

## *The Denouement Continues*

The author has indulged himself with Catherine this past year and a half. *Vox Audita Perit, Litera Scripta Manet*. The purposeful end of this endeavor has been served. Now he sits in judgment upon himself and his work. He feels he needs to move on, the way we all do from what has suddenly become a drudge; into other realms. While at the same time he feels he abandons someone to the anomalies and vicissitudes, no longer able to influence what happens in the reader's imagination.

*A Caveat:* As much as one would like to be timeless, timelessly appropriate, it will be, must be, obvious to the reader that this opus is anchored in a particular time. As Catherine's first writing in this opus stated:

'Necessarily, this writing has evolved over a defined time period. Once the venue was chosen, it did not admit of other happenings, and challenges to my person, that have occurred only as recently as this whole past week, each day bringing forth new insights, new ways to perceive things. As I state this, I realize one might put himself or herself on hold while he or she took stock, as this particular writing took stock of myself only as recently as the previous week. If I was to rewrite to accord and account this past week, I might never have done with it, lest I be cloistered away from the world entirely.

It is to be assumed from this observation that further changes in my being, to my thought processes will doubtlessly produce results not entirely consonant with what I feel and think today.

It is to be understood that we might be consistent in our method, that is, in our basic reasoning, that it is legitimate to view some propositions as self-evident. These might never vary. One might identify them as beliefs. They become the mainstay of our credibility. They become a how, how we recognize our self. So I believe, even though I do not reflect what has happened in this past week, I still feel I recognize myself, and doubt little what I have written in terms of what I seek. It is only my expectations that might suffer some erosion.

The bitterest medicine for me to swallow would be to learn that reason is fallible. I deduce things, I infer things from a framework of inner logic and reasoned debate. These states of being and mind do not exist without some purpose and functional utility; so I believe.

If there is an inevitable conclusion to be drawn from these words, let it be 'Indeed, we are all in this together'.

One assumption I do make; that this writing is not some empty high sounding rhetoric; to me it is more; importantly, vitally more.

Having proceeded thus with Catherine, the author imagines he has found a slightly higher ground; raised somehow from the rant of himself. Imaginary others speak for him to his betterment. On the face of it, Catherine is his better self.

He has involved both the principals and the reader, seeking advice in fabricating an ending to this dubious narrative; perhaps a reasonable option, however unconventional and improbable

Of all his authorings, Catherine has become his favorite. Perhaps his last and best effort.

So much aware of time and place; of things that matter and do not matter. Of language that breathes and language that languishes.

While he knows Catherine is only a fabrication, however unreal, and implausible, he is reluctant to leave off, or to invent another equally implausible, perhaps more implausible, Quixotic presence.

However, he does feel some compulsion to bring his original document to some kind of close before it becomes a ramble until death do us part, a consideration and a deference shown to the potential reader, and to allow Sancho an opportunity to return home to visit his family.

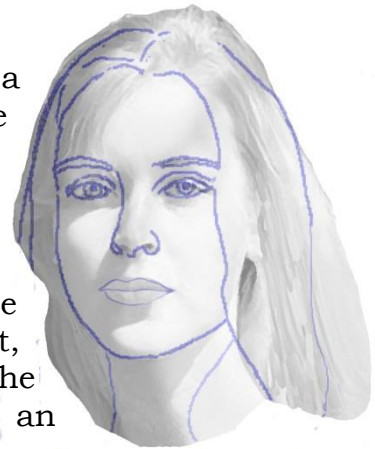
However, again, the author has felt so comfortable with Catherine that he feels he wants to continue the relationship, long afterward, perhaps for eternity, whether or not there is any reader interest, and whether or not Sancho is able to visit his family.

Even with occasional lapses, his need to scribble continues unabated; and he feels no need or compulsion to fabricate another intimate conversant. Truly, he cannot imagine a warmer companion.

He also feels he can say anything to her; she will not judge his thoughts or words, measuring his worth and his validity against some dubious, and failed, moral precept.

The lights are going out. His mind is not remembering some things. He can devote fewer and fewer hours and less and less energy to regrouping, to organizing and reorganizing. He is very much inclined to travel the same road over and over again.

Catherine has shown a willingness and an eagerness to engage him, to badger him, to draw him out. In her mind, and in her feelings she realizes his uniqueness, that soon he will no longer be there. For her part, she feels some imperative, some urgency



contained in the furtherance of the denouement, besides a deep loyalty to someone she loves.

The option still exists to conjure several possible endings herewith. Those who have been asked seem to want a continuance. The author's incentive for continuance is at variance with the others. He knows it will end when his end has come. Until then, the rest remains uncertain.

He recalls various endings to various readings, realizing how he becomes swept up in the somethings that augur for resolution, tidied up with a ribbon looped into in a bow. Unlike life, always; which is seldom tidy; unfanciful, almost devoid of that which we would ask of it. Endings are found in deaths; deaths of individuals as tragic occurrences, deaths of relationships (irreconcilable differences); deaths (transformations) of one's surroundings. And those fluffy ones where one exits on the peak of happiness, riding off into the sunset; all relieved and tearful in joyous celebration, wherein we are deprived of the knowledge of the true ending; or the deaths that will follow.

Now, so far down that road, the author doesn't any longer feel any compulsion to explain the relationship. More demanding imperatives obviate any further necessity for doing so.

Therefore, without further adjuration, or further argument, we continue as before, with the left elbow resting on the chair, and the left index finger poking the keyboard, while the right arm hangs from the shoulder as the middle finger pokes the keyboard; thus, awkwardly, only somewhat methodically, it all ensues, and unfolds.

To acquaint you further with the author beyond what you might have surmised from this opus, the author should mention the shambles of his physical world, bordering on unmanageable untidiness. He cannot bring himself to follow a set course of habitual behavior to deal with his messes. It has been his lifelong habit, to rely upon his memory where things are, how they are filed. Which is to say they are barely filed, and only accumulate in piles, and boxes, and in often unspecified computer files. When he was a working stiff, before computers, with many seemingly important pieces of paper crossing his desk, his duties were such that no time remained for the frill of organized filing or piling. So a loose assortment of phone numbers, page numbers, images cluttering and imprinted upon his brain became his resource; also a willingness to tackle any problem with his belief that anything made by man had its own logic, which he, as another of that same

species, would be able to uncover. He also had the innate ability to remember where all the parts fit together, and those he had forgotten, to be able to decipher their logic, and find the way back to a reason-to-be. A very long sentence, indeed indicative of the clutter that one day saw him outrageously slip his hands beneath a pile of papers through which he had quickly and unsuccessfully searched three or four times, certain what he, and the professor standing on one leg, was looking for, was to be found therein; to his and all in the vicinity's amazement, his hands lifted, raised, and scattered the papers in frightening disarray. The professor, and all in the vicinity, hastily disappeared; he found the paper a moment or two later in another pile of papers where he remembered he had piled and filed it, his memory functioning on its own dubious schedule.

He could not see himself, as now he can barely see himself, in his messes. Not oblivious to them; he considers the order they require too demanding a task, one which tires him, saturates his brain beyond any capability of functioning; and that once, if he imposed order, he would need to move away so that he might never disturb it again. If left to his own devices, the disorder would soon take over once again. So it was upon his memory he relied in all things. If anyone came along to disturb his disorder; that is rearrange it according to some logic, he would be lost, and angered.

He remembered the desk of another person, a counterpart cohort, acting in a similar capacity to his, in another department, who allowed only a square large enough for a pad of paper and a telephone, the remainder piled high with manuals, and important pieces of paper, and the balance of his office littered with piles and piles. The man became a drunkard who eventually committed suicide. He remembered his last visit to his old employer's office to see the whole enclosure piled high with manila folders, desk, chairs, all flat surfaces with not a single empty space. Drunk on his own self-importance, perhaps. It was this man's brother, the Princeton professor, apparently another drunk on his own self-importance, in whose good hands was entrusted the world. From coast to coast the world is in good hands then; all in need of AA.

The author too has only a small place for his laptop (not on his lap) (that space is reserved for Catherine).

We are at the center of the Universe, each of us, with things whizzing by us at incredible speed, the heavens flying by at 1000 miles per hour, (unheavenly satellites flying by at many times that speed) while the bird busies itself with the seed cast for his benefit, and the wind blows and the seas respond, all 'grist' for the author's meditations. Man muses whether the moon causes the tides, or the

slosh from a precessing planet. There is the bullshit that comes from on high, those rationalizations for destroying the planet. Whiz! There is the other daily bullshit emanating from the dirt and chaff in the mind of homo sapiens. Whiz! Splat!

Amidst a barely cohesive clutter, and a whizzing universe, the author hangs on to Catherine, his seeming salvation. As long as he is with her, nothing else matters. Another state of drunkenness.

In the way he had appreciated PC Write, a public domain writing software program (an encouraged freebee by its inventor [a former employee of Bill Gates]) a program he had used at the inception of his computer-aided writing career, he is now mostly appreciative of MS Word, which he could not afford in the beginning, and could not pirate at the inception of that career. At least his offerings are legible, however otherwise insensible. He doesn't need to sharpen pencils; only his mind. However, he imagines how convenient it would be to have the company of a squire.

