

SELECTED WRITINGS
OF ESIQUIO NARRO

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SELECTED WRITINGS
OF

*Esiquio
Narro*

1949–1997



ESQUIVO NARRO
1914–1999

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Preface

ARTHUR LEE JACOBSON

My friend, Esiquio Narro (1914–1999), entrusted me with his writings. These consist of 112 bound journals and 990 loose sheets of paper. His essays, letters, poems, fiction, class notes, jokes, recipes, and autobiographical notes cover a vast breadth of topics.

Esiquio didn't write for publication or money; he wrote to express himself. Before he died, he told his best friend and housemate, Milton Norlin, and myself that he wanted me to publish anything I thought worthwhile. Milton was named the executor of Esiquio's will, and I was the alternate executor. After Esiquio died, Milton delivered the manuscripts to me, and we agreed that any net proceeds from any publications should go to nonprofit causes.

In 2002 I finished compiling a database index of Esiquio's writings. The total number of pages recorded in the database is 15,733. These were written between 1949 and 1997, although the quantity markedly increased in 1979, when he turned 65. Esiquio was most prolific in 1984, with 1,249 pages. I left out of the database hundreds if not thousands of pages that were mere notes, taken as Esiquio listened to news programs such as *Wall Street Week* or *Serious Money*, or recipes.



Esiquio Narro was born in Mexico in 1914, spent eight years in Texas, married in 1938, fathered three children, and began a new life in Oregon at age 28. He finally settled in Seattle where he lived from age 39 until he died at the age of 85. He spent 46 years—more than half his life—in Seattle. The accompanying map and time line provide more detail on his personal life and sojourns.

Though he earned his living doing various work, Esiquio spent most of his working years employed as a gardener. After 23 years working at the University of Washington, he retired and did freelance consulting, pruning, and teaching. He was exceptionally talented in this realm. At its prime, his garden was an Eden, luxuriant with diverse flowers, fruit, and trees.

Esiquio was an extraordinary observer. He developed a sharp mind and became expert at analyzing. People familiar with him appreciated that he was well informed and a superb conversationalist. I have never known anyone who could talk at such length, on such diverse topics, so well. Although I met Esiquio in August 1979 at the arboretum and we later became friends, I did not know for years that he was just as adept at writing as he was at speaking.



Because he wrote so much, on such varied topics, over some 50 years, I found it challenging to select writings for publication. How does an editor choose a representative portion to serve as an overview? Such was my task, and this is what I did. First, I tried to arrange the loose pieces of paper and bound journals in chronological order. This was not always possible, as many pieces were undated. I spent months compiling what I called an index, in database form. For this index, I entered the title of each piece, the number of pages, and its date. I noted whether the piece was written in Spanish, a poem, or autobiographical. If there was no title, I read enough of the piece to determine its topic. Here is a one-month sample of this index:

TITLE	PAGES	DATE	NOTES
“Quiet please. Intelligence at work”	3	11.1.80	
Civilizations	1	11.80	
A dog’s affection	2	11.1.80	
Conditioning	2	11.80	
The bare necessities	2	11.4.80	
[Untitled]	9	11.5.80	The election
The expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492	1	11.80	
The fundamentalists	2	11.80	
Differences between Republicans and Democrats	6	11.7.80	
Ancient cities and the theatre	1	11.80	
Of metaphors and reality	2	11.8.80	
Addiction to material things	2	11.9.80	
The half-life of submerged individuality	2	11.9.80	
The blindness of the righteous	1	11.80	
Hamlet	4	11.9.80	
Third frost	3	11.11.80	
Things I do not care to do	1	11.12.80	Autobiog.
The wonder of it all	1	11.80	
The salesman	2	11.12.80	
Beyond survival	4	11.14.80	
The human mind	4	11.15.80	
The moneylenders	3	11.80	
Life’s will	4	11.15.80	
The power of money	1	11.80	
[Untitled]	4	11.80	Traffic woes
Inflation	1	11.19.80	
Dear Abby	1	11.19.80	
Life as action	4	11.23.80	
Life as pure thought	2	11.24.80	
Diffidence	7	11.24.80	
Faith cures	2	11.25.80	
Abraham, Sarah and Isaac	3	11.26.80	
The God of Moses	3	11.26.80	
The quiet life	1	11.29.80	
The eleventh commandment	1	11.29.80	
Latin America	2	11.30.80	
Ignorance, greed, and malice in business	1	11.30.80	

After compiling the index, I skimmed through the 15,733 pages, one by one, to select passages for inclusion in this book. I read numerous pages, typed a few of them, and read still more. Many months went by, and I found that I could not read every word. Ultimately, I selected 389 pages, or 2.47 percent of the total.

In choosing the selections for this book, I favored autobiographic passages, feeling it is better that Esiquio's story be told in his own words than for me to do so. I used 78 of his 243 autobiographic pages, or nearly one-third. I also disproportionately favored poetry, selecting 12 pages out of his 320 pages of poems, or 3.75 percent of the total. I used none of the Spanish text, which is barely over 1 percent of the whole anyway. I do not speak Spanish and would have had to ask a friend to translate the text into English.

As for the bulk of the prose chosen, I tried to include material from different decades, covering many topics, yet generally included upbeat or positive writings rather than the opposite. Esiquio's mind, like the weather, could be sunny and fair or cloudy and gray, and his writings reflect this. Some passages would bring tears to my eyes; others, I suspect, may cause frowns and furrowed brows. All in all, I had to combine my literary judgment with subconscious or instinctive hunches to favor one passage over another—as any other editor does.

Fortunately, little editing of the text was needed. Other than some changes in punctuation, what you see is almost exactly what Esiquio wrote. For help with this, I asked a few friends to read the draft manuscript and offer their input. Then I combined their “red-inked” versions with mine and made modest adjustments. I am grateful for assistance from Michael Boer, Keala Hagmann, Julie Hauser, Ruth Laughlin, and Evelyn Roehl. Without their help the book would have been longer, yet redundant, and certain awkward sentences would have escaped my eye.

Esiquio and I were friends for more than 20 years. He wanted me to inherit his writings, as he judged that I, with a publishing

and writing background and an ability to follow through, was the best candidate he knew. I tried to do a good job and consider my role as helping a friend—who now happens to be dead—to share with this world his philosophies and views.

All of the net financial proceeds of this printing shall be donated to a nonprofit cause that I know Esiquio would have approved of: the Elisabeth C. Miller Library, a horticulture library affiliated with the University of Washington. Whether any more of Esiquio's writings will be published later, I have no idea.

I could write much more about Esiquio and his life. But *his* words are the focus and soul of this book. Instead of gardening for a livelihood, Esiquio could have taught, written professionally, or done other things. But other than a handful of freelance gardening articles published in the 1970s, he never wrote for money. He picked up the pen because he felt compelled to express his thoughts and feelings. It was as if he were addicted to sharing whatever was on his mind, so he either talked or wrote—he couldn't keep it to himself. He thought at great length, wrote abundantly in longhand, and typed almost nothing.

Now, by reading the pages of this book, you can harvest the fruit of his quiet labor.

SEATTLE,
SEPTEMBER 2004

Time Line

- 1914 *January 26.* Esiquio Narro is born in Saltillo, Coahuila, Mexico. He is given the name Policarphio Hesiquio Narro Villarreal. Polycarp is the saint celebrated on January 26. Hesyquinus or Hesykias is derived from Hesehiah, King of Israel. Esiquio's nickname is pronounced *Key Ko*, but some say Chee Ko and others spell it Chico or Quico.
- 1917 Juan Narro Rodriguez, Esiquio's father, dies at age 33, leaving a widow (Esiquio's mother), Elodia Villarreal Garcia, and children Ofelia Narro Villarreal (1904–1980), Roberto Narro Villarreal (1906–), Aurora Narro Villarreal (1908–1985), Esiquio, and Juanita (1917–). Preceding Esiquio's in death were siblings Juanito (1910; died young), Esperanza (1912; died young), and another Esperanza (1916; died young).
- 1924 Esiquio's family moves to Texas.
- 1932 Esiquio moves back to Mexico.
- 1938 Esiquio marries Juanita Quesada. They become parents of three children: Jorge Sergio Narro Quesada, Irma Alma Narro Quesada (died February 15, 1996), and Edgar Fernando Narro Quesada.
- 1939 Esiquio contracts malaria and nearly dies. He moves to Mexico City.
- 1942 *September.* Esiquio moves to Eugene, Oregon, intending to pursue a career teaching Spanish language and literature. He works at the Eugene Plywood Company mill.
- 1944 Esiquio is drafted into the U.S. Army. He gets an exemption and teaches Spanish part-time.

- 1947 Esiquio graduates from the University of Oregon with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and minor in Education. He becomes a U.S. citizen and develops an interest in Socialism.
- 1952 Esiquio takes classes in Personnel Management, Labor Relations, Statistics, Economic History, and Industrial Psychology.
- 1953 Milton L. Norlin of Everett, Washington, spontaneously buys a new car and drives to Portland, Oregon, where he gets lost. He meets Esiquio at a restaurant, and they find they have things in common (both worked at plywood mills). They keep in touch.
- 1953 *September.* Esiquio loses his job and moves to Seattle. Milton quits his job, and the two rent an apartment. Both obtain jobs at the University of Washington.
- 1963 Esiquio and his wife divorce.
Milton and Esiquio buy a house at 1332 North 165th Street in Seattle.
- 1976 Esiquio retires from his job at the University of Washington.
- 1977 Esiquio teaches pruning at Edmonds Community College.
- 1986 Esiquio's physical condition is self-described as being a little diabetic, having a bit of kidney dysfunction and some high blood pressure, and being a little overweight.
- 1996 *November.* Esiquio suffers a blood clot in his leg that requires surgery and hospitalization.
- 1997 *December.* Esiquio suffers a stroke and can write no more.
- 1999 *April 16.* Esiquio dies. His funeral is held April 23.
- 2004 *September.* This book is printed.



Map showing places where Esiquio lived

The novel

1949

The novel, to be great, must portray interestingly a life, or several lives, moving in a definite period and place. A novel can be true to life, that is, realistic, or it can be true only to certain general aspects of life and on the surface be imaginative, like a fairy tale, poetic. A novel may be beautiful, or it may be ugly or perhaps terrifying. It may be morbid or romantic, gay or deeply tragic. Its substance may be thin, as in a humorous tale, or it may be rich, as in a study of good and evil. What makes it worth reading is mainly that the author has made it interesting to an audience at a certain time and place.

The greatest novels must necessarily deal with great and important subjects. They must highlight the realistic details only insofar as they contribute to the strength of the ideas and the power of the mood that are the essence of a novel. Otherwise the novel is a stylized work of art. Selection and emphasis are essential. A novel is not life itself, but life distilled. To portray life as it is would probably be boring.

The imagination of the novelist and his philosophy lie at the root of his novel. To convey his images and his ideas artistically he not only needs to be an artist at heart, he needs to understand fully what words mean to other people and how situations are understood in the light of the knowledge of the times and the fashionable conventions.

The greatest novels are seldom appreciated by large audiences. This is true because a good deal of what we read in a novel we know and understand already, mostly from our experience.

*Since the infinite
has no end, there
may seem to be
little advantage
in understanding
more of life
than others do.*



The novel merely gives it a more elevated, artistic, concentrated, focused form. Popular forms of literature are idealizations of that which is familiar, and great ideas, deep emotions, subtle irony, wit, and humor are not familiar to many people. It may make no difference in the end whether some people are able to see beyond the stars or not. Since the infinite has no end, there may seem to be little advantage in understanding more of life than others do. But—and this is faith—men so believe, and so long as they do, they will continue to strive for a broader and deeper view of nature and of life. It is as a result of this effort and no other, that we have great novelists.

If a novel's aim is to entertain, it must be humorous, interesting, and vivid, and it must reach the reader's heart and interests. It will not be a great novel because it must appeal to the familiar. To be great a novel must portray immortal, though nonexistent, persons who embody the greatest ideals, evils, problems, questions, struggles, *etc.* But it also must entertain and be interesting.



Notes on religion

OCTOBER 19, 1951

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, *thou shalt not commit adultery*. But I say unto you that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery in his heart.”

We are under the misconception that adultery, fornication, and sexual behavior of a promiscuous and obsessive nature are in themselves evil. There is, however, no sexual act that is evil in itself. Overindulgence and promiscuity are not wrong

in themselves but merely symptoms of something wrong with the individual. Christ taught his disciples to grow in love for one another, in other words to grow up.

We know now that the man who goes from one woman to another has not developed the capacity to love anyone. He loves himself, like a child. He has not grown up. The same is true of the homosexual or the lesbian. It is this lack of capacity to love, to be a true friend, that is wrong. Not repression from without, but a building up of faith and understanding from within, will cure the patient.

What I want out of life

MARCH 1952

It's sweet, it's exciting, it's a delightful feeling, just to be alive!

The meaning of life is, in the end, a reflection of each individual's enjoyment of life. The capacity to enjoy; to endure; to expect that which is probable and find it bearable, interesting, or enjoyable when it occurs; or to find a bearable, interesting, or enjoyable substitute when it does not occur—that is the secret of living.

Outside the realm of pure mathematics and pure science there are no absolute truths. God's truth is mathematical and scientific truth in its purest form. But, in the world of applied truth and science, every event, good, bad, or indifferent, is a probable event. Every response we make in life is a gamble. Some responses are pretty sure gambles and very minor stakes are involved, but others are dubious and risky. Every individual has the privilege of gambling.

The individual is at home in certain areas of endeavor, such as art, literature, music, philosophy, religion, and occasionally science and invention. But in most areas of activity

the group, by its very existence, either hinders or helps the activity of the individual.

The existence of groups, and not the industrial revolution, is the source of specialization in work and activity. Specialized

*But for some years
I have seen that
my main function,
my main purpose
in life, is to help
in the clarification
of values, the values
of humanity.*



behavior is a byproduct of the existence of groups. The group has many byproducts arising from the mere fact that many individuals and small groups live near one another in space and in time. A generation, a village, a city, a province, a nation, a continent, all produce advantages by virtue of their very structure. The individual takes most of these advantages for granted, but his personality, through habit, has become dependent on them.

Modern houses, electricity, water, sewage, streets, roads, stores, barbershops, beauty parlors, doctors, clinics, hospitals, churches, clubs, railroads, industry, *etc.*, all are products of group living, of specialization, of organization.

The individual lives and moves in the group as if he were in a special medium, in a womb. He cannot live normally in isolation or outside the group. Physically and bio-psychologically he is just as dependent on the group as if he were attached to it by an umbilical cord. His freedom is within the group, restricted but vital. Within the limitations set by the group there is much he can do, both for himself and the group. We live then through the groups we belong to. There is no life outside the group.

Every individual, sooner or later, feels that he needs to have some *function* in the group. This function may be imaginary or real, it may be recognized by the group, or it may not even be accepted by the group. Some philosophers and writers, poets and artists, as well as others, have seen their function with

respect to future generations. They were too advanced for their time. Many who so believed were wrong, but many were right. The group does not always recognize an individual's function, unless it is simple and obvious. A small number of people may recognize a *new* function. An "instinct" guides our functioning. People often do not know this.

My interest at first was only my own adjustment. That has become now a very simple problem. There are many possibilities open to me, chiefly because I do not desire money or material wealth beyond the bare necessities for a decent living. But for some years I have seen that my main function, my main purpose in life, is to help in the clarification of values, the values of humanity.

The clarification of values is essentially a religious, philosophical, and, in some areas of life, a scientific task. Values have to do with *present* adjustments in all areas of life. They have to do with the interpretation of *past* adjustments in the light of history and accumulated knowledge and culture. But their main function is to point the direction of *new* and future adjustments. The orientation of civilization will determine its future because there are, in the solution of all problems, several alternatives.

All problems are solved by means of adjustments of people to people and people to things, things to people and things to things. Adjustments may be:

1. Immediate and shortsighted
2. Immediate and farsighted
3. Taking into account future generations
4. Taking into account the future of civilization
5. Oriented towards efficiency and stability, security and complacency
6. Oriented towards survival and flexibility, risk consciousness and progressiveness
7. Group- and individual-minded
8. Chiefly group-minded
9. Towards standardization and extreme socialization

10. Towards variety and medium degree of socialization
11. Towards a materialistic view of life with spirit as its servant
12. Towards a spiritual view of life with material forces as its servants
13. Dominated by the lust for power, control of natural forces, or conquest
14. Oriented towards love of human values of life, love, friendship, group activity, the arts, the development of individual genius and talent, the enjoyment of works of the imagination, romance, worship, *etc.*

These are just suggestions. Much has yet to be worked out. The future of mankind depends on the kinds of thoughts free people think, the kind of emotions and attitudes they develop, and the kind of behavior they encourage and practice. "As a man thinketh, so is he." All behavior is guided by *persistent* thought and feeling (desire) in a given direction. Thought, feeling, and behavior can all be changed by the individual who wants to do so. The greatest influence in changing behavior and character is the influence of the individual himself.

First he must be convinced, by convincing himself, that his former behavior is undesirable (not wrong or sinful) or unintelligent.

Second he needs to cultivate the attitude of cooperation: helpfulness, brotherliness, love, friendliness, pleasantness, kindness, courtesy, *etc.* Self-suggestion, reasoning, identification with the group; participation in cooperative group activity or play, as in mild competition, all are helpful.

Third he needs to persist, regardless of failures or relapses. Not *criticism* but *encouragement* is what he needs. Not lecturing but friendly guidance answering his questions and friendly "listening" is what strengthens his growing new tendencies and habits.

Fourth he needs to pray, if he can.

The reorganization of behavior along a new orientation requires the elimination of all feelings of guilt by an implied

attitude of forgiveness in the behavior of the group. It also requires a program of action in the *new direction*. Society must provide a *function* for every individual. This function is twofold: 1. Work or productive function. 2. Social or group activity (play) function. A religious function is implied in this.

Out of life, then, I want the privilege to work, to serve, to produce, according to my abilities and the needs of my community.

Out of life I want the privilege to associate in work and service with fellow humans in cooperation and mild competition.

Out of life I want the privilege to associate in play and recreation with friends and acquaintances.

Out of life I want the privilege to associate in group activities for political, religious, artistic, and intellectual purposes.

Out of life I want someone to love and be loved by, someone to share the simple joys and sorrows of each hour, each day, and each year with me. ✱

[untitled poem]

APRIL 1952

I took a walk through the woods alone,
And saw how the mosses and ferns had grown.
I took a walk through the woods with you;
Don't ask me now where the mosses grew.

Patches

JUNE 6, 1952

There is nothing quite so graceful as this female. She waves her tail as an accomplished lady would a fan, keeping it up in the air all fluffed up. No lady ever had a plume on her hat to match its ever-changing style and grace. Her ears are always perked and turning with a steady sweep from fore to aft, like radar antennae in continuous duty. The everlasting curiosity in her deep green eyes never leaves them, and at times seems almost anxiety.

For a cat, Patches has a pretty face. Her hair is not too long, though she is Persian. Pure white are her nose, the inside of her ears, her three white paws, her heart, and a few blotches all over her down to her tail. One paw is black as coal, and so is a patch over one eye. Here and there a slight touch of brown proclaims her a female, so they say, but she would be a female even if she were pure gold.

When she wants out she stands with utmost dignity in front of the door and sends me a message with her eyes. I ask, "You want out?" and she says distinctly, "Yaw." She goes out, or rather flows out the door, her long slender body bending away from the door frame and around the partly opened door. One look at the weather outside and she may change her mind, even if it's only the sprinkler out on the lawn.

When she wants in, she paws the screen-door spring which hangs loose all winter. If I am reading or too lazy to get up, I pretend I don't hear and hope she'll go look for some social life. But she is determined. I go to the window to watch her. She rears up and grabs the door knob between her paws and gives it a shake. I decide perhaps I better let her in.

No one loves love like Patches does. When I have been away for a whole day and she is starving, I come in and go straight to the refrigerator, get a kidney, chop it, and put it in her dish. Nix. She wants to say hello first. I pet her till she purrs miles an hour, and then, and only then, will she start eating.

Like any female would, she has taken legal possession of my lap whenever I sit down. No bones about it, it's hers. The utmost tact must be exercised to cheat her out of it, or her feelings will be hurt. No one loves recognition like Patches. To ignore her is the worst act of sadism. When she says hello, I must speak to her, pet her, then she'll go her way.

The social life of a female cat is full of danger, and Patches has had to learn how to cope with a cruel world. Toughy, a Persian-Manx, bob-tailed, gray tom, lives next door. He has all the toms in the neighborhood

absolutely buffaloed and fights like a cyclone that just hit a warehouse full of tacks. You can pet him if he is in the mood, but I haven't found out how to tell when he is. He always looks tough, hence his name. Toughy can't understand Patches. You see, she is spayed and indifferent to his advances. She can't figure out why he is so mean. For a long time he absolutely terrified her. She'd spit her nose out at him and run for the door. Gradually she discovered that Toughy is pretty slow on his footwork because he is stocky and heavy. She found she could outrun him with ease, bite his bob-tail, and outmaneuver him. Eventually she learned to wear him out till he just gave up. To Toughy she is just a dream that never will come true.

*He fights like a
cyclone that just
hit a warehouse
full of tacks.*



The social life of cats, I have found out, consists largely of pow-wow in which they watch each other intently, wag their tails—if they have tails—and chase one another. The conversations are often very intelligent like, “Well, what’s new in the neighborhood today? Anything happen last night?” “No, just the usual thing.” Or when things get rough, “Ow! Ouch! Stop it! Great groans, whiskers, scam!” For all I know the translation may be unprintable judging from the way it sounds. At any rate, most cats hate to miss it, and they get so bored and lonesome when no one is around! *#

It's now become a common thing

NO DATE; LIKELY 1952

Her dress is at the cleaners still
And may be had.
His mother's given all his clothes
To a spright young lad.
A youngster's playing with his cane.
Her heirloom pin a young girl wears.
The grocer thinks he moved away.
The Persian cat sleeps on her bed,
And perks her ears at our steps
Then waits again.
His glasses gather summer dust
And sundry tools begin to rust.
No one has clipped the roses now,
But the petals fall and dry on the ground.
The clock in his room has stopped at last.
The ivy on her window is spreading fast.
The lawn is thirsting for a drop,
The spaniel sniffs at every cuff.
I no longer feel I have to stop
For Jane and Ed are gone and off
Where many souls so oft do tramp.
They've joined, alas, a nudist camp.

Of the life of the spirit of finding

JANUARY 1953

“Seek and ye shall find.” Where is it? “The kingdom of God is among you.” It is odd that the greatest joys open to humans be in those relationships whereby we commune and have intercourse with fellow humans. To love, to respect, to admire, to be with, to enjoy with, to exchange with one another—these are the primary and most satisfying relations.

Humans enjoy two main kinds of relationships with their fellows: relations with one other human, called intimate, and relations with a group.

In relations with one fellow human the beginning is usually “liking,” a predominately physical and sexual attraction. A spiritual relationship comes with seeking truth, justice, beauty, and pleasure together.

In relations with a small group, no matter how intimate, certain conventions usually determine the behavior. Conversation, usually of a humorous tone; eating and drinking; being entertained (as an audience); political or literary discussion and action; fighting; scientific work; teamwork or play—these are some of the activities usually involved. The small group is the field from which we choose our intimate friends and mates.

In relations with the crowd and the community, the threads of intercourse are more abstract and vague. We identify ourselves with a group through interests or preferences.

In seeking the life of the spirit it is important to realize that it is not a life to be lived alone. It is essentially a life of love, love for a mate, a friend, a community, and even for the human species as a whole.

This way of life is remote for the world of 1953. We live in a world ruled by primordial fear of strangers, by hate and distrust of one race by another, of the idolatrous worship of nationality, and of provincial attitudes which divide even the people of different regions within one country.

The division of society into mutually exclusive social classes (for motives of prestige and power) is also animal and primitive. It is not the way of the life of the spirit. The way of the spirit looks to the inequalities, which exist among humans in physical and mental ability, as talents to be used for the good of all, or for the good of self alone. It is against the well-being of the community for the well-endowed to despise and shun the society of the poorly endowed. It is also against spiritual health to harbor envy against those who are better endowed than we.

To achieve a harmonious society we must then reduce the envy of the poorly endowed to its lowest point and the pride of the richly endowed to a point where endowment is carried with grace and recognition to the true author of all talents, the Creator.

No individual can achieve full and complete happiness by himself. It follows then that the community must become so organized that every member is able to—or at least has equal opportunity to—achieve full happiness. This necessarily means that the ways in which people are to seek happiness are limited in some respects, while they are increased in others. Thus, to kill, to rob, to rape, to torture, to lie, to commit injustice, to steal, *etc.*, may make some people happy, but not the whole community.

To work together, to sing, to dance, to eat and drink, to play games, to listen to music, to tell stories, to explore, to build, to create works of art and imagination, to love another—all these things may make many people happy and no one or very few would be made unhappy.

It is inevitable in all group relations (of two or more) that the happiness of one at times means the unhappiness of another. This happens in early love relations and, because of the different stages of development of tastes, likes, and dislikes, in youth. Therefore at times, some of us must learn to forgo some of our pleasures for the sake of another's enjoyment. Later, as that person matures, he will learn to do the same for someone else.

Utter and uncompromising selfishness is like a one-way road which allows no commerce but merely the draining out of the resources in one direction. A parasitic way of life can only be overcome by persuasion.

The spoken word and the living example are the greatest, and almost the only, methods of building the spiritual life. The whole society of every known civilization has been held together by a system of abstract concepts which channel behavior along the desired lines. It is then obvious that we live by words, by suggestions, by the imitation of those around us, or by example.

All social systems have been created out of the minds of intelligent leaders over a period of time. In the face of chaos, disorder, insecurity, murder, theft, violence, lying, selfishness, and weakness, the leaders have sought order, strength, security, prosperity, and well-being. When this cannot be achieved for the whole community, they have ended up by achieving it for one class, letting the rest serve as slaves.

Always they have used word-concepts to create a plan or system, then they have used wealth, military force, and the force of deceit and superstition to make the people conform to their system. Nonconformity means ostracism, prison, loss of all rights and privileges, and even death in such systems.

The life of the spirit does not allow for ostracism but for forgiveness and love. It needs no prisons but uses persuasion and suggestion and the opportunity to work, play, associate, and live on an equal basis with others.

Since all crime is caused by either extreme misery or extreme ambition or insanity, it follows that to ease misery, loneliness and hunger, and to temper ambition would reduce the chances

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of crime. Some crimes will always be committed, but the remedy is still the same.

Prayer and suggestion are often one and the same. That which we think most of the time, in the end determines what we do and are. Wishful thinking, if along practical and realistic lines, will become reality, if we persist. Our bad habits will yield; new good habits can replace them. But we need to be patient with our natures and should not let the viper of guilt undermine our work.

Each time we go back to our old lies, enemies, hates, cravings, urges, *etc.*, we feel guilty, but we must not be discouraged. If we insist, in time they will be forgotten. The spirit's victory over the flesh is slow, but it is certain.

No order can be established in one's personal being, or his life, or in the life of the group, except by thought, by observation and knowledge, and by persistence. Thought determines all action that is not automatically the direct and unmodified result of habits, urges, drives, or reflexes.

Whether *thinking* alone can break a habit remains to be seen. It depends on how we think, whether we are able to transform our thoughts into *emotions*, and hence into *action*. †

The growth of love

NO DATE; LIKELY NOVEMBER 1955

The emotion of love in its natural manifestation is a tender but unstable passion. It very easily becomes hate, especially when frustrated in the attainment of its object.

This emotion leads at times to behavior which is good, but at times to behavior which is evil. From the day we are born we are protected from a hostile world, fed and cared for in sickness and in health, all because of the love our mothers and fathers have for us. This love is often a selfish possessive sort of love, little different from love of self. If we are a source of pride we are

loved. If we are deformed and a source of shame; a burden; and an interference with work, advancement, or pleasure; we are loved grudgingly, as a duty, or we are not loved at all. We may even be hated. Because such hate would be regarded as a sin, or at least as immoral, it is suppressed by our parents. It only shows itself when they are off guard, when they are angry and out of control, or when they have become strained to the limit by the duty we represent in their daily life.

To love a child that is beautiful, one we wanted and expected to have, one that is a source of pride and a future embodiment of what we are or represent, this is easy and comes naturally. But to love the child we did not want or expect; the child that is defective or handicapped or sick; the child that will never bring honor to our name nor carry our ideal or tradition, this we cannot do. Our love, even that we proffer to our children, is conditional. We use it as coin to buy the child's conformity with our plans for him. Such love is in itself the seed of hate and is not love at all.

Only unconditional love can give a child true security and strength and nourish his soul with the power to think and to live fully. When we love our children we should make this clear to ourselves and to them, and we should practice this kind of love.

As children grow parents often do not differentiate between their disapproval of what their children do, or fail to do, and their love. They use their love as a bribe and their hate as a whip to make their children conform to their ideal of behavior, of being, and of achievement. Thus, when the children fail to measure up to the parents' expectations, they at once feel rejected and unwanted.

Yet no parent has the right to dictate to his child on every detail of his life. Each individual is a free agent who must create his own personality and work out his own salvation. This is the essence of human progress. When the rule of the parents is absolute, the children do not advance beyond their stage, but remain carbon copies of the last generation.

We grow older, and when we make friends, we make our friendship also conditional. Anyone can love the beautiful, the charming, the rich, the richly endowed. But we all need love, and in loving those who come near us unconditionally we give the power of life; the bread of the spirit is love.

It is the same with our spouses, and even with our enemies. Unless we learn to love—and it is an art and a science—fully and adequately, our world will suffer from emotional starvation.

Love is not always sentimental. Love is merely treating another individual as an equal expression of the Creative Principle that gives us life. Whether more or less endowed, we declare our faith in the capacity of each and every individual. We show equal respect and willingness to listen, to talk with, to associate with, to help and be helped by, to befriend, to extend our hospitality to, and in general to interact.

Love then the beautiful, but also the homely. Love the richly endowed, and the poor in spirit also. Love those who are like yourself, and the strangers also. Love even your enemies. #

[untitled]

JULY 1956

Life is a succession of fits of passion out of which, sometimes, comes a little understanding. What we intensely desire today may seem utterly unimportant tomorrow, and things we never dreamed existed become the objects of our interest.

We wander, like the moth, to where the light is and smash ourselves against the glass of things unknown. Slowly and painfully we learn that to understand ourselves and the world in which we are merely parts, we need all the science, all the patient observation and thought, and all of the poet's insight and power of expression to ignite the prime material of facts and turn it into the light of understanding.

I once lived in an apartment building which also housed a family of five: a husband, Sam; a wife, Louise; and three children, Bob, Bill, and Elizabeth. The husband's sister, whom the children called Aunt Anna, came to live with them. Anna, four years older than Sam and unmarried, had taken on the task of caring for their aged mother. When the mother died, Anna was in her forties, and she gave up hope. Sam and Louise asked her to come to live with them, knowing she would more than earn her keep by helping in the house. Anna thought this better than living alone, and so it was. Bob, Bill, and Elizabeth all accepted Anna at once, but there was never any great show of affection in the house.

