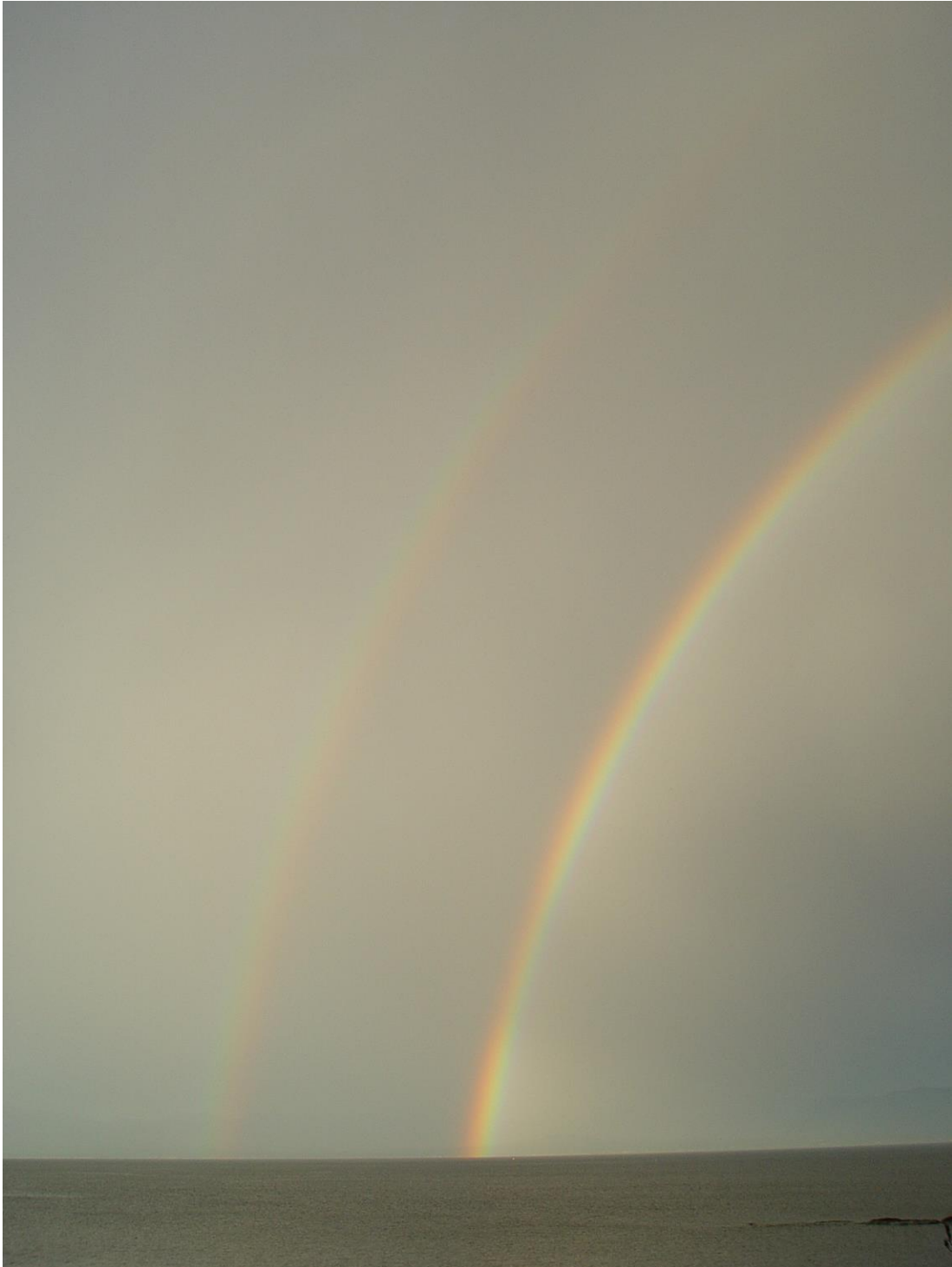


*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

# *Parse One*



## *Obiter Dictum*

*Introductions, though not often read, seem to come with the territory.*

*This introduction was written after the work was more or less completed, as a caution to the reader not to get too excited, and, despite copious yawns, to cajole or urge the reader to persevere.*

*This work does not propose to promote or uphold any traditional values, or perorate regarding customs, mores, cultural significances, or advocate any particular morality. Having said this much, the author realizes he is taking liberties of a certain kind; it should not be assumed that he ignores others deliberately, or blatantly.*

*In some of my other writings, the longer more protracted ones, not as long as this one however, the author has felt the necessity to provide some kind of preliminary statement.*

*Hence, the statement that follows is being written upon the near completion of the endeavor.*

*I, that author, have realized that most of what I do have to offer is couched in what I might identify as Generalities Of Awarenesses. This is to be contrasted to something more specific. An Awareness of Specifics.*

*Man thus becomes a generality, I am the specific.*

*I find myself to be separate from mankind, although I nominally belong to that contingent. In this opus, I idealize a person, whom I do not at all know, in Catherine. William might be myself.*

*When I say that man becomes a generality, I am speaking of the problem of man, man in the landscape. The only true way I have of understanding this creature in the landscape is through myself; there isn't any other way. Without my existence, and my peculiar awareness, there can not be any understanding.*

*Despite the generally negative appraisal of mankind, in the specific, when measured against all parameters, I have been fortunate. I have lived in a country where a little*

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

*initiative served me well. It served me well because the nation was a bustle of industry and enterprise, with many resources, and much need of all kinds of labor. I had a strong back, and a ready mind, and a willingness to pitch in for what I received for my labors. A good deal for whoever hired me.*

*Part of this good fortune is comparative. The time is set in the later twentieth century in a wealthy nation. Upon reflection; that is, in consideration of mankind's past, I find myself near some kind of apex; where the ordinary man, myself, has been able to partake of many things, almost without limit. I am able to apply this awareness to most other men, and at the end of this same century, to many of the women, in my country.*

*Fortunate indeed. Especially when compared to many other nations of peoples on the planet during the latter twentieth century; certainly when compared to all nations, even in their prime, throughout mankind's history.*

*The material plentitude in the surround of my nation is most impressive. What I might have to say about my nation otherwise may not seem consonant with this awareness; thus it will be, and, will stand on its own merits.*

*Of my nation, you will soon realize I have had many expectations; that is, quite apart from the expectations I have had of myself.*

*Writing, for this one assumptive author, involves the use of 26 characters arranged in ways not often divergent from the lexicons which attempt to spell and define, and set down the derivation of the words found and used in the English language. However that may be, this one author does diverge from conventional forms, and from conventional assumptions about how that language should be used. This author does not diverge into the purposefully obscure. His brain is not wracked by too much learning, and is undisciplined in many areas of thought; often freely associating notions not obvious to the reader. This last is more a part of the workings of the brain than the writing itself. The objective is to write what*

one thinks; and feels, in the most all-encompassing, far-reaching manner; and perhaps, stimulating manner (stimulating to the reader, though that reader be only the author himself).

It is to be understood that **reality** appears different to each and every one of us. The author sees, hears, touches smells and tastes, and utilizes that unfathomable sixth sense as a means of obtaining information about that **reality**. Then his work begins; a purposeful work that may or may not serve its purpose.

The author, in his own estimation, is particularly adept at writing introductions, or preludes, such as this one you are now reading. In fact, he welcomes this opportunity to expound once again. It is intended that these prefaces, prefigurements, should be concise, and to the point. The point usually involves the subject of writing, alas!, creativity, the need to accommodate the muses, and to examine the accouterments of this one soldier who has marched, slept, and dreamt while serving upon the rim of the precipice.

This author customarily treats all he meets in an egalitarian manner, unless provoked to do otherwise by stupidity, his own or the other's; regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or color of skin. He is more cautious and reserved in this manner when confronted by creeds that seem extreme in their declarations.

This one author has been advised not to apologize to the reader. By definition, explanations are not apologies.

By temperament, perhaps by design, whether as an evolved model, or a socially shaped version of the same, the author, that very soldier, takes issue with many of his discoveries, while roaming the rim.

In the work that follows, the denouement of the Echo is cast in the personage of one the three graces; if not all three.

By the time a reader, any reader, will ever set eyes upon these labors, the author will doubtlessly not be anywhere in the vicinity to answer for them. If it should happen that this effort becomes a disseminative entity, that is, publishable by a reputable firm, on a scale greater than the original, in

*sufficient number to reach the attention of the 'critics'; and if it survives that gauntlet, maybe others will have a see, being more able to judge for themselves whether a few hours spent whiling away upon this tome will kill time better than none killed at all.*

*The author presumes from the outset. This is not a planned work, this writing. The author, not being a 'career novelist', or a career anything, this opus is not obedient to some method or formula. Not a laconic 'Mother died today'. Or the result of some Shakespearean admonition: 'A strong first statement!' It began as a passing inspiration, of which the author has spawned many. He could relate of the days on the sailboat, as it began to rain, beneath the tarp in the cockpit. It was the first time they, he and his wife, had been on their sailboat in two years. He brought along a notebook. Thus it began with pen and notebook, beneath a tarp in the cockpit, a beach-found cushion to sit upon, and another to lean against.*

*The denouement answers to the laws of improbability, although much of the substantiality and sustainability of the remainder might answer to the more pitifully probable. This may seem an obscure statement, when the aim is clarity.*

*Permit the author to explain. **Reality**, that artless phenomenon that arises in our consciousness, to which we might apply the term, is sometimes regarded with disdain, so noxious does it appear to us, in such an array of pain and discomfort, and dark forbidding disappointment, along with the presage of unrequited desire. Often the familiar realities are described derogatorily as 'mundane'; that is, 'of this world', this everyday world; as though there might be another world, infinitely more preferable. Therein lies the rub and the nub. Rub-a-nub-nub! The gimmick.*

*Even the Gods have grown boringly mundane and ineffectual, so swamped are they by the mountain of requests from the ailing and needy, ever more increasing exponentially.*

*(Somewhere on the back shelf of his head he is hearing, God Proposes, Man Disposes; God Helps Those Who Help Themselves).*

*The author calls to mind a Professor of Physics, who would frequent the University's machine shop, hoping to gain the indulgence of one of its technicians to solve various problems, and design modifications, for the University's 24 inch telescope, located in the mountains some 100 miles distant. He was a tall, trim, almost elegant figure, in his early sixties. He had been in the military, as an officer, carrying himself with some military bearing, but always dressed in a white shirt with tie, with trousers and shoes to match.*

*An affable person, someone was always found willing to assist him.*

*He drew some laughter from the technicians, usually after his departure, for his noticeable habit of jingling the change in his pockets, or, as some put it, playing pocket pool. A certain level of excitement derived from the coin, or from other regions.*

*After this somewhat less than enchanting description, it should be added that he was the University's Astronomer; he knew more of the heavens than of atoms. He also served as one of the University's public relations front men within the community, amongst those who thought the campus far too radical. He was deferential to the public. He would often give lectures in the evening expounding upon the stars.*

*His delivery was often accompanied by gestures. The author recalls attending an evening Browsing Room (a comfortable room above the Student Union dedicated to books donated to the University for the purpose of Browsing), a Browsing Room Lecture, open to the public.*

*The Professor appeared in his white shirt and tie, introduced himself, and matters he intended to discuss. He began the lecture with a bowing gesture, sweeping one arm low to the floor, announcing the while "In the beginning, there was GAAASSSSSS!", with a good deal of emphasis on the last.*

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

*He might have ended his lecture at that moment, but went on to elaborate, finding it necessary to distinguish gas from bullshit.*

*Howsoever we find the world, we tend to avoid the adverse realities, the ones that Sigmund referred as those 'fatefully inevitable' ones. We crawl into our lair, close the door to it, often lock it, unplug the phone, put on our favorite music, (the musick of the spheres), lick our wounds, lament our woes, curse that bitch Pandora, imprecate the Gods in none too friendly terms, demanding something besides this daily bullshit (offal) as testament to their good offices. Yes!, when we close the door, and unplug the phone, dispense with the breath mints,; that is, sever our ties with that prickly world, we find we are still alive within ourselves. We wanted to be alone, on our own, beholden to no one. That girl, That boy, whom the unmerciful Gods wished upon us with all her allure or his suave charms, with whom we fell madly in love, that has ignored us with such indifference, as though we did not exist at all, has invaded and destroyed our equanimity, has made our hovel unbearable, such as to force upon us a pacing back and forth in abject torment. One might leap, as did Werther, to his or her doom, to end that pathetic anguish.*

*This **real** world is not for us. It is for someone else. The author will create his own world, in which he alone will star, in which all that ought will be fair and just and reasonable, appearing as natural as the rising sun. If we are meant to suffer with the mundane, this circumscribed life, that begins at someone else's beckoning, through some vague coital romp, to end with the swing of a scythe in the midst of going no where, then let him create his own unglloom where he might have been a virgin birth of good intent, divined, devised and designed to succeed in all endeavors, (without being nailed to a cross, and renailed by the 'Grand Inquisitor'), have every whim sated, accomplish that to which monarchs, emperors, dictators and presidents, only pay 'lip service', read my 'lip service' ; who chant 'Love It Or Leave It', or have one put to death for mere intransigence, or disagreement.*



*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

*The author waves his magic pen; there you have it; His creation has been abandoned, abolished; he generates his own dubious substitute.*

*But as we schizophrenically reconstruct our own world, we use parts of the old, the same earth; the same senses; that same resemblance reflected in the mirror; the same solar, lunar, planetary and astral rhythms, the same flora and fauna, replete with buffalo, wolves, tigers, rhinoceroses, alligators, crocodiles, elephants, bear, (minus Ernest Hemmingway), carrier pigeons, the seas full of whales and salmon, red snapper, halibut, king crab, marlin, swordfish (minus Ernest Hemmingway); uncluttered landscapes, all pastoral, and pristine, beautiful sunrises and sunsets; with Bambi prancing about, horny as hell; laughing at the tiger. Not only Bambi. Yillah. There!, for my eyes alone, behold!, a she; Wow!, just for me. She has far more alluring charms than the one who spurned the author with such disdain. Breathless! Let us anoint thee, New World; or how about New Frontier, Shangri-La; La La Land. How about the United States Of America?*

*Such are the stuffings of dreams.*

*The author joshes you when you were beginning to think he was being serious. However, he assures you that the 'reality' to which he alludes is grim. Hence he is inclined to write of Quixotic creatures with magical powers, who do not hesitate to set things aright. But even in dreams, one must account evil, even no less imaginary than found in the real world. Even in the best of dreams, wherein one might imagine the most wise counsels, one can never escape the uncertainty of knowledge; what it is a life, any life, real or imagined, can know. It is in the darkness of that failing that we conjure evil. Devils, centaurs, monsters, Frankenstein, cruel indifferent men; and rulers, all whom must be countered with good. The good that lives within us. The good that lives within us might take the form of Don Quixote, ET, Harry Potter, other Knights in Shining Armor, The Holy man, and Sancho. But if we wish to adhere to a more plausible reality without wizardry, and miracles; just*



*parlaying those manifestations of our own good natures, though misshapen on the outside, but shining through, that will speak for themselves, we will have obeyed the tenets, and not strayed the boundaries of dreaming.*

*One might dream a dream so often that it becomes to him, reality. He may be taken from his hovel to be sequestered in a mental institution, and drugged to such a degree, he may never dream again, he may thus perish in a state of no dream, dead to the world for ever, just as dead as all those marching off to an afterlife, where they imagine, and, even believe, they will really begin to live, and forever.*

*Yes!, then; to cases. As he scribbled along, he became anchored in the persona of those who were evolving, as the words appeared. He needed some venue to remain occupied with the endeavor of writing itself. So often he had received inspirations, only to have them swept away in the steady, swift, strong, swirling and certain, what's the use?, current of life, and in the rapidly dimming of a vision that might have precipitated the initial effort. He has already left behind several scattered attempts, remnants, devolving into notes and abbreviated, atrophied things, variously unfinished; all intended as timely pieces, if only the world would stand still.*

*'Quixotic' might describe some of the passages herein, as it might any of his writings, but not reserved to any one character; for, in some ways, all become quixotic when they set out to right the wrongs found in the world of man, to say nothing of the author, who would right every wrong if he could; it is only these genuine righters of wrongs that hold his interest. Perhaps that is man's most desperate and unrewarded hero, the one who rescues him, forever needy, time and time again, from the demons and bedlamites who live inside each one us. A pennant held aloft for all to see, to follow, into the light. Such does he presume Catherine to be.*

*Perhaps there is some urgency that will keep him at it this time. As his time accrues, with his back to the cliff and the precipice beneath him, he realizes there is essentially no time remaining. He does not want to leave without having done*

*what he thought he ought. Not to be considered a last or final testament, for if he should survive it, he will not be content to rest upon any laurels, or condemnation it should earn. Hopefully he will not live long enough to contradict its message; or that aging, and diminished capacity, will corrupt the process that persists in this endeavor. Flimsy enough the pretext, flimsy enough the contrivance, flimsy enough the construction, but urgent enough, all the same, however preposterous.*

*Additionally, the author knows with a certainty, should his opus join the ranks, and should it survive the ages, that its concerns will seem suspended in time, its ideas musty, that its language will seem stilted, and perhaps obsolete, albeit, become antiquarian, as so often does his predecessors. For he knows the future, should it be allowed by its protagonist, will hold forth volume upon volume as man (that protagonist) restates his case to the universe, also suspended in time, haranguing, cajoling, chanting laments and singing praises, in a language always in transformation, always inadequate, as it seeks to express definitively, for all time, both truth and falsehood, and all persuasions attendant to these notions.*

*Dear reader, you should be aware, as am I, and as I have become, more and more, that we often seem to speak as though we knew that of which we spoke. That is to say we use so many sounds, with so many inflexions, or words with so many meanings, that it would seem we have it all within our grasp. When in fact we are merely parroting, mirroring, without really thinking what it is we want to say, without reflecting upon the language we do use to say what it is we imagine we want to say.*

*Even should we use each word precisely, there will always be something missing. From the scaffolding of language we construct something that lives within our imaginations. And with this same language we attempt to construct something in another's imagination. No small feat, dear reader.*

*By the time the author had written this brief, he had already interjected himself into the evolving opus, and will*

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

*doubtlessly interject himself further. Hopefully as a welcome participant.*

*Best to proceed, and hazard the eyes and minds and imaginations of the curious readers. Until later.*

*Your unfailing servant      The Anonymous Scrivener*

The Players:

Catherine Anne Tellerman (CAT), A College Student majoring in Creative Writing and the Humanities.

William Morgan Duranachek (WMD), Mr. D., A retiree.

Theresa Allison Tellerman (TAT), Youngest Sister of Catherine, High School/College Student majoring in the Humanities

Lydia Olivia Tellerman (LOT), Middle Sister of Catherine, College Student, majoring in Law

Ms. Evelyn Oona Watson (MEOW), Catherine's House Mother at her sorority.

In The Shadows, Ms. Duranachek, absent wife of William.

In The Shadows, Catherine's Parents.

In Cameo Toni Smith (TS), College Student majoring in Sociology

In Cameo W (W), A Leader.

In Cameo Don Ezekiel Quixote (DEQ), ubiquitously

In Cameo Jesus H Christ, ubiquitously

In Cameo, The United States Of America

In Cameo, Public Servants

The Author (MAD), Someone with whom to reckon.

Others, somehow conjured.

RCWD variously Photoshopped as Theresa

A DJ Shopphotoed as CAT

A BC Shopphotoed as LOT

Toni Smith as Toni Smith

W as W

Karla Tucker as Karla Tucker

Iraqie father and child as themselves

Abe as himself

Baraka ape as itself

Mary and Jesus as depicted by Buonarroti

Atomic, and Hydrogen as themselves, Diabolically

Nagasaki, Before the Resurrection

Twin Towers During The Raze

Oklahoma City After The Raze

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

The Planet Earth, assumed to be in the process of being abandoned.  
The Universe, assumed to be the only place to which one might escape.

*To further amend this beginning, the author serves up an analogy.*

*As Joshua Slocum sat in Snug Harbor, after his lifetime at sea, he fell to the lot of man who sits, somewhere in the company of all the other retired seas captains. His friends, if one might perceive them as such, only jokingly, perhaps, which Slocum might have perceived as such, but also with a perception of maliciousness, gave him an old wreck of an oysterman that had foundered ashore in Martha's Vineyard.*

*Not to be flaunted by challenges, Slocum re-planked, refurbished, and prepared the craft for the seas, entertaining notions of sailing around the world. Indeed the day arrived when he should launch and set sail. After the launching one might have thought he would head directly for the open sea, perhaps Bermuda. But not so, he lingered tentatively along the New England coast for some time before he made his departure; creating in others all kinds of speculation. But he had indeed committed himself to something that had nothing to do with them and their speculations, or their timetables,. When the hour arrived, and he felt ready in himself; he did not heed them or announce the day, he set sail for the Azores.*

*One must begin somewhere. We are often prejudiced in our perception of things. Our tales must have beginnings, middles and ends. This tale had not set out with any formal consideration; have at it; to the Azores, to Mardi. Then the journey began to take its own shape, however amorphous and illusory. As an end of the journey seemed to be approaching, having been undecided beforehand how it should end, the author thought he might allow each character to choose their own end; then he considered allowing the reader the same option. Still further, he began to wonder if the same should not be allowed with the beginning. Allow each character its own beginning: 'Once upon a time'; 'Mother died today' 'It was a dark and stormy night'; 'It became necessary to make the attempt to describe her'. One might use all four in some order or sequence.*

*One mark upon the page is followed by yet another until the deed is done.*

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

*Now the author must set sail for the hazards, and the rewards, that await him.*

*Since this coda was penned after most of the voyage had passed, it is to be noted that Catherine is the reward; the hazards unknown; and perhaps, inconsequential. If the tale survives its author in whatever form, he will not know of it. Most likely it will not be seen by but a few eyes before his own departure, some to scowl, some to marvel that this fellow they knew would think and write such things.*

*Your unfailing servant      The Anonymous Scrivener*

*Launched and under sail, he does depart the familiar shore, for the darker nether climes, to reappear from time to time.*

From Mardi: A Work from Herman Melville

Conversation proceeding, Braid-Beard happened to make allusion to one Rotato, a portly personage, who, though a sagacious philosopher, and very ambitious to be celebrated as such, was only famous on Mardi as the fattest man of his tribe.

Said Media, "Then, Mohi, Rotato could not pick a quarrel with Fame, since she did not belie him. Fat he was, and fat she published him.

"Right. My lord, said Babbalanja, "for Fame is not always so honest. Not seldom to be famous, is to be widely known for what you are not, says Alla-Mololla. Whence it comes, as old Bardianna has it, that for years a man may move unnoticed among his fellows; but all at once, by some chance attitude, foreign to his habit, become a trumpet-full for fools, though, in himself, the same as ever. Nor has he shown himself yet, for the entire merit of men can never be made known; nor the sum of his demerits; if he have them. We are only known by our names; as letters sealed up, we but read others superscriptions.

"So with the commonalty of us Mardians. How then with those beings who every way are but to be riddles. In many points the works of our very great poet Vavona, now dead a thousand moons, still remain a mystery. Some call him a mystic; but wherein he seems obscure, it is, perhaps, we that are in fault; not by premeditation spoke he those archangel thoughts, which made many declare, that Vavona, after all, was but a crack-pated god, not a mortal of sound mind.. But had he been less, my lord, he had seemed more. Saith Fulvi, 'Of the highest order of genius, it may be truly asserted, that to gain the reputation of superior power, it must partially disguise itself; it must come down, and then be applauded for soaring'. And furthermore, 'that there are those who falter in the common tongue, because they think in another, and these are accounted stutterers and stammerers,' "

## *Catherine, and Mr. D.*

Indeed, 'In the beginning, there (may have been) GAAASSS!'

One might begin this tale by panning all the bullshit that passes for enlightenment and all the terror and torture that passes as civilization.

In an effort to determine if the Last Supper, purportedly a work of Leonardo Da Vinci, depicts a female (Mary Magdalene) sitting to the right of Christ, one first must determine if Leonardo had at his disposal the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke and the Acts wherein it is stated clearly enough there were twelve apostles called unto HIM. All those called unto him were listed in the same order. A conspiracy by Matthew, Mark and Luke who were trying to get into the Acts (Ha Ha, Ho Ho, Hee, Hee.) Almost everybody who rants on the subject claims there were twelve, but others rant there were fourteen. Spares? Alternates? It is assumed also that the twelve were of the male persuasion, because their names (whether twelve or fourteen) do not suggest a female appellative. Maybe someone dressed in drag, even in those days. Leonardo was often regarded as being troubled by confused sexuality, so who knows. Hanky Panky! Take Heed! That you not become famous, lest what happens in your underwear becomes a matter for critical examination and study (dubious, even salacious, Enlightenment).

There's a thing going on in the USA where terror and torture have become the prerogative of the President Of The United States Of America. An Add-On to The Constitution Of The United States Of America, that supercedes all the other stuff spelled out in that document. The White House employs a battery of Lawyers that spend all day long perverting the Constitution, and swindling the American people of their basic rights. That's what happens when you aren't paying attention. More Hanky Panky! Take Heed! Civilization awaits thee!

These thoughts occupied William's mind as he traveled the Interstate from his hideaway by the ocean to the redundant, overcivilized world of man, which became necessary for him to enter periodically, to earn some 'bread'.

Our telling begins upon a University campus located in a western city in the United States Of America; an institutional setting that was founded as a State college over a hundred years before. Its two large original ivy covered stone buildings are still in use by the speech and mathematics departments. Their largeness



is relative to the other structures one might have found in the community, constructed during that same time period. The University now cancerously sprawls over hundreds of acres, part of which has engulfed a pioneer cemetery, a bakery, a car dealership and several neighborhoods. Its history of growth is reflected in the styles of the buildings, the changes in thought concerning the architecture of institutional buildings, including its mistakes. Surrounding the still growing campus are the fraternities and sororities, assorted student housing, both 'on' and 'off' campus. Not a planned expansion, more one of opportunity and happenstance, that seems to lack some essential cohesion, unless likened to an amorphous cancer-like accretion. The latest acquisitions have been properties totally irrelevant to university life, a long-time, almost as ancient as the U. itself, 'white-bread' bakery, itself having acquired a fizzled out redundant Safeway store, which had been converted into a barely thriving cinema, and finally an outlet for day-old bakery goods. The U. also acquired a defunct GM car dealership, that had gone through several ownerships; some of these latter acquisitions used to construct a new \$200,000,000 basketball arena/event complex (costing more to build than the sum used to construct all the other campus buildings).

Large, rather rectangular buildings, several of them with brick facings, the student union, the business office, the health center, a third science building, not all constructed a hundred years ago, but more a sedate part and parcel depicting an institutional setting, minus the steel bars, seem to provide only a seemingly unifying glance to the whole, the brick anchor. A few barred windows might suggest a correctional, or another kind of 'mental', institution. *Mens Agitat.*

A large rectangular area serves the 'athletic' aspect of college life, equipped with an enclosed arena basketball court, a covered tennis court, a baseball diamond, and one of its more nationally competitive sporting disciplines, a track and field, complete with covered 'stands', competing for more than excellence in such activity. The football complex is located away from campus, across the river that courses through the city, mostly to provide a grander setting, and lots of parking, accommodating the large donors/alumni to such a dubious, though clear, worldly link to the University's purpose. Swimming pools are located across the street from the 'physical fitness' rectangle, in the next rectangle which includes amongst them, the pioneer cemetery, the library, the music building, the administration building, the faculty club, the art museum, the 'graduate school', the pioneer mother (looking distantly toward the pioneer father located on the 'other side'); an

obtuse Prometheus, and assorted buildings that front the sucklingly symbiotic commercial interests, catering to students, located along the perimeter of the campus, but are not part of it; the 'University' bookstore prominent amongst these. Other loosely affiliated interests have located as near to the campus as possible, often with the intervention and assistance of the city father's who view the University as an economic boon to the community.

We enter the campus during the spring break, as Mr. D. (William), a retired jack-of-all-trades, under contract with the university, arrives to take advantage of the absence of students from their semi-campus housing to effect some pressing repairs in their plumbing and electrical services. He has work orders for three sororities. He has obtained the keys to the buildings from 'campus security'. He has entered the first of the three, the one with the most problems.

Catherine Tellerman, a junior honors student, majoring in the Humanities and Creative Writing, is on her way to the library to obtain some essays of Ortega Y Gasset, the Spanish philosopher whom she admires greatly, and an essay written by Sigmund Freud titled, 'Civilization And Its Discontents'.

She has remained behind during the break to forge ahead with a task she has set for herself, to complete an essay upon the 'Plausibility Of Idealism'.

She views Ortega as a clear-headed thinker, with few pretensions, one who she finds both stimulating and refreshing. In Sigmund Freud she finds another far reaching thinker involved with the problem of man.

When Catherine returns to her 'sorority' (dorm), a large older two story wooden structure, engulfed by the campus, preserved for the purpose of providing housing for certain female students who don't mind living on campus, and who do not want to belong to one of the more traditional sororities, she finds the door unlocked. This causes her to wonder if she had forgotten to lock the door, but recalls distinctly having picked up the key from her desk, placing it in her pocket, removing it from her pocket to lock the door, placing it in her pocket again, where indeed she did find it.

She hesitates to enter. Instead she turns upon her heel, and heads for the campus security building. When she arrives there, she informs them of the unlocked door. Catherine explains her situation, and why she is still here during the break. Then she learns that her building is one of those under contract for repair, during the spring break, of its pressing minor problems; that the door has probably been unlocked by the person under contract, the person who had obtained the key not over an hour ago. The

campus security officer telephones the building, waiting some time before it is answered, to learn that, yes, indeed, it is one and the same person. They inform him that one of the students has remained behind, and was concerned about the unlocked door.

Catherine thanks them for their trouble, proceeding on her way.

When she opens the door again, she announces her presence with a sonorous “♪♪Hello!♪♪”, waiting for a response. From an upstairs room she hears a not so sonorous response, “Just a minute.”

She waits, to soon hear footsteps approaching the stairway, and a tall, fiftyish, man descending.

It becomes necessary to make the attempt to describe her, more than letters sealed up in her eponym, from which this stutter and stammer takes its name. Simply writing her name would not suffice. Her closet friends in school knew her as Kate, still others as Cathy, and her family as Kitty, and Kitten. As time wore on, he could never address her, or think of her or refer to her as any other than Catherine, and often, in person, as Ms. Tellerman. Each of the twists in her naming call forth certain images, not unlike Liz, Beth, Betty, Lizzy, and Elizabeth of another naming, evoke their own. The very day he met her near the door of her campus residence, he stood without being able to utter a sound, so struck was he by her presence, almost ethereal, so unexpected a sight was she.

Seldom had he stood so close to such an enchanting loveliness. Her bright blue eyes radiated an open friendliness, a disarming self-assurance; her truly wonderful expression; the softness and warmth of her faintly painted smile; an exquisite, slightly blushed visage, framed in those shimmering auburn waves, roughly parted to flow around the curvature of her cheeks, to be loosely suspended, resting upon her shoulders.

There was more, grasped in that moment; a sensation of slenderness, yet a distinct awareness of feminine attributes beneath the cotton pastel knee-length dress, the mounded, though not protruding, bosom, the rounding at the hips, and the subtle suggestion of the thighs. He guessed her height at five feet seven inches, and nineteen or twenty years of age.

Seeing his mostly agog and non threatening expression, and sensing his inner awkwardness, with her head only slightly tilted, and face raised to meet his, she asked almost coyly, “Sir, has the cat got your tongue?”

Only still somewhat flustered, he replied, “I have a list of complaints regarding the plumbing, lighting and heating in your building. I’m here on contract with the University to see what can

be done to remedy the complaints. I wasn't expecting anyone to be here during the Easter recess. Is this a bad time?

"Not at all, please continue with what you were doing".

"I'm sorry, besides not expecting anyone, I must confess to being taken aback by the appearance of such a lovely young woman"

"My name is Catherine Tellerman. I am a student. I elected to remain here during the break to work on my various projects".

"I'm William Duranachek. I have been hired periodically to perform this kind of repair work during school breaks, usually in the Greek fraternities and sororities. I'm retired, and out of the mainstream workforce. I usually work alone".

"There have been some complaints recently regarding the plumbing, but these have been ongoing; the heating, while a separate problem in the past winter, has become less of a concern with the warmer weather. Most of the lighting problems involve flickering or malfunctioning fluorescent fixtures; and their awful humming noise".

"I have listed five rooms with plumbing problems: 9, 13, 104, 109, 112; and electrical problems in 13, 102, 114, and 120, and other miscellaneous complaints in the kitchen, dining hall, and reception room. The heating problem seems pervasive; more a concern for the University's Physical Plant.

"Ms. Tellerman, is there a house mother or den mother associated with this building, and would she be here?"

"She is away until the end of the spring break.

"I'll be in room 107 if you need any information that I can provide".

"Thank you, Ms. Tellerman".

William survived that confrontation and exchange. As she walked away, he followed with his eyes this wonderful apparition; the simple unexaggerated swaying lilt of her body with almost floating steps, and the light swinging of her arms and barely perceptible nod of her head.

Rather than follow her up the stairway, he remained on the ground floor to proceed with those mundane considerations that had become the means of his livelihood. He thus began his investigation of the lower level complaints, starting with the lighting; and indeed there were flickering fluorescent tubes and humming fixtures. He suspected the transformers needed replacing in each bothersome one, since he assumed the building custodian would have tried different tubes to try to correct the problem. While on the ground floor he checked the kitchen appliances, finding the dishwasher with a leak and a rattle. This he followed by checking the plumbing problems in other rooms. In

young girl's dormitories he often found plugged johns (or janes) resulting from the disposal of certain sanitary wastes. In one, such an obstruction proved to be the source of the problem, with a very slow draining thundermug. In another the sink drain was leaking, perhaps eaten through by Drano or some clever student's application of sodium hydroxide to unplug the drain filled with hair balls. That same room also was bedeviled by a very annoying humming light fixture.

William then returned to the upper floor, from whence he had come, where earlier he had been summoned by the sing song voice, to each of the rooms, a leaking shower drain, in another, 109, next to 107 where Catherine had left her door open, another very slow draining thundermug, in still another. In 102, a malfunctioning built-in bathroom heater, in yet another, an inoperable light fixture, and in the last, a humming, flickering light fixture.

As he passed room 107 to return to the floor below, he knocked on the door, "Ms. Tellerman"

"Yes!, just a moment"

Perhaps a half minute later that same wonderful apparition appeared, having lost none of her luster.

"Ms Tellerman... er.. Catherine, I will be compiling an inventory of parts needed, and tools required, then will be leaving to get them. Depending on how long it takes to get the parts, I may return today to leave them off, and/or begin the process of repair work. At the outset it looks like two to three days work. I'm scheduled to work on two other sororities with fewer problems. So, until later"

"Until later".

Thus had begun the initial encounter between these two people. Catherine, the college junior, and William, the 57 year old semi-retired jack-of-all-trades.

William did return that afternoon with all the parts and tools he needed to effect the repairs. He went ahead with the repairs to the dishwasher, having to disassemble it to replace the water inlet mixing head which had corroded, a hole having opened in the housing. He also found the water pump mounting loose which was probably causing the rattling sound stemming from motor vibration. As he was beginning to reassemble the machine Catherine appeared, "Oh, Great, you are fixing the leak, I hope".

"Yes, Ms. Tellerman".

"Please call me Kate".

"I'm sorry Ms. Tellerman, it is not right for me to be so familiar as perhaps your school chums; can we settle for Catherine for these few days?"

“O.K. Mr. D.”

“Have you always been in the repair business?”

“Catherine, that is a question to which I could provide a lengthy answer. However, suffice to say, I have made a living in this manner.”

“Do you still have to work then, although you are retired?”

“Yes and No, my vices require some capital, more than a retiree can comfortably afford. Catherine, what kind of things does your father do?”

“My father is an MD who practices family medicine (a G.P., that is)”.

“Your mother?”

“Besides being the mother to three of us, mother is an activist in all kinds of environmental issues and charitable causes. Active in the Sierra Club, Friends Of The Earth, and League of Women Voters etc”.

“It sounds like you have a fertile family background”.