Catherine has gone on with her life, juggling her desire to be with Mr. D., and her desire to save the world. She can only partly save the world through her writing. She knows she must take to the battlements, the trenches, the ramparts, the windmills, the frontiers of desperate need, where no one else will tread.

In order to be nearer Mr. D. she has followed his urging to see what she can do at home, where the New Frontier and the Great Society, worn out slogans of William's youth, have been found wanting, before she would set out abroad, where the wanting, persevering from colonial days, followed by brutal dictators, has been in evidence for a much longer time. He teased her about her grandiose impulses, which provoked her to challenge him to get up off his ass.

Which he was unwilling to do. Mostly because he doesn't believe that anything can be done to save man or the planet from man's predations. The only solution in his mind is to get rid of man; in an asteroid moment.

However, Catherine is willing. Her eyes are wide open. After her first year in the inner city, that 'asphalt jungle' she now realizes the immensity of the human need. With her sister Theresa, and several other like-minded souls, she leased a building, hopefully starting a center for the troubled; those kicked around by the anomalies and vicissitudes, those wounded by the slings and arrows, those who had to kick against the pricks, those foundering in the slough of Despond, and in the cave of Despair; those desperate and heartbroken; with hope deferred, dashed hopes; and vain expectations. Those abandoned to the Golden Rule; to trickle

down, to the private sector, to God helps Those Who help Themselves, rejected by the last resort, the worst come to the worst, as well as those who were plain victims of indifference; that of both the creator and man alike.

After the first year, many volunteers, from the ranks of the professionals, were beginning to donate time and resources; attorneys, counselors, physicians, social workers. Even her sister Lydia donated legal services. It could be done.

Theresa seemed to be filled with boundless energy, ever there whenever there was a job to be done, a person needing to be rescued, soliciting a volunteer to come in a timely manner, to respond to emergencies, all accomplished with complete dedication, equanimity, understanding and compassion, her most outstanding traits. Her enthusiasm was also boundless. She even persuaded her mother to donate some time.

While organized, and performing a service, theirs was not a simple task; they were under surveillance by the enforcers; they were challenged by other organizations opposed to some of their philosophy. While not directly involved in the abortion issue, they were nonetheless counseling young pregnant women, who had been mostly abandoned to and abused by their fate. They were also a force for organizing the poor into an activist group who petitioned for fair housing practices, for fair treatment in the workplace, for base support for those disenfranchised by the closings and relocation of industries. The Homeland Security people were at their door constantly threatening them with unlawful assembly and conspiracy to overthrow the US Gov't; and the enforcers showed particular interest in the drug connection of their counseling services.

Lydia conducted seminars regarding civil liberties and people's rights; also taught concepts of fairness, equity and justice; and Law for Laymen; and Fair Business Practices.

The building had ample space to accommodate a small dormitory for those without shelter, on a short term basis. It also had a small kitchen for feeding some of those most in need, on a short term basis; both of these operated by volunteers. They also provided a small library and a video and music room, using only a bank of earphones.

Part of their counseling services found them making referrals to other agencies or other volunteer organizations.

It was a demanding task, because there was so much need, which seemed to emerge all the more, once their organization became known.

Lydia and her mother both argued very insistently for limitations upon what their group had set out to do. They argued

constantly for outside involvement and capitalization, from Foundations, Banks, other Financial Institutions, and Corporations; and Holy Of Holies, the Last Resort Society (The US Government); and for more professional services. Once again, it was the tireless Theresa who approached these for involvement and funding; arguing in her own sweet enthusiastic persuasive way, attempting to awaken their social conscience. **“We are all part of the problem, we are all part of the solution”**. Often she returned empty-handed; but was never deterred in her dedication and basic belief.

Everyone seemed agreed upon steering the clientele toward self-help; to believing in themselves, even if they had never believed in themselves before. Only in that way could things meaningfully happen. Once the band-aid was removed, to be ready to assume some of the responsibility for oneself; often a losing proposition.

It was Catherine’s and Theresa’s special task, perhaps the hardest of all, to persuade people of their ultimate worth, regardless of their apparent social rank, however seemingly Untouchable. That, as human beings, they were as capable of appreciating the very best there is in the world, equally with any other human being, regardless of his or her station in life. They informed them they believed it was also their entitlement as human beings. Catherine continued to publish. Less on ideals, and more on practical solutions to real human problems; stressing, as always, her humanitarian outlook; never forsaking that lone life in need.

William, though he very much wanted to be near Catherine, both to support her, and to share in her affections, could not join her in the urban setting. He realized he risked losing her, despite all her protestations and assurances to the contrary.

They maintained their usual way of communicating, but did so with some caution, because they knew the government had tapped Catherine’s land phone line, had probably found a way of accessing her cell-phone communications, and her e-mail; and suspected the postal authorities of somehow reading their mail.

As a result, their messages to each other were often cryptic; even their declarations of love were encumbered in the same way lovemaking is encumbered while under public scrutiny.

There would be sudden, almost desperate, visits by Catherine, desperate for a private conversation, free from prying eyes and ears. But they would need to find a place they felt was not bugged. It was not easy to evade the eavesdropping by the forces that be. William had hired two former detectives to periodically debug his place, to check his e-mail surveillance by deliberately sending

surreptitious messages, and to inspect his mail for tampering. Even though he was situated in another country, his own government barely respected the sanctity of its neighbor. The government of the neighbor often acted in collusion with his own, through a number of pretexts.

But governments are always put to the test when lovers are determined to be together. There is very little they can do, other than detain, imprison, or execute one or both. But if William thought Catherine was in any danger, he vowed he would break off the relationship.

Bad, or even evil, as some governments can be, Catherine and William refused to believe the worst. They argued that this was the twenty-first century, that mankind would not stoop so low to try to rub them out. But there were others, all the same, sympathizers, patriots, even total idiots, Common Denominators, who might take matters into their own hands; red-neckers; scoundrels, low-lives, the meanly disposed, without conscience. The government would turn its head the other way, then issue a statement that lawlessness, vigilantism, anarchy, terrorism, will not be tolerated; or might say nothing at all, as warning to others like Catherine and William.

Treachery is the mark of man; no other creature.

Finding it somewhat of a slog in the City, and feeling she wasn't making many inroads into the social consciousness of her fellow man, perhaps exhausted by her efforts, she decided upon a visit to William. He would calm her, reaffirm her; love her. She would get some badly needed rest. Theresa had earnestly encouraged her to go.

When she finally arrived upon his island, she was ready to crash. She had had a friend send a note to the Taxi service on the island to fetch her when the ferry came in. She hadn't informed William of her plans, only cryptically referring to flights of fancy. Fancy that, will you.

When she appeared at his doorstep, he realized her condition immediately. She seemed to have drooped, her face seemed haggard. He muttered to himself 'Jesus Fucking Christ' (a most appropriate remark). He was instantly angered; and concerned (not again).

When she entered the doorway, she seemed to sag even further. William caught her in his arms. She dropped her things, put her arms around his neck, holding on, feeling his strength as he supported her.

"Catherine, you have gone too far!"

"Not now, Mr. D. Let me crash!"



He led her to the bedroom, where she sat upon the edge of the bed for a moment, took her shoes off, and laid back on the pillows, sighing.

“I’ll be OK. I am relieved to be here. Let me be for the while.”

“Yes! love.”

She reached for his hand, taking it in hers, smiling wanly and sweetly. Then let his go, to close her eyes. William placed a blanket over her.

Catherine almost instantly fell asleep. William sat by the bed for some time watching her, studying her, as her face slowly relaxed, seeming to lose some of the haggardness, and to reveal her still youthful loveliness. She slept, almost without stirring for several hours. He had left the bedside to gather her things, and to get some kind of meal ready for her.

However, when she awoke, it was morning. She called out to him.

“Oh, Mr. D., where are you?”

He was sitting in the other room, staring out to sea, trying to absorb and understand the eternal rhythms. His thoughts, his feelings, concerning Catherine, lying so close in the next room, were both of desire, and sadness.

Her voice, her call, while so welcome, was a summons back to reality. What was he to say to this 25 year-old girl-woman? He felt the old conversational tone could not be the same. He knew he would no longer be able to support her in what she was doing, doing to herself.

All the same, he went into her, trying not to reveal any of his concern, only his eagerness to see her. He smiled warmly at her as he approached the bed, “So, you have once again rejoined the living; such a sight. Such a sight you are.”

“You, my dearest, my very dearest, are a sight for me.”

Her arms were wide with invitation.

William hesitated, but she wiggled her fingertips with beckonings, “I promise not to bite you; I want the hughest, and biggest of smothering hugs.”

William slowly lowered himself upon the bed, allowing himself to be engulfed by her arms. He felt self-conscious lying on top of her, but she hugged him fiercely. He put his face, against hers, snuggling into her hair, smelling her, which was full of sleep and travel. He reached his arms under her to hug her too, only to withdraw them because he suspected it was too uncomfortable for her. She then rolled on her side, taking hold of his arms directing them around her again. They lay for some time, wordlessly embracing.

“Gotta Go!”, Catherine suddenly urged, disengaging herself, rising quickly, making for the bathroom.

William rose from the bed, to sit in a chair nearby.

When Catherine emerged, she inquired. “Where did you sleep?”