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Then came the war, and the two boys, now 19 and 21, went away. Louise wrote to them, and so did Liz, but it was Anna who wrote the most wonderful letters. She knew just how they felt being away from home, having been lonesome herself for many years. She wrote like a novelist, in a vivid, descriptive style that could make everyday things come to life. All through the war her letters were their favorites. Then on their return, they brought presents from Japan to everyone including Anna. First Bob, then Bill, took Anna in his arms and gave her a big hug and a kiss, and they knew in that moment a kind of love which is capable of uniting people of all ages, sexes, and social classes—the love which comes out of sympathy and understanding.

This is the basic stuff of love, out of which the special loves that enrich human lives are made. You may serve it hot. #

The cup

AUGUST 1956

Fashion a cup: Take time and thought, and fashion a cup of words, and then pour your understanding into it. Then I will drink. I will drink and taste and be filled with the wonders of your mind and of your heart. And our conversation will

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be a pleasure to remember. We shall be as one, for we shall understand each other.

O beloved, think during the day and during the night, and choose the words into which you shall pour your thoughts to me. I love your thoughts and the insight they give me into your soul. I love you, I know you, I understand you. The unspeakable depths are brought up, like bubbles

to the surface, by the magic of words; by the artifice of gestures; and by the Gestalt, the totality of you which takes shape in my mind as I learn to know you more each day.

You ask me, what is love? Love is to know and to be known; to understand and be understood; to be forgiven our faults and offenses and mistakes; and to forgive likewise. To love is not to judge, but to guide, to encourage, and to lead. To love is to listen; to feel sympathy, to put oneself in another's place; and to search for the possibilities ahead, not dwell upon the failures of the past. To love is to search for the true good in each time; each place; and for each individual and group, and to use science as well as sense in the process. †

Open letter to the United States—the people

1957

You are a great people. In history you will be long remembered for your accomplishments in political, industrial, and social organization. You set the example before the world of a new nation that could, in less than 200 years, surpass, in many fields, the older nations of the world.

But now you are becoming a prematurely old nation. A pernicious philosophy of life has taken hold among you, and it threatens to choke out your very life. This may be defined simply and briefly as the *philosophy of the higher standard of living*.

It seems that the abundance of the material aids to living has become the sole object of all our efforts. We care for nothing more than better houses, better clothes, better food, better entertainment, better ways to spend leisure time, better roads, better everything. We think in terms of bigger cars, bigger houses, bigger incomes, and bigger everything that is good to have big. We want more and more.

We actually think that the ideal life would be a life without effort, unless the effort can be classified as fun. We want more gadgets and better gadgets. Gadgets to save energy and gadgets to use up the calories we saved with the other gadgets.

In this process we are becoming spiritually and physically soft. No swallow flying in February can prove that spring has come; and no isolated cases of work and self-discipline can prove that Americans as a people are not becoming a leisure-loving, pleasure-loving, ease-loving nation.

The truth is that we have become smug and satisfied with our big country and have lost all interest in expansion and exploration. We say we have no interest in foisting our way of life on other people. Yet we adopt their cooking, their dances, their architecture, their landscaping styles, their decorating forms, their clothes designs, their perfumes, their technologies, *etc.*, without feeling that they foist these on us.

Come, come, are we secretly afraid that our culture is not really good enough for others? It is really up to them to refuse it, on its own merits, not fret because it is ours.

The exploration of space today is a challenge, just like the exploration of the oceans was a challenge in the days of Columbus, Vespucci, and Magellan. In those days it took a hundred years of Spanish and Portuguese exploration to awaken the sense of shame and greed of the British. Much later the Germans, the French, and the Italians finally explored Africa and divided it.

But the fields of knowledge, and space itself, are wide open right now, and if we sit on our laurels we will be left behind enjoying our leisure, and rich (and stale) high standard of living.

The discipline necessary to conquer in the fields of research and exploration is harder to attain in the midst of ease and abundance than in a more lean and thrifty way of life. #

The philosophy of the rose garden

OCTOBER 1957

There is a garden where I work a great part of the time. It is not an ideal garden, for it wasn't designed or planned. It is more like a nursery of four thousand roses, some mixed and some in patches all of one kind. Yet the rose is such a beautiful flower that the colors look well even in their helter-skelter arrangement. The individual bloom that happens to be exceptional stands out amidst the chaos—its perfection of form, color, and fragrance like a poem that just happens, like an accidental work of art.

The factors that brought it about are in the plant, in the chromosomes and genes, in the soil, in the water, in the temperature and humidity of the air, and in the sun. Out of a chaos of these factors comes the rose, a thing of beauty to please the eye and the mind and the sense of smell.

I have tried to think of the rose as one would regard it had he never seen anything in the world at all. If a man could be born full-grown knowing nothing, would the rose still please him? Is the rose's beauty no more than a tradition, a history built up by nurserymen to promote the sale of roses? Or is the beauty of the rose real? A mere baby has no idea of the beauty of a rose. He destroys it. It is no different to him than a piece of dung. Have we created in our minds the beauty we attribute to flowers, or is it really there?

Whatever the answer is to this question, I know from my conversations with visitors to the garden that each of them has his or her own idea of what a beautiful rose, a flower, is. One thinks a rose is nothing unless it is at least six inches in diameter. Another thinks perfection exists only when the rose is in the form of a bud, slightly opened by recurving of the outer petals. Another thinks fragrance is the main attribute of a beautiful rose, yet another likes only double roses; or thinks the single roses are more interesting; or that the small, well-formed buds are the most fascinating.

With regard to color, there are people who hate red. There are those who want no trace of orange in their red, and those who want no trace of purple. Some love orange-colored roses, some hate them. Many love pink, but the shade of pink each loves varies from pale pink to lavender. A few hate lavender. Some prefer pale yellow, and some prefer gold.

It is plain to see that each person's association and background determines their color preferences. Every color in the rose garden

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is found in the rainbow and in the sunsets of the west. They all blend, and each and all can be arranged to advantage in some combination or other. The truly color-educated person finds all colors pleasing and knows how to make them more pleasing. The color-illiterate people are prejudiced. They cling to this color or that and want no other. Lavender and orange coloring, for instance, is typical of some roses when they fade, such as President Herbert Hoover. Some people cry out, "Oh, look at that horrible lavender and orange mixture." Another will exclaim, "Say, look at that beautiful blend of lavender and orange."

And so it goes.

The purpose of the garden is to please people. From a distance, the tourist, the visitor from the city, the employee, the faculty member, and the student all see a splash of color. Many never bother to come down to Frosh Pond to see what these flowers are in the distance. Unless classes or business bring them through here, they would never come. They are the class of people who are indifferent to flowers. They would live just as happily out in the desert or in some uncultivated area with nothing but weeds growing and dying about them. These people show by their dress and lack of makeup that their mind is in some rut such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, or engineering of some kind. They are as ignorant as barbarians in matters of literature, and worse than savages in their capacity to appreciate beauty in any form.

Next to these are the souls who, though knowing little about flowers or color or art, nevertheless experience a lift as they go by the gardens. They are glad the roses are there instead of pavement, or a lawn, or green shrubs.

Then there are the more artistic souls who really enjoy the roses. They are the color-lovers and fragrance-lovers. They are the most appreciative and least critical. The critical ones are plant-lovers, always looking closely for traces of mildew and aphids. The landscapists are the most unrelenting critics. As they go by they comment, even if only to themselves, on the lack of

design in the garden, on the failure to use green shrubs as a foil and contrast to the colors, and many other such comments.

No one who has not worked in a large rose garden can know how many interpretations there are of its uses and values. One chemistry professor has said over the years that a patch of cabbages would be more useful. "It is," he says, "the most nonsensical waste of the taxpayer's money I can think of."

But hundreds more come by and tell us how they enjoy the roses. One woman told me one day, "I come here depressed and sick inside, and these roses make me feel the world is still beautiful and worthwhile. I always feel better afterwards." A wealthy lady to whom I gave four nice fragrant buds exclaimed, "This is the most wonderful day I have had in the last ten years, young man, and you have made it perfect with these roses." It was her 97th birthday. She was Mrs. Henry McEwen, wife of the first honorary president of the Seattle Garden Club.

If a person were to devote his or her life to the rose, the whole rose, and nothing but the rose, it would be hard put to bear up under the attitudes people assume towards these flowers.

Even the exhibitors, who, of all people, should be on his side, might at times disagree with him on the merits of many of his varieties and blooms. Most exhibitors are unaware that the arbitrary standards set at flower shows are merely for the purpose of having clear-cut rules for picking out a winner. Grace and charm is often the attribute of an imperfect bloom that would never qualify at a show. Only the artist and the flower-arranger of wide perspective can fully appreciate the rose in all of its possible variations within a plant and in its entire range of variety within the species.

The exhibitor then would be a poor guide to lead us into what values to seek in our rose garden. The rose-lover would come nearer to our needs, though he might take us too far.

A rose-lover of the true ring is one who has seen and enjoyed a large variety of roses old and new, and who is aware that variety of form, color, and fragrance are essential to provide interest in

the rose garden. His enthusiasm furthermore does not come from winning prizes at shows, but from sheer enjoyment of the roses themselves, in the garden and as cut flowers. The true rose-lover is more literate than the exhibitor and a better judge of beauty and interest in roses.

But to the enthusiasm and knowledge of the rose-lover must be added the discipline and artistic sixth sense of the landscape architect. Truly roses stand out better, both as to foliage and blossom, when seen in association with evergreen shrubs or trees that introduce variety of leaf color and texture; bring in the coloring and texture of their bark; and introduce new patterns into the landscape through the forms of their branches.

Not one but several landscape architects should be consulted now and again in order to achieve the best design and composition. This would be, in a real sense, educational. Many people on "feeling the difference" might undertake the study of landscaping for their own use. Fine gardens are an advanced stage in a civilization. They are also a pleasure and a boon to mental health. Anyone in need of a hobby can find one here. But above all, use the talents of the architects, yet without surrendering some measure of personal preference in the matter.

I have often thought that the reason people who build homes always want to change the architect's design is that they are afraid their house will not be unique unless they have a hand in its design. This may be true of gardens. But fine gardens evolve over the years. Architects and owners, friends and critics, all have a little influence. The result is something unique and, usually, fine. ✱

What a beautiful world

NO DATE; LIKELY JULY 1959

People, and our relations with them, are the light by which we see the world. It's a black light when we are bitter because we feel unwanted and unloved. It's a red light when we are angry; mad at people because they do not understand us, nor we them, because they are unfair, unjust, greedy, cruel, ruthless. The white light of noon in the desert is the light of desperation, the light of oppression, and of struggle. The cool blue light of a moonlit night is the light of love, of romance, or of sadness pouring out of the lonely heart, over lost love or love never found. In between these extremes there are all shades of light; the light of good humor, bright and sparkling; or the soft candlelight of a church service; a family dinner; or an evening of conversation with friends.

People are the lights of our lives. People make the sunset beautiful, and people can also make it a scene of terror.

Walk in the green meadow in the spring and it is the perfect backdrop for love or friendship, for a picnic or a hike. But walk alone and the thought of death, the thought of scorching drought and freezing winter comes to mind all too readily. It is not hard to realize that people and their relations—the way they treat or mistreat one another, the way they enjoy or fail to enjoy one another—can make a hell out of heaven itself.

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On love

JANUARY 15, 1963

If you find yourself growing old and you are alone, the miracle of love may still happen, even if it is for the first time in your life.

What will bring it about is love itself. An old, cold heart will catch fire, like a damp stubborn log in the fireplace, if it is warmed by the flame of another heart in love with him, or her.

Love begets love, awakens it from sleep, kindles a burned-out fire, or starts a new one. Nothing else will do. †

Boiling down

NO DATE; LIKELY 1965

All societies can be boiled down to two individuals—a man and a woman, the units of reproduction. From them emerges the family and from that a new society grows and evolves. A society is only as good as the individuals that make it up. Organization, laws, rules, hierarchies, plans, levels of command, ideologies—all that make up the formal relations among the members of a society—are *never* permanent. They are *never* absolutely correct, but must be continuously adjusted, corrected to fit the situation, rendered flexible to permit change and progress.

All progress is an attempt at better-working relationships among groups, classes, and individuals; and between these and the environment. Every new advance in technology forces changes in all these relationships. Every change in the environment, including population growth, forces changes in relationships because space is reduced per individual.

Change is desired also for its own sake because mere repetition of the old brings about tedium. Resistance to change makes a society brittle. A society develops a form of dry-rot in which seemingly proper, legal, and moral behavior and

institutions become the cause of nausea in those who are left out of the mainstream of privilege.

One individual acting against a society he hates is powerless against it—unless he can make atom bombs in his basement and set them in every city and make them go off at once. But many individuals, a large number, even though unorganized, can wreck a society. Such a large number can open the eyes of the young to what is rotten in their society. This will bring about change in years to come—or a big explosion. †

*On James R. Ellis,
upon his dedication of METRO*

NOVEMBER 13, 1966

Here is a man whose religion is to find the needle of good in the haystack of selfishness, ignorance, apathy, and prejudice. Here is the man who thinks of life in terms of all future generations, not just his own. In a nation of liars and crooks, here is an honest man. Here is a man who saw the waters being polluted and, having no official position of power and able to do nothing directly, he set out to show that it can be done. People can get together to effect change, and then let those in power go ahead and implement it. It is being done.

By what faith in people—in selfish people with minds made up on the basis of ignorance—has he persuaded, influenced, confounded the evil and selfish individuals, and caused them to cease opposing and even to support the work to save the waters, the fish, and the plant life for this and future generations?

Mules and goats often show more sense than people. The mass transit mess shows to what depths of unreason a so-called civilized people can descend when they commute to work each day in a car that measures 8' × 20'; weighs 6,000 pounds; burns 1 gallon of gas for every 8 miles; pollutes the air with fumes;

costs \$1–4 a day for depreciation, maintenance and insurance; costs from 35¢ to \$1.75 a day to park; takes up 12' × 25' of valuable real estate while parked in addition to the lanes for exit and entrance; causes 50,000 serious accidents, nearly all of them fatal, every year—700 deaths in Washington alone. Since the advent of the private automobile, the mid-sections of the users have become heavy with fat; their legs weak from disuse; their endurance equal to that of a man of 70.

50,000 cars carry 50,000 people to and from work clogging millions of dollars worth of freeways and parking lots. These people could be carried by 1,000 buses, but under the private enterprise system it just isn't profitable to compete against private cars which people already own.

Besides, the freeway builders love it the way it is because they get more contracts. The parking lot owners love it. The garage and service station owners love it. The oil company owners like it that way, and the automobile manufacturers are crazy about it.

Mass insanity could hardly look for a better example. Mass inefficiency. Mass brainwashing through advertising can hardly be surpassed. If American decline ever sets in it will be through the processes of self-choking and waste of natural resources, all in the name of a phony individualism in which everyone looks and acts like everyone else. ↓

Upon my death

FEBRUARY 1969

When you, dear friends, put me down in the cool earth to rest, pray not for me, for I am safe. But rather let me pray for you. For you will need it more than I. Therefore I pray that you have peace of mind, and hearts that are full of love for one another. That you are free of the love of possessions and full of the love of the things that are free—the beauties of nature, God's free gifts.

I pray for your health, and that when death comes, you will be able to accept it and truly rest in peace.

Goodbye, dear friends, I wish you well. I love you now the same as always. Stop hating, stop fearing, love one another. Be kind. Be gentle and have a little laugh. Things are never what they seem, not as good, not as bad, not as indifferent either. Have a laugh at your self-deceptions. How can one know anything when life moves so fast? Before you can solve a problem, it has changed. All we do is guess, and only the pedants and the presumptuous egotists think they know anything. Have a good laugh, while you can. Love everyone you can. Do your best, and hope for the best. But avoid the deception that you are good or bad or great or small or that you really change things a lot.

Within you the Life-Mind is trying to speak to you. It will light a light in your mind. It will imbue your thought with spirit—the spirit of love, faith, hope, and peace; the spirit of giving, of imagining, of creating, of enjoying, of loving life from its beginning and wherever it exists, all over the universe.

You will become one with the Life-Mind. And still you will do what needs to be done in your own way and style. You will follow the truth in your own way. You will know what is important, and you will unburden yourself from the load of all that is unimportant. You will rest, even as you work. You will accomplish great things. You will know what true justice is. You will experience true love for yourself and others. You will love yourself as part of all life and the Life-Mind, and you will love others the same way. You will revere and love all living things.

I go on living in you. I do not die. My body goes back to the earth to be used again in other living bodies. All the dead are in our bodies. Their spirits are in our spirits. No one has died. So long. I leave you my love, my faith, my hope. †

*Open letter
to the Students for a Democratic Society,
and other so-called radical groups*

MARCH 8, 1969

Observing the activities of your people, it is clear that you are the victims of self-deception, no less than the members of the establishment which you oppose.

Your recent opposition to R.O.T.C. on the [University of Washington] campus is a clear example. Have you ever investigated how and why R.O.T.C. got on the campus? Are you aware that an officer trained on the campus can get a liberal education *plus* military training? And what kind of an officer is an officer without a liberal education? If military training were carried out in strictly military training centers, would that benefit the country? Would that be better for the men who will be under the officers' command?

Another delusion of yours is that you are going to get rid of the military. Let me tell you why you won't, nor will anyone else: The military is older than your kind, as old as Adam and Eve. The military originated in the desire for conquest (a polite name for robbery by one nation of the land and goods, including slaves, of another nation).

It also originated from *fear of conquest*. Without going through the history of conquest and the history of the fear of conquest, we can look at the present situation in the world. Who wants to conquer whom today? Who is afraid of being conquered? Answer these questions and you will have the reason for the military—the armies, navies, air forces, missiles, nuclear bombs, poison gas, biological warfare, and the political games that go on in Congress for more funds in every country in the world. There is no nation, however small, whose leaders do not dream of having the military power to ward off aggression even from the most powerful, or to defeat the most powerful nation in the world and take it over.

You say that we have wars because we have a military-industrial complex. But why do we have such a complex? Isn't it because the *people*, not just the leaders, are afraid of being conquered, being made slaves, by another nation? To their fear now you are adding the *enemy within*, the traitors and "*friends of our enemies*" kind of fear. You are sowing the seeds of paranoiac fear of everyone which sickens totalitarian systems, communist as well as fascist.

Civilian control of the military depends on having officers with a thorough grounding in the social and political sciences and in the appreciation of the arts. You'll never get that in a purely military school.



You blame American corporations for the economic plight of underdeveloped nations. Have you ever been there? Have you met the political leaders and the rich of these countries? Where do they keep their money? In Swiss and American banks? In American and European securities? Why don't they invest their own capital in their countries? Why do they keep goods scarce, prices high, and wages low? Why shouldn't they blame a foreign nation for their failures? Who else is there to blame but themselves?

Do you really believe that communist politicians busily engaged in hanging on to their personal power are actually better than capitalist executives busily trying to keep their wealth and influence?

Of the people that study and work at the University, 30,000 stayed away from your recent demonstration and 7,000 went to see your antics, 95 per cent out of curiosity. Has it occurred to you to put the question to a vote, say at registration time or in some other way? 30,000 have already voted against you. At least 6,000 are questionable votes—either for you, neutral, or against you.

So long as someone is determined to use force to impose his will on another—no matter how good, no matter how right he may be—there will be war, and there will be a military.

The Viet Cong and their counterparts in other countries are the *direct causes* of wars because they initiate the wars for “liberation against their corrupt capitalist oppressors and exploiters of the peasants and workers.” They may be right, they may be championing a good cause, but they are the direct

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cause of the war in Vietnam, not the South Vietnamese or the Americans. The reaction to their attacks is the cause of growing military expenditures. The fear of communist takeover of the natural resources of the world, on which we depend, is the cause of the arms race. This fear is based on actual takeovers in Cuba and Vietnam, and in attempted takeovers in Indonesia, Malaysia, and other places.

You say that the military is growing out of control. So is the political power. The people have no control of the political power in the Soviet Union or in Cuba or in any communist country. Hence they have no control over the military either. Indeed, in all these countries, those who refuse to serve in the military are shot. The people have no control over anything anywhere in the world. They are sheep to be sheared, slaves to be used, completely expendable everywhere in the world. And they have always been so. Even your own followers are expendable. You hold their coats while you send them out to get beaten up, get arrested and put in jail, or even killed. You are no different from all the other power-seekers in history.

The best thing anyone can do is stay away both from your kind and their kind. Blend with the environment, attract no attention, do as little as possible, accumulate no wealth, do not shine, work quietly, help those who need help, play quietly, think, observe, wait until the sickness passes: the greed for wealth and power, for status and influence, the materialist mania,

the attention hunger, the thirst for recognition. Why not enjoy being ignored? Who needs the whole world for a friend?

Should you flit around like a restless mosquito, like the fly on the window-pane, and deceive yourself that by so doing you'll leave your mark on the world? Then you will find that the reporters, the TV producers, and the historians got you down all wrong. The mark you left is *their* mark, a product of their imagination created to make money, to increase their rating and circulation. It's not you at all. You never existed after all. You did not get through. You are forgotten. It is as if you had never been born.

So you want "relevant" courses added to the curriculum. Then why not advocate relevant courses, or relevancy in existing courses? Even R.O.T.C. can have a course on "The Evils of War," "The Underlying Causes of War," and "Long-Term Consequences of Wars." In the end those courses for which there is no demand will be dropped. You certainly will never hit the bull's-eye by shooting in all directions, or with a shot-gun.

Ironically, those who are least busy acquiring wealth, power, and influence are the ones who have more time to seek what is relevant. And what is relevant is something each of us must find for himself. No course and no professor can make anyone attain insight into himself or into what is relevant in nature. The entire outside world, and we ourselves, are all "nature," regardless of how artificial or man-made things may appear. If you do not see things in the context of nature you do not see them at all. No professor or book can make you see through the tangle of abstraction created by civilization in the form of language, values, customs, and cultural traits. All this you can do by yourself without taking a single formal course—by studying, on your own, the world of reality around you. The libraries are free if one wants to read what others have written *about* their impressions *about* their experiences and *their* world. People are available for conversation if one has relevant questions to ask.

The purpose of a formal university is to make sure that those who complete the prescribed courses are graded and certified, and those who don't are not. The graduation certificate is a ticket to a job in the system. It serves no other purpose. Some study for the grades and the certificate. Others study to answer questions they have in their minds about themselves and the society and the world they live in. Studying for grades and a certificate robs the student of spontaneity. He ends up doing as he is told to do by the professor and the administration. He can also graduate and still be thoroughly uneducated—having acquired a lot of information, a lot of conclusions ready-made by others, and nothing else. Free inquiry and free expression are not the road to a Ph.D. If you are not impressed by the greatness of Shakespeare, the English Department will conclude that you are an idiot, and flunk you.



The Garden as a microcosm

NO DATE; LIKELY OCTOBER 1970

I. THE GARDEN AS A PLACE OF PEACE.

When we are tense we go to the garden to see what's happening. A lot of things happen in the garden. New shoots sprout out of the ground or out of branches. New seedlings appear above the ground. Fruit grows and turns color; new flowers open. The unfolding is there in every growth bud and flower bud. Cells are growing, dividing, building (like bricks) and producing fascinating forms. Some large trees, like redwoods, begin life as seeds little bigger than a pinhead. Some large and beautiful flowers grow from tiny buds. The entire flower is already found in the bud, but is compressed to the size of a pinhead even

though it may grow to 12 inches in diameter. The genes and chromosomes contain the blueprint for all these forms, and they unfold before our eyes. The womb of the seeds is the earth. They lie on top of it and send their roots down into it. Earth, water, sun, and air is their womb. Contemplating the garden brings peace because here life is at work quietly without pretending to be what it is not, doing what it can. Concentrating on the wonders of the garden we forget ourselves.

II. THE GARDEN AS A PLACE OF BEAUTY.

From spring to fall and even through winter, you will find color, texture, warmth, coolness, fragrance, sculpture, and endless variety of forms, all in the space of a small garden. It changes as the light changes, and as the seasons change. Like a symphony there are quiet moments and great crescendos of color in spring, summer, and fall. The fall of the year is like the evening of the day at sunset. Winter may add sculptural beauty with bare branches seen against the sky or covered with ice or snow. Become aware of beauty. Take time to look. Don't hurry; enjoy it as you would any other pleasure. The birds add their song to the symphony of color.

III. THE GARDEN AS A PLACE OF HEALING.

Things get hurt in the garden. Insects, slugs, rodents, and birds eat leaves, stems, flowers, and seeds. But always the wounds heal. New growth replaces damaged wood and foliage and flower. In the chain of life one living thing lives by eating another. The bee takes the honey, the spider eats the bee, the wasp eats the spider, and some bird will eat the wasp. But even large wounds on trees heal. The bare earth is soon covered by weeds and grass, and the soil is held from being washed away to the sea. Even poisons placed on the earth by man are destroyed by soil bacteria and water bacteria, by the sun and by oxygen. One pest destroys another, and life goes on.

IV. THE GARDEN AS A PLACE OF STRUGGLE.

Plants are not as passive as people think. As they grow, the strong ones kill the weaker ones. As all search for the light, some are shaded out by others and they die. Some small plants live under the shade and protection of large ones. Some plants produce toxic substances in their roots which kill other plants around them. Many can kill just by choking other plants out with their heavy root systems. Plants defend their living space like any other living thing. In the garden you become a referee, an arbitrator. You prune here and there to keep a large plant from killing a smaller one. You become a judge, often an executioner. You remove a shrub or tree that is too greedy to protect some other plants. You act like a ruler or a god.

V. THE GARDEN AS A PLACE OF DEATH.

Death comes in the garden every day and every year. Annual flowers die at the end of the season. Blooms fade each day as others open. The birds and squirrels eat seeds and buds and fruit. Many plants die for one reason or another. Vandals could come and destroy the garden. The leaves die and fall to the ground. All these dead things add to the humus of the soil. Their substance becomes food for new growth in the spring. There is constant recycling of all substances if you leave the remains of the plants where they fall or make them into compost and put them back. The soil is never exhausted this way. Only when the dead matter is taken away for the sake of neatness do we see the soil becoming poor. To have more life some must die. Every seedling that sprouts cannot live to maturity. Out of millions of seeds only a few survive.

In the garden you will see, on a small scale, all that happens in the larger world. There are many failures in the garden. Seeds fail, plants fail, flowers fail, the gardener fails. Success is only here and there.

The beautiful garden is a product of a combination of what nature has to offer and the gardener's imagination. The gardener

dreams his garden, then finds plants, rocks, driftwood, and ideas that make the dream come true. In this sense the garden is like our lives. Our lives are a dream, and we set out to make some of that dream come true. As we dream, so we are, and as we dream our gardens so they become. To change the garden we must change our dream. ☛

The greatest human sin

NO DATE; LIKELY IN 1972

The greatest human sin is stupidity. “Forgive them, Father, they know not what they do.”

Human behavior is rooted in ancestral animal responses to hunger, danger, threat of danger, sexual urges, and early development of the concept of territory. Hence, humans, faced with the need for food when food is scarce, are capable of wishing the death of others who compete with them for food. The wish is the beginning of action. From death wish to murder there is only the need, the necessity to eliminate others.

The same occurs when humans are threatened or actually attacked. In the constant struggles for power, no weapon is spared, no device or trick is left unexploited.

In the pursuit of mates, the pattern occurs all over again. Hence wealth, power, and sex are the constant motives behind all our evil deeds. Often sheer boredom and maliciousness may be the motivation to action, but it is only a rehearsal for later use in the struggle for survival.

Nature has provided a built-in cure for human boredom. The universe is hidden from man in such a way that only by patient and systematic observation and analysis can he discover how things function. Each discovery brings a thrill, and there is excitement in curiosity itself. Yet today we still have a lot to learn about the most common things.

There are individuals in all ages and all places who want only the best of everything during all their lives. They are at the same time unaware of the fact that what is the best is a question not yet answered, from the time of Socrates and even before. What is now being rejected may in another age be the best. In fact, the stone rejected by the builders may become the cornerstone of a future society.

A preacher once said that man's reason for existing is for nothing else than to glorify God. "Now," he said, "I have said it, and any one can say it; but only those who understand what it means to glorify God can enter the Kingdom of heaven."

And it is so with all the things we say and think we know. That if we really understood any part of the universe we would enter the Kingdom of God. There is no question but that we trespass and trample the Kingdom of God every day, but we are not aware of it.

Our bodies are in it and are part of God's kingdom, but we choose to stay out of it. In fact each of us creates his or her own kingdom in which we rule, or those we love rule. It is our own world, and we look no further. It is thus that learning can make one blind and another a fool, even in the midst of knowledge and wisdom.

Most humans become excited by virtue of chemical stimuli produced by the secretions of the internal glands. The glands stimulate growth activity in children, sexual attraction and mating, jealousy, rivalry, combat, conquest, love, sociability, and desire for power and importance. Most of our behavior is chemically triggered. We act as we do because of our glands.

Man is God looking at himself. Or, in other words, man is God's sight, hearing, touch, smell, *etc.* Man's view of the universe and himself is romantic and exciting. In loving life and loving others and loving nature and all creation, man glorifies God.

You cannot love God and hate life because God *is* life. You cannot love God and hate your fellow man and woman because God is them and us. We are all God. ☺

Give me your heart

FEBRUARY 20, 1972

Give me your heart, and I will treat it gently,
Like a bird that just flew in from the cold.
Come warm yourself by the flame of my love,
Little bird, and you'll be
Cold no more.

Give me your heart, and I will love it gently,
Like a bird that lost its song because
It was all alone.
Come close to me and the warmth of
My love will get you singing again.

Beat, beat, O heart of mine,
Sing a song of love and life.
Of life and love sing again,
As you did when you were young
And in love with every living thing.

Sing, sing, O heart of mine.
Sing a song of love and life,
Of life and love sing again
As you did when you were a child,
And you will never, never die.

It's blowing in the wind

SEPTEMBER 1976

Every so often someone is quoted as saying that the Jews have influence in this country out of all proportion to their numbers. The Jewish population has been given at 7 million counting only those openly professing Judaism as their religion. There are, in addition to these, those who do not practice the religion, and those who converted to other religions. "Genetic Jews," and "part Jews" are probably far greater in number than practicing Jews. So, in any case, the Jews in the U.S. are between seven and 14 million, and in the world between 14 and 30 million. The exact figures do not matter.

What matters is the part Jews have played and are playing and certainly will play in Western civilization. It is no small part, I assure you.

To begin with the Mosaic Law probably antedates Hammurabi's Code and very likely marks a turning point in the way society dealt with the problems of murder, adultery, dishonesty, *etc.*, besides appealing to God as the source of law to inspire people to obedience.

Then came a moral and spiritual teacher who founded Christianity, which spread a modified form of Judaism throughout half the world and became the basis of our present-day Western civilization.

Third, after several philosophers and writers on economics and other subjects came the author of Communism, to change a system which the Jews largely created: Capitalism.

Today, as always, one cannot hear music, classical or popular, without often listening to the works of Jewish composers performed by Jewish musicians. And if you study music, the chances that your teacher will be Jewish are high. In opera, the symphony, the ballet, the theatre, and popular musical comedy, or performing groups you will encounter composers, writers, directors, and performers that are Jewish—out of

proportion to their numbers in the population. If you search a little, you will find the people who finance all this also are Jewish. They may do it for profit, for pleasure, or for the love of art.

But wait, the same is the case if you go into the art galleries and look at painting and sculpture.