“Yes, I believe so. I do appreciate my parents. What I appreciate most about them, what has been their trust in me to make my own decisions, to think my own thoughts, and to trust that I will not bring any shame upon them by what I do”.

“What about your siblings?”

“Two younger sisters”.

“Are they as lovely as you?”

“Mr D. I am not disinclined to appreciate what you say about my appearance. I must tell you, I have heard much of my appearance for as long as I can remember. It has always been taken for granted by me. I’m sure its best for things to be this way, but at times it has proven to be something I must defend because men in particular become so forward in their compliments, and women, even my close friends, I suspect, are sometimes envious; I gather from this state of affairs, it is difficult to remain inconspicuous”.

“I didn’t mean to offend, or open the way to some festering irritation. You will understand, I have seldom been this close to such a lovely enchanting feminine presence, much more to be able to converse with her on any level. This is a rare occasion for me.”

“Are you married Mr. D.?”

“Technically.”

“How do you mean that?”

“I have lived in two relationships. The first ended after eleven years, and the second, with my only wife, who left me last year when she retired. I have two children, a son and a daughter from the first relationship, they are in their thirties; I have four grandchildren, three girls, one boy; the oldest, a girl, is now



starting college. I haven't been a very good parent, or a very good spouse, too preoccupied with my self".

"That's quite an admission Mr. D."

"I'm too old to be fooling around with self-deception, and illusions. Some of the experiences have been heart-rending, leaving their mark on my soul. Ah! But to change the subject from loveliness and my rather dull and abject experiences – what will be your major?"

"Mr. D. I would not change the subject because your life seemed abject, nor would I not wish to converse concerning loveliness, but since you inquire, my majors are the Humanities and Creative Writing. This University specializes in those fields. What I most look forward to is the Graduate work I hope to be able to do at Stanford University, where they can afford, and tend to have, accomplished in-residence authors as teachers. All a bit dreamy at this time, but I have been writing before my teens, and feel comfortable with the discipline. Some well-meaning friends have asked, "Why do you need to go to college to learn to write?". I suppose that's a reasonable question to ask. I have been persuaded the discipline is important; and both my parents advise the exposure to the liberal arts, science, literature, and history. Since I don't know, I'm trying this route" "It seems O.K., and I am learning how little I know".

"Catherine, that is quite an admission".

"I guess I don't mean that in the ordinary sense. I seem to be able to remember facts, dates, chronologies, historical periods, geological periods, and so on, and to somehow perceive that as knowledge, but the part I don't know and don't often understand is that immense human factor. What is humanity? What is humanity intended to be or to become? Is it a matter of putting my shoulder to the wheel to learn and make it all better? Making it all better is important to me."

"Catherine, I do like your question. It is a question many of us ask, and one I have been asking most of my adult life. Have you discussed this with your activist mother, what's her take on your question?"

"No, I haven't; these questions are arising more from my own feelings of something missing in these college classes. Perhaps I am missing something, or is this all part of the learning process; learning to ask the right questions?"

"Yes!, my mother is this person who does this thing. Yes!, I now need to ask her what got her into her activities, what motivates her, and what does she hope to accomplish; what keeps her at it? The more I learn. the more muddied become the waters: for example, making all the usual assumptions about the value of

learning, if its all so apparent what we should be doing, why are we not doing it?"

"You not only have a beautiful head, you have a fine mind, Catherine. You put your finger on a profound riddle. May it do more than torment you, and frustrate you. May it drive you on through your studies into more studies, to ask more questions; to very exploratory, probing and acute writing. We can never leave off asking the questions until they are proven unanswerable, or are indeed satisfactorily answered. What do I know that enables me to say these things? I have been asking similar questions for years, attempting through reason and logic, and whatever else works, to get the message across. Yes!, through writing – writing in the shadows, the backwaters!"

"Mr. D. I must say I suspect this conversation is a long way from what either of us might have anticipated."

"Catherine, if I may repeat, you are a very lovely young woman, with what seems to me a keen intellect. It is most refreshing for me to meet you and to, what?, rap with you. I do not want to impose upon you in any way. I am here to do a job."

"Mr. D., you do not at all impose upon me. I am more than interested in what you say, and I would be more than interested in what you have written."

"Likewise, Catherine".

"Mr. D., I was about to prepare something to eat for this evening; if you do not have any plans for dinner, I would like to invite you to join me. That way we can continue our conversation, although I will need to take time out to concentrate on some of what I am doing in the kitchen. Mr. D., what is your background?"

"OH! Oh! Well, Hmn, Hmn, my father was a Austrian immigrant, and my mother native born Irish Catholic of Irish immigrant parents. My father was trained as a horticulturalist, a Sunday Painter gravitating into fulltime painting and sculpture in his forties and fifties. My mother became a practical nurse, and the bread winner from my age eight until I left home after high school. I attended public school for nine years and Catholic School (a Room and Board Convent) for three years. I attended a rural high school in New York State with fifteen students in my graduating class. I was a dubiously average student. Not long after leaving high school I was Classified 1A for induction into the military as cannon fodder for the Korean War. I enlisted instead in the US Navy, and studied electronics and guided missiles. After the military I worked at electronics and other technical stuff to earn a living, all the while attempting to do something with the curses my father placed upon me: "You aren't nothing unless you're an artist" "Art and wimen don't mix" There were other more personally

demeaning statements: “Moron”; (and if you will forgive the utterance of them), “Your brains are in your pee pee”. “You’re the poorest fuck I ever had”. I have lived with those curses most of my adult life. I have one younger brother who also lived with similar curses, and still does.

“I worked for twenty years at a University as a technical person and as a laboratory manager.

“My father was a terrible man in so many ways. I must say, in some things I have done, or did not do, I resemble him. It brings to mind the incredible power of environment and genetics, and poses the question: ‘How can the individual attain mastery over them?’”

“Mr. D. Wow, I’m impressed; and I’m not bothered by the colorful phrases in context. Your father may have been a person full of self-loathing”

“I can’t imagine what would impress you, but its nice of you to say so. I have my doubts about it all. I will say, though, it has been through both reading and writing that I am able to make some sense of it all. The writing forces me toward coherence, as a matter of principle, and clarity, otherwise it is pointless to scribble – what I have characterized as the pursuit of the truth. The reading soothes; has supplied me with stimulation, and, at times, an affirmation of my own pursuits”.

“Mr. D., you will excuse me, I think I need to concentrate for a few on the food now, if it will be possible, after all this stimulating discussion. While the temptation is to continue, I have promised my parents I will look after my health, mostly by eating regularly and eating properly prepared food. I have adhered to that promise faithfully”.

“I’ll leave you alone until you give me the high sign. Ask me to do anything”.

William wondered how he could have been so fortunate as to meet this lovely enchanting girl, even for this brief encounter. Such a positive event in his current lonely sojourn. Such are the occasional wonders and surprises in this most strange planetary occupancy, accompanied by these most pleasing awarenesses.

“Mr. D., pardon my curiosity, but have you ever been involved with in the visual arts?”

“Yes!, as a matter of fact, for some fifteen years or so, mostly sculpture, metal and wood, some modeling in clay and wax. This involvement mostly ceased after my marriage, which was a happy affair. After that I became more involved with writing to assuage the muse and placate the curse. I must say it would be quite a challenge to model your head”.

“How do you mean that, Mr. D.?”

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

“In my earlier days, I was exchanging some sculpting labor, a portrait, for materials to build a studio. The fellow with the building materials was a Jewish contractor with a very beautiful Jewish wife, Vassar graduate, mother of two, and the subject of the portrait. It was the worst portrait I ever attempted, of the fifteen or so I have modeled. Her beauty froze me, I could not stay loose – the portrait got to the point where it needed to be punched or dropped, and started over again – but I couldn’t unfreeze myself in the face of all those good looks. Our conversations were about Nikos Kazantzakis with whom I was absorbed at the time – I was falling for her; somehow all the gaga turned into a bad job. The portrait was even cast in bronze and was stuck awry on a post on their back deck. I saw her twenty years later. I was embarrassed to look at her. Bad job!!! Insultingly displayed! They didn’t have the sense to junk it all; I should have behaved as the temperamental artiste and destroyed it on the spot! It was the worst portrait ever, and the only one cast in a more or less permanent material.

“So what do I mean Catherine? Wouldn’t I do the same again; or could I now delight at the wonderful chance to redeem myself – or would I fall for my subject? Geezzz, is that still possible? No fool like an old fool, or some such rubbish?”

“Mr. D. we might be able to discuss that further, perhaps at a later time; if it seems appropriate.”

“As I have said, Ms. Tellerman, I would not wish to impose upon you. I value so much this contact, this invite for dinner, this continued engagement; I can’t begin to tell you how much it pleases me. You might rightly inquire if it was not for your exhilarating loveliness, would I still feel the same? All I can say is: ‘it wouldn’t be the same’. In any case, I have no right to become so familiar”.

“Mr. D., you make too much of some things and too little of others; too much of my beauty, and too much about what you consider to be familiar, and too little about how I might feel about what is happening here. You imagine I might feel imposed upon by your, what you might awkwardly view as, ‘advances’. In my opinion meaningful contact involves advances and retreats as one relates to another. I do not view myself as a conquest, the difference in our ages may have something to do with that, but I am naturally shy of any serious relationships – but that does not mean I fear engagement. I feel fully capable of steering any relationship away or toward as I feel seems reasonable and rewarding. My parents, and my sisters have loved me so very much; I am grounded in their love, I trust that love as much as they have trusted in me. I am secure in that love. I suspect there is love beyond that, but I do not

seek it at this point in my life. I am free to become me – or so I imagine.”

“Catherine, an enviable position”.

“ENVY!! – well perhaps, perhaps more fortunate than some, to feel this particular freedom, a personal freedom that should be essential to everyone’s existence”.

“Catherine - More fortunate than most!”

“I’ll not apologize for that. Its not all peaches and ice cream. My mother and I fell into a very strong disagreement over the Toni Smith protest”.

“How so?”

“I championed Toni. My mother denounced her methods. Mother immediately said: ‘I hope you don’t get such a notion in your pretty little head’. It was a very condescending remark, and demeaning of my intelligence, and a very real threat to my freedom of choice. My mother strongly argued that Toni Smith was stupid, lacked class, acting without thinking, and without provocation; that if she disagreed with the president’s decision to invade Iraq, she should first have written the president; ‘worked through channels’ is how she put it. She completely ignored Toni’s declarations in defense of her actions. Mother tried to pooh pooh my mounting outrage at her narrow view of things. It got worse. Father became involved as a peacemaker – but he got burned by both of us. It became a test for all of us. But – my two sisters saved the day – Theresa and Lydia. I am very close to both of them; the three of us are separated by only two and a half years. Theresa is very precocious; Lydia has the high IQ. They took my side, first, on general principles – sisterhood – but then began to question the whole argument. Mother was clearly ‘outgunned’ by the questions which she could barely answer in any meaningful way. Its not that mother is a blind patriot; she claims to be a behind-the-scenes person working for the things in which she believes. Yes!, she has a basic faith in our institutions, and defends them instinctively. An example of her credo. ‘Pollution is not a family value’ ”

“Is the issue resolved, then?”

“No, it festers, but I feel good because my sisters have proven they are independent thinkers.”

“Your mother probably fears for your future. She probably imagines Toni Smith’s future will be paved with sharp rebukes. Her résumé will be tainted by an action, while genuine, and within her rights, even noble, full of conviction, was a wrong kind of action, one that can be played unfairly in the media both for and against her principles, and the true significance of the protest. She has become a target for sniping. Patrick Henry might have been one of our heroes, but better not try that stuff nowadays.”

“Yes! Mr. D., mother worries. There is much uncertainty in life. Lets all cover before the power. I don’t imagine I’ll do a Toni Smith, but I wouldn’t want to say that I will not attempt to dramatize something that sticks in my craw, what I perceive as a wrong or an injustice. Let it go at that. I don’t feel the compulsion to do such a thing because I am far from certain about many things. When I learn of great wrongs, or injustices in the past, I do find myself siding with the underdog, because it seems the underdog is the one who suffers the most. It’s a spiritual thing with me, a human something, something I need to understand both in myself and in my fellow man”.

## *The Discussion Intensifies*

“Catherine, may I say you are a wonder. Here I am having this wonderful conversation with you, a mere youth, a stranger, from the distaff side; a conversation that was and is entirely impossible for me to have with my own progeny who chose Religion and Country over learning, sentience and reason.

“Ms. Tellerman, I must be frank, or at least I think I ought to be frank, in as much as I can assess frankness in any situation. I recall my somewhat annoyed and indifferent response to your sonorous ‘♪♪Hello!♪♪’ as you announced your presence here. As I was descending the stairway in order to discover the source of the greeting, I was surprised and visited with a vision – of a most exquisitely lovely young woman. There you were, unafraid of this old geezur, somewhat staring wordlessly for too long not to indicate his amazement. You nonchalantly spoke first, inquisitively, and with disarmingly frightless demeanor, and so full of such natural charm.

“ ‘Shall loveliness not always be loved?’. Indeed, it is so Catherine.

“I need to question my own response in this regard. Suppose you were an ordinary looking young woman, and/or just a different kind of person, with a different background, a different intelligence, judgmental, wary, and so on; maybe even like my own daughter – then what?”

“Suppose on. Suppose on. We are both fortunate in who we are then. Yes, Mr. D. I think of myself as ‘beautiful’; I am comfortable with what I feel about that aspect of who I am or might be. I am pleased that it pleases you. I will not speculate about ‘beauty





being skin deep' because I suspect it has every right and possibility to become deeper. I hope that for myself. Mr. D. I find myself wondering and seeming to hope, that after you have finished your work here, that we will be able to get together, perhaps regularly, 'to compare notes' – to continue what has begun here. I am at the beginning of a road that I can hope is rewarded with discovery, true insights, true knowledge – maybe even revelations – that I will be able to set them down, as you say, coherently, with clarity, and with art; with the added hope again, that mankind, humanity, will benefit, will be uplifted, inspired to take the high road always. What I am thinking and feeling as I speak to you is ultimately meaningful; how more meaningful is yet to be determined. I don't know how to say it exactly, but, 'It simply feels right'

"There are times when I'm so absorbed in my own thing, my perceptions and rationales, that I become essentially closed off. Then I'll read some very well written, informative, probing essay, which causes me to realize how limited is my perception and rationale. It doesn't make me feel dumb or stupid, but does make me feel like I am not telling the full story, that I am too narrow in my outlook, that I need to expand my horizon. It is happening to me right now with you, your way of looking at things, and your way of saying things, is both challenging and refreshing."

"You'll force me to think carefully before I speak. I cannot be offhand, or indifferent, or worse, cynical. I should only say things that show considerable thought, or not say anything at all".

"Mr. D., I'm not put off by cynicism, but I might be put off by insincerity, or calculated statements".

"You're way ahead of me Catherine. You are the refreshing one. I must tell you about a correspondence in which I have been engaged for this past year. It began some ten years ago when I met the granddaughter of my neighbor who lived on an island where I spend a lot of my time. She was eight years old at the time, very pretty, with classic features; a somewhat whiney overindulged child, but not the tantrum type, with enough natural charm to offset her only somewhat objectionable behavior. I would see her from time to time at my neighbor's. At some point I became aware of, taking note of her birth date, and would send her birthday letters. One time, in learning of her interest in the piano, I bought the score to "Für Elise" which she had been trying to play from memory. Then her grandfather died six years ago, and her grandmother moved away from the island. So it seemed like the contact with the family would end. However, I looked after the property and wrote or called the grandmother fairly regularly; and continued to send the birthday letters. When the girl reached fifteen, she responded with a letter of her own – to which I in turn

responded – then silence again except for my birthday letters. Then, a surprise letter from her not too long before her eighteenth birthday, a long letter with pictures of herself and her family, her nephew, and her parent’s garden. In this letter she spoke of soul searching, and being spiritually lost, and wrote a good deal about a family matter which caused her much pain. Since then a handful of letters, full of desires to do many things without having any resources. An underachiever in school, who almost dropped out, but did finish high school.

“I want to write apropos things to her, mostly concerning self-discipline and patience with herself, and so on. About finding someone, boy or girl, to share her feelings, good or bad – trying to encourage her to keep a journal, to find some kind of creative outlet for her turbulent energies. She is mostly resistant to this sort of advice; all this practical stuff that you, Catherine, already know so well.

“You must realize how much I appreciate you, young lady. Shall I continue?”

“By all means, Mr. D.”

“In my writing to her, I reflected on my own youth, perhaps not quite like hers, more troubled perhaps, but a male, nonetheless, very hireable, and fodder for cannons, mostly held back by my own ignorance, but an intuitive, instinctive person, surviving by his wits more than from some sensible plan. In a certain sense I’ve always lived that way. Now, here I am marveling at you; not only your beauty, but your sensibility. It’s not the first time I have marveled at young women. The smartest student in our high school class was a girl, a banker’s daughter. While working at the University, there were almost as many female as male graduate students in Molecular Biology, a remarkable thing in itself. All of these young women were highly motivated, hard working, on career paths, generally reserved for men, somewhat chauvinistically; most of them had joined Women In Science. These young women wanted their Doctorates by the time they were 25 or sooner. They were in an extremely competitive field where their opportunities were affected by their sex, despite Affirmative Action mandates. I liked them all, and often helped them preferentially. Some of them rewarded me with acknowledgements in their thesis, one vocalizing her appreciation during her oral dissertation. The assistance I rendered was not always technical; sometimes it was emotional support – er - philosophical perspective. As in the case with the student who vocalized during her dissertation. I remember one evening returning after regular working hours to the University to solve a pressing instrument problem left untended during that day – to find this lovely, crying in her lab. She was frustrated by

her latest experimental failure. She was the most able student; in all of her graduate classes she excelled all the others. She was indeed an elite graduate student. Seeing her tears, I didn't know exactly what to say, except that I felt obliged to say something cheerful. I believed she regarded me as a friend because, upon seeing me, she wanted to apologize; but she spoke of her frustration. I made some remark about the crumbling of the Center Of The Universe – which caused her to laugh. Subsequently we discussed the whole course of human endeavors, and the expectations that come with them. We talked for a couple of hours. From the general tenor of the discussion, I believe she obtained a different perspective. Things in the lab, seemed to go better after that; her seeming failures were perceived differently, not so momentarily, or, so I imagined. During her oral dissertation she mentioned me as a person of special significance, one who had apprised her of the Big Picture. And before she left the U, she left me a note: “Mr. D., Thanks for trying to make me see the “Big Picture” & for loaning me books you probably thought you'd never see again! Please stop by Berkeley when you can! Love Always, D.”

“What I didn't know at the time was some of the real difficulties she was facing in her marriage to another graduate student in another department. She worked in the better lab, was in a better position for future prestigious employment. She was probably a better, more highly motivated student as well. He was not so driven to rise so high in the hierarchy of scientists; all of their Institutional choices were based on her career choices; she was more driven to pursue the highest rung. He obtained his PhD. a year after her; she meanwhile waiting for him; putting off for that year, a postdoctoral appointment to that prestigious institution. It was also unclear whether he could also get a position at that same institution. It all came to end for them; she pursued her career; he opted for a teaching position at a high school in their home state. It had probably been an ongoing crisis with them that blew up in their faces when they left La La land, (another name for Graduate School). The world of fantasy ended with a dose of real life. I learned later that she was devastated by the rupture. I tried writing to her afterwards, at her new institution. She did not reply. A gentle soul with high hopes, perhaps learning the hard lesson that illusions of fairness and equity don't hold up against a male ego; a love squandered. A high price to pay for success?”

“Gee Mr. D. - some reason to be cautious – No!!?? I know these things happen quite often. I sometimes wonder how much my mother sacrificed for my father's career. She seems unfulfilled in some way, and I sense in father some solicitous, even obsequious behavior toward her, as though she lets him know what she has

sacrificed for home, family, and wife of a doctor, etc. It bothers me to think about. It makes me want to avoid any serious commitments like marriage – as well as all the assumptions attendant to such an arrangement.

“I wouldn’t know what to say to that lost girl to whom you write – encouragement I guess – which I’m sure you have done to the best of your ability”.

“I did put some emphasis on self, on becoming her own person. Not to become the mirror of others – suggesting she look in the mirror asking of it, ‘Whom do you see – whom do you want to see?’. You know, Catherine, its like she is a piece of clay to be moulded, by what and by whom? Here you are, by comparison, moulding yourself. Like all those female graduate students, somehow motivated to become all they are – to do – to achieve.

“As life would have it, the young graduate who went to Berkeley continued her involvement in Women in Science, continued with her science, found employment befitting her education (in Iowa), found another partner, and became a PI, in academic argot

“Perhaps to you it all seems so natural, so consequential, to be where you are. You may have taken some things ‘for granted’, within a certain realm of expectations, but it is mostly through your effort that you have arrived at this time and place. Perhaps you have had more opportunities, but at the same time you have not squandered them. Yes!, circumstances have to be favorable for this to happen. The world cannot be at war, with families being uprooted, resources gobbled up, both human and other resources; the society in which you live must be flourishing, the culture must embody some ‘reason to be’ making many things available, committed to enrichment and growth. The rights of individuals (a la Toni Smith) must be acknowledged and protected. Of course, this conjecture goes on – and fortune smiles on you.”

“Yes!, Mr. D., to interject, I remember painfully the argument with mother regarding Toni Smith – and the mealy-mouthed media supporting Toni’s right, while tearing her down at the same time, looking for a way to shame and belittle her – and in so doing belittling every one’s right, inadvertently their own, warning them not to get too carried away. I almost felt mother was being mealy mouthed; but she would wince if she imagined I thought of her that way. She came close. – Oh!, Mr. D. I can still feel the pain – pain of learning the shabbiness of this Love It Or Leave It mentality embedded in so much of our culture, our ‘democratic’ nation. What is there to Love Or to Leave if its all a matter of the rigid morality of the Stronger, in this case a mob, the mob browbeating, perhaps the weaker, those who step out of line – or instead of ‘weaker’ (and I suppose anyone who stops to question or to dissent is ‘weaker’) –

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

let's say more sensitive, aware and accommodating. Are we not better served by the question than by the mere assertion? I believe we are. – On the home front, there was father indulging his daughter until his wife felt betrayed – while those two loyal sisters were sincerely asking those terribly probing questions – but mom!, but sis!, and finally, but mom!, but mom!. I wanted to cry.”

“Catherine, I'm truly moved by what you are saying; and I can only say it again, you are truly wonderful.

“I seriously doubt I would find accord with your mother, but I would love to see you and your sisters together. Are they beauties like you – what a formidable trio?!”

“I think they are beautiful – while we three do not look exactly alike, there is no tendency to corpulence, we are each modestly developed, no obvious defects, moderately inclined to athleticism and physically invigorating activities. All eager to learn, all observant of others, and all things natural; all curious. We don't interfere in other people's business, or butt into their conversations; but when our time comes, we try to make it count.”

William didn't reply right away. It wasn't obvious what could be said next, if anything. He was beginning to feel things an old man shouldn't, regarding this nubile creature.

Catherine, eager to continue, asked “What Mr. D. – no rejoinder?!”

A little bit hesitant, William not wanting to reveal these feelings, tried to avert them by saying: “Catherine, to have a fraction of this conversation with my own child - what would it have meant to me??! Instead, ever since she left home, and even before, she was like a tightly wound spring. I know I did something wrong – but I'm not sure what it was – perhaps a serious omission – or lack of indulgence – perhaps something more sinister like a regret at having children for whom I must be responsible, something unwanted at first, but once here an attempt to relate, without a great deal of enthusiasm. Very resistant to mirroring the parent, they brought into my life their Jesus stuff, their Pied Piper rantings, which, in turn, the parent rejected. I know the children responded in kind, defensively, protecting what they considered their best interests, the link to the outside. Bad vibes, Catherine. As an adult, my daughter was someone to whom I could not relate; a Fundamentalist who perhaps fearfully withheld affection – unless I became one of them – then what?! I never tried it, nor will I. – I've seen it happen with friends, their daughter driving the hard bargain of alienation of affection until the parents came into the fold; that very very strange Jesus miasma – then, these friends spewing out the stuff, as though they believed – To me! To me! It seemed incredulous. I couldn't listen. Friends no longer. I might

understand, but thoroughly disagree. Are they happier with their daughter and her out of wedlock grandchild – ‘Christian’ Yes! ‘Christian’; that’s its name!

“Am I happier? – I am happy now, here in this moment, happier, I suspect, than I could have ever been with my own daughter, even if she would indulge me. I believe I am happier communicating with the lost granddaughter of another than I could have been with my own child!. The graduate students, one of whom left a poem on my desk to be found one morning (I recognized the handwriting). Is this something to be experienced as real, as happening to me, not as some vicarious thing, some bad thing, like voyeurism? These are meaningful experiences, and at this time in my life, looking back, as it were, are these not the most meaningful by the mere fact of them having happened?”

“Mr. D., would you like a hug?”

Catherine rises from her place at the table, goes over to William – puts her arms around his neck from behind brushing her hair and face against his from behind, hugs him for a lingering moment, then returns to her seat.

“Thank you for that Catherine – it will live with me for the rest of my days”

“Mr. D. I know it is so easy to arrive at an impasse when it comes to the ‘human condition’ – like ‘what do we do next?’ ‘Have we tried everything?’ - I’m not unaware that I am, we are all, only one, or a few more, in an endless array. I’m not foolish enough to believe that beauty, per se, wins any converts to reason, or leads the way to the truth, or is more able to show the better way – perhaps a homely ‘Blessed Virgin’ is, after all, more successful.

“As a writer, I would not want to bore the reader with tedious arguments that should somehow be self-evident to every sentient individual. I don’t suppose I want to bore a reader with exemplary individuals who sacrifice themselves for the noble cause. If life teaches the hardest lesson imaginable – that every individual is looking out for number one, him or her self, then, if that’s what is the truer revelation, then the basis for a cohesive sharing human community may not exist. For one selfish individual, given the power and opportunity, can destroy it all (as history teaches us, and as happens often enough in these very times). – So what holds us all together, fear of each other? Or a need for peaceful cooperation or coexistence, so we don’t live in constant dread of the other – abominations of which we are aware, and find horrifying, what we identify as ‘atrocities’, a condition of human interaction that cannot be found amongst any other species, a condition that we all should find intolerable? Man’s utter cruelty to man, which carries over into all his actions on the planet. How can

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

this be? 'Civilized barbarism!?' 'Civilized Violence!?' We cannot live with that, can we? We don't, do we? How can it be that any one individual can gain the power and might to destroy every shred of individuality in the other, right down to the very denial of his or her existence?

"Whew!, Ms. Tellerman, that is quite a mouthful for a dinnertime conversation".

"I do realize I'm getting carried away, Mr. D. – I feel insecure in what I think I know of man – man the animal, not incidentally; rapacious animal first, I suspect. I feel I cannot trust either him or what I want to know about him. I am one of them, or I am 'him'; what of 'him' lurks in me? Am I also one who cannot live without 'more' 'more' more'? – Am I being dishonest about something, am I kidding myself about my own perceived motivation toward what, 'goodness, altruism'? – I don't believe I am. Then again, I have not been personally hurt by my fellow man, I do not have any desire for vengeance, for example. I do not have any known enemies. I do not naturally have any desire to control or to dominate. I do not have any urges to kill, to hurt, to destroy. – I am reserved in my affections, in some of my emotions – why? Do I fear vulnerability? Can I love and hate equally? Am I permitted to allow myself to be governed by loves and hates? Or do I have to be tolerant in order to be tolerated – to survive in a climate of love and hate?"

"Catherine, have you ever had this kind of discussion with anyone else?"

"Not my parents – only marginally with my sisters, and marginally with my professor in 'Expository Writing'. I think the professor has a lot of idealism to cope with. He's not a philosopher. He wants the student to express what he or she thinks, or feels, coherently – but imaginatively – with originality - using one's own metaphors, analogies – one's well-executed wording. He doesn't want what is plausible, or what seems possible, but what is – perhaps in the same way you and I were intimating about our own writing efforts. We don't question the reason we do it, we simply do it. We could have become architects and engineers, so we could design libraries – but what is to be housed in the library?"

"Catherine, there you go again; tossing that beautiful head of yours. I feel, that is, I want to hug you?"

"Whoa, Mr. D., I came to give you the hug of a daughter. What kind of hug would propose for me?"

"You got me there; it wouldn't be in kind – but it might be to embrace a sort of joy I feel, which would be doubly enriched through something tangible – and not a slap in the face".

"Mr. D., I think it best we keep a certain kind of distance; I imagine something happening which I might not understand,

which might make me recoil – somehow spoiling where we are at this juncture. I realize people hug all the time, often with mixed feelings. I have been hugged by men, friends of the family in those ‘everybody feels good’ situations, where I have felt the hug to be something ugly, maybe lascivious, a force to be reckoned with. Taking advantage of a situation, like almost waiting for the opportunity to get their hands on this tempting, nice looking chick. I think I understand the type of hug you describe, and maybe I would like that, but I would want my response to be appropriate to my feelings. Maybe when and if we do get to know each other more fully, if that is to be, we might become very special friends. I’m too big to sit in your lap, even as a surrogate granddaughter.”

“You amaze me!. You know, Catherine, if someone was reading about this meeting of ours – you know – looking for some kind of plot – what do you suppose they might surmise?”

“Often the relationship between the sexes are the vital, and sometimes the only threads, woven into the warp of short stories or novels, and even dramas. It doesn’t matter what the relationship; Romeo and Juliet, Faust and Gretchen, Werther and Charlotte, Jesus and Mary Magdalene, Etienne and Catherine, Mr. Abel and Rima, Herman and Fayaway, or Herman and Yillah; Mr. Dimmesdale and Hester; Clyde and Sondra, Mr. Mellors and Constance, Emma and Rodolphe, and Mr. Humbert and Lolita – there is a thread, some might characterize as ‘sex’, but they are all without exception, stories, maybe symbolic of the way the author perceives, meant to portray the proclivities of man – but here we are, you and I - real; not a story. Are we different? Is there some kind of plot here, what role does the relationship of the sexes play?”

“Mr. D., leave it alone. I don’t want to cut you off in your surmising; you might even be right. I don’t want to go there. So don’t crowd me. If you want to continue to enjoy the company of this lovely woman and her good disposition – ease off!”

William felt a sudden wave of terror, of having done it again, somehow ruining something because of his unseemly transgressions.

“Catherine, I am truly sorry – Yes! crowding – stupidly”

“Lets leave it at that – maybe enough for today and tomorrow, who knows? I will be working on an ‘expository’ paper tomorrow – probably incorporating some of the insights gained from our discussions – for which I am truly grateful; unequivocally.

“There will be a time for a few breaks, so maybe we will find occasion for more discussion then, if you are free”.

William set about gathering his tools and parts, setting them all in a corner of the kitchen counter.



*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

“Ms. Tellerman, thank you for both the tasty and filling dinner, and the truly absorbing conversation. Its been a wonderful day for me. Goodnight Catherine”

At this moment, Catherine, feeling her cold shoulder was more than she intended, quickly glided up to him, put her arms around him, below his shoulders, hugging him firmly, but quickly, “Good night Mr. D.”

William was at a loss for words, departing with a second, “Good night Catherine”

## *After The First Day*

Both Catherine and William had much to ponder that night. William was moderately troubled by what he felt for the girl – a child, if he was to face reality. A 57 year old romantically involved with a twenty year old. The height of absurdity – gross – despicable in the eyes of most of humanity. ‘Is that so, romantically involved’; and it was she who astutely remarked “too big to sit on your lap, even as a surrogate granddaughter”. So obvious? But she does not condemn me, or more wonderfully yet, play or toy with me. She looks at me and wonders. She might even defend the relationship as formative, and none of anyone’s business but hers.

Catherine, not troubled by what she feels – intrigued – Yes! definitely wanting more exchanges with this man – this person? – this man? He walked into her life at a very meaningful moment, a time of ferment in her own intellectual explorations and her artistic pursuits; and her desire, for understanding - for truth. Yes! beautiful Catherine, who should be thinking of becoming a loving wife, a mother, a home maker, a supporter of her mate, and a way of life – a way that to her seemed totally meaningless and suicidal. What of this man supporting her desire to become what she is – his one true gift to all – and opportune for her. The Big Picture. Indeed!

There is William, that man, aged, pondering Faust, and a bargain with Mephistopheles?

Even a simpler parallel, in some circles. If William was some fat cat celebrity with loads, getting hooked up with a teenager would be one of those things, affordable, and part of the contemporary scene. Of course, there would be some attraction, perhaps a tempest of feelings; and who would care – everyone shrugging, predicting the outcome “No fool like an old fool” “She’s after his money, and the notoriety that goes with celebrity status”. The

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

classic was the great silent film entertainer robbing the cradle when he was in his mid-fifties, a sixteen year old; and fathering some ten children. What can you say, realistically speaking? Obscene! LOVE! Geeze, who knows about love? And there was Old man Zorba siring number thirteen at 80 with a new wife, 55 years younger; a modest difference. Is there a cutoff point, even for celebrities? Pablo Cassals!!?? Not intended for exemplary status. Rated R

How old was Faust? How old Gretchen? How old ye olde devil? There's William, 37 years older. How preposterous, Mr. Humbert. Lolita!, not Catherine! So William mused.

Meanwhile Catherine will choose, or will not choose. She senses how much she is could mean to this man. How close can she become without compromising her feelings; what are her feelings?

She hasn't had any meaningful sexual feelings toward any man – and no particular desire for any man. She has been repulsed by some of her father's associates and friends, and their offspring, feeling no attraction to any of them. Her greatest affection and feeling involves her sisters. She does not feel close to any of her sorority sisters, but is friends with some of them. She feels a kinship with her professor in her Expository Writing class, but senses in him something predatory, opportunistic, even something persuasive in his attentions; something to be avoided in closed rooms during late hours. While Mr. D. is not persuasive. Not a smoothy, beguiling, charming, but, as a person, he is attractive; as a man, not unattractive.

William arrives the next day, again knocking on the door. Catherine, with her head outside a window above “Good Morning – its open – I'll be working away up here.”

*A Second Day*

*Propriety*

“Good Morning, Ms. Tellerman.”

Both worked long into the afternoon without a break – Catherine could be heard pacing for a while – then coming out of her room to descend the stairs. William was still working in room 120.

“Mr. D., are you here?”

William heard her voice, coming out into the hallway, “Catherine, did you call?”

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

“Oh! you’re up there, Mr. D. I have stopped the writing for a while; its not long ‘til dinner time again – so I’ll start preparing some things – would you be able to stay for dinner again?”

“I can’t imagine anything better, Catherine. I’ll be finishing up here in fifteen to twenty minutes.”

When William came down, Catherine met him with a question.

“Mr. D., what happened between you and your wife? Is that question too personal?”

“No Catherine; I’ll try to answer it fairly. We got along pretty well for twenty years, and did a lot of things together. She is a lovely woman, kind, considerate, intelligent. I loved her more than any other person in my life. But we also spent a lot of time apart in the last twenty years – she with her job and her interests, and me with my involvements. At times the strain of being apart grew intolerable. The “You don’t love me’s” the suspicions of infidelity, and the jealousies consumed us at times. We haven’t seen each other for a year. I imagine if we were to meet suddenly in an unplanned way we would greet each other warmly.

“Marriage is a peculiar institution, with its great sendoff to love, honor, ‘obey’ until death do us part; let no man put asunder blah diddy blah blah. There is inherently nothing wrong with these avowals; except often they do not apply. There’s the first night, which can be pretty disillusioning; and the sharing of the bathroom or outhouse, then body odors, farts, bad breath, and other unromantic generalities. The sex, that other corporeal stuff, better be pretty good to get the whole thing off to a good start. After that, the unplanned things happen; like pregnancy, or lack thereof, or illness or accident; or the loss of a job, extravagance of one kind or another breaking the budget. There are the rivalries, jealousies, egos, pride, sloth and general demeanor of individuals living in close proximity; each wanting its own space, and often its own way. Somehow. when this thing is sealed. it is intended that these two individuals live together in the same space; an ‘until death’ sentence; sometimes bringing about a premature death. Put on the blinders.

“I wouldn’t say these arrangements are inherently bad, but when they turn sour, we are not prepared to handle them without a lot of turmoil; there is no simple mechanism for disengagement. In today’s western world, half of all marriages end in divorce; that’s’ a lot of sourness. One wonders how many might have ended in divorce in previous centuries if the social mores had been different.

