve a good time once in awhile too. She was right. She did deserve a good time, but what did that have to do with it? I turn on the television and we all look at the loudly blaring razor commercial as it focuses on the screen.....

My father fought for another day of life, all the while knowing that his time was nearly up. My father was never a fool. He also loved my

mother and knew a lot more about women than I did at this time. He was also smart enough to know I would have to learn myself.

Not long ago, when I was still in the United States Army, they gave him four years at most. He called me before they took him to the hospital to burn him with radium and cobalt. "Don't worry Amos I'll be back." Oh father.

Then they took out all his teeth and burned him. Later they cut open his stomach and took out his intestines. After that he slowly starved to death. He lived nine months on Bourbon. At first, six a day, then three, and finally at the end, two. Ironical for an alcoholic. The doctor said his one good eye would last about as long as he did. He smoked a lot up to the end, but at the end it was only a few puffs from a cigarette, as that was all he could manage. Once six feet tall, muscular and athletic, he had wasted away to a mere ninety pounds, or less. His bones stuck out from the flesh.

Two weeks before he died, he got his two feet and legs out onto the floor and painfully made his way to his chair, to look out over the porch into the cold autumn day. It was as if he were saying goodbye one last time to his life here on this planet. Reminiscing, he sat quietly for nearly an hour then asked to be helped back into bed.

Steadily he grew worse as day by day he slipped from this life into



eternity. His breathing was troubled and he became claustrophobic, which had been his childhood phobia. Then he began to hallucinate and talked with his dead mother, or maybe he really was talking to her.

"It's really not so bad as it was," he said the day he died, then apologized for being so much trouble, as he kept moaning, "Oh God Oh God..." Then would say again, "I'm sorry for all the noise. It is really not necessary."

He asked after my work and Milinda in a low and feeble voice. Then he asked to be held up, and to be let down. Catching his breath, breathlessly, he would request to have the window open, the door a little, to let in more air, for more light, complaining how "The damn light bulbs are no good." At the end, the only thing he wanted was for his wife and family to be nearby, as his eyes became sunken and the lids heavy, and his color pallid; and as he stared sightlessly straight past us with his one good eye ... as his breath imperceptibly stopped, and his lips turned pale and his mouth fell open and cavernous.

Little Taylor had refused to leave him. When he died, the clock over the bed stopped, and for years Taylor was afraid to go into that room.

We had prayed together over him as he died, his hand grasping ours, tears in our eyes. We were happy that his suffering was over and

that he had been able to die a noble death, and because he had shown us so much iron constitution, force and strength. We missed him so much already. We prayed with some reluctance, Calvin later remarked, for fear he would sit up and tell us to stop this nonsense and get him a drink. That's the kind of uncanny sense of humor the old man had.

Milinda eulogized him as "always the vicarious warrior, the kindly patriarch, the absolute christian."

For weeks my mother cried openly as she put away the last of dad's things and cleaned the room where he died. It was then that I knew how much my mother for all her pretensions, as perceived by me, did love him. It was then that I realized how much she had gone through over the years even if in the beginning it was for the money, for the security of herself and for her future children, and really who could blame her, I mean isn't that what we all want? A good life, a good education for our children, and security, now at last I understood.

### **MILINDA ENDING**

She had written the following just before I left:

"How I hate my husband, it's as if he can't see a damn thing sitting over there in the corner, it's as if he can't even see me. I'm here but I'm not what he thinks I am or what he would like me to be.

It really takes some ego to think that way, that guy, my husband, funny I don't know what to call him. He thinks he knows so much about everything, but I can see for myself what things are. After all this he will bug me again tonight with his bad touching hands, Ugh! Or go through those stupid, tear jerking scenes where he lies there feeling sorry for himself, oh pitiful and all because he can't have me - too bad! It's his own damn fault, why can't he see that instead of fucking me up. He could help it if he weren't such a schlemiel, I'm tired of all this, tired out to death, especially after work all day. He really has it so good and yet he doesn't know it. When I'm gone he'll know. Jesus how I hurt, the bastard! But it's not him, damn shit, another scotch will make me feel better, yes it does. Why did... how did this ever happen? That's where the psychiatrist always starts. I sure let myself in for it, now how to get out of it. Oh yes he'll make me pay, I hate him. At least he let me alone tonight. If I can only make it until this nightmare of being pregnant is over. At least this fake happy shit keeps him away, I can be cheery, what a laugh and how damn funny but at least it keeps him a little less obnoxious... He's getting that nervous jerky bit again as he huddles in the corner over there like a wooden match made man that quirks