And in the fields of science, the Jews are doing well indeed. They cured us of polio and other diseases, and will very likely cure us of cancer and heart disease and so prolong our lives. They largely gave us nuclear energy, will very likely make it safe, and lead in the exploration of space.

If you go to all the universities, you will find outstanding professors who are Jews, in every field. In sciences, mathematics, psychology, and finance, and economics, they are tops, but no field is bereft of them. Medicine and dentistry are fields where they excel, as are biology, physics, *etc.*

Do you need glasses? Chances are your doctor as well as the optometrist are Jews. Do you need teeth? The case is the same.

In fact whatsoever you need and buy in any store, the chances are high you will buy from Jews, and that it was made in factories financed by Jews.

Now we come to one of the most influential elements in our society: money. The Jews know all about money and have known since antiquity. They became the world's bankers in the Middle Ages when the Church forbade Catholics to loan money at interest. The Jews had no such prohibition, and they were restricted in other fields of endeavor. It is no wonder that Jewish families became financial powers—often loaning large sums to kings and princes and suffering as a consequence of stratagems to avoid payment. In the end, they prospered.

Today, Wall Street is largely Jewish run, with the Irish a close second. It is said that most Jews go to school to prepare for a job they already have. Unemployment is rare among them, unless they strike out on their own.

The media are largely in the hands of Jews. Whether that is bad or good I cannot say. There are more Jewish writers in

newspapers, magazines, and books, in proportion to population than there are others. In television, at times, it seems we are in Israel. The sponsor, the producer, the director, the actors, and all or most of the supporting staff are Jewish. In the movies there were times when even the Indians and the Mexicans were Jewish. An actor, of course, can play any part, if he is talented.

In the field of law there are many fine and even great Jewish lawyers and judges, as well as professors. In government they are great at all levels, and often serve as advisors to the president. It would be hiding the truth to say that they do not have influence out of proportion to their numbers in the population.

In fact the question to ask is why Jews should want to hide the truth. Many change their names, often giving up beautiful musical names for plain American substitutes. Some have their noses straightened and their hair bleached or dyed. But of course they would be foolish to give up the best of their Jewish values. Some traits persist because they are good. Anthropologists can spot them at once, as can linguists and sociologists. No one can hide completely, for then he or she would disappear, or else would become an imitation of something else. The most beautiful Jews are the ones that retain their Jewish names and behave like true Jews. They are a great people and have been and will be a great force and a light in Western civilization.

Fear of anti-Semitism is probably at the root of all the disguises and precautions. It is unfortunate. There is a mixture of envy and of "the outsider" in the attitude toward Jews, in the minds of non-Jews. It is as if the Jews had come from another planet and were subtly taking over the earth. As if genes from a highly civilized people in another world had been implanted in earthlings, and from them grew the Jewish people. Their talents, intelligence, energy, persistence, and thoroughness are at times beyond those of the rest of the species here on earth. They have led the march of civilization, and they will probably someday take a journey on space ships to repeat their success in the planet

of their origin. They have been like leavening and have made civilization rise.

The animosity toward Jews is probably animal in origin. They don't help things by keeping themselves separate, but then if they had mixed and been assimilated, their heritage, both genetic and cultural, might have been lost.

If we wanted to accelerate the civilizing process in some planet where all "humans" were still in the Stone Age, we would probably do the same. We would send "teachers" by implanting fertilized eggs in the native women. Then they would grow as their own. As they grew we would secretly teach them, by stages, until they could proceed mainly on their own, after several generations. Without this, civilization might not develop for millions of years, or it might develop only destructive forms.

The advance of a civilization can be judged not only by its technologies but by how it attains resolution of human conflict and achieves just and fair distribution of goods, services, privileges, rights, and honors among all the people. The way creativity is released, opportunities provided, the imagination unbound, and the truth made supreme, would distinguish such a culture.

The love-hate relationships are unavoidable. Humans will always love some things and fear and hate or avoid others. It is impossible not to identify some persons with some of the things loved or hated. Only awareness of the nature and sources of our feelings and values can enable us to forgive and change hate to love.

In any event the influence of the Jews in many aspects of our lives, such as the media, finance, religion, philosophy, science, music, medicine, trade, and commerce, *etc.*, cannot long remain hidden. All efforts to hide it will only make things worse. In a socialist society, the problems may be different. I don't know. But in our society the non-Jewish part of the population may react emotionally to a situation which resembles what Hitler described as the "Jewish Problem." In a non-racist society, however, the

solution may need go no further than to say, "Alright, stop favoring Jews over non-Jews in providing opportunities of all kinds where you have the power to hire, fire, recommend, promote, train, evaluate, advertise, publish, assist, protect, tolerate, benefit, defend, encourage, stimulate, *etc.*"

The Jews stand accused of teaching the inside workings in all kinds of fields to the children of Jews. Often uncles, aunts, friends, and connections will motivate a young person by guaranteeing a place in their business or organization. The truth appears to be that often the Jewish candidate is the best qualified. It may be that motivation, as well as native intelligence and ability, plus good training and education, made him or her qualified.

Even within families we see parents favor one child over another and thereby stimulate the success of one and hinder that of the other. In dealing with your own, it is easy to treat outsiders with diffidence when you are a teacher, a professor, an employer, or head of a department of government. That does not even take into account financial aid. Of course, this is a big order. To expect the Jews, who often are like an extended family, to treat Jews and non-Jews alike is probably impossible.

Nonetheless one might ask whether the mission of the Jews on Earth is to civilize only their own and get rich and enjoy a high standard of living, or whether their mission is really to civilize the gentiles, as Christ intended. The Kingdom of God may very well be an ideal civilization based on Christian principles and ideals restated as Tolstoy attempted in his *Harmonization of the Gospels*. That the Jews have not been left out of the process is attested by all their contributions towards a more just and true society up to now. Their separate course from Christianity may have been for the best since they preserved traditions that would otherwise have become lost.

If the so-called Christians were to become true Christians there might be no problem. But so long as Christianity is not genuine there is danger. There is also danger from non-Christians

who might find it to their advantage to adopt an anti-Semitic stance.

If tomorrow all the Jews in the world were to migrate to Israel, the world would lose a great deal. In all fields, great and capable men and women would leave gaps impossible to fill. Even if they were not allowed to take their wealth, the loss would be tremendous. It is indeed fortunate that Israel will not be able to absorb all of them for some time, and that the majority do not want to go, unless forced. For the world, the tragedy would be worse than for the Jews. ♣

Life without father

NOVEMBER 16, 1977

I have sympathy for the fatherless. I often cried when I was young because I barely remembered my own father. At the age of three, I lost him. He died from a ruptured appendix. The medicine of 1917 could not save him—though in a different city, under the best doctors, he would have lived.

Often I thought what life would have been with father. He was handsome, always well-groomed and dressed, and smoked a fragrant pipe. My mother says he was loving with all of us. There had been eight, but two girls and a brother died before he did. So we were two males and three females. I was next to last.

We were well off economically. I remember the houses we lived in. All had gardens, orchards, swimming pools, many rooms, and servants. When relatives came they stayed for days, and we were never crowded. Christmases were big get-togethers. I had so many toys I can't remember ever wanting anything—that is until after father died.

Mother knew nothing about business or money management. Relatives and friends borrowed heavily from her inheritance and the insurance money. They never repaid. She also invested

unwisely, believing that all businessmen were honorable. She lost large amounts. In time, we ended up as poor as our poor neighbors that used to call for leftovers and hand-me-downs.

I found out some of what the slaves suffered when I first went to work picking beans, cotton, or whatever was in season. After school and on Saturdays, I went with my cousins, also poor, and worked. During the summers we worked ten hours each day, stooping at back-breaking labor, for one dollar a day. I resolved to go to school and learn a trade or a profession, or to go into business. The Depression hit, and I found myself fortunate to be asked to work by the fathers of my friends and their friends.

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I had no connections.
I was alone in the world.*



I grew up without the restraining hand of a male model. Mother could only object to the obvious. I was otherwise free to do as I pleased. I tried drink but didn't like it. Marijuana smelled too sweet. While other young people were using cocaine, I even disliked tobacco. And sex, which was the main subject of interest among my friends, seemed a bit messy. I felt sorry for pregnant girls, and even the married women seemed to be getting a raw deal. Taking care of homes, husbands, and babies was indeed a chore.

I found a lot out while baby-sitting for my sisters. One uncle and aunt had eleven children. It was a continuous struggle to ward off starvation, but they had two more before he had himself

sterilized. A doctor he worked for did it for free. All eleven children took care of their parents until they died.

Instead of a father I had friends. None of them played the role of father. I grew up detached from the cultural ways of responding to situations which fathers impose on their sons. I did what I did without any pressure from anyone. I had no connections. I was alone in the world. No one of my relatives could help me financially or with their counsel. Alone, I became a banana planter, and alone, I left the plantation to go to college at twenty-nine.

My marriage was an accident. I didn't plan it. My girlfriend was in love with me, but I felt only friendship. I looked at her as a person, not as a sex-object, but she wanted to be a sex-object and wanted it passionately. Our first night of love was like exploring a cave or some unknown garden. Curiosity and wonder had more to do with it than passion, on my part.

She became pregnant, and we made plans to marry. It was the expected thing, even though most of the couples in the area were not married. Her father and brother arrived one day and made it clear that if we did not marry, I would not live long. The honor of the family required it. So accident decreed that I marry. I never freely made the decision.

The marriage never took hold of me. My wife was aware of it. Always, as far as I can remember, I have reverted to the state of automaton when I am pressured into doing something. My heart is not in it unless I make the decision freely. At the same time, I felt I could walk away, anytime, and not feel guilty or ashamed. I felt free and not bound by any agreement I was forced to make.

I have all my life remained an outsider in society—always observing the strange customs, even participating in them, but feeling not part of anything. In fact most of what society regards as custom, tradition, and culture fails to move me, and is irrelevant though at times interesting and sometimes beautiful. I have seen men and women come close to deadly violence and suicide over failure to fulfill some requirement proving their

manhood or their belonging. All this to me meant no more than observing a primitive tribe.

This detached view of society and people around me led me to automatically discount religious beliefs, customs, rituals, patriotism, and other attitudes that many held dear. But I showed no contempt or even indifference. I felt how others felt and sympathized. At funerals I could not cry in the same way or for the same reasons. Death to me was as natural as the fading of the flowers in the meadow. Death is inside us all the time. It comes as a surprise. The wonder is the way people accept it, and the sadness is how terrified some are of it.

I have always been aware that others feel and know of my detachment. "Nothing ever bothers you," they have said to me. I stand outside the storms. I barely feel the warmth of their pleasures and the bitterness of their pains. Culture has invented many joys, but also many traps and painful snares. I manage to walk over all this without being caught or hurt. In a corner of my mind, I am aware of the idiocy of certain customs and habits even while I sympathize with those who practice them. Their lives are like play-acting. They go from one scene to the next, and the doom falls inevitably because that is the custom. I am the only one in the audience.

Had my father lived he would have naturally and without great ado initiated me in all the ways of his people and his class. I would have lived like all the others, going through the same stages, as custom decrees. I would have become a player in the dramas of family and community life. I would have been denied the wider view from offstage, where I can see all kinds of people, without being affected by their particular ways of responding to life's situations. ♻️

What is my mission?

APRIL 1978

Most of us have wondered and asked ourselves what our mission on earth is. We can surmise a special mission, individually assigned to each and every person who has ever lived and will live. Or we can postulate that we are each born with certain talents and inclinations, and that by following these and developing them, the fruit of our labors will fill a need in society, or even in humanity.

It could be that relatively few individuals doing “their thing” will, apparently by chance, move civilization ahead. Society’s leaders, however, see to it that certain goals they have set are attained, at least by a sufficient number. Those in charge tend to select, among their relations, friends, and people they like, those who will be encouraged, financed, and guided to study, learn, and become the top candidates for the best positions. Inevitably there will be thousands—or millions—who aspired to such positions, worked their way through school, got little encouragement, and after much effort and sacrifice failed. They ended in positions below what they desired and prepared for.

They learned in the process that it pays to promote yourself, to create an image of success, and to cultivate the right contacts among those already on top. Money also helps, as does the help of friends and relatives. The failures of our society are the potential revolutionaries who will someday join movements to overthrow the people in power, or the entire system.

The causes of failure are often listed as laziness, lack of intelligence, stubbornness, unwillingness to follow orders, and others. But we can learn more by looking at success. From the time I was 11 years old, I had to work part-time during the school year, full-time during vacations. I learned while working for farmers that those who had connections with the shippers always sold their crops, even when production was in excess of demand. The shippers could buy only part of the crop of Japanese

and Mexican farmers, but they would buy all of the crops of their friends. The price also varied.

Later when I went to work for a cannery owned by German immigrants, I noticed that all the best positions in the business were filled by Germans. In time I went to work for a store owned by Jews. All the top jobs were filled by Jews. Outsiders were hired only for the menial jobs or for some job no insider could do. I have no doubt that this is a universal tendency.

Those individuals who have no connections with the people who own and manage businesses are less likely to be hired and to remain in the better positions or to be promoted. In the universities those students who have connections with the administration and the faculty will be encouraged and helped more. The victims of indifference suffer a subtle discrimination and are sifted out of the competition. They end up as semi-failures or failures, alienated, because no one really cares about them.

The stranger, the outsider who has no family or friendship connections, is left out in the cold. If he or she marries into a well-connected family, things may turn out well, or he or she may develop a friendship with someone well-connected. Otherwise he or she has a good chance of failing.

The unconnected and the alienated are the raw material waiting to be welded together into the machinery for a revolution. Violence is the natural product of frustration. Pleasure heals the pain of failure for a while, but after a time only violent overthrow of the monopolies of power and wealth will suffice. Society has failed to be a father, mother, brother, and sister to the lonely disconnected. They will form their own brotherhood and, with the right leader, take over power and crush their enemies.

Why should a Jew give a job to a Gentile when Jews are waiting in line for it? Why should a Black hire a White man? Why should a Gentile hire a Jew or a Black or a Chicano? If jobs are scarce everyone favors his own kind. Human prejudice and favoritism are both part of each person's culture. Only a strict quota

system can neutralize the effects of personal likes and dislikes and preferences. The executive who seeks sexual pleasures hires potential bed partners first and workers to do the necessary work second. Those who do not play the game are left to do the work.

Success and failure are measured by the standards of each society. The losers are judged as of little value. By other standards they may be more valuable than the winners. Not all winners are original, or even honest. Many take ideas from others and use them as theirs. Many cheat, misrepresent, and even defraud others and steal. Their success hinges on the fact that they are not caught.

In most societies an honest person would seldom succeed. In fact a very honest person would not be trusted at all. He or she would make enemies. Anyone demanding justice, compassion, and mercy would be crucified. If instead of keeping technology secret you let others have it, you seldom get rich. Neither will you get rich if you are content with a reasonable profit, interest, or wage, rather than all the traffic will bear.

The so-called failures of this world may be the real successes. They may represent the future kind of human who is less aggressive, less competitive, and more concerned with what is good for others, than the successful types.

There is, after all, a certain stupidity in the accumulation of wealth beyond one's needs. Lighting cigars with \$100 bills, losing money gambling, paying women millions for their favors, wearing expensive clothes and jewels, riding in luxurious cars

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and sailing million-dollar yachts, and even living in palaces is no more than self-indulgence, a childish behavior.

A grown-up man or woman can hardly be honored for excessive and wasteful consumption.

On the other hand, managing money or a business to produce needed goods or services for the benefit of society can be interesting work, or even regarded as a game. But when profit is the main motive, it becomes a modified form of war and conquest. Inevitably deception, concealment, and even criminal acts become necessary to extend and preserve a little empire. Money corrupts as much as power, and it can do it in small ways as well as wholesale.

In time the deprived, the have-nots, will blame the rich for their plight, and usually they are at least partly to blame. Envy and hate lead to violent acts as surely as greed. When properly organized, the poor and their sympathizers will attack and revolution will tear society apart. The next step is a fascist state or totalitarian communism. There is nothing left between once democracy is destroyed.

The destruction of democracy is brought about by rich people using their money to pay for political campaigns—buying votes—thereby obligating congressmen and senators, the executive, and even the judiciary. Work is begun early on the young, helping them through school. Universities are corrupted with grants, students with scholarships. The best brains are brought into the services of the rich. Democracy becomes a farce.

The mission of the individual is to seek the truth. The truth is seldom clear, seldom black and white. We seek the ideal state where all the citizens have enough to satisfy their needs, and no one hoards any excess. We seek justice for all, equal under the law, tempered with mercy. We seek care for the less fortunate, the sick, the handicapped, and the aged. We seek a state where all are one another's brothers, fathers, mothers, and sisters. Where no one is a stranger, an outsider, an enemy.

“Love your enemies” means just that, love the outsider, the stranger. For so long as we persist in loving only our kin and kind we will not achieve peace in this world. We cannot long remain indifferent to strangers. We need to adopt one another. ☛

Pessimism in daily life and thought

APRIL 1979

It takes the power of will and constant determination to be optimistic in our society, and probably in most societies. Individual experience tends to support the expectation that the worst, or at least something not good, will happen at every turn. Pessimistic reaction may be mild, being no more than that no good or very little good will come.

The work situation is one of the richest areas for pessimists. No matter if you are never late, never absent, and do your job faithfully, you will seldom, if ever, be commended or praised. Recognition is for others, such as relatives, friends, friends of relatives and friends, members of the boss's church or club, whites, and persons who hold conservative political views.

If changes are made, they will be for the benefit of the employer, not the employee. Negotiations, if they exist, are doomed to failure. Wages will increase only months or years after prices and the general cost of living increases.

Friends will deceive you, betray you, and abandon you. Your relatives will take all you have, and give you nothing. You are robbed at the marketplace wherever you buy anything. The world is full of crooks. You need a lawyer every time you sign anything.

Every time you have a holiday or take time off, it rains. On the road you see others speeding, driving through stop signs, spilling garbage, *etc.*, and there are no patrol cars. But *you* step on the gas, and there they are.

Chance means you are more than likely to lose. Good luck means you have less than an even chance to win. You expect little or nothing from others or from nature, and when something good happens, you think it's a freak. The fact that it happened means it will never happen again.

A history of pessimism is impossible to overcome. A crook meets a true friend, so he robs him because he doesn't believe it. A friendly soul is robbed, but he continues to be friendly, hoping

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to find a lifelong friend—the height of optimism. An abnormality in a world where no one trusts anyone.

The most brilliant minds of any age have seen the world as more evil than good, and evil more likely to happen. Yet all calamities at any time effect only a small portion of the world's people. By being scattered over the available land, the probability of many being killed or injured is lessened.

Today, as always, the greatest enemy of man is man, not the other animals or diseases or natural

catastrophes. Humans are the worst enemies of humans.

If one analyzes the basis of most conflicts and disagreements, one finds they are based on erroneous thinking. At the root of much human conflict and suffering is the belief that one should acquire all he can of the world's goods and not share anything with others, no matter how great their need is.

People are organized as families, groups, parties, religious sects, clubs, gangs, *etc.*, and as such they discriminate in favor of their own kind and against outsiders. Group then is set against group, sect against sect, class against class, race against race, and nation against nation. The differences among all such people are largely imaginary and superficial. They are emphasized for

the purpose of excluding non-members from the rights and privileges members enjoy.

For this reason the Christian ethic as taught by Christ himself, in his own words, is the only way that can save humanity from the endless cycle of conflict and mutual destruction.

Evolved patterns of behavior lead to competition, overpopulation, constant conflict, war, and insufficient production of the means of livelihood. Only intelligence can find the means to attain sharing, population limitation, accommodation, and the peaceful resolution of differences, and productivity to provide an abundant life.

All of this is within human reach, if we can get over emotionally charged erroneous thinking patterns, at least most of the time. ♻️

To Mr. Lloyd Cooney

MAY 1979

Dear Mr. Cooney,

I watch your little TV editorial sometimes. I get a cramp and can't get up to change channels. I am writing because I have nothing to say about your opinions on any subject.

However, my dog has something to say. She says when she makes a fuss it is always about something—cats or dogs or people outside, rats in the woodpile, or a squirrel. But you seem to make a fuss about nothing.

Once you said you didn't want homosexuals teaching your children in school, or anywhere else, because homosexual behavior is forbidden in the Bible. But the latest studies on sexuality say 65 to 70 percent of Americans engage in fornication or adultery. I take it you don't want adulterers and fornicators teaching your children either since the Ten Commandments specifically forbid it.

You have expressed concern about the leniency of judges in dealing out sentences to burglars and other criminals. But I have never heard you come out for stronger laws against sellers of houses, cars, and other products and services who misrepresent the condition and value of their merchandise and rob Americans of billions every year. The crimes committed by the rich and the powerful on the weak and poor are never your subjects.

Everywhere there is evidence that employers favor persons who are like themselves in appearance, education, culture, and religious and political outlook. They also favor relatives and friends. Yet this great area of discrimination is hardly touched by our laws and certainly not by you.

Injustice stalks the land. Employers pay their workers 1960 wages and charge 1979 prices for their products and services. The economist David Ricardo said that is the way to make a profit and businessmen have a divine right to do it, or a “natural” right. Yet the only time we hear from you is when labor unions demand that wages be brought up to date since they always lag behind the cost of living.

One good thing about your editorials is that your listeners have the opportunity to tell you what your employees have been dying to say, but are afraid to.

As you probably guessed, I have been writing these notes over a period of time, with the help of my dog. My dog has a keen sense of what is important. Since she is spayed, she leads a thoroughly moral and clean life. She exerts herself only for a clear and definite purpose, such as chasing a cat who invades her territory, going out, and being ready at meals. Otherwise she has a thousand ways of relaxing. She is one of the better gurus I know. She is very loving and always appreciates being petted, something often lacking in some humans. One thing she does is project more feeling of friendship and affection than a lot of people.

Your views on pornography leave me wondering. Some young people I know never actually learned about sex until they saw

one of the really educational porno movies or books. One young couple went through several books on sex and still had no idea what the art of loving is. Of course, a lot of porn is just trash, but with the trash the censors want to throw away the great comic masterpieces like “The Immoral Mr. Teas” and so many others. I am afraid until sex education really comes out in the open, the porn stores will be the best places to get all the information.

My dog does not pretend to know anything. She just guesses and gambles when she thinks she smells or hears a cat, *etc.* It turns out that when I reach any conclusions they later turn out to be mere guesses based on incomplete information. The more certain I was of my position, the more ridiculous I feel later. I have been waiting for you to do the same.

God, dear Mr. Cooney, is unchanging, but this world is not. Those of us who appear to change our opinions with every change of wind do so because every fresh breeze brings new facts in this day of scientific surveys and computers.

We know now, without shadow of doubt, that Blacks were not created to be the servants of Whites and are as intelligent and talented. We also know how the rich got rich and are getting richer, and it is not by performing great and valuable services for society. We also know why the poor are poor, and we would like to have you come up with ideas on helping the poor get training and jobs to get them out of poverty. ☹

Tomorrow may never come

SEPTEMBER 1979

Tomorrow may never come. Nevertheless, I'll plant a garden. There will be string beans, tomatoes, and lettuce. Some peas, a bit of squash, a few carrots, onions, and radishes. Plus a few flowers for color to brighten the summer.

I will care for the apples, pears, plums, figs, grapes, raspberries, and strawberries, even though tomorrow may never come. We have enjoyed wonderful fruit in the past. Either we or others will enjoy it next year. Some will be preserved for later use.

We will set aside money for the grandchildren's education, and keep up our health insurance. We look forward to a bright future for our children and for ourselves, even though some say tomorrow may never come.

We are not young anymore. In fact, for sixty-five years the tomorrows that might never come have been arriving on time. Most have been good and many were bright, sunny days. Fruitful days, days of flowering, of friends, of loving and laughing and caring.

So no matter what they say, I will continue to look forward to tomorrow for me and my children and their children and for my country and the world. It's a good bet because already 23,725 tomorrows have come and gone, and nearly all of them were very good. ☺

The dead man's story

SEPTEMBER 1979

As my mother told the story, my father ordered wagons and a carriage to move us out of La Rosa, the hacienda where several generations of Rodriguez and Naharros had lived.

Mother and father and my sisters Ofelia and Aurora and brothers Roberto and Juan rode with father and mother in the carriage, the boys in front with the driver, Manuel. The Arabian hybrid horses pulled the carriage with grace at an easy trot. According to news brought by friends, the revolutionaries would be at La Rosa looking for food and valuables and money the next day. They had already extorted money from several hacendados and killed them afterwards. Perhaps the town of Saltillo, to the east, would be safe. The wagons followed with only the best of the furniture and other household goods and clothes.

After four hours the horses seemed tired, but the city was in sight. We crossed the stone bridge across the dry arroyo and entered the dusty street called Lerdo de Tepader, after one of the heroes of Mexican independence. Our house was ready on the Calle de los Baños (bath street), named for the many homes that had swimming pools used to store well water for irrigation. The water was always cold, but on hot days young people would swim.

In a day or so, all was moved in and arranged. Then father got the news that our family accountant was at the point of death. Father rushed to his house and learned that a group of revolutionaries had robbed the bank where our family's money was deposited. The accountant had been caught by the revolutionaries, beaten, then shot. Friends found him still alive but unconscious.

My father wanted to know if any of our money had been withdrawn as he had ordered and where it was. Don Octavio lay, breathing peacefully. My father sat by his bed and talked to him

in the hope that Don Octavio could hear him. The man's family left them alone.

"Don Octavio," my father said softly near his ear, "I need the money you withdrew, if you had a chance to withdraw it. It is all I have in the world now. Can you tell me where it is?" Don Octavio did not move, but his eyelids moved as if he were dreaming. My father then said, "I will mention several possible hiding places. Move your eyelids once for *no*, twice for *yes*." He then began.

"You had the money in the black metal box I use to keep it?" To his surprise Don Octavio moved his eyelids twice. Father smiled.

"You hid it in the well?"

No was the answer.

"You buried it?"

No.

"You put it in a wall?"

No.

"Is it under water?"

No.

"Is it in the outhouse?"

Yes.

"Under the seat?"

No.

"In the roof?"

No.

"Oh, no," said father, "is it under all that crap?"

Yes.

"Well," said father, "we will have to dredge the old outhouse, but fortunately the metal box will be easy to clean."

He and mother took a bent pitch fork and soon fished the box out. Buckets of water plus soap and disinfectant washed the box. All the money was there—our entire fortune. With that we lived in Saltillo until the revolution was over, even after father's death from a horse fall.

Don Octavio died a few hours later. In those days there was not much doctors could do. He never recovered consciousness. 🚫

Window on the world

SEPTEMBER 1979

The firs and madronas are the last survivors of the great conifer forest that once covered this land. My next-door neighbors have western white pines and western red cedars. There are also Pacific dogwoods. On the ground, salal and Oregon grape, the native ground covers, still survive in clumps here and there with sword fern and lady fern. A few red huckleberries and red currants remain.

The rest of the trees and shrubs are intruders brought from other parts of the world. Some are from Japan, like *Pieris japonica*, and others from Chile or China, like *Escallonia* and *Rhododendron Loderi*.

The Japanese maples yell at you in the fall with loud red foliage. The fig trees remind you of the Mediterranean. How well they have adapted to this cool, rainy climate!

The apples and plums look like dwarfs in front of the tall firs. In bloom they are a sight to make me forget whatever depresses me. In fruit they are proof of nature's generosity. The garden is full, too full, of everything. Yet this year, Rochester peaches that only got six hours of sunshine tasted good, so did raspberries and pears, strawberries and peas, beans and tomatoes, as well as plums.

A flock of sparrows, about 60, is out on the Mugho pine, and now and then they scatter on the neighbors' lawns and peck at seeds and insects. They land on roofs and return to the telephone wires. They must have flown from the north. What grace and eagerness they display in their flying and feeding.

There is in all these living forms an essential equality. They all have a place in the ecology. Some are directly useful to man, but all are important in some unknown way.

At home, and in the garden, there is a world of things to see and do. There are soil preparation and planting. Constant care is required. One cannot go far, but must return to water,

weed, and train plants. Then comes harvest time. From June to October something ripens. Strawberries, raspberries, plums, figs, peaches, pears and apples, even grapes, all must be canned or frozen. A few go into jams. It ties you down. You have little time or opportunity to burn gas on long trips. You need less from the store. You are more self-sufficient.

If you love good books, you make friends with the authors who share their experiences and their thoughts with you. You visit distant lands, vicariously. You travel to the planets and the stars. You delve into the lives of microscopic flora and fauna.

You see civilization as a temporary tenant, barely holding its own against the invading weeds and forests. All is kept up through constant repair and maintenance. Neglect it for thirty years, and most of it will have crumbled and rotted. Rust and corruption, to say nothing of vandalism, will destroy neglected property in a lifetime, if not less. Civilization is literally held up by the hands of workers. It must be renewed constantly.

It is the same in nature. The stately old firs will rot and die, or be cut down before they fall. New ones will be planted, or come up by themselves. Nothing is forever, except seeds and the genetic material they enclose. From these blueprints, new copies will spring, always new.

My life is a window on the universe, but I don't need to see it all. A part of it illustrates all its essential elements—with a bit of garden, meadow, swamp, river, sea, forest, and sky, you have the entire universe before you. It would be almost the same on a planet around the farthest star.

There may be a planet with a very dense and moist atmosphere, where all living forms float in the air. Shallow seas cover the entire surface, leaving a few islands. Monsters float, wallow, or fly, and the water and air are full of nutrients. But life forms will obey the same laws as they do here, even if they reach into different possibilities.

The air is quiet, and I wonder how it is that the earth is not constantly torn apart by violent storms all over. The gentle rain

falls as if trying not to disturb or damage the tender seedlings. The largest part of the earth is warmer most of the time. A very large portion is temperate, what we call air-conditioned. Only about a third is cold during each winter in each hemisphere. The variations are just right because we are adapted to them.

Yet in the hot climates humans feel and act as if they did not belong there; as if they had been transplanted from a milder climate. In Spring and Fall, in temperate climates, when it is around 70°F everyone remarks about the nice weather. In winter, many complain about the cold, but most don't mind it. Many enjoy being outdoors in the cold. Did we evolve at 70°F average, and is that why we prefer that temperature?

At above 105°F we die, unless we can cool ourselves most of the time. We perspire and seek the shade and go into water or caves. Cold forces us to seek heat. We are like strangers on the planet earth, not adapted to it like most other animals. Perhaps we already evolved and adapted to living in houses and wearing clothes and even to air conditioning.

Colonies in space are already in the near future. Fragile humans, blobs of stiff bone and protein, will colonize other planets, or at least influence life on them, someday.

We already know about the effects of human interference in ecologies on earth. We know the effects can be worse on other planets. We cannot resist the urge inside us to explore, learn,

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and seek adventure, profit, and glory. But we are like the bull in the china closet, awkward and careless. Still, we will learn. We will be humble and not come down as gods upon some less advanced beings, but as brothers, offspring of the same Life that pervades the universe.