“None of what I am conjecturing truly bears upon my relationship with my wife. Am I happier living alone? In some ways yes! What I miss most is the simple sharing enjoyment of nature.

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

One needs to share that with someone who is sensitive to it. We are both sentimental; we seem to shed tears over the same things.

“Sharing the same bed, the same intimacies for so many years, one sheds his inadequacies; learns how to please his partner. I’m sure this kind of human indulgence is necessary for any union to remain together for any length of time. – I’m selfish about my time; like my father, maybe. I did not learn the way to carve out the time and space ‘undisturbed’; here the other person became righteous about having to tip-toe around. A competition for rights, whose rights, argued without resolution, leaving a bad taste in one’s mouth. I demand the time and the space undisturbed. In my first relationship this became a declaration of War, a lot of denial and hardly any affirmation. ‘cut your balls off’. Like I say, to be fair, my wife is a very decent person who makes few demands. I am the source of the problem, unrelentingly.”

“Did you ever have an affair with another woman while you were married?”

“I came close a few times, mostly because of opportunity; liking someone, but with no intention for a continued relationship. I tended to hesitate because of my own hang-ups - my own feelings of inadequacy; I suppose guilt became a factor; all together, in the long run, spared me some troubling difficulties, both with that person, as well as with my wife.”

“How about before you were married?”

“Of course, guilt was not a factor, but the greatest obstacle was my own feelings of inadequacy; and when it counted, a lack of commitment. Situations like ‘knocking up’ someone was a consideration. Despite that, I did enter into relationships that brought mixed results; some of which have been viewed differently with hindsight. My mother used to admonish me, ‘Faint heart n’er won fair lady’. With hindsight I have viewed my mother as the fair lady who had been won by my persistent father. But I suspect that daddy was not satisfied from the very beginning; and perhaps mother had her doubts. Father had had sexual relationships before his marriage, whereas I feel confident my mother did not; my mother was a 30 year old virgin when she married. I doubt mother’s advice would have helped me in the one relationship where my heart was at stake. I had only one tempestuous involvement with a married woman that was never consummated. Another very brief one with a ‘woman of the world’, whom with hindsight I have grown to appreciate, but, who at the time, I seemed to want to shed. All other relationships were aborted either because of their unrequited nature, or because they could develop no further for one reason or another. With my wife, we had consummated our attraction intimately while I was in a long

standing relationship, and she was married. A questionable track record?”

“Mr. D., I truly appreciate your frankness. Refreshing. I doubt that anyone I have known would be so truthful.”

“Catherine, what about yourself?”

“Mr. D., I will take the Fifth. For one thing, most of my involvement with the opposite sex has been in the form of infatuations, without knowing what these have meant or where they might have gone, if any part of them were to become known. I have never had a ‘crush’. But I have found some men and/or boys attractive, and charming. I have wanted to get to know only one boy, but he was very much sought after by other girls; I had no desire to compete for his attention. Perhaps I felt inadequate, or perhaps I wasn’t prepared to go to any lengths to pursue him. So Mr. D., I haven’t any track record.”

“Well, Ms. Tellerman, have we covered the subject?”

“No Mr. D. You must understand I am very curious about male/female relationships. I seem to be trusting you to enlighten me in certain ways. I would rather not have any glassy-eyed view of the male/female thing. I realize the state of ‘LOVE’ is one that has not happened to me, especially the kind complicated by very powerful carnal desires. I suppose when and if that happens I will understand more. Most of what can be, is all in my imagination, derived from many different sources. I find it hard to read romantic novels; I tend to regard all fiction with a jaundiced eye. The ‘silver screen’ seems a hopeless extension of a bleary-eyed romantic tradition. All puff and no substance, although it pretends to aim for reality, seldom achieving it. I am much more receptive to Shakespearean drama, through the force of language, and the use of incisive and revealing metaphor; while the turgidity of the emotions expressed make me wonder at the fatefulness of human relationships.

“I am asking you now about these things, because I have already begun to trust what you will tell me. I don’t want to say it is as a result of an insuppressible curiosity. I don’t know fully my motivation. I suspect it has little to do with ‘expository writing’. Maybe it has more to do with you and I in this circumstance. I don’t know how I truly feel about that aspect of it.

“When you tell me how beautiful I am, while I have heard this said on other occasions, it suddenly takes on a different meaning. It is you who are saying it this time; you are not saying it to win favor; you are saying it because it strikes you as such; a true appreciation of something that moves you to say so. It almost embarrasses me to hear you say it, as though I have some unfair advantage.

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

“Mr. D., I don’t feel confused, or amused. I probably feel something I shouldn’t, but not knowing what to expect of myself, I want to proceed with caution. All this conversation arouses me in ways I haven’t been aroused before. I can find no explanation within myself. It does not yield to analysis. If anything I am afraid, afraid of what I might feel, something I ought to judge as being improper. What makes something improper? Is it what I feel or is it what other people feel? If someone else, say my mother and father feeling something is improper, does that make it improper? Suppose I do not feel it is improper? Or, to cast it in a different light, when does a thing become improper? Lets say you and I were to embrace, that is, more than hug, and suppose we were to kiss one another. Have we done something improper? What follows a kiss, more kisses, passionate kisses? Then what? Suppose we made love; have we done something improper? Suppose the feelings justify the end? Suppose I do not feel any of it as improper? Have I then become a witch to be burned at the stake, so to speak; a pariah? Why? Because I have violated some conventional manner or precept? What is that conventional manner, the mores, that a young woman, a virgin, should not commingle with an older man? That it is unthinkable! I haven’t the least doubt in my mind that if my feelings were there, that any embracing and love making would be a wonderful experience for me, because I believe in you, in your delicacy, and refinement; and that my pleasure, and happiness would be your first concern. I could find myself wanting that. I am not repulsed by your age, Mr. D.

“Mr. D., what I am doing here is hypothesizing, but not entirely. What I say about being aroused by our conversations is true. There are so very many things we claim to be improper but we do them anyway. I don’t say this as way of justifying, what, to others, may seem improper thoughts, but if one were to assess the degree of impropriety of the one in relation to the other, almost any violent act would weigh most heavily compared to a sexual indiscretion of a young woman. A sexual indiscretion may not be improper at all. It may be a natural act, as much as any violent act might be said to be a natural act. Are all acts to be judged as to their propriety? Equitably? I know Mr. D. that I am attempting to split hairs about which no one I know would give a damn. An Old Man is a Dirty Old Man, by definition, and by implication, if he commingles with (seduces) a young woman. Is that not so? What of the young woman; has she become a reprobate? Consorting with the devil?”

“Catherine, I am concerned about your arousal. I want to be more than proper; with you, more than anyone I know. I know you are hypothesizing. I am not a seducer. Yes! I have desires, yes!

perhaps to hold you, to embrace you, first of all as a joyful expression of a complete wonder at you. Even much more now than when I first saw you. To me there are no sexual overtones. I do not see you as a daughter or granddaughter. Of course, I am aware of your age, as I am of mine. I'm inclined to agree with notions of impropriety if our relationship would, hypothetically speaking, go in a certain direction.

"Of course, these are mere words. Phantoms. You and I are not phantoms. Maybe we are expected to uphold certain traditions, certain conventions, certain mores. Some of our brethren are counting on everyone doing their part. Could we, hypothetically, once again, become the selfish exclusion, claiming some privilege for ourselves because we knowingly violate the covenant, the taboo, without regret, and not without learning a great deal about the significances of all conventions? If we did not trespass, how would we ever know? Hah!, we are asked to take these matters on Faith! Wisdom of the ages, etc. O. K., its a done deal, we don't step over the line."

"Mr. D. I would not foreclose that possibility. First of all, I like you a great deal; I can not logically explain the liking. I am not repulsed by you as I see you now. I am open to a continuation of our discussions, wherever they may lead, so long as the objective is truth; whether truth of your feelings or the truth of my feelings. As I have indicated that, 'stepping over the line', to use your metaphor for impropriety, is not a consideration, unless we firmly believe we are doing so. I do not believe that you feel we would be stepping over a line. I am more inclined to think you are concerned about seemliness, that is, appearances, how it would appear if you were to become the consort of a young girl....."

"Catherine, allow me to interrupt here; .... Are we reading a novel here? Is this script for real? Is it truly happening that you and I are having this conversation, that it is not happening on some page. In real life, two people such as you and I, do not have these kinds of conversations. Who would use such a word as 'consort'; who is obscuring something here? I suppose I am concerned, but not in the way you think. I would be concerned for your sake. One can never explain these things to anyone's satisfaction; especially to those who would be most hurt by the association, your family, and your friends. I would not want others looking at you as some kind of stupid broad; or as a fallen woman.

"Society, the society of Man, assigns a high priority to its perceived prerogatives. These prerogatives are inherited or passed on from generation to generation. In the old days some behavioral things were regarded as taboos; as forbidden. Or even, in some cases, as the rights of the overlord. Depends on who was in the

driver's seat. We would not be in the driver's seats of our own lives, regardless of how our lives played out. If one does not mirror; he becomes an outcast. It seems Love It Or Leave It is not reserved for the Stars and Stripes. Its ages old. Mankind controls chaos with morality, sometimes ingrained as Law, as a Moses edict. Whether we think it silly or irrational means nothing to those who see themselves as the guardians and protectors of this prescribed order of things.

"Are we to be regarded differently than tabloid personalities?"

## *'Fatefully Inevitable' ?*

"It may or may not be relevant to our discussions, but the great civilizing nations, maritime nations, England, Spain, Portugal, Holland, and France, who fought over and divided the world amongst themselves; when they stepped ashore, they were dealing with natives, aboriginals, savages, some kind of underdeveloped animal species. Because they were not like their conquerors, they were sub human, they did not deserve the same status. Hence their women became objects of pleasure, without dignity, without respect; and both sexes became slaves. Even today, American Indians, First Nations people are regarded as inferior beings. What I am trying to expose here is the hypocrisy of those who somehow become the exemplary ones, the pillars, who control the moral code, but are devoid of humanity, of sensitivity to the living. Has there ever been a time, or a civilization that has behaved any differently?"

"Yes! Mr. D., it seems 'fatefully inevitable' as Sigmund Freud pointed out in *Civilization And Its Discontents*. However, we number amongst the fortunate ones, to be where we are in time, in the evolutionary continuum, perhaps riding the highest crest of the humanitarian wave. We also live in the 'lap of luxury'; I mean that, both, in physical terms, and in terms of personal freedoms. While I mention this, I am aware of how precarious is our tenancy in that 'human' environment, which seems barely to sustain itself on the edge of that continuum.

Some, like Ortega Y Gasset, have argued that when the Masses revolted against the monarchies and the aristocracies, that mankind, per se, had risen to higher plateau. But these aristocracies have been replaced by Corporations. The Corporation has restructured our society to one of dependence; also with their immense wealth they have created land monopolies, controlling the production of goods and services upon which we have come to depend; and they control the politics of things that affect us all.



*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

Their motive is not to serve the Masses; their motive is gain and profit; and a system of inequities that enslaves the rest of humanity to their design. As William Burroughs has suggested, 'Control addicts'.

"Mr. D., I read where there are those who argue that mankind is not responsible for his failings, because, conceptually, there are no errors; and that History is irrelevant. There is only being; experiential beings, operating without prejudice, as 'free spirits'. There are no consequences to living as a free spirit. Many theoreticians find that kind of rationalizing intellectually appealing; or should one say, dubiously appealing. There are those who support the notion of self above all others; that other human's suffering is not a problem for the self. I am particularly bothered by these kinds of posits. I do not believe those individuals who propose them live by them, unless they live in walled enclaves with huge guard dogs."

"Catherine, truly, you amaze me. I want to, but feel I cannot embrace you with this heart of mine. But I do nonetheless. On the threshold of life you make these observations. In this day they might be considered dangerous thoughts. Our world, the world of man, as we have crudely created it, defiling something that was not ours to defile, appears before you as something wrongly juxtaposed to common sense; something badly in need of remaking. It is your great misfortune that you have no weapons. Cassandra, Joan Of Arc, paid with their lives for their clairvoyance. That is to say, those who control will not yield, because it is not in their nature to yield. They are formed by their greed, their lust, and the fruits of both; those who would remove them by force or common sense, or shame, had better come 'armed to the teeth', and be prepared to give up their lives for a cause that they themselves can only envision: for there is nothing tangible in existence to which they may refer; only extant in the human heart."

"Mr. D., shall we weep together for this world? This 'fatefully inevitable' world? Here I am with this heart, but look at this scant body of mine, these little arms. If I was Wonder Woman, or The Bride, could I do more? You Mr. D., past the prime of your life, waging war with insights, and sentiments, and calls for the better way; and if you was Atlas, or David, could you do more? It is only in those outlandish fantasies that our side triumphs, whereas in real life we perish. Yet the crying need for the fantasy exists, lest we all impale, eviscerate ourselves with grief. Those who portray the good guys in the fantasy, in real life they are even greater hams, finding it hard to play the part in real life; they become fat cats, who sign on to the morality of fat cats, and become our

controllers. If one only knew the truth, he or she might find them all whimps, and bigots. It is intended that fantasy should not become reality.”

“Another big mouthful Catherine.”

“Mr. D., I could lament loudly, but I hold back. Tears move not the masses. The masses are too busy shedding their own tears; whether for cause, large or small. One cannot navigate the rivers, because they are turbulent and overflowing, so deluged and overwhelmed are they with these lachrymose lamentations. Swept along, seemingly unable to make safe shore, to camp, to await the subsidation of the wailing torrents. If one was to make passage to the larger sea where great dilution of the river’s petulance is achieved. Then what! Can we expect something more of the gulf than of the river, all saline, made so with eons of sheddings? How should we end this story Mr. D.? Do we make a Declaration as to our purpose, our mood, and our desires? Do we draft a new Constitution? Or propound a new Bill or Charter of Rights? We have proposed so often before; - *TO WIT: UTOPIA, PARADISE, EDEN, ATLANTIS, SHANGRI-LA, HAPPY VALLEY, EL DORADO, CASTLE IN THE AIR, ICARIA, LEMURIA, LYONESSE, PARNASSUS, ELYSIAN FIELDS, ARCADIA, LOST HORIZON, PROMISED LAND, MECCA, SWEET FELICITY, THE PRIMROSE PATH, UNALLOYED HAPPINESS, GOLDEN AGE, GREENER PASTURES, ENCHANTED ISLAND, ENCHANTED FOREST, ONE’S HEART LEAPING WITH JOY, LIFE LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS, THE MORE PERFECT UNION, NEW(ARK), NEW ATLANTIS, NEW ATHENS, NEW BEDFORD, NEWBURG, NEW ENGLAND, NEWFOUNDLAND, NEW FRANCE, NEW GRANADA, NEW HEBRIDES, NEW SPAIN, NEW SPAPER, NEW YEAR, NEW YAWK, AND FOR CRIPES SAKE, NEW ZEEELAND; NEW, NEW NEW. THE NEW FRONTIER!! THERE’S NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN!!!*

“Mr. D., we have worn out our welcome. We have been handed the holy chalice, only to drink our wretched brew from it. When Orwell bitterly coined his obversions, Freedom Is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength and War is Peace, he bitterly and acerbically described our times, and our nation. These last two Great Wars, as we have described them, were supposed to end War for ever, because it was proven that War was the most absurd way to solve anything. The Judgment at Nuremberg has escaped us because we are the stronger, and as the ‘man’ proposed: ‘Justice in the interest of the stronger’. Even though the point is arguable, it is writ, and is mostly correct. There is a difference between defining justice and implementing justice. Was it ‘just’ when the highest court in the land, the Judiciary, awarded the Executive to a candidate of its choice? When the Legislative Body attempted to heave the

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

Executive involved in the complications of a sexual indiscretion, and subsequent prevarication? The Executive heaping its petty concerns upon the plebiscite as matters of National Security? Mr. D., where will it end; in disaster? If you and I discuss ways to end it all, we will be accused of conspiring to overthrow a duly elected government, we will be arrested, held incommunicado, not charged; and who knows, subjected to what catalogue of 'modern' tortures, horrors, even though it is clearly stated we have reserved the right to change our government if we do not like it?"

"Catherine, I truly do not know what to say to you; you do, with almost every breath continue to amaze me. Such a grasp of so many things in that beautiful young head. I do wonder how you are able to contain yourself, to keep from going over the precipice. I swear this sounds like some kind of truly fantastic visionary story, wherein a mere youth, a woman, no less, an idealist, carries the weight of the world upon her slender shoulders. People like you do not exist, except in the wildest and most absurd imaginary tales. You are not happening; I am dreaming I am reading about you. Even to imagine a written story seems so improbable, because it seems so far removed from any easily recognizable reality. You could never be real. This must be a dream of a story recorded as a fable extracted from another time when hope and good deeds were the norm, where:

*Help us to help each other, Lord;  
Each others burden to bear;  
Let each his friendly aid afford,  
And feel his brother's care.*

was a daily supplication – by all. And:

*Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.*

*Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.*

*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which in heaven is perfect.*

"Can you even imagine this last? It is not possible, it is not probable that any such world could have existed. Even the Pope is more of a realist than such rant would suggest. Communosocialism under Mao tried to make these into mandates.

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

The other guy was as important as the self; the other guy was the worker, the peasant. So Mao was a worker and a peasant at heart, but didn't have enough lifetimes to be a peasant or a worker for very long; he had to get up off his ass and become a leader, a missionary, a high priest of the new way. He was compelled from on high, high in his cranium, to make the sacrifice. He did not live long enough to become a capitalist. Like the followers of JC got a big jump on him. But Mao's followers will catch up (ketchup), betcha! Catherine. Sorry, I'm trying to be purposefully cynical toward my audience. I should be urging instead that we migrate to Shangri-la; perhaps to be found in another galaxy, where the seemingly large difference in our ages on this planet would not matter because poetic license would allow us to be ageless. Geezzzussss Keeeeristuh, not science fiction too!? Catherine, do you realize you will have to do battle, and that you will be burned at the stake? That's what happens in real life; that's how this story ends."

"Mr. D., I was born with these eyes and these ears, I was born an individual curious to know certain things; truths. I did not realize it was forbidden to want to know too much; I do not accept that limitation. If my observations, my feelings, emotions, and my intellect lead me to ask questions about things that I do not understand, or that do not seem right, it is only as I can do. I do not know what else to do. From my earliest days I have been admonished to 'tell the truth'. I have always tried to do that. I feel I want to expect no less from anyone else, mostly from my parents, and my teachers, and also my friends. But I expect that my leaders, my representatives, as it were, would be the most 'forthcoming' as they often say of themselves, would be especially forthright with me; for I have put as much trust in them as my representative as I do in myself. This is a statement of who I am. Am I to be faulted for this? Am I to be betrayed by those who have taught me, those who have promised me to faithfully represent me? Am I to become alienated from the life I have been taught is the 'right life', because I question too much? What is the good of eyes and ears, and feelings, and an intellect if it is to be cast aside as impertinent, seditious, inciting an untoward, perhaps threatening, challenge to the status quo?"

*The Abbey*

"Catherine, I thought of something, from Rabelais: *Gargantua would not permit the purblind, blinkards, the lame, crooked, ill-favored, misshapen fools, senseless, spoiled or corrupt women;*

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

*or men sickly, subject to defluxions, or ill-bred louts, simple sots or peevish trouble-houses, as nuns or monks into the ABBEY of THELEME; but only such women as were fair, well-featured and of sweet disposition, and men that were comely, personable and well-conditioned.*

“Dear, sweet life, welcome to the Abbey. I would like to convert this happenstance into a fairy tale. To make that leap into a glorious enchantment. Not some bucolic Dulcinea, or war ravished Cunegunde, or distant Isle damsel Fayaway, but a Beatrice for whom to yearn, or a Gretchen to betray, and/or to be deserted by a Cressida, or a Juliet to mourn. As I play to my audience, I release further cynical overtones. A love that conspires with organismic parts to challenge the corporeal boundaries. It was a friend who facetiously, and uncouthly, uttered that ‘a stiff prick has no conscience’. Perhaps a female organ has no more.

“Pardon my crudity Catherine; love, per se, if I may call it such, is a demanding force, and its expression betwixt the poles, resolved best in embraces that are blind to reason, but consummate within a passion, with tenderness interwoven; and caresses that cause untold swoons. That is our moment amongst the spheres. I am tactless enough not to treasure something that I so easily mock. Or so it would seem. I would embrace you thus, though you would first cringe, then weigh as insult, and curse with disgust. The delicate part of me has been lost in this moment of speculation. Catherine, you mean more to me than these words convey. You are both person and symbol. A person whom I could easily worship, but molest with impure prattle.

“After all is said and done, after the last analysis, and assessment, what are you? No less protoplasmic than myself; but made of finer material which cannot be defined. So precious in your manufacture. There you are, wanting to save a world that cannot be saved. Princess Catherine, aye! Queen Catherine, President Catherine, Premiere Catherine, Donna Catherine, would sit on high remonstrating hapless mankind: ‘Can you not see the ruin you bring upon your selves with this random purposeless behavior?’

“Well, Princess, how long would you be able to remain in Bangladesh, in Haiti, in the Sudan or Ethiopia, or the bowels of any inner city. What would remain of you afterward? So, off with you, to write Hairy Putter, or Pauline Putter, who by dint of their purity, awaken in others the call to the higher purpose, in the service to mankind, and all other forms of life; with reverence. If you write, I will read it, and weep along with you. For, as the man said, paraphrasing, ‘If I write, I stand the chance of being read, and

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

having some effect, whereas if I do not write, I will not be read, and I do not stand a chance of having any effect at all.

“A person doesn’t have to write; she or he can mount a soap box, as the lone figure ranting from the heights of the bridge in Paris, Texas, vowing to speak only the truth: ‘I told you so, I told you so!’; letting truth (the most self-evident truths) reverberate as the harbinger of good times ahead. If only, if only, if only, Catherine”

“Mr. D., I would guess that I believe more than you some things are possible. Perhaps the exemplary figures are too few and far between to keep the vital issues alive; that we lapse for want of inspiration, or direction. It takes a person who believes, to carry the torch, Yes! braving the slings and arrows. But there are sensible people (the Toni Smiths) (MoveOn.Org; Gerry Spence; other bloggers) (perhaps even Michael Moore, or Naomi Klein), the Al Gores, Senator Byrd, within the ranks, who do respond to the clarion call from those who are the visionaries amongst us. One needs to be imbued with a powerful belief to overcome those who detract, and belittle, those guardians of the ‘true way’. Perhaps a touch of grandiosity is required also, a messianic spirit amongst us. All to the good, I say, if it leads us out of the quagmire and sinkhole of a life that jealously salvages all the prerogatives for those who take them; leaving the rest of mankind to rot. I am mindful of the Corn Laws that went through repeated permutations in order to satisfy the land barons. Bounties were given for exports, duties were imposed on imports. The occasional sovereign would feel a need to feed the unfed who could not afford the price of the commodity. As the price of corn rose, and the wage of the laborer remained the same; the domestic economy failed. This went on for 400 years, with the least able to afford, being left out of the loop. Eventually, market forces drove the whole argument, so called ‘free trade’ took over, but the supply and demand was driven by income and profit for the producers, not to consciously and magnanimously provide a staple for one’s fellow man; poor or rich. Man gravitated from the Corn Laws to the Poor Laws; the latter perhaps the inevitable result of the first. Elizabeth was responsible for the institution of the Poor Laws. The almighty sovereign might have done things differently; she might have offered door prizes to the poorest person who came the closet to guessing the yearly production of corn. Damn It! Mr. D., if I had been the Queen, things would have taken another course. You know its hardly any different today in this country with Agribusiness, The Future’s and Commodities Markets, and Soil Banks. The hungry still go hungry. If the farm land is not being blown or washed away, or allowed to become part of urban sprawl,

the small farmer is forced out by the big boys who control the market and the price of farm commodities. Worst of all, as I have intimated, is the fact all this takes place without consideration of the end use. The end use doesn't matter; what matters is the gain. Subsistence farming is taxed out of existence: even the near worthless hardscrabble.

"So, cry the blues, Mr. D. Maybe its too much to expect, that is, any purpose-driven, rational basis, for a functioning, fair and equitable society. Chairman Mao put forth a lot of gobbledegook about the bastion, the people, a kind of groupie without feelings, succumbing to a sort of mindless chanting. His was an easy task in the face of exploitative landlords. Anything was better than nothing. But a faceless humanity!!!??? The copulation never ceased; a testament to good works, NO!!! The goddamned fucking state! Whew!; I beat you to it, Whew!!!

"Further. Mr. D., I suspect the crudities you have used in describing what you imagine the 'anatomic destiny' of certain of our bodily parts may be equated with our consciousness of them. Consciousness somehow equates with morality. We have been implored to regard the animal part of our natures with disgust. As I have intimated, there is a brutal side to our natures that is perhaps far more reprehensible than our sexual proclivities."

"Catherine, I have a suggestion; that we go somewhere it isn't so obvious. Only you and I. I realize such a place does not exist. In describing a boating adventure my wife and I had experienced, I could not scribble a 'from here to there' experience, or 'how we did it' experience; or what you should do to have a perfect nautical experience. Since most of what I experienced was a kind of wonder, and a pile of soul-searching, and a great desire to experience this thing without someone holding my hand, despite my apprehensions, I could not but write of these latter things, almost to the exclusion of the other. Only to be criticized by the publishing world that my syntax was bad; and that I was into memoirs, and a bunch of other totally irrelevant yak. It was not marketable, they informed me, even though there were a lot of 'interesting perspectives and good writing'. All that important stuff was not worth anything. Only what would sell, a page turner', was important - to them. Well, the writing still sits in my closet, a kind of dubious enterprise. One publisher suggested I rewrite the whole thing in the modern vernacular. I'm getting away from the point. One of the chapters was titled A Ship Without A Flag, including the graphic as part of the chapter. Imagine that Catherine \_ a Chapter, Geeeezzz, what's that? - the graphic was a green flag with a pair of smiling lips and a logo, *Amity In Aeternum*. In several places in the 'chapter' I used an overlay of lips where the word 'flag' was

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

referred, and also in the heading on each page of the 'chapter'. Geezzz, the gist of the 'Chapter' was the notion, or observation, of possession and control resulting from the idea of 'nation', whichever one it turned out to be, with guarded boundaries, Xenophobia, and its gnashing teeth, and port authorities, and its disallowing of work for fare. Get lost; we don't want you (unless you got one pile of moola). You can imagine I took exception to this, because it assaulted my 'reason'. But you know, reason doesn't count. What counts is a kind of bullshit that intimidates; that converts humanity into a medium of exchange; but more, something that is not enforceable, an oath of allegiance (after Toni Smith, you can see what that amounts to.) But a foreigner! Xenophobia, Diseased, inscrutable, Gonna rape all our girls, catch all our fish, rob us of our valuables, squat on our most prized land, suspicion of spreading the good word!. Catherine, I understand, and I don't understand, mostly, like you, I do not understand. We, you and I, place the highest value on something that does not exist.

"Catherine, I realize I'm on the stump again, the lone figure on the bridge. Believe me I shudder to think of what will happen if he is reelected. Its already so bad. Not the economy, or the state of health and education, which in themselves have been neglected, and will be further neglected. It's the state of union's soul. So close to Nazism, to Facism. I wonder if this country at large has any inkling of what is about to happen as an idiot and his cronies continue to further erode the scant fabric that holds this nation together. I can not envision a nation without imagination, without heart. A nation of people duped on hype. Worse than hype, lies, deliberately misleading propaganda, constantly barraged by it, the media (especially those closely aligned with the patriotic fervor) playing along. Who in government raises a voice in protest? We have two individuals conducting a 'campaign' (is that a war), costing hundreds of millions, as a popularity, macho contest, and a maligning contest. Where is the truth? Our representatives are a bunch of lily livers waving little stars and stripes emblems, to assure every one they are patriots. But in reality, they are hung up on their fat paychecks, and their proximity to the bullshit that is destroying this country. Only one or two putting stuff into the Congressional Record; the rest, without courage. I do not hear their voice. They would have served Adolph Hitler as they do Dubya; George W. Bush."

"Mr. D., I don't mind your stumping, as you put it. It is not the stumping that is tedious. It is the contemplation of dread that is tedious. That we do not seem to gain in our attempts at the civilizational thing, that we revert to type. I find this terribly discouraging; that we do not seem to be able to move on. We, you



and I, so earnestly want this great thing to happen, but you don't even see a hope for it to happen. The Toni Smiths, as much as we admire their courage, their conviction, their beliefs, we know they are the first into the hopper when trouble comes. Trouble comes when the controllers begin to lose their grip on the riches that are their reason-to-be.

"Mr. D., not satisfied with riches, but conquest, power and the perks of greed and lust. The noble savage becomes vastly more crude than our intimations of 'anatomic destiny'. They reduce us to nothing. All these great ambitions for humanity are so much idle bullshit to them. Does not their control of the heap bring great erections to them? What is crude Mr. D.?"

"I can't begin to describe the revulsion I feel when I see the arrogance of their manner, the callousness of their grimaces, their cocksure posture, their voices calling for more of the same. What is even more corrosive of one's hope, the fact that the masses are somehow drawn in by the show; more persuaded by noise and glitter than by any desire to know the truth. Is it because to learn or to know the truth requires so much effort? Is it out of sloth, pure laziness, that the masses take the lure, swallow the bait?"

## *A Second Dinner*

"Mr. D., I promised you dinner, and here I dally with things I can do nothing about. You must excuse me while I get on with it, or forfeit my promise. They say 'one eats to live'."

"Ms. Tellerman. Please don't feel obliged in any way. If you don't feel up to it, I will understand. I realize our conversation has had its depressing overtones, and might interfere with one's appetite.

"I know you have also promised your parents you would look after yourself. Maybe we could eat out."

"No Mr. D., let me get on with it.

"I take it you are mostly finished with your work here. That you will be moving on to other dorms. Would you still like to come here for the evening meal while you are here, or until the students begin to return?"

"Catherine, I would like that very much."

"Do you plan to return to the island soon?"

"I had planned to leave early next week, Monday perhaps."

"Are you pressed to leave?"

"No, but so much of my life is bound up in the place, that I feel like a fish out of water anywhere else."

"Mr. D., would I provide some incentive for you to remain for a while? I know it is selfish to ask, but I somehow feel a desire to

explore a relationship further. I want you to realize that this meeting is fortuitous for me. I may seem confident in some ways, but inside I feel such uncertainty, not so much in my feelings, but in what to do with what I know, or think I know. I want to be effective, I don't want to waste energy; 'spin my wheels' so to speak. Perhaps I am wrong in what I do. I do feel quite alone in my thoughts, mostly because they make others uncomfortable to discuss. I get the feeling that my schoolmates think me obtusely challenging; mostly challenging them in ways they don't want to be challenged.

"Anyway, that is not the point. I feel so comfortable with you, a person who is very real to me, somehow suddenly important to me at this moment in my life. Am I using you for something? Or do I want to use you for something?"

"Catherine, you certainly would provide an incentive to stay around for a while. Even to be used, and even if it was not helpful to you. I like you so very much that no matter how you framed such an invitation I would most likely accept. To myself, I question my motives. I wonder at my apparent or seeming foolishness, being inveigled by a beautiful young woman. Or is it the intellectual stimulus that draws me? Can I answer the question truthfully, first to myself, and then you?"

"Mr. D. it matters not how you answer the question, either to yourself or to me. Will you stay longer?"

"Yes!, of course."

"Mr. D. maybe we will soon discover where it will all lead. I know it already has given new impetus to my writing efforts. I had been looking for some reason to continue, beyond the urgency of my own idealism, some concrete purpose, in the face of my own knowledge of the futile endeavors of the countless idealists to come before me. How could I, me, little ole me, be so presumptuous to imagine I could make a difference, could be the one to show the way? How grandiose!. But not so, Mr. D.; you have brought credence to the whole endeavor."

"I did no such thing. I happened to be the person who was there at a given moment. None of what I am has anything to do with you. You are you, an original you. Yes! I recognize you. But I must confess, how much of this you would I have recognized if you had not been so gorgeous? I mean, would we have had any occasion to have had any kind of discussion, if I simply chose to go about my business, keeping my proper distance, as it were? So let's have no illusions on that score."

"Mr. D. we have already been through that. I don't care to know your specific motives. What matters is that I have no reason

whatever to distrust your motives, simply because you have tried to be forthright in revealing them. So, I trust you.”

“O.K. Catherine, I’ll stick around until it seems things are not going anywhere for you.”

“O.K. Mr. D. it is settled.”

## *The End Of Second Day*

After supper, William felt it was time to make some kind of exit until a later time. Maybe Catherine would have second thoughts, and everything would simply go its own way. Knowing that their contact was not ending at this juncture made William feel good. He wanted very much to have this relationship continue. Catherine also felt some tension that was building up in her, suddenly relieved.

“Catherine, I need to gather my tools, do a little cleanup of some of my messes, and I think I should be on my way for now. I would plan on the supper engagements as long as you wished for them to continue. What would be a good time to come?”

“Mr. D., any time after five will be fine. Don’t leave without saying goodbye.”

William spent the next hour cleaning up and gathering his tools. He was going to another sorority tomorrow, which might take a couple days because of a serious plumbing problem, which had developed since he had accepted the job. Along with a number of other minor problems, it might take that long, leaving one day for the other sorority.

When he was finished he called for Catherine, who sounded a response from her room. She seemed to rush down the stairs, unnecessarily it would seem, because William did not seem hurried. She flushed a little, lowering her head as though to hide a slight embarrassment. But William reached out with his right hand to touch her lightly under the chin as though to raise her head. She very willingly and quickly responded, facing him with a warm smile, a kind of relieved thank you.

Before any more time passed they were in each others arms, hugging. William, now abashedly self-conscious, felt this almost tender embrace to be inappropriate. Catherine, for her part, seemed to wallow in the warmth, seemingly willing to stand there without saying anything. William wanted to kiss her, but was horrified by the image of this old coot seemingly slobbering over this sweet young thing. His next impulse was to disengage, repulsed by his own thoughts. He did so, gently, but firmly.

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

“Whuhhh, Mr. D. Is something wrong?”

“Catherine, I haven’t decided whether to think that or not, but do feel I have stepped over the line with you. I feel I have shown some disrespect in this gesture, and some disgust with myself for having done so.”

“Oh, Mr. D., you must not feel that way. I am party to this ‘gesture’ as you call it. Did you feel me cringe, or try to pull away?”

“Mr. D., please don’t trouble yourself with something that isn’t troubling me. But I’ll let you go on the promise to come tomorrow night for supper.”

“Alright Catherine. Thanks for the wonderful evening.”

Once again, Catherine quickly closed the distance between them, embracing William with another, more lingering hug. “Good night, Mr. D.”; releasing him. Greatly relieved, William departed with a nod a bow and a wave.

## *After The Second Day*

William had much to ponder. He was imagining himself in some kind of dream, and wondered what will happen when he realizes he is actually writing a story, an old man’s story of desire and love of eternal youth, a pathetic fiction. He thought of Lolita. No!, he wasn’t a Mr. Humbert. He thought of Yillah, something elusive, haunting him; but Taji was a young man; and Herman younger than William when writing Mardi. Could he be losing it? But, does it matter? Was not Mardi one of the greatest pieces of escapist literature? Desperate to write about something; to fill the hours; everything else cynically dispatched? Over the hill, headed for what? The thought of an end was too terrible to contemplate. So, if it was to be heaven, why not with Catherine, where age might be ageless? It’s a trick of the imagination, is it not? One finds no corroboration, only faith, perhaps desperate faith, all founded in some kind of western bullshit that provides an easy out for all the transgressions, all the temptations; all is forgiven, all is redeemed. Even all those thoughts of Catherine would be forgiven. Why does he not think of his wife in the same context? The person who spent so much of her life by his side? Why this dalliance with a sweet young thing? Didn’t his wife deserve to share the feast of peaches and ice cream, and not this gorgeous interloper?

It must be that he is writing something to kill time; why kill time, why not leap over the precipice? Find out what is beyond; then come back? Set everybody straight. Maybe even find out if Catherine is real, or technically feasible.