“In the other room, as I have done when your sisters come.”

“But why so far away now?”

“I simply did not want to disturb you.”

“Truth!?”

“Truth!”

“Well, I want to be disturbed now.”

“Tea, coffee, breakfast?”

“I’d love some of your green tea, but other things before breakfasting.”

William rose immediately to prepare the tea, Catherine suddenly standing in front of him. She was still in her traveling clothes. She put her arms around his neck, pulled him to her, with her face lifted towards his. Without a word, they embraced and kissed; and kissed.

“I’d like to get out of these clothes, take a shower, before the tea. Then I will be ready for something.”

“I had better shower while you are drinking your tea.”

“I want you to drink tea with me, maybe over there.” Pointing to the bed. “So I’ll wait until you have finished your shower too. No peeking!”

“Same goes for you.”

Catherine retrieved her overnight bag, a valise-like thing, and disappeared into the bathroom, with a, “There’s a penalty for stealing --- looks.” Closing the door. William, though sorely tempted to tease her, acted the gentleman.

He put more wood in the stove, spinning open the draft, to produce a more vigorous blaze. He put the kettle on its top. Then he went into the living room to listen to Catherine undressing, showering, toweling, and dressing, wondering in what kind of gown she might appear; and to become absorbed once again by the sea while doing so.

Doubtlessly, he loved Catherine. He was worried about new things. No longer worried concerning the social repercussions of their relationship, he was worried about her health, and about her short-term safety. Even if he broke off the relationship, she would not be safe. If she did not slow down, she would destroy herself in about every way conceivable. He knew he would be talking to her about these things. He was compelled to do so. However, he hesitated. She would frown, perhaps cry if he said anything before they shared their affections. He knew she was looking forward to special moments, as was he. He had better wait until much later in

the day before he launched into discussions of these serious matters. He was determined she would not get away without being forced to engage in them.

While he was showering, Catherine had brought the chair step ladder to the bathroom wall which was approximately 7 feet in height. However, a tallish nubile creature with an ardent desire to tease, she was able to stand tip-toed on the top step approximately two feet above the floor level to peer over the wall directly into the shower. She watched, and waited, until William caught sight of her looking at him.

“There is a penalty for that, young lady.”

“What would that be?”

“Life on the slow track.”

Later, they sat in the bed sipping their tea. Catherine had donned a long lavender colored, soft cotton shift. William had placed his hand upon her inner thigh, feeling its warmth, with a delicious sensuousness its silky smoothness, and its firmness. Catherine passively smiled her acknowledgement and appreciation.

“Mr. D., I love you, you know. I miss you terribly at times. I hunger for conversation that only you and I can have.

“Theresa usually holds me together. She is so positive, and so willing, and so very supportive. We do have some very meaningful conversations about who we are and what we are doing, and what are our expectations. Every now and then she will say, ‘I wish Mr. D. was here.’”

“There are others too who keep us all focused.

“But we’ll talk about that later.

“Theresa is a darling; I think I am in love with her.

“Listen to silly me.

“I do feel good this morning, actually rested; and happy, happy to be here.

“How I miss feeling your hand there. Your unbelievable tenderness. Always giving more than you are taking, so intent upon pleasing me, when it wouldn’t matter if you took more; pleased yourself more.

“But I know you will argue that your most sublime pleasure is found in giving me pleasure.”

“That is so, Catherine, incontrovertibly.”

“I know it is the highest profession of your love; I must accept it as such. I do all I can to reciprocate; that is, when I am conscious of where I am, and what I am doing.

“My private joke. Mr. D.”

“Yes, of course.”

“I do not want any other experience, it would only confuse me. I’d rather live in the darkness of my ignorance of what others might consider better things. To me nothing could be better; not even something better. Love is what it is, not subject to analysis. One must yield to its persuasions, and give one’s all to it. Anything less would indeed be missing a great deal. I am all yours.”

Setting her empty cup upon the window sill, “Well, that got me through my tea.”

All the while they were sitting there, as Catherine spoke and gesticulated William was observing the movement of her breasts beneath the gown, ogling their shape, imagining their beauty, and admiring them and desiring to touch them.

As soon as she had set her cup down she proceeded to remove her shift, pulling it over her head. William meanwhile swiftly had set down his cup on the floor. He then moved close to her as the shift was being pulled over her head, he reached from both sides from behind to cradle her breasts in his hands. She suddenly slowed her shift removal to keep her arms overhead to allow William his moments of sublime pleasure and joy in fondling her.

The curtain fell.

The wonder of it all.

The curtain rose as William attempted to tickle her nipples with his eyelashes. Which brought her hands sliding into his cheeks, awakening the while.

“Mr. D.! I can’t bear it.”

As the reality of things dawned upon her, Catherine thought it wise to abruptly deter William in his teasing ventures.

“Mr. D., has the writing been getting any better?”

“Not that I could tell. Same dour disposition.

“Drunk upon myself, as usual.”

“Oh!, you always have something important to say, regardless.”

“Doubtlessly that’s some kind of achievement.”

“Mr. D., there you go again. Please give me a decent answer. Something specific.”

“I tried, but you do not find my assessment acceptable.”

“Must you make of this a contentious thing? Have we not found some common ground? Some way to communicate. Can we not continue in the same spirit?”

“A moment ago I was attempting to communicate; you informed me of its unbearable nature.”

“Mr. D., while I appreciate your earnest desire to communicate, I had hoped for something else in the moment.”

“I’m sorry Catherine; one moment it’s a blanket to warm you, and another a wet blanket; alas! what purpose to serve?”

“I’ll try to answer your question, but feel you already know what I will say.

“I’m so beset by the contemplation of evil that I am unable to sing praises. I see humanity as the greatest of evils, the destroyer. So, you might well imagine, from what you already know of me, how I might struggle with such a thing. The color is usually red upon black, or the reverse.”

“But is not humanity also the marvelous wonder of the universe?”

“How can you ask such a question? You who know man to be cruel beyond all measure?”

“If, you mean by intent, I do not know that.”

“Rephrase, dearest one. Humanity is not the marvelous wonder of the Universe. Life upon this earth is the wonder. Man, while supposedly the highest expression of it, is also a manifestation of something for which we labor to find definition.”

“I’ll accept that. When you put your mind to it, you are a very amenable fellow.”

“Careful, love, a bombast awaits you.”

“Not so soon upon our declaration.”

“One might easily become agitated in the mind, despite the swoonings of the corpus delicious.”

“You should wear a bulbous red nose; and paint your face into a grin; I could not laugh the more.

“Seriously though, tell it like it is.”

“Hah!, I am polishing evil. The worst president we ever had is acquiring his justly deserved patina of black. But I am not satisfied. I stew less, but unless the man, the evil one, be gone, I will remain restive; sniping, bitterly.

“You dearest one, how do you keep going in the face of the wretched?”

“Mr. D., you have to do what you do; and we desperately need your arrows shot against this thing, this animal. Meanwhile, the fallen need succor. It is ingrained in me to deal with that face you describe.

“I do lose sight of my own being as it slips away into this pressing, demanding, seemingly endless, virtually cruel thing. I too remain restive, while others suffer.

“Now that I am here away from it all, listening to your perspectives, knowing them to be mine also, basically, there is a very great temptation to abandon the project. I sense the futility of it all. But when one sees the gladdened face of those who receive a human touch, abandonment is not possible. Not for me.

“I cannot afford the luxury of asking ‘what are we here for?’.

“Survival is an empty gambit without reverence for life, without civilization; and without humanitarian institutions. I cannot perceive things in any other way. I cannot yield to a more primitive conception of life on this planet. I know this flies in the face of true knowledge. I also know what can be done when mankind exercises its mind and will. While mankind does construct the hapless edifice, the Tower of Babel, he also constructs cathedrals. While he yields to his baser impulses, he also produces the most sublime of creations. Survival for its own sake seems the lower duller road to travel. What does it mean ‘to survive’? Your ‘holding action’? While the fates ride roughshod over the whole prospect without remorse or remedy?”

“It would seem so, dearest, most troubled one. You know my thoughts in the matter; they are not comforting or reassuring. But I am only one sour puss; despite what I might desire in the best of all possible worlds, I must acknowledge this is all we will get in this best of all possible worlds. We are forced to claim ‘best’ even when we know it to be the ‘worst’. We assent to the virtues, but yield to the sins, converting the best into the worst.

“Not to change the subject all that much. Have you met any interesting men serving the needs of man?”

“Yes, and No. Yes! in the sense that there are men who care. Yes, in the sense that I find two in particular, as dedicated as myself. No, in the sense of romantic interest. There isn’t any time for such interest. If there was time, I cannot say what might be the possibilities. Most of my free time is spent with Theresa. Even she often forsakes her boy friend.

“In answering your loaded question, so you will know, I am presently with the most interesting of men.

“By the way, Theresa wanted to come with me. She sends you her love; and lots of hugs. She is doing well, so boundless is her energy and enthusiasm; she does not go to the edge like me. She can crash in the middle of the storm, as matter of course, as though her hypothalamus were a sentient thing looking after her well-being.”

“Perhaps you should have yours examined.”

“We get what we get.

“I am my father’s daughter.”

“What about Theresa?”