He who has seen the truth has lived and conquered even if he never went anywhere. Yet we must bear witness to the truth if it is to set us free. Philosophy and religion have been guessing games based on dreams, intuitions, and insights into the nature of the universe, humanity, and God. Science has placed or found definite markers in the real world that make clear what was once merely imagined. That Life is one. That the laws of nature are the same everywhere. That the universe is, on the average, an orderly place. That some useful predictions can be made. That we can save ourselves if we act reasonably on the basis of what we know. That all humans need one another, and no race is superior to another. That civilization can be learned by any and all. That variation is essential to the survival of Life and even of species. That we can apply reason and scientific methods to most fields of human activity. That we can build a better world, if we want to. ☯

Grandmother Honoré (Honorata)

OCTOBER 1979

My mother's mother was a slender, small woman, seemingly frail but strong as piano wire. Her philosophy was Catholic and uncompromising, but she did not hand out judgment. She always said, "God will judge," but she would add, "I myself think it is wrong to indulge in sexual activity, except to beget children. We are here for a purpose, and our duty is to do what the Lord commands us to do, whether we like it or not. We are not here to enjoy ourselves, but if we have some joy in our children and in the beauties of nature and in fellowship, music, travel, and our work, so much the better."

She would get up early and help the maid with breakfast, just to make sure things were done to suit the taste of each member of the family. She was not bossy. Some maids did not know how to handle the wood stove. They either had it smoking or too hot, wasting wood. Most garbage was carefully burned, even bones after our dog cleaned them of meat, gristle, and fat. Pigs ate leftovers, and the few chickens ate egg shells, leftover rice, and meat scraps.

Grandmother was constantly cleaning. If anyone dropped a match on the tile floor, or a cigarette butt, she picked it up in a tin can. It all went into the stove. She dusted, swept, and mopped any spot that needed it. When the maid cleaned the house it was already almost clean.

In the afternoons she would darn socks, mend sheets, pillow cases, underwear, pants, and shirts. She also read her prayer book and sometimes the Bible.

At night we would get her to tell stories about her childhood and early marriage when mother and our five uncles were young. They lived on a large ranch called Bitter Springs, Los Amargos, because there were mineral springs rich in Epsom salts. She was born in 1862 and died in 1954. The Industrial Revolution took place during her lifetime, and she saw many changes. The

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railroads, steamships, airplanes, radio, movies, TV, and two world wars, plus the revolution of 1910, all came during her long lifetime.

“Each new generation has been different from the last,” she would say. “The world is changing too fast.” An aunt, almost the same age and a sister of my father’s, used to say all such changes were things of the Devil. My grandmother did not agree. She believed new discoveries are ordained by God. Someone is born with the talent for invention and

discovery, and new ways of doing things are developed that save labor. It’s all in God’s plan, and in the end, all will benefit.

She even believed that criminal acts, such as robbery, pillage, graft, and corruption, sometimes result in good to the next generation. She told of a general who became governor of a state, stole money, lands, and houses, and then died. His children were able to go to good schools and became doctors, scientists, and lawyers. One became a musician, and a daughter became an artist. It is doubtful if any became crooks like their father.

Today the grandchildren have socialist leanings. A complete change can occur from one generation to another. The human mind leans toward freedom and independence rather than submission and conformity. Conformity has to be enforced. Each time the old generation is proven wrong by scientific truth, it loses respect and influence over the young. So, she would say, science tends to create a series of revolutions away from old beliefs and ways of doing things.

Grandfather Lalo had lived by gambling most of his life. He seldom had worked at a job but did some buying and selling with his extra cash. He was an expert on cattle, horses, carriages, real estate, and fighting cocks. He loved cock fighting and horse

racing, but mostly he bet on other people's horses. Because of grandmother's beliefs on sex, he had a mistress and had several children from her. Even in old age he was helping others and requiring no help himself.

He used to smoke a pipe filled with a fragrant mixture. I could smell it half a block away and hours after he left the house. His suit smelled of it. He was loving and generous. I learned the value of money from him because he would give me more than anyone else and then check on how I had spent it. He didn't care what I bought, so long as I got my money's worth.

He taught all his sons to trade. He would say, "You cannot always get a job, but you can always buy something that is undervalued and sell it at its true value." He used to say that most people, other than Jews, do not know the true value of most things. They do not keep up with the market and the value of money. Because of this, most people pay too much for what they buy. Then people in financial trouble are forced to sell what they own for less. The Jews understand this but few non-Jews do. Most Gentiles finding themselves suddenly rich spend their fortunes foolishly on wine, women, and gambling. They use neither restraint nor sense.

"The part of wealth that earns a living cannot be spent," he told me. "If one spends it, he will have to go to work for another, or steal, to live. Working capital is an investment, a machine that keeps one independent." 🌀

Living again and again (requiem)

OCTOBER 1979

The last of the luscious red plums is gone. Gone are the red-blushed peaches, the nectarines, and the strawberries. The dark red juicy cherries are gone. They are all a memory.

The apples and the pears will keep even after the grapes are gone. A memory of figs and raspberries remains congealed in jams. The fruit leathers speak of a fine harvest. The perishable juices, with just the right combination of tartness and sweetness, are gone.

It is winter, and I look out the window at the dogwood's naked branches, purple and gray. I don't know why I remember your kisses and your embraces, but more than that, I remember how just having you around was a pleasure. It was hard to imagine life without you. Now it is a memory.

Because of you I now know how to love. I can love the whole world: children, grown-ups, and old people. I can love nature: land, water, plants, animals, mountains, and valleys. I can love life. You taught me to love.

Life flows like a river in me, and I am in it. Life uses death to its own advantage. So old yet always young. So frail and yet so strong. Always born again; eternal. ♪

Fear

OCTOBER 1979

Fear can be provoked, or it can come by itself.

When I was a child I was frightened by loud noises—train whistles and gun shots, for instance. I was afraid of the dark, and imagined monsters in my bedroom. The shapes of clothes on chairs and bedstead became crouching invaders.

My dreams were wild. I flew, sometimes very low, grazing the rooftops of houses and walls, and trees, telephone poles, and wires. I was fleeing from people or monsters or fierce animals. I would strike them with stones and clubs, but I could not stop them. The pervading emotions were strangeness and fear and the sense of not knowing exactly where I was going. The way was a series of narrow roads; rickety bridges over great rivers; blind alleys that continued through houses and out to other blind alleys; steep climbs on roads, by car or truck, uphill and downhill; and rough roads, some impassable.

I did not fear my mother or my uncles or the soldiers that passed by; only the horses and large dogs. I had friends, and they were lots of fun.

I feared water, until I learned to swim. I was afraid of heights but not of climbing small trees.

I remember being afraid of some of my teachers and the bullies at school. I feared losing my best friends, but I was ignorant of other fears.

Father died when I was three, but I hardly remember. I remember Mother crying. She rubbed her sorrow like a new wound and would not let it heal. She could not understand why God took him away. She thought it was a punishment. It took me years to realize it was an accident, and it could happen to the good as well as the evil. People fall from horses. Rain falls on the just and the unjust.

Before my father died we were relatively well off, but Mother knew nothing about farming or investments. Previously, friends and relatives came and stayed with us for months, but now

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Mother feared that. At once she began to look for a smaller house. Six bedrooms were too many, and she could not afford guests.

When I was twelve a black boy named Travis, tall and wiry and about 14, put a razor to my throat from behind, and looked into a store window. He said, "don't move, or I'll cut your throat." I knew he was just kidding, but I was scared.

I must have been twenty, in the tropics, when I ran away from my brother's house. I had no money, but I walked all the way to Atlixco, southeast of Mexico City. It was an adventure in which fear played no part. Passing through Tierra Blanca a poor man who slaughtered pigs for a living noticed I was hungry (he knew the look) and took me home and fed me tamales and black coffee. His wife washed my clothes. The next day I went on to Córdoba and Orizaba.

A man offered me a drink in Córdoba, and I said I could use food more. So he took me to dinner and gave me 5 pesos. That was five days' wages for a peasant, but he was a businessman.

In Orizaba my boots lost the soles and a cobbler repaired them for one peso and gave me dinner. The hike up to the plateau was made easier by an Indian guide who took me up an ancient trail that cuts many miles off the railroad route. He left me that night in the hut of a friend who gave me beans and tortillas.

In Atlixco I took the train because I had developed blisters. I arrived in Mexico City and made my way on foot to my cousin's room in a rooming house. His landlady at once offered me room and board if I would teach her son and daughter English.

Every day I walked Mexico City streets in every direction, looking for a job. But 1934 was a year when unemployment was so rampant, there were a hundred applicants for every job. Yet, not once, was I afraid.

Returning to the tropics, a mistake, I worked for a Spanish plantation owner at La Magdalena on the Tesechoacán river. A tow boat ran the banana boats, called chalanes, up and down the river, and the operator gave me a ride. I went up to Playa Vicente to see an aunt of my sister-in-law's, but there was nothing

there but coffee and cocoa plantations. Some oranges, mangos, and bananas were also grown. I aspired to be a manager on a plantation, but I had no idea how little I knew about the business. I had read many books on the subject, but actually managing native workers was an art in itself.

Don Paco hired me and asked me to have my meals in his house. He had a wife ten years younger than himself and two daughters and a son almost my age. He was about 50. The workday began at 6 a.m. and ended at 6 p.m. Wages were two pesos for all but me; I got three.

Whether we were cutting bananas for shipping and bringing them to the riverbank, or keeping down the jungle growth that constantly grew in the rows 16 feet apart, or repairing fences to keep out cattle, or repairing roads or bridges over the many creeks, it was hard work.

It was then that Paudro came in one day, drunk and looking for me. He had a gun and claimed I had taken his job. I had no idea he had been fired from the same job. He was going to shoot me. I was terrified. I ran behind huge banana trunks but knew they were no protection. They are fiber and water and bullets go through them, barely slowed down. He aimed at me and pulled the trigger. The bullet hit a banana trunk a foot above my head. He shot again, wobbling on his legs on the soft ground, and again the bullet went too far to my right. Then the gun jammed. I knew it was probably a cartridge that had not been pushed all the way into the barrel, but all he did was pull on the trigger. Then he threw the gun on the ground and came after me with his machete.

The other men did not interfere until then. Then one went to the fence and cut a pole about five feet long and two inches thick and threw it to me. I took the pole and kept my distance from Paudro. I was a fair dancer and the waltzing and Pase Doble came in handy now. I outpaced him every time he lunged at me.

The machete in his hand shone as if it had been recently sharpened. To impress me he cut down a banana stalk that had

been harvested in one stroke. I moved around a large banana clump and maneuvered always a couple of feet away from the tip of the machete. He tried to be quick, but I was quicker.

At last I became cool and calculating. He swung hard and lost his balance as the weight of the machete took his arm all the way to his left. I lunged and poked him in the solar plexus with the tip of the pole. I put all my weight behind it, as we used to do in football when blocking or advancing. It knocked the wind out of him, and he fell on his butt. His eyes looked blank. I struck his wrist and the machete fell. I grabbed it. Then I looked for the gun. It was still where he had dropped it. I pushed the cartridge in and fired a shot in the air. He was terrified. Dazed and afraid he began to beg for mercy. "It was just a joke. I had no intention of hurting you." He may have been telling the truth.

I told him to go home. I would send the gun and the machete later. He left. The other men admitted they did not know what to do. All they could say was, "Paudro, don't do this. Calm down. You are drunk," but it had no effect. A few days later I fell ill with fever. Don Paco and his wife nursed me and gave me quinine. I recovered in a week but was too weak to work. I decided I would go to my brother's to recover. ☹

Obituary for myself

OCTOBER 1979

Dear friends, do not grieve. Death is part of life. Great forests grow only where many other plants and animals have died and enriched the soil with their substance.

Civilizations do not grow unless they change and discover new ways of doing things that are better than the old ways. But people used to the old ways refuse to change, and often change doesn't take place until they are dead. So nature, by letting us die, brings about change without violence.

In a world that is fast becoming overpopulated, each one who dies makes room for a new human being to fill his place. I hope those of you who come after me will love life at least as much as I did.

Ever since I can remember I found each day a wonder to behold and experience. Every flower, every insect, every animal, and every person were to me wonderful. The distant clouds over blue skies, the distant blue mountains, and the purple and brown foothills of my homeland fascinated me. I spent hours looking at them each winter when the peaks were covered with snow, and it was a greater wonder yet.

As I grew older I went to school and on hikes with friends. I found nature beautiful everywhere. I also found many loving friends, and they have been the greatest joy in my life.

Take care of yourselves and this spaceship earth. It is a wonderful and beautiful planet. Take good care of it. Don't let anyone destroy it. The Garden of Eden is here. We can make our own garden.

I believe Christ's teaching, His word, is also His spirit. He said if we love one another without exceptions or conditions and help one another, we will be like the Father and we will be united in Him. Then the Kingdom of God will become a reality. The Kingdom of Heaven is in ourselves. All we need to do is express it in love and help for one another. We are greatest when we are of service to others.

I thank God for the opportunity He gave me to see this beautiful world slowly evolving into the Kingdom of Heaven, as His will is carried out. It was a wonderful experience. The time will come when I have played my part, and must walk away from the stage. I leave you my love and my prayers for a better life for all of you. ☺

Depression

OCTOBER 1979

My optimism doesn't flag, but I see things through less than rose-tinted eyes. An undercurrent of faith in Life—and whatever keeps it going, the will to live, I suppose—keeps me from sinking out of sight into the abyss of darkness.

It is ironic that I should actually delight in episodes of depression. I suppose many do. It may seem masochistic to a few, but it is not.

The mind sees things differently in the darkened light of depression. Melancholy floods our inner being when tragic events turn our attention to the bad side of life.

I take a walk in the garden in the fall, and the leaves are turning golden and red while some trees are already bare. But seedlings of peppergrass and other weeds are emerging, confident that they will survive the winter and be ahead of other seedlings in spring. Fat iris rhizomes contain the flowers that are to emerge and bloom in June. Fall is but a readiness for spring, a waiting for winter to do its thing.

Were I to be perpetually brimming with optimism, I probably couldn't stand it. The cycles of euphoria and elation on one side, and sadness or melancholy on the other, may be no more than our mind's natural tendency to exercise itself over the full range of emotions and to look at the world from different perspectives and in different lights. It could be that our minds get tired of the monotone of perpetual cheerfulness, so valued in some societies.

Many people love to go to horror movies to experience fright. Or they go to see violence that vicariously lets them exorcise the anger they have built up against injustices or insults, real or imagined. Some harbor great hidden guilt feelings, often exacerbated by the moral and religious programming dedicated to making a great issue out of something that has little or no consequence to the individual or to others. Feelings of shame

abound. We live with the pain of loss of dear friends, lovers, and relatives; the sadness of poverty; and not having things we imagine are the greatest boon in life.

Yet the questioning mind will cast a shadow of doubt on all this. Are we responding to mere symbols devoid of reality? Yet, if we become immune to fear, anger, and sadness, are we not also in danger of becoming too cold to love others or even ourselves and life?

To feel or not to feel, that is the question ... ☞

Writing

NOVEMBER 1979

I will write only to write. I will write when I feel the urge to put something down in writing, as I am doing now.

It is no use writing to earn a living. That, for me, would be like breathing to earn a living. I write as my mind tells me to write, and my mind moves and thinks by itself.

I prefer to think that the authors I like to read wrote because they felt the need to put things down. A publisher saw what they wrote and decided to publish it. People bought their books because they thought they might be interesting.

A professional writer can make the commonplace interesting. Often his or her words are all there is to enjoy. They tell the reader little or nothing he didn't know or understand before. They are word craftsmen.

But I have no desire to create art, to glorify language, or to entertain with words. My aim is to communicate ideas and thoughts as laconically and economically as possible. ☞

Mercy

NOVEMBER 1979

Without compassion, the wheels of justice, attached to the axles of the law, will grind down everyone, sooner or later.

Those not protected by privileges of social class, money, political position, or other influence will become victims of the legal system. The police and the courts will use them as examples, while far greater offenders will remain free.

The laws are selective, discriminating in favor of the merchant, industrial, and financial classes. Only the lower-class criminals are arrested, tried, and imprisoned. Those who defraud the people of billions remain free. Large-scale criminal organizations are hardly affected. It is like cleaning around corpses at a morgue.

Mercy is made necessary by the fact that justice is seldom perfect. A one-time offender who repents will be a better citizen than one who never breaks the law.

The habitual criminal needs to be prevented from harming society, but while in prison he or she need not be made miserable. Their life should be made bearable and even profitable to themselves. ☛

For better or for worse

DECEMBER 1979

We are born, and fate begins to unreel. "Heredity is Fate," say the geneticists. It is true that our heredity places limits on our height, weight, skin color, musculature, propensity to diseases, and intelligence, among other traits.

The environmentalists say "Environment is fate." They are both right. Whether one is born in a desert, heat or cold, a rich plain, a mountainous area, by the river, or by the sea, all decides our fate.

We can do no more than what our environment allows us to do, and often it obliges us to do each day what we must to survive.

If this isn't enough, the anthropologists say that "Culture is fate." We are born into a society, and we are married to it, for better or for worse. If we rebel certain reactions follow. We are punished, isolated, ostracized, restricted, brainwashed, persuaded, molded, coerced, beaten down into submission. Every society has developed some code of ethics and standards of achievement and expects all members to conform. For the sake of variety, some deviations are allowed, but there is a limit. This preserves the identity of the group or nation and keeps it different from all the others.

We may choose to leave and go to another environment and another society, but there we have to conform to their set of values and goals. If we deviate, they are less tolerant because we are outsiders, and outsiders are tolerated, seldom accepted as native children.

We could form our own group, such as the many religious and philosophical societies that have sprung up over the years. Such groups develop their own ethics and goals. But they cannot deviate too far from the parent society, or they will be in trouble with the law.

Having others who share our ethics and goals provides dialog, stimulation, support, and strength against the outside world, but it does not guarantee that as individual persons we will always agree or find approval. Those who want to accumulate property want to protect it; those who do not, care not about its preservation. Those who want one mate faithful for life will come in to conflict with those who want to flit from one to another.

We can make decisions about where we live within our cultural range and national heritage and citizenship rights. Economics and our talents and education or marketable skills also are determinants. We dress within the range of tastes in our society. We eat also in accordance with that, and so we drink, mate, and enjoy sports and entertainment. Our religion can be private,

or it may be to our advantage to join a group. In general, our fate has been decided. It was decided long ago. The house is built. All we do is decide on the decor and a little remodeling.

As we look around we see lifestyles that would be impossible for us to follow. We see that others would not be happy living as we do. On just one element, music, I know two friends, one of whom loves classical music and the other is put to sleep by it. One loves popular music, and the other goes crazy with it. It jars his nerves, and he cannot tolerate it; he finds it monotonous. The other friend finds classical music monotonous.

Is life, then, no more than food, clothing, housing, entertainment, work, and play? Or are we part of a long process that has a greater goal than our personal goals? Every culture, at some time in its development, attempts to discover or invent some great purpose or goal for its adherents. To some it is the "correct life." To others it is the "good life." Whether it is the "happy hunting grounds," or the "Kingdom of Heaven," or "nirvana," most, in practice, behave as if the goals they really believe in are material improvement and status in the present or in the near future.

The idea of a heaven after death, or a hell, offers little comfort or deterrence to most. If we cannot convince ourselves and others that humans will someday develop a heaven-like civilization here on earth, then we have very little to go on.

With all our science and education, we might be brave enough to think, or even believe, that we can create a better world. If the world's oligarchies would allow more true democracy and stop sending their agents to destroy it in every developing nation, we might see improvement. Their corruptive practices have ruined governments and defeated justice since civilization began. The result today is that many choose to obtain help from communist nations and to steer their countries toward socialism and totalitarian regimes.

The harm done by such systems is that they fail to encourage, or actively restrict, individual initiative and creativity. All

activities are analyzed as political, and freedom is destroyed. A deadening loss of creativity takes over, and progress is retarded. On the other hand, those in power can allow freedom, as soon as they recover from their paranoia.

Anyone born today finds his or her fate waiting. There will be little he or she can do, except try to succeed at the game under the system into which birth places him or her.



My ambition

FEBRUARY 27, 1980

I search my heart and mind and ask myself: "If you could have whatever you desire, what would you ask for?" As I meditate on what I want most, I find I do not desire wealth or power. What I most desire is knowledge, understanding, and eloquence and clarity in writing. What I most desire is that humanity learn to live in goodwill and peace.

Perhaps conflict, war, violence, and all manner of strife are a necessary part of the development of civilization toward the ideal state. But then, I believe much conflict can be prevented. Differences can be settled without war, just as they are often settled after a war.

Victory does not grant the right, or even the power, to oppress the losers. In fact, war teaches us above all that to prevent war, injustices need to be redressed and differences resolved. Enmity and vengeance only breed more enmity and vengeance.

I would be happy if I were to be counted among the world's peacemakers. I admire any and all who have contributed to human progress. To champion justice is to champion peace. †

The enrichment of life

FEBRUARY 28, 1980

When I was young I was lucky. I grew up in homes that had orchards and gardens. My father and mother loved fruit trees, nut trees, flowers, and vegetables. They grew up on farms where a variety of things were raised.

I grew up watching flowers open, fruit ripen, and insects feast on nectar and fruit. I used to watch our gardeners at work. I would look at the mountains, blue and purple in the distance, and at the green and brown hills nearby. Everything fascinated me.

Along our street, horse-drawn carriages, wagons, and donkeys and mules passed by loaded with firewood, charcoal, or grain. There were autos, too, and trucks. Soldiers went by, and well-dressed neighbors on their way to church. Life was like a parade, and I watched it all.

When I went to school at six, my teacher read stories to us. She read history and also tales. She read poetry to us, and we memorized some. We drew and painted a lot. Later we were taught arithmetic and geography. I was fascinated by maps of other countries and our own. Pictures of other lands were a source of wonder. I still remember the pyramids of Egypt and a man on a camel. I remember a hop-field in Austria or Hungary, and a picture of the battleship Brooklyn in New York harbor never left my mind; it so impressed me.

I could never go by a flower without examining it closely. I also looked at people very minutely. I noted hair, eyes, lips, ears, cheeks, wrinkles, color, hands, and clothing. I was always impressed by the fine clothes of the rich boys and girls, but most of all by good-looking people, young or old.

Our English teacher taught us to read interesting stories. I loved Homer's tales about Ulysses and Troy and Agamemnon; *Alice in Wonderland*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and *King Arthur and the Round Table* were a joy. Later came *Huckleberry Finn*, Zane Grey, Sherlock Holmes, John C. Raffles,

and yes, even Shakespeare. Yes, Miss Thompson, you had a great influence on me.

My history teacher not only made history come alive, but she got me interested in psychology. In science our teacher showed us what nature does, and how it does it. He made astronomy an adventure. Geography also came to life. Our world expanded. My own took in the entire universe.

Only in math did I fail or fall short. I found out, at 29, that I am nearsighted. I was copying numbers wrong off the blackboard. I had the right answers, but the problems were not the same. I had lived in an impressionistic world and not known it. No wonder my friends saw small birds and insects in trees while I didn't.

All my life I have written my thoughts and feelings, often in verse. Little has ever been published. It does not matter. I do not hide my light under a bushel. I talk a lot and write letters to friends, but publishers must make money. It would help to have a relative or a friend who is a publisher.

Most of what is written is a waste of print and paper. When one distills the essence, there is little or nothing. The art of writing is to make the insignificant absorbing, interesting, exciting. It is like masturbation—a matter of technique and art. This is not to say that I do not admire good writing as pure entertainment; I do.

Great writing has substance as well as form. It can entertain and instruct at once. It is pleasure and wisdom, art without waste, a light into the past, present, and future of mankind through thoroughly examined individual characters and places.

Our lives are enriched if we are lured into reading by writers who entertain, above all. Nothing kills suspense in our daily lives so quickly as the assurance that tomorrow will be the same as today. Therefore, we redouble our efforts to make it different.

Nature is not the same every day. New flowers will bloom, new experiences will surprise us, new friends, or just new acquaintances. The artful writer makes us see change and movement even when nothing appears to move or change.

We need to look at our world like artful writers. We need to see humor and drama over the septic tank.

Above all our life is enriched by people. Even those we hate make those we love more precious. Those we like and love give us intense pleasure. It can be sex without sex, just pure thrill. Or it can be intimate. We are most promiscuous, and still innocent, when we can respond to people without actually being intimate. †

Irony of fate

APRIL 14, 1980

The ancients suspected that fate cannot be avoided, only modified. Some persons develop the idea that they can be whatever they wish and do whatever they want. They set out to build their lives according to design. They sometimes want to shape the lives of others around them, particularly their children. Imagine yourself as a child being molded by your father, mother, or both into what they want you to be. It is like being born into a dictatorship.

Some individuals in every population are born with more intelligence or energy or talent than others. A person who has intelligence, energy, talent, and ambition is going to achieve something. It is hard to imagine anyone stopping him or her. Great talents and genius have flourished in spite of their environment. In nature things come about often against all opposition. At the same time all the stimulation, aid, help, encouragement, training, education, coaxing, and forcing does produce some achievement, in some fields, but never a genius, and seldom what one recognizes as great talent.

Humans can, by willing it and working at it, change their personalities, particularly appearances and behavior. But inside, the person is essentially the same. He or she may hate his or her old real self and succeed in creating a different image, but the

real self is still there, suppressed, negated, shamed, rejected, and supplanted by a phony character that “succeeds,” earns a lot of money, and satisfies ambition.

Some individuals can appear to have escaped fate and some do effect dramatic changes. But in a population taken as a whole, and in the entire human species, the movement into civilization and achievement occurs through genetic production of talented individuals who, at a given stage in the development of a culture, flourish and produce the breakthroughs that will advance the species on the road to survival.

The survival of the human species hangs not only on the health of the ecologies of the earth that indirectly support human life, but on the course of human relations, the enjoyment of life, and the refinement of technologies. The will to live is instinctive, programmed into us more deeply than in other species, because despair is more a human state of mind than that of other species. But the will to live is vulnerable and requires the joy of living and the pleasure of healthy human relationships to keep it at peak power and to rekindle it when its extinction is threatened.

Humans have shown expertise at creating hell on earth. But they have also a certain masochistic persistence in tolerating pain, suffering, hardship, and even torture, so long as some hope of a better future for themselves or their descendants or others still lingers in their minds and hearts.

When a civilization is enjoying great prosperity, the arts are flourishing, and the majority are enjoying life as never before, some portion of humanity may feel jealous or envious and feel the urge to destroy such a near-heavenly way of life. Some persons are unhappy under any circumstances and hate nothing more than a happy world.

Humans are happiest when they discover their mission in life, set out to carry it out, and succeed. Each person’s talents, education, training, opportunities, discipline, rewards, and success, all together, are their fate. Those who fail generally fail because some element of chance frustrated their efforts along

the way. But in nature there are many failures. Of millions of seeds, only a few germinate, and of those, fewer survive. Still every human actually succeeds and can succeed to some degree in some aspect of life. One can always enjoy the successes of others. It is presumptuous to conclude that anyone's life is wasted. Along the way each and all of us can help someone. That makes any life worth living.

The great do many great deeds. The not-great do few and not so great deeds. But each deed, each word spoken, each smile, each hour watching, has a value of its own.

On the other side of the ledger we can see the bad things we do and say. When we are rude, unkind, when we lack tolerance and sympathy, we hurt others. When we do not forgive, we intensify other's feelings of guilt and unworthiness. It is true we should not encourage bad behavior, but to change it we need to open the door to acceptance, forgiveness, and repentance.

Inheritance, environment, and chance make up the greater portion of our fates. Those who are lucky are intelligent, talented, energetic, born at the right place at the right time, and live among the right people. But the majority are average or less and chance does not favor everyone all the time. The world's work cannot be done by the intelligent half of the population alone. Much work has to be done by the less intelligent half. ¶

The playwright

AUGUST 1980

He wrote, and his words imprisoned forever the ways of thinking and speaking of his time, at their best. He wrote of pride and power, of ambition, of love and hate among men and women, of justice and injustice, of tragedy and comedy. Through it all he tried to compress all life into a scene or a soliloquy.

His object was always to entertain, but he had a high regard for the intelligence of his audience. Therefore he wrote philosophy into his dialogue and poetry into his philosophy. The interplay between emotions, the illogical and the philosophical, created a world where tragedy and irony came into play in spite of all reason.

Tempers flare, the world explodes, and reasonable alternatives cannot be seen in the blinding light. The sound and the fury lead to confusion and violence and death.

Characters come to life out of life itself, out of the world they live in, and true to it. All that happens is inevitable whether it be tragedy or comedy. This is the stuff of life. This is being human. ¶

The art of magnification

OCTOBER 1980

In Western culture there are many people who insist on loading every event of which they are aware with as much meaning as it will hold.

A happy situation is overloaded with joys while a bad situation is burdened with awesome significance beyond what is really there. All this overload is supposed to lead to a more satisfying life, more spiritual, deeper.

Well, there must be a point beyond which adding meaning to events is like adding salt and pepper to food. Enough is enough.

By laying significance on thick it becomes a fragile sand castle easily damaged by the slightest non-happening or event. The husband forgets the wife's birthday, or their anniversary, or the kids, or a present or even a greeting card, and all kinds of significance is attached to it: "He doesn't love me anymore," or "his love is waning." "We are headed for a divorce."

The rivers of love and friendship run with deep currents and every eddy or whirlpool matters little. But no, we must wonder what that last cool kiss meant, or the diffident look, or being late from work, or all kinds of little things.

Our function in life is to be born and be taken care of by parents and others. Soon enough we are all expected to work. We are expected to contribute our grain of sand to the anthill. We are attracted to someone of the opposite sex, or of the same. We feel the thrill of sexual arousal. We marry, mate, and have children. We raise them, and they leave. They may love us or not. They live their own lives.

Society has a system to persuade each and all of us to do something for it. It rewards us with money, honors, degrees, titles, and prizes. If we are good, we are held up as examples for the young to follow. We do what others want us to do. They are the market. We produce goods or services. If we do what society does not want us to do, we are punished. Punishment and rehabilitation occupy the time and energy of a lot of people.

But over and under all this each person is concerned more with himself or herself than with society. The bottom line is always, "How do I profit?" It is amazing that society gets what it wants at all.

There is, of course, no real feeling toward others. When someone goes away or dies, what we miss is what they gave us. This can be friendship, companionship, love, sex, money, intellectual stimulus, encouragement, rivalry, competition, togetherness, *etc.*

No, the death of a dear friend or a loved one reminds us more of our own death than anything else. The bell tolls for each of us,

and each time it sounds the knell, we realize that we are our dead friend. A little of us died there, and the rest will go. It is only a matter of time.

What do we do in the meantime? We continue creating our image of ourselves and the one we project on others. We are conscious of our desires. We want to be rich, or richer; and we want sex, power, and glory. We suck at the teats of power and prestige. Underneath the well-dressed, clean, and perfumed man and woman lurks greed, like a beast. It reaches up for gold, diamonds, bank accounts, real estate, stocks, and bonds.

Mothers are greedy because they want to be sure they have enough to raise their children, no matter what happens. They always expect to survive their husbands. But men are all fiddlers on the roof, with few exceptions. They all want to be rich, though not all want to work long and hard to get wealth. 卍

Arrival

OCTOBER 30, 1980

I came into this world, and someone brought me flowers. I reached with one small hand and crushed one and put it in my mouth. Is that the reason I have loved flowers ever since?

Later, as a small boy, I would watch as the orchard bloomed and the fruit grew and ripened and my cousins would give me ripe fruit. It was delicious!

One neighbor's boy, a little older than I, used to hug me and kiss me and said he wished I was his brother. He was an only child, and now I realize he was lonely.