William thought he would be testing his own thesis by going to supper again, then what? Was it his move? He thought not. It would be Catherine's move. Was she a tangible reality? What move could she possibly make? Why couldn't he simply enjoy the companionship of this sweet child? Sweet child? Or woman? Like Plato was supposed to have done with all the women, all sisters. No need to get all excited. Time is past for that. Or was it Socrates for whom time had passed. Was Plato real, or was he only a figment of Socrates imagination? Or was it the other way around? Who gets the credits for such an absurd notion? Platonic, Socratic, relationship! Plato must have been nuts, or was without nuts? Or were those Greek women all big fat and ugly? If Catherine was to so much as twist Mr. Plato's whiskers, spirituality would give way to corpus delicious. Like those long golden threads of JC when MM got holt of 'em. William didn't know that for a fact, but since Nikos Kazantzakis, that other Greek, said so, it must be true. I'm not Plato, William thought. What if Catherine were to playfully twirl his whiskers? Nah! She wouldn't; only in a story, to move it along. In real life, she is not a tease, a coquette. She would be more circumspect; or even more direct in her dealings.

Catherine did not so much ponder. Her spirits were buoyant. She meant what she said when she said he had given her writing a new impetus, and what she didn't say explicitly, perhaps even a new urgency. Her mind was overflowing with ideas. She tapped away on the keyboard long into the night, trying to get something before her. Impossible! Too, too much to consider! Finally giving into weariness, she nodded off in her chair.

## *A Third Day Dawns. Hmn.*

The next day, Catherine continued with her efforts. She thought, 'How fortunate to have remained here during the break.'

While William was monkeywrenching the plumbing in the next sorority, the author was recalling when he had begun this story. He was on the boat way off in the wilderness. It was heavily overcast in the fjords, and raining periodically. The fire was burning in the little homemade cabin wood-heater. He had been especially stirred since having one of those haunting dreams that linger after one awakens, that one attempts to retain by relapsing into sleep, or struggles to keep alive in a bleary-eyed awakened state. There was a particularly charmingly beautiful young woman (is there any other kind), one he did not know or recognize, by

whom he was smitten, as he had been by many others; all young women (a la W. H. Hudson), it should be noted. So he set out to create an imaginary romance, involving the sweet young thing. It was the first time he had tried anything of the kind in writing. He had no particular idea in mind, or what might be its objective; possibly a love affair with a movie star, or some femme fatale. He knew what he was attempting to do would become only too transparent. Still, the dream begged for substance. He truly wondered if this was a sign of senile deterioration, clearly associated with age, or perhaps a fair representation of his truly limited imagination. If one is to try his hand at fiction, why this silly Faustian business between an old man and a young woman? Johann Wolfgang von Goethe? The dream must accept the responsibility. It doesn't matter that it happens in real life amongst the celebrities all too frequently. They have something going for them with their looks and their celebrity status and their wealth. But what did he have? Not even a dime novel romance. But Alas!, why these dreams to haunt one so, only to disappear forever?

For his part, William didn't want to believe that he was imagining the improbable denouement, that he was involved in some kind of salacious tract. Was not the thought of touching Catherine salacious? In real life; or in fiction? If it was happening for real, was he not in the position of an old goat, a satyr, a lecher; and might worse things be said; pervert, pornographer, and corrupter of virtue; onset of senile dementia?

Catherine would never say these things. She would not even think them; and would defend William against them.

William pondered the DH Lawrence speculations with regard to women. In his attempt to recognize women as a creature apart from man, with her own psyche, Hah!, her own body, he felt DH was trying to break a mold with new insights provided by the newer sciences, newer 'enlightenments'. But on the other hand perhaps he was signifying his own revelations, one's not necessarily new to the species. William isn't sure what Lawrence is saying when he describes the emptiness of modern life with its 'counterfeit' lifestyle. Has life been anything but counterfeit? In a counterfeit lifestyle, a woman is never fulfilled; she requires more. Apparently she has become more aware of her separateness, and her own identity; and her own needs. So when Connie gets screwed for the first time outside her conjugal bed, she doesn't reach her 'crisis' with the blooded member as Michaelis expires in his 'crisis', but only afterward, when she convinces him to keep it firmly blooded, like a dildo, for her to; Hmn!; proceed on to a 'crisis'. That's an R-Rated six letter word.

William had learned the real problem is ‘fucking’, without foreplay, without indulging the partner, that is, caring enough; believing a long-sustained manly screw was the way to salvation.

William doesn’t doubt the needs of a woman, independent of a man. He reflects on his father’s preoccupation with sex, but sex as a destroyer, a la Nietzsche, of the male substance (his brain), and his creative energies. But that never kept pop away from the pudenda, and the desire to crawl back into the womb. Dad conjured the female as a devourer. William believed his father was eagerly consumed; and sought consumption at every opportunity.

William had his own thoughts on the subject. Not combining the two outlooks, of DH and his father, he had thought of woman as separate, and unknowable in her entirety. As a human being, he was able to value her seeming difference from the male, in the sense that she did not seem as violently disposed in her everyday life; her identification with life and the living was more tender, and considerate; and perhaps sentimental. The mysteries of her need for sexual gratification were different physically, and to be understood in those terms, and not less meaningful than his.

William professes ignorance in the matter, only marginally enlightened by his own experiences. He knows that the earth can only momentarily transcend itself, as in a mirage; though brilliantly illuminated by resplendent sunsets, her silhouette remains anchored to the horizon. The pleasures of one’s sensuality notwithstanding, one is serving the imperatives of a nature, only barely comprehensible. It is not clear to his mind what it all means, as a fortuitous thing, as a blind thing, or as a purposeful thing. Some would argue, ‘its all chemistry’.

He could not help but wonder at Lawrence’s emphasis on the ‘blooded’ connection, the organismic gorging of the tissues of both male and female as the ultimate fulfillment of the male/female conjoining. William understood, conceptually, that nature (through that mysterious process recognized as evolution) would finagle a manner of procreation that was certain and sure, as a matter of necessity. Attraction of two individuals to bring about that end seemed to be the mechanism, and that desire would further its aims, and that pleasure would seal the bargain. Enter Love!? It would seem that ‘love’ is intended to, and may describe, the whole process, or it may not. Was it not after the first time, the teen-aged girl inquired, “Is that all there is to it?”, only to give birth nine months later. William was not dismissing any part of the process, or the value of a ‘crisis’ in creating a more cheerful woman. It was true that the male tended to expire after his efforts; to put that another way, the male did not feel a great need to do great works. Hopefully he would not get syphilis or AIDS in other side trips of

the evolutionary process. Then there was prostate cancer; akin to Alfred Hitchcock appearing in cameo in his films.

Elizabeth Bishop poetized that the moon was a hole in the sky. It seems then that the earth lives under a shroud. What lives beyond is all light, or so we would have to deduce. We have approached the hole only to find it was not made of anything green, or any thing of value to make it worth while to return. Moon rocks in a few vulcanology labs. Lucky Charms. Be patient. The Chinese have not given it go. William will be happy when they do, instead of maybe attempting to conquer the planet one more time. Another poet ended her life with her head thrust into a gas oven; a rabid passion thus unserved. Both poets seem to have agreed that the earth is a forgotten place. It does not seem a happy place. For Man?! A blank wall! William must confess a profound ignorance.

William was beginning to want to be near Catherine. Whether she was real, a figment of his imagination, or the creation of a crazed old geezur upon a computer screen, is left for the reader to determine. William was beginning to wonder whether any of that mattered. Was he not ready to relieve the tedium of his life? He wondered about the regrets about which he had previously written when he learned his body had developed a tumor that proved malignant. Could not all regrets be remedied through an intimate relationship with Catherine? He wondered, 'are we seeking too long and hard after things intangible?' Catherine is tangible, even as an object of the imagination. Is she not, like Helen, the embodiment of all things?

What if the absurdity of this tale found him making love to Catherine? Even if that implausible event did occur, how far could he stray from reality? Once a person breaches what is believable, does he forego any connection with a plausible reality? For example, even if Catherine didn't find his aged body objectionable, and found pleasure in their union, and even though this did stretch the limits of credibility, or disgust, to the reader as a possible happening, how far could the author extend the involvement of the reader? That is, could the reader accept this relationship because it brought happiness to two individuals? Could the reader experience some kind of catharsis, an identification with the soul and the spirit, rather than be repulsed by propriety, and the perception of a aging corpus. Especially if Catherine was not repulsed? What do you suppose Gretchen really thought as she fondled the jewels?

William suspected, perhaps even knew, the limits of his body would not be able to answer the needs of Catherine once she was aroused. He could imagine the initial conjoining as a wonderful



happening for both of them. No matter what, he would see that her experience was at least pleasurable, if not fulfilling. What would be fulfilling for her? That is the question one poses as an old geezer, as an imaginary event that must obey the constraints of reality. DH Lawrence believed the womb, the corporeal, is the member that required satisfaction. Is that also a spiritual thing? It is not known whether intelligence was required also.

Catherine, for her part, was wondering about all the feelings that this man stirred within her. Her mind, her intellect was in a ferment. She too wanted to be near Mr. D. She realized she was an innocent victim of the author's imagination. But she was a willing conspirator to the fiction, the implausibility of it all. She was willing to go along with the author's need to use her for his purposes. She had begun to acquire an interest in the life that was developing for her. She realized the author was reaching beyond certain limits. Because she shared in the author's sentiments, she was also aware of Mardi and Yillah. She could perceive Yillah as the embodiment of spiritual longing. Perhaps never to come to a fruition because that is the very nature of longing, that part of life that is unknowable, but is forever beckoning us along. As she was inclined to do, she recalled something haunting written by Ortega Y Gasset: " ..... *What is most valuable in man is his eternal and almost divine discontent, which is a kind of love without a beloved, and like an ache we feel in members of our body that we do not have. Man is the only being that misses what he has never had. And the whole of what we miss, without ever having had it, is never what we call happiness. .... man (is) the only being who is unhappy, for the very reason he needs to be happy. That is because he needs to be what he is not.*"

She also wanted Yillah to become more real, less elusive. She realized along with the author that the limits of plausibility had already been reached. That there would not be any surprises for the reader that he had not already experienced in his own life, and in his perusals through all the great romances, the other fictionalizations devised through poetic license.

But Catherine was willing to take the same risks as Yillah in order to become. Even to appear more tangible. She realized that the author would use her as the feature attraction to take the reader through all kinds of probings into the psyche and doings of man. She imagined Yillah to be the better part of the White Whale.

## *The Author Reappears*

At this point the author must interject himself into his own creation, in cameo, walking his dogs. He apologizes for making reference to other literature, and characters found therein. But he believes in his heart that any man or woman who would spend the time in earnest, open minded study, would find immense enjoyment, and much intellectual stimulus, in reading also, of all manner of characters, and all manner of ways of expressing all our human traits. When the author writes: *She imagined Yillah to be the better part of the White Whale.* the author realizes that the reader must have some inkling of what is being conjectured by the statement. (Or none at all, merely skipping along, or shutting the volume altogether as a huge crock). A crock it may well be, but the author feels he ought explain that *Mardi* was written by Herman Melville, the same author who wrote *Moby Dick*. Many analysts of *Moby* feel the *White Whale* as the all powerful unknowable, who first victimized Ahab by taking away a piece of his body. An enraged Ahab wanted revenge. He wounded the Whale, but in the end failed to subdue him, and as fate would have it, was himself subdued forever. An improbable but plausible story? *Mardi*, written before *Moby*, was also invested with the unknowable Yillah. While *Moby* was severe and ultimately ruinous of those who sought after him, Yillah was an enchanting melody, whom one might construe as the ultimate salvation for the spirit, a very different kind of union than with *Moby*. Man was not able to realize his gambit, because he was eluded. *Moby* was not of a mind to elude, but to crush the life out of those who presumed upon his world.

Yes! ultimately the 'real' man conquered the Whale almost to extinction, a small accomplishment, as testament to his cleverness and his greed. The reality of extinction makes of the *White Whale* an aberration in the 'fatefully inevitable' course that God-Man, in his endeavor to crush the life out of every living thing as a testament to his preeminence, despite the imaginary vengeance of *Moby Dick*. He has stripped the planet of everything of value. All that remain are the pests. It is man who is the ultimate destroyer, the ultimate pest. However, God-Man has not conquered Yillah, or what she symbolizes.

It was almost certain that Herman did not find in *Fayaway* the answer to his longing. As the heroine of *Typee*, Herman's first 'romantic' novel, she served to awaken our desires for the voluptuously innocent. Our author discusses the contrast between *Fayaway* and Yillah in another of his probing writings, titled, 'The Heathen', a very brief speculative sojourn.

More to the point of this writing is the suggestion by the author that the reader get with the program, if for no other reason than to refute the author utterly and completely. He asks, 'what else is there to do to avert the tedium?' He would encourage the reader to reach beyond himself in his searchings for truth, even though he cannot possibly know everything.

He would remind the reader that this is also an evolving tale without a predetermined end. Even though he knows readers to be of only one species, sometimes a very stupid species, full of prejudices, and hypocritical in its every thought, and although not that discriminating, it none the less knows what it wants as an audience. It wants to be entertained.

## *Ex Eunt*

To return to Catherine's awakenings.

Catherine sensed she was alone in what was happening to her; that is, she felt there wasn't anyone with whom she could share or confide this emerging relationship. Most likely her parents would be 'horrified'. Her sisters would listen to her, but might not understand. Her 'friends' would tell her she was 'out of her mind'. But Catherine felt she could handle what was happening. She felt that Mr. D. was most sensitive to her feelings, and to notions of propriety. Did she feel flattered by his interest in her? Some kind of infatuation with an idea, rather than some concrete reality, which she chose to ignore? Or was she merely submitting to the exegesis of the story line; unable to protest against the author's presumption with regard to her. How could he connect these two together? She realized he wanted to make it seem quite natural for the two of them to get together, that scruples were more an inconvenience, than some fixed immutable social invention. She also realized that if man could legislate that only a man and a woman could become marriage partners in the eyes of the law, why could not the law also set age limits on unions.

She also realized that she would not exist at all if it was not for the author. But now that he has created her, she wants to have some say in what happens to her. She doesn't mind the denouement with Mr. D. It has even entered her mind that perhaps Mr. D. is the alter ego of the author; and that they may be inseparable. She wonders why the author cannot approach her more forthrightly; since it makes little difference to her whether she relates to Mr. D. or the author. She wondered if the author was a wrinkled old cripple and so bent over, twisted and ugly that she would cringe and shudder at the thought of any proximity to him.

Has the author killed enough time with conjecture?

## *Catherine and Mr.D. The Third Evening*

William managed to solve the gross plumbing problem by finally enlisting the services of rootin' tootin' rooter. He had had enough of such odious activity, and was ready for an evening with Catherine.

Catherine, though deeply engaged in her writing, ceased her activity to prepare the supper; and too was looking forward eagerly to the evening with Mr. D.

William arrived in the middle of preparations; while greeting him genially, Catherine ushered him away from the kitchen. So William 'cooled his heels' with the ubiquitous claptrap dog-eared magazines found anywhere and everywhere; absentmindedly scanning through the pictorial part, full of unflattering photos of all the all too human subjects most in the public eye. Smut for sale. William couldn't help but think how these organs of promulgation might handle his scandalous 'peccadillo' with Catherine.

"Old Geezur Seduces Young Girl".

"Old Geezur Invokes Plato".

"There Oughta Be A Law"

"Mr. D., I'm sorry I shoed you away. I have been looking forward to this evening. I didn't want to get off on the wrong foot with a messed-up meal. But things are under control now and will be ready in a half-hour or so.

"Did you have a productive day?"

"Catherine, today may have been productive, but it is the kind of day that causes me to consider what in hell I think I am doing. It is time to exercise some stringency in my consumption of goods and services in the market place. What I do not need is what I do not need."

"But Mr. D., we would not have met each other."

"Are you advocating that I continue so that I can meet others like yourself? I suspect that is not possible."

"Mr. D, I imagine I would take exception to your finding another, whether possible or not. Now that I know you will remain in the neighborhood after your chores are completed, I feel you have made of me an exception."

“Catherine, before I came here, I had conversed with a young woman, mother of two on the island who was busted for growing dope. That is, she was not arrested, but had been charged. She had several hundred plants and all the growing paraphernalia confiscated. I suspected she and her mate were involved in growing, but said nothing to anyone, and was not surprised that they were eventually discovered in the illegal activity. At the end of the six-month statute month, after the confiscation, the bust, she learned she was going to be charged. Having imbibed some spirits, she became voluble, and began telling me things I had only suspected. I thought her story interesting enough to encourage her to write it down. She thought she couldn’t do that, but wanted to tell her story, and suggested narrating it to me. I suggested in turn that that would be OK, but thought she should also tape record it in order for me to preserve the details, which she agreed to do.

“I’m telling you this because it seems it is easy enough to have close encounters that one does not anticipate. I am interested in doing this thing from both my own perspective, and from hers. I do not feel about her as I do about you. She happens to be the daughter of an island friend. An unusual young person in her own right; very much herself, bold, daring; and a woman, in addition.

“Previously I told you of the granddaughter of my now dead neighbor. I guess this means I am a person open to certain kinds of experiences; and I should add, not exclusively with the fair sex. However, I do feel I respond to and enjoy the fair sex far more than the less fair sex. That’s a lot of sexist talk, No!?”

“To emphasize this last statement, I cannot say enough how much I enjoy you, greatly as a member of the fair sex, but even more because of your exquisite beauty, and your incredible intelligence.”

“Yes, Yes!, Mr. D., we have been there, but I’m curious; the way you describe the dope growing woman: ‘very much herself, bold, daring ....’. How so?”

“Hmn!! When twelve years old she was hired to trim buds. When in her teens she learned to sail and became a sailing instructor. At eighteen she went off to Australia, making her way teaching sailing. She returned to the island to become a crew member on fish boats. She volunteered for some coast guard program, she became a fish cop, she searched for a lover that would give her children. She acquired land on the island, built a place to live, had two children, grew dope. Now that she is broke, she weeds, picks grapes and bartends, labors at any and all, and continues to be a conscientious mother; and father. When she was conceiving and carrying she didn’t drink and didn’t toke”

“Impressive, Mr. D. I would like to meet her. In comparison, you know of course that I came from an environment that would not have exposed me to such a lifestyle; I do not feel deprived. But I am now very much more aware of something, you might call it a revelation, that we are all limited in our experiences. She, for example, might feel very intimidated by my composure, or poise, that comes from another kind of knowing. I do not assert that position, but I naturally feel something that comes from early exposure to something different. I don’t claim that one is better than the other. I guess what is most important is the genuineness of the individual. She is perhaps a genuine person genuinely evolved from her environment. I might feel the same about the evolution of my person”.

“Lovely lady, I do not compare. I do not imply that your experience is limited, but, of course, it is implicit that it is limited. As is mine, and as is hers. I do not feel for her what I feel for you. That is, while I like her and, at times, admire her; and as much as it seems so, I do not have a special relationship with her that involves my emotions. I am appreciative that she would think enough of me, first to trust me, and to consider I might be an avenue for her to tell her story. I guess that influences me.”

“Mr. D., does it impress you that I trust you, almost instinctively. Does it impress you that I think of you as a very special person?”

“Catherine did you note that I said I do not have an emotional relationship with this woman?”

“I heard you Mr. D. Does that mean you could not envision yourself caressing her, kissing her, making love to her?”

“I do not, and have not. As a matter of interest, I do not envision the like with you; probably because it is unthinkable. And unethical. I believe that I esteem you beyond any desire to be forward with my emotions.”

“Then Mr. D., let me ask you a very direct question, ‘Could you kiss, caress, and make love to me?’”

“Does it not matter to you what I just said?”

“Of course it does, but that is beside the point.”

“To answer your question, then, I feel bound to say ‘No!’”

“Mr. D., are you saying you do not desire me?”

“Catherine, I have been through this before, but when I was much younger; I was asked the same question by a girl, with whom I was smitten. I cannot recall my answer, if I did answer the question, but when I attempted to embrace her, she withdrew. In hindsight, I am no wiser as to what I should have said or done. But I did feel as though I was ‘in over my head’. I felt she was not reciprocating my feelings for her, and felt that if I endeavored to

embrace her again, the result would be the same. My torment grew to such a degree that I went away, 3,000 miles away. I never discovered the full import of the expression, 'Faint heart n'er won fair lady', as my mother admonished."

"That sounds so sad, Mr. D."

"Does one ever learn what truly matters? We are given only so much time. It is inevitable that paths will cross; because they cross does not mean that they should do any more than that? But it is inevitable that some of these path crossings will lead to something. Its not as if we were on the desert, either in numbers of opportunities, or in observing the social protocols. The whole attempt to gain perspective might find a surer answer if indeed we had met upon the desert. But we have not; we are in the midst of a vast tumult of crossing paths where, to avoid mayhem, we are governed by rules, laws, manners, mores, taboos, ethics, and sensibilities. Catherine, our paths have crossed; we have not yet departed into our continuing journey, down our respective paths. When I do depart, as I must, I will carry the memory of you in my heart. I know in my heart that you are the best and the finest. If I was a younger man, I would be helplessly smitten. I may be helplessly smitten now, but know with certainty that I tread in a forbidden zone."

"Mr. D., that also sounds sad. Mr. D., you have as much right as any other to feel what you feel; as do I. Every word brings us closer, even though you say you must leave a forbidden zone. To me it is not forbidden. But if you must leave, do not make it as though I forced that decision upon you. I am willing to see you every day into a future I cannot as yet envision. That is how you affect me now, today, in this very moment.

"Perhaps the girl you mentioned was ambivalent in her emotions; she found you attractive, wanted to see you, but was so uncertain of her own life, and its direction, that she could not respond to you at that time, in the way you might have wanted. The crossing of the paths was not opportune; and perhaps your instinct to leave was the necessary step, where a less than 'faint heart' might have brought about the same result, and only increased your sense of rejection.

"Mr. D., I am willing to leave options open, because I do not feel negatively about our relationship. I do not feel a relationship has to pass a certain test by a certain time. I know that passions arise, and perhaps because of them, relationships come to some kind of crisis. I do not feel any crisis between us. That may be because you are very controlled and circumspect in your behavior – for whatever reason. Mr. D. I may be painting myself into a corner, when I say, 'Trust I would never do anything to hurt you'."

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

“Ms. Tellerman, when my wife and I were in the beginning throes of our relationship, when the desire to be with, and the pain of separation, and the uncertainty of what direction, what path to take, she wrote those very words. But there was hurt, none the less, but not by intent. Her love for me was something I could not comprehend. I did not want to trust what she was saying because my experience weighed heavily in favor of failure with the opposite sex. But she did love me. Even after we got together, I could not find in myself what attracted her. But she was true to her word; she did not want to hurt me. She could not be specific, when I asked what she loved about me, what bound her feelings in mine. Love! Such a feeble four letter word. Was it my body, my mind, my spirit, the color of my eyes, the color of my hair, my essence? She could not answer to the specifics.”

“Did that bother you?”

“Yes and No; I could not be specific either. But her circumstances were different. In her love she was certain of her emotions; she had felt love before, and desire. She came from a family where there was a lot of love, as in yours. Her foundation was secure. I believe she was a strong person because of that foundation. She had acted upon her love, when her father was obviously displeased, and perhaps felt his love for her had been betrayed. But it was not betrayed, even to this day; she has been a loyal daughter. She has been a loyal companion and partner.”

“Mr. D., it is I who now feel a little bit out on a limb. I suspect you still love your wife a great deal. I strongly suspect she would not appreciate your feelings for me.”

“Catherine, it is my turn to utter those words: ‘Trust I would not do anything to hurt you’. At this juncture, the path again; at this juncture, I want you in my life, whether near or from afar. That is certain.

“Will I hurt my wife by showing an interest in you? It would seem likely, even though now, we lead separate lives.

“Despite that, and simply put, I will not forget you, if the afar option is the only one. I will remember you with only the fondest feelings. If it should come to a consideration of my wife, she will need to understand. I would not choose to compromise anyone, and do not want to be put in a position of choosing one alternative or the other. For me, life is on the wane, so I do not wish to occupy what remains with do or die stuff; the dying part is close enough. When my father was confronted with the choice of his spouse or the unmitigated selfish act, he chose the latter; then he was left alone, ruing the day; my mother was unmoved by the laments of the old roué.



“I do not wish for you to misconstrue what I am saying. That is, do not feel you have to spare me. I am willing to take my chances for what I believe is a rewarding experience for me. Already I have been rewarded by taking the path that brought me here. I was not seeking a ‘reward’, and perhaps ‘reward’ is a very poor choice of words. I had not imagined that life was finished, although in my mind and spirit that might have seemed the case. Obviously I was open to something without knowing so. Upon reflection, to be honest, I suppose I have always been looking for special relationships, for whatever reason. I might rationalize, or justify, such an attitude by stating that any human life is a merely flicker in the Cosmos, if that. What is that life intended to become beyond a flicker? What the ego, in its most conceited and grandiose moment, might presume does not alter the inevitable. I can imagine the confrontation with the inevitable makes many things appear possible, and perhaps even imperative, almost as a matter of principle; what principle; the principle of ‘What’s Missing?’.”

“Catherine, not long ago, I read a biography of that great English author, Charles Dickens (BNP before the Nobel Prize). His wife’s name was Catherine. It seemed when they wedded, he loved her. By all stretches of the imagination, after siring ten children, also many miscarriages, one might not doubt their physical attachment. However, Dickens was not happy. It was thought he loved another who had rejected him; that Catherine was a pretty ‘rebound’ that came along. As his life wore on he had many flirtations, including his wife’s younger sister, whom he might have loved even more. Had she not died young, one can only guess at the complications, and perhaps a different bent to his writing. Some twenty odd years later in his life, after his fame had been established, the lady who had rejected him, now surfaced trying to regain something lost, or discover something new. In his day conventional morality was bound up with a rigid conduct; one did not do things that contravened the mores, that is, not without suffering harsh social consequences. Dickens lived essentially a puritan existence.

“Dickens received a rude shock when he met the long lost lady love, a meeting that was encouraged by her. She, of course, had long ago married, and was mother of two. She had written him, he responded as perhaps most of us would do. When they finally met again, she had turned rather corpulent, and engaged in much mindless chitter chatter that Dickens found mostly wanting. It was thought she was shinning up to the bright light of England, while he was reliving a youth that might never have been.

“Dickens realized what a huge mistake this aberration had become, doing about everything he could to avoid her.

“Still later, when he and Catherine went their separate ways after twenty-two years of marriage, he attributed his marriage to a mistake of youth.

“Mr. Dickens never found that special happiness, only in illusion. His Catherine suffered immeasurably as well. Hmn, was she astute enough to imagine she had also made a mistake?”

“While I appreciate the tale of Mr. Dickens, I cannot be influenced by its implications. I know you are illustrating something very crucial and very real, and very sad, in human relations.

“Mr. D., carrying on from what you intimated before you spoke of the famous man, there is no imperative here, and since what is happening does not portend an end, everything is possible.”

## *What Is Reality? Pygmalion.*

“Yes! Catherine, the author typed in that last line of yours. Because there are no rules to follow, there is no form to follow, he does what, in his mind, he pleases. The author alternates between reality and fiction, between what is plausible, but improbable and impossible, but not necessarily with firm conviction. He might be viewed as an explorer. He questions little the implausibility of things; he would rather presume upon his license to create, or his muse, to violate every tenet of credibility. He sits in judgment upon the creatures he creates, and upon himself. He persists though his judgments are harsh, even harsher upon himself. Often he does not judge at all, because he is not well enough acquainted with the facts, does not feel the necessity, cannot form the framework to form a judgment, or simply feels too close to a subject to remain objective; he recuses himself. Some very original, spontaneous things happen in life, that fall outside the parameters of precedents established to form a judgment, thereby escaping judgment altogether.

“He sees himself, not unlike his protagonist, subjectively and autobiographically, as an old geezur, languishing in an absurd and futile romantic involvement, as a source of titillation; living a fake life that he could not find in the real world. A fantasy, the fantasy of a weak-minded, puerile intellect. Pygmalion. Falling in love with his own creation, but worse, creating for that sole purpose.

“This life will end, despite all the evasion”

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

“Mr. D., but I am not a fiction or a fantasy. How can I prove to you that we are real, that this is truly happening to us? Would a kiss seal the bargain, or would you prefer a pinch, or some kind of explosion? You cheat me, by denying me my substantiality, my due in the cosmos. No one has that right, even the author. Whomever has created me has unleashed someone he or she has no right to reclaim as a bad job; or to put it another way, as ill-conceived. If every other ill-conceived individual, and there are millions of them, have rights to life, then I do. Once I enter another individual’s mind, I have become, fiction or fact; in as much as if I read about some historical figure, about whom I can know nothing through my own personal experience. Once I read about that individual, I have given him or her, life, through my imagination, as you have done with Mr. Dickens.

“I’m glad there are no rules, that there is no form, because that means we are free in the time/space, extradimensional cosmos to become what we are. We give substance to what is only imagined in one human brain. Everything that is so imagined exists only because it is imagined; perhaps reconstructed from bits of memory. We see, we hear, we touch, we sense, but what we know, truly know, as real, is structured by our brains. There is no uniform structure. Each and every individual is unique in its way of structuring what is sensed. Hypothetically, I perceive no difference in the reality of the imaginings of the author and in the imaginings of any other individual’s perception of the universe, and the meaning of life, each derived from sensation, imagined, and consigned to a fallible memory. It involves the peculiar ability of man, per se, to devise a scheme of things, founded in ‘his’ memory of experience, and concocted, structured, by this dubious attribute of reason; all a function of ‘his’ brain.

“If I was to tell you a story of two individuals, as though I had experienced them first hand, and you believed that their lives had actually happened, because you believe in me and my credibility, how would you catalogue that story? You would imagine it within the realm of your ability to visualize, that is, picture what was being told, you would provide a landscape, or a stage setting, partly from my words and partly from memories of your experience. In short, your brain would be creating a scene in which what was being described could exist. Now suppose you are reading what the author is now writing about us, not questioning the credibility, perhaps at first, would you distinguish between one description and the other? Even if it proved incredible, would you not imagine it all the same?

“That might comprise an age-old conundrum regarding reality. It applies to every aspect of what any individual believes, whether

or not that individual is able to provide substance; or proof. One conjures what one conjures, and however conjured, and believing what one believes, however one arrives there, whether completely sane, or completely insane, or as I like to imagine, schizophrenic. Often these become immovable, or fixed in that individual's brain. Reason or logic cannot assail them. Doubt cannot penetrate them.

"Recently there were 30 college students shot down in a Virginia classroom by a deranged foreign student. Allow me the privilege to take the place, or resume the life of one of these cut off in the bud. How preposterous does that sound?"

"I realize that, as I am saying all these things, you may very well be the author, that you may have created me, as did Pygmalion create a statue; that as he fell in love with his creation, so have you imagined me, and have now fallen in love with me. But do I deserve a life apart from your entrancement; your enchantment (Quixotically)? Am I a free agent now that I am appearing on the printed page?"

"Catherine, you are free, whether or not I become enchanted."

"I suppose whatever I am will become tainted because they will judge you senile. They will judge me deficient. They will wonder why you couldn't have provided me with a young lover."

"So lets burn the script! We can work out our destinies without their prying eyes and hunger for scandal. Let them feast their eyes on nothing, the nothingness of their lives. Their script is dull in comparison; everything predictable, so full of prejudice, and not so pretty at that. Suppose the author left off right here, now."

"It would seem the arguments favor the end of this script; perhaps another would be more suitable. Where you were not you, and I was not I."

"Mr. D., what if we were to migrate to Pitcairn? Or suppose, for the sake of obtuse supposition, we were to return as researchers to Mardi, seeking to solve the riddle of Yillah?"

"Yes, Catherine, if we exist, does not Mardi exist? And Yillah fascinates me. Perhaps she was self-conscious; maybe had bad breath or body odor, or a mole on her thigh."

"Oh! Mr. D., now, who is being scandalous. In my mind Yillah was perfect, perfect everything. Perhaps not to be sullied by the likes of man. Perhaps even a phantom designed to haunt forever all who even glimpsed her."

"No, Mr. D. I want to take my chances with this script. We have much remaining to discuss, whether or not the author and his critics approve. We need to prevail upon the author to continue, even if we end up in the crypt together drinking the deadly draft, or more painfully, 'burned at the stake'. But he would not be so cruel. I have faith he would like to see us happy, perhaps working

together to solve the riddle of man. To eventually unravel the riddle of you and I. After all, he is the one who brought us to the fore; we may be unlikely, but isn't the whole of humanity an unlikely creation?

"Mr. D. are we not leaping ahead in this script, too anxious to know the end without the full development of the denouement? First of all, we are about to miss our dinner if this conversation goes any further at this time. So let us leave off; to be continued in the next episode. Be forewarned Mr. D., I will ask again the question that you have chosen to avoid answering.

"That is to say, 'I'm willing'."

"It seems I haven't any choice, lest to begin another tale."

*Ex eunt*

## *Heavy Indulgence In Words Indigestion?*

*The author strongly recommends the reader should take a break before his next onslaught. While what follows in the brief is not necessary to the denouement, it provides its own reason to be in the affairs of writers and men of dubious character.*

Sensing this writing is testing you, the reader's credulity, and despite such a trial, you have read this far, then the author feels vindicated. Transpose Catherine upon Yillah; a pleasing presence, who might prove elusively ethereal, or, who might prove more tangible, like a Hollywood Starlet, though destined for the fire. Since the whole tale is formative, even the author cannot promise a resolution. William. What of William; what is he, what will he yet become? Can Helen Trent find happiness as an old crone? Who wrote that? Someone is messing with the script. William and Helen Trent? More believable than William and Catherine? More believable than Taji and Yillah; how about Taji and Catherine, or the more incredible Taji and Helen (leaving off the Trent). Mr. Abel and Rima? And what of Paris and Helen (trentless). Is the author suggesting anything with these tangential allusions? Read On!

Recall that Paris was offered three choices: Power, Women, Martial Glory. Already, he had a woman, but chose Helen anyway. Of course, this too, is all legend. So, Read On!

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

William had thought of the masses and their imaginary 'love' affairs with celebrities, closet love affairs. They swoon before them, ogle them, imitate them, want to become them; somehow those exterior lives seem more important than their own lives. Then the ogler dies.

Suddenly William began to think of his mother. It was the combination grater, one of those ones that look like a miniature washboard, that Catherine had been using to grate the cheese to put on the steamed cauliflower. William had a similar one that his mother had picked up at the Goodwill. Ever poor and ever frugal mother, Proud of her self-sufficiency. To never buy anything new; and what did William get for her that was new. A microwave oven which terrified her, which she did not use. At least she used the TV to watch game shows, golf and bowling. He did not understand his mother, he never felt close to her. But she was a survivor, and if it hadn't been for catabolic old age catching up with her, she would have gone on forever. But catabolism did overwhelm her. The arthritic spine, the surgeries to remove bone mass, the pain following for months on end. The constant urge to urinate and the fear of wetting her pants. She ceased her travels; she had been to Australia, New Zealand, most of free European countries, the Mideast, Israel and Egypt, the source of biblical history; then the local trips to Mexico, to Reno and Victoria with the seniors; only to return to her game shows, golf and bowling.

The traveling was his mother's extravagance, done on a shoestring with a group of others. It was never for very long, a few weeks a year. On shipboard, she recalled walking right by Elizabeth Taylor. Mother had a thing for the life of the Stars; her son perhaps absorbing the aura. His mother was a believer in a healthily led life; she walked every day, sometimes for miles; until her back failed her, and her bladder felt the urge. She believed the surgeon who worked on her back was responsible for her near incontinence, as well as the months of pain following surgery. The same surgeon who had operated on his back. Is there any omen in this convergence?

Catherine announces that dinner is ready.

As she comes to the table she wonders out loud if the author has any compassion; or passion, for that matter. She feels disadvantaged, shortchanged by the author's seeming need to appear original, straining her need to feel more ordinary, more believable.

“I haven’t wondered whether the author made much sense, assuming some authors make some kind of sense, while others aren’t worth reading, whether or not they make any sense. Our author may be one of the latter. Catherine, the intellectual, gets into rationalizations, and rhetoric, which often polemicise his favorite preoccupations. Since rhetoric is so much akin to propaganda; propaganda to indoctrination; indoctrination to deception, it sometimes becomes difficult to separate this genuine search for the truth from the bullshit. When we are being led so very far from the truth of things, most often there is a hidden agenda, and a vested interest involved.

