

A Concluding Chapter



XXIV **A CONCLUDING CHAPTER.**

Whither thou goest, go now.

While not so much a story as a series of episodes (and speculations), I extract from my notebook, yet one further chapter to add, written in an attempt to satisfy the requirements of the First Mate (RCWD) who feels leaving the reader high and dry amidst the sayings of others does not properly conclude and stress the message of this one prospective author.

As you have doubtlessly concluded, this has not evolved into another 'how-to' compendium. Although I have indulged myself in those (how-to) nautical bibles, most generally having been bored to copious yawnings, I realized if I held to their admonitions and opinions I would never leave dry land. If I could not secure a craft Shipshape and Bristol Fashion built to Lloyd's Specifications, how would it be possible to leave the quay for those glamorous oceans. I became most blanched and terrified upon reading the experts. Oddly though I have been more terrified of the ocean when cast down and tost about as though some

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inconsequential drift, unfortunate enough to elect to Persevere in such watery abandon. I have known of the Shipshape and Bristol Fashion built to Lloyds Specifications to break brutally asunder in calm weather when mercilessly driven upon the rocks, while her helmsman's eyes were misted by some romantic illusion (or with three sheets in the wind).

Perhaps, by now, you are the one best able, without further adjuration, to conclude something with regard to yourself, seafaring and this one prospective author. If I was to conclude any one thing, it might be found in the simplicity and directness, to be reiterated time and time again, succinctly, to one and all, forever: "GO NOW!!"

YES!, a tiresome repetition with which you might tease and beleaguer yourself, only to react plaintively, "But how, but how?" It is a question every man or woman anchored in a stationary workaday world (or ghetto) might ask eventually, only to live in a swale of torment until overwhelmed by life itself; or formulate from out the very urgencies of the life force itself. He or she would feel compelled to up-anchor for the open sea. This may seem overly dramatized. Perhaps; still there is no drama that quite equals that famous soliloquy of Hamlet, to which we must all fall heir. What may appear to be a theatricality is doubtlessly symbolic of the human spirit, feeling itself in the traces; and yea, feeling unaccountably compelled to answer to the life force itself. Perhaps one wishes only to change from one job to another, sacrificing his equity as it were, or to move from the plains to the mountains, or from the mountains to the sea; or to more needfully unshackle himself, or herself, from shabby human relationships, a defunct marriage, or enslavement to the collusion of the Banks, Madison Avenue, and Consumerism, as well as countless bureaucracies.

'Overcoming' might aptly encompass what one is all about as he challenges his own staid patterned existence, to move aside, making room for the one and only self, which is yet to be brought to light and fruition; perhaps as part of an instinctive yearning.

No, this message is not a broadside against life as we (or I) know it, although, because I am who I am, one who does fire his random fusillades at the entrenched hominid image, it may appear so. I do not quarrel with life per se; I cannot; it is larger than my mereness. Yet I am a voice, and as a voice I shall speak, and sometimes become quarrelsome, either inadvertently or with defined purpose.

While the past or the future may appear to offer more than now, there is something persistent and immutable to be found in the now, that only something cataclysmic could substantially alter. Within this persistency, one must find himself; yes!, as

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something special and unique, if only to enjoy that singularity of existence, as though there were none other. Perhaps you feel, once again, I am wandering too far afield, irresponsibly. You desire some specific formula for making the change, the switch to the alternative life style, to one of a magical self-fulfillment.

Yes, perhaps I act as the physician whom you would visit hoping for a remedy, or a prescription. That I could, that I could, I would.

If you have determined your life does not sustain itself as one more affirmation of the status quo; if all the little goodies for which you labor and enslave yourself do not produce the desired effect or fulfill their promise, as perhaps they will not and should not, then most likely you will be ailing and in need of some palliative or change of venue.

Waiting for the afterlife, I must insist, cannot and will not provide adequate succor or salvation. It simply cannot be, for surely there is no afterlife. Leaving mockery and blasphemy aside; Oh, Yes, surely dreams are the stuff of life. If one should dream as his dream, the afterlife, perhaps he imagines he is thus sustained in this life. If one should dream, as his dream, not some passive issuance awaiting a deliverance, but as something his whole being desires and requires, beyond a waiting for that expiration, then before expiration one must first recognize and submit to respiration; one must live and be alive in order to expire or perish. The dead cannot die. To submit to a premature death as a gambit to curry favor with some imaginary deity who or which would selfishly request your subservience to its will rather than seek your own fulfillment (a living to the fullest) seems more akin to some ugly despot, whom you would be advised to abandon - since you do have a choice. In any case one might as well not be born as to become, with life, an empty gambit. Or to state the proposition yet another way, one might as well not be born as to not become.

The dead cannot die, and permanent death cannot be construed as eternal life.

I argue, but do not persuade. Will more of the same rhetoric persuade what one's inner self already instinctively knows to be the only way?

'Tis not wild abandon or anarchy that I propose, but something that cannot be measured until it has transpired. Instead of dreams then, one acquires memories. One acquires a knowledge of himself in relation to something that is not found in the school books (THE TEXT), bibles and law books. Inside one becomes more than he was.