The world of my childhood was a beautiful world. There was sunshine, trees, flowers, and lots of birds and butterflies. There were lizards, squirrels, snakes, grasshoppers, and crickets. There were mice, rats, fleas, lice, and spiders. Bees were everywhere during our long growing season, and we had to

watch out for hornets and yellow jackets when we climbed fig trees to gather the sweet ripe figs.

Later I learned how to peel pomegranates. I no longer had to wait for someone to put the red berries in a bowl for me. I would shell pecans myself, and I could climb the pear trees and the apple trees to reach the big ones.

We played war with marbles and rows of soldiers and artillery pieces. We also played marble games. I loved tops and later baseball.

My cousins, sisters, friends, and I would listen to ghost stories for hours, and other fairy tales. ††

Writing as therapy

DECEMBER 2, 1980

As I pour my heart out on these pages, I often feel relieved. Still, a residue of frustration remains because the written words fail to express what I feel. It is strange that our thoughts can be expressed, often in exact language but more often in metaphors; and the metaphors screen the feelings.

How we feel can make us healthy or sick, happy or depressed, full of euphoria, or tired and aching. We seek that germ of truth, that seed, that will grow into a beacon to guide us in these wind-tossed seas of change and troubles. ††

If the weather is bad . . .

DECEMBER 18, 1980

If the weather is bad when I die,
 Don't bother to come.
It won't be worth standing in the cold rain.
But if it is in the spring, come.
Look for me in the trees, the flowers, and the birds.
I'll be there, smiling.
If a bee buzzes by, it's me.
It knew my love.
I'll be in the buds opening in the warm sun.
And if it is in the summer,
 Look at the ripening seeds.
I loved them too. Stores of new life.
I gathered them for the following year,
 Even if some never got planted.
If you eat a ripe plum, or a fig, think of me.
In the fall, look for me in the cool breezes,
 And in the reds and yellows of the leaves.
I will be in the sound of the leaves under foot
 And the flights of birds headed south.
Look for me in ripening apples,
 In pears, and persimmons.
In late fall, look to the damp soil
 Where I loved to dig, plant, and transplant.
On clear sunny days or cloudy rainless days,
 The bare branches of trees and shrubs will remind you of me,
 Particularly if they need pruning.
But in bad weather you'll have to read what I wrote,
 And it will give you an inkling of what I read
 And what I thought and felt.
For in bad weather, more than any other time,
 I went into myself and looked at life
And at this great and wonderful universe.

And I saw myself as a flash of consciousness,
A flicker in the fleeting river of time.
I found great joy in capturing so small a glimpse
Of this enormous wonder.
I felt most fortunate
To live long enough to see it and appreciate it.
One could live on bread and beans, vegetables and rice;
And read and listen to knowledgeable teachers;
And see photographs of the very small
And the very large.
One could observe the sweep of human history in
Error and achievement.
And it would all be good. Life is too wonderful to miss.
I would not close the gates to the unborn,
But let them come and show them the
Wonders of our world.
This Earth overlaps Heaven.
We can step from one to the other.
What hell there is, is man-made, and woman-made.
If the weather is bad, read this, and do not bother to come.
I am here. Only the husk is buried in the damp earth.
I flew the length and breadth of the universe long ago,
And I wrote all I saw.

What is man?

DECEMBER 23, 1980

Is it true that only man takes care of his grandparents?

Is it true that only humans laugh?

Is it true that only humans are aware of growth, aging, and death?

Is it true that only humans have a complex language, understand numbers, write languages and numbers, develop science, and are aware of nature, life, and the Cosmos?

Is it true that humans continue to learn until they die?

Do they also unlearn?

Is human memory longer and more extensive and complex than that of other animals?

Are humans the only animal that record experience, accumulate knowledge, and build civilization?

Is man a self-interpreting animal? Is man an evaluator?

A seeker of Utopia?

Is man the only animal that is willing to give his, or her, life for an idea, a system, a culture, or a civilization, and to kill for it?

Can age fade man's concept of the world, of Heaven, of the Kingdom of God, of the ideal state? Or does the concept change and evolve, in the light of new knowledge and events?

Can man die before his (or her) body dies? Is there a death of the mind and the spirit when we refuse to adapt, to change, to evolve, and to join in new discoveries, new approaches to old problems, and the new generations?

Is the Cosmic ecological vision essential to our view of our place in the world? Should man care for the Earth, the solar system, and the accessible universe as if it were part of him and he part of it?

Is humanity all one? Should all humans share what they have?

Can humanity survive without loving one another?

Do we need to love children, the young, the mature, and the old to survive?

Will suffering cause humans to deny the value of life and wish for death? Or will life be affirmed, and thanks given to God, and will life and death together affirm the glory of God? †

Getting to know you

DECEMBER 26, 1980

In order to know another it is necessary that the other person feel that he or she is not going to be judged, evaluated, compared, criticized, or changed in any way. When he or she feels accepted as is, then will he or she trust another and reveal what is in his or her mind and heart.

The aspect of a person that is presented to others is nearly always acting, or a mask. Dress and make-up are designed to produce a desired impression. But when one knows that another, or others, will not judge, *etc.*, he or she will drop the mask, stop acting, and remove his or her clothes. The real or “naked” person is there for all to know.

Most persons prefer to have a secret personal past, good or bad, which they would rather not reveal. They do not want to be totally known by others.

Some persons live a fiction of their own creation all their lives. Others are as they really are, making no effort to be anything else. Accepting themselves as they are, they are genuine and give no hint of artificiality.

To get to know ourselves we have to forgive ourselves all our faults, stop judging, and accept ourselves as we are. Otherwise we tend to hide from ourselves.

The Christian teaching is that in order to attain the true life of the spirit, one must first die. The part that dies is the part that is always wanting things—the ego—and judging others and the self—the super-ego. By giving up our constant desires

and serving others or following Christ's commandments, one becomes part of a whole, that is, the Kingdom of Heaven.

Once we give up all our ambitions, we cease feeling like failures because the success we wanted is no longer valid. We also do not desire great wealth, or sexual gratification beyond the bare essentials, or power, or anything beyond what is readily available to most humans. We relieve ourselves of great burdens and proceed to loving our neighbors as we love ourselves, *etc.*

This is a denial of the importance of the ego, the super-ego, and most of what we call civilization or "the world." †

The garden

APRIL 9, 1981

SPRING



The garden responds to the seasons. It vibrates to the warmth of sunny days. It awakens from winter's rest. Each plant begins at its own time, some in late winter and others in early spring. On perennials new growth emerges below the ground or at ground level. Hardy seedlings sprout. On some woody plants, buds begin to swell.

Flowers emerge, already formed the year before, inside buds. Hellebore, primrose, *Trillium*, daffodil, *Chionodoxa*, *Crocus*, early tulips, and even *Viola* bloom, often in weather too cold for comfort. Immune to the light frosts, *Lobelia* and sweet alyssum, candytuft, and forget-me-not, sprout and grow and soon bloom. Of these the earliest is forget-me-not; then the others follow.

The woody shrubs and trees do not wait either. Winter heathers lead, white, pink, and lavender. The cornelian cherry dogwood puts on a show in February, a mass of golden staminate flowers without petals or bracts. Actually they are there, but they are very small. *Viburnum Carlesii* perfumes

the air, as do *Sarcococca*, *Daphne odora* and *D. Mezereum*. Pussy willow swells its woolly buds. *Corylopsis*, witch-hazel, *Fothergilla*, and *Forsythia* bloom in shades of cream and gold. Fragrance fills the air.

The Japanese plums put on a show with their masses of fragrant white flowers that is hard to match. Some are worth having for the bloom alone and their spreading habit of branching. Some turn red in the fall.

 We take for granted the individual flowers, yet they are fascinating. 

The European plums are beautiful too. Most showy is the upright “big plum,” resembling President plum. But even Damson plum is beautiful, as are Italian, Brooks, and Peach plum. The peaches are not showy, unless one plants a flowering peach. The Japanese apricot, *Prunus Mume*, is fragrant and beautiful. Cherries

are also very impressive. Apples, pears, and *Amelanchier* also bloom, and they are gorgeous, with clusters of pink buds opening to white.

We take for granted the individual flowers, yet they are fascinating. Each one is a variation on the theme of calyx, sepals, petals, stamens, pistil, stigma, and ovary. Leaves are also variations on a basic form, and yet each species, and even each variety, manages to be different in some way. Stems can vary in shape, texture, and color. The general appearance of shrubs and trees can also help in identifying them at a distance, though not positively.

Roses and *Iris* bloom in May and June here, preceded by lilacs and *Viburnum Opulus*. Late rhododendrons and azaleas remind us of the great splashes of bloom these plants made in mid-March, April, and May. Mock orange, *Deutzia*, *Weigela*, and *Kolkwitzia* all add to the profusion already there. May is the month for dogwoods, but some bloom in April. Magnolias also flower early, but *M. grandiflora* goes on all summer,

as does *M. virginiana*. The crabapples also put on a great show, usually in April.

SUMMER

Roses and hydrangeas continue beyond spring. Annuals and other bedding plants hold the fort on the ground and in hanging baskets and other containers. Fuchsias and geraniums are tireless bloomers. Dahlias, heliotrope, *Felicia*, *Begonia*, marguerite, and *Dimorphotheca* also bloom all summer. Among the shrubs, *Buddleia*, *Vitex*, *Hydrangea paniculata* (PeeGee), and summer heathers are great.

Yet while we watch flowers and maturing fruits and berries, we need to be aware of what is going on in plants. Flower buds for next year are being formed all along. Wood is ripening and getting ready to survive winter cold. In time new growth must stop, plants will protect buds with scales, and they will drop their leaves. Under dry conditions this can happen earlier.

Summer, as well as fall, is harvest time. Raspberries and blackberries, cherries, apricots and early plums, apples, pears, and peaches are ready from June through August. Figs ripen as do grapes in warmer areas. Fruit is beautiful. The flowers are delightful. And it is good for you.

FALL

Leaves begin to turn yellow and/or red. Some fall prematurely if there is drought. Late fruits ripen, mainly apples, pears, grapes, and second-crop figs. The first frosts catch some apples, pears, and grapes, as well as persimmons. Soon the leaves fall. Deciduous trees and shrubs go bare. The first heavy frosts of November kill the tops of perennials. Annuals die and scatter seed. Tree seeds fall to the ground and are covered with leaves. Everything goes dormant to withstand the rigors of winter, but roots continue to grow into favorable soil, aided by rains. Food is stored in stems and roots for use in spring.

WINTER

Blessed is snow that protects plants from dehydration, alternate thawing and freezing, and very low temperatures. It is doubtful whether plants *need* winter to rest. But the earth has winter in the temperate and cold zones of both hemispheres, and plants seem to have adapted. In so doing they “learned” to store food in the fall to create means of avoiding damage by frosts and to accumulate food for spring growth.

Scientists have found antifreeze-like substances that prevent damage to plant cells. But some plants keep water in such a condition that it can become super-cooled without freezing.

In spring and summer flowers open and are pollenized. Most plants are bisexual and are self-fertile. Yet a percentage of flowers are cross-pollinated by insects or wind, as in the grasses, conifers, and nuts. Cross-pollination produces plants that are more likely to adapt and survive because there are more chances of variation. In some plants the sexes are on different plants, and in many they are on separate parts of the plant. Some plants self-pollinate almost exclusively. Still, cross-pollination is possible often enough to produce variation.

Plants in the garden are often at the mercy of the gardener, particularly if they are not native or naturalized, and need water in the dry season. Some plants will adapt and survive on their own. Some will spread, as weeds do. But many exotic plants need some care. Seedlings and young plants are devoured by insects and slugs and need more water and the right amount of light and winter protection. As I care for plants, I realize that caring for animals and people is more demanding. I come to the conclusion that all living things need care at one time or another, including ourselves.

Out of all this comes a reverence for life and a respect for the web of life that constitutes every area's ecology. We live on earth for a while, and we have no right to endanger or destroy what we find here. Others after us need what the earth has to offer.

Often in the garden I find insects doing damage to plants. I assess the damage and the insect numbers. I watch. If they do not become dangerous, I leave them alone. Their natural enemies take care of them. I have insecticides that are 15 years old; I use very little. I fear I will kill the natural enemies, destroy the balance, and end up spraying all the time.

The garden is full of natural clocks. Every operation is done by nature on time. The rhythms are regular, varying at most three weeks when weather is too warm or too cold. The marvels of nature are all there to be seen.

Inside us there are similar rhythms. Our genetic nature determines that we build civilizations and seek better ways of ordering our lives. We know now that there is a unity in all living things. All Life is One. We are One with Life. ॥

Women

MAY 3, 1981

Women and men are essentially the same—human. Humanity transcends sex or gender. Some women are more capable of doing what traditionally has been man's work than some men.

Sexual differences are important, but persons with male organs are not necessarily masculine and vice-versa. The desires for peace, prosperity, health, and love are civilizing qualities often regarded as feminine. Quickness to anger, suspicion, violence, war, destruction, fear, and hate are more associated with masculine behavior. Yet more and more men side with the former.

A man and a woman, or a group of men and women, doing the same work are not distinguishable as male and female. Differences in dexterity; thought processes; emotional tone; and other characteristics, like muscular strength, menstruation, and childbearing, are all complementary. Together, the two sexes are stronger and more capable than each sex by itself.

Among women, some women have qualities that complement those of others. This also happens among men. Social life is made richer by complements. Every organization finds persons with different talents and all together they do more and better work than if all were exactly the same. This being the case, the value of women in society is the same, not more nor less than that of men.

On a person-to-person basis, each contributes according to his or her talents, skills, and willingness to work. An irresponsible person is of little value, regardless of sex.

Embryos of humans and other species begin life as female. Maleness is introduced by the action of a chromosome. So it is not true that man was created first and then woman was fashioned out of one of his ribs. This is pure male invention to keep women under submission. Men are women who underwent a sex change shortly after conception. ††

An ear for music

MAY 11, 1981

Music consists of vibrations carried by the air. Take away the air, and there is no sound. Water carries sound but, for us, not as well as air.

The vibrations of the human voice, tapping, or any instrument have musical possibilities. These possibilities were discovered by humans over the centuries. Each time a pleasant sound was discovered, it was improved upon. Patterns of sound were developed, and music evolved.

But musical ability is more than an "ear." Sound vibrations are transmitted by the eardrum to the inner ear and thence to the brain. The sound is there regarded as pleasant or associated with something in experience or disregarded as unpleasant and/or of no consequence. We remember tunes or melodies, themes, or

complex passages that we recognize but cannot recall. The mind has selected these as pleasant or meaningful.

The mind seems to recognize musical elements as its own. It has affinity for music. To be sure, specific tastes for certain styles and instruments are learned. We acquire habits in music, as in other things. But the basic capacity to enjoy and to associate music with experiences is our innate human trait. It may also be common in other species than *Homo sapiens* but that has to be researched.

In nature birds are the main class, other than humans, that make musical sounds and seem to enjoy doing so. Some birds produce their own sounds with their voices. Humans have enjoyed bird songs longer than they have their own music. Whistling and voice imitations of bird songs may have been our first attempts at music.

The tapping of woodpeckers on tree trunks may have started jungle drums. Dancing may be a response to rhythmic beats. Rhythmic beats may have begun with the sounds of dripping water, walking or trotting horses, or other animals.

The bow, when plucked, may have been the first sound from a taut string. Several bows of different pitch might enable a clever inventor to play a simple tune. Resonance was discovered when a hollow trunk was tapped, or a note was struck near a thin wooden screen or a tautly stretched hide. Humans began to explore sounds and echoes, and even tried to bring down the walls of cities with the sounds of horns.

All that exists in the world can be comprehended in the mind. This is because the mind is designed or made to take in the world outside. So eager is it to do this that it often shapes the outside world to fit its conception of it. The mind continually guesses at the nature of the world. We see bits and pieces of evidence, and from these we try to figure out what the missing parts are like. Each time we discover new evidence we are forced to change our conception, but in time we will know enough to have a fairly accurate, though general, view of the world.

The world of music is an orderly and rhythmic world, and it reflects the nature of the whole universe. Music gives us a clue to the beauty of the universe. To be sure, culture has a lot to do with how we perceive beauty of any kind or its opposite. But if it were not there to begin with, a culture could not develop it. Our minds developed the idea that nature is beautiful long before cultures evolved.

The appreciation of beauty is like a prayer, and music is like a mantra. They lead us to the infinite, the timeless “whatever” that brought the world about, and we feel grateful. We are glad it all happened, and we are alive. 卍

Ulysses and the Odyssey

JULY 4, 1981

The heroes of Homer were essentially men and women (Penelope) who would not surrender their freedom. They fought against great odds, storms, supernatural powers, and monsters. Always they found a way to render the power of their enemies useless.

Today we are all Ulysses trying to discover how to nullify the power of the corporate state and its machines and organizations. True dinosaurs, they will in time disappear, but they can destroy the earth before they do.

Corporations in and of themselves are neither good nor evil. They are a form of power that can be used to create a new and better world or to destroy it. They can do both at the same time, destroying nature as they create new things, or more of them, to sell.

The corporate state is run by private and public bureaucracies. Each person in a position knows only his or her job and is not interested in how it affects the rest of the nation, society, or the world. Responsibility is avoided by saying, “I just make the bombs, I just load the bombs, I just fly the plane,” and “I just



push the button.” The targets are determined by a computer. It is impersonal. No one can be blamed. Everyone takes orders from someone else. The man at the top takes orders from a computer.

We are not prisoners of Circe, the song of whose sirens held us on her island. We cannot just plug our ears and escape. We have to learn to see the whole picture before we can escape the maze of the machines and the bureaucracy. Everyone who avoids being hog-tied by the corporate state is a hero. Anyone who sees through the deceptions of advertising and sales talk is a hero. And anyone who raises hell when products are not as represented or are dangerous is a hero. But the greatest heroes are the ones who fight to protect the earth and the living things on it from destruction for profit.

People are ruled by employers and other authority figures through fear—fear of starvation, of loneliness, of strange places and people, and of losing a job or property. To be free, people have to conquer fear, just as Ulysses did.

It takes imagination to use present-day machines and their products and services creatively. Otherwise much is really wasted.

Large cities constitute vast markets. The populations must not only be housed but fed, dressed, and provided with all their needs. Carloads of goods are needed. These need to be produced and transported, often great distances. Then they have to be stored and distributed in stores where consumers can buy them. This system cannot be handled by small-scale businesses, although there should be markets for small producers and

 But the
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truckers also. But disruption of this system would have grave consequences for city dwellers.

People in the country and in small towns can obtain most essential necessities. Those who grow their own food, build their own houses, and make their own clothes think they are independent. But no one is independent, as long as someone else is depending on them. No one is independent. We all need one another, including people in foreign countries.

We cannot deny God is man (and woman). To treat humans as if they were animals is to ask them to rebel. We cannot and should not treat any living thing as if it were not living. 卍

Between a pearl and a diamond

NOVEMBER 11, 1981

Is it a diamond-like pearl
Or a pearl-like diamond?
That is only a description
As the light goes through
A pendant drop of dew.

No magnum opus

DECEMBER 10, 1981

Some people love to listen to an aria but not to a whole opera. They prefer quotations from great literary works to plowing through *Don Quixote*, Shakespeare, or *War and Peace* for a few kernels of wisdom. There is, after all, great pleasure, even ecstasy, in “just sitting,” as the Zen philosophers suggest, and letting the mind do by itself whatever it will.

The mind, left to its own devices, will come up with an idea, such as “justice,” “beauty,” “work,” “decay and destruction,” “rebirth,” “interdependence,” *etc.*, and literally build a sermon on it. Later, reason comes to criticize the mind’s prophetic voices, and a dialog takes place between the mind in its “by-itselfness” and the mind closely scrutinized in accordance with the known evidence applied logically.

It is of the greatest help to cull through the contributions of scientists for facts about the world we live in, to give the mind a grasp on reality. Otherwise the mind weaves patterns of thought from old myths that have been found to have no basis in the real world. Once given the real facts, the mind can deduce, with little or no effort, how the whole is organized. In *Lives of a Cell*, Louis Thomas explains how cells got together and formed larger cells through interdependence or symbiosis. The clearest idea that emerges from cell study is that cells “learned” to cooperate. Our bodies are conglomerates of cooperating cells with a government which consists of the brain and the endocrine system. This government has a constitution which is the genetic code or DNA.

To enable an organism to cope with the environment, the most basic acts, such as reproduction, flying, walking, eating, and drinking, are inborn or imprinted while other behaviors are learned by interaction with other organisms and the environment.

The idea that all thought is useless unless it produces immediate or long-term profit in dollars and cents is absurd. In fact it is so absurd that a world based on such a principle would not survive.

It is possible to be rich and be dead while apparently alive. Focusing the mind on profit is good for the bank account and for accruing goods and services, but it does not help anyone see anything not directly related to profits. In fact the very ecologies that all life depends on for survival are of little or no

interest to one bent on destroying the land to get at coal seams or at the forest to reap the lumber.

To such minds an old rotting fallen tree, or one about to fall, is wasted wood. But to the ecologist the rotting wood and the organisms it supports are part of an ecology essential to life, to healthy watersheds, to the general balance of life in nature, and to our long term survival. On some mountain sides and valleys, it is best that trees be left to rot and regenerate naturally, forever unexploited.

What do the rich do with all their profits? They live in great luxurious houses, wear fine clothes, eat fine foods, and generally push other people around. All that rots too, and we are left with nothing but old stuff only museums can use.

The land is gutted and ruined; erosion has made deep wounds in it; and the forests are gone. Those who did the gutting and the cutting are gone too, leaving few traces. Workers got a few dollars more and bought a few gadgets and appliances. Their life was made better for a while. Now they are gone too. Their children have scattered, seeking careers in the cities, and money. Civilization spreads like a fungus devouring nature in its path, but a hundred years later nothing is left to show for it. All that survives is a few works of art, some literature, music, and scientific discoveries and inventions. Some or most of these were done by persons who made little money out of them. ¶¶

Anger

NOVEMBER 8, 1982

Anger, like fear and hate, is often the result of a person's interpretation of a situation. The interpretation is usually based on erroneous assumptions and thinking. The person may stubbornly cling to his or her ideas even though he or she may realize they are mistaken.

Examples: parents who believe they own their children, as if they were slaves, and become angry when children display behavior that implies they have rights. Parents become angry when children question their rules and orders, or when they disobey. Children grow to hate and despise their parents and yearn to be as far away from them as possible.

Parents and tutors often assume that they have a right to abuse a child. Like despots, they may even feel that they have a right to kill them.

So-called highly moral people who have a long list of do's and don'ts as guides to their conduct may rationalize when it comes to doing things for their own pleasure or profit. But when others do anything "wrong," they become indignant and even angry. Such anger is excused as "righteous anger," but it is no different from any other.

Anger is often provoked by imagined wrongs, wounded pride, or humiliation at being defeated in a game or in business or politics. Poor losers are angry people, and some interpret another's success as their failure.

Jealousy is anger brought on by the threatened loss of love, position, or property. The loved one is seen as property and so is the position. But someone who sees the loss of the love of another as natural will feel less anger, or none. He or she will merely begin to look for another love. If love is gone, wounding or killing the new lover who takes it away will change nothing. It just makes a worse mess of the situation.

Analysis of the situation reveals that the reason for anger is pride and the belief that things should not change. Conservative minds are more likely to feel anger than more liberal ones. Acceptance of a changed situation defuses anger.

A person's idea of justice used to include revenge, retribution, or punishment. But justice may be seen as doing what is right and fair by others, making up for loss or damage if possible, and expressing repentance or contrition.

Anger often is aroused by the feeling that one is being taken advantage of in a purchase or at work or in some deal.

Whatever the provocation, anger is a harmful emotion, as are hate, jealousy, envy, avarice, and some forms of chronic fear. So, it is best to soften or eliminate such emotions. We can acquire the habit of analyzing situations and becoming less sensitive to arousal to emotion. We may at least not be provoked by trifles.

The degrees and forms of anger are infinite, ranging from mild disgust to violent rage. We can grow by outgrowing such episodes, or we can nurture them in memory and never forget them. The accumulations can build into hatred of persons, whole classes of people, places, and things. Some little innocent thing might displease or annoy those in power on whom we depend, and life could become a hell.

How comforting to know that some or most of the people with whom we interact are slow to anger and forget annoyances and offenses easily. We can disagree, criticize constructively, and compete for love and jobs or clients, without becoming angry or violent. Well, almost. †

The lioness and the lion

DECEMBER 5, 1982

As they relaxed in the shade at the edge of a grassy plain, the lion said to the lioness:

“I’d like a fresh carcass every day. Do you think you can manage it?”

“I think we can, if you hunt every other day.”

“Hm! Perhaps a carcass every other day is sufficient.”

“Fine. But you’ll have to stay with the cubs while the girls and I hunt.”

“It’s come to that. Now I am the baby sitter around here.”

“It is one of your values. The cubs like you.”

“And I thought I was essential; the king of the jungle.”

“Well yes, but we only need one male lion at mating season, you know. Any of the healthy young lions will do.”

“So I am not really needed at all.”

“Well, you do help scare off the hyenas while we eat.”

“I know. Perhaps I should get in training and hunt also.”

“It’s really not necessary.”

“Yes. I’ll just relax and enjoy feeling worthless.”

Tannhäuser

MARCH 23, 1983

Wagner’s music contrasts the emotions of sensual and spiritual love. Our lives are lived mainly through our emotions. A well-educated and informed intelligence can analyze each situation and consider alternatives. It can lead to choices that are pragmatic and best for all concerned. But without emotions, intelligence could not cope with daily life.

Education and training can teach us to keep emotions within bounds. They act like voltage regulators in electric circuits. We learn to control the floods of fear, anger, and even love. We learn to not be easily offended or upset by events of little importance, or by details that do not really matter. We learn to accept some losses and to not rejoice in others’ misfortunes.

Yet, sooner or later, at the right age, most of us succumb to love. Often all the reasoning in the world has no effect. And the loss of a loved one is a great disaster.

And who can remain unemotional in the face of failure, rejection, misunderstanding, injustice, discrimination, and being victimized?

Apprehension, fear, suspicion, uncertainty, strangeness, discomfort, nervousness, hesitation, doubt, and all shades of feelings of insecurity can overwhelm one in some situations.

Othello is a story of a great and powerful man who is led by one of his officers, Iago, to believe that his wife, Desdemona, was unfaithful. The emotional volcano of suspicion, betrayal, insult, misunderstanding, unjust accusations, and inevitable doom engulfs the man and his wife while Iago secretly gloats. After Othello strangles Desdemona, he discovers, to his horror, that the scarf used as evidence had been found by Iago's wife where Desdemona had inadvertently dropped it. Now guilt takes over, and horror at the deed perpetrated. Emotions are provoked at first by *imagined* wrongs and later by real deeds.

No wonder propagandists love to stir up people's emotions without providing enough accurate information to enable the audiences to control their feelings.

Life is enriched by emotions, but they can also be abused and misused. A person can wallow in sorrow, self-pity, fear, and a poor self-image, all because of elements in situations that are not, in reality, at all as imagined.

Throughout the ages humans have imagined all kinds of terrors. The night, fog, cold, storms, tragedies, crimes, wars, injustices, catastrophes, and calamities have inspired a world of horrors. The opposite is also the case. Others have dwelt on imaginary pleasures far greater than any real ones. The idea of heaven may have grown from this.

If one lives to old age, one may suffer loneliness and fear of illness and death. For this reason one should cultivate family and friends throughout life and accept the reality of the end, since all living things die. In fact, even nonliving things decay in time.

Throughout the ages, human imagination has created worlds beyond the real world. Such worlds become real in some cultures, leading to lives ruled and determined by the imaginary order of things. Such worlds have often been the opposite or quite different from reality, and whole populations have lived as

if hallucinated. There is no end yet to imaginary worlds. Many people create their own. Most are harmless, but, now and then, some are not. ††

Totally personal rewards

OCTOBER 14, 1983

The world will lose nothing if no one reads what I have written. In fact the world will lose nothing when I die, even though heaven cares about every sparrow that falls. What counts is that I am part of Life, and through my senses I see the world from where I sit, stand, or walk. My view is unique, I have my own prejudices and preconceptions. I am partly blind, as are all other humans. I see only a part and that is in dappled light. I live by guessing as do all other human beings. I make decisions by intuition, or by letting my mind decide by itself, because there is never enough evidence to make an exact decision.

Still, as I work or walk in my garden, every minute and hour contains pleasures that are totally personal. Few people I know would enjoy a bud, a flower, a leaf, or a section of the garden as I do. And it is all almost entirely the work of nature; I interfere as little as possible. I only help here and there, bringing together plants and stones.

Purely personal pleasures originate in my love of Life in general and of plants in particular. Nature is a gold mine, and its treasures have been collected and are found concentrated in garden beds, rockeries, and bordering woodland.

This capacity to enjoy living things is personal, but it is growing on a universal capacity to enjoy that I have in common with all humans. It only needs to be allowed to develop.

At the same time I have, since long ago, acquired an appreciation of animal life, and that includes humans. Birds, squirrels, rats, mice, fleas, dogs, and cats all use my garden for

water, food, digging, hunting, and even play. My property is also their territory. Slugs eat my seedlings and some full-grown plants. Earthworms digest the leaves that accumulate in the beds. Fungi and bacteria decompose debris and fallen fruit. They even inhabit my skin and digestive system. I am not alone, and probably would not survive alone. I am part of the ecology.

What I sense in all this is a will to live, to reproduce, to continue life, and take pleasure in doing it. Humans have taken plants and animals from one continent or island to another, and plants and animals have adapted or failed to adapt. Soon humans will take plants and other organisms to space and to other planets. There will be more adaptation. Then they will design by manipulating genes, so as to get better adaptation. Humans will be doing what gods have done in the myths of past civilizations. What was once a myth will become reality.

There is a purely personal pleasure in the contemplation of Life in any of its millions of forms. But this pleasure originates in Life itself, which is in us. We are part of Life, and as such we are *its* eyes, ears, and senses in general. We are its brain. *Life sees itself through us.* We are Life looking at itself. *Narcissus* is Life contemplating itself.

We are *personal* only insofar as we are alone, isolated. As soon as our view of Life reaches the senses of *others*, through the media or conversation, we are no longer personal but become interrelated with the rest of humanity. Then the *collective* mind, the *thought of groups of humans*, affecting one another, takes over. We become cells in a greater organism, society, and civilization. ¶¶



The mediocracy

MARCH 18, 1984

The people, no matter how well-educated, cannot cope with the media. Few persons have the ability to analyze what is presented and to gauge to what extent it is lacking in scientific rigor. The majority of the people is swayed by the images presented, by isolated instances, by false statistics improperly presented, and by outright lies. The majority is powerless in the face of the media because they do not have the intelligence, the information, the time, or the desire to analyze its errors and flaws. By the time the few experts do so through the media, the majority is no longer watching, listening, or reading.

The total impressions of the media are erroneous. The few programs and persons that take a close and critical look are heard by few listeners, or read in the printed media. The majority is in the grip of the image- and slogan-makers. The intelligent, the well-informed, the educated, and the concerned are in the minority. “You can fool most of the people some of the time,” and that is all that anyone needs to get elected or to have a law changed or a policy modified.