and quivers, god what an unmanly person I married. Jesus how plainly I can see what a mistake I made! There's so much else I loathe about him too, it's so disgusting I don't even want to think about it. Really he just bores me, if I weren't married to him, I wouldn't have to hate him, I could get the fuck out of here. It makes me really sad to think how I got myself so tied down with two babies and he's such a phony! I get to feeling so bad, my poor damned life, I have to cry, Well maybe I can get away, somehow. He tells me this absolute bullshit, about how I will be guilty and all this crap, he should talk, man how I hate him! I feel sorry for him, he is such a piss ant nobody, why else would he keep searching for himself?, Even he can't stand to think he is exactly what he has always been, nothing!"

While I moved my things sadly, slowly into boxes, hoping against hope that she would change her mind as she saw that I was really leaving, I found a note that Eric had written to her and I tucked it into my pocket. I just had to know what it said and I figured I would read it later once I got to my new place. It felt funny to even think about being somewhere else, away from my wife and especially the child that I loved. I half expected her to rush in from the living room and beg for me to stay, But Milinda sat

quietly in the big over stuffed chair with her feet on the ottoman watching television, and didn't even look up even as I lugged the last of my things down to the car. "Good bye, Amos," echoed down the hall. There was no mistaking that tone. It was undeniably a voice of relief. No, she would not be asking me to stay. She would not be asking me back any time soon either.

Somehow I made it to my new apartment. It seemed so empty, so very alone, like a nightmare. I lugged my things in and put them away, poured myself a beer and sat down to read the letter that Steve had written to my wife.

"Jesus, what a god damn fucking kid that Amos is, how fucked up can you get. Milinda what beautiful feelings I hold for you, I have never felt like this before, No, man, I don't feel good about it, it's shitty, believe me, you just can't imagine. I never expected all of this to happen, if somehow I could have avoided it yet in a funny kind of way I'm glad, shit I don't care it was worth it, it was kind of good. Funny how you understood my feelings, I wouldn't talk to you if I didn't feel... you know. I really didn't need to get in to this hassle and all this other stuff. You know I am really fucked up, what a fucked up hassle. Yea it was nice you know that, really nice, no

even more than that it was wonderful, it was as if we were meant to be all along. You know I can't write, but I'm most serious, I write poetry about it, like twinkle, twinkle little star, now you will hate me for writing this, but eh I have to go. Don't worry I'll make it alright you just take care of yourself okay? Yea it was mixed up, I can't even straighten it out in my own mind, and with all this stuff going on now, what am I going to do? I really want to be a person who does things as I know can be done. It was so cool and that cool stuff like I really feel it, but I don't want to screw anyone, I mean it when I say I care. It's good to have someone like you when I get the feeling. Man this drinking and music, they are so damn good."

Poor baby... so cool, so loving, but he was at least smart enough to get away from her when he got hit. That was the last of my hope, smashed as if a bottle on the waves during a storm against the rocks near shore. The rocks of destruction, the bitter end of all hope that was ever, that could ever be. I cried myself to sleep. The days passed slowly. Somehow I managed to make it through work each day. The lonely apartment was almost more than I could stand.

Sometime that afternoon Milinda had left the following letter on my door:

"Amos: how I love myself, I feel quite self astonished at the feeling that I have everything I want-- a lovely child and another on the way, a home filled with comfort and things to which I am attached, pleasant and really friendly companions with whom I work and a challenging job that offers ample room to make money and yet perform a service for humanity and humans at large, a secure family of brothers and a mother who I admire and respect and love and with all of this , a yet satisfactory past, nether devoid of outward adventures or inner journeys and above all almost different feeling of self than I had ever expected. It is only since a trip which left me out of my mind for longer than I want to recall and since perhaps too, the death of my father, that this self awareness has descended on me, as if despite the possibility of death this instant, or tomorrow and of pathetic failings of courage, intelligence, feelings, and being, and possibilities of loss of everything I have. ( Indeed it seems awful probable-- no matter what happens.) Still I feel something has been accomplished in which I have participated. This world may indeed perish. If only whatever must be suffered could be done with more strength and courage and less niggling fears and their cousins-- This feeling of identification with someone or thing beyond my own

decidedly more complaining weaknesses-- as if ethical action living with others were possible, and still with oneself, making no matter what, nor how many relapses, this present better! Or was I just feeling comfortably tired, and this writing and fantasizing, a dripping out of that complacency, to a bigger goodnight. What a push it would take to nudge my consciousness a level down to it's other pole, again, to learn like now, to pull it up and keep it there no matter what-- for others and the same thing not for self pity. It's like I told Eric, I will be destroyed, but at least I have found part of the way."