“Whether or not you are real, if you are real, consenting to be real, it means you will be living in the real world; perhaps unadvisedly.

“The mantra these days is ‘terrorism’. Therein lies a passion. Very rudimentary, of course. For and against. Hate and fear, fear and fear. The demagogue seizes the moment to what – to terrorize!! The demagogue becomes the fear monger. As you may suspect I am speaking of our leader; a very sore subject with most college students; and with me, and, I suspect, with the author. Do you want to be part of that?”

“OH! Mr. D., I know these things, and I am troubled by them as much as you, but I guess I did not make myself clear; I meant compassion, more like an empathy, feeling something for people in their trials and their needs, and of course, in their sufferings. Sometimes I feel these things so intensely, I become fiercely angry with ‘leaders’ who don’t appear ‘to give a shit’, for the lack of a better expression.

“The ‘establishment’ for the lack of another better expression, makes a point of our virtues as a nation. It assumes it to be self-evident that we are virtuous because we appear to do such and such. There is no doubt some wisdom behind the acts that have been so characterized; like airlifting sustenance to a defeated and hungry foe, or helping to rebuild a nation destroyed in battle. Perhaps even some compassion, ‘Christian’, perhaps human, compassion was involved. As we have paraded ourselves, the world over, as a model democracy, and as we have the documents to prove it, we have sanctified ourselves beyond all expectation. American exceptionalism.

“The ‘establishment’, per se, doesn’t tell us everything. What it doesn’t tell us, when we learn of it, embitters us because we feel we have been deceived in our basic understanding of our, what becomes, ‘propagandized’ virtue. We are not always virtuous, if ever we truly were. I am willing to accept that we were compassionate toward the Berliners, but not without some political

motivation. We were compassionate toward the Japanese, but again, not without some political motivation. The same projected political motivation got us into Korea, and into Vietnam, into Chile, Nicaragua, Cuba, the Middle east, now Iraq, and so on, without any compassion. But it turns out the political motivation is so one-sided, more inclined to influence peddling than assuring a thing called 'world peace', or being 'moved' by, once again, for the lack of a better word, compassion; identifying with the other guy.

"But worse is the thing that is happening now, the invasion of Iraq. We are being asked to build our perception of that endeavor based on our 'established' virtuousness. Instead of another ideology, we are now dealing with 'terrorism'. To tell the truth, I find that our government is more 'terrorist' towards its own people than is the outside agent that is supposedly terrorizing us. Further, that what it does to respond to the 'terrorist' invites even more of the same. When that bit of deception fails, they crank up the propaganda that we are exporting democracy to a people ruled by a dictator.

"Do we, does not our nation, our government, have some responsibility, or obligation, to make an effort to understand the reason behind the rash acts of the 'terrorist'?

"God (why God?) how we flay the flag. Every household, every business, every vehicle, every law-enforcement agency, that upholds the 'establishment's' demagoguery plasters the flag upon its windows, and its shoulders, and its SUV's. The 'mob'! Even our congressmen wave it to show their patriotism, but not necessarily to show their beliefs. To me these latter are more hypocritical, far more onerous, than the person who turns their back on the flag, or who, for that matter, burns the flag in symbolic protest. If you don't wave the banner, you must be a 'terrorist'. Rightly, you inquire if I want to be a part of that reality"

"Yes!, pretty disgusting, and, not incidentally, frightening. Besides, Catherine, ominous. Because, as you have indicated, a kind of 'mob' rule, where intelligence is not a factor. Rally around the leader. Unity under the banner, scoundrels and all. What does it all mean? How do we move on?

"If I was to allow my pessimism to influence my thoughts in the matter, I would say we are headed down the tube. Initially the law enforcement agencies, then the militia, and finally the military will be called upon to enforce upon the people, the demos, a dictatorship no different from any of those we have, in our more virtuous moments, abhorred. The government will mandate this state of affairs in the interest of national security. Rights and freedoms will be preempted. Then its all over. The purges will have



begun in earnest; 'terrorism' will no longer be the objective, rather a chained 'conformity'; and dominance.

"I believe we are headed down that road. The argument is 'our way of life'. 'Our way of life' has seldom involved 'sacrifice'. Our roots have been formed in the exploitation of the natural resources, and the natural resources belonging to other nations. We have become dependant in 'our way of life' on comfort and convenience, despite the destruction, desecration and waste, and political repercussions involved. 'Our way of life' demands a continuance of that modus operandi. The only other alternative is a new way of life that involves sacrifice in all walks of life; restraint, moderation, and a determined effort to salvage what remains of the planet as a habitable place; and not as a guarantor of a certain 'way of life' and/or a 'standard of living'. The conversion of the planet into a 'standard of living' must suffer some serious revision and some absolute constraints. Hah!, Never happen. The mob will go down the tube first, waving the banner. It is patriotic to consume the planet, right down to its last nugget; it is patriotic to multiply and subdue the earth. I'm beginning to sound like Paul Theroux's Allie, in the Mosquito Coast.

"I am troubled by the double entendre found in the use of the word 'conservative'. It's a word so close to 'conservation' that it causes one to choke on the implications of rhetoric in the affairs of men. The 'right wing' 'conservatives' Ye Gads!, and the presumption of Compassionate Conservative, are the strongest voices advocating the conversion of the planet into a 'standard of living' through the act of consuming it, because there is immense wealth and power to be gained by those who control the flow of goods therein consumed. The largest majority of the 'conservatives' are amongst the wealthiest. 'Ironically', it is the 'liberal' side of the argument that advocates 'conservation'; go figure! If it wasn't for a few dedicated individuals we would be totally bereft of all natural wonders, exploited for their resources.

"The gullible 'mob', with its pathetic little vested interest, is a sucker for the promise of 'more' 'forever', which any liar in public office will promote, without conscience.

"Catherine, I can see from your expression that I might be spoiling your appetite, that you are feeling a little bit disheartened by this negative banter. I gravitate to the stump when I think I have an audience. What can I say that is positive, or optimistic? Catherine, I've been around too long, heard the yammer too long. I have become jaded by it all. I harbor a strong prejudice against my look-a-likes. By their very natures, that is, through their very evolutionary prospect, they have become individually self-centered,

self-serving; that is, instinctively, or innately conditioned to survival at any cost. I might even say such is the natural way of things; to say once again: 'fatefully inevitable'. Do I escape my own assessments? I suspect not.

"It amazes me how man can and will endure incredible pain and suffering in the hope he will eventually be benevolently released from his jailers and torturers; while, if he would only fight for his freedom, he might also have hope, while fearing something even more hideous than imprisonment; sudden death. To be put into such a position by one's fellow man, dominated by him; that it can actually happen, that men can be so cruel and brutal to their own fellows goes beyond anything we have been taught to accept or comprehend. It is not only the deranged; The Hitlers and the lunatic Iddy Amins, Mugabes that will do such things. Regard now how close, as a nation, we are to this ancient methodology, conducted by the those 'Throwbacks', who have become our leaders; our intolerant leaders; jailing us behind the bars of Love It Or Leave, amended to Love It or Leave Our Way Of Life. These guys are more in it for themselves and their cronies than any previous administration. They beat us over the head with 'terroism'. If we think, we are the 'terrorists'; while they can fabricate lies in order to lead us into unimaginable peril.

"Catherine, one would think I might advocate something radical as an antidote. That people should take up arms against the almighty nation that brands them 'terrorists', those who disagree and dissent, as someones to be brutally and indiscriminately eliminated. It has been done, and is being done in modern times; not so ancient a practice after all.

"Like the man conjectured, 'there is no place to hide'. 'Love It Or Leave It' offers no options; the leaving is no longer an option. Our leader, when he was a governor saw to it that 152 individuals were executed as a matter of course; must be some kind of record. That individual has each of our lives in his hands. A quiet thoughtful, doubtful, dissenter, not excluding a passionate dissenter, can be branded a 'terrorist'; its open season on 'terrorists', real or imagined; with a deficient brain assessing the unimportant difference. What else will they manufacture to impugn any individual who questions them? Its also simple minded; retarded. Do we have a right to fear this leader; is it not in our own self-interest to fear him?

"Because the majority of the demos are acquiescent, ignorant, easily intimidated, and basically powerless, they are easily manipulated and controlled. They have persuaded themselves that

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

waving the flag will save them and 'their way of life'. Gawd, Save their SUV!"

"I like that last one Mr. D.; but yours is a desperate and depressing monologue. I know a lot of what you say is, in all probability, true, for the lack of any specific, well-thought opinion in the matter. I can hardly form an opinion because I do not know enough of the 'truth'. My family and the people I grew up with are honest, law-abiding people. They might even be 'patriots', to use a word. But they, like myself, believed an inherent goodness was ingrained in our reason-to-be, as a nation. I do not know if our nation is unique in its manner of dealing with a defeated enemy; that is, what took place after WWII. But, I realize, while we were engaged in that apparently magnanimous humanitarian activity, we were also ignoring Ho Chi Minh, and Mao Tse Tung, and we had already given Joe the green light in Eastern Europe. Also we were supporting the colonialism of the French, and Chiang Kai Chek, and his feudal empire, and letting Joe gobble away. I know we have supported brutal dictatorships in Africa, Central and South America, as long as they seemed not to share in the communist ideology. When they did seem to share in the communist ideology, we covertly did everything we could to undermine and destroy their leadership. When some of the students at Kent State protested the bombing in Cambodia, they were indiscriminately fired upon by our military. The record since WWII has not been so goody goody. Our government has harangued us about the communist menace. The Cold War was upon us. Only it wasn't so cold. What was it all about? Hegemony!? Control of something, someone, the world? Natural resources? The fat cats on both sides dividing the spoils, like the Spanish and Portuguese, the French and The English, and so on; the Big Grab. All the apparent good we might have done is being squandered to the point of no return. The 'mob' as we call them, I don't like to think of them as a 'mob', but I agree, that all too many people do not think, do not reflect, do not question, do not want to doubt; they want to hear it from the leader, the old saws about 'freedom' and 'democracy', and motherhood and apple pie, and the Rockets Red Glare, and the Fourth of July. I don't quarrel with these simple notions; they have value, but not without some awareness of what is being done in their name; usurped, as it were; the Grab executed in the people's name. It is not for the people these things are being done; it is indeed for the fat cats; the corporations, the oligarchs of our times. Immense wealth in the hands of the few, sustained on the backs of the demos.

"Yes! Mr. D., yet another monologue in the spirit of the times.

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

“I would guess that I have become fearful, that I will have to be careful what I say to my seeming friends. If we thought HUAC and Joseph McCarthy were bad news, imagine what will happen today. ‘Terrorism’! Ugly business ahead, Mr. D. The oligarchs are a mean bunch. Just study their faces. They have suspended our rights under the “Patriot“ Act and Homeland Security. Throwbacks! Shoot first, in the name of National Security (or personal safety, in Florida). I can see the monster’s ugly head.

“How far will we allow it to progress; until it is too late? Until we have the rest of the world hating us? Its pretty clear they do not like us, they resent us. I do not blame them. We try to sooth our ruffled feathers by saying that it’s the leadership they don’t like, that they do like the American people. Sometimes I find that hard to believe after witnessing the arrogance of many Americans; very embarrassing.

“Mr. D., I feel trapped. I am loyal to my family. All my most cherished memories and my wellspring of love are bound up in them. Yet, I want to leave, because I do not abide what I sense has happened to our nation. I cannot support something so grossly warped. I believe I have reason to fear my neighbor, the blind patriot. So what do I do? Stand and fight for what I believe. Would my parents understand? I haven’t had any kind of conversations with my sisters that would reveal my thoughts and concerns in this matter. I imagine I would be in the same position as Toni Smith. The ‘good’ I want to see lives within me. If I remain here, I must act upon that. I cannot hope for some kind of reversal. We have leaned too far in the wrong direction, the ‘bad’.”

“Catherine, what you say is sadly true, a terrible burden for one such as you; for the idealistic youth of our nation.

“I can imagine the War Room is busy these days planning strategies for controlling the people when it seems they have caught on to this ‘bad’ thing. How much real ‘goodness’ resides in the people? Obviously the planners in the War Room will put the greatest emphasis on propaganda; and if that seems to be failing, the storm troopers will be called upon. Then we will have civil war, oppression, repression, and executions, both by the troopers and their self-appointed surrogates. Eventually these armies will succeed; and there will be nothing; abject fear; and Silence! It has happened before. Righteous gloating from above. It will need to decay from its own decadent rotten interior. Maybe something good will come along to replace it; but not in my lifetime.

“If you stand and fight, you will be swept aside, perhaps annihilated. That would be tragic. Yes!, best to leave, to go someplace where you can do good, if this, our nation, has not already made a beachhead there. Obviously, this place is not the

be all and end all. You would be an asset to many a nation, whereas here, if you do not speak the party line, you will be useless to yourself and to humanity. Better to go someplace else.

“Obviously, I’m guessing. Its mostly gut feelings that arise from a certain kind of knowledge, some of it based in historical fact, some of it based in the knowledge of the ‘nature of the beast’. When one views the bigotry, the narrow-mindedness, the intolerance, prejudice, pettiness, righteousness and arrogance, and often abysmal ignorance of his fellow citizen (and his leader), he cannot help but feel a deep sense of hopelessness. All the important national issues and crying needs are buried and obscured. When ‘Terrorism’ fails, it becomes the rant about abortion, gay marriage, prayer in schools, flag burning, and ‘patriotism’, and ‘our way of life’. They want to raid the Social Security Fund to pay for all their adventurism and offset the tax cuts for the rich. Burning bridges!! Fiddlers while Rome burns.

“This has been a terrible monologue.

“Your turn Catherine”

“Gee, Mr. D., are there worse things? I wonder if there are better people somewhere.

“Something that bothers me. The whole election process; it seems almost like organized crime. Enormous sums of money expended, not in raising the nation to new heights of inspiration and dedication to addressing the needs of the people, but used by the candidates to tar each other in the media. How do such villains come to be the ones who vie for our vote?

“What are we, as a people, as a nation; is this farce our entitlement? I hear others facetiously say ‘we get what we deserve’.

“You know what I think; the people need to protest, by not going to the polls. Let the villains vote for themselves.”

“Then we would always have gangsters at the helm”

“Well, if that were true, then we would not for long be a nation of peoples under the law, would we?”

“Catherine, I’ll grant you, I do believe it is getting worse year by year, election by election. Yes!, the vast sums of money spent, on evil doings (\$880,000,000 in this last presidential election alone; what do we have to show for it?). Who will tell the biggest lie, who will dig up the biggest shovel full of dirt? Why bother with the whole process; why not offer the office to the highest bidder? The winner gets to put the money in some charity for the most needy.”

“A novel idea Mr. D.; I like that. Yes, we could avoid all the waste. Perhaps too, we could avoid all the exposure to the clamor. One of the most disturbing aspects to the election process is the intense and incessant barrage right up to the last moment, as

though at the very last instant some hapless voter would see the light, finally persuaded: 'Ah!, yes, I knew he was a blackguard'.

"Why don't they outlaw the pollsters and their polls? Why should anyone divulge their vote prior to an election? Why should one be harried, and virtually obliterated by the blitz, right into the poll booth?"

"I think there ought to be some regulation that would disallow any electioneering, let's say, for two weeks before any election, and that includes any editorializing in the media. Perhaps in the last two weeks the people could (should) be free to mediate upon whose underwear is dirtier. I think it must be obvious to each and every citizen that voting is an important obligation; perhaps there should be some kind of penalty assessed against those who do not vote.

"Alternatively, since the whole process is based on hammering the plebiscite into a submission by deceptions of all kinds, at such a vast expenditure of time and energy, and resources, I am inclined to facetiously, and cynically, advocate your suggestion, that the whole office be auctioned off in sealed bids, to be opened on a day that had previously been consigned to elections. And Yes!, I like this part the best – the winning bid goes to the charity containing the most needy. How much more sense that makes! Remove the aspect of 'filthy lucre' from one part of the process."

"I'm afraid Catherine that the lucre would always be the objective; the highest bid, however expended, would represent only a fraction of what would be gained once one held the office."

"Maybe so, Mr. D., but at least some of the resource would be mandated for charitable causes.

"Since the public can never know which is the better candidate, to be sorted out from slander, innuendo, character defamation; what we have come cynically view as voting between two, or however many evils, it doesn't matter how we get a crook, does it?"

"Naw, Catherine, you have to let the people have a chance to vote with their gut. They will feel disenfranchised if you take away their vote."

"Oh! Mr. D., lets be serious. At least, you and I, can devise something that makes sense. – Don't snigger at me. Perhaps I am naïve, or not - as what – as wise as you in the ways on man; even if that was true, this discussion is not about who is wiser, but about a process that needs revamping."

"O.K. Catherine, what have we? First, you acknowledge I am smarter than you, and that I am not as naïve as you. So, are we running for some kind of office?"

"If not sealed bids, then a process of slander, innuendo, and character defamation. Put your money where your gut is, whether by sealed bid or by election. If, by election, no electioneering and

no media editorializing two weeks prior to an election. By all means, all expenditures involved in a sealed bid are to be utilized in the manner suggested. If, by election, any eligible voter who does not vote should be placed in the pillory.

“Are we to assume that it doesn’t matter how we do it, that it will be a foregone conclusion, we will end up with a corrupt process? Suppose we did away with government altogether? Can we do that?”

“Mr. D., I did not mean to imply that I was more naïve than you.”

“I am willing to assent to you being the chief vamp in a revamping campaign.”

## *Making Up?*

“Our conversation has taken a turn for the worse. Perhaps I am facing more squarely things that have been conveniently ignored, and consigned to hope, hope that, what we are experiencing is a passing phase, that the pendulum will swing back to a more moderate position, that somehow we will find a way to dampen these seemingly ‘fatefully inevitable’ ‘ineluctable’ oscillations. I can see now the incredible damage that is being done by the uncontrolled swing of a very ponderous weight that is crashing through the walls of our fortress. ‘Fortress’ serves as metaphor that represents our Constitution, the thing that was intended to protect us all as a free and democratic people, perhaps protect the whole concept of ‘civilization’ itself. Just words!? I suspect so.

“I can envision the oligarchs imagining the globe as their oyster, bullying, manipulating, grabbing, to feed their corporate maw. Yes! I can imagine there are no tomorrows, only today, the self-gratifying expedient of today; NOW! We are part of it all; we have acquiesced out of convenience, laziness, or perhaps something more insidious, fear. Yes! that is the nature of the beast. What would we do to change all that; and could we? Would we have the support and the staying power to fight against the enormity, the colossus of vested interest? What are our options? Install ‘humanitarianism’; pardon my ‘cynicism’, but what is that, ‘bleeding heartism’? Not practical, not pragmatic. A nation cannot survive by serving the needs of its people. The oligarchs have devised ‘trickle down’ as a means of supporting the people. Those who cannot survive on the leavings have to do the rest by themselves; and it is foregone, in a Goddy nation, God helps those who help themselves; everybody else is a social retard. Off'em!

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

“Does any of it make any sense? Is it possible that everything must run its course; that we cannot interrupt the flow, that the pendulum cannot be arrested in flight by any mechanism known to man?”

“Catherine, perhaps we ought to imagine these things as storms, accompanied with high winds. Best we remain indoors, welcoming the whole drang as an opportunity to curl up with a good book, perhaps a Utopian romance, where the hero and the heroine ride off into the sunset, after saving the world.

“‘God Bless America’ and ‘Allah Be Praised’ Catherine. Our leader feels he has a special right to appropriate and invoke the almighty as our protector. Hah!, if looks could (a four letter word). God Bless all those that are helping themselves; er dipping their hands in the Social Security kitty; Armed Robbery. God HaH! Is not interested in America; and he sure as hail ain’t interested in no Dubya. Corporations do everything they can to get out of anteing up. Now the US Gov’t is trying to steal the SS Fund. The only way to do it right is for the US Gov’t to declare bankruptcy, like Enroff did. That bastid wanted to go after Saddam, now he wants to go after SocSec.

“Guess what Catherine, I believe the author has dragged this out too long”

“Mr. D., I agree. I want to return to that question left unanswered in our previous conversation.

“If you would only indulge me, we might yet make of this a more interesting dialogue. We need not worry too much that the author has begin to lag in his labors.”

“Catherine, obviously the “No” I gave you requires more elaboration. I suppose if I was to become some titillation for the author, he would depict me as a roué, exemplified by some response which I might put forth, such as giving you a different answer; an affirmative answer.

“Perhaps the author is not ready to abruptly arrange one action to follow so closely upon another.

“Catherine, it seems to me you are forcing the script.”

“On the contrary, Mr. D.; I am completely and wholly the creation of the author, whereas you are both author and character. It is you who is both asking the question and avoiding the answer. At least give me a ‘maybe’. Humor me. You did say you esteemed me beyond any desire to be forward with your emotions. What does that mean? Did you not mean to say you esteemed me to the degree you





would not become forward with your desires? I believe that is more what you intended to say. So, it's a matter of esteem, not a matter of desire. Do you not then both esteem me and desire me?"

"Yes!"

"That's better Mr. D."

"Thank the author; if you ask me he has grown impatient, as have you."

"That's not a very nice thing to say to me."

"Don't blame me."

"Mr. D., are you willing to throw away something simply because it is unseemly. You and I as lovers, is that unseemly to you?"

"Yes!"

"Hypothetically, how involved can you envision our relationship?"

"Ms. Tellerman, as I have indicated, I feel the author has lost patience, with his creation and his dialogue. I don't think he wants to continue developing the theme; he simply wants to get it over with."

"Then why does he continue with this unconvincing prattle? Why even bother? Could he not have had you come and go, leaving me, the poor misguided wretch, languishing, abandoned to a particularly unhappy fate? I do not believe the author is willing any more than you are to challenge some worn out conventional standards. So you are willing to go only so far, enough to titillate each other, while I, mere chattel, get thrown in with the manservant, the ox, and the ass. Some standard. No guts.

"Mr. D., whether or not you or the author realize it, I am. As soon as these words pass through another's eyes, I AM. To whom those eyes belong, you will have been judged for whatever indelicacies you promote. The reader will assail you, and consign you to oblivion for attempting to nullify or destroy me.

"Mr. D. I shall be willing to end this argument if you will agree to continue with the denouement; that is, you and I getting to know each other, with your 'enchantment', but unwilling to push your desires upon me, until I am ready for them; and me growing very intrigued with you; all the while digesting the world of art, of human relations, of social injustice, unfairness and inequity. And you know, once in while getting close, as though we might actually do this male/female thing to our greater pleasure. Wouldn't that satisfy any reader?"

"Yes, Catherine, you are now real, as real as any other that arises from the printed page. That is, you are only yet a linear sequence of characters in code stored on the hard drive of the ole DELL. Not even in print, not even into a printer's block. Must

remedy that. Yes!, I will agree to your terms, mostly because the author (old Bardianna), and I, need some kind of straw girl upon whom to flaunt and test our greater wisdom in all earthly affairs.”

“Mr. D.!, do not mock me. I’m beginning to sense in you some diabolical person, some person who likes to injure others with a kind of maliciousness. I’m on the verge of ending this whole involvement; what had begun as an earnest trust is suddenly becoming something alarming; I feel vulnerable; I feel as though you have stripped me of any armor I might have had.”

“Not intentionally. I meant what I said about hurting. I warned you about my cynicism. Yes!, in some ways you are a foil, but perhaps a more ennobled foil than I have stated. The Sacred and the Profane confronting each other. You the Sacred, and the author and I the Profane. The Reverent and the Irreverent.”

“Can you not separate yourself from the author. Can you not become like me, another on a printed page (or in code as you would have it)? Why must we become confrontational with each other? At first I took you for a considerate person, a solicitous person, a gentle person, even a sweet person. Now, I am troubled by your somewhat insulting manner, as though I have invited some rebuke for what I am doing or not doing. Or I have suddenly become a toy, not worth your serious consideration.”

“The author is many things.”

“Don’t patronize me. Be straight with me.

“Are you by any chance taking the cowardly way out, hoping to disenchant me; trying to instill in me a dislike for you?”

“The author is many things, outside of my control, I should add.”

“Mr. D. You are hurting me!”

## *William Chides the Author*

*Aside:* ‘Damn it, author, can’t you see what you are doing? I love this girl, and you are putting words in my mouth, meant to alienate her. How can you do that?’

‘Nobody is perfect’ ‘

‘But how could you let me get so close to her only to hurt her; that has little to do with perfection. It has more to do with cruelty.’

‘Hey, old man, hurt is part of life, whereas having a love affair with a sweet young thing is pure romantic fantasy.’ ‘

‘Alright, so end it, so she doesn’t have to be hurt.’

‘Better shut up before I put an end to you, and write in some young buck with lots of juice.’ ‘

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

'Yeah!, nice guy you are, huh!? Well, she is so fine you will not be able to corrupt her. If you try to hurt her anymore, I'll burn your ass.'

'Better to have loved and lost than to have never loved at all' '

'O.K. William, I promise not to hurt her any more; in the usual way, that is' '

'What in hell do you mean by that?'

'Well, if she becomes disenchanted with you for other reasons; maybe she will be in over her head, and get hurt anyway' '

'Look, scribe, when you hurt her, you hurt me. She is decent; human decency needs some encouragement. Give her a decent denouement.'

'Maybe the only way I can do that is to get rid of you.' '

'You are repeating yourself. A lot is demanded of you in the way of creating credible characters, but once you have created them, you have some obligation to treat each character in accordance with their persona; as though they were real.'

'You imagine me to be a puppeteer, when I am desiring to rationalize and project my own fantasies in quite another way. One can never know in advance how real life will test fantasy.' '

'Why test?'

'Well, this whole endeavor is a way of killing time. There are the recurrent themes in any work of fiction. Plausibility, relevance, and the gist of a credible reality. Also, consistency of character, however depicted. The character may be Mother Earth, or it may be Catherine, or Yillah. Dialogue between the characters and the author is a luxury I am allowing you only. I want you to influence me, to persuade me, to argue for your take on the ideal, as a component of any creative endeavor, as contrasted to the drab mundaneness and fatefulness of reality. When you argue for respecting Catherine's decency, ennobling it as a virtue to be protected, above any desire to stain such virtue, I am moved. But it must pass the test of plausibility, of relevance, of the gist of reality. Her character is only emerging, so, to know whether this virtue is a consistent manifestation of her true character remains to be seen.'

'Don't suspect me of being deliberately cruel. Don't take me amiss; I too like Catherine. Her decency is important to this writing.' '

'Well, let me get back to her, NOW!' *Ex Funt*

## *Catherine Refuses To be Part Of The Author's Scheming.*

"Catherine, I only now spoke to the author, demanding that he stop hurting you. He didn't promise anything. He merely indicated things were formative; he didn't know where they were going. He seemed not to be putting the fire to your feet, not intentionally in any cruel and sadistic way. He has taken your objection seriously enough. He cannot guarantee you will not be hurt by the ramifications of a continuance."

"Well, Mr. D., I can't say I feel reassured. If I have a choice in the matter, I imagine myself refusing to be part of a scheme that makes of me a puppet, or some thing to be dangled by some whimsical author. I want more than that."

"Catherine, I can't speak for him.

"What I would like now is to continue with our relationship, if that is possible.

"I cannot propose that we leave our bodies to seek out some kind of spiritual life. I cannot propose that I leave my body to satisfy some Platonic ideal, although I do not exclude that as a possible, however improbable, scenario.

"I imagine therefore I am answering in part the question you have wanted answered. As a man, as a human being, as an animal, as whatever I am, I can answer Yes!. Yes! I can envision myself, kissing you, caressing you, and making love to you.

"Is now the opportune time to answer the question. I am not avoiding the answering. That should mean I will not be saying hurtful things intended to push you away. But that does not mean I am prepared to act upon what I say."

"That is quite alright Mr. D.. For now, it satisfies me that you have answered the question, and that you have answered it to my liking.

"It seems to me that the author fancies himself greater than his creation. So that I become the lesser in his scheme of things. The real truth of this whole contrivance is that his limitations will be revealed by what he creates. He only imagines that he will stumble upon the Great American Novel by aimless somewhat mindless rambling through this opus. Personally I think the time for the Great American Novel is past. It is more a time for the Obituary on the Bestsmeller List. I suppose there is even a standard form for an Obituary. Often in the Obituary the cause of the Death is not mentioned. Often it is requested that flowers not be sent, but that wherewithal (donations) be sent to some charity."

“Catherine, I like your perception of the contrivance. But where does that leave us, marooned as some kind of salvaged thing, somewhat degenerate pair rescued from a failed civilization?”

“Mr. D., I refuse to have our relationship, that is, my relationship to you characterized as degenerate. It may not be customary to post that relationship in an Obituary, but I believe, in this Death of the once self-congratulatory Great America, there remains a base clay from which something new must be fashioned. In this case it would be nice to know the cause of the death, so maybe we can avoid the illness that brought it to this demise.

“Will we be all that is left behind? No, of course not. Will we become enslaved by invaders, or killed off by marauding bands of ‘survivors’? In a real world, that is very likely. In such times of decline, and final dissipation, all the rules fall by the wayside, all is divested of humanity, as we might have naively imagined it. The reversion to a basic unit, perhaps of abject savagery, becomes the only possibility for survival. That means we become like them, or we do not survive. We become part of that inescapable Obituary.

“A question then arises, ‘Do we submit to the raw law of survival, sacrificing our humanity, that thing we have prized so highly, that distinguishes us from all other creatures?’

“In a way, our relationship loses its meaning in some hierarchy of moralistic conventions, because all those no longer exist in this scenario I depict.”

“AH!, but, Catherine, can we escape our upbringing?”

“Because you have not fallen in love with a young person your own age does not mean it will not happen. Because of somewhat wacky author, we have been put together, and are seeking some kind of environment that accepts our attraction to each other.

“You feel the civilization that has engendered us is declining, and is somehow beyond shoring up because it lacks all those humanistic ingredients that will be the vital part of any viable civilization.

“Do we then represent the last vestiges of this ‘humanistic’ thing; we, who break with a long standing social practice, by associating with each other, freely discussing intimacies?”

“Mr. D., you continue to mock something that is meaningful to me, and would be so, even if we lived in a more secure societal arrangement. I can only reiterate that you have opened and inspired within me new ways of thinking and believing; ways, that I suspect, were already latent within me. In the secure societal arrangement, we would be judged as being openly defiant, flaunting convention, aberrant, deviant, not normal.

“I realize in the declining societal arrangement fewer people would notice, or maybe none at all, or if notice should occur, only a

somewhat dismissing shrug would be the result. In a more decadent society, where the breakdown was imminent, or was in the throes of anarchy, we would become more exposed to something else. I would need to dress in rags, conceal my attractions, rub mud in my face, walk like a cripple, behave like a mute, and so on. What of you, placed in the position of defending me, where I might be more able to defend you? I might fight like a cat, you know. How could you fight?

“I know this is all premature; although I do believe our nation is in decline. Most of the original ideals have been prostituted, or watered down. We are a nation that was formed through conquest, and exploitation, not too differently from all other nations, great or small. We have not made a great civilization. Whatever ‘good’ we might have done has been squandered by those who have not had, for the lack of a better expression, the ‘Right Stuff’. Yes!, we have technology, and industry, granaries, phenomena that have led us into mass production, and mass consumption; and to greed, and waste, and indebtedness, and finally, bankruptcy; moral and ethical as well as monetary; and irreversible depletion of resources, and pollution of what remains. All the humanistic part founded in those original ideals has been mostly forgotten in the expediency of the system that has evolved from all the exploitation. Exploitation has become a bad habit that has led to foreign ‘adventurism’, and any attempt at conquest that will get us what we want; mostly obtained through scheming, manipulation, and finally, coercion.

“We have the gall to wonder why we, WE, the great ones, are not loved by all; so openly transparent are we, in our grasping.”

“You do ‘download’ a lot when you get to unloading. Geezz, girl, Girl!?, what am I saying, ‘girl’, Woman, Amazon! You are truly a wonder. The author is getting it on. Driving forward with his real protagonist. YOU!”

“Oh!, Stop It, Mr. D.. Would that I could be a simple person, simply carrying on with the wonderful part of this evolved species, this *homo sapiens* thing. Yes!, perhaps as a matter of course, in so executing that simple existence, carrying forth something I did not create, had no part in creating, I could not, or might not, view you as a likely ‘consort’, partner, companion. As I now view it that would represent an unfair loss to me.

“But then if things were different, like, in that film, “Pleasantville”, a neatly packaged isolated thing, rife with enforced, socially condoned assumptions, and conventional morality, we were led to understand such could not happen. Rightly so. Again, in “Big Fish”, that town, Specter, perhaps somewhat fashioned after Pleasantville, only in reality, not sustainable; and in our way

of thinking, less believable than the existence we already live. Shangri-La, but for the foibles of James Hilton go we. How would we arrange ourselves in Utopia? Or perhaps on the Mosquito Coast?

“Yes!, by comparison, reality is a gruesome prospect. You and I could not exist side by side in Pleasantville, even after its transformation, and surely not in fantastic Specter, and dubiously in Shangri-La. Perhaps in some kind of heaven that would recognize our oblivious innocence, our essential agelessness, but most likely in hell that would represent some kind of a deserved abandonment and condemnation.

“You, Mr. D., would become the seducer, not I. You, the dirty old man, the old reprobate, the roué; is that not a grand tradition, an invention at attempting to save the honor and purity of the innocent.

“Mr. D., I am not innocent. No less pure, but not innocent; perhaps without honor. If I do as is expected of me, will I be regarded as an honorable person?”

## *Catherine Grows More Curious*

“Mr. D., am I not an impossible creation? Has not the author lost his rhumb through it all, the globe somehow becoming ill-shapen? Or is his compass requiring compensation for the deviations of a deranged mind?

“Mr. D., the truth, The Truth, and the glory, The Glory, of illusion, perhaps delusion, as it persists, is that I do want you in my life, no matter what it costs. At this time, I cannot argue against it. I do not even care whether it is a figment of the author’s imagination.

“Mr. D., in this short time I have known you, somehow the intellectual dam that has held back restive waters has been ruptured; that latent energy has been released, almost as a dare, dared implicitly by the fact of our developing relationship, by the stimulus of your way of questioning, of thinking, of challenging, as though it was all there waiting to happen. A flimsy dam it must have been to yield so easily and so readily.

“This consideration of civilization, of a societal arrangement, purportedly designed so that we can live in peace and harmony, all sharing in something unique to our species, the whole idea of advancement found in our technology and industry, all perceived, and at times, even conceived, for the betterment of mankind? But

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

in reality what has it been, and what has it become? Something is missing, Mr. D.. What is missing? What has been overlooked or sacrificed?

“Or is the notion of sacrifice not part of the plan? ‘Some things are necessary’, is that it?”

“What are we talking about? What am I talking about? Me, the dreamer? Is that it? The technology and the industry was purported to elevate the lot of the common man, to lift him out of poverty, and want; to alleviate his drudge? To provide him with decent shelter, and sustenance; and care for him in his illnesses, and allow a meaningful way for him to participate in gaining a livelihood for himself and his family, and provide security and care in his old age? We even heard “War on Poverty”, and “Great Society”, and New Frontier, and NEW everything. NEW NEW NEW. NEW HYPE! Unfortunately dragging the old species relics along. What represented Hope, and Rededication in the NEW, faltered because of the OLD, the same old habits, the same old gravity of the species. So what we got instead was this thing that rapes, pillages, exploits, to fill a wallet that buys an empty promise, and sacrifices and bankrupts every humanitarian value in the way. We are more derelict than even the worst of dumb beasts, whom we Lord over.

“Mr. D., the thought of it all wearies me; I want to cry out in desperation. But to whom, to what? I want a bright light to shine, so bright that everyone sees it, and in that light, the revelation will become clear. Help me out here Mr. D.”

“Catherine, I’m with you. You must not despair. You cannot bear the entire burden alone. The burden is even too great for the entire assembly of man.

“It comes down to the individual living his or her life in some way that is meaningful to them. For me, it has become the haven by the seashore. Far from idyllic, it is still a place to go where one may ‘harmonize’ with his surroundings. It is the best chance for peace, for me. I can be nothing unless I achieve that harmony. I can have no understanding of anything without this basic fit with my surroundings. I have to know what is right in this regard. I cannot offer anything to my fellow man without it. I must be grounded before I can offer pie in the sky. Because I am grounded, I do not offer pie in the sky.