The simple-minded desire for something new—a new personality, a new look, new ideas, or new methods—can sway the majority. One-half of any population is below the average in intelligence. “Intelligence” may represent the ability to pay attention, to concentrate, to remember, to relate things according to similarities and differences, to know where a thing belongs, and how it operates, to balance things, to compute, to manipulate, and other tangible and abstract skills. But one important thing intelligence implies is the ability to detect contradictions and

 *Democracy*
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inconsistencies. All you need is to fool 51% of the people once in a while, and 50% have low ability to detect when they are being fooled by images and words.

No studies have been made of how many of our college-educated men and women can detect a false argument, a false image, a false statistic, or a generalization that is unwarranted by the evidence. I venture to say that out of such a select group only 30% will score above 90%, and many will fall below 60%. The rest of the people will fall far below that, with few exceptions.

Democracy rests on the peoples' instincts, not on their intelligence and information. As Plato said, "A demagogue can sway the majority and lead them to vote even against their own best interests."

The media have a corrupting effect in court trials. A trial reported only in the printed media is of local interest only, during the proceedings. The audience is small, and little is gained by the defense lawyers and the prosecutors by exploiting the theatrical aspects and the publicity. But television changes the situation so that the free publicity becomes the object, often for all concerned, except the victim or the accused. Nationwide coverage is always harmful to rape victims and often to the accused of any crime. Its effects extend to the entire country over a period of years or for an entire life.

The media inflate and exaggerate everything they present. Television is by far the most powerful. An unfair or false image can do irreparable damage, while the truth and the creative efforts take far longer to attract attention and influence the minds of watchers and listeners. Critical ideas are more difficult to express, communicate, and accept than catchy phrases, humor, generalities, or appeals to the emotions. In subtle ways, the truth can be twisted, distorted, clouded, and misrepresented so that crooks appear honest, and honest men are shown to be well-intentioned but ignorant dopes. ††

[untitled autobiographic musings]

AUGUST 5, 1984

Time not remembered. Infancy, when there was no idea of happiness, no knowledge of why I cried or smiled. It was the early dawn of life, rosy, nestled in my mother's arms.

The sun of life's day rose, and play became everything. Play and good things to eat, and wandering through the orchard looking for ripe fruit, birds, lizards, and squirrels. Friends are playmates. Few games can be played alone.

Christmas is pure joy. Snow and ice covers the street with crunchy pieces, like crystal gravel. By the old wood stove, fried crisp bread powdered with sugar and cinnamon made a stack. So many good things to eat. In the parlor the Christmas tree shelters the nativity, a pond with dikes, and shepherds tending sheep on a rocky mossy hillside.

First days of school, unbearable except for Rosa, the loving school teacher. She entertained us with tales from history. Later I made friends, and recess became the time I looked forward to for games of all kinds. There was the smell of books, the feel of chalk, and giving the right answers to questions, oral and written. We knew little about the adult world then; we were truly innocent, even when we thought we knew or pretended to know.

Learned to swim, and played baseball on the neighborhood team. Played touch football. Went fishing. Nature was always fascinating. Every new experience was a thrill but hardly verbalized. I climbed to the top of a mountain and looked down at the valley and the city and the purple mountains in every direction. The fragrance of herbs was in the air, and wildflowers bloomed in every color. There was still innocence, and the world was experienced as fascination.

High school became a time for questioning. Religious questions were explored. I read Watson on psychology; James would have been better. Read Plato and Tolstoy and was profoundly moved.

The Bible was a great experience. Love blossomed but was restrained by an ascetic sense, after questioned.

The world was in a depression in 1932. I was age 18 and confused about the future. It was at best uncertain for the world and for me. Went to Mexico, to the tropics of Papaloapan, and Tuxtpec, Oaxaca. Lived in Agua Fria, a village of 35 families, and worked as a teacher, secretary, and banana grower. I learned how little I knew about everything. I learned how hard it is to cut sugar cane six days a week for two months. Clearing jungle with only a machete and an axe is also hard work. Then the slash is set on fire, and you plant in unimproved land. Transplanting banana bunches on horses and burros is no picnic. The 90°F heat, the floods, and malaria finally were too much.

Nearly dead, I was brought to Mexico City by my wife, in 1939. The city was a new environment, never experienced before. It had then, as now, its own culture, and to find employment one must conform in dress, courtesy, and habits, or be ruled out regardless of competence. I soon learned and became an English teacher in two private business colleges. Also had some private students.

Then I met Bill Moxley, from Eugene, Oregon. He and his parents, William and Frances, helped me return to the United States. I came to Eugene, worked at Eugene Plywood Company, and went to the University of Oregon. Graduated in 1947, in psychology. Dr. Leavitt O. Wright wanted me to major in English or Spanish, but I did not want to be a professor. I don't know why, but my heart wasn't in it. I majored in education and then tried industrial psychology. None of it jelled, because I gave up. I became depressed and barely pulled through. Came to Seattle in 1953 and began working at the University of Washington in grounds maintenance. Working with plants acted as therapy. A friend called it "landscaping."

I have never been able to explain my dislike for the interiors of buildings, offices, classrooms, and sitting most of the day. A certain discomfort sets in, and it was never there when I worked outdoors. I could have made far more money as a professor or

even a teacher or in industrial psychology. But somehow, it didn't jell. Horticulture has been good to me. I hope I have been good to it. The U.W. campus and the arboretum were great experiences. I stayed away from the turbid waters of academia and the rat race of the industrial scene. Perhaps I could have made a contribution there.

As I look back I can see that I have always been a believer and a doubter at the same time. In everything I see the good and the bad at the same time. While others become impassioned and excited over "new" ideas, I soon discover the ideas are not really new, and the "true believers" are being used by ambitious men and women who seek absolute power. I see bad decisions and policies being pushed by people who claim credit for everything good that happens and blame opponents for everything bad. I see the people being fooled most of the time, and the media acquiescing, because it suits the owners.

Today I cultivate flowers, fruits, and ideas. ††

Character and interpersonal interaction

SEPTEMBER 7, 1984

When I was a young man, I had a banana plantation in Mexico. Every two weeks the bunches of bananas had to be harvested and brought to a shipping point on the railroad. I had very little money left by the time production began, so I used my horse and two donkeys to carry eighteen bunches, or twelve if they were large, wrapped in blankets made of burlap and banana leaves.

The horse was gentle and never objected to the several trips that had to be made as production reached a peak, but the donkeys rebelled. They would bite and refuse to go in the direction of the railroad. I did not want to whip them as others did their animals. I decided to give them a little corn with sugar

when we arrived at the shipping point. I did it every time. After three times they were eager to get there all the time.

I had used Indian laborers to plant and cultivate the plantation, so I decided to give them something at the end of each workday, as they finished “48 squares” between banana plants planted 16' × 16' or 20' × 20'. I gave each a shot of rum and a sweet roll to take home. I had heard complaints from other planters that some men did not finish their tasks. I never had any problem.

I had been taught by my parents to be considerate of others, no matter who they were, and to treat all persons with respect. I found this to result in many friendships and good relations. But some planters yelled at their men and called them stupid and other names. The men would go someplace else as soon as someone offered them work.

When one got sick, I would take him or her to the doctor and also to the local medicine man. I did not want anyone dying while working for me. I gave them corn, beans, and other foods when we had abundance. They always came back after they went home to plant or harvest their own crops. I gave them clothes and toys for their kids, and they responded by doing extra work without being asked.

One time I sold a cow and it turned out to have T.B., so I took it back and returned the money. The man I had sold it to became my lifelong friend. The cow, with care, got well. Its condition was brought on by low calcium and other nutrients, so I began to enrich the diet of all my animals with bone flour, minerals, and vitamins. Soon everyone was doing it, particularly with horses and oxen which are very important.

One time I was robbed of my suitcase full of clothes while I traveled from a distant village in the jungle. They took all I had, except the clothes I had on. The horse was rented, and they knew it, so they did not take it. This taught me to appreciate honest people more and not to take them for granted, but it made me a little suspicious. These robbers were later caught stealing calves and slaughtering them. They were hanged near where

they were caught. Maybe they were poor and hungry, but they could have worked if they had wanted to.

As I look back I realize that interaction with people molded my character. When I was fourteen I was a little too sassy. One time I called an older boy some name, and he promptly gave me a black eye. I never was sassy again. Humans are shaped by those around them, and if they get a good or bad reaction from someone they soon learn to change their behavior. The great determinants of behavior seem to be culture and interaction with other people and situations. ††

My neighbor

SEPTEMBER 10, 1984

You are my neighbor. Whoever is or lives near me is my neighbor. As far as I can reach with my influence, all are my neighbors. To love my neighbor means to love those near me, those I can have a drink with, speak to, and listen to. It means giving a helping hand when needed or requested. One can love the whole world as an abstraction, and pray for the salvation of all humanity from nuclear war, but one can love one's neighbor concretely and every day. ††

The uses and abuses of things

DECEMBER 11, 1984

I have been in homes where one vase is worth more than the house and car I own, one Oriental carpet is worth all of my furniture, and one painting has value beyond what I will earn in my lifetime. This doesn't even begin to include the lady's jewelry, or the serving sets and silver, or a hundred and one pieces of art and of furniture. There is a great deal of luxury so excessive one wonders what its use can be.

Well, first of all, luxury conveys an image of success and power, even if its owners are already tiptoeing inside the grave with gradually disabling illnesses that no amount of money can cure. Often items are actually loved for their beauty, brightness, artistic originality, and as investments or as insurance against future catastrophes. Many a family has been saved from total ruin by the family heirlooms, gold and diamonds, and anything of marketable value. Yet all of this wealth can be ignored by those who live simply. A Spartan existence of healthy, nutritive foods, bare-bones housing and furniture, and a few well-kept clothes has much to recommend it.

Some of the world's great writers used the same cheap pencils and pens until they wore out, and some used typewriters until they could not type. Getting the most out of something is really an achievement that impresses me more than having millions of dollars tied up in things that are not used at all.

In nature everything is used over and over. Our bodies, and that includes our brains, are made of recycled elements: water, carbon, and a few minerals plus nitrogen and sulfur. Over and over the elements go through plants and animals reincarnating in different forms. We are literally made of urine and manure and decayed bodies of plants, animals, and human beings who lived before us. No matter how deep they are buried, the gases emanate into the atmosphere and come down as rain, and, in time the insoluble elements are stirred up by floods or people

digging. We are made of second-, third-, fourth-, and fifth-hand material, and even older.



Nature wastes nothing. The dead are all food for the living. The compost is a life-chain where every bit of flesh, bone, plant tissue, or one-celled bacterium is used again and again.

Our images of cleanliness, stylishness, luxury, and beauty are just that: images. The wealthy couple dressed up in all their most expensive clothes are really not better than the Orinoco River native who wears nothing. We have fooled others into believing that infinitesimal and irrelevant differences are really great. Some have been led to believe that great wealth implies the owner

and his family are successful and, therefore, noble and superior. But all it means is that in a particular culture someone or several members of the family learned how to make profits by buying, selling, manufacturing, hiring cheap labor, getting others to do all the work, and collecting interest and dividends from accumulated capital.

Some, however, simply became rich by robbing others. They used force to extort and take from others, rich and poor. Wealth can also mean the owner is a crook. There are many ways of getting rich, but hard personal work is not the most usual one. If all the rich were to be allowed to keep only what they personally earned, through actual services to the society in which they live, many might end up poor.

“Of what use is it for you to gain the whole world, if in so doing you lose your soul?” asked Jesus. What is this “soul” that one can lose by becoming absorbed in gaining wealth and power? Can men and women truly love one another and God which at the same time engage in competition for wealth, power, and pleasure? “You cannot serve both God and Mammon. For where a man’s treasure is, there will his heart be also.”

 *There are many ways of getting rich, but hard personal work is not the most usual one.* 

During a shipwreck, a lifeboat found itself with limited water and food. While the others slept, one crept and stole some food. The captain had him tried. In stealing he took what belonged to all. He therefore received a warning: if he stole again he would be fed to the sharks. In society, he who takes more than his share, by whatever means, is he not doing the same? The others get less because of his action. ¶

Late Night America

JANUARY 1, 1985

Reverend Wallace and Reverend Falwell on nuclear war: Wallace said that he does not hear Falwell emphasizing or even bringing up Jesus' teaching against violence and killing. Falwell quoted the Old Testament on the need to defend oneself against one's enemies. He said Israel and the Soviet Union would go to war against each other, and God will destroy the Soviet Union, the evil empire.

Wallace said the Bible does not mention the Soviet Union or the United States. Armageddon is no more than an interpretation, and the prophesy will tend to come true because so many will believe in it. Nuclear war is not ordained by God. It is a human mistake, and humans can prevent it. Differences should be settled peacefully.

Falwell said that's what Great Britain tried to do with Hitler, but it didn't stop him. Nor has it stopped the Soviets in Afghanistan, or Cuba, or Nicaragua, or Vietnam.

I think some evangelicals are forgetting Christ's own teaching. They search in the words of St. Paul, Peter, and the rest, and in the Old Testament for passages that justify *what they want*. Christ's words are contrary to collecting large sums of money, beyond bare subsistence, and against siding with the business and military establishments. Christ was anti-nationalist, anti-

wealth, anti-military, anti-violence, and anti-war and killing. The heart of His message is that evil cannot be overcome by more evil. “Resist not evil,” he said. “Love your enemies.” “Give unto Cæsar that which is Cæsar’s.”

Leo Tolstoy, in his *Harmonization of the Gospels*, concluded that the central teaching of Christ is “resist not evil.” It is love, service, work, giving, refusal to bear arms, to kill, or to use force against others. He was aware this might mean slavery, loss of freedom, paying tribute, work, humiliation, rape, injustice at the hands of the powerful, and suffering. But, in time, God’s justice would work, and God’s people would triumph over evil.

The leaders of churches past and present, with few exceptions, have not taught Christ’s teaching, nor have they practiced it. ††

Apples

JANUARY 1, 1985

Here is an apple, dear.
I'll put it here beside you
On the little table.
Read and dream,
And if you fall asleep,
And after a while you wake up,
Eat the apple
And its tartness
Blended with sweetness
Will bring you back to reality.

Sink your teeth into its flesh
And feel the juice splatter,
Hear the crunching and squirting
As you savor sweet and sour.
It will bring you down to the earth
From the heaven of your dreams.

And an hour before she comes,
Take a brisk walk, taste the air,
Fill your lungs and stomp the ground,
And the instant she arrives
Take her in your arms and kiss her.
It will bring you down to the earth
From the heaven of your dreams.

The tired one

FEBRUARY 19, 1985

She said "I am tired; tired of working;
tired of playing the part they gave me;
tired of living the life I did not choose."

"I was tired from the first day.
I wake up, after the first night,
tired. Sleep did not give me rest."

"It began in my mind. There was strain
and tension, as Love trying to escape.
Trying to break free from bonds."

"I felt hemmed in on all sides.
There were so many things to do,
and I was supposed to do all of them."

"I searched my mind and heart
and the world around me
and found no meaning or satisfaction."

"God did not speak to me, or I did not hear.
I saw no visions, no distant origins
and no remote ends."

"Chance, luck, or fate
all seemed alike.
The living stumble, fall into holes."

"They are trapped in webs,
some of their own making.
Habits entrap us like flies in dewdrops."

"I searched for the thread
that leads to the light,
but I did not find it."

“My prayers have turned bitter,
and God cannot hear them.
I am lost in my weariness.”

“They say I am not sick.
The tests indicate
my body is quite well.”

“I am tired to the bone
and want only to sleep
and never awake.”

The man next door knocked
and his voice, deep and masculine,
said, “*Are you all right?*”

She opened the door and let him in.
Tall, his face creased, hair graying.
“*I thought you might be ill,*” he said.

“I am and am not. My body’s well,
but in my mind
I seem to have tired of the journey.”

He took her in his arms and hugged her.
“*There is a union picnic in the park.
Let’s go and see who’s there.*”

He had never performed, nor made love.
He wanted to be friends, that’s all.
He made her feel better, much better.

The grass in the park was dry
and August had begun
to paint the trees with gold.

They sat down to eat their potluck,
and the beer was free.
Everyone seemed glad to enjoy small things.

That night they slept in each other's arms,
and she wondered how long
this romance would last.

But now it didn't matter.
The gray future had receded;
it was not filled with loneliness.

The present now became life itself
and proclaimed its own meaning,
like the appleness of an apple.

"Eat me now," said the strawberry,
"for tomorrow I may be mold;
kiss me now before I grow too old."

"If I survive my friends
I will know loneliness again;
my companions will be memories."

The mind clings to life in memories
like the ivy to the cliff.
What once was real is real 'til we die.

"But, how strange, that the memory of his love
is more intense
than it ever was when he made love to me."

"His kisses, like wine, have become mellower
with time; his embrace more tender;
and all sensations tingle with a subtler fire."

"He taught my body to feel, and now it feels
by itself. The mind repeats
sensations like old tunes learned by ear."

"I can afford to be generous now.
Life has been good to me,
and I will give of myself to those around."

“I know what indifference is;
neglect and diffidence left their scars.
I will heal your wounds and hug you.”

“Love filled my cup and now it’s a spring
flowing day and night.
I am no longer bitter; I am rested.”

Note on myself

AUGUST 2, 1985

I was born January 26, 1914, in Saltillo, Coahuila, Mexico, a city today having about 300,000 people. It is 5,000 feet above sea level, in a valley flanked by the Sierra Madre Oriental on the East and the Cerro del Pueblo (Town Hill) on the West. The river that runs through the valley runs dry except after it rains in the mountains.

My mother, Elodia Villarreal García, married my father, Juan Narro Rodriguez, about 1903. My oldest sister, Ofelia, was born in 1904 and died in 1980. My brother, Roberto, was born in 1906, and we lost track of him in Los Mochis, Sinaloa, in the 1950s. Next came Aurora in 1908, and she died March 8, 1985, in San Benito, Texas. Then came Juanito in 1910, but he died young from diphtheria. There were two sisters, Esperanza in 1912 and another in 1916 who died. Juanita was born in 1917, January 27th. I am not sure about the birth dates of the two Esperanzas.

My full given name is Policarphio Hesiquio Narro Villarreal, or Polycarp Hesyquinius Narro. I changed the spelling to Esiquio. Hesyquinius, or Hesykias, is derived from Heseekiah, King of Israel, from the Bible. Polycarp is the saint celebrated January 26th. ††

On literature

SEPTEMBER 3, 1985

When I think about literature, sometimes I remember the conversations I had with some fellow students over beer. We used to go to Taylor's tavern on the west edge of the campus at the University of Oregon. I had signed up for Milton and Shakespeare with Dr. Lesch. We were halfway through the quarter and, to make conversation, I asked the three students, two men and one woman, what they thought, so far, of Milton and *Hamlet*. All three smiled, and one said, "Chico, we are taking lit for the credits. We only want to find out what Lesch wants us to say in answer to his questions.

Lit is boring old stuff, isn't it, Nancy?"



"Well, it is and it isn't. I find the language interesting."

"The language," said Bill, "that's what I hate."

In time, I was to find that most literature other than love stories and great adventures is boring to most people. Today the young prefer movies and TV. Works of literature have to be very entertaining and not too long. No wonder few read the Bible on their own.

Language becomes difficult with time. New words and expressions come into usage, and old ones disappear.

The meaning of idioms is lost, and only professors and researchers keep it alive. To love literature one must love to delve into the past, to relive other periods and empathize with characters of another age. In this sense one who has enjoyed literature has lived with the ancient Greeks, the Hebrews, the Persians, the Hindi, the Chinese, the Romans, and the early Europeans. It is

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like living 3,000 or more years and experiencing the development of civilization. Surely there can be no greater adventure.

Literature can be pure imagination, as in *The Arabian Nights*, or it can be historical fact, as in Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*. In any case we enter a different world, and we are fascinated by its possibilities and by the way people behave and make mistakes and seem unable to avoid them. ¶

Desires

OCTOBER 1985

Men, women, and children are moved by desires. As they grow they attach themselves to people and to things. Desires may be weak, easily reined, kept in check by thinking, "I cannot have this; it is wrong or it is beyond my means." Or they can become powerful passions that cannot be controlled, such as incestuous and adulterous loves and desire for what another has. Such desires are like the temper tantrums of spoiled children when they are told they cannot have what they want.

All fiction, tragedy, and even comedy are filled with examples of love that is aroused by an object that cannot be had or by ambition that knows neither restraint nor limits.

Buddhists, mystics, and many religious groups believe that to attain the consciousness of the Spirit, a person will succeed only if he or she is not distracted by sexual desires or overpowering emotions, such as love, hate, fear, or anger. The same goes for attachment to material possessions, honors, positions, and privileges. But it is very easy to become used to being honored and to special treatment. When such distinctions are lost or withdrawn, one realizes how dependent he or she had become.

The kind of love that remains constant is a spiritual love. It loves in spite of defects and is not dependent on physical sensations other than the most tender caresses. ¶

Crevasses and chasms

NOVEMBER 21, 1985

As we go through life some of us suffer accidents while others, perhaps by chance, are spared. A young man falls in love, and the girl dies. His loss is like a chasm, a crack in the earth, dark and depressing, and he cannot go around it or cross it. Emotionally he feels he will only find release in heaven, when he sees his beloved once again. A young girl losing her lover may have similar feelings.

Our emotional landscapes may be like a summer afternoon in the country, by a quiet lake, and a meadow full of wildflowers. Or they may be like the South Pole: cold, with biting winds, monotonous, and desolate. Somewhere between are visions of hell, torrid loves, and terrible losses.

As in storm-tossed seas, a feeling of helplessness overwhelms us as we are lifted in the crest of a gigantic wave and then are brought down into a trough, surrounded by black mountains with snowy summits.

Then, in quiet moments, we wonder why the wind is so quiet. Why isn't the earth in constant turmoil, as it ought to be, given the density of the atmosphere and the capriciousness of air currents warmed by the heat of the sun? Why aren't volcanoes erupting and the earth quaking and splitting as it did on previous ages? Why should this relatively quiet age be the time when civilizations have flourished, during the last 10,000 years, just between ice ages? There is a timing of evolution and the quieting of the earth, when it is neither as hot and humid, nor as cold, as it has been in past ages.

As humans face the emotional abysses opened up by catastrophes and calamities, natural or man-made, some turn to God, to the spirit that they feel must calm the waves and temper the storms. What guided mankind before we acquired knowledge?

On a moonless night the newly hatched baby sea turtles find their way across the beach to the sea. Did their mothers know that sixty days after laying their eggs they would hatch on a moonless night, or was it just chance? How does nature calculate the probabilities of survival, of individuals, of a species? How does the rate of reproduction come about? ¶

[Sexual] Feelings

FEBRUARY 11, 1986

Consider how you feel when you discover that your beloved is having sex with someone else. You are, or were, in love. It was a beautiful and fulfilling relationship. You had fun together. But, somehow, another was attracted and became attractive. The idea of another experience, a variation, a bit of promiscuity entered his or her mind. They went ahead and did it. You feel rejected, discarded, obsolete, left out.

This feeling was not lost on the ancients. They realized that the relationship, in the case of husband and wife, would never be the same again. It was damaged beyond repair. All the sophistication and rationalization of the purely physical act did not remove the feeling. There had been a spiritual union, a trust, and it was shattered. Jealousy and violence spring out of this. Hence couples were admonished to be faithful to one another.

Somehow, men were allowed, by other men, to have more than one lover, but the same standard was not allowed women. This was a misuse of power. The damage is the same either way. Some women preferred a part-time lover or husband to nothing, but they would rather have had the whole man.

Awakening sexuality in women can lead to promiscuity. Few men can keep a knowledgeable woman satisfied. Nature makes men quick to ejaculate, in the interests of reproduction, while women can go on for a long time. A long-lasting, virile

man can be desirable to many women, even if he has few other qualities. But sexuality is not correlated with creativity or with many of the qualities that contribute to a civilization. The world's great minds have generally kept sex under a tight rein and sublimated their energies in projects requiring long hours of concentrated thought, observation, and argument.

Men tend to excite easily and are as quickly satisfied, for a time. Prostitutes know this and build their business catering to whatever turns men on. Women are slower to arouse, yet are easily masturbated to orgasm. Once they become sensitized, a man can bring them to orgasm during coitus. But many women have developed inhibitions that prevent them from surrendering to pleasures.

Yet once having learned to enjoy sex, women are easy conquests for men who have the ability to make them feel good. This is fatal to existing relationships, and very sensual men do not seek or want stable unions. The way to promiscuity is marked by such short-lived affairs. Diseases are more probable as the frequency of contacts increases, and a satisfactory mate is more difficult to find on a permanent basis.

In ancient times people experimented with everything, and yet there were many couples who chose to remain faithful. They valued the trust they had in their partners and the good health they enjoyed. "Beware of the strange woman," warned the preacher in *Proverbs*, and happiness was to be found in a faithful wife and loving children. The Pagans felt the same way, according to Cicero and other Roman writers who taught that love and loyalty were essential to stable and satisfying relationships.

The connection between faithfulness to friends and mates and survival becomes clear when we realize that children cared for by a mother and a father have a better chance of doing well than do children raised by a mother alone.

True, lions are raised mainly by females, mothers, and aunts, and most species are raised by the mothers, though a few also include the fathers. In nature mating for life is not common.

Most species mate promiscuously, often with the dominant male. But most species mate only periodically, when the females come into estrus, and this reduces promiscuity.

Since humans mate on a monthly cycle, humans need to practice more restraint. It also appears that humans have more serious diseases likely to be transmitted by promiscuous unions. ††

Connections

MARCH 15, 1986

I am connected. I am connected to my best friend, Milton Norlin. It's a connection that has grown, like algae or moss or a vine, between us since 1953. It is not just a physical connection. It is more than physical. It is transcendent. It transcends the physical. I am religious, and I understand transcendence, or think I do. But he is not, and it doesn't seem to matter. Our bond is as real to him as it is to me. Yet we have little in common.

He likes furniture, and the house and things. He likes to move and rearrange things. I prefer to stay put and to have things where they work best and care not whether they are old or new. He likes to paint. I hate the smell of paint. I like the garden, but he prefers neatness to natural beauty. I read a lot. He prefers movies, *Twilight Zone*, *Believe It or Not*, famous people. I prefer ideas, movements, changes. Still we agree Reagan and conservatives have no compassion and no sense of justice. We agree on many things. We see the humor in many situations. Without humor and laughter, there probably could be no heaven.

I have other friends, and then there is my family. Connections branch out into other connections. When I read books, I connect with the authors. I get to know their thoughts and their best ideas. I can converse with Moses, Plato, Socrates, Xenophon, Æschylus, Aristotle, Marcus Aurelius, Petronius, St. Augustine, Plutarch,

Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Chaucer, Tolstoy, Cervantes, Voltaire, and many others, right up to our time. There is a world of ideas and ways of seeing the world and feeling and sensing reality.

And among all the luminaries of history, there shines Jesus of Nazareth, in words and deeds, and his followers after Him. This connection is difficult to make because there are no other historical sources outside the four gospels. The connection is purely spiritual. The physical aspects of Christ's life and ministry remain a mystery, based on hearsay. Yet the spiritual message is there.

We know that physically every particle of matter and energy is connected to every other one in the universe. We sense, intuitively, that spiritually we are also connected to the Spirit of Life. Throughout the universe matter behaves in the same patterns, as if it followed a blueprint built into it or written in space like a hologram. The entire universe seems to be of a piece, and the variations in the forms matter and/or energy take do not violate the fundamental unity. 卍

Attachment

APRIL 1, 1986

We become attached to people, to pets, to things, and to places. We suffer when we lose them. The Hindu yogis teach that we need to become unattached and not become attached again. We live as if other people and things were part of us, and they are. We are also part of them. But they die and get lost. They are not forever. Places change. They even disappear. They are us. They are in us. Yet we have to be ready at all times to part with them because they die and we die.

When our dear family and friends are sick, we suffer. When they die, something within us dies. We die a little at a time. We lose things we loved and liked. We regret the loss. Still we must accept the loss. In the end, everybody loses. Even emperors and kings lose in the end. We cannot hang on to life and things beyond the appointed time. We need to let go, with dignity and serenity.

We need to become conscious of our connection with God. We need to pray and meditate, to reach the center of all being. We can love life, but we cannot become possessive. As the tree gives up its leaves in the fall, so we must give up all we have. Our bare souls go back to God, where they came from. ॥

Father Charles Curran



AUGUST 31, 1986

Father Charles Curran, teacher of moral theology at Catholic University of America, has been dismissed from teaching theology. He claims that the search for truth is never-ending, while the Church claims all truth was found by 300 A.D. and there is no more to be discovered.

A changing world, full of different situations, challenges ancient doctrines and dogma, in the light of reason and reinterpretation of old texts. These, including that the earth was flat and the center of the universe, have clearly been twisted and shaded to favor the views of the established clergy.

The fact remains that humans have the obligation to regulate their numbers through contraception, until other means are found. Abortions are very often necessary, not just in a few cases, and homosexuality is a natural phenomenon we must live with, not a willful sin. Women are the equals of men, and male prerogatives were written into scripture by men, who wanted to exclude women. All races and varieties of the human species are equal before God. This last is recognized by the Catholic Church, but not by some Protestants who are racists and base their racism on scripture, as do some Jews.

There is plenty of room for discussion, and those whose minds are set in concrete are being left behind, and out, in every field. Things that were considered eternal verities are found to be subject to change. The eternal resides in God Himself, not in His creations, which are in fact designed and equipped to cope with change, or perish.

 *Nature is
God's Book even
more than
the Bible, which
suffers in
translation.* 

Christ's teaching has economic consequences. If all at once one-half of the people in the Christian world, or in the Western world, were to follow Christ's commandments closely and faithfully, the following would happen:

1. A sharp decrease in the sale and consumption of luxury items, fashionable things, and status symbols. This will include most of the things the wealthy and the yuppies consume and buy.
2. An increase in unemployment as the industries that produce such things decline.
3. A decline in the use of courts of law and lawyers to settle disputes. Most differences will be settled by arbitrators or by the parties themselves.
4. A decline in the hours of work, and days per week, to distribute the available work among the available workers.
5. A decline in the number of rich people, as they give their fortunes away and simplify their lives and those of their children.
6. A decline in armaments manufacturers and related contractors, with subsequent unemployment.
7. A decline in the size of armed forces and an increase in the number of those seeking jobs and on pensions.
8. An increase in the demand for simple, natural, nutritious, unprocessed foods, such as grains, legumes, vegetables, fruits, nuts, and dried fish.
9. An increase in participatory sports, with emphasis on play, not winning. Players rotate between and among teams, and scores will be left to chance. Emphasis will be on enjoying play, grace, and experiencing the game itself.
10. Live theatre and entertainment will increase, and promotion of stars will cease. Hype will be outlawed by custom as bad taste. Commercialization will be out.
11. The materialism and greed which seems so essential to our present civilization will gradually disappear. The challenge will be to be interested and interesting without

being entertained by others and cared for by professionals throughout life. The key is in the relationships of friendship and love, good humor, shared work, and an uncomplicated life.

12. Science will continue, but not for commercial or military reasons, rather to learn to make a better life in a better world.
13. The arts will flourish, for their own sake, not commercial values. The idea that if people do not buy it now it is not art is wrong.
14. Government will consist of genuine public servants, not self-serving groups or individuals.
15. Last and first, God, the Father, will be constantly in everyone's consciousness, and prayer will be pervasive, though silent in most cases. Scientists will work to discover God's laws, and humanity will live in accord with these. Nature is God's Book even more than the Bible, which suffers in translation.