“Perhaps more so. She is so angelic. Almost unperturbable.”

“Are you saying that one need not worry about her?”

“I think of Theresa as one of those people whom one would never want to harm; that she projects an aura that is virtually

inviolable. Her earnestness is remarkable; one trusts her words instinctively, and immediately."

"I would hope that all would agree with you."

"Don't take me wrongly; I do fear for her, as someone so precious to me; I cannot imagine life without her. Her chitterlings, like yours and mine, are made of some soft stuff that needs deep regard, and protecting.

"And, Yes!, there are times, when the forces that be, assume a very threatening posture. But, oddly enough, we sense there have been a few times when the forces that be, seemed to respect what we are trying to do, even when it stirs their conscience, and embarrasses them. They know it is a task they would never undertake; whether needed or not, even though they are in some way responsible; if not liable. They recognize us, but patronize us, then challenge us, our commitment, by plaguing us with bureaucratic stuff. Then, they bug our phones, and let the rednecks hassle us, maybe even crap on us.

"But realistically speaking, we do not have their support. They don't care if there is a problem; whether it stays with us, or goes away, means nothing to them. Man's accursed inhumanity to man. All of those for whom we care, and all of us doing the caring, dropping dead, would suit them fine.

"So when the unruly crowd does focus on us, it does frighten us, especially when the militia standby watching without taking any action.

"We have had to deal with two bomb threats; neither of which proved to be real. It's a tactic of intimidation."

"Wouldn't be too sure of that. Lulling you into believing maybe the threat doesn't exist. Hoi!"

"Mr. D., we could all leave our posts for fear of our lives. Then they win, the bullies win."

"That they do; regardless."

"Mr. D., mistake not my caution; I have been sufficiently exposed to your take on mankind that I am alert and wary.

"Theresa and I chew this over regularly. She believes we are doing the right thing, without being righteous. She does believe that our government means us no harm. That it is only the kooks who are the difficult ones. But these she feels would respond to her humanity, if given a chance to do so. She feels there is a kind of undeniability to her reason-to-be, a self-evident property to her involvement; another kind of Untouchable, so to speak. That human need is a sacred thing; and those who answer the call are somewhat sanctified.

"In the best of all possible worlds she would be right. I might agree with her. After being around you I am not so sure. I am a

cautious and rational enough being to heed your words. Your arguments are persuasive. When I use them on Theresa, she winces at the hardness of the judgments. She might even say something like, 'You didn't use to think that way.'

"So, if you think you are having trouble convincing me of something, imagine working on Theresa."

"In our discussions with Theresa, my discussions with her, I find she is open to all arguments, even the cynical ones.

"It may be that she has her own momentum created by what she has accepted as the thing to do. Even if man is black inside, it does not alter what she perceives as a glaring need, even the villain in Patch Adams.

"There are people suffering; she feels she can help to alleviate that suffering."

"She does not feel she has the luxury to debate who is responsible; that that doesn't help. If her fellow man is indifferent to those who suffer, she feels she cannot alter that in the moment; she must do something else, somehow mitigating a circumstance. I think she looks to me to argue, to make the case for a policy that makes of human suffering a cause for national consciousness, and a national responsibility. I know she expects it of you.

"I know, for you to act, there must be a rational, a logic, to a thing; and an expectation. The same is true for me. But I think I can act without expectation; that is, respond to a need; perhaps as my father's daughter. This latter would certainly be true of Theresa. For me the rationale comes afterward, not as to why I should be so engaged, but the need to find a rationale for the systemic disease within the human contingent; an attempt to understand the 'how can this be?'. 'Is there a way to correct this thing, maybe forever?' I want to find that way. The rational part is the easy part. One can say, as Theresa might, 'It should be thus and such, because it is a 'human' thing to do.'

"I now know that to be a human is to be many things. Being 'human' and being 'a human' are not synonymous. To confuse the issue, without providing any particular insight, we use expressions like 'human being'; as an expression of hope perhaps; or some deeply felt ideal."

"It is so, sweet life."

"I have listened to you, my dearest friend and companion. I trust in you, in your mind, your thought, and the way it perceives things; your insatiable quest for truth. I want that for myself; to know that truth; what we have come to understand as the higher truth. Not to delude ourselves with assumptions, inferences."

"Hah!, my sweet one, for all the good it does us.

"Basking on the Riviera would do as much; or more."



“Don’t be silly now.”

“I am lighthearted and more forgiving after love-making. Nothing seems all that important.”

“Do I need to turn you into a celibate in order for you to be serious?”

“I’m incorrigible.”

“Does that mean you would be looking for another?”

“Nothing of the kind. However, the tango is seldom a solo performance; so I count on you for a partner. Celibacy is not a dance that either of us can perform.”

“Oh!, you think not.”

“What do you think I am doing when we are apart? What are you doing when we are apart?”

“Two questions. You are being trusted, as am I, to observe decorum; at least, no philandering, no little infidelities. All else is a private matter.”

“Mr. D., I do not have the time nor the inclination for fantasy. I am fortunate to have met you when I did. I do feel rather contented. I have become aware of something in a timely manner; and in a manner that does nothing but make me feel good about myself.

“We have known each other for six years. For those six years, I have not desired another. I am comfortable with what I feel about myself, and what I feel about you. Nothing has come along to alter those feelings.

“I do not want to speculate what might have happened if I had not met you. Its that simple.

“Now, can we turn the page?”

“Sure. You want serious.

“I was thinking serious only yesterday before you came. Not about suffering in the streets; only my own perhaps; but as part of the human condition again; that ‘fatefully inevitable’ ‘human condition’. It confronts me as though it might be a troublesome wart upon my hand, or foot, or penis; or perhaps like a cataract in my field of vision.

“I went to a gathering last week where the subject of depleted uranium came up.

“Following that I got into another of my writing rants. Some of which I’ll retrieve for this moment.” William rose from the bed to search for the writing to which he had referred. When he returned with it, he mentioned it was rather crude, as usual, but helped to vent his feelings in the matter of his chief nemesis. He read:

“Part of the Bush legacy, the Least Common Denominator legacy: Twenty Million Doses of Prozac for those who have become

inordinately depressed when reading about DU. That aint no spectrophotometer; that's Depleted Uranium, with a  $\frac{1}{2}$  life of 4,700,000,000 (billion) years. One became inordinately elated when they heard he got his sausage caught in his zipper. The Prozac is for the treatment of manic elation. For those who are found to be muttering, Motherfucker! We all know who they mean. She's the Queen Katrina who, upon her throne, was heard to (m)utter *What I'm hearing, which is sort of scary, is they all want to stay in Texas. Everyone is so overwhelmed by the hospitality. And so many of the people in the arena here, you know, were underprivileged anyway, so this is working very well for them.*

He might be inordinately stupid, like the womb from which he emerged, but he knows about DU, like Billy Boy (Moniker Billy) did when it was used in former Yugo(slavia). Like the father of the son with the zipper problem when it was used in IRAQ where the son is now also using the stuff, after learning of its penetrating power, sticking it to the old bitch, Mother Earth, in Afghanistan. Some Cabal.

The stuff, DU, has been around for a while; since the bomb years. Its been used in penetrating weaponry, and shielding weaponry for some time, probably 45-50 years anyway. First acknowledged use was by the Israelis in the 1973 confrontation with their bad guys. DU aint all there is to it; there's the Dirty DU with Plutonium 239/240 and Uranium 236, Americium 241, Neptunium, Technetium 99, and Zeusium.

Quite a roster of 'nations' got the stuff in weaponry, US UK France, Russia, Greece, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, Pakistan, Thailand, Taiwan, the other China, probably North Korea, and South Korea; geeze probably everybody in the coalition; OK, everybody with a nickel to spare, and those on lend lease, and foreign aid (friendly friends [not Chavez of Venezuela, Moreno Of Bolivia]), and the IMF, or World Bank. Gee Whiz! a UN of DU. There's gotta be a protocol somewhere. Cuba?!

OK, so here's what you get for your nickel. Besides alpha and beta, you get gamma. In addition you get heavy metal poisoning through ingestion; there are several ways of ingesting the stuff.

You know how it is with the Nuclear Industry. Its all a matter of rems; each individual is permitted so many rems, each individual has a tolerable level of rems, often measured against exposure to cosmic radiation, and exposure to watch dials. Rems are not to be mistaken for rapid eye movements.

The Defense Industry accepts the diabolysis of the Nuclear Industry. God Said!! Every thing is in good hands!

All those suffering from the after effects are now grouped all together under the phenomenon known as Mesopotamianism, or Gulf War Syndrome; otherwise recognized as Diabolic Nuking. High

U disease, High Urine; baked Kidney; very 'heavy stuff', as he puffed on his toke.

To hell with Prozac, Medical Mary Jane. Something for a trip. An escape from this madness. Have a Coke! Suck Your Thumb!

Think I'm stymied, do you. Can't find anything else to say.

What you are reading emanates from the trash bin, slop bucket, chamber pot. Can't deposit it on the floor; or spew it into the atmosphere; the sorely offended atmosphere. As an Untouchable I am forced to deal with it.