It was so like Milinda, I thought, to write saying how happy she was now that I was gone and how together her life was. So like her to rub salt in the open wound that she had made.

Milinda called one day, to say she was going to the Hospital as she was in labor, and surprisingly she said I could come if I wanted to. There would be no need for me to watch Taylor as she was going to be watched by Milinda's mother. What a total bitch! Oh, and by the way, she thought she should let me know, as soon as she had this baby and got back on her feet, she would be moving. She couldn't stand the apartment. She said it had too many unpleasant memories. What a total loss, not only was she



leaving me and keeping the children to herself, but she would purposely move off just to make it harder for me to see them.

I paced the halls of the Hospital like all good fathers do for hours while my mind raced. Maybe if I was lucky she would die in there, and then I would take my children to live with me. This hateful thought didn't last long though for as soon as I heard her screaming I prayed that she would be all right. In another hour it was over. "Amos, you have a daughter," the doctor said proudly. "You may go in and see your wife and child now if you want."

Funny, looking at Milinda's pale white face and at the beautiful child she held in her arms I forgot totally all about the fact that we were living apart, all about the fact that soon we would be divorced. I brushed the hair back from her face and wrapped my arm around her and our lovely new born baby and kissed her softly. "Oh Milinda, she's really beautiful."

"You mean your not mad that it's not a boy?" she said weakly.

"Of course not," I said. "She's wonderful and I couldn't be happier."

"Oh Amos, you really can be quite charming when you want to be," she smiled. Her name is Sofia Marie," she continued. Then she handed the baby to me and fell asleep. Having the baby had taken quite a bit out

of her, I realized later as I looked in the nursery window and remembered the situation, how that I would never get to see this child grow up, not really. Oh sure, I would be able to visit but it would not be the same as when Taylor was born. I would miss those first steps, her first words, the bonding, everything. Milinda hadn't been so nice to me in ages, but I knew as soon as she was herself again she would be the same old bitch she had always been.

Two months later, after I visited with them and ended up spending the night just before Milinda and the children were to move and leave the city and me forever, I received this letter from Melinda:

"I feel very strange here as I wait for the movers to come. I am sad and tired, but not really as nostalgic as I thought I'd be. I'm mostly sad about you and frightened in a way, that we'll become strangers to each other-- almost obligatory to a degree to try not to think of the other person. This is strange in a way as for so long we've not been close to each other; now for purposes of survival I must try not to feel close to you. It is harder for me to not feel close to you now, harder than it ever was when we were married-- one of life cruel little ironies, don't you think? My shrink says the reason I recoiled from you was because I was aware of my own destructive tendencies toward you. ( true-- more often than not I was

aware of being a bitch, acting out a role which I felt forced to play.) Now that I'm not so close to you, in the sense of living with you, I don't feel this destructive feeling, so in a way our relationship is superior, tho as mentioned before there is a risk of having no relationship eventually. I can say now from afar that the old distant me really does still love you. I see you completely differently and I see a great metamorphosis taking place in you, and it makes me happy for you, but sad that I can't take part in it, but as long as I was around no growth was possible for you in any real sense. I battled you down every chance I got, and you gave me a lot of them. As for you I would imagine you love me less the further you get away from me, I say this because you say you loved me when you were living with me, I don't know. I like loving you and I wish I thought that I could love you and live with you. I know that men feel they are being castrated when their wife's leave them but I think I castrated you when we were living together, and when you chose to ignore it I thought subconsciously you wanted it. I really was not trying to be bitchy or mean last night by laying with you in bed when I asked you to spend the night. I don't feel embarrassed or as if I were using you for my own ends. I liked needing you-- it's a nice feeling. I hear the moving truck outside-- guess I could write and write forever. No, wrong about the truck. I am sitting and smoking and smoking-- self