Men and women tend to substitute their own commandments for those of God, but, in time, those based on human thinking are found to be deficient, whereas those rooted in the Infinite will become more effective. We need to acknowledge our errors and correct our thinking and feeling through prayer and meditation. Then we must act with love, forgiveness, compassion, and generosity, and so persuade others to do. ॥

Democracy in decline

SEPTEMBER 28, 1986

Circa 400 B.C., Plato and the academy, and probably Socrates, defined democracy as a government in which only the 20% of the population that owned property and were well-informed about the issues and candidates would vote. Today this would be called an oligarchy, but then an oligarchy was one in which a few very rich families ruled.

Today voters are not any better informed about the issues, problems, and candidates than the voters of ancient Athens. In fact, they are less informed. If one asks voters before they vote what they know about the candidates, one finds they only know the names of the most important ones. Down the line they know nothing about them. That is why the LaRouche people are able to get votes. The best thing to do is not to vote on any candidate one doesn't know.

The same goes for issues placed before the voters. The media put out propaganda paid for by each side. They do not place the *facts* before the public. People are often more confused than if nothing were said.

There are probably between 20 and 30% of voters that are well-informed in this country. To get solid information one has to *read* a variety of opinions and get the facts. The propagandists try to hide the facts, appeal to emotions, and cloud the issues—the opposite of what is needed in a democracy. Most people never read much beyond the sports, social, and comics pages. Willful ignorance and laziness will be the cause of the failure of democracy, as Plato said.

Citizens' rights and human rights do not exist unless citizens become well-informed, register to vote, and vote for people who will defend those rights. But too many citizens are apathetic, lazy, and cynical, as Plato said they would be. ¶¶

Suicide

OCTOBER 3, 1986

Suicide is like homosexuality: it does not lead to survival of the species. One difference is that a homosexual sometimes has children and often helps nephews and nieces. Suicide is a temper tantrum, a feeling sorry for one's self, and a failure to find an alternative.

In the quest for excellence and/or perfection, those who fail feel they might as well be dead. The events that lead to depression may be failures; frustrations; not being born beautiful, handsome, or talented; a physical or mental handicap; or even an allergy.

We see only ourselves, in our immediate context, not in the frame of life that covers the earth and populates the universe and is eternal, renewing itself forever and ever. Eternal life is this: realizing that we are part of the eternal flow of life, not alone.

People who teach and train the handicapped find they also need to motivate: "What little you have, do the best you can with it." Giving up is not in the interest of survival. Ulysses did not give up, no matter what the odds. He symbolized the *will to live* which leads species to survival. This will to live is very ancient and is at the heart of living things. It is the "Will of God" in the Lord's prayer because we know as God lives, so must we.

We are beings with moving parts, and our brains and emotions are complex chemical reactions kept in balance and control by a miracle. We are fragile, and it is a miracle that we grow to adulthood and old age. Living is the most important thing we do. To live, just to live, is to succeed. Life succeeds by surviving. Life has even invented pleasures and games, to insure survival.

The young of all species seem to delight in play. As they age they become more serious, and follow their instincts, but still delight in the coming of spring, the ending of storms and floods, and the passing of Winter. Only when very old, sick, and tired do they resign themselves to death, which they have observed.

But new generations give them hope that life goes on, perhaps forever.

True, we live in the present, but our roots go back to the first cells on earth, and our future, the future of the species and of all Life, is infinite. We are small wavelets in a sea of life.

We are not alone and not separate beings but parts of a whole.

Suicide is a denial of the will to live, of saying *yes* to life. It is not worthy of us. †

Profits and crisis

DECEMBER 3, 1986

Any philosopher would be at a loss to understand how nations are to manage their economies so as to insure long-term economic health while, at the same time, corporate executives plan for *short-term profits* to save their careers and their friends' investments. The two are often opposite goals and cannot be carried on at the same time.

Take the environment. Pollution of rivers, air, and the oceans threatens to put an end to civilization, not only businesses. But, bent on profits, industries dump toxic materials and heavy metals that have long-term effects on health, up to 20 years. Executives couldn't care less what happens to the health of human and animal populations over 20 years. They can't even calculate profits or sales that long. Even five years is too long. They look at one or two years, at best, and in that time frame they only worry about whether they will make profits, be fired or jailed, and whether they can get away with it.

The nation? Well, the citizens wave flags and make speeches and watch fireworks on the Fourth of July. They support a strong defense-offense with profits to contractors. And they all oppose communism.

But they see no danger in depleted resources, toxic waste dump sites, and widespread pollution. They make products designed to end in the garbage dump in a few days to five years and are not concerned at all about the problems created.

Well, the reaction is closing in: "Less is more. Recycle everything. Waste nothing. Practice intensive agriculture and gardening. Avoid toxic substances. Make it do. Wear it out. Repair it. Lead a simpler life," *etc.* The reaction will affect markets as people buy less. Together with lower wages and a tendency to work part-time and cut down on needs, a change is coming. ¶

Sexuality as the spoiler

NOVEMBER 2, 1987

Sooner or later most men discover that their women are not having orgasms. Such men do not know how to prepare a woman for sex or how to stimulate her to orgasm. Some men deliberately avoid provoking an orgasm in the woman because they have been told, or they have learned from experience, that women tend to become addicted to orgasms and want them very often. Men do not want to provide frequent orgasms, either due to the pressures of work and responsibilities or because they may have or seek a mistress.

Women who do not get orgasms at all, and find out about them may seek a lover or a divorce. But a divorce means breaking up a network of social links and many privileges besides just severing the relationship with the husband. After a divorce a woman may find herself ignored by many former friends who had deep regard for her husband. Other women also will not trust her with their husbands.

But even women who experience orgasms may find themselves wanting more and wondering if they will feel more pleasure with other men. Some become so active sexually they go out several

times a week with different men. A son or daughter might be told their mother is a whore, and they would be ashamed.

It is almost as bad when the man is a caveman able to satisfy women with his ability to maintain a large thick erection over a long period of time and is skillful in stimulating women to orgasm. If on top of this he is a loving, kind, considerate, and generous man, women love him. But his children are not proud of his promiscuity.

It all becomes worse when men and women acquire venereal diseases or have illegitimate children. Taking antibiotics over and over sometimes has consequences also. But the worst problem is that sons and daughters are at a loss as to how to live their lives.

If adultery, fornication, and promiscuity for pleasure (recreation) are okay in our society, then society has to bear the cost of increased venereal diseases and mental illness resulting from the deep feeling of loneliness and distrust that shallow relationships produce. Since every affair is temporary “until someone better comes along,” there can be no deep love, no real trust and loyalty. There is no insurance against the future, and no “us against the world.” The object becomes sexual pleasure for its own sake.

But sexual pleasure is nature’s way of guiding humans and most animal species into copulation for reproduction. Had sex been mainly painful, species would have disappeared. “Pleasure centers” draw male and female into sexual unions, and they reproduce. So sex is a means to more abundant life, just as food is, but neither is an objective of life. ¶

The important and the unimportant

JANUARY 27, 1988

Einstein paid little attention to dress, personal appearance, and social etiquette. His mind was focused on the problem of how the forces of matter are related. He was a kind, tolerant, religious, and loving man, but he gave the appearance of self-neglect.

Linus Pauling also concentrated on important problems and seldom worried about unimportant details. There are many men and women who have worked on difficult areas, often neglecting family, friends, and selves to some extent.

Others raise unimportant details to the level of sacraments. They will condemn a person for eating grapes, apples, or plums and spitting out the seeds, stones, and skins.

Propriety and cleanliness, well-groomed appearance, dress in the latest fashion, nice cars, nice homes, and gardens—that is what counts; to hell with what goes on inside people's heads. ††

Drifting northward

FEBRUARY 11, 1988

In 1925 my sister Aurora married Alessio Ecresti de Getner, son of Ventura Ecresti. He had two brothers, Raul and Samuel. They went to live in San Benito, Texas, in his father's house. In a year I followed my mother and Juanita, my younger sister, there. We all lived in don Ventura's house.

The house was near the resaca, north of Robertson Street. My sister Aurora sometimes sent me to buy food in a nearby restaurant owned by the Pedianza family. Mother preferred to cook. We all got free vegetables from the culls in the packing sheds, called "priculas" for pre-culls.

Before going to Mexico I lived with an uncle, Uncle Antonio Villarreal, and Rosa, his wife. He was a merchant and butchered

hogs. At that time they had two children, Rosa María and Tonito. My brother Roberto also went to Texas and married a Texan. When he returned, his wife did not like Saltillo. So that is when we went back.

Saltillo is an old city founded in 1543, by the Marques del Valle. It lies in a valley with the Sierra Madre rising to 12,000 feet on the east and the Cerro del Pueblo (People's Mountain) on the west. It is much larger now, stretching to the north and in every other direction. In winter the Sierra was covered with snow, and I loved to watch the sun rise over it. Saltillo was a city of orchards and gardens, and I grew up in them, picking all kinds of fruit in season, at my aunt's orchard and at ours, which mother leased. There were apples, pears, plums, peaches, figs, grapes, pomegranates, and other fruits and nuts.

My earliest memories date from about 1918 when I was four. My sister fell from a chair and cut her nose on a brick step. I remember the house well. It had no orchard but had two pecan trees. It had a gray wood picket fence. Later we moved across the street to the "Chalet," a European-style brick house. This one had a carriage garage, a swimming pool, and an orchard. We lived here sharing the house with an uncle, his wife, two daughters (one my age) and a son. My grandmother Honorata, grandfather Lalo, and a younger uncle, Felipe, also lived with us. I remember the large red American apples that ripened late. I remember also the cat that drowned in the pool after I removed the hose it used to get out. I think I threw it in the pool, twice.

I remember playing with my cousins in the rye. My uncle whipped me and one of my cousins because he thought we were doing something. We had taken our clothes off.

From there we moved to another house with an orchard. I had friends, and we played in the orchard and in the dry creek behind it. There were squirrels and snakes and birds, and we used sling shooters to hunt them. We seldom killed any. We also played in Aunt Jesusita's house and orchard three blocks south. We sometimes went on hikes to the Cerro del Pueblo.

All this changed when I went to San Benito where there are no mountains. There we went fishing in the resaca. I went to school at once and was put in the first grade. I was in sixth grade in Saltillo, at age 11. In one year I went through grades 1 through 7.

The school was for Mexican-Americans, because it was in their section of town, or "Mexiquito," little Mexico. Many Mexican migrant workers did not send their kids to school. There was no segregation. There were a few white Americans. Later in high school we all went together, even Blacks, but many Blacks did not go to high school.

I went to school full time and worked after school and on weekends. I swept a theater, mopped the entrance, vacuumed the carpets, and cleaned the toilets. I got \$7 a week. I did it after the show and on Saturday and Sunday mornings. I also swept a confectionery for \$2 a week and a dry goods store for another \$2. Then I did a little gardening. Sometimes I made \$12 a week, and my brother-in-law made \$18 in a grocery store.

I did well in school, but in 1930 I was fired from the theater job. A friend of the manager was hired. So I borrowed \$36 and went to Tex-Mex Industrial Institute, a work and study school run by Presbyterians, south of Kingsville, Texas. I made my tenth year there. Then I went to Mexico, where my brother worked for Standard Fruit Company and wanted me to come and help him.

Soon I went out on my own and went to San Juan Sugar to cut cane for the experience. It was good learning how the workers labored to earn a few pesos. I made some friends. Then I came to Agua Fria and taught school and planted a few acres of bananas. For me the work was incredibly hard and hot. In 1939 I caught malaria for the second time and nearly died, so I went to Mexico City. A few months later my wife and daughter, Irma, followed me.

Ofelia, my oldest sister, took care of me, and my uncle Rafael took me to Aquilino Villanueva, a specialist in tropical diseases. A young doctor, Radolfo Falcón, supervised the treatment. I recovered. After working in a hotel (Holywood) for a while,

I found work teaching English in two business colleges. I was able to make about 350 pesos a month, which was about \$100, but we did well on that.

It was then that I met Bill Moxley, at Dr. Montañó's college on Ave. Obregón. He suggested I come to Oregon and teach Spanish. The father of one of my students loaned me \$100, and I got a visa and came to Eugene, Oregon. There I began to work at Eugene Plywood Company and registered for six hours at the University of Oregon. ¶

The purpose of life

APRIL 25, 1988

In ancient Egypt the purpose of life was to serve Pharaoh and the gods. In Persia it was the king and the gods. In Israel it was the king and God, or God and the king. To Hitler it was to serve Greater Germany, as he gave orders. In the U.S. and Europe the real purpose of life for the people is to work and serve as soldiers defending the wealth of the rich. But in democracies everyone chooses his or her own purpose. A purpose may have to be invented.

To Christians and Moslems the purpose of life is to serve God and mankind; but in each nation, the nation comes before mankind. The Glory of God should come first, then the Glory of the Nation. But many seek first their own glory, fame, wealth, and power.

Some consider pleasure to be the purpose of life. The excitement that makes adrenaline flow—sky diving, adventure—whatever makes one *feel* alive. There is no such thing as a spiritual inner life for some.

Some find no purpose in life at all. They drift from one attempt at enjoyment to another. To others life is the family. They live

through their children and grandchildren, and their experiences, triumphs, and suffering.

Still others find life's purpose in their work. Art, music, literature, philosophy, the sciences, and projects men and women dream up all fill them with passion and excitement and fill their days and nights. More than love or food or drink or sleep, and often in spite of pain, men and women pursue their dreams and work to make them real.

Then there are the philosophers who search for truth, beauty, and justice, and the ideal state for mankind. And the religious leaders, the founders of great religions who found a path to God and want to lead mankind to the Kingdom of Heaven, they have found their place.

But perhaps the real winners are the ordinary people who enjoy the simple life, life itself, just being alive, no matter what they are doing. They take in the sunrise and the dew on the grass; the flowers and the clouds and the blue of the sky; the birds and the trees and all creatures great and small and they love everyone and do all they can for anyone. And every minute they thank God for such a wonderful thing as life. They do the best they can and guide their lives by the Gospel and feel God's presence at all times. To them the purpose of life is to glorify God and to enjoy it and thank Him for everything.

But the rich and the powerful give themselves credit for all they have and forget the poor and God. They are too busy attending to business matters. They have no time for their children, or anyone. Their wealth and their power requires constant attention, day and night. They are proud of their success. They enjoy expensive foods, drink, and recreation. Their friends are the same as they.

Who is to judge what others do or do not? Each needs to find what the spirit moves to search for. The world is a place of great variety, and there is room for all.

Every talent known to mankind is a gift of God to man. True science comes from God, as all truth is part of God.

Human errors are the natural result of trial-and-error learning. It is only when we do that which we *know is wrong*, or deceive ourselves into believing it is not wrong, that we sin. But even this kind of sin is error that has its own consequences, not direct punishment by God. The consequences are always there, and they have always been there. Only humans have not recognized them or have refused to recognize them.

The problem has always been that living in accordance with the best rules and principles is often found boring by the young, and by some older men and women. So they seek more wealth, more power, more adventure, and more pleasures. This leads to their corruption and downfall. They become addicted to alcohol, drugs, and sex, and all else becomes boring and unimportant. They become a market for anyone who offers excitement and remedy for their troubles.

As they become overweight, flabby, lazy, indulgent, spoiled, and weak, they seek gurus and doctors to get them back into shape. Ironically these doctors teach them disciplines which they once had or which others tried to teach them.

But, no matter how well the body is, the spirit is another matter. †

The good Samaritan

OCTOBER 30, 1988

This is not about the good Samaritan who picked up the man who had been robbed and left by the road, took him to an inn, and helped him until he was well. It is about the two men who *passed* him and did nothing. What were they thinking?

Each one was in a hurry and busy: he could not take the time. He thought to himself: "Many people pass through here. I am sure someone will help him." Then each thought: "He could be a bandit pretending he is a victim. As I come close to him,

he will take my purse and run, or kill me with a stick or a stone. There may be others, his partners, hiding nearby.”

Or each thought: “If I help him, it will cost me money and time. He may become dependent on me since he is a stranger here and has nothing. I may not be able to get rid of him.”

We do not know what happened after the man the Samaritan helped got well. But it is possible he was a merchant or an artist or even a government official, a lawyer, or a doctor. Perhaps he became a lifelong friend of the Samaritan and helped him many times during their lives. ††



The reality news

NOVEMBER 10, 1988

Let us assume that a brilliant group of newscasters puts on a program, financed by the public at large, that tells the truth, corrects all lies put on the air or in print, and explains exactly what is going on no matter how horrible. For one hour every day, seven times a week, those who want to know the truth watch this program, or hear it on radio. Will it have a large audience?

Well, not exactly. Americans love horror, blood, sex, sorcery, Satanism, violence, odd and strange behavior, incest, pedophilia, torture, comedy, romance, money, opulence, luxury, flashiness, sexiness, more sexiness, more violence, explosions, fires, wars, bodies blowing up in the air, dismemberments, poisonings, stranglings, throat cuttings, beatings, shootings, people buried alive, people burned, robberies, fraud, people ruined, trials, tribulations, variations on death, garbage, lies, imaginations—in one word: shit. There are rewards for those who can invent more horrific ways to kill, die, or maim, physically or mentally.

Next come sports, favored by decent people, and romantic novels about fornication, adultery, homosexuality, and betrayed friendship. Struggles over money, business, contracts, property,

 Ignorant of
languages, geography,
history (American
and world),
mathematics,
science, literature,
art, anthropology,
politics, economics,
and you name it,
one out of two
Americans,
or two out of three,
don't know
and don't care. 

and you name it, one out of two Americans, or two out of three, don't know and don't care.

The leader of the Western world knows little about the Western world it pretends to lead. America's principal asset is money, to lend or to give away, and goods. The military is less and less effective as it becomes more expensive in lives and money. Missiles of all sizes are now being made and sold by China, Korea, Brazil, and other countries. In a few years tanks, helicopters, planes, trucks, and guns will be blown up by peasants with missiles.

The most durable and effective way to influence other nations is fair trade. Each makes or produces something more efficiently and better than others. Each can sell what it does best

land, cattle, diamonds, gold, or power are also popular. Comedies, anything for a laugh, are good, as are stand-up comedians of both sexes or neither.

But anything to do with reality, documentaries, lectures on economics, politics, philosophy, science, health, or the world we live in, these are considered good, but seldom watched or listened to by at least half the audience. "Don't bore me with facts" is the motto of many who think they are too smart. The country with the greatest(?) educational system has the lowest utilization of its educational resources and opportunities.

Ignorant of languages, geography, history (American and world), mathematics, science, literature, art, anthropology, politics, economics,

to buy what others do best. Neither unrestrained capitalism nor totally controlled government enterprises work best under all conditions. Some regulation of safety and quality and the environment is necessary. Excessive bureaucracy, public or private, is inefficient. And small businesses need freedom to prosper, freedom from big businesses' attempts to destroy competition and from excessive government regulation and interference.

But when elections come voters are going to be lured by who looks better, who is more entertaining, who gives a feeling of security from fears (real or imaginary), and who inspires investors' confidence.

Plato and his disciples and Socrates their teacher in 400–300 B.C., said democracy would fail because the rich would hire demagogues to present a false picture to the people, and the voters would be misled into voting for candidates who would be ignorant and incompetent and would not have the best interests of the country in mind or at heart. A tyrant would soon take over, as in Syracuse, or a conqueror from another city or country would become the boss.

A democracy has to be defended by a military that is subject to the legislative, the executive, and the judicial branches of government. It also has to defend itself from those who propagate ideas that destroy democracy. A democracy cannot allow freedom to destroy it, either by the left that purports to favor the common people or by the right that favors the rich and powerful. A democracy cannot allow itself to be destroyed by lies. The test of truth must be applied to all that candidates and propagandists say.

The absolute right to lie or say anything that gives a false picture of reality is not guaranteed by the Constitution. If it is, then watchdog researchers and speakers and writers must answer, *at once*, to expose the lies. ††

Edmund Burke, on taste

DECEMBER 25, 1988

Burke assumed that everyone sees the same, smells the same, tastes the same, touches the same as everybody else, since the sense organs are the same in everyone. Today we know that this is not true. The senses vary, being in fact different in every individual. What is sour or sweet to some is bitter to others, and what is pleasant to some is foul to others. Sounds and rhythms also vary in their appeal.

On top of this we have cultural indoctrination. In one culture, bagpipes are fine, expressing emotions of patriotism and country. To others, they are unpleasant whining noises resembling mice or rats in a bag. Gumlast and Limburger are cheeses that are a delicacy to some but foul to others. To some Africans large loops stretched by hoops in the earlobes and lips are beautiful, but they are horrible to outsiders. How a people came to value some characteristic as beautiful is often unknown. Perhaps it was imposed by a strong leader as a symbol for the tribe. After that, it became good and beautiful.

Circumcision was considered good by the Jews, but horrible mutilation to the Romans. Other Middle Eastern peoples practiced it for reasons unknown, perhaps hygiene. Animals do not need it. Perhaps abnormally long prepuces adhered to the glans are a hereditary problem with the Jews.

In any case taste develops by chance, in each culture, each arriving at what it considers beautiful and desirable. It may or may not be so for others, like Andean or Mexican Indian blankets or baskets. Some elements have more universal appeal, others strictly local like bull's ears in Spain. Yet horns, once polished and made into bugles, are more universal.

In fact, some of our intolerance of other cultures comes from our inability to accept their idea of the good and the beautiful. Somehow a young man with huge rings through his nose, ears, and lips is not our idea of handsomeness. Nor do we relish

raw octopus, as do the Japanese, or raw seal meat, as do the Eskimos, or fried grubs as do the Mexicans, to name a few cultural preferences.

Our ideas of female beauty are, and have been, what arouse us sexually. But at some times and places it was the fertility symbol, the mother, that was considered life-giving, therefore beautiful. Our beautiful women today, our models, look more like boys than symbols of fertility. It may mean that we are expressing our underlying homosexuality which cannot be openly expressed. Everywhere we go, men and women display their butts under tight pants. Slender waists and firm, not-too-large breasts, appeal to many. This is a change from the past when larger breasts were preferred.

Form, line, color, and the play of light, still find appeal in art. Artists strive not to repeat the past, and worse, not to imitate. The search for originality leads to infinite experimentation. And art has to speak to the present and the future, seldom the past. We find few things that truly please us and excite us. We are happy if few displease us.

Then if we decide to rely on nature for beauty and what is good, we hardly differ from those who wrote a long time ago, except that we know more science. But we still have questions that are unanswered. We still know that there is much we do not know.

All that we know we perceive through the senses, and then our imagination, aided by reading what others have thought and by conversations with others, combines perceptions into all kinds of ideas, comparisons, relations, classifications, and generalizations. In time some conclusions are found to be untrue, so new theories replace them. This is the John Erickson theory of perception, also developed by Joan Erickson, his wife, here anticipated by Burke.

In Burke's time accurate representation in art was considered a mark of excellence. Now that we have photography, it is not. It is knowledge and experience that enables wit and judgment to be sharpened. Small differences are difficult to measure or define. ¶

On meditation

FEBRUARY 2, 1989

“When you pray, pray secretly in your private chamber, and your Father, who hears you in secret, will do as you ask,” said Jesus, after some Jews went by saying prayers out loud and hired trumpeters blew their trumpets before them. It is the same with charity, which is giving to others, instead of asking.

Inevitably, Maharishi Maheshi and his followers have brought Eastern philosophy and religion into their teaching of Transcendental Meditation. The main reason is that the material world is distracting and has to be kept from overwhelming the mind and the emotions. Meditation opens the door, but each of us has to set limits on his or her desires, ambitions, and involvement with wealth, property, society, fame, the media, *etc.*, in order to achieve and maintain inner peace. A new and more selective set of values, embracing all life, the whole earth, all those around us, has to be developed. Eastern philosophy and religion are a source of such values, as are the teachings of Christ, of Buddha, or Mohammed.

One can meditate and relax like an idiot, not caring about the world we live in. Or we can follow ethical rules or laws that enable all of us to live harmoniously together. Meditation may enable anyone to give up drugs, alcohol, smoking, or promiscuous sex activities. It may help overcome anger, violence, greed, and injustice in dealing with others. We want inner peace and relaxation, but we also want a community free of crime and other evils. In Japan the Samurais often went from village to village fighting bandits and oppressive leaders at the request of the people. They trained in the use of arms and in hand fighting to champion just and honorable causes. Many were Zen Buddhists and used meditation.

Jesus taught prayer and non-violent resistance to evil. The power of prayer is that those who oppress soon fall victim to accidents and diseases, and they come to believe the prayers of

their victims have effects. In one generation a wealthy family's name disappeared. No males were born or survived. Others had no children at all. The poor, however, multiplied.

Meditation is a way to shut out the world with its excessive demands on our attention, time, and energy, and to discover what is important. "Build for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where thieves do not steal and rust does not corrupt." We can simplify our lives, drop useless burdens, and live closer to Life, and to God. 卐

Love begins before conception

APRIL 30, 1989

Of the children born to parents who used drugs before conception or to mothers who drank alcohol during pregnancy, one-third have neural damage. Pregnant women drinking beer and/or wine—as if they were elixirs of health—damage their children for life and burden the state. They blame teachers for behavior problems of their children and failure to learn.

Many children of alcohol and drug users also become alcohol and/or drug users: "It's my pleasure." They are status symbols, ways out of boredom. It is "cool" to drink and to ingest, inject, or inhale drugs.

On a purely logical, scientific basis, one cannot support alcohol or drugs. A life devoted to pleasure, to sex with many persons, to rich foods and drinks, can also not be supported.

A healthy diet, athletic activity, and mental work can lead to long, productive lives. Only ambition disrupts discipline, leading to acquisitiveness, to wealth, and to power. The diseases of the rich overtake those who indulge. Their children grow spoiled and difficult to satisfy. Few discover intellectual interests. The biological urges dominate all humans, and we tend to live at our animal level, only occasionally feeling the inspiration

to do for the sake of doing; to discover new knowledge, new insights, and new ways of conducting our lives, private and public.

The human brain has not grown appreciably in the last 17,000 years. Apparently what we humans have to do is to learn to use what has evolved so far. What has grown is our accumulated knowledge, and how it is related, how everything is related to everything else.

We also need to stop damaging human brains. The problems they have are difficult to deal with. Students who won't study. Workers who won't work. Delinquent young people become old delinquents.

A nation rots because its people choose to ignore the causes of rot. Alcohol, tobacco, and drugs are big business. Legislators, governors, and presidents kowtow to the wealthy who sell poison to the people.

Brains must be kept healthy from the day of conception. Better yet, from the day of the formation of egg and sperm. Then brains must be *trained* and put *to work*, not allowed to remain idle and unemployed. That is a responsibility of the whole of society. It has to be done through agencies of the government, semi-private, or private sectors. ¶

Death of a writer

AUGUST 7, 1989

Many writers die before their time. This is more often true of great writers. It is true of great artists rather often. They reach a peak, produce a masterpiece, and after that it is all downhill. Some cannot tolerate descending from the heights. But reality is that most humans decline before they die. Even other animals and plants do that. But humans cannot accept it. To many, decline is death itself.

Well, it need not be. As a great writer, a Hemingway or a Truman Capote, passes his peak, there are minor pieces that reveal aspects of his mind and his life that did not come out before. Writers like Isaac Bachevis Singer age well. Tolstoy became a religious philosopher in old age. And as the world changes they can enjoy what younger writers publish.

To drown in alcohol and drugs is not to face the problem. By facing life to the end, sober and clear-headed, one performs a last act of courage.

In the subdued light of the sunset of our lives, our memories fill our minds while new experiences and observations decrease. Writers write about archetypal crimes and criminals, loves, misdeeds, and acts of heroism. With age, the view of the world widens and deepens. Our understanding becomes subtler and sharper. We realize by then how much we do not know, and how little we know.

Everyone does the best he or she can, until the end.

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Woman

JANUARY 3, 1990

What is woman? The word reminds me of my mother and her love. She was a devoted mother and a faithful wife. Her love for my father knew no bounds or conditions, and she lived for her children. Well, that is out of style now.

The word awakens memories of sensuous women, overwhelmed by the fever of sex, who wanted to enjoy men they found attractive, at least until they lost interest. It was hard to tell whether they ever loved anyone. But it was clear that they loved orgasms and attractive men.

The word reminds me of women I see shopping all the time. Shopping is the way to get their spirits lifted. They shop to make themselves, and their homes, beautiful. They are a blessing to shops.

Then they go have a cocktail, to meet some friends and, perhaps, romance. Their husbands are busy making money. Maybe they drink too much. Maybe they get into drugs. Maybe they become prostitutes. And then maybe not.

Then there are the independent women: the ones who hold a job or are in a business or a profession. Some are great. Some are famous, and all are honorable in many ways. They represent a new trend, a new woman, a true partner with man in civilization.

Woman. The word evokes many who did not succeed. Culture and custom and the law held them back, made them believe they could not do many things. They became lost, not reaching their potential in full. It is not their fault. Everyone, including men, needs help and education. What to do, which way to go, how to begin and pursue a career, with or without a family?

We can know a woman, or several women, but we cannot know woman or all women. We can only dip, or dive, or cast here and there. We cannot know the whole ocean.

But woman as mother is the mother of all humanity, or the female is the mother of all life. Without her a species cannot

survive. Mother love is the core of our love. From it spring all other feelings of love. Mother love is part of evolution and the key to the survival of most species. The unloved child finds it difficult to *feel* what love is.

“Care for your enemies as if they were your children. Care for their children as if they were yours.” This may be the way to peace, the way of love. ✨

Great cities

JUNE 9, 1990

Civilizations are built according to the desires of the leading families or individuals in business, government, and the professions. That which they want is cultivated and built. European cities were built and preserved by people who loved the styles of the past and then developed some modern styles.

In America, the skyscrapers became the greatest achievement in architecture. But many critics say their existence is mainly economic. When many businesses want to have addresses downtown, they are willing to pay the rents, as well as adapt to the inconveniences of crowded elevators and many other problems.

The canyons of big cities full of skyscrapers are definitely ugly. There are many areas where the sun never shines. The traffic is awesome and irrational. The buildings are marvels of engineering built to withstand strong winds and earthquakes. But anyone there has to consider if he or she can attain the same things in a place not dominated by such huge towers.

Fast transport by bus or train is the solution to the traffic congestion messes. But people have become individualistic in extreme, choosing to commute long distances by car, alone, and filling parking spaces by the millions. Riding with others is seen as a form of collectivism that forces others on them,

nullifying their privacy. But so much privacy also leads to isolation. Some people have jobs in which they see hardly anyone, and they ride alone to and from work.

Since ancient times men, and probably women also, have been impressed by tall and large buildings. The Egyptian temples were built to inspire awe. The Greeks, the Romans, and the Babylonians also found inspiration in large-scale columns and spaces. During the Middle Ages, great churches were built to inspire the faithful and to proclaim the glory of God. Later the Renaissance builders created Romanesque vaults and domes, using no wood except on doors and windows.

Today, the tall buildings are the expression of the economic thinking behind them. They are investments designed to bring a return. Beauty is secondary and is sought as a means to achieve prestige and to avoid the criticism that has been aroused over the decades.