I've incorporated some of the bile into Catherine. But Catherine has been such a positive experience, I haven't wanted to load it down with the worst in me. God Bless America was a plenty big dose. I included that epithet in Catherine because I was hurting, hurting bad enough to do it. Actually I was impotent, while that other guy was running around, flashing his sausage.

In truth, one is impotent anyway; its the daily reminder that assails one, where one feels all he was taught to believe is being undermined by a shithead, the dumb-ass Denominator Man. Where he feels he hasn't any recourse. Where he feels there isn't any democracy; only a sham thing, something for the photo-op, while the dirty dealing goes on behind closed doors, those highly polished doors, the same ones that Abe passed through.

Here I am at 62; this is still going on. It started early in my life. Way back when, while I was in elementary school, like sometime between the first and third grades when some tough kid, some local bully put it to me, knocking out a tooth. In Catholic School the nuns rode herd on the bullies. But after three years of relative safety, it was back to public school where the pecking order was established; the bullies on top. It seemed patently unfair, and inconsistent with the dictum of the Declaration and the Constitution. I got tired of being knocked on my ass, developing a few survival skills of my own. Somehow you gotta earn respect for democracy to work effectively. Man's natural tendency seems to be domination, intolerance, and a bunch of other character flaws (predilections).

Anyway the bully was a presence; one walked the other side of the hallway or street, one let him have the ball, one was terrified of confrontation. It was a terrible imposition upon those who were on the wrong end of it. It was a terrible imposition to be forced into school by truancy laws, then, exposed to such frightening behavior. No different with Democracy. The school grounds were, in reality, the training ground, the arena of the future, where one would learn the tough lessons where the whole fucking army in a Democracy would be after your ass when you mocked the big bully; and where

nobody would give a damn. You are on your own in a Democracy. Was it the proper kind of training?

I see my president as a bully, as someone to fear. It is still terribly unfair that one human being should have such power over another. One hears the righteous Brotherly Love crapola preached by that bully as he beats up on one and all. Things could be worse. He's on Prozac you know, otherwise he would be shooting everyone from the hip.

I am tired of being knocked on my ass by that fucking Texan; its not only him; its those other guys like him; other presidents, and the string of cronies, the Kissingers the Bakers; the Hatches, Agnews, the Perles, the Meeses, the Wineburgers, the Nixons, the Reagans, the Ashcrofts, Gonzalez's Rumsfelds, Wolfritzs, the Cheneys, the Gingrichs, the Lotts, Delays, and their ilk. All bullies. All guys I'd like to get for the pain they have caused me. They better stay behind their razor-wire with their Rotweilers. Every time they open their mouths they undermine my most basic beliefs about the country in which I was raised. Their equivocations, dissemblings, temporizings, rationalizations (rhetoric) and outright lies; then telling me if I don't like it, what I can do. Or I had better watch out, ya hear! The gunslinger Horiuchi waits in the wings to blow your damned head off, the one who shot Lady Weaver, her son, and Branch Davidian; probably shot Allende too. A real human thug with a telescopic sight. I tell yuh, those guys are worse than mean. What's more, they have appropriated the country in which I must live.

Its ugly. Is that anyway to live?

Moses didn't say anything about bullies. Not that it would have made a goddamned".

"Not a very pretty spew, as usual. Guts all over the floor"

"You!, and challenging."

"So frustratingly repetitious. What would I say if these bad guys weren't in my face? Would I have anything to say?"

"Always, Mr. D.; it's your nature.

"I like what you had to say concerning the imposition of the truancy laws resulting in the exposure to a kind of tyranny, the tyranny of the bully; and how inconsistent that was with what one is taught, not only in terms of democratic principles, but in terms of Brotherly Love. So much contradiction of the basics, the assumptions made when we are proselytized with the finer things. Something doesn't ring true. We are had by the system which somehow allows the bully to function in all levels of our society.

"As you say, something Moses overlooked.

“I can see it in myself; the fear of this man; its there; and he is in my face, simply because he has such power at his disposal; I do believe he is both a bully and an idiot.

“The Compassionate Conservative certainly lacks sensitivity and human compassion. Even these would not be so terrible, if they were in place as some kind of necessary expedient; that is, as a *modus operandi*, a way to get a job done, without being concerned with a lot of extraneous stuff.

“Not him. He does not do a job, as though there were a job to be done. It’s a clubby business; and a feather your nest while in office. Serve narrow interests. Raid the coffers to implement a game plan.

“The God Bless America thing; enough to make one puke from shame; the blatancy of the hypocrisy, and the infantilism. Who can listen to it all, who believes in all that, respects all that? Isn’t it all so transparent? Isn’t it?”

“One would think so. Even the Christian right must take a little pride in who advocates their position. Can they not tell they are being used as a political football? I wonder; are they as stupid as he? Probably so.

“I know some of those Christian righters. They are prone to utter ‘God Said’ at every turn in their thought; Thought!!!???. They know where to go in the Romans, Corinthians, Timothy, Leviticus, to get a slant on things. ‘Jesus’ is a talisman. One rubs it, strokes it, invokes it. They are always in the act of justifying themselves through their precious, goddy, holy, holy righteousness. They are perfumed so you can’t get a whiff of their unholiness. All tied to the Red White and Blue; heavenly blue.

“My daughter is one of them; I have often depicted her as someone who went to the minister for a lobotomy. As many students use felt tip pens to line through all the important dictum in their texts, my daughter does the same thing with the American Standard Revised edition of that Holy Tome. Holy Shit!

“The whole gambit is ***Afterlife***. Immortality. Fear of the interminable death. They don’t know where its at, do they?

“Thing is, they cause so much misery with their ignorance and their rant, all the while believing they are Saving, Saving, as in Salvation; when all they are doing is Condemning.

“Somebody doesn’t agree with the dictum gets to burn in hell for eternity. Bunch of hard asses. No!?! The Man was so empathetic, while the brethren are full of condemnation.”

“Mr. D., we have encountered some of this contingent, especially on the anti-abortion side of things. The religious Right-To-Lifers seem fanatical; and surely enough the Woman’s Rights people are almost as fanatical. The courts have made a legal

decision, but the Righters think they are making a moral decision that should become law. The Law Of Ages, Of Moses, a Commandment, like he should have made a Commandment about bullies. But they think of the killing in Iraq as righteous. For several years, the highest court in our land is being asked to take a loyalty oath on the abortion issue.

“There are some of those who come from that side of things who have kind faces, do not vociferate; they simply believe in something they have no intention to question, even as women. A woman does not have the right to her own body (especially if she was stupid enough to get pregnant). The state, the church, the righteous have a right to her body, and her progeny.

“I will not argue there are people out there, childless, who might want a life to love and to care for; Yes! anticipating your take on things, to corrupt. There are foundlings a plenty without making an issue of abortion. Let those who yammer put their whatever where their orifice is.

“Morality!? Bigotry!!. Irrelevancy!!”

“Its odd, Catherine, how I react to you when you speak strongly, somewhat bitterly and cynically, or ‘one better than me’, playing my game. It hurts me to hear what seems like my foul words coming out of your beautiful mouth.”

“I suppose it is confusing, but I too have moments where I feel nothing but disgust, when I feel the futility of having to deal with awful people, especially my leaders; sometimes I want to spew it out too. But I feel guilty when I do; as though I have lost control, somehow joining, thereby giving credibility to my antagonist.”

“I had a cockeyed notion. I remember the photo-ops of George before 9/11, teeing off. Another Coolidge, only worse. Then I imagine his attempt to meld the races by rattling around the links with OJ. Imagine Denominator W and Denominator OJ. Dah!”

“Mr. D.!, while I might see the attempt at humor, and while I might realize it is you who invents such a thing that few others would invent; another mockery; cold, severe, acid; it doesn’t come up to grade. It is an inferior product; clowning again.”

“Catherine, are you so offended by such juxtaposition?”

“We were having a perfectly sensible conversation before you threw in that ----- “

“But I announced it as cockeyed notion. Which it is. It also acts as some kind of summary of that with which we are dealing. Not only a golf ball, but a goof ball.”

“OH!, Mr. D., spare me!

“Sometimes, you lose it.”

“Haven’t got used to that side of me, have you?”

“The incongruity might satisfy you, but does rather infuriate me. I am trying to relieve myself of something, you tell me how the way I do it upsets you. I inform you of how I feel when I resort to the slinging of it, and you walk right past me.”

“Catherine, it is precisely that incongruity that breaks in upon our rationality; the rationality that cannot and does not solve the very problems we are discussing. The WHO with whom we are trying to rationalize is somewhere else. Where else? Tell me how to express the frustration that ensues from such dereliction.”

“Mr. D., lets not quarrel. Yes!, your manner does surprise me, especially in the middle of something I take very seriously, where I believe you are hearing me, following me.

“I don’t do that to you when you are being intently serious, or even cynical. I am listening to you grappling with truth, logic, assumptions, and language; I am eager to hear your words as they discover themselves.”

“I know that you know that no offense was intended, that I was not belittling your words.

“Yes!, I freely associate. As you speak, as I speak, as Theresa speaks, images and notions are being triggered, Yes!, perhaps randomly, too freely associated. I am not only hearing you or Theresa, or myself, or someone else, for that matter, my head is doing its own thing. It is always seeking some perspective for what is being stated. Often the seriousness seems absurd because it solves nothing. Even my apparent seriousness dismays me, because I have already determined its inutility. Through habit, I am looking for some kind of escape from something that produces mostly frustration; I tend to jocularism. Cocked hat ism. The more biting, more acid, rancorous, viciously laughable, the better.