destruction. This was another theory of the shrink's (he asked me if seeing women's buttocks in the subway turned me on, ugh!) along with the theory of my not getting close to you which is not contradictory I suppose and possibly the other side of the coin. Perhaps I am masochistic, which is maybe why I entered into the relationship with you, you brought out all the bad qualities in. I enjoyed not having sex with you, ect. It is not very clear to me but I do thrive on guilt feelings-- I am often terrified about the future and will have to rely on sheer guts to make a lot of decisions, I hope I have the strength. I hope that I have your faith that I will raise the children well. It may sound strange to say but I do not regret the last five years I have spent with you. I loved, I hated, laughed, cried, created, destroyed and learned a great deal more in those years than in all the other twenty. I feel no bitterness toward you anymore and don't resent any bitterness you probably still have for me. I love you in a special way, ( that sounds so trite) and I want you to be happy always. I am looking out the window at the tree and feeling a great deal lonely and unsure of myself, pity, a great deal of loss, I suppose of security and of good times, but mostly another person in my life, the person that I knew better than anyone else. Why didn't we learn to treat each other better? Silly things make me cry uncontrollably during the packing, one of which was doing the dishes,

another was going through the shelves of your beloved books which you were always trying to get me to read-- I could almost remember every moment in time when you offered up one for me to read-- each one representing a different period or interest in your life. I am truly sorry that I never shared those interest with you. I was too dumb for Nietzsche, too unsure square for Gurdjieff, too light headed for Hesse! I read though your writings and am appalled at the wonderfulness of your mind. It occurred to me that I haven't written to you for a long time from my heart. I'm all dried up-- maybe or maybe I don't have a heart anymore."

We wrote occasionally. She always wrote or called for money, more money. I still remained hurt and angry and she asked how I could write her such a letter as I had one night, saying that my blaming her for things... absence of faith, or whatever, was wrong. These things were not important. I should not do it. I should not call her and use her absence of faith as a pretext to slam down the phone...

So I phoned her, and explained: it was hard because I got my hopes up. I got upset because they were continually dashed.

"You knew I had no faith," She said. "Why didn't you do some deductive thinking for a change, instead of wasting your time, trying to negate, or rather, oppose the reality of it, and figure out why. Then at

least your thinking would be constructive."

Tempus Perdue

*The center had not held. Amos' self had imploded. I found some more of Amos Gambol's writings which he had written during his separation and the divorce from Melinda:*

*A POEM*

*"What is the way of inner power changes?*

*Through the marshland of unconsciousness or*

*through the clear ethereal realm,*

*and in karmic games? The fortune teller said;*

*What is the meaning of your question?*

*The world is here and now."*

*He was living near China Town NYC in a communally owned building doing nightly therapy, with the self styled sufi teacher Daniel Shah, who had urged Amos to travel in what was still then the old Mexico. Amos wrote from Oaxaca:*

*CONCERNING PSILOCYBIN MUSHROOMS: GOOD KARMA*

*With the help of a mexican Indian friend I saw the sky, clouds forming and disforming, a panoramic and transcendent vision, and the grass, and dirt, and bushes and corn fields that stretched before us to the*

distant mountains, all living around me, and I myself was a part of it, and I exclaimed in wonder as I walked out of the little Oaxaca hut into the light of the sun, "So this is life! So this is life, and they never told me!" How far beyond belief wonderful it was and that was the secret of life: it is! I saw a couple of bulls kind of restless, chewing on the grass and stomping, they looked around at me and sensed my presence, and the indian said "It's cool, man. They see us, we see them, it's just a pasture." Just then a bug landed on my leg and started sucking out blood and I was frightened-- "Death is a part of life, Amos, that's cool too. We eat animals. They eat us, and in the end bugs eat us all. That's life," the Mexican indian said.

Amos had realized the miraculous and paradoxical identity of the universal in the particular, the Mandala of life! But this insight was frightening. Amos not lay down and savor bliss. Experience of transcendence did not excuse one from action. As the Empire collapsed around him, Amos, a good Scot, might lay down but only to rise up and fight again! As Shah rather ruefully remarked to Amos: "A Prince must have his heirs..." Taylor, Sofia Marie and Melissa were what counted. As I put down Amos' final version of the manuscript, the manuscript of Amos Gambol, I wondered had he not been a little smarter, a little more adventurous, a little less selfish, how would his life have been? And I

*realized howe how much he was my dark doppelganger.*

*The End*