Cities create problems because they *are markets*. They produce goods and services and sell them, but they also buy in large quantities. In fact, towns and cities formed where people met to trade. Cities are essentially commercial centers. Even religious and educational centers provide services, and markets grow around them.

Consequently the wealthy landlords and merchants, the bankers and public officials, the professionals and tradesmen, and even laborers, tend to pay little attention to pollution, destruction of the environment, and the ugliness of streets, buildings, factories, and warehouses. Ugliness is accepted as necessary, so long as it is economically unavoidable. If it does not cost too much, the environment can be cared for.

Humans pretend they adapt to big cities and to crowding, traffic congestion, *etc.* They do not. They hate it. But it would be too expensive to build, or even to plan, an ideal city. But new cities without traffic jams, pollution, excessively tall buildings, and all the problems cities have, will be *planned, designed, and*

built. What many people don't like, sooner or later will be changed.

In democratic countries changes occur faster. In dictatorships, changes take longer, unless the dictator gets the idea. Most ordinary people are very *patient*. The Soviet people have waited 70 years for their rulers to ask them what they want and what they don't like.

But democratic cities do not vote for complete and efficient public transit systems. Those who hate to ride buses or trains will not vote for them. Those who do are a minority in the United States. So there will not be such systems for a long time. The poor and the lower middle class are less than a majority. Therefore, politicians are not too interested. They are not the better part of the market.

Nevertheless, cars are doomed, particularly for single persons commuting daily to work in great cities. They can only be allowed in the suburbs and in the country. And this the upper classes will not allow.

Big cities then are full of contradictions, and these will lead to their downfall. The best people will move out of them and build smaller and better ones. ❁

[untitled]

JUNE 17, 1990

I leave you my soul. I pour here for you all my spirit, all my love, all my prayers, and all I know and understand. ❁

The pursuit of pleasure

JULY 18, 1990

The decline in religious ethics has meant that each individual decides what is good or bad. The idea that if it feels good or tastes good, it does no harm, has been made a rule of life by some. But others have amended the rule so that anything is okay unless there is scientific evidence that it is harmful. Manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers, as well as service industries, will sell anything to the public using high-tech persuasion methods, and think they do no harm unless it is scientifically proven. By this standard, the physical and mental health of a nation can be destroyed before scientific evidence is attained.

This is actually the case with marijuana, artificial flavorings and colorings, and many other additives to foods and drinks. In the case of alcohol and tobacco, the evidence is overwhelming, and still they are not only produced but promoted in the most intense manner. The ads imply that if you do not drink beer, pop, whiskey, or smoke, you are a nerd and a threat to the American economy. ✨

There is more to life than this—or there must be

OCTOBER 31, 1990

Do we have to go to remote places to see and hear what Life is about? If that were the case, most people would never know. Do we have to go to the highest places, the deepest oceans, and into space to experience what Life is? I hope not.

All of Life is in anyone's backyard and in his or her neighborhood. Every leaf, grass blade, root, stem, flower, and fruit tells of Life. Every fungus, insect, mouse, bird, all that grows or moves.

The sun, wind, rain, snow, the heat of summer, all are the same world experienced by people everywhere, with some variations.

But greater than the experience of Life itself, of people, relatives, friends, neighbors, and fellow countrymen, there is human imagination and language, from where all things in human civilization come. From the human brain and “mind” come literature, mathematics, the sciences, philosophy, religion, government, the arts, and all that we are. ❁

The young prophets

AUGUST 7, 1991

Simon and Garfunkel's concert in Central Park conveyed spiritual messages in sound and words. Music reaches the soul.

They evoked the days of the anti-Vietnam war activists, the prophets of peace. Music is a way of loving. It caresses our spirits. Even the illiterate get the feeling. The spirit of the people is here expressed without words as well as with them. The concert is a spiritual experience. God bless them all.

Change comes, and will come, through the young who see what is right and what is wrong. We are living in an age of prophets. Most of them young. Most of them do not even realize they are shaping the civilization of the future; a world—wide, tolerant, and full of variety and human qualities. The forces of good and justice will triumph over the forces of greed and oppression. ❁

Trust

NOVEMBER 9, 1991

Trust in one another is like water. No society can live long without it. The Greek and Roman empires fell when their citizens no longer could trust anyone. They became riddled with crooks, con-men and -women, seducers, frauds, false lovers, false prophets, liars of all kinds, corrupt politicians and bureaucrats, generals, officers, soldiers, lawyers, craftsmen, farmers, manufacturers, and religious leaders. Hypocrisy and dissimulation became the rule, the custom; “everyone does it.” There was no confidence, no trust in family members, relatives, friends, or doctors.

Such a situation made many people sick, and they chose suicide. The world had become a place where life was impossible because most relationships were corrupted, vitiated, made unreliable.

The same has happened many times in history. The Spanish empire up to its fall in 1810–20 treated the lower classes as if they were not human and as if the upper classes were special, even divine. The British did the same thing in India and Africa, and their empire fell together with the Dutch, the Belgian, the Portuguese, the French, and the German. The rot was there all the time. It only spread as time went on.

Today the Soviet Union has broken apart, and *corruption*, not communism, is the main reason. The United States is also afflicted with all kinds of corruption at all levels and in all places. Whoever has economic and/or physical power tends to abuse those at their mercy. Employers abuse their employees, pay them less and less, and give them fewer and fewer benefits. They go all over the world looking for cheap, productive, and submissive labor. But in time the rot will overwhelm them.

Essentially they do what they know is wrong, but they use Talmudic arguments to persuade themselves and others that they do what is right. By shifting definitions and by false analogies,

they convince themselves and some others. Those who see the false arguments do not have the means or the media to reach the attention of the people. They reach only a few.

Rot has a root, and it is greed—for money, property, power, pleasure, prestige, and pre-eminence. All manner of tricks are used to reach goals. ❁

Beyond words

DECEMBER 7, 1991

Humans today have become fascinated with science and want to analyze everything in scientific terms or numbers. Consequently, people are judged by means of tests, questionnaires, peer-evaluations, polls, profiles, physical tests, brain wave tests, graphology, lie-detectors, case histories, accumulated files, and so on. Still, with all that, often the “spirit” of individuals and groups is missed entirely. All the parts do not add up to a whole. The whole is very different from the parts. The “Geist” is the “Gestalt,” the totality, the multidimensional individual or group, city, or state.

Some persons are what they appear to be, and little more. So are some communities. The Spirit barely flickers in them. Others are richer, more complex. An outsider can sense the Spirit, but he or she cannot describe it or explain it, even though it is put into words.

A play comes closer to expressing the Spirit of a character or a group, such as a family or a town. Novels do that well, sometimes. History can be rich with spiritual and psychological nuances. People call it duende, or elf-like, or magical, or simply spiritual. When it is absent it is dead, cold, not imbued with the divine spark.

That is why so much in life is human imagination. We imagine beauty, love, virtue, heroism, or whatever emotion

we are inspired with. We feel compassion, pride, belonging or indifference, shame, ostracism. We feel warmth, friendliness, acceptance, closeness. Most animals feel such emotions or sensations even though they can't speak. They use body language. The young express joy in play. Life then is deeper than words. Our verbal expressions bounce around on the surface of the waters of our lives. Words sometimes express something that reaches deep, but many are not affected by them most of the time.

In human relations a good word helps, but actions say more. Bring flowers, bring gifts. Give food and drink, hug people, kiss people (but no further, unless requested). Say something good. 🌸

Psychological and physiological need for dancing

JUNE 7, 1992

Observing documentaries of people all over the world performing ritual and traditional dances, including Western dances, it seems clear that dancing originally was a release of energy generated in young bodies spontaneously. The alternatives would be fighting, sports, work, and sex. Leaders would channel surplus energy into useful work or war for gain, or into sports. Religious and artistic members of a community would choose dancing. Gradually steps and figures would spread as outsiders were invited to festivals and took new forms home.

After the dance is over, there is time for a bath, meditation, conversation, or love. The school of Athens under Socrates and Plato favored the baths for conversation, after exercise.

Some African tribes have invented vigorous dances that use up pent-up energy and undoubtedly contribute to the peace of the groups.

Dance is as natural as walking and running. Some movements imitate animals doing mating rituals, or the hunt, or a battle.

Some convey stories and ideas or states of mind. The body can express emotion, action, and attitudes, as well as stories. Dance, like music and art, can express things that cannot be put into words by ordinary people. Poets and novelists can put almost anything into words, but not all listeners or readers get the message.

Among animals, play takes the place of dance. Bear cubs, dogs, cats, monkeys, chimpanzees, gorillas, antelope, colts, calves, kids, and so on all frolic, and run and play. Mating dances and songs are clear expressions of the joy of living and the excitement of sex. In nature, dancing is part of the music and rhythms of life. ❁

Our memory of creation

JUNE 26, 1992

Deep in our DNA, and in every living thing, is kept the memory of all evolution, even of evolutions before ours, before life began on Earth. DNA has a record of every device and adaptation ever made to any environment by any living thing in any planet, in any universe.

We carry with us the Eternal Wisdom of all evolutions and the intelligence to create new ways to adapt to new environments. In every cell of our brains and bodies we carry the intelligence and wisdom that created our brains and bodies which are vehicles for further development in a changing environment. DNA is the instrument of the Spirit of God and is itself God-like, or part of God. We can communicate with our DNA through prayer and meditation. It is our channel to God which is a Spirit, pure energy, in which all the wisdom of DNA is preserved throughout infinite eternity, in space and time.

Scientists have in fact discovered God, in DNA, but being atheists they do not recognize Him or Her, because It is neither male nor female but all the possible genders.

To revere all Life, as the Hindus do, is to revere the DNA and all its works and thereby God and all His creation. God is in every living thing and now the modern prophets, the scientists, are going to reveal all about Him, even without wishing to do so.

What scientists took for granted, what they attributed to “chance,” what they explained away as pure probability, they will now discover to be intelligence, wisdom, vast experience and knowledge, and the will to live and to love every living thing. They will discover the facts of creation but as something very different from the metaphors of the Bible. DNA is not a metaphor. It is God creating and inventing new strategies for survival for all living things. ✨

The care of plants

AUGUST 25, 1992

He who keeps a garden serves the plants, himself, and all who love nature and breathe the air.

Plants on earth have held the soil and prevented it from being washed into rivers, lakes, and seas by rain and floods. Plants truly protect the earth, even weeds which are the first to colonize bare ground. Many seeds are true paratroopers, such as dandelions, fireweed, and geraniums. Others stick to the furs of animals or to clothes and scatter all over.

Most plants live in soil, in muck, the cracks of rocks, on trees, or on the surfaces of rocks, soil, or bark. Fungi live in soil, or rotted wood, or living roots of other plants. All need water, though some can survive without it for long periods. All plants need some nutrients, and most need carbon dioxide to make carbohydrates which are the main part in roots,

stems, leaves, flowers, and fruits. The main elements are carbon, water, potassium, nitrogen, sulfur, magnesium, iron, zinc, manganese, copper, and very small amounts of boron, cadmium, and others. Too much of some of these elements can kill plants.

Plants are limited in their growth, flower, and fruit mainly by water and temperature, sun and soil. Some need deep rich soils, plenty of moisture, and temperatures 60° to 100°F. Examples include the banana and many tropical plants. Some, like cacti, tolerate drought, and some can stand long cold winters, like spruce trees and many mosses and ferns.



Some plants, like the rockroses or *Cistus*, and *Ceanothus*, can grow in the Pacific Northwest and the California and Oregon coasts without additional water, and bloom well.

There are many such plants. Others require some irrigation during the summer drought, and some require almost daily watering. Roses often fail to bloom from lack of water and nutrients, or fail to produce a second crop.

Plants, flowers, and fruit have psychological effects on people. Patients suffering from mental depression often feel better when they walk in a garden. Poets and philosophers have marveled at the power of simple plants like violets and primroses to reproduce and bloom against many odds.

Sick patients are often helped to forget their pain temporarily when someone brings flowers, or they are taken to a garden.

Plants are sources of food, medicine, fiber, lumber, roofing materials, and nesting materials for birds and other animals. They offer shelter from wind, rain, and predators. Humans

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would not exist without the plant world. Our roots are in the plants. We are rooted in the soil through the plants, as are all other animals.

The earth is a self-supporting bio-system that happens to have an intelligent species: humans. Humans crossed mountains and oceans and now have gone into space to explore other planets. Human intelligence is a tremendous power. It can make horrible mistakes, but it can make great achievements. Humans have to protect the plant world because our life depends on it.

Humans tend to think of nature as if it were outside ourselves. But, of course, we are part of nature. We are its eyes, ears, senses in every way, and our minds try to comprehend it. We are the “comprehenders of nature.” We are its consciousness. We only obey nature when we are conscious of it. Science has made us more conscious at all levels, the sub-atomic, the microscopic and sub-microscopic, the normal range, the telescopic and beyond, and the radiosopic.

Truly the mind of humans is part of the mind of God. The Kingdom of God is inside our minds, and it will one day come out of them. The good and the bad, in the plant, the animal, or the mental worlds are sides of the same world. The human mind thinks of opposites, and men and women sometimes do the opposite. They soon discover if they made a mistake. ✨

Thank You, Father

SEPTEMBER 19, 1992

Thank You for every hour, every day, and every year of our lives.

Thank You for the sun, the skies, the clouds, the moon, and all the beauty of nature, which You created.

Thank You for giving us the intelligence, imagination, love of life and of one another, and the curiosity to seek the nature of reality.

Thank You for the adventure that You made of the world and life. And for the fascinating variety of plant and animal species. And for the beauty and richness of mountains, valleys, rivers, lakes, and oceans.

Thank You for the pure air we breathe and for the pure waters that quench our thirst, and for the soils that grow our food.

Thank You also for poets, philosophers, artists, historians, scientists, lawyers, judges, doctors, public servants, and workers of all kinds. They make our lives easier and better, even if some make mistakes.

Thank You for the wisdom and the courage to bear pain, suffering, and our mistakes and our willingness to correct them.

Before the world came into being, You were there. Your mind and Your love visualized it and brought it into being. And before that there were other universes and other worlds going back into infinity.

Bless us and help us, out of Your grace, even if we do not deserve Your blessings and Your grace.

You gave us life because You love all life. You gave us the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven, and You help us open the doors.

Your will be done, Your Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. For yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen. ✨

What does God want me to do?

NOVEMBER 16, 1992

It is possible that at this particular time God does not want you to do anything other than pray for yourself and others and for the Earth. The power of prayer, when thousands or millions pray, is enormous. Physical actions can do a lot of good when those who do them are very good at them. Service to others is part of the Kingdom of Heaven. However one needs to know what he or she should do. The best course is to serve, help, or work for those who ask for help, who need it, and want it. When someone needs and wants something, then do it for them, according to your ability.

The problem is to discover in ourselves the Spirit of God and the wisdom, courage, energy, compassion, and patience to do what is right for ourselves, for our community, for our neighbors beyond our borders, and for the earth's environments. Most educated people consider this idealistic and impractical. They are more concerned with getting money, wealth, lands, sex, honors, and status symbols. Humans have changed little since ancient times. We now have more science and scientific arguments to use in rationalizing whatever we do or want to do.

Evil arises out of wanting what belongs to others, or what is not given to us, or what we cannot get or earn. Cheating, lying, stealing, and murder come naturally to humans.

Yet, somehow, some people some of the time, and some most of the time, do the right thing. And that has led to the building of great cities, the arts, industry, and the sciences. Otherwise there would be nothing to steal. Some honest work is done by some. Some seeds fall on good soil, and the rain comes, and they sprout, grow, flower, and bear fruit.

Some prefer to take what others produce. Someday these predatory individuals and groups will disappear. Their children will grow to be honest, industrious, wise, brave, artistic, compassionate, patient, and devoted to the service of humanity.

The question is whether they will become bored and try the opposite, just for fun. Each of us can, by meditation and prayer, discover what God wants us to do, which is to serve humanity and all living things, to preserve and protect the earth. But some think it is more fun to destroy or to do whatever pleases them at the time. That way may be the road to disaster.

We may ask whether God needs our help to do whatever it is He wants done. He obviously does and/or wants our help. It is one thing to do things by miraculous means and another to follow the natural laws. It may be the hard way, but it is more dramatic, comical, interesting, educational, inspiring, and exciting. A ready-made Heaven might be taken for granted and not appreciated. A Heaven that humans help to create would be more to our liking, and far more interesting. Boredom may be the devil's greatest ally.

God, the Spirit of God, incarnated in the prophets, and most fully in Jesus Christ, is our guide in learning how to build and develop relationships that lead to a richer and better culture and personal life. If we do not destroy ourselves, we have plenty of time to learn and build.

We can begin by not hating or despising those who are different from us and our group. We can all work together and share the benefits of our work. ❁

Life at its simplest

MARCH 31, 1993

At 6:30 a.m. the morning comes, the sun lights up the window on the east side like a neon light. Its rays light up the opposite wall, and the sky on the north window sends a soft light. The bedroom is flooded with light, and the birds are chirping outside welcoming the new day as they peck at insect eggs on twigs and at seeds on the ground invisible to any but the smallest birds.

I turn the radio on to the news and begin to stretch my legs, arms, shoulders, and neck because I am not fully awake. In another half hour I will feel up to dressing and walking. The news are broadcast from KUOW FM. I hear all the important events from all over the world, as if I were a king. Our dog, Smoky, comes and puts his head against my arm, and I squeeze his neck behind his ears and gently pinch his hide in imitation of a dog bite, a gentle bite. He goes and lies down beside the bed knowing that I will now put my clothes on.

I go to the bathroom and comb my hair and reach for my old tan corduroy jacket. Smoky wags his tail in anticipation of our walk down to the county right of way, where the Interurban railroad used to be. I pick up my cloth hat, my glasses, and the leash and scoop. I attach the leash, and we go out the door. When it rains I also carry an umbrella and put on boots instead of shoes.

We walk down the street going west, on the south side, and the dog stops at selected posts and bushes and marks them. Sometimes he skips some, and I don't know why. We get to the right of way, the grass is wet, and I have to watch for puddles. We go five blocks to 160th Street and back, and he finally decides to poop. He does a little dance, moving in circles until it happens. I pick it up with the scoop and fling it against the fence, so no one will step on it. He wants to run, but I can't run, and I can't let him loose because he is still a pup.

After we return I take the coat, hat, and glasses off (I am only a little nearsighted), and I wash and get the materials for the

blood sugar test and insulin shot. After that I make coffee, toast, oatmeal, and occasionally eggs. Then I take my medicines for gout (Allopurinol) and high blood pressure (Verapanil), two aspirins to reduce swelling in my hands, and a multiple vitamin cap. Then I take a nap. I do so mainly to think, because I like to think about everything.

I think about the world—the earth and all its people and the world of nature; how life has survived and evolved; and whether God the Father, takes care of it all with the help of His angel scientists and engineers, doctors, and teachers. ❁

Alcoholism

OCTOBER 5, 1993

The genesis of alcoholism is said to be rejection by the father, the mother, or both, and by neighbors, classmates, friends, relatives, and society in general. Rejection can begin early and continue throughout life. At first it may have been unintentional, even imaginary. Father (or mother) went away intending to return but did not. Or parents intended to get together at another city and did not.

Later, in school there is more rejection. Children reject those who are different, or dress differently, or are poor, or look poor, or speak differently or poorly, or smell different. Cultural differences are as determining as physical ones. As the young adolescent grows, he or she may be introduced to alcohol by friends, by strangers, or at home where one or both parents drink and the adolescent can sneak one.

If they like the stuff and the sensation, they may get hooked. Our society promotes alcohol as a business, as part of the economy. It is not only sanctioned, it is a status symbol: the more expensive the greater. Often fellow students, fellow workers,

friends, and bosses drink moderately. Social occasions are opportunities to get drunk.

Sexual frustration; lack of money; a poor, hard, or dirty job; low self-esteem; low status; low intelligence; low ability; low education; doubtful pride; a masculine image that involves smoking and drinking; or making out with those who do—can complicate the matter.

In time, as responsibility increases—sometimes too early in life—the sense of failure deepens if success is not reached. To dull the senses, to sleep, to escape the psychological pain, drink offers relief. Some like the taste and the feeling. But some become angry and lash out at anything or anyone. The result is more rejection—in employment, in friendships, and in love.

The situation only gets worse. Treatment enables some to recover; others relapse. Some come to like the attention they get during treatment. Professionals help a great deal, but to heal the wounds inside some individuals require forgiveness of themselves, of others, and by others. Often the religious route finds the hidden hurt and heals it. God forgives, and by prayer one can change a behavior and be accepted by fellow believers. The prodigal son is taken back into the fold. ✨

The career that fizzled

NOVEMBER 14, 1993

In 1944 I was headed for a career in Spanish as a teacher of the language and its literature.

I came to Eugene, Oregon, in September 1942, and Bill Moxley took me to meet Dr. Leavitt O. Wright, head of the Romance Languages Department. I enrolled as a special student for six credit hours and got a full-time job at the Eugene Plywood Mill, swing shift. I began sending Juanita, my wife, \$100 a month

and rented a basement apartment in the house of Mr. & Mrs. Wetterstrom on Patterson Street.

I did well in math and English, and the next year, fall of 1943, I enrolled in economics, psychology, and sociology. In 1944 I was drafted, and at the same time, the Army Specialized Training Corps began operations at the University of Oregon. Dr. Wright recruited me as “an informant” to teach two companies of officers and men with classes every day, two hours each. He got me a deferment, and I quit the plywood mill. I also took over some extension classes in Albany and Myrtle Creek, Oregon. I also taught at University High School as a substitute. In 1945 I taught for a whole year. I took few classes at this time, so I didn’t graduate until 1947.

At that time I also became a U.S. citizen, at the Eugene courthouse.

I was not enthusiastic about teaching Spanish, but I took the required education courses for the Oregon certificate, after 1947. I considered majoring in economics, but Dr. Daniels and another whose name I can’t recall, gave me Cs and Ds in graduate courses. At that time I had developed an affinity to socialist ideas, in an idealistic way, and they did not approve of it at all. Up till then I had all As and was quite conservative and capitalist, a true champion of the system.

The question I would ask was: “Why is it that in the richest country in the world there are nearly seven million unemployed, and over 30 million poor individuals and families?” It seemed to me, and it still does, that the business organizations, the national manufacturer’s associations, and the chambers of commerce adopt a tacit understanding that low-paying jobs and unemployment are necessary to maintain low wages generally, or to prevent sharp increases. Therefore nothing will ever be done to raise the wages and standard of living of the lower 50% of the people.

Today, the low wages in Mexico, Asia, and other third-world countries are used to produce cheap products for the U.S. and

world markets. Americans are expected to compete with that. This has come up now during the NAFTA discussions. Ross Perot sees the danger of revolution in it, as do Ralph Nader, Jesse Jackson, and Jerry Brown. People are getting angry.

This is the same theme that derailed my career in economics.

My career in education was slowed down when I moved to Seattle. I had to take additional courses to qualify for a Washington certificate, and I burned out with work as a University of Washington gardener and school. Even after my wife and I divorced in 1963 I could not move on. Horticulture remained my career, including some teaching, until 1980. After I retired in 1976 I did consultations and some landscape work.

Other factors also influenced decisions, such as the move to Seattle. Dr. Leavitt O. Wright would have pushed me into a professorship at Oregon, but I was lukewarm. That was the way up, and I missed it. After that all was study and work but it led nowhere because I could not follow through.

I should have stuck it out in either education, psychology, or economics. I could, with a Ph.D. degree, have gone to Mexico and worked there.

Nevertheless, I have had a good life. My friends, Milton L. Norlin, John Rozdilsky, Rob & Tony Leitner, Don and Alice Parker, Mr. & Mrs. Mulligan, Art Jacobson, John E. Heintz and Jack, and many others, over the years, all have given me great pleasure and companionship.

I thank God for every day of my life. For my family, Jorge, Edgar, Irma, Viqui, Saco, Edgar junior, Fernando, Beto, Viquita, Fabiola and Jorgito, and for all my friends. I also am grateful to all the people who have provided me goods and services, wherever they are, and to God for allowing me to live in this wonderful world which He created, whether He did it in 6 days or 6 billion years. ❁

Ode to the long-lasting car

JANUARY 16, 1995

A car was so well made it just lasted and lasted. It began as an expensive, luxurious, personal or family car. But in a few years, two to five, it was sold or exchanged for a new one. The reason is that its owner liked new cars, not an old one. It was still a good car, but it became old in style and comfort. It lost prestige. The new car was not as good. It broke down often and was expensive to repair, but it was new. It had prestige.

The second owner was satisfied because he didn't care about prestige. He wanted a reliable car for transportation and to keep him comfortable as he drove. But, in time, he realized he could afford a better, newer-looking car, so he sold it.

The third owner was a kind of person to whom looks are irrelevant. He needed transportation and comfort, nothing else. The car just would not break down. Parts were cheap and available, and repairs kept it up well. It lasted until the third owner died, and at 200,000 miles is still running with good care.

Now it was considered a classic. The new owner reconditioned it like new. Now it had prestige beyond any new car. Its three former owners were all dead. ❁

The weakness of love

SEPTEMBER 7, 1995

We cannot love the whole world. Our hearts are small and our minds limited. We cannot truly love our country or even our state or city. They are too big and include too many people, places, and things. We love our work, our places, family, and a few friends. Very few love deeply.

Love sounds the depths here and there but not everywhere, and not too far. Only when we pray can we pray for those

far away and little known, for the world, all the children, the peacemakers, and those who suffer.

We are still learning to love beyond ourselves, our families, and our tribe. We are transcending our human animality into spirituality, the kingdom of the mind and the heart where all living things are One.

We cannot help but err, because our knowledge and understanding are limited. ❁

Cloudy day

JANUARY 7, 1996

The sunlight filters through the clouds,
Silver linings enrich the sky.
There is no sadness in the gray,
As pearls galore adorn the day.

Even the rain is celebration
As the soil drinks and plants are filled
With surging sap as Spring comes near.
The crocuses peep eagerly
Among the leaves of season's end,
And early-blooming witch hazel
Perfumes the air to welcome spring.

The first camellias venture out
Risking the late frosts without fear.
And heathers brave the cold and snow
As if they knew that spring is near.

Life stirs in every nook and cranny,
In leaf piles and rotting wood.
And buds swell with leaf and flower,
To join the sun in brotherhood.

All days are beautiful, bright or dark.
Each has its own story to tell.
Each one brings change for the best;
The beat of life is in each breast.

The disintegration of society

MARCH 15, 1997

In most homes, each member of the family has his or her own room, TV, radio, computer, friends, and style of living, and together they rarely communicate. Neighbors communicate even less, and communities do so only if they have common problems.

People rush through cities and neighborhoods without paying attention to them, unless they need something, or they have an accident. People are broken up into races, nationalities, ethnic groups, religious groups, educational and economic levels, politics, languages, lifestyles—not brothers and sisters at all.

Fragmenting goes on and it can only get worse, not better. People belong to small groups that eat or drink together and talk about what interests them, but few congregate in large numbers. ❁

Computers and teachers

APRIL 3, 1997

Students can learn a great deal from computers, the Internet, and access libraries. But to read on the monitor is not easier or better than a book or page, and the personal effect of the teacher may be better for students.

E-mail can be a pain in the neck, as are faxes and advertising of all kinds. The world-wide web and the Internet are also expensive and use up more time. Key words are essential to navigate the Internet. Students prefer to play games rather than do serious research. A lot of time is wasted.

There are serious limits to what one can get on the Internet. The order in the library is a helpful system. The Internet is disorganized, up to now. The amount of information is overwhelming, but how to use it requires individuals to use judgement and decide what to use. There are 22 million web pages, and there will be one billion by the year 2000. But what people can actually use is not that much. Just as the printed page became filled with all kinds of garbage, so will the Internet. ❖

Life is bittersweet

APRIL 11, 1997

Children need to be taught that life is not all sweetness. There is a bitter aspect to experience. Children should taste some thirst, hunger, pain, and boredom and acquire immunity to days that are not filled with pleasures and good things.

From the day of birth they are given pleasure, fun, and nothing is asked of them. A more ascetic style of life would toughen them a bit. Teach them to love, to be kind to others, to be of service to others, and to give to others. Teach them to love all

living things: the plants, the flowers, the insects, the fruits, and the animals. Teach them to love water in rivers, lakes, and oceans. Teach them to love trees, rocks, clouds, blue skies as well as red ones, and bright mornings. The world is full of beauty. Teach them to love life itself, for its own sake.

Gifts are for the ego, but he who worships his own ego is doomed to unhappiness when others forget his birthdays and other special occasions. Expect little, and when someone gives you something, it will be a real surprise and it will make you happier. ✨

Civilization as verbiage

APRIL 24, 1997

Without the verbiage, there would be little left of civilizations. The ones we remember most and best are the ones that developed an extensive and intensive literature—great speeches by articulate men and women and great stories about history, interesting events, people, places, and philosophies.

The more they talked and wrote and the more clearly they expressed themselves, the better and longer they live in our day. No amount of artifacts can communicate Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle; or Petronius, Seneca, and Tacitus; or Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles; or the many writers and artists who left so many clear ideas and concepts to future generations.

Today, our civilization is overloaded with the writings of millions of playwrights, historians, writers of fiction, and descriptive works about peoples and places and other times. Each great writer and artist is like a civilization in himself or herself, the universe of their minds, their views of their world. It is like living many lives to delve into the minds of so many writers.

Much of what has been written is not real, not really true, but often expresses many truths and deep understanding. Life is largely a dream, imaginary, and is best expressed in words.

The genetic material in humans produces, by chance or design, a great variety of types each of which is influenced by its environment and the culture of those around him or her. Therefore each community, city, or state has persons who have physical abilities, mental powers, dexterity, and education which enable them to perform the work that those in power desire in industry, art, the sciences, or whatever.

Thus, humans are essentially civilization building animals. We humans learn—using language, pictures and artifacts—to transmit and accumulate knowledge and carry it through time and space to other times and other lands.

Language is only part of the human mental equipment. One can talk and write extensively, but action will follow, by anyone. What can be done will be done. The effects will be intended or not, good or not, but things will change; nothing stands still.

While individuals pursue profit, power, and pleasure, the general progress of human civilization is moving humans into space, to exploration of other planets, and into ways of preserving the earth, of which there is only one. ❁

The cult of weirdness

AUGUST 28, 1997

There is interesting weird, comedy weird, dramatic weird, and plain weird. It is straining to produce viable movies and TV stories to cure the sickness of our time, which is boredom.

Generations of spoiled brats, including the Kennedys and the offspring of rich yuppies, cannot overcome their propensities to indulge in sex, drugs, illegal political financial practices, and attempts to find a vote-getting formula. It is so pervasive, even people of low-income classes are spoiled by TV programs that suggest they buy this or that or adopt a lifestyle that is beyond their means.

Advertisers and TV producers still argue that suggesting reckless driving, violence, sex, and bad language do not lead to imitation by the young or the mentally or educationally deficient, in spite of evidence that they do. "As a man thinks, so is he." We become what we think, what we imagine or desire. We desire what we see others having or enjoying. We rot in our own fantasies, or elevate our minds, behavior, and lives by thinking of what is good, kind, decent, beautiful, healthy, and a better bet for ourselves and for all others.



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COLOPHON

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Note: The publisher's humor and typesetter's obstinance led not to consensus on the use of italics for non-English text, but to this note in which the typesetter yields to the publisher but reserves acquiescence.