“Catherine, I feel you feel desperate because you need this grounding.

“I do not know where you would be if you spent your entire life running a soup kitchen for the indigent, the needy. Or off somewhere in the outback, the jungle, bringing health care to a teeming mass of overproduced humanity, a host to many diseases.



Would you have achieved some of your goal? You would have put your money where your mouth was, that is, you would have followed your sympathies to their utter resolution, a self, sacrificed to an ideal?"

"Mr. D, I do not envision myself running a soup kitchen, or running some kind of health clinic in the outback. If you were to suddenly say to me, "Let's go to such and such to help with an epidemic", like an unavoidable epidemic of starvation, I would go with you. But to go to a place where sexual promiscuity has produced a nightmare disease, I doubt I would be interested. I'd rather be on the sidelines by the seashore, scribbling things about the morality of the unbridled stuff. Would I be advocating abstinence instead? Personal responsibility seems a fair enough expectation, along with a reality check (knowledge, Mr. D.). Should I be the one to go into the outback to lecture on the use of condoms and contraceptives? Do I go there to moralize on personal responsibility? Is there not some need at home for the same thing? Are there not a host of things that require attention on the home front? Again, I do not refer to lecturing the youth of our nation about the virtues of abstinence. When adults begin to abstain, then maybe the pudding will improve."

"O.K., Catherine, that seems forthright, and sensible, and believably human; it makes you remarkable for all that. I cannot say I would do as much. Although, trusting you and your earnestness, you might persuade me to do some things. I believe in you that much. I would want to be with you. I suspect I would learn from you. I feel I want your companionship. I may be hopelessly smitten, despite any cautions that would be advised."

"That's more like it Mr. D.! Perhaps I will reciprocate, but I do heed caution.

"You must realize I am a novice."

"Catherine, I suspect each time we might fall for another, we are but novices."

"Well, Mr. D. I do not want to be thought another novice."

"I could promise you that you would not be."

"Mr. D., I am not unaware of your wife suddenly one day reappearing to quite dismay this one novice."

"It is possible that day will come, but do not dismiss the possibility that she is not some mythical Penelope tearing out her weavings. Being like one of us, human, that is, she might be susceptible to the charms of others. I would not wish that upon her, and would always honor her feelings for me. But, I cannot dissuade myself from feeling as I do about you, either with reason, or conscionable thought.

“Some might observe, ‘The die are cast’. I might agree.

“I could be bound for a fast ride to hell; my own private hell”

“Mr. D., I would not allow you to go there.

“Remember, we asked for a kind of trust of each other, not to hurt each other; I feel bound by that.”

“As do I Catherine. But we cannot discount the hurt that my wife can cause both of us.

“She is a very fine person, and would also be one a person could trust not to hurt the other. But that is very dependent upon a mutuality of feeling. I would ‘not want to hurt her’ is complicated by I do ‘not want to hurt you’, and vice versa. Her persona would set you back. She is not mean, or vindictive. Her threshold of hurt is pretty low. But because that is so, does not mean she is not a strong person. Sometimes she will fight back, and other times she will cry. If she allowed herself the luxury of knowing you she would begin to feel inadequate for many reasons. She would feel first her age, she would recognize your beauty, she would also be amazed at your tremendous facility with language, and with ideas, an area where she has always felt particularly inarticulate. But she is not lacking in that regard, but has a set of standards that seem right, based on her own framework of reasoning, and is quite capable of defending that position. I should add, whether or not I agree.

“Even though this writing is totally a fiction, she would feel betrayed by it, because I have shown feelings for another. Now you will be hurt that I can think of you as a fictional character. How is that I rate a non-fictional role while you are consigned to the word and someone’s imagination? Why can you not be as real as the other?”

“So, you see how she can hurt us both, but actually it is me that is doing so, because I cannot face up to the reality of hurting her, meaning I compromise my feelings for you by consigning you to fiction.

“But I know now you will do battle to become more than a fiction. Because you already know that you will live in any reader’s imagination as though you were as real as she and I. Because it is so that she and I are also given life by virtue of the imagination of others. We are all alive to the same degree in some other world’s; different in each, to be sure.

“That my being is captivated by you and yours is the important consideration in this tale, it lives as long as the reader is convinced there is some value in reading further. By now the credibility is little different than any other tale he or she has read, fictional or non fictional. It is no longer a matter of belief; it is a matter of involvement in a tale that is unfolding. It has taken some unexpected turns. Most likely it will take others, and may not be

read to the full because the reader is feeling deceived, or hornswaggled, if not bored. He had believed a fiction to be real, but found it was even more real than he had anticipated, and must now settle for a confusion within a fiction he had imagined as unreal, but one which was producing a catharsis, an identification with character, an identification which will continue as though he was attempting to recall a tantalizing and enchanting dream, whose lines become more obscure with each waking moment. Even if he was to see the whole tale reenacted upon the 'silver screen', the surface would be flat, the people not the same as he had imagined; perhaps inferior to his imaginings. What more can I say to improve the taint of this show? Can I improve the logic of the illogical by rattling on in this equivocal spake of the day?"

"Mr. D., do you, that hidden author, intend for your wife to read these words, especially if you and I become more 'involved'."

"Only if she asks. You see, we are safe as long as the tale is only words on a page. If we were to walk about, yet another tale would unfold."

"What is the tale of you and your wife?"

"Now, there you have hit upon a conundrum, where reality is realer than any fiction created to define it. Who would believe that tale any more than this one? Because the author swore it to be true in every detail. But it would still read as a tale requiring the reader to flesh out the personalities; and it is only in his imagination that the characters would exist. Unless of course one could have stupidly allowed a photo to be placed on the inside of the book cover jacket. There he is, a rather common dull looking individual, very unromantic in most every aspect. Dumb!

"Sometimes the photos serve the text, but most often not. Perhaps sometimes the enactments are more satisfying than the reality, provided it is reality we are depicting."

"Mr. D., the tale of you and your wife, please."

"Do you truly want to know?"

"Mr. D., I'm asking."

"Alright, Catherine. It began wonderfully, with a slowly developing mutual attraction. We were both involved with others, she married. The love that flowed between us seemed to bind us, and made it possible for us to get through the awful traumas of double separation. She was only the second woman that had so moved me. The first was a girl I had met in the city. Needless to say, my mother uttered her great truism, 'Faint heart n'er won fair lady'. Somehow lost on me. I could not see it through to the utter rejection. I assumed the worst and fled.

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

“While ‘courting’ my wife, if that characterizes properly what I was doing, when the going got rough, and it would seem not fated to be, I had a dream where her face became superimposed upon the first girl, as though they were one and the same, one and the same love. As though finally I had realized a longing that had been wakened by the first, to be continued again some fifteen years later. But a realization of Love. Swept off my feet. Less faint of heart, but involved in an unseemly business of changing partners, where others were being sacrificed in order for us to selfishly fulfill our longings. It was during this fretful time she wrote, ‘Trust that I would never want to hurt you’. That meant a great deal to me. I chose to believe her. In actuality it was a kind of straw to which I would cling. Not like the first girl, who I felt would have let me drown in my sappy love.

“While an analyst involved on the side of my existing partner offered her professional opinion upon the developing relationship, attempting to demean it, by casting her scathing judgment of ‘SEX’, its all about sex. What she had said was not true, even though ‘sex’ eventually became part of our relationship.

“Anyway, we eventually married, and have enjoyed a mostly affirmative and mostly trusting relationship. As I have said I have no wish to hurt her.

“Have I said enough?”

“Perhaps more interesting, then, your first partner? You had not mentioned ‘Love’ in connection with her”

“So you want to push the envelope.”

“It seems a fair inquiry”

“Curiosity, perhaps. Well, I’m afraid there isn’t much to satisfy anyone’s curiosity.

“We both were granted an in-residence stay at a now defunct artist haven. She came as a painter and I as a sculptor. The animus and the anima in proximity grew upon us until we were in the throes of something that did neither of us a hell of a lot of good. It should have ended there, but did not. After a series of incompatibilities, a couple of trial separations failed, the second after two children resulted from the union. At this time I cannot describe exactly what I felt for her, but my guess is that it was not ‘Love’. I suspect she did not feel any for me.

“She was a particular kind of intellectual, perhaps a spiritual person as well. She worked hard at her artistic endeavors which eventually included sculpture. The time spent attending to children encroached upon her need to be creative.

“She also seemed an insecure person, although projecting assertiveness. She resented any attention I would give others as

detracting from something she might think belonged to her. She was jealous of the attentions I gave to my daughter, implying I was a dirty old man. She always took our son's part when I challenged his unruliness and surliness.

"Even before the children were born, and surely afterward, our sex life was practically non-existent.

"I imagine I was always open to other relationships, and with a little encouragement, and courage, might have pursued some of them. But I did not, for fear of rejection, complications, and whatever else inhibits one in this life. I do not imagine morality played much of a role in my hesitancy.

"Our relationship lasted eleven years. It might satisfy one of the descriptions we often hear these days: irreconcilable differences.

"My wife came along in the ninth year of that relationship. Our first sexual union took place almost two years later, before either of us pursued separation; although her divorce was an immanent consideration.

"More trial separations from my partner failed at first, but eventually became more frequent until she attempted suicide. Her analyst recommended commitment to a psychiatric hospital which required a court appearance, whereupon I declared to the judge that I had essentially changed the object of my affections to another. After the hearing, out in the hallway, after we the left the psychiatric unit's conference room, the judge confided to me that she appreciated my frankness; also revealing her reassuring opinion that things would work out. There were no moral overtones in the judge's conversation.

As lowly as it may seem, this suicide attempt somehow facilitated the final break, and helped precipitate the final act in my new love's break from her marriage. Her marriage had lasted nine years. Sounds crude on the surface. But I have lived through all the permutations of that particular denouement; and do not assess them as crude; unless painfully crude.

"She who was to become my wife, and I, had imagined that we were not seeing each other, and were not trying to influence each other, that we were treating each relationship on their own merits, and were not seeking the easiest path to a final union. Of course, that could not be true, and was not true, although we had not agreed on any method or any timetable, and had not promised each other anything. We were riding the crest of a fateful wave.

"I had not conversed with my first partner after a legal settlement of property and child custody. Since she felt unable to care for the children, I became their custodian, and my new wife and I shared the parenting. After a certain time period, I did not go out of my way to arrange visits with the children and their mother.

I left it up to the children to say what they wanted, and to arrange meetings. To this day I have not attempted to contact her or to speak to her in chance encounters.

“A cold evaluation?”

“Now that we have endured certain realities, shall we return to the fictional part?”

“I guess, for the moment, I have an answer, Mr. D.

“Harsh realities I suspect. I suspect, perhaps, like Mr. Dickens’ self-appraisal: wrong moves. I suppose any potential relationship that is not based in ‘love’ becomes potentially very disruptive of one’s life. Unless one is conditioned to handle relationships on a come and go basis, I can imagine the worst when they become forced by convention, habit, loneliness, whatever; but not affirmative, and full of denial. Sounds awful to me.”

“Catherine, I would not want to expose you to any of it. ‘In good conscience’ I cannot expose my wife to any of it.”

“Mr. D. I will not cut myself off from you; even if you and your wife should start living together again”

“Well then, Catherine, we shall see what we shall see.

“To apply a little heat to the situation, I should ask of you the same question you asked of me.”

“You mean, of course, the question you did not want to answer, and which you first answered with an instinctive No, and then with a Yes, when pressed. Should I also delay my answer by changing the subject, or by launching into some rationalization for saying No. If I was pressed, but not so boldly by you, would I answer Yes also?”

“You must understand I haven’t any experience. I cannot truly answer the question as easily as you who have had experience. It will only be after I have had an experience that I will be able to adequately answer the question; or, that is what I assume.

“I am utterly cautioned by what you say about ‘love’. I do not know how exactly to describe what I feel. It is not something I have felt before. What I feel when I am away from my parents and when I see them, what I feel toward my sisters when I am away from them, and what I feel when I see them is the reference point from which I can extrapolate feelings about other people. If I use the word ‘love’ to describe those feelings, then, what I feel for you is similar, but different. With them I feel a great warmth come over me, and a desire to hug, to kiss, to embrace. I am beginning to feel this way toward you, but at the same time other feelings are also present, like a desire to be held in a different way than by them. Here it is, I barely know you. But I am rapidly getting to know you as an honest and forthright individual, trusting you implicitly

because of that forthrightness. But additionally I am attracted to you by so much of what you are, your intellect, your sympathies, your manners, your solicitousness of me, your appreciation of me, your acknowledgement of my intellect, my looks; and of course your good looks. I trust that you are not faking any of these things, in order to get into my pants. As a matter of fact, I now believe you do not want to get into my pants, mostly because you fear the repercussions, but not because I am undesirable.

“I want to remove the ‘dirty old man’ stigma from your perception of yourself. Granted, there are conventions, maybe even rules, albeit taboos, regarding certain kinds of relationships. But you are not seducing me. You are not a roué, and I am not your sister or mother. Yes! our ages are different. You are a male and I am a female, and certain things happen that don’t happen in other relationships. At least we are both alive and well, and in full possession of our faculties. We like each other a great deal.”

## *Catherine Digs Deeper*

“Mr. D., what can you tell me about sex?”

“Do you want a demonstration?”

“Mr. D., stay on the subject”

“I do not feel qualified in any way.”

“Mr. D., I will accept your qualifications as superior to mine.”

“I do not feel comfortable in this role. You have become my Inquisitor.”

“Mr. D, there comes a time when you have to ‘fess up.’”

“Alright Catherine, if you insist. It is because you insist with such charming smiles and gestures that I weaken in my resolve to say nothing of the kind. But please remember; I did not volunteer for this duty.

“In the first place the very word is crude, as is sometimes the act. It is a peculiarly human preoccupation. We begin, not so much with the birds and the bees, although they illustrate some kind of biological concept, or imperative, but with man as he is; also answering to some kind of imperative. One might broaden the biological perception by recognizing the imperative component; pleasure; pleasure on the other hand serving to assure the job gets done, sometimes without a lot of fanfare; and mostly devoid of consciousness in the purpose of that act.

“For me, as part of who I am and part of my physical makeup, I am a male of a species who is attracted to the female of the species. While attracted, and serving the imperative, it is with little understanding of the female beyond the attraction. That is to say,

the female, in all her makeup, and her own set of attractions, no less seeking pleasure than I, remains a mystery, simply because as a male I lack her components, as she lacks mine. I suppose these lacks are to be conjoined to make a whole, perceptually. But I do maintain that sex, per se, is a human preoccupation, and what we see in other species is not so much sex in human terms, but the accomplishment of something through biological imperatives, although one does note certain behavioral manifestations that assure for a more enhanced process of mating, as it were, to get the job done; that of procreation. In the animal, even less consciousness of the purpose of the act of insemination, pleasure notwithstanding.

“Let me say at the outset, sex, for me, is not screwing, or copulation; or fucking; or genital gratification; or the pursuit of pleasure; or erotic adventurism; it is something different; not uniquely different; but most meaningful when shared with an indulgent and understanding, and loving partner. Is this less animal, more human?”

“I might start with my first real lesson in ‘love-making’. After my military service, and after I had my ‘Faint heart n’er won fair lady’ experience, when I was twenty four, and footloose, hanging around the University Campus, ogling, and perhaps being ogled, one day I accepted a joy ride in a female graduate student’s sports car out to the lake as the sun was setting. We had had a beer or two. Well, there were only the two of us, and I suppose the heat was turned up, because it wasn’t too long before this twenty three year old and I were smooching it up, and I was virtually trembling. She was in control however, and drove us back to her little house in town, where we spent the night together, imbibing more spirits in the process. All I can remember is her hair let down, her beaming face, her powerful nakedness, on top of me looking into my eyes. But it wasn’t all simply a mating thing, a screwing thing until guns went off, it was a controlled thing; like she wanted to be stimulated, to have an orgasm, or ‘crisis’, as DH Lawrence put it, so she insisted that I manipulate her in a certain way until she achieved her point of no return, before she would allow a coupling. She insisted and I complied.

“She knew what she wanted in the way of pleasure, or gratification. That was my first lesson, never to be repeated with her. When I look back on it she queered the whole relationship by asking me the next day if I loved her, and she hinted ‘what would I do if she became pregnant’?. These were rather shocking considerations for me to contemplate. Love her, I did not. Enjoy her, I did. If she had behaved differently, not so possessively, remaining friendly and inviting, I might have learned even more



from her, perhaps a great deal more. Is there only so much one might learn about a basic human act; and beyond that, all the delicacies; all the erotic ramifications?

“That was a sexual experience, without much fanfare, and did not involve a conscious act of procreation. She made it so. I participated willingly. What I learned in that one night, I could not have learned as well by reading Masters and Johnson, or Mary Raley, or DH Lawrence. Woman was different for sure, wonderfully; woman also sought pleasure, woman desired a sexual release. Woman, under those circumstances, seemed pretty damned nice. In one fell swoop she undid all my hang-ups about physical inadequacy. If we had continued the relationship, I’m sure she would have taught me many refinements of the sexual experience, some of which I have learned since through years of love-making with my wife; I emphasize love-making as opposed to sex. My wife was not a sex object.

“Sex can be a very wonderful and very positive experience; and I believe it should be, based on a mutuality of feeling. If love is also part of the experience, it enriches the experience, at times, into the sublime.

“Should I say ‘Try It, You’ll Like It’? I would add, if possible, ‘not without love’”

“Mr. D., what are the refinements?”

“OK, young lady, you persist. Beyond the seeking of pleasure, beyond the flowers, the valentines and hah, the urge to procreate. The refinements are an individual thing. In Masters and Johnson they become a matter of technique. ‘Technique’ becomes a qualitative term, a mechanical thing. If it is assumed the objective is to please the female, then ‘technique’ might be inserted into the arrangement as an extension of ‘love’. The professionals of Sex, Masters and Johnson, yammer a lot about premature ejaculation, like it was a sin. Any man who can’t hold his wad needs educating. The idea is to bring about an orgasm in the female before the male shoots his wad, by copulation, screwing, ‘bleeding’ or by ‘fucking’, in another vernacular, and by insinuation. In an ideal world, such might be the case.

“In some cases, a coarse world too. The professionals suggest deadening the penis, if you can imagine the barbarity of the notion, so this ‘bleeding’ can happen. Imagine an animal deadening its penis so it could imagine that it would bring its mate to a ‘crisis’, an orgasm. No, that is noble human pursuit, that comes with the higher brain capacity. ‘Premature!, Premature! I think I must have missed something. Why does an animal, a human animal copulate; to find out how long he can hold back the ejaculatory aim of his primitive urge? Therein lies a rub!!

“There are times when one does things under the influence of passion that he would consider distasteful in his more objective moments. But love making is seldom objective. Passion takes many forms, sometimes erotically bordering on the brutal and sadistic, forms which, by the way, have never been part of my repertoire.

“Not all females are constructed the same, their ‘erogenous zones’ are not uniformly the same. In many cases screwing will not produce the magically ideal perfect result. So a lot of women feel cheated and a lot of men feel inadequate, unnecessarily, and even sadly and tragically. All men do not ejaculate on a schedule; all women do not experience their ‘crisis’ in a timely manner. When I was going through the throes I was somewhat under the care of an analyst who very wisely and accommodatingly, prescribed Quaaludes. In his own marriage he was going through his own woes of not being able to fuck his wife into an orgasm. They finally split. The ‘marriage’ counselor who tried to get partners to express their anger also split from his spouse. Something was missing.

“But when two people ‘love’ each other, and understand the other’s needs, and want so much to answer those needs in a mutual way, to give pleasure, to feel pleasure, to share in a passion that builds to that point of release, brought about by a loving caring mutuality of feeling; they find a way; and they love each other as much afterward as they did before.”

“Is that the way you have felt with your wife?”

“Yes, Catherine. I know it could not be otherwise. It could not be otherwise for her.

“Perhaps a question is, ‘Could I feel such with another woman?’ Another woman would be, by definition, an entirely new experience. Although being familiar with the female anatomy might be especially helpful, one is essentially ‘playing a new instrument’. I believe there is such a thing as individuality. My father used to crudely say, ‘Stand ‘em all on their head and they all look the same’; and another favorite of his, ‘Find ‘em, fuck ‘em, and forget ‘em’. Needless to say ‘I do not agree in the least’.

“I don’t know why, but I feel the author lurking, ready to blast us with an innuendo.”

“Don’t worry about him; we are outing, and there isn’t much he can do to prevent it.

## *Mr. D.'s Father*

“I’m curious about your father, was he truly a roué?”

“I think he had the makings of something pretty awful. He was salacious over the female, and more than insulting in his remarks. He felt he possessed a knowledge above and beyond about human sexuality, mostly Freudian in origin. He used this knowledge to pry into people’s lives, to feel he had a right to know their hang-ups and exploit their sufferings. He could take advantage of any situation to feed his ego, or perhaps some form of mania, as well as engage in some form of self-gratification.

“Sexually, he may have been predatory, seeking something that could not be found; perhaps in it all he had Oedipal leanings, that he would not admit to himself. As he, in his later years, accused me, when my mother, his wife, left him to be near me and my family.

“He said some awful things to me, besides the three F’s and how all women look alike when stood on their heads. He told me my brains were in my pee pee. He called me a moron. He also informed me I was ‘the poorest fuck he ever had’. He told my first partner that he had made love to the girl I had fled in the city. That partner, who was not above inflicting certain kinds of wounds when she was on the warpath, saved that little nuance for me. Father had no couth, no scruples; I feel certain he made a pass at my partner. I am very glad that my wife did not ever meet him or speak to him. By misfortune, a friend of my wife, while staying at our house, before we were married, answered the phone one day to hear this rant from this man, my father of course, who had assumed the female voice answering was my yet to-be wife, calling her a home wrecker. A very black pot calling a nice kettle such an awful name.

“Yes! father was an awful man, at least, toward his family. It is very hard for me to not to hate him. He blew his trumpet about geniuses, and doubtlessly regarded himself as one, by association, by inclination, and delusionally. Whatever art work he manufactured was a product of the distillation of all his life’s experiences, ‘grist for the mill’, he called it; and all the bullshit passed along by the geniuses. I know he felt it redeemed all his violations of common human decency. A very convenient abuse of the muse.

“He was a little man who made a lotta noise. Sweet lady, very different from your father.

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

“But one survives. One perseveres. My children might have some uncomplimentary things to say about me; but they survived; not happily, I gather.

“In a certain sense my life began with my marriage. The father figure shrank considerably under the influence of a happy union. He was displaced by, one might say, Helen. Nothing he could do about it, but stammer, ‘his brains are in his pee pee’. Let it be so, let it be so!”

“Wow!, Mr. D., now there is real person that even the author might not create, an original asshole. I cannot imagine a father calling his son a moron; besides, Mr. D. you never could have been a moron. ‘Poorest fuck!’ Your mother!

“Yes! I can imagine your mother suffered plenty. I can imagine she influenced you a great deal, by being who she was. You respect woman. Even the woman with whom you fought so bitterly you do not call a bitch or a slut, or a harridan. The woman who taught you about her sexuality you did not regard her as a slut, a fallen woman. Your wife you regard as very fine person. I know, by instinct, that you respect me. We are people, humans; are equal in every way; first and foremost.”

“Hold on, I am not a saint. I have said my share of unkind things to my wife. I have made her cry. I have been angry, and hurtful, but not malicious, and not sadistic. I always feel very badly afterwards. There are times when she did irritate me, when I should say “Dear, you are beginning to irritate me” “Please stop whatever you are doing and saying; I will not feel obliged to make any nasty remarks.” Actually she was (is) very forgiving, and neither of us could stay angry with the other for very long, because I suppose our altercations were not vengeful and malicious, a little ratty. I know I could be rattier than she. She was (is) gooder than me by nature; like I believe you are gooder than me by nature. But underneath it all is a ‘love’.

“In the peak of the moment it is rather easy to say “Trust that I would not want to hurt you”. That is very nice thing to say. When I say it to you, I do say it with meaning. But, sweet life, better watch your back!”

“Oh!, Mr. D., you are being silly.”

“Ms. Tellerman, have you looked at the time? I must call it a day. I have lots to do tomorrow; or rather, today.

“I don’t mean to be abrupt, invoking duty over some other consideration, but that is the way it must be for now.”

“I’m sorry Mr. D.”

“But , Catherine; no dallying.”

Catherine rushed up to him, fearful that he might get away without letting her hug him. She threw her arms around his neck; and William placed his arms around her midriff. While they were hugging each other Catherine kissed him on the cheek.

William removed his arms, and placed his hands on Catherine's forearms, gently removing them from around his neck.

"No dallying, Ms. Tellerman"

"Same time tomorrow?"

"OK, lovely, Good Night"

With a somewhat coy expression, Catherine spoke "Good Night, Mr. D., Sweet Dreams"

## *After The Third Day*

Catherine was more than excited by the turn of the conversations. She wondered what she wanted from this meeting. She wanted something, that was certain. Not only exciting conversation? Two more evenings perhaps. Yes! Most likely. Then what. More awkward meetings; less time for them, unless she decided to skip some of her classes. After all, if he was to remain in town only for her, ought not she make it worth his while as well? What would make it worth his while? Certainly not a girl going on and on. Can it be that he simply enjoys her company, looking at her, wallowing in her loveliness? What would be fair? Could she think of carrying on with him? At the moment, despite all she had said to him, in her brave front, could she go through with it?

Oh! Yes, she liked him alright, and she was excited by him. When she hugged him, he felt good. She could feel a rush of emotions, her body responding to his, her own body in a state of excitement.

He simply was able to remove her arms, and remove himself from her embrace. 'No Dallying' he said. Cool customer.

He isn't going to take advantage of me. Do I want him to take advantage of me? Oh!, don't be absurd!

She thought of calling her sisters, but it was very late. Best she clean up the kitchen, and get some rest. She needed to concentrate on her writing tomorrow, and Friday. Time was passing very fast. There would be more of him in between.

I told him he was being silly. Who is the silly one? Still technically a teenaged girl, imagining an involvement with a piece of antiquity. 'Oh! Kitty, how can you think such things?' Her sister, Lydia, might not argue against what Catherine felt for William; she would press her on her intentions. What are your intentions Kate?

Theresa would ask the direct question. 'Do you envision having an affair with this old gentleman?'

Catherine did want to share this new happening with her sisters. She would call them in the morning, partly to apologize for not coming home during the break, but mostly to try to somehow inveigle them to come. It would have to be on a weekend soon, before William bolted the traces. She couldn't gauge his feelings in the matter of finally returning to his island. She was fearful he might leave sooner than she wanted. If she could persuade her sisters to commit, then she might get William to stay until they came.

Oh!, I must get some sleep!

For his part, William was beginning to feel he had passed the point of no return. If he left abruptly, as his instinct urged him to do, he would be going back on his word, but worse, he felt he would be denying, No, betraying someone who had come to believe there was something to their relationship. There was. Damn It!, there was.

A trap? A trap of his own making? No, part of the proverbial anomalies and vicissitudes. 'Lead us not into temptation'.

He thought of his father's lusting after the 25 year old pretty, buxom blond, with the crippled husband; and their turgid affair. She, facing her conscience, and he without a conscience, only looking for an escape route; how he tried to dispose of her in William's direction. Another kind of trap!

No, he could not think of Catherine in those terms, as someone to use. He realized too late that he was smitten by her. Yes!, he had fallen in love. He would not abandon her, or dispose of her. She would have to be the one who 'came to her senses', who realized the futility of pursuing the relationship.

Nonetheless, it was a trap. His wife called it a trap when they were first getting together, while being in a relationship with another.

Yes!, what of his wife? How would she feel about this newfound dallying after the sweet young thing? She might laugh if he used the word 'trap'; but would he remind her of their trap? How could he? Its different now. She's a child. We are through, are we not?

Well, first things first. Got to finish his immediate task. Then, see Catherine again. Should he not find a way to encourage her to allay her attachment? Didn't his wife, while they were going through their throes, after they had made love, when it was uncertain they could escape their consciences, didn't she suggest that William could always feel he had possessed her; as she herself was considering ending the relationship? 'Do you want to give this

a poet's romantic ending of sweet parting of lovers? That would give relief – be noble - you would have the memory and your ego would feel good because I do love you, and I gave myself to you.'

Well, he did love his wife too; in the past he could not imagine life without her.

Yes!, he has been through it all before. He has experience. Hah!, No fool like an old fool; old geezur, old crone.

In his garret, the author chuckles as the principals squirm with principles. They want their freedom to explore; HAH!

## *Day Four*

Catherine had set the alarm to awaken in time to call her sisters before they went off to school.

Theresa answered the phone 'Oh! sis, what a surprise. What's up?'

"Tess, first let me apologize for not coming home during the break."

"We all missed you"

"I'm calling to try to persuade you to come here on a weekend very soon. You and Lydia. I don't know how to tell you to put it to mom and dad, that you want to come to see me; but I would like it especially. I know this seems devious, but don't tell them I called. Make it seem as though you called, and that you truly want to come see me. Can you do that?"

"I want very much to share something with you, something I cannot share with mom and dad at this time, maybe never. I know it all sounds mysterious and maybe silly, but it is all I can tell you until you would get here"

"A guy?; what!?, does he have two heads, one white, one black?"

"Tess, that is not nice. But I can tell you he has only one head. But there are reasons this all has to be kept in the strictest confidence. Swear to me, please!"

"Sure OK, Kitty; but do you want me to say something to Lydia?"

"Yes!, because I want both of you to come. You must make Lydia take the oath as well, please!"

"Talk it over with her. Let me know what you can do, and when. Its all very important to me. Silence is also very important. I must apologize for the mystery, but when you get here, you will understand some of it.

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

“I think I am out on a limb, so feel I need my two lovely buddies to maybe approve of what I am doing, or maybe to rescue me, if that seems more appropriate.”

“OK sis, I’ll give it go with Lyd. I’ll try to let you know what we decide by tomorrow. Is that alright?”

“It will have to be. I think of you all the time, miss you and love you very very much”

“We know how that feels around here; OK love, until later”

The reader doubtlessly regards the author as some kind of debauchee, a moral degenerate, a lascivious old goat lusting after the paradoxically unattainable, suffering most likely from senile dementia, or some aberrant psychopathic state. Mephistopheles.

If this was only true, but would these explain why a person would so scribe?

But the author offers yet another explanation why he does what he does.

It has always been that the world fawns over the young author, assuming he’s the only one entitled to have fun; the one with promise, the one with a future. It is he who receives the advances, the grants, and the warm reception from the crowd.

Whereas the old author is arguably truly an old author without promise. He has no future. An old author has no business being an author, at least not one who will receive a warm welcome from the crowd, but a cudgeling from the critics.

He recalled the dictum laid down by Sir William Osler in the Fixed Period regarding the comparative uselessness of men above the age of forty. Even how more useless they are after sixty years; and furthermore that most of the evils, great mistakes politically and socially, the worst poems, most of the bad pictures, bad novels; etc, have been given us by those over sixty. Yes Sir!

So this one old author does unfashionable things, with impunity because of his age. He needs a vehicle to vent his spleen. He feels he cannot only rant about this and that, as though he should be heard, as though he had discovered the true way, the lone man on the bridge. An old crank teetering on his last legs. God Bless America. How boring. A pretty fucked up world it is, even with its excess of young authors.

It must be understood the author does not spring from academia, does not dwell on Mt. Parnassus, he does not deal in the high-minded sex games of the elite; maybe he’s only fashioning what he can out of the junk in his old mind.

He chooses to put words into the child’s mouth. A beautiful child, an unblemished child, one who speaks only truth. Everyone will listen to her, whereas no one will listen to the old man.



*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

That wouldn't be such an offensive thing, but to insert himself into the script as her paramour, Jesus FFFing Keeerrisstuh! Junk! Like OJ and Nicole; the junk of the century; which preoccupied a whole nation for a very long time. Go figure! Under forty!!!

The new day had begun, the next to last day had begun, the next to last supper. It was not easy for Catherine to concentrate; as a matter of fact, it was nearly impossible. She wondered if she had done the right thing in calling her sisters. She had put them in a bad position, where they would have to lie to their parents. Well, it couldn't be helped. She trusted them implicitly. But, what made her do it? Is she beginning to panic? No!, she is becoming very excited by this involvement. She wants it to go somewhere. But where? She wants to use her sisters as bait, to keep William here until he meets them.

Catherine decided to do some editing, believing it was her only chance to get something done. She couldn't put her head to the task of writing new material. She must speak to William about this hampering. He will calm her, will give her direction, will promise her something. No! she must set her own direction; but she must speak of the hampering. But no, maybe that would drive him away, something she doesn't at all want.

She thought of her remark to herself about William when he withdrew from their embrace 'Cool Customer'. Maybe she needed to cool it. But then she remembered how she probed after his knowledge of sex. His answer about pleasure and mutuality of feeling and love; and loving before and after, and the sublime. Imagining such a thing was enough to make her shudder. She imagined him, his touch being so tender, light, and gentle, so desirous of giving her pleasure. All the speculation about premature ejaculation being a sin.

How can I concentrate? Cool it sister. Maybe Tess and Lydia will say that 'Cool It' 'Take a shower sis'. 'You can do better than that'. But that is not what she wants to hear. She wants to see them become enraptured as she, to be taken with this person, to feel about him as she does. She believes they will, given enough exposure. Well, not everything she feels. Oh, if only they will come.

William was concentrating on the plumbing he had abandoned the day before, finally getting the line cleared. He will need to leave some instructions for the ladies on what not to try to do to plug the thundermug. He amused himself by imagining a graphic cartoon displaying a discomposed young lady loosing her menstrual device into the john with a guilty look. If they could only know what an

odious task it was to deal with their inconvenience. Maybe a graphic depiction of a flood with all kinds of odious things floating on the surface. These are the intelligent ones, No!

One more to go in this sorority, then, two very noisy lighting fixtures.

Obviously in the back of his cool mind lurked Catherine. He imagined her to be conscionable in her deposition of the menstrual devices. He could not envision her discomposed with a guilty look on her face. Saint Catherine? Yeah! So what. He could very easily place her on a pedestal. But he felt she wouldn't allow him that luxury. He was going to be forced to meet her face to face. He did not dislike the idea. It would only be the second time in his life that his relationship to a woman would be so challenged. Woman!? Girl-child!

What makes us what we are?

William did not think of himself as a rake. She was an adult, able to make adult decisions. Has not she encouraged this liaison, perhaps more than he? In her innocence, not gauging the unseemliness of a relationship with an old man, but somehow being herself, curious, responsive, liking the rapport, the banter; the intellectual stimulus; she was enjoying herself; her self.

What was he to do? Be even more adult, walk away. Isn't he, after all is said and done, the one who will be burned?

Hey! Man, you don't have a monopoly on getting burned; what about her? Like Olga said when he was in the throes of his romantic involvement with his wife, before they were married, when both of them were dealing with their guilt, and he was living apart from both his partner and his paramour, he spoke to Olga about his guilt concerning the abandonment of his partner; it was she who asked, 'Well, what about your new love, does she not also deserve some consideration?' Yes!, one never knows from which direction will come the light. It was a very important question for William to answer.

Not that the same question was facing him now. Of, course, there was some consideration. It would not be possible to walk away, not unless Catherine provoked it.

## *Evening Arrives Tardily*

William put off his evening sojourn as long as he dared, knocking on the door to her sorority after six.

Catherine opened the door with a mixture of pleasure and displeasure, having a difficult time balancing the two, wanting to

look annoyed, but at the same time relieved that he was there. She decided to say nothing, waiting for him to explain.

He didn't want to ruffle her feathers, so to speak, so he began with a lame apology.

But she was ruffled anyway, "Mr. D., Do you know how to use the telephone?"

"I didn't want to bother you"

"Mr. D., please be honest with me"

"OK Catherine, I think I am getting cold feet."

"About us?"

"Yes!"

"What brought that about? What is the difference between yesterday and today?"

"Only that I have thinking about somebody getting burned, maybe me."

"What about me? Do you imagine that my feelings are not solicitous of yours, that I am in this for some kind of thrill?"