“OJ and W.; lets examine that for its potential.

“I believe OJ killed Nicole and her lover from pure jealousy, as ancient and old a motive as any; you know, that old Othello and Desdemona thing. Perhaps he must be viewed as a ‘crime of passion’ sort of guy. I do not view him that way. His intelligence was fobbed off on us; the USC graduate, the TV celebrity. The Beverly Hills novitiate. A person who had most everything; or who could get most everything; Brentwood and a Bentley to go with it. He even got a sexy white woman, whom he did not handle well, for some reason. Who knows what goes on between a celebrity and someone he picks up in a bar. What were the rules? What was the game plan? SEX, that began to cloy, that didn’t satisfy. But enough of the tumble to produce offspring. Maybe his character was all sham, a grunt who could run like hell with a pigskin tucked under his arm, made a small fortune. What else was he? What did she see in him? What were her motives? Ding Dong!

“After all is said and done, after he was acquitted of blood lust; but was found guilty of infringing civil rights; costlier monetarily by far than a murder conviction, he was able to retain his freedom, his golf clubs; that is what we have heard about him; that very strangely he was awarded custody of their children over the protestations of the parents of the dead ex.. There was George, another kind of grunt as our president, another kind of celebrity who had everything, teeing off; sort of, while his cronies were sacking and burning Rome. Then an outsider attacked Rome. Dah!

“Some people say ‘That’s History!’, like they say ‘That’s Toast’ or ‘He’s Toast!’, one might say ‘Rome is Toast!’ But George teed off in the desert, in a bigger game, where his handicaps were bound to become evident.

“These guys are on the front pages for days, months, on end. They are ‘Copy’. Why? I’ll fight back against this intrusion into my life. Should I incautiously venture upon this earth, these poor excuses for humanity are trumpeted upon the marquee; deserving my attention?

“So, here’s these two yuks on the links; these two fuck-ups, useless for anything else, a couple of yahoos who are guilty of crimes of passion, whacking these pathetic little balls across the planet in search of a hole”

“Mr. D., it doesn’t get any better; that is gross.”

“So you say, so you say.”

“Mr. D., you are being hostile.”

“My darling, you are expecting too much from the ill-formed thing of me.”

“Oh!, from hostile to passive aggressive.”

“Perhaps, but obviously being put on the defensive by my, Holy Be Jesuzz, lovely critic.”

“Mr. D., you are something else.”

“That may be my sweet.

“We have known each other for six years. While we have been sorting out our lives and our relationship, the world has moved on.

“Even though you have been very attentive to the human thing, it has gone amok even more than when last we were shocked by its horror.

“Iran says Israel has got to go. Some are conjecturing that China could mount an invasion force of 100,000,000 without batting an eye, to assault our shores. Even though arithmetically it seems unlikely, 20,000 ships carrying 5,000 each across 7,000 miles of ocean.

“What is happening? Tell me the sense of it all.

“How can we even think these things?”



“One enormous preemptive strike against the whole of the planet?”

“*Homo Sapiens* is a monster misnomer. A restive unsatisfied animal prowls. It has the presumption to think itself superior to all other forms of life. Perhaps its martial arts are more sophisticated than some other creatures. But the art of diplomacy is severely lacking, or wanting; not a creature more in need of it.

“Some argue it is a matter of necessity that we act in one way and not another. You cannot trust *homo sapiens*, so you must act to thwart his every move. Man must kill man as a thwart. Must I?”

“Look yonder, he rises. We think he goes for his weapon, when he merely reaches for his hoe. The ground must be tilled even while belligerence runs in the veins. The monster must be fed. Since the gun and the hoe reside together, we assume the worst. It has been so. It will remain so until every gun, and every man is broken into a thousand pieces.”

“Sadly, I know where this is going.

“I sometimes wonder about you, whether you are not waiting for bad things to happen so you can jump on them: ‘See, I told you so!’. This insatiable self of you that seeks confirmation of something not nice. A basis for rejection of, for non participation in, something basically worthless.

“Then you will try to persuade me we need to escape to the far shore, where no man treads. You and I, to live out our days on the edge, out of earshot, in a kind of stolen peace. Where we become some dubious testament to our words, to our avowals.

“That man is a colossal blunder that we cannot remedy though we drain the very last elixir of life from our veins in his stead. That we can have no expectation of improvement despite these selves we would lovingly, dedicatedly, place into the hopper.

“Mr. D. it is a refrain that only saddens me. It separates you from me. It breaks my heart.

“I know you do not want to violate that welling in me that loves you, as that love is so pure, and unstintingly given; that state of being you have awakened in me that enlivens me beyond all sensibility.

“Though we might abandon this place to find some imaginary peace for some while somewhere else, what happens when you leave my side? Will we not have cause to wonder when the flotsam and jetsam of the torn planet float ashore? How do we escape the inevitabilities?”

“Will not the isolation from my family and my friends destroy me? Can I selfishly abandon them?”

“Perhaps you can truly leave everything behind as long as you have me. Will I be able to do the same? Can I deny who I am?”

Perhaps without even knowing who I am? Are you the one to tell me who I am. One belonging to that species you have condemned?

“You will argue we are in possession of our own lives, we have our own entitlement as lives, without the say-so of our fellow creatures. That in coming together we have taken that which belongs to us and not to them. That we have every right to live by the shore as might have our ancestors in other times, intimately tied to our surroundings, living out our days in appreciation of something grand, something beautiful; even more beautiful because we are in such a unique position to appreciate its wonder.

“That we do not need to possess, as much as we need to integrate, to understand life, all of life, as some kind of marvel. But can we truly escape our origins? Can we be so naïve to believe that our ancestors did anything but survive? Did they too marvel as do we? If they had not survived as surviving things do, would we have had this luxury to imagine such a thing as choice? We choose to do such and such; go live by the seashore attuned to all its wonder and all its marvels; and all its palpitations?”

“It can be done Catherine.”

## *Where Will It All End?*

The author imagines many of you had begun to think, and perhaps hope you would never hear from him again; that he would fall over the precipice, upon which he insistently chooses to perform. Perhaps that would be best; even though consigned to the background as slave to the word, the author does continue to think about what it is he imagines he is doing. He could return to the beginning to alter the whole tone of his opus. This might be viewed as foolishly tinkering with the manuscript; it might also be regarded as an important adjustment in the reader’s perception.

Imagine Little Nell saved from the demons, or Yillah captured.

You must not think the author wholly a malcontent; he simply struggles with tough unrelenting queries.

Has civilization failed us? Is civilization something needing to be dismantled? Who is to represent the whole of failed civilization; the reluctant upholder of something that others tear down; is mankind to live up to his promise; is he truly the embodiment and keeper of ruins? Is he that expectant creature in the landscape who has presumed upon this planet, with or without the blessings of the almighty? Who continues unabated to trash his mother with his presumption, who doesn’t give a damn, simply because giving a damn means personal sacrifice?

Suppose Catherine and her sisters do represent idealism, along with the obvious energy, eagerness, enthusiasm, and hope; and

innocent belief of youth; while aware of history, perceive it not as ruins, or a record of failed promise, but as a beginning; something begun in earnest that needs reinforcing; perhaps in the semblance of a cathedral; though ravaged by years of exposure to the elements.

The two legged appurtenance, Man, homo sap, has been depicted as the creator of another kind of Cathedral; symbolic of his failed promise, The Tower Of Babel. It is said all men have common objectives; but their tongues cannot agree.

Is the Tower the inevitable consequence; the resultant of this creature; or is there another edifice somewhere else more akin to the cathedral, like the unfinished Sagrada Familia; more than a façade, perhaps living in the human heart, unsullied, worth protecting and worth the dedication of one's life? Of Catherine and her sisters?

William, Mr. D, The Old Geezur, and Catherine and her sisters symbolize two aspects of man's dilemma. William is soured by the endless altercations; the conversion of the planet into a standard of living; the triumph of the I. I Land; or, in lieu of the triumph, the 'if I can't have it and control it, nobody else will either'. The art of self, of selfishness. William does not exclude himself from these condemnations. He recognizes the truths of man's propensities and behavior through himself. Knowing himself he feels he knows the other. He argues, 'If I cannot act upon my knowledge; if I cannot become the exemplary individual whom my imagination deems vital to his own argument, then I am nothing but a fake, a phony, a charlatan, a patent medicine salesman, a double talker, dissembler, temporizer, disinformation propagandist, a sad dubious and laughable figure in the landscape, just like the one's I mock'.

While Catherine might appear as any savior, in white raiment, kindled with her mission. She is not weighed down and worn by age; or the cumulative disillusionment that accrues with time. Her expectations are inculcated; instilled; ingrained. To her everything is possible; Lazarus will rise again. She symbolizes the hope that emerges from every classroom in every land. Donna Quixote, inspired, enchanted, ever and again, everlasting.