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Our sojourn to Southeast Alaska has shaped us in more than one way. Since it arose as a desire, albeit ending as a diminutive nautical adventure when compared to the exemplary challenges to be discovered in that milieu, it nonetheless resulted in EXITING a tiresome leaden foregone melodrama, to the entering of another personal staging of events untold, wherein, while the whole being was not exposed to the ultimate regimen, one was nonetheless about to become his own script. One, in the end, treasures that script alongside those of the others who served as inspiration, and act as further prompt to more of the same. We had become, and were further stimulated to become even more, the once having potentiated the prospective second (which, by the way, also transpired), (and having taken the initial step, one feels he has earned the right to anticipate more).

If one is to become but a series of repetitive events, following a formula or prescription (proscription) for existence, all predictable, predicated in a conformity, what is the point of one life in such redundancy? Is it presumption that would desire or seek more than such an endless refrain? Should one not be obliged, as a life, or feel challenged, to change the lyrics? I would answer in the affirmative, and would return resoundingly to meditate upon the quotation appearing on the title page: 'We demand eternity for a lifetime: when our mortal half-hours too often prove tedious'.

The message then, is not so much concerning the sea as the SELF. The sea serves as metaphor or symbol of place upon which or through which one may freely act out his personal drama, however big or small. The sea in its immensity, commands both respect and humility, states of being within us that stimulate and shape the larger awareness, and lead to the greater understanding of the very act of respiration. It is perhaps my personality and my disposition which requires this immense physical reality to subdue or harness an otherwise recalcitrant spirit. It was long ago the poet Virgil admonished, Let the Angry Man go to the Sea. I have been an angry youth who matured into an angry man. Whether or not a justifiable cause exists to warrant and effect such a condition is not a matter for discussion, therefore is not negotiable. Mostly what is a matter for discussion entails that very awareness of ourselves, and how we arrive at the exploration, knowledge and fulfillment of that self.

Since I seem to harbor the compulsion to repeat myself, as though, either I doubt your attentiveness, suspecting your inertia, or am overly impressed with my own message, I shall reiterate or replay once again my own cryptic stanza: 'you cannot die if you

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are already dead, and permanent death cannot be construed as eternal life'.

While it may not be necessary, and may perhaps spoil the whole effect of this conclusion, in the interest of fairness I ought mention those for whom this sort of epistle appears anathema to their happily ensconced reality. It is my belief that in everyman, jack, and human soul there exists a yearning beyond, even if only momentarily. A smug complacency, whether founded in wealth, religiosity, other personal achievements, or just plain righteous fervor, does not wear well as a component of the exemplary hominid. In short, inherently we are more individually, and collectively, than the casual observer of our behavior would suspect, once given a chance. Aye!, sullen murderers we have been and shall be again. And I believe we murder through balking at some obtuse and unreasonable restraint, some resultant to be found in, or reaction to, that smug complacency. There is in each of us a desire to annihilate that very condition, perhaps mostly outside of ourselves, perhaps as a purge, or act of expiation within ourselves; simply because it does not wear well, because it is out of character as a property of life, as we instinctively measure life, intuit and project the dimensions of that creature, or emanation, of our selves. Call it intolerance if you like. Such it may be, and deservedly so.

I do not propose the happily ensconced seek a duel with the sea in order to acquire yet another dimension to themselves, but if their ensconcement in any way demeans another, it ought be exacted as punishment, that such individuals be exposed to things and forces greater than themselves in order to learn yet something more.

Nor do I propose Murder or Intolerance. Sometimes what is announced to the Heart, in having sounded and heard the complaints of the wronged and wounded soul, but leaps engorged, bursting with righteous fervor to the trenches as its champion, yet must be held in abeyance for the lack of proper armor. Is this to say one cannot fly in the face of reality? One mere person, albeit Heart, cannot cataclysmally alter the immutable number; the number remaining persistent and leaden. The dying and dead must labor against this huge inert corpus of humanity harnessed to the traces. The prediction for the future generation envisions this selfsame unlikely anatomical persuasion pacing and retracing these very byways; ah! and alas! compacting the very sod and dirt over thy grave; and the next; and the next, until time and patience have been expended in a vain attempt to produce something from the animal, from the very ordinary ingredients (clay) provided by Mother Nature. Without cataclysm or apocalypse, the unwilling must follow.

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'He doth argue too long and loudly upon some mean topic'
'He hath taken the reader off course into the nether lands where
only hopeless fools care to go; not to explore, but to scowl and
rage against things over which he hath no control' 'Aye!, 'tis the lot
of these ones too long steeped in their own brew, to imagine the
whole world corroded black as their insides.' 'He has guessed
aright about the one thing though; he doth needs change his
lyrics.'

So they mock me in my philosophizings.

The challenge remains for each of you to seek out these
truths for yourself, fearlessly and honestly, if only to gain
some understanding, and perhaps attain some humility in the
face of something larger than yourself; not to feel cowed, but to
know your proper scale in the Universe.

Thus I have come to a conclusion, as all conclusions must
be achieved, regardless of how diligently and fondly we attempt
to prolong their inevitability. While there seems always to be room
for a last word, this clump of Knotted Twine, whilst not unraveled,
hast progressed dangerously close to greater entanglements,
mandating the cessation of further adjurations.



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