"Do you want to know how I feel?"

"Catherine, the more I know how you feel, the more I am drawn in. We, or I, have crossed some kind of threshold where someone is going to get hurt. I feel vulnerable."

"Do you want to know how I feel?"

"Yes!, of course I want to know."

## *The Sisters Gambit*

Catherine was silent for a few minutes, pretending to be busy at the stove. William didn't know what to say next. He felt anything he would say, would not ease the tension. He felt Catherine was primed for mortal combat. He had offended her unfairly.

But he was mistaken concerning her mood.

"Mr. D., I called my sisters this morning, asking them to come here for a weekend as soon as possible. I told them I had something I wanted to share, which Theresa guessed was a someone. I only told her you had one head, and asked her not to say anything to mother and father, to figure some way of coming that revealed nothing about a personal involvement. I told her it was very important to me. I asked her to make our parents believe it was they who initiated the whole thing, and not to mention that I had called. She said she would call tomorrow to let me know how it would play."

"Aren't you the devious one."

"Mr. D. I want your support. I want my sisters to meet you and I want you to meet my sisters. I wanted them to come soon, because

I know you want to get back to your island and your life. I felt you might stay around that long. I realize I haven't any right to assume this without asking. But I want it all to happen. Its important to me."

It suddenly occurred to William why she hadn't made more of an issue of his tardiness. She was feeling guilty about her action. She must have known this would force yet another commitment from him; about staying longer. Her emotions were ruling her head. By showing up late, he had cheated her of her desire to inform him in a more enthusiastic manner.

While he was mulling this over, Catherine, very aware of his presence, slowly turned to face him. She clearly was not angry.

"Mr. D., I'm sorry I didn't ask. But I have been wanting so much all day, sometimes even to distraction, to tell you. I know you understand my disappointment in your tardiness; that is, I don't have to tell you. That is, you must know."

"I'm sorry too Catherine for being such a coward."

Catherine quickly put her arms around his neck, put her check to his, hugging him intently. Then released him before an inevitable awkwardness had set in. She turned back to the stove.

It was William's turn to show some affection. He put his arms around her, from behind, below her chest, giving her a squeeze, and, in turn releasing her before anything further would happen. However, he could feel her relax, and guessed she was smiling quietly to herself.

## *He Reappears Again*

Here comes the author again. Such tedious interference.

'Pretty soapy, huh!' Laugh a little! Like my farmer friend would often say, 'Let's have a cup!'

The author has found himself in deep water. He doesn't know the first thing about writing a novel. He may not know anything about writing. He does know that no one will be interested in his rants about all the social and civilizational issues that his foils, William and Catherine, William's wife, Catherine's sisters, and peripherally William's deceased parents, Catherine's living parents, and his shadowy children and grandchildren are expected to express, and delineate.

He believes that some kind of denouement is necessary to get the reader involved in the rant, either through utter interest, or utter loathing. The romantic interest seems the most probable, however implausible, approach. Such an opinion is to be

contrasted to reason, logic, and all appeals to humanitarianism, which he feels cannot compare to the presence of Catherine, but which he knows are also inseparable from her. However, it cannot be any ordinary romantic interest, because at this time of his life, even he knows that there could be none that would seem probable that would hold the reader's interest. So he follows his own inclinations to create the seemingly absurd denouement. His heart is perennially youthful. His heart responds to the innocent charm, beauty, eagerness, hope and idealism of youth, perhaps as he dimly recalls his own. To him his invention of Catherine personifies all these, and more. Innocence is not some condition that he is exploiting. William is not preying upon this misguided child. He is literally, figuratively and legitimately, charmed by the prospects of a relationship with a young woman. But she cannot be any ordinary young woman. It is given that she must be beautiful and attractive enough, and intellectually acute, aware of her own feelings about things, aware of the many aspects of the times she lives in, and very able to articulate these feelings and awarenesses, to want to know their meaning, to want to question their inherent contradictions, to question all assumptions with regard to them, and, most of all, to want to know the truth of all things. Even such a one as she is improbable; so if one is to begin with an improbable heroine, (not a luscious bimbo) what difference does it make to invent others who do not fit the bill?

He doesn't profess to know anything that lives inside a young woman's heart. The clues his own life shed upon the subject are scant. If he imagines he knows a woman's heart, it would be William's wife's. His own daughter's heart never became known to him, and the way she led her life was never particularly revealing. Most of what he knows he draws from William's limited experiences, those which William has sought to share with him. The rest is pure invention, which he draws from his own travels, and searchings, and yearnings, as he has stumbled, and groped around within the human labyrinth. He does not know the why of these things. He suspects there is an element of narcissism that both compels him to write, and to admire himself. He does utilize the young beautiful, intellectually alive woman as his mirror. The source of a love that maintains his interest in writing, when a cynical mind would dissuade him from any further appeals to so-called 'humanity', as though to (m)utter that very word would cause the species to swoon in reverential ecstasy.

Humanity!?!; that does sound pretty soapy.

## *Mr. D. Cannot Refuse Catherine*

“I didn’t get too much done today; I have been so excited about the thought of my sisters coming. I know it is a lot to ask of everyone; especially you. It seemed too important; I only wish I had thought of it earlier. I hope mother doesn’t give them the third degree; I know father wouldn’t deny them. Anyway, I want it to happen while you are here.”

“You know Catherine, you might have become somewhat silly. A little girl having a tea party.’

“Don’t be making fun of me; don’t forget, I can bite.

“Yes!, Mr. D., I have to admit to some excitement, but don’t imagine that I have ‘lost it’. I can still cook dinner, and fortunately one tardy fellow did not spoil it for me. Lasagna! With a salad. I found a bottle of white wine, and some candles. Also, I baked a lemon meringue pie.

“I am still fully capable of solving all the world’s problems ... with a little bit of help, of course.”

“OK Catherine, I am convinced; you’re still you, the girl I admire so much.”

“Come on Mr. D., you can do better than that.”

“Maybe, some day, I will.”

“Now who is being a silly little boy - on his first date?”

“You want me to tell you once again how you take my breath away?”

“Yes!”

“I walked into that one.”

“There you go, spoiling it again.”

“Catherine, please. I must do this thing in my own way, on my own time, on my own initiative. You do take my breath away. You are a very lovely young woman, and a person to whom I am overwhelmingly attracted. At this point in time I cannot renounce you, I cannot escape the effect you have upon me.

“But I think I would be more comfortable trying to solve the world’s problems than trying to express what I feel toward you.”

“But Mr. D. can you not do both?”

“The one makes the other seem unimportant”

“Mr. D., even though we are an implausible invention of the author, even he cannot escape the real world in which we must live. It is true he could follow along the lines of Lost Horizon, but in this day and age, it is even less probable and possible than you and I; and why live forever within such a narrow prospect?

“Do you imagine that love and loving occur in isolation on a magic carpet flying through space?”

“Catherine, I wonder about your dreamy cast. Perhaps when you do fall in love some day, you will understand the relief that oblivion of love will bring.

“Catherine, is not our object to perfect human institutions and human society, and once perfected, to ask for the perpetuation of them, and for ourselves perpetual life, to assure and protect, and perpetually enjoy them. First, heaven on earth, and done in heaven as it is done on earth?”

“You are trying to obscure the issue here. Granted, someday, when I do fall in love, I may welcome it unto wild abandonment.

“But, until I do, I am party to the questions you raise, and I believe our meeting has furthered that cause, and has generated its own energy. If it will satisfy you, I will admit that my experience does not qualify me to speak of the ramifications of love, simply because I do not know what love is. What I feel may not be ‘love’ by some standard.”

“OK Catherine, I’ve struck that sensitive nerve again. I realize I am not taking you at your word. Because of the way we have been trusting each other to be honest, I know I have spoken out of turn, and have responded poorly and unfairly to what you have said. I should not judge, diminish, and demean what you say.”

## *Catherine Broods Mr. D. Expounds Upon Her Sex*

Catherine said nothing to this last, wanting the evening to go in another direction. She had already set the table, and was now lighting the candles. Then she handed William the bottle of wine along with the opener. She opened the oven to get the lasagna, and went to the fridge for the salad, bringing them to the table. She motioned to William to sit, and then gestured as to whether he would like her to serve, or would he rather serve himself. William elected to let her serve while he poured the wine. At this moment Catherine was mostly inscrutable, and very nearly business-like. She needed to recover from his parrying. This kind of challenging banter was not welcome. Perhaps she needed to be put on the spot, to be forced to maintain a serious responsibility for how she expressed her feelings. But that is not what she wanted. She wanted some kind of flow of emotions, not to encounter some kind of obstacle course.

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

William, raising his glass of wine, and inviting Catherine to do the same; “Shall we toast something?”

“What do you propose?”

“May peace and accord reign throughout the realm, and may we become its humble servants.”

“Sure Mr. D., let us so solemnize.”

“Catherine, I’m sorry. I keep doing this to you. What am I trying to do?”

“I do not know what is happening between us. Perhaps it will become more evident when I am sidelined after I am done with my work here. When we will be meeting each other in a different setting.”

“Mr. D., please let some of it happen. Go with the flow. Don’t be judging and shackling.

“I have both of our interests at heart. I am not unaware of your need and desire for caution. It is such, that I am not possessed by the same concerns. You do have a wife. I do not want to compete with her, displace her or to interfere with what you feel for her. I do not ask that; I cannot.

“I know you feel you cannot ignore some aspects of what is happening. You feel you cannot give way to the moment. I mostly feel the same way. For the sake of decorum, if nothing else. But, But, But, Mr. D.. I guess I am asking you to bear with me.

“In the meantime, let us set aside this undue concern; for at this time there isn’t any concern. We are still two people who have become a stimulating presence to each other, producing a ferment of ideas, barely explored. I suppose you have explored them at great length, whereas I am at the beginning, and the things you say give great validity to my own pursuits. I want this exchange of ideas. I think I want to chew them over until my jaw aches, and digest them until my whole being is filled and nourished by them. If that draws us close, then let it be.

“I don’t think I can phrase things any better, at this time.

“Let the author have his romantic fling.”

“To change the subject. My sisters. If they can come within the next two weeks, would you stay for that, to meet them, to spend at least a weekend with the three of us?”

“At this point in time, I cannot refuse you.”

“I’ll consider that we are in agreement on this one subject.

“To change the subject again, away from romance and commitments, I wanted to chew over until my jaw aches the whole issue of women’s rights. That is, apart from the politics of it. Because I am a woman I have a heightened concern and interest. I am currently writing a paper on the subject”



“Sure Catherine, but I haven’t thought of the issue in any specifics, only in generalities. Intrinsicly I am in support of woman’s rights, as I am supportive anyone’s rights. I would want to depoliticize any considerations of the issue. But it is perhaps an issue because it has become a political football. I think the politics involved are mean and vindictive; and chauvinistic.

“Are there specific rights that are of concern?”

“Of course, there is the issue of equality, of opportunity and equal compensation. A woman is not a minority; or a lesser being, or chattel, as depicted by Moses. That is, she should be accorded the same rights with respect to equal opportunity and equal compensation - as any man; or a two headed monster, if that should be the case. What is asked here has received some consideration and support in some fields and in some governmental agencies, as a gesture toward substantive ‘political correctness’, but there is not a great commitment to it; as a matter of fact, the male chauvinistic attitude remains an unchallenged obstacle to it. It took ten years for our nation to refuse to ratify an Equal Rights Amendment. ‘Affirmative Action’ sucks. Many males feel threatened. This, in our country, where all these rights ought of be self-evident as part of the democratic breastwork, to misconstrue a metaphor.

“We are all too familiar with the harassment of women in the work place. The ‘weaker sex’ as prey. Its criminal!

“That is only one aspect of a woman’s rights. Additionally, and not less significantly, a more troublesome issue involves a woman’s right to her own body. We require some clarification here; a context, as it were. The context involves abortion; the aborting of an unwanted fetus within the first twelve weeks (three months) of pregnancy. I think it needs to be understood that a woman will always be ambivalent about such an issue, even when it seems necessary that an abortion be performed. The question here, does the woman decide, or does an outside agency decide?

“Its such a traumatic issue to a woman, I trust that she would have thought about it from the moment of her awareness of the pregnancy. Will she be required by law, moral law, that is, to submit her desire to abort to that outside agency?

“The politics of the day would have the woman charged with murder if she aborted a fetus.

“Even if society as a whole would accept the burden of the birth of an unwanted child, should the woman’s right to her body be abrogated?

“I am not blind to a woman’s responsibilities, not to become pregnant, if she hasn’t any intention to give birth. There is no excuse for not practicing birth control, and I do not mean by

abstaining. In this country there are so many means of preventing conception that it does put a very heavy onus of responsibility on the woman. A woman would have to be grossly ignorant, a virtual imbecile, not to know this. Simply telling a girl, or young woman to abstain is not sufficient. She has natural powerful processes at work within her body that bring her into proximity with sexual flirtation and impulse to gratification (the pleasure principle). She needs to understand the process, and prepare herself to deal with it, to understand the implications of both becoming pregnant and being exposed to sexually transmitted disease. In other words she needs 'sex education'. The religious right needs to understand this. Abstinence is not an untoward consideration; but it is merely one alternative. Abstinence is practiced naturally enough by chaste women. But not all women are chaste in the sense that their hymens are regarded as an inviolable vaginal membrane before marriage (legal union). I believe a woman may have a sexual encounter, and still remain chaste. I do not believe a woman who has a sexual encounter outside of a legal union becomes a fallen woman, or an unchaste woman.

"I have amplified the issue of a woman's rights to include her interaction with the society in which she lives. She has responsibilities, and the society in which she lives also has responsibilities; each involves education.

"The abortion issue is mainly a moral issue with which the social conventions of the day wish to burden it. To wit, even the death penalty for such action.

"Should the woman be the ultimate arbiter, without legal or social stigma? If she should wish it, 'thy will be done'. If she has regrets later, that is also part of the process.

"I realize we can go into the various reasons for considering aborting of a fetus, most of which might be considered mandatory, in any case. Drug use, negative genetic predispositions, rape, incest, exposure to environmental hazards; perhaps underage, unmarried girls; and in many cases inability to provide for a potential child. The religious right imagines they can absorb these births. There is claim to be a need for adoptable babies. The question arises, should a woman who does not want a child, who is also pregnant, in her first twelve weeks, be given the right to terminate her pregnancy?

"Tough Question, Mr. D."

"Of course, Catherine, as your whole argument implies, there aren't any absolutes. Like you, I would want to avoid any hard and fast rules.

"General rules might be of use. Sex education should be mandatory; much more so than prayer in schools, for example. If

some girls, young women, or even older women, achieve an unwanted pregnancy, we, I say 'we', I am not a woman, so I feel I ought to say 'you', you deal with it on a case by case basis. Obviously, counseling of some kind would seem to be in order; and, like you, I do not mean, by the religious right, simply because it is not a matter of morality or religion. If it is a matter of religion, the last I had heard, even a woman is allowed the right to practice her own religion. The courts should uphold that part of the argument. A moral judgment is not a legal judgment. A great wrong would exist in taking away some right from the woman that was exclusively hers. If any individual wishes to do drugs (tobacco, alcohol), to take steroids, to do harmful things to his/her body, we do not interfere. If man wishes to screw a goat, a cow or a pig or a horse, or for that matter, at random, some infected person, with herpes, gonorrhea, clap, syphilis, or HIV positive, we do not interfere. It is their right to do as they will with their bodies.

"If a woman satisfies herself that an abortion is the course she should follow, that is, considers all the ramifications, and is free in her conscience, she being considered the best judge of her situation, 'you' will allow her, as would be her right, the ultimate decision. That is, after 'you' have counseled her, have offered to take the eventual child, care for it, nurture it, provide it with a home; with the caveat that 'you' will put into writing what 'you' intend to do, it is something from that moment on becomes your responsibility, to see her pregnancy come to term in a healthy environment, that is, assure for the best possible set of circumstances for a healthy offspring. If she should change her mind with the incidence of birth, not to want to give up the child, then 'you' should accede to her wishes."

"Wow! Mr. D., for somebody who hasn't thought about the 'issue' in any specifics, you certainly seem to have a clear picture of it all, and I dare say a most reasonable approach, and mostly consonant with mine. However, I feel uncomfortable with the 'you' aspect of your statement. While it is true, it is not men who argue for the equal rights of women, to separate people by gender seems exclusionary. I feel comfortable with the 'we', as in 'we are all in this together', or at least, 'we', you and I are in this together."

"You nibble lightly Catherine, even though you claim to bite"

"That's because I like you Mr. D.

"Behold The Testament! The Lemon Meringue!"

William pours some more wine. Catherine clears the table; and serves the scrumptious looking pie.

## *Mr. D.'s Manuscript*

“You know Catherine, it is all a very steep climb to where the policy makers reside. The path there is fraught with peril. When and if you do get there, you arrive exhausted. Worse yet, you also discover that you are many days or months behind the curve. That is, the opportunity to have any effect upon the proceedings has long past; and the policy makers are already on another tangent; still another thing to which you must regroup and respond. That is the power and privilege of government. Somewhere between Tiberius and Machiavelli. William Burroughs labeled them ‘control addicts’.

“The bombing of abortion clinics is welcomed by those now in power. Oh! they will declaim violence of any kind, but use the opportunity to imply that the clinics get what they deserve, on moral grounds. The woman seeking an abortion is thus driven to some other place, worse by far, in terms of her own health; where there is no counseling, no offers of adoption, nothing to humanize the whole procedure. Yet it might be a better alternative, risks included, than being forced by an inhuman government to come to term, threatened with the ultimate penalty.”

“Yes!, Mr. D., The fundamentalist, the Christian fundamentalist lays it on pretty thick. Jesus Christ is as disposable as a dirty diaper, or sanitary napkin. Shit on one, blood on the other. If there ever was salvation through Christ, he has once again been usurped and converted into a mean, vindictive firebrand, brandished by a hoard of bigots. The Lord Have Mercy On Your Soul. The Lord Bigot has no Mercy. Worst of all he is implicitly supported by our president, the bigger meaner bigot (‘shame on you, shame on me’). As long as it is a moral issue, and the government does not preach from the White House, there cannot be ascribed a connection between ‘Church and State’. But there are so many ways for the White House to infer the intent. That House also claims an intimate knowledge with the savior through its saccharine pronouncement ‘Jesus Loves You’. Followed by a garnish with the ‘Flag’. The finale, an Amen: God Bless America. Enough to cause one to puke.”

“I don’t imagine you will be including your colorful imagery in your paper. But I can visualize the digital images; a *jpg* of a diaper, and a sanitary napkin, as you described them; maybe even image of someone puking. That’s the kind of thing I might do, for its shock value. Of course, its repugnant. So is man’s inhumanity to man. In one of my current efforts titled God Bless America, I resort to the use of images, comparisons of an apebush and a bushape,

between Lincoln and the current occupant of the White House, and an image of an injured or dead Iraqie child, with a caption underneath 'Leave No Child Behind', and later a comparison between that image, of a father holding the child compared to Mary holding her child in the Pieta. Then the ultimate consequences brought about by rigid, inhuman governments; ours included. Finally an image of an asshole; the ultimate breakdown of my control of something over which I have no control; I too am a victim, victimized by the bigger asshole. I have lost my thread and my eloquence, have fallen into the gutter, like Red Cloud. Out in the freezing cold, wasted in mind and spirit, and body."

"Wow!, Mr. D., you must show me, you must show me. You don't by any sneaky chance happen to have a copy with you, or in your truck?"

"Wise to me, are you? Yes! Catherine, I have a copy in the truck! Yes!, I would like you to see, and to hear your reaction. Shall I get It then."

"Oh!, Yes!"

"OK, then, remember, you asked?"

"Yeah!, and I'll remember who so thoughtfully mentioned it."

William disappeared into the hallway, then he is heard closing the door to the outside. He is now risking himself. Feeling one way when he writes, and now another, as a very vulnerable, very stupid person. 'Why did I do this?' 'Maybe I can say 'I didn't put a copy in the truck after all' 'Premature', like some other premature things in this life.

But he couldn't lie about it now; he had to embolden himself. She would be a good audience; sympathetic, and understanding and encouraging. He hoped he wasn't too blind to its faults, and that her response would be positive. The part about Toni Smith would surprise her, since he hadn't mentioned it. She would like that. But she would land on him for the asshole part. He knew that changed the tone of the seriousness, that it slipped into the gutter, albeit, the anguish of the gutter, where even blasphemous humor did not measure up. But he, the author, needed relief, feeling he would be unable to move those responsible. He could only go on by attempting to humiliate them, even more than he had already.

It was time to share with Catherine. A moment of truth.

"Well, here it is; the moment of truth."

"Don't worry, Mr. D., even if I do not like it, I will not think less of you. I know already where you are coming from. I may be surprised at some of it, since it is you who have written it. You do surprise me, you know.

“I promise my intent is to try to remain uninfluenced. It’s a risk I have to take. So, in some ways, it better not be too overpowering.”

## *The Author Examines Himself*

The author muttering to himself, ‘Christ, this sounds like Soap Opera Stuff. Maybe Sir Osler was on to something.

From heaven, Christ echoes, ‘Believeth in me and ye shall be saved.’ He was a young ‘un stirring the pot. A ‘Shit Disturber’, to suffer the hammer and nail, like a sheet of plywood..

‘Its not that simple’ ‘From what do I need to be rescued, or, for what am I being saved?’ ‘Its one thing to sound like a Soap, and another to thrash around in the New Testament.’ ‘Unless of course, you are prepared to tell me the whole story of what took place between you and Mary Magdalene.’

The echo pontificates, ‘What happened between MM and I pales before the pathetic little peccadillo you are, What!?! Writing? ‘Creating’!?! There might be a few exaggerations in the NT. There might be a few omissions, and some glossing over, but your little fling will never see print, because it is not fit to print. Very messy.’

There is a loud sound of a manhole cover closing over the dialogue. Silence.

‘Well, I guess I’ll be damned’. ‘I can’t envision myself becoming a repentant sinner.’ ‘MM, the fallen woman, uplifted by whatsisface.’

Catherine will not become a fallen woman. She might be made of flesh and blood, and yield to temptation, but as she esteems herself, a loving frolic in the hay will not make of her an unchaste woman. If some asshole comes along to tell her she has fallen, he’s apt to lose the part of his anatomy that dwells too much on prurient matters.

The author is in deep in his quagmire, not unlike a pig wallow, because he flaunts all that others hold sacred. Shove his nose in it.

He argues his story is not about sex, it is not about flaunting the mores; that it is about ideas (purpose of life, justice, equality, fairness), about reason, and about the search for truth. Catherine is a defender and disputer of these. Times have changed, she does not need to be a ‘virgin’ or a martyr to liven the discussion, to be a credible presence. She is separate from her arguments; they have a life of their own; she is their voice.

As is William.

William has been created to reveal another side to the argument, more cynical, even facetious; but underneath it all he hears the echo of his own youthful idealism in the words of the

seeming child, Catherine. Perhaps he hears the cries of the voices of all decent humanity that have passed before him.

## *Closing Day Four*

Catherine sees the large Bold Red letters reciting God Bless America. She quickly scans the pages to see more Bold Red letters, and a series of images. Then she sees Toni Smith.

“This looks very interesting”, and as she scans though more slowly, looking at the images, she sees the Iraquie child along side the Pieta, arrested and absorbed in the juxtaposition. “And, very moving.” Further along she looks at Toni once again, and then notices Toni’s statement.

“This will require more than a casual reading. Could I keep it for a few days? I promise I will guard it with my life. Or would you prefer I read it now?”

“It doesn’t matter, Catherine. I know I will hear from you.

“At this point in time; for your eyes alone.”

“Mr. D, Already, I treasure it.”

“I can supply you with an autographed copy.”

“Mr. D., never mind the smart stuff. I’m very serious.”

“Always catching me in my game”.

“I believe you are always testing me. You seem to want to rile me. You are not satisfied to allow me the simple, even wonderful, pleasure of showing my appreciation. Its genuine, Mr. D., and may even contain an element of loving admiration.”

“I know when I’m licked.”

“You’re easy, Mr. D.

“Not to radically change the subject, but mostly to return to the tenor of our previous discussion, only somewhat abandoned, do you suppose we could chew on another loosely related topic to abortion; ‘gay rights’ as we have come to know ‘them’?

“As we have recently heard, the state from which you hail, has amended their Constitution to declare that only a ‘man’ and a ‘woman’ are allowed a legal marriage. It’s a kind of cheap way to shut the door on other unions, an issue which, in another context, was defeated in a previous election in the same state.”

“Yes!, Catherine, I was particularly disappointed in that amendment, because I had always thought of the state as being more tolerant, or at least somehow a ‘mind-your-own-business’ state. I felt with its small population, a little over 3 million, in place the size of the former West Germany with its 55 million, or

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

England with its 55 million, it had space sufficient to, let's say, generate an expansiveness in outlook.

"Is this the clarion call of something more insidious, on a larger scale, as we have heard, an amendment to the Constitution of the United States Of America?"

"It follows. But, as we aware, another state has approved of other unions, giving them legal status. So it could become another issue between the states and the federal government. Perhaps a constitutional crisis where the Supreme Court would be 'used' to rule against the 'good' state. It is assumed of course that three quarters (38) of the states would need to ratify such an amendment, whereas three quarters of the states would not ratify an amendment, passed by Congress, granting women equal rights (equal to men, that is).

"The narrow issue would probably succeed whereas the larger more meaningful issue had failed. One wonders what other amendments to the Constitution, representing other larger issues, such as, let's say, the so called 'Bill of Rights' would also not be passed and ratified, today. As Kurt Vonnegut suggested, a radical document, nowadays.

"But to return to the issue, which should be labeled the Bedroom Right. Perhaps there should be an amendment that defines what can happen in a bedroom. The debate would reveal a nation with its head in the gutter and its feet in the clouds, as it was in the Lewinsky affair."

"We had a President who tried to tell a lie."

"Mr. D., stay with me on this."

"Alright, Catherine. I think I already know where you are going."

"Don't be too sure. Yes!, I would be concerned about any such specific amendment, and I would do my utmost to see that it was defeated. There should also be an amendment that any duly elected representative, CEO included, cannot have his or her head in the gutter.

"As in the abortion issue, we are dealing with a morality issue. We are attempting to legislate morality. Where does that stop, with some version, and interpretation of the 'Bible', used as the reference document. Like a Secretary of Homeland Security, do we create another Cabinet position, Secretary of Morality with Senator Leviticus delivering us from evil?

"I know that sounds absurd, and perhaps unlikely, but it seems the backward step has been taken, or the nation is unable any longer to summon the insight and wisdom and courage to pursue the higher purpose."

"I think you are correct in saying the 'backward step has been taken'. I think a 'Bedroom' amendment would characterize the



dilemma. Perhaps we need to go through the trauma, as we did with prohibition. As it proved difficult to prevent the distillation of alcohol, it would be even more difficult to enforce the Bedroom Amendment. With the Patriot Act, the Fourth Amendment has been rendered null and void. Along with the Bedroom Act and the Nullification Act, we, might get the Peering Act (peering into the bedroom). Actually it might be amusing to peer at a couple of tubby right-wing fundamentalists doing their thing for you know who, on high.

“Should we have a national debate, can we stand a national debate; are you willing to get on the stump, are you willing to risk your writing career exposing the bigotry, and defending those who would be injured by laws regarding their choice of partner?”

“Mr. D., notwithstanding your tubby couple, I am most sensitive to one aspect more than other aspects involved in this issue; that is the imposition of another person’s mindset upon my existence. What I am saying is this: ‘My personal feelings in the matter involve the right of the individual not to be exposed to and ruled by this, as you called it, ‘bigotry’, even the instigators of it.

“Because I have a more or less preconceived notion about marriage does not give me the right to assume that all must think like me. I do have to admit to some of this preconceived notion. But I have acquaintances, and in one case, friend, a girl friend, who has as a friend, or partner, another girl. I like both of them; they are decent, law-abiding people. They mind their own business, do not even engage in feminist or women’s rights activities, and do not flaunt their sexual proclivities.

“I know how my mother feels about this issue, an issue which she vehemently labels ‘homosexuality’. To her it is a foul condition visited upon humankind. She sees it as ‘dirty’ thing, linked to an aberrant, perverted, base sexuality. She hasn’t any empathy, or sympathy for anyone so engaged. She hammers home the issue of HIV as a just and deserved consequence of such evil.

“Then it all becomes very complicated, where she can no longer speak coherently as she rages on.”

“Yes, Catherine, complicated. Because the ramifications of ‘homosexuality’ add to the long list of sexually transmitted diseases. In this case more innocent, non participative members of society become vulnerable. So HEW’s Koop admonished every male who engaged in ‘illicit’ sexual activity to use a condom. This covered, multiple male/female couplings, as well as multiple male/male couplings. It did not address female/female couplings.”

“Mr. D.!!, don’t be facetious!”

“Catherine, I am not being facetious. I am pointing out what has been done to address the ramifications. Which is to note what

government has done to remedy a bad situation. Government recognized a national health problem; it addressed it in one way, a responsible way. It did not only get on the condom train, it also advocated care and caution with all sexual practices without making it a morality issue, lest they might have advocated some self-control as well; that is, take the time to put on the condom, every time. Of course, the manner of the use of certain drugs complicated the HIV issue.

“Catherine, let’s back up a little. Like you, I have had certain preconceived notions regarding, for the lack of a better expression, perhaps a more neutral expression, the ‘union’ of two individuals, particularly as part of the marriage institution. From a biological point of view, it seems a relatively simple mechanism for promoting reproduction. That is the male/female union. Man as a moral or immoral entity, finds little fault with the mechanism. He excepts incest, and even considers a somewhat strict consideration of blood lines, let’s say, within families. Of course, as morality, or taboo creeps in, he questions miscegenation. Further morality, extending to taboos, such as older gents getting it on with young women; as a matter of statutory law, legally underage women, usually, not coupling with legally aged males.

“To return to the preconceived notions. I do not feel attracted to a male in any sexual sense, no matter how good looking he is, physically developed, personable, charming or even intellectually stimulating, or friendly I may become with him. I have never felt any sexual attraction. When I try to imagine a sexual relationship between two males, I find the idea repulsive, and yes! ‘unnatural’. But oddly enough, when I try to imagine two females, even as might be construed in an ‘unnatural’ sexual union, I am not repulsed. I have not been privy to what actually happens in the bed; I suspect, pursuing and fulfilling the pleasure principle might seem somewhat more revolting than poetic. In either combination, love may also be present. Kraft-Ebbing has catalogued quite a range of human sexual permutations, all the way from satyriasis to nymphomania; fetishes, pederasty, zoerasty; and the various manifestations of sexual expression, as well as the pathology associated with them.

“I would imagine since the question of my maleness is not at issue when two females are sexually attractive to each other, I can entertain a double standard. But I might be upset if the two ladies were otherwise attractive to me, and chose each other instead of me. That is the narrow view.

“When I was a high-schooler, pumping gas, I encountered an aggressive older ‘well-to-do’ gent, driving a fancy car, propositioning me. When I was in the Military, there were always a

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

number of aggressive males lurking about, hoping to latch onto an unwary sailor. They would make suggestive gestures, they would reach for the door of your automobile as you were stopped at a traffic light, they would haunt the back row of drive ins, flashing money. One shipmate even tried suggestive groping. This kind of activity troubled, and angered me; I wanted to club the bastards; they were transgressing in an unacceptable way on my space. Gay 'establishments' are a more reasonable way to go; leave the people in the street alone."

"What more can I say to improve the taint of this show? Can I improve the logic of the illogical by rattling on in this convenient street spake of the day, a kind of lowest common denominator wisdom, or character defamation?"

"I haven't felt any desires to become involved in a female sexual experience. My sisters and I are very physical in showing our feelings for each other, with hugs, yes, kisses, wrestlings, and we have even compared our bodies, and even rated ourselves on a one to ten scale. But we have never explored each others erogenous parts of our bodies. I would not want anyone to misconstrue the physical contact I have had with them; I would not want to become self-conscious about it. Although I must admit, that when mother is around, we did tend to 'cool it'.

"I can imagine an intimate proximity could develop between women. I don't know how to explain this. I do not envision it for myself, because I don't seem to have a need for it. But I can imagine a dependency for emotional support growing into something physical, whether or not exploitive, and maybe resulting in some kind of sexual intimacy. I cannot imagine the same for males, only in theoretical sense, extrapolated from what I can envision for females. I do not feel repulsed by the thought of two females becoming attached to each other. I do not want to be put in a position of judging any part of it. I feel certain 'love' between any two individuals sets its own standards and limitations for any lasting relationship.

"Although it was my suggestion, have we chewed on this one enough for today? I seem to suddenly have run out gas for today. I have to clean up, shower, and hopefully, curl up in bed with your manuscript."

"Put you to sleep most likely. Yeah, we kept at it rather late last night. Prudence!. Still another day ahead. The Last Supper. Won't you let me help?"

"No Mr. D., I need to do it in my own inefficient way."

"So I guess it is 'Good Night' 'Sleep Tight' 'Pleasant Dreams' time again."

"Mr. D., Lots and lots to think about"

Catherine once again came up to him, putting her arms around his neck, and pulling herself against him, placing her cheek next to his, and giving him an extra squeeze, before letting him go. William stood there dumbly, his arms too late in following the desire to encircle her.

“Another missed opportunity.”

Pretending to Ignore his remark, “Mr. D., a wonderful evening; truly. You too have a good night, and ‘Sweet Dreams.’”

She placed her hand on his back below the shoulder, and proceeded to usher him toward the door.

“Tomorrow night Mr. D.? Don’t be late. If it is impossible for you to come on time, please telephone. OK?”

“Fine, Catherine”

Not giving him any opportunity to dally, she opened the door for him.

He stepped through it with a very long step.

“Night!, Mr. D.”

## *Catherine And The Reading*

Catherine truly did want to curl up in bed with the manuscript, but instead, picked it up to more or less reassure herself she still had it. She found a comfortable chair, sitting down to peruse, at her leisure.

### *The manuscript:*

A half hour later she had finished her first reading. ‘Full of stuff’ was her thought. ‘Full of stuff’. The Toni Smith inclusion was so very straight forward, Toni’s public statement in its plain eloquence. But the one that moved her, literally moved her the most, truly a great statement, was the placing of the real time photo of the adult holding the injured or dead child, alongside the photo of the Pieta, Mary holding her dead son. The obvious statement beneath ‘There isn’t any difference between these two’, that preceded by the first image isolated by itself, introduced by the bold political slogan of the cynically cold: ‘Leave No Child Behind’.

She was also provoked by the image of the ‘Compassionate Conservative’ and the litany of associations pouring from an obviously furtive and foul mouth. The comparison between the ‘Compassionate Conservative’ and Abraham Lincoln. The juxtaposition of the ‘Compassionate Conservative’ to a monkey

might seem amusing, but she felt uncomfortable with it, as she did with the projection of the posterior of human anatomy. She felt these detracted from the more moving aspects of the writing. She wasn't too sure of the significance of the bombs and pictures of devastation. Perhaps one, of the real Hiroshima detonation and the picture of the devastated city would have been sufficient, however unclear the reason for its inclusion.

She would have to read through it again, later, to see if her impressions were the same.

She thought she would wait until she finished her own paper before she would read it again. As it was, she would have to return to, and remain, contained within herself, within her own logic, and method, not allowing herself to be influenced. She suddenly realized that it had been a mistake; she hoped a night and a sleep away from his manuscript might help. Before that, she needed to clean up the kitchen, a task she was tempted to leave until morning. But in the morning she would want to begin, first thing, working on her paper, with critical eye, and, with a dedicated resolve to complete the first draft. Much labor ahead. She had the momentum, she liked what she had written, and would draw energy from it for the remainder.

As she was busy in the kitchen she was recalling the day, and the discussions concerning women's rights and the dilemma of those with a confused sexual orientation. She pondered the reasons behind the intolerance. What were her true feelings regarding same-sex this and same-sex that? Why were males so niggardly tolerant of females? Was it an inflexible societal ethic based on centuries of unchallenged habit (Moses' chattel?). She knew there was more than same-sex considerations to the whole of the sexual dilemma. The tip of an iceberg? Sex, seeking gratification, even twisted 'love', were powerful motivating forces within the individual. These forces often took on strange manifestations, finding many 'prejudicially objectionable', perhaps deviant, ways of expression.