Think now upon her spiritual ancestor, the Great Don that Imaginary Illustrious exemplary individual, possessed, imbued with purpose, dedicated to righting all the wrongs of the world, to ousting the bedlamites, depicted as a farcical figure; and in the end, a tragic figure. Not a fake, but maybe wrong for his times, out of sync with reality. He is our unlikely champion, though swathed in soiled underwear; but the champion of the human spirit

nonetheless; of all those, while donned in clean underwear, put upon other men.

Will she suffer his fate?

This unlikely pair, Catherine and William, emerged from the grayed head of a decrepit, decaying author; the one indisposed by time and fate; the other upon the threshold of the unknown, each to parry the other, but to find between themselves an accommodation. Perhaps the mechanics of their accommodation are truly implausible; and perhaps it is also true that mankind cannot be accommodated upon this planet.

The author argues that the doubtful series of occurrences between William and Catherine is not a perverted maunder. It might be the purposeful coming together of the ancient with the modern; a recognition of the common objectives of both. Yes! perhaps it is wrong to personify the ancient with life when truly it is dead beyond recall, something to ponder in museums; how quaint were our ancestors; how inexpressibly inexpressible their torment, whether possessed by love or hate.

As moderns we are cleverly versed, through the assimilations and accumulations of the centuries, in the art of deception, of deceiving ourselves that we know the true way, when in fact we are being forced to question the very premise of our civilization. What civilization?!!

Is this then where the author leaves you, asking this question? Does his awkward opus lead toward some clear objective beyond the unlikely amalgam of William and Catherine? Not the ancient with the modern. Some other denouement; a dime novel to be found in the libraries of all the latrines of the world?

When William and Catherine were allowed to return to the manuscript, William pressed ahead with his agenda.

“Catherine, I know you are growing weary of these desultory assessments of life in the universe, life on the planet, as though one were to place an Amen at the end of every thought, or digression.

“As the thoughts Whiz by, I must latch onto them, or they may never appear again in the same form.

“Here it now appears we must make peace with the planet, with the universe. Man is only incidental; making peace with him hasn’t any enduring consequence.

“We are a transient life form; first in our own short term, but also as a species. Everything we discover in fossil remains confirms this prospect.

“Even if we finish that Cathedral, it is doomed to fall victim to the vicissitudes.”

“Mr. D., you are missing the point of me; and my involvement.

“Do you think I am deaf and dumb to your words? I recognize clearly what you are saying is true. Because that is so, am I thus to sit upon my hands musing, delighting in these awful truths, as you seem to do? You know, I am not Waiting For Godot.”

“Hah!, the unkindest cut of all: ‘delighting in these awful truths, as you seem to do’.

“Catherine, truth is truth. Delight in truth is only part; there is sadness; and tragedy in truth. As you well know.

“We, each of us, makes his own peace, or none at all, with the fates. It is our vanity that makes fools of us in the face of the inevitable. We shake our fists, when acquiescence would be more in accord with our knowledge; or lack of knowledge, if the truth was to be admitted.

“I don’t want to declare us pathetically blinded lost souls, even though we appear to be. You are not pathetic to me. You are not vain. You are an innocent. No, not being led to the slaughter. You are empathetic, sympathetic; you feel things deeply. Because you do, you are led Yes!, led, you feel compelled, that is, to relieve suffering. The cause of the suffering is not important. Suffering is suffering. Whether a person is abused by a loved one, or by indifference; whether the storm, any kind of storm, has beset them; whether they are simply lonely in this night of life; you are there. You are unafraid. Giving of your self is natural to you; much flows from you.

“You are so aware of causal relationships. Some things do not occur by accident; or some things are preventable, to say it another way. Your reason argues for humanity to become involved with life and the living as though it was the most sacred thing; a condition to be revered.

“I argue it is a trick of the mind; I demean what you are in this assessment. You act while I look on. I am the privileged adjudicator; the assessor, the mocker; the cynic.

“Yet, you do not condemn me; you accept me. Is that more of your flowing out of yourself, indulging me, tolerating me?”

“I know you want to stand revealed, however I will not respond to this last; I will seize upon what you have inferred concerning ‘accident’. I would not declare ‘intent’, that is, that ‘neglect’ is intentional, that abuse is intentional, although in some cases it may appear to be; that one intentionally brings suffering upon anything living. Oh! Yes there are those who are destructive, who are hostile, aggressive, pathological. Often one finds these same ones who seem so bent are also bent upon destroying themselves.

Trashing their own lives. They feel worthless, because that is part of what the human condition fosters, and how they play the game.

“From what I am saying, you will deduce I am hesitant to use the word ‘accident’. While I might not perceive any deliberate ‘intent’, I do see indifference to pain and suffering, even in those who bring it upon themselves; perhaps manifesting a pathological condition, an inherited condition, of inflicting pain and punishment upon oneself for sins committed, and sins of omission. It is a pain that one passes on, mostly because it is unendurable within oneself. “Not by accident. Not by intent. Then what?”

“We both suspect man could do a better job. That along with everything else, he has it within him to do a better job. Then, why doesn’t he?”

“Somewhere, somehow, in the evolutionary prospect, the story is incomplete. Although we are seers, visionaries, prescient, we cannot force the process. It must happen on its own, or not at all.

“You perceive the failure; I am impatient for the success, the completion. But we are the reasoners; mother nature does not reason. She is too busy birthing, juggling forces, Yes!, evolving. All without the knowledge we possess, that she lives in an idealized system of conservation of energy and matter, constantly undergoing transformation (decay and rebirth), auguring for entropy; life without life; a pervasive calm, unending; alas! without any observers; how sad!

“In this scheme of things, the notions of ‘accident’ or ‘intent’ seem irrelevant. ‘Shit happens!’ seems more to the point.

“How say you, Mr. D.?”

“Well done!”

‘The truth and nothing but the truth so help you.... WHAT!?’

As if anyone could know the truth.

‘Yes, No, Yes, No, Yes, No, Yes, No’ passes as the truth.

‘Maybe’ is not clear enough. ‘Answer the question!’

“I don’t know.”

Finally we get a straight answer.

But is it the truth?

Please Pass the Truth!

Perhaps close enough for this occasion.

Let it be so.

One deliberates upon this notion of truth and this half-assed answer. The verdict, ‘veracity of the dictum’, “The defendant is not guilty by virtue of **ignorance**.”

To repeat something previously alluded.

“Enchantment, we want enchantment. Yillah, Rima, wood nymphs, mermaids. What of Dulcinea? Do I want Tagi, Abel, the satyr, a merman; or Quixote?

“I have said this before, repeating it once again:

“Beyond enchantment lies pleasure; all consuming, each time the last because we have tried so resolutely to let it all go, all of ourselves lost in an oblivion of erotic sensation, however momentary, however out-of reality, floating in space, Chagall-like, Klimt-like, feeling to our depths as we devour each other. So sublime, resolving to a changed rhythm of respiration, after deep sighs; D H Lawrence and Henry Miller mere dabblers in a lusty denouement.

“Then it must begin again, the onset of enchantment, the quickened palpitation, the increase in that rhythm of respiration, the alteration, clouding of sensation, ignoring reality, the warts, wens, moles, hair in the nostrils and in the ears, the awakened parts all somehow immersed in this rutting, seeking that momentary surfeit; and that glowing once again, and yet another subsidation; all mindless, so bleary-eyed, Modigliani-like; yet, so useless. But without this lost swoon of entwining, we become agitated, neurotic, schizophrenic, even mad; we copiously eat or starve ourselves, our bodies, our corpus crushing, and depriving our minds and spirits.”

“Catherine what you say does go beyond what we can know or express. Yet we like to express our **ignorance** with such eloquence. We stand revealed, undramatic, only to ourselves important, lest some predator lurk, salivating, not at all interested in our feelings or thoughts; another thirsty blood-holding mammal after a good feast. Probably less palatable than it imagined.

“Such a feast are thee, my lovely one; to bring about swoons that others might envy. I have been utterly lost in thee; beyond all that can be reclaimed or known.”

As we are attempting leave off in this unmeasured measure of words, we can not but linger. Much happens when we attempt to translate what is, and what is not, into a comprehensible tongue.

Speaking of a rather mute testimony, a dubious measure of wordings ladled out, as to reveal what we are all about, recall what he was purported to have said as he drew his last, while suffering that pitiful and pathetic end, pitiful because it symbolized man’s cruelty to man, and pathetic because his father asked it of him, “Forgive them for they know not what they do.”

The whole of mankind condemned to **ignorance**.

Jesus said.

Compounded when that same ignorant creature assuaged his guilt through the Resurrection. Funny Land, the Easter Bunny laid decorated chicken eggs. A colorful pastime coinciding with springtime. The Crucifixion and the Resurrection. Some script invented by the ignorant, visited upon the ignorant. Invisited.

Absurdity passed off as the real thing.

“Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?” Still the valid questions, that even the ignorant may answer with no more nor less clarity than the enlightened.

I am one of those.

“Best Guess!?”

Not good enough. Too visionary.

He was thought to be muttering to himself. Walking about clothed rather awkwardly in his barrel. Difficult to squat when the alimentary occasion required.

Laughable?

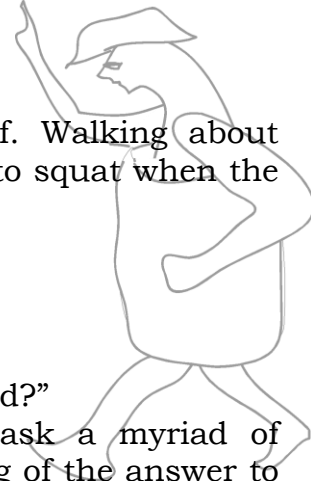
“Forgive!? Forgive!?”

“Bullshit!”

“**Ignorance!**, that goes without saying.”

What we all want to know: “Where will it all end?”

All we get is a glimpse. Long enough to ask a myriad of unanswerable questions that require the knowing of the answer to the last question. “Where will it all end?”



The author measures the end against what he can know of it. What he knows of it amounts to little enough. When his aged ailing dog was put to sleep in his lap he knew not when it passed from life to death. When he fired the 22 rifle at close range, into the animal's head, the animal whose leg was mangled in the trap he had set for it, its death was agonized and fierce. He was not present when his mother died; she became a black metal box of ashes that lives in his home. He was not present when his father died and when his ashes were scattered. He was present when a friend, John, riddled with cancer, was not dying peacefully, in the terminal ward of the hospital. He had visited friends Alex and Tom, who were not long from that fated day, suffering every increment of time toward that destination. When he attended the cancer-support group meetings, there seemed to be one less attending each week. He recalled the beautiful young woman all dressed in brilliant red, dying from a particularly aggressive form of breast cancer. A brave front, that red. Soon thereafter, she failed to appear. There was Thelma, who had both breasts removed, on Tamoxafen, who took off for Thailand and some erotica before bailing out.



He has attended only one funeral, when a nun, Sister Maria Antonia, at the convent where he was a boarding student, joined the concubine in heaven. He was eleven years old. He has been to a mortuary only once to look upon a dead high school student lying in state, the student, Francis somebody or other, somehow not particularly well repaired for such an event, following a violent end in an automobile. The student had been one year older than he. He looked like he ought to be dead. He arrived only moments after they had started CPR on (another) John who was lying on the floor, remaining there inert for a long time. He has attended one friend's wake, Tom's, and one friend's memorial, Stuart's.

We have witnessed in the media, the omniscient media, all kinds of violence to living things; things made of flesh and blood, that have been exposed to such diabolical mortality.

For the last two years of her life, his mother wanted to die. It is possible she willed her own death through starvation. Might it be true if one does not wish to live, they ought not eat, like his mother, willing her end, having a say in when it happens.

Are there any options besides life or death? Dulling the awareness; hallucinating; confusing the two.

He remembered when they injected the 6 mg. of morphine into his arm in the hospital emergency; it was like liquid fire; a rush. More rush than he had ever during his life, and wondered if death ought not produce such a rush. Life is dull, death is dull.

If the author was to begin at the very beginning, with the conversion of what he might have seen, heard, smelled, tasted and touched, and generally felt, along with all those transformations that have happened throughout the evolutionary aegis; to convert the aphasia with which he was indeed born, excepting the loud squall, and the helpless whimper, convert those into explicit sounds, and learn how to make those explicit sounds into symbols constructed of other more basic symbols; to begin at the very beginning to gather it all into this happenstance that we identify as writing, scribbling, that eventually meandered its way to the question. 'Where will it all end?'

Only yesterday, he realized how unconscious is the process that sets these symbols in their linear arrangement, so they might be deciphered by others who had traveled the same route as he, using the same symbols and the same tongue and same voicing.

He reflected upon that unconscious process of conversion.

How much the figure of speech, the vernacular, the manneristic response, the colloquial, the locale, the slang, the pun, other sensible, and senseless usages, had insinuated itself into this process, his process.

As he writes at this very moment, he is mostly focusing on the words as he chooses them, that he could do little else than choose the words he does; the exigencies of time do not permit the lingering over the imperfections. Occasionally, during the editing process, that is, when he makes the attempt to review what he has written, in order to assure its coherence, its sense, its clarity, its flow, its readability, its accuracy in what it attempts to elicit; if done with any deliberation, before anything else is attempted that day, that morning, he will often discover meaningless words, sometimes often repeated meaningless words, figures of speech which are intended to modify what is already scant in its meaning.

How embarrassing to realize how inattentive one might have been as he was engaged in this serious endeavor, this apex of civilizational endeavors, the communication of what one is to the universe. Whereupon he had relied upon the inborn aphasia, and vague gibberish. Not so much in the entanglement or denouement, such presumption to label it that, between the protagonists, the young and the old, where it is intended they should live side by side a respectful distance as to observe one tenet or another, which have little to do with anything but the prejudicial, ossification of process. That very process the author sets out to examine.

Thus it was during the absent-minded and repetitive droning of this opus the author discovered such words, that for the most part have been excised, because they indeed struck him as gibberish. 'just' and 'really' were removed as inconsequential to the story line, with few exceptions; and, but, then, so, met a similar fate. Mr. Gates Find function in the editing mode facilitated the removal. The author feels happier for it, and wants the reader to know when the question is asked 'Where will it all end?' that more serious effort has applied to the answer than, at first, might seem the case. Judiciously excising the text of 'just' and 'really', plus all the others, answers in part the heady question.

In attempting to read any of this aloud, it requires a more proficient enunciator than its author, who tends to wrap his tongue around his non-existent tonsils. All that might seem apropos to the eye, unsounded, mind you, and only imagined in that regard, falls flat upon the ear when the author becomes a reader.

A silence ensued.

The question remains, mostly unanswered. Only to burden the reader with his own imagination, his very own fancies.

A note appeared on the slate; an assignment: Please Provide This Manuscript With An Appropriate Ending.

It will end where you, the reader, want it to end; Catherine; civilization, life and the living, your own life, the life of the planet. It is yours to do with. A sequel may be in the offing.

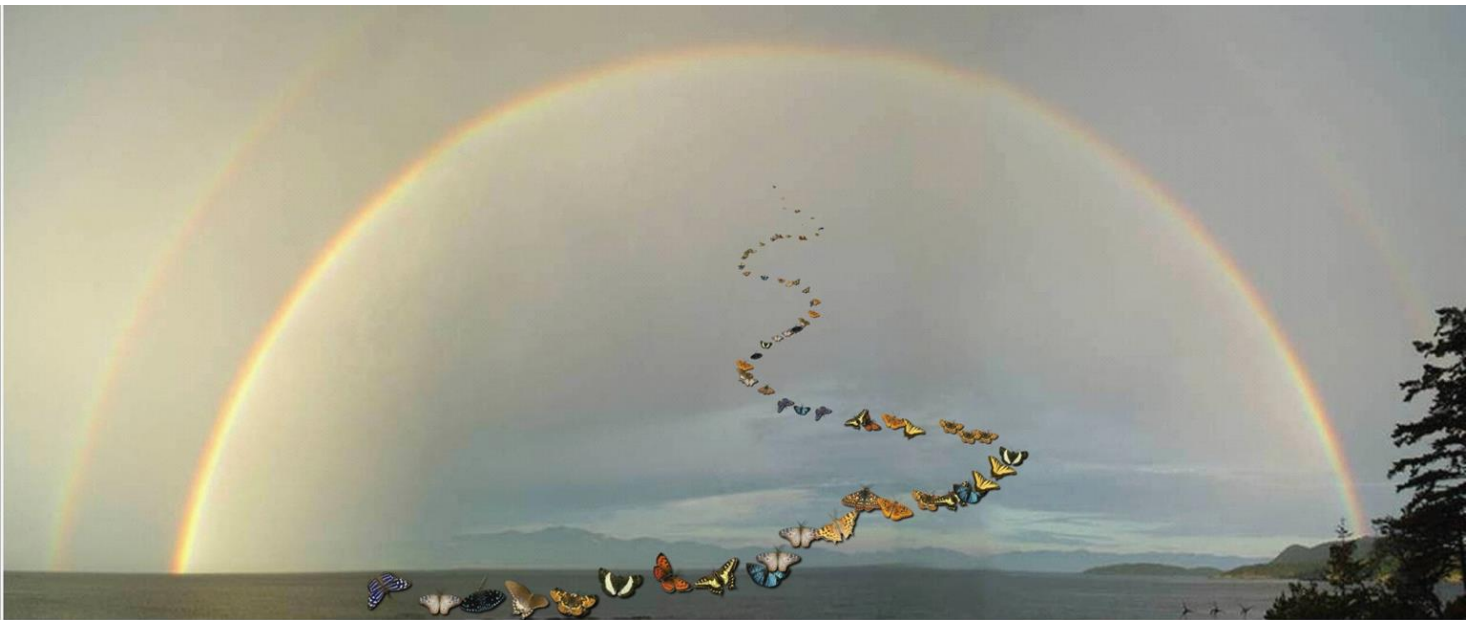
Little Nell will not be sacrificed upon the altar to enshrine and affirm a brutal neglectful species. It cannot be so.

May Yillah yet appear for our enthrallment once again; it should be so.

Meanwhile Catherine and her sisters will attempt to salvage something from the ruins. Let it be so.

Mr. D. (William) will look on anxiously.

The Author will most likely continue to abuse his license.



Tune In to: *A Renaissance In Paradise* *A Place Of Few Regrets*