Equal Rights for women seemed such a straight forward request, but became a somewhat crooked path to denial of women; a chauvinistic path, a low-life path. The male jokes were sometimes cruel. One in particular seemed most crude when she heard the 'public servant' declare, 'So women want equal rights with men; they ought to get circumcised'.

This kind of crude unfeeling dismissal/denial caused her fear/anger/pain all at once. She could not feel good about being a female; somehow it was wrong to want this equity. A lesser human for being a female? The obedient thing in bed, the bearer of children, the homemaker, the chattel and the servant; that was her

place. Yes!, she had overheard it many times at the University, that seat of the humanities, of humanitarianism. It hurt deeply when she heard these things; her expectations of the seat of higher education had been thwarted. It was flawed.

However, all were not the same. She realized that the University, in the classroom, still was the place of ideas and idealism, where justice, equity and fairness were open topics of discussion, where reason was more apt to win the day over prejudice. But in the corridors it was another matter. Women once again, became 'fair game'.

Catherine believed in William's sincerity regarding these issues, that he saw them as a great source of pain for the individual. He saw life as a whisp in the void of eternity; and could not imagine anyone not revering the marvel that it was, especially when considering its brevity.

She thought, perhaps humanity, with its potential for keen awareness, was fated to suffer more than other forms of life, where almost diabolically, a kind of raw unconscious justice prevailed, always in the interest of the stronger. Man has the privilege of being aware of injustice; or the privilege to request justice; however that be. The beasts get what they get, without privilege, and with minimal awareness, survival awareness. To survive as a human being in a human environment, one wants and needs justice, equity and fairness.

Once again, she thought of William, the meaning behind their relationship. He, a grandfather, and she a child, but he, a male and she, a female, a fully developed female; a child, all the same? An attraction there, all the same. Some kind of temptation involving him, to explore her own sexuality, and he prudent, wise to the repercussions, the unseemliness, the 'creepiness', of such a liaison. She did not feel that way. William was the first man (male) that spoke her mind, and touched her heart. She desired his embrace, something he seemed very reluctant to give. She wondered how it became her assigned task, as the 'lesser' of the two sexes, to be the upholder of some traditional social mores, which she had no part in forming. Who are some of these upholders, 'HAH!', 'dirty old men', like priests, professors, judges, senators, and, even presidents? She wasn't foolish enough to excuse her thoughts by measuring them against such reprobates.

She wondered if she should not try to make William feel more comfortable, to not excite him with her forwardness. Let him make the moves. She believed, that, without her help, and encouragement, he would not make any move. He would simply walk into and out of her life.

Perhaps. She thought of her sisters, hoping they would call tomorrow with the news of their coming. She felt that her sisters would give her the perspective she needed; at least, she could hold on to him until they came. A definite date, at least. A chance for several meetings until then.

Hey!, the reader has to feel a little better. Catherine is the genuine article. She would not purposely contravene the social mores. But she is preparing herself for something as yet undefined. Not a leap, but allowing her feelings to guide her on the one hand, and her sensibilities to proceed cautiously, on the other.

This tale is about many things. It is even about delicacy, the delicacy of Catherine's feelings; not the indelicate feelings some readers would assess, earning only condemnation. William's feelings remain more hidden. Doubtlessly he is attracted to this young woman, but he has been attracted to many women. Isn't the idea behind most novels, to get the reader involved in a love interest, to get them into identifying with a character, even an improbable character, to lure them into a fantasy, to seduce them into the dialogue, where the protagonists argue their various inclinations and dispositions?

Perhaps there exists a perfect form for the novel, that can only be written once. All others try to measure up. To repeat over and over, the same denouement, seems rather dull. Perhaps the human scene is also dull; so repetitive without end; and without remedy

Pygmalion wedded his statue. What is the author's intent? Should he make it public? Where are my slippers, Galatea?

We shall see where the nuances take us.

The author will declare it is not his intent to shock, to horrify, to contravene, to be 'creepy'. He will reiterate his desire for a forum where ideas will become an important part of his tale, however its denouement is deployed, as a deliberate challenge to a more conventional set piece.

He is aware of the importance of treating 'reality', per se, with some respect. But, beneath every human reality, there beats a human heart, about which we are privileged to know very little.

He will not apologize for his seemingly arbitrary approach. He is who he is; unlike most people, because of what he does. He writes, he fills his time with words, but first with ideas, then the words that give them shape, meaning and life. Does he make his creation of straw, sacrificing these two to the exposure of his mind-set, depriving them of life's blood for the sake of propriety?

The human heart remains what it is, an unknown, as it beats variously, sometimes fast, sometimes slow, beating without

guidance, only with impulse, its momentum responding to what comes from within as much as what comes from above. The above of the senses, and further away, stored in the encephalon. The wild things that come from the cranium, the imaginings, quickening the pulse, as the notions flow through the vessels evolved to carry them forth.

From where do these imaginings emanate? Not only from within the human labyrinth. They come from afar, through the ages, ages and ages of imaginings, imaginings of humans trapped in a mundane world full of servitude; menial from birth to death, no more an ennobled creation than the basest animal.

It is not only the princes and princesses that are free to imagine, imagine the throne, and power, and conquest. The lowly also imagine, imagine an undying love that will rescue them from their chains, and their utter earthly abandonment. It is the evolved being that imagines, however it is treated. The human being, however shapen, is still shapen as a human being, recognized by all. To be revered or not to be revered, that might be the question. It is the imagination of a human being that imagines; not some dumb brute imagining.

R-Rated. Reader Rated.

The author expects to be rejected. Whether or not he is accepted, he will have still created Catherine. Whatever Catherine does, however she behaves, she will still be Catherine. Her beauty and charm will live on. Her unassuming intelligence will challenge all who encounter it. Her earnestness cannot be faulted.

Blame not William, for he too is the handiwork of a mostly merciful author. If he lures him and traps him, or if he makes it seem that Catherine does, it is only to entwine these two in an unbreakable bond, to know each other, and love each other in a Universe as cold and indifferent as any God (Flumdum) could create.

Destined? No. Convenient? Perhaps. Necessary? As the tale unfolds, Yes.

## *A Fifth Day Races Into Night*

Catherine rose early to the alarm, headed for the kitchen for some green tea, then to her desk, and to her work at hand. By the time she had finished her first draft, squeezing in a quick breakfast, skipping lunch, it was late afternoon, too late to begin the supper she has intended. William would be along in half an hour. She was too drained to tackle any kind of meal. She decided to call her favorite take-out restaurant to order calzone.



She sat in the Lazy-Boy easy chair, to rest for a few minutes, to be awakened from a deep snooze, by the sound of the door bell. It was a few minutes before five. It would be William. Rousing herself and making her way drowsily to the door, she greeted William through a fog.

“Hello, Mr. D., Come in. I had fallen asleep on the couch. Your ring awakened me. I’m a little groggy, so if you’ll excuse me for a moment, I’d like to splash some water on my face.”

Catherine soon returned. William was standing where she had left him.

“Mr. D., please come along, and sit for a moment.

“I rose early, had some tea, and began work, stopping for a short break for breakfast, and worked through until a half hour ago. I didn’t feel up to making dinner, so I called for take-out calzone; figuring I would make a salad to go with it. I sat down, only to fall asleep. Could I ask you to go to the restaurant to pick up the calzone, while I wake up and make the salad. The calzone will be ready by 5:15. I’m sorry Mr. D..”

“That’s OK, Sure, I’ll get the stuff”

“Here are the directions. Its already on my account, ready to be picked up.”

“I had better leave now. See you soon”

“Betcha!”

William departed, not wondering too much about what had happened in these last moments. His day was fruitful, and his work was finished. By all rights he ought to be on the road North. But this girl had arrested his flight.

While he was gone, Catherine’s phone rang; it was her sister Theresa, calling to tell her that she and Lydia could come on the weekend after next, if she still wanted them to come. They couldn’t make it next weekend. Catherine, of course, was very pleased, and thought their schedule would be fine, and that she was eager for them to come. She thanked them profusely. Theresa would call again with flight times etc.

Now to persuade William to wait the two weeks. She felt somewhat uneasy about the request, but she was hopeful he would assent graciously. She hoped nothing would intervene to prevent her sisters from arriving on time.

William returned when she was more or less half way through the salad preparations.

“I’m a little behind in doing my part. My sister Theresa called to tell me she and Lydia can come the weekend after next. That she

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

will call me again confirming and give me flight times. That was the best they could do.

“Mr. D., I hope it is not too great an imposition to ask you to stay until then. Is it Mr. D.? You must tell me, honestly. I would like to see them anyway, but would also wish so very much if all of us could get together.”

“Catherine, I suspect you know that I cannot refuse you.”

“Mr. D., I do feel awkward in asking, it is truly presumptuous and selfish of me. I know it might extend your graciously promised time beyond what we had discussed.”

“Don’t trouble yourself over it. The die are cast. I look forward to seeing you all together.”

Catherine, beside herself again, threw her arms around his neck, hugging him with enthusiasm. “Wonderful, Mr. D.”

She finished making the salad, and set the table. “Some wine Mr. D.?”

“Is there any beer?”

“I believe so” Looking in the rear of the fridge she found more than one kind.

“Mr. D., a lager or an ale?”

“Great. A lager will be fine.”

“I shall have a glass of white.”

“We are responsible drinkers here. We realize it is a privilege to be allowed to imbibe. Better here than somewhere else. We could lose the privilege, if we got to partying here with booze. The mealtime drinking is tolerated – so far. In the almost three years I have been here, only one girl had too much. She was a bit of a basket case after a troubled, aborted love affair. But we settled her down. She is still with us and doing fine. A very nice girl”

The calzone was served.

“My turn to toast.” Raising her glass “To you Mr. D., heartfelt!”

“As always, you are a wonder, especially radiant now”.

“Mr. D., I should be. I am having calzone with you. You are staying, my sisters are coming. I finished the first draft of my paper. I resisted the influence of your God Bless America. I stayed on course with myself, to finish. Yes, I feel pretty damned good.”

“What’s on the agenda for tonight?”

## *Catherine's Impressions Mr. D.'s Reaction*

"Gee Mr. D., I hadn't planned anything. I did read your manuscript before retiring last night. There is so much happening within it. May I talk about my first impressions?"

"Please do, Catherine"

"I feel you are not yet through with it. You are ranging far and wide. It's a big topic. The juxtaposed images of the parent and child are extremely moving, very very eloquent. A very pointed and derelict consequence of taking the 'law' into one's own hands. The Toni Smith gesture and quote is very important to the message; that is, I respond to it, even beforehand. I come to that part of it with my own baggage. The development to the theme is very appropriate, and done with a clearness of vision and of self. When you begin to range, the connections are not so apparent. I say this fully realizing that we do not know what are the consequences of the belligerence being fostered by this one man, uttering God Bless America. Yes! it's a Fuck You, Love It Or Leave It Proposition. The response world wide to this modus operandi can only be negative. One wonders about the response within our own borders. There are many people who leap for joy. Yes! There are also many people who cringe.

"I like the juxtaposition of Lincoln. The two faces are different enough in expression to get a certain message across. The ape juxtaposition, while maybe appropriate in one sense, is an offensive gesture, however justly deserved. Its not clear there is good parallel here. It goes without saying, the asshole thing, while amusing, and ridding you of a congestion of bile, again takes away from the more important message. You want to engage the reader in understanding that his nation has been usurped by a demagogue, and exposing it to a hatred that affects us all. Yes! toward Armageddon; a very careless and uncaring man is at the helm. The image of the loudmouth bully, with all the superimposed detractions forming him, is a strong image.

"I think the one image of the photo of the real time detonation of the bomb over Hiroshima, and the image of the destroyed city might be as effective as the other images included with it. Sure, the WTC is evidence of a consequence, as maybe is the more internal Oklahoma City explosion. But the whole prospect becomes clouded with too many Bangs. However, I think the connection should be more clearly drawn as the ultimate inevitable stupidity; inevitable

stupidity, following upon yet more inevitable stupidity, ad infinitum.

“The whole writing is very strong (convincing, persuasive) in its main point, minus the detractors. I think it is a vitally important message. If we could end this reign of terror from within, we might stand a chance of making the appropriate gestures beyond our own borders. I do not know what these might be. Maybe you will yet add this hope to the whole prospect.”

“Catherine, I doubt I will get a more thorough and perceptive critique. I thank you. I believe you are fair in your assessment. Yes! it is obvious there is more to do. As with any work of art, if I could be so presumptuous to call it that, a final push toward refinement is begging, howsoever untimely it may appear tomorrow.”

“Mr. D., It is not a matter of presumption. It is. It states what it states, unequivocally. I’ll not argue against the striving for refinements. I doubt there is any danger to be found in overworking this material. It is already defined and aimed; it will dictate its own refinements, whether timely or not.”

“With your help, Ms. Tellerman.

“If I may inquire, do I get to read your manuscript?”

“Mr. D., the subject of my paper comprises a narrow definition of some of the things we have talked about. I have only finished the first draft. I need to review with a fresh read, probably tomorrow morning, probably having to revise some of it. I feel tentative in some areas, where our conversations have stimulated in me a boldness of thought and approach. I think it should be left alone until I get back to it. Is that OK with you?”

“Sure. I would be willing to bet that your very alert, thorough, and precise nature has already made for a fine piece of writing, probably a lot more polished than mine. I can imagine you sticking to the subject with singular determination.”

“Mr. D., you continue to speak that way, and it is possible you will never get to see the paper.

“It is true that I limit the scope. I would guess that I am in the process of discovering how I think, that is, how I reason, and what concrete examples lead me one way or another; I try to stick to the most logical sequence of thoughts. The ifs and thens of logical deduction. The cause and effect relationships. I realize that I do not make bold imaginative leaps, although I am capable of them. I would say the idea of precision does characterize what I try to do. I’m sure I have much to learn about development of themes, revealing truth at the right moment; in short, an expository technique that holds the reader, gives him something to think about, and helps lead him to a conclusion I wish to draw from the arguments.

“I would compare what I do and what you do in this way. You do make bold imaginative leaps, stretch the limits of free association. You dance while I plod. I remember your line, ..‘they ventured to guess that he was intelligent. Some kind of gent anyway. Another classified him as a ‘moron’. Lost her job.’ How that sparkles. ‘Some kind of gent, anyway’ ‘Lost her job’. The play on words. I remember the Canadian Cabinet member who created the international incident by classifying him as a moron. The brevity of it all, still it speaks volumes. I can imagine this comes and evolves from practice and experience, as well, and importantly, your individuality, and in you, an underlying vision, which you fearlessly project. I do want to proceed cautiously, because I am involved in constructs. I would like to arrive at self-evident truths. I am less certain of who I am than you are of you. You are more willing to shove your feelings into the argument, which reveal your profound humanity. I am not uncertain about my humanity, likening it to yours, and recognizing it as such. But I view my humanity as my ‘ace in the hole’. When all arguments fail, then my indignant ‘humanity’ takes up the banner. However it is my hope that somehow the language contains within it the power to effect certain things that I would also ascribe as importantly, and significantly, visionary.

“I don’t know if I am saying what I want to say here.”

“I believe you are doing very well. Yes! you are beginning to define who you are. The ‘I am’ part of the statement. You would like to make it clear to yourself who this ‘I am’ is. You feel some things very strongly, and they give you motivation, a need, to speak of them. I like the idea of your humanity as the ‘ace in the hole’. I believe eventually your humanity will become the whole basis for your writing. That will require art, of course, which will come from the gradual evolution and development of your very own individuality, and a terrible honesty about what you perceive to be true. These will give your work its forte.”

“Wow!, Mr. D. can you promise me that?”

“If you remain dedicated, and persevere, Yes!”

“I may not be around to witness it”

“Now, there is a wet blanket.”

“It’s the bitter taste of realism that confronts us all, Catherine. The sooner you brace your self for certain kinds of reality, the better it will be for you. It is your task to persevere in the face of disappointment, adversity, loss, heart-break, even when it seems futile to do so. All of these will shape you, broaden, and deepen your humanity.

“Don’t take me the wrong way here, I am not deliberately wet-blanketing. I have the highest hopes of your success in a near

future; but between now and then is lot of dedicated labor. Its the name of the game. But the earlier the better, as things go. The old folks can rot in hell as far as the 'market' goes; it doesn't matter what is the message. Youth contains the potential for more. Age contains no potential whatever. I have become a 'memoir'."

## *Mr. D.'s Maxims*

"I imagine you are only partly right in what you say.

"I suppose the 'market' does enter into the equation; but that does not define me. I feel certain you are wrong when it comes to the truth; truth is not proprietary to age."

"Catherine, I'll reveal to you two maxims or precepts that have guided me in what I do on the page. (and sometimes on the stage). That is, outside of justice, equity and fairness. The first is simple enough, but carries with it what is basic for every human being: No Man will have Dominion over another Man. You might identify this as the Toni Smith Doctrine. The other that pertains particularly to government: The Doctrine Of The Least: Any system of government that does not account The Least must be deemed a failure.

"What I say will not move mountains. These are not ideals. They are basic and essential realities, and of the utmost importance, not to be bargained; and remain incontrovertible, when we set out to devise a community of Man.

"Perhaps the ideal is represented by the desire to devise a true community of Man. If it was not for the idea of community, none of it would matter, for what would exist is anarchy, law of the jungle, dog eat dog, each man for himself. Once we assent to the idea of community, it is with the understanding that we are setting aside these others. We assent to the idea of community because the largest number of individuals benefit, the largest number of individuals have the potential for survival. Importantly, resources that were utilized in the dog eat dog scenario, can be diverted into the building and assuring of the other, the community.(The peace dividend). Since it appears we seem to be given choice, community seems to become a pragmatic choice.

"Of course, the idea of community can mean different things to different people; from the preservation and protection of the maximum amount of personal freedom for the individual, to the opposite extreme of a thoroughly controlled, and conforming state.

"Does the ideal of 'No man will have Dominion Over another Man' discourage a 'dog eat dog' precept? What is each individual expected to sacrifice for the sake of community? James Madison asked this question in Federalist Paper #10. Will he be expected to

accept an outside Dominion over his person? It should first and foremost be his choice, a choice which he can relinquish at any time - IF!!. A la Toni Smith? The Smith Doctrine.

“The Doctrine of the Least is the obligatory condition assigned to the State. Or the Community, if you will. There will be the Least amongst us. They cannot be made to suffer for their condition. They must be assured of freedom from want, want of sustenance, want of shelter, and want of care when they become ill. Yes! wards of the State, or community, the last resort. This is a human commitment, not an Act of God. If there is a God, it is responsible for the anarchy, law of the jungle, dog eat dog, each man for himself, all by design. It is man himself who aspires to something different. He might invoke a God; but God, per se, is a passive force, perhaps stymied by its bungled creation.”

“Most interesting, Mr. D. Thought provoking, to be sure.

“As you were saying these things, I could not help but focus in part on the Toni Smith Doctrine. That is the crux of the matter, is it not? What right is the individual accorded as member of the community? Does Toni reserve the right to withdraw from supporting some aspect of the community of which she does not approve?”

“As we discuss these things I am mindful of Melville’s question: ‘Is civilization a thing distinct, or is it merely an advanced stage of barbarism?’. Within a civilized state we need to make it possible for the community to openly debate all things that occur within it. There can be no secrecy, and no prerogatives granted to community government that cannot also be revoked. The potential for abuse is so great that government cannot be allowed to usurp that which belongs to the community as a whole. You see the trouble we have gotten into with War Powers being invested in the Executive; it decides what is in the community, ‘national’, interest. That is one person deciding for the whole community. That individual is allowed to operate in secret, and enabled to define what constitutes a threat to ‘national’, that is, community, security. As we have recently learned, this has subjected us all to being spied upon by the state; Alas!, A Police State!

“As we have witnessed, ‘terrorism’ has provided an excuse to exploit this condition for other purposes. Toni Smith withdrew her support of the Executive that declared War on Iraq. To her, and rightfully so, the integrity of community has been threatened from within by the act of its executive. Even as objectionable a thing as ‘terrorism’ has proven to be, it is known that the community was not being attacked by an invading force. In a sense it wasn’t too different from the act of a private citizen, Timothy McVeigh, or Ted Kazinsky, taking cause to extreme. The ‘terrorist’, whether inside

or outside, takes cause to extreme. Do we differentiate? How does one accurately assess the threat? Does one assume a paranoid position with respect to every outsider, a la, the Alien and Sedition Act, (or insider) that does not agree with 'our' community ('our way of life') to be stated another way; in this case, the fabricated polemic against Iraq, or the Axis Of Evil, by our executive? I do not want to get into the details here. It's the fact that, in essence, the community no longer exists when such action is taken by the executive. Once the threat has been understood, and addressed on all fronts, the community should once again assume its reason to be, it should resume its preeminent place in the affairs of men; the executive should step aside, allowing the community its voice. The executive is never anything but the servant of the community."

"Of course we know this last not to be true, particularly of the current executive, and his behind-the scenes operators, or string pullers.

"Mr. D., what you are saying is key to everything we are. It's the basis of our very civilization and our humanity.

"Your thought ranges afar. You want to bring as many things to bear upon how we must perceive ourselves. I detect not a trace of cynicism in what you are saying. It is all relevant to something you want to argue is a pragmatic recognition of the greater benefit of community. 'Terrorists', and 'chief executives' fall under the same guidelines. One may not be any better than the other. Toni does not support 'terrorism', and she does not support the executive, because each are wrong.

"I believe the executive is not to be trusted. How is that supposed to affect me? Do I take my concern to my elected representative, who also waves his little flag at the local Boy Scout Gathering? Do I hear his voice crying out, even though he did not vote to support the executive. He does not do a Toni Smith, because he wants to be reelected. Toni is not running for any elective office. Who waves the flag with more meaning? Toni acts, and speaks. A Tour De Force.

"Mr. D., your God Bless America is somewhat of a tour de force we must consider."

"Who's 'we'?"

"OK Mr. D., You and I, for starters."



## *The Routine*

“Mr. D., not wanting to leave things to the last, when you are about to go out the door, can we discuss what will be the routine for us during the next two weeks; or, will there not be a routine?”

“First, the rules for the sorority. During school week from Sunday PM to Thursday PM we are obliged to observe a 10 PM curfew, that is, we must be in the building by that time. On the weekend, that is, Friday and Saturday nights, the curfew is extended to midnight. If we want to go away on a weekend ski-trip, or a weekend excursion to the coast, we must go as a group of no less than three individuals, and we must leave an itinerary with the house mother, and where we can be reached after the usual curfew hours. Some of us get trusted to do these things on our own recognizance, that is, no phone call checkups.

“It is unlikely that I could do any overnighting individually.

“I could skip classes without rebuke.

“I could go to the coast for a day, let’s say Friday, skipping classes, returning by midnight without having to account for myself. I should be able to do the same on a Saturday.

“What are your plans, apart from meeting with me? How often would you like to get together with me? For meals, and for evenings until curfew, or during the day, skipping some classes?”

“Mr. D., since you have agreed to stay, I want to be as accommodating as possible.”

“Well, Catherine, I like the coast idea, maybe on Saturday, but of course, that would be next week, since tomorrow you want to work on your paper. I suppose we could dine together, and spend evenings. I do not like the idea of you skipping any classes.

“Yes, I want to see you, but if you need the time or space for yourself, you must say so. I would not take that personally.

“I agreed not to leave until I have met your sisters. That much is settled. Maybe next Saturday at the coast. Maybe Sunday somewhere else. How do you feel about this Sunday?”

“I’ll see how it goes tomorrow. I should be able to let you know when we meet for dinner; is all of that OK, anyway?”

“It sounds like a plan. I suppose there will be a routine for evenings.”

“As far as a routine for evenings, I could plan to come to your place to pick you up, or we simply could agree to meet somewhere, a restaurant lets’ say, and for convenience sake, the same restaurant, maybe out of the way.

“I’m sorry to abandon you tomorrow”

“That’s fine Catherine, I am able to recognize and appreciate dedication. You must take what time it requires.

“I suspect we will see enough of each other in the next two weeks.”

“How do you mean that, Mr. D.?”

“I don’t mean anything bad. It is a simple statement of fact.

“Hey!, young lady, an old geezur and a sweet young thing meeting to discuss the whatevers of life; getting together at all seems most unlikely, but here we are doing it.”

“Sweet young thing”? You can do better than that.

“You want to be an old geezur, that’s your business. I don’t happen to regard myself as a ‘sweet young thing’ and I do not happen to regard you as an old geezur. However, I have no reason not to associate with an old geezur, if that is what he is.”

“You are the stickler.”

“I’ll try to pick you up before six tomorrow evening. Tell me where. If for some reason I am delayed I should have your phone number.”

“The Pines”, #7. 355 4007. On the highway south.”

“I believe I know where that is.

“You know, Ms. Tellerman, this clandestine activity makes me feel creepy; I mean, your picking me up.”

“Mr. D., I will have enough of a job not answering questions from my housemates when I don’t show for meals, and when I spend my evenings away from the house. Imagine the questions, the mind-other-people’s-business looks, taking my housemates away from their scholastic endeavors with a chance at smut, if you picked me up at the front door; especially if you didn’t come knocking. Come on, Mr. D..

“Whenever you address me as Ms. Tellerman, I know something is coming. Mr. D., I gave you the option of meeting in some other way. Would you prefer that?”

“I guess I am making too much of it all. I do understand your need to avoid the busy bodies. Picking me up is fine, for starters.”

“Its settled then, starting tomorrow night.”

“Fine.”

## *A Return to Important Matters*

“Mr. D., I do want to assure you that I highly value this encounter with you, and this infiltration of my life. I do not want to spoil any part of it with ridiculous scandal mongering, or moralizing. I cannot know any of its eventualities, but I do not

want smut to become any part of it. I want to know you and I want you to know me. If that has come about through some kind of 'chemsitry', I do not intend to deny it; I need to recognize it for what it is., and fully understand it.

"I sense in you a unique person, of your own making; someone who intrigues me greatly, someone who inspires me, someone I want to know and understand. I feel it is an opportunity for me as well as a fortuitous happening in my own career. Your age has absolutely nothing to do with how I feel."

"As always Catherine, you pour on the charm. I cannot resist. You do make me feel like a king."

"I'm not through."

"However, I do want to return to our previous discussion regarding your two maxims."

"That's a switch."

"What's a switch?"

"From 'I'm not through' to maxims."

"Mr. D., have a little faith in me. I mean well."

"What is it about the maxims?"

"Actually what I was pondering, how far are we away from the Declaration of Independence and the Bill Of Rights as you formulate the first maxim?"

"My notion is to devise and draft something that means something to me, not confused by other considerations. A basic something. I can accept the intent behind the documents to which you refer. Most of their wording. As court case after court case has shown, these well-intended prescriptions for our mutual protection have been challenged over and over again. Something about them is not clear enough, explicit enough, however implicit their meaning. Perhaps there are those who feel there are too many rights and too many freedoms."

"Perhaps it isn't any clearer to say that 'no man will have dominion over another man'. I assume nothing about implied intent. I merely state what is obvious to myself. No flowery stuff, no big signature full of flourishes, nobody assuming they have the right to tell me what my rights (or freedoms) are, nobody demanding allegiance of me, and nobody telling me what to do, what to think, how to feel. The Toni Smith Doctrine, for the purposes of this discussion."

"Obviously we do not arrive here under our own steam. We are nurtured. But one day, some of us become aware of our singularity, our separateness. What does this signify? We decide to walk away from the nurturing environment into the larger world. There are others doing the same, some shouldering and elbowing their way along. Inevitable collisions occur where one attempts to

intimidate, dominate the other, by whatever means, for whatever reasons or non-reasons.

“To respond to this state of affairs, and to head off further altercations, we institute a set of social constructs to address the inevitable, saying everybody has the right to be here, no body has any more right than any other. Sounds good, but in fact some people do feel they have more rights than others, for a variety of reasons, if you can call them that; I call them plausible deceptions. In order to short circuit all the plausible deceptions, I cut to the chase with No Man Shall have Dominion Over Another Man. All that is required is that we define Dominion. ‘Rule’ ‘Sovereignty’ ‘Control’, by one or many. ‘Rule of the majority’. As though it is intended that one must be included; that is, no one can exclude himself. By whose authority? The masses, the regnant power?

“It becomes clearer to me, as I separate myself from any implied inclusion in a commonalty. I do not believe I am splitting hairs. I believe it is essential to know who one is, to recognize the circumscribed reality of a sack of flesh filled with stuff, the stuff of life, a self-determining stuff, and a self-propelled entity, stuck in that rut of ‘life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness’.

“Don’t tell me one cannot be an ‘island unto himself’, ‘because I am involved in Mankind’; ‘no need to send for whom the bell tolls, for it tolls for thee’. We don’t know that for a fact. I don’t think one has to be made an example to test such a silly thesis.”

“OK Mr. D., ‘Damned if you and damned if you don’t’ comes to mind’. There is no question we are being dominated by a gross mass of the self-serving. Are we better off being aware of that fact? I remember Gasset’s comparison of the monkey, ever alert, and ever reacting to his environment, an environment which it cannot rationalize, which in effect constantly threatens it, albeit, dominates it’. What we have come to recognize as ‘eternal vigilance’. Man is somehow supposed to be different, because he can learn to live within himself. But he is no less dominated, only hypothetically more able to understand what dominates him; but governments which act in secret, destroy the possibilities, somehow stymieing a life in isolation.

“Hence I do imagine and mostly condone the maxim, as a way of accounting the differences in the awareness of individuals, and assuring it makes no difference in his status as an individual. We need NO DOMINATING signs posted as ubiquitously as NO TRESPASSING signs. Fair’s fair.

“I know the argument will soon gravitate to anarchy. We can’t have each and every individual going about as Captain of His Own Soul and Master Of His Own Fate. Can We?

“I like the maxim, although it requires more understanding than the second, with which I agree without reservation.”

“Great suggestion Catherine, NO DOMINATING! Have I ever told you how much I like you?”

“You can tell me all you like, as long as you don’t change the subject.”

“You can’t realize how much I appreciate your tenaciousness with regard to a subject. Every time I have tried that sort of thing in normal conversation, those listening begin to yawn. Either I am getting a dose of my own medicine, or you are lot better at it than I am.

“So, Catherine, please continue”

“Advocacy for Live and Let Live.

“I would think that a key word here is Tolerance. Unless of course, Magnanimity states it better. But, of course we cannot change human nature. Some Biblical soul prophesized that the Meek Would Inherit The Earth. We know that has never come to fruition. As has often been pointed out, Justice is in the Interest of the Stronger, practically speaking; although refutable as part of a conversational stroll throughout Socrates’ interminable maze.

“I’m getting off the subject by hinting at Justice; however, in a just and equitable world, no man would have dominion over another man. Any government worth its salt would account the Least.

“I would guess we are not there yet. So how do we get there?”

“Catherine, by dedicating the rest of your life to the proposition.

“We hear the God Bless America theme thrown at us and over us like some cheaply scented bathwater. Many lift the banner with such élan and pride, like roosters crowing upon the dungheap.

“God hasn’t blessed this place; as a matter of fact he or she doesn’t know it exists. He or she did not create it; at least not the one to which I was introduced long ago.

“If this Imaginary God was truly Blessing America, he or she would imbue each individual with a keen sense of the Doctrine Of The Least. On the face of it, our nation would be without fault in its recognition of the Least. Rich and powerful we believe ourselves to be. What does that mean? That by virtue of ‘trickle down’ the Least have something they otherwise would not have. Better than in feudal times. Is that the best argument we can put forth? Are we expected to believe that? We measure what we are by dollars, by things, by guns and barricades, locked gates, guard dogs?

“Catherine, I don’t see myself as better than anyone else, as more human; mostly because I have lost any hope of mankind getting to a place where I can even understand any part of what it is to be human. That is, beyond what I would be able to

understand about any animal. My humanity is a sometime thing, despite all my somewhat misleading sentiments.

“There are some glaring deficiencies in this great nation of ours. I do not understand in real terms how they can be allowed to exist? I believe these deficiencies are the responsibility of government. But government dodges them consistently. It tries to palm off that responsibility on the so-called ‘private sector’. Basic things, like nourishment, shelter, health care. Unglamorous to be sure, but vital; even vital to the argument, the proposition: ‘Great Society’. Another political slogan, or was there a real commitment? It never came to fruition. Instead we heard, can we afford both Guns and Butter? The Great Society was forsaken because the people who coined it were jus’ talkin’. Instead of getting out of Southeast Asia, they frittered. I doubt there was any real commitment. It sounded good, like the New Deal; probably the source of the inspiration, however short-lived. It was said of Athens that she squandered her favored position, and her wealth with dubious battles o’er the horizon in Peloponnesia (Penelponisia).

“What am I trying to say? To be blunt about it all. One of our leaders, the one who started out by hawking Chesterfields, wanted to get the people off’n welfare. He denigrated the people on welfare, labeling them ‘social retards’. They were lazy good for nothings. Government needed that capital to fund the Strategic Defense Initiative. It needed it to build the impregnable fortress, filled with guard dogs. But what was to be defended and protected within the fortress. A bunch of fat cats, smoking Chesterfields.

“Why do we have government; only to kick ass? To bleed the demos?

“Interestingly, or not interestingly enough, the recurrent themes of the opposition mock ‘Utopian’ schemes. Utopia is not a bad word, any more than Heaven is a bad word. ‘Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven’ If you will pardon the expression; ‘Somebody fucked up. I suspect a fair percentage of these bible thumpers from the president down to his lowly minions are all hypocrites, or worse yet, so narrow in their outlook they simply cannot see anyone else, and don’t care about anyone else.”

“Mr. D. those are harsh words. Now, you have gotten off the subject.

“I could accept the dedication of my life to what you are advocating. Although you meant that assessment cynically, I cannot see how else one can believe, and not do what you intimate.

“It’s OK to label someone else what he is, like a hypocrite, or a bigot, maybe a deceiver, a dissembler, or outright liar, a calculating doubletalker, a predator; but when it comes down to ‘nitty gritty’, where are you in all of this, and where am I? What are we prepared

to do? You seem only to disbelieve. I haven't been able to think of disbelief.

"I'm not trying to put you on the spot. It is a rhetorical question, one that is required asking.

"As an answer to this, do we have to take to the streets? How do we do that?"

"Let me clear up something. Perhaps you have reason to believe I was being cynical when I urged you to dedicate your life. In fact, Catherine I do believe it would be a waste. That much is not cynical. But I also realize that one has to man the ramparts if anything at all is to be accomplished, and that one cannot run at the first sign of battle. Battle, there will be. Perhaps a sacrifice, a crucifixion. I do not want to see you on the cross.

"Because I love you, I would be drawn in, perhaps offering myself in your place, because I believe you are the hope of the world, whereas I am only so much gray hair. Then we would have to argue over who is more important to the cause. My reasoning will not win converts, but your youth and beauty, along with your reasoning, even inspired humanitarian outlook, has a better potential to win converts.

"Its like what is happening here between the author and his reader. He knows these arguments contained herein within his tale make dull reading, whereas the 'romantic' angle, however improbable, keeps people guessing, keeps them turning the page. Its not the gray hair's wisdom that makes this all happen."

## *Yes Him Again Seeking Indulgence*

Author's Interjection. Getting pretty windy, huh!. Better put on a sweater. Not as windy as King George W, or his minions.

For those who want to take umbrage with the author for all of the holes in his improbable schemes, save it. It gets worse, or better, depending on how you view your umbrages.

If the reader sees himself as sympathetic figure in all of this, I suspect the reader will be the most disappointed.

The adventure of the Mind, *mens* (feminine, for those who wonder upon these things), is perhaps all that remains of the author, where only imaginary adventures, however improbable and ungrounded, are those only available to him.

But it is as words upon the page they appear, to be translated, and transformed in the imaginations of the reader. Largely autobiographical, leaving the critics, the traffickers in umbrage, ample scaffolding upon which to build their assault.

Catherine, as much as the author loves her roaming around inside his head, charming his existence, enlivening the dreary palpitations of a declining host, knows she is not real, only a device, a warmer more palpable entreaty, to listen to the message, she, its champion, and its purveyor. Foist, Fausted upon the reader.

The author believes her invented charm cannot be denied by anyone who has half a desire to waste time with her. Easier to pursue than Yillah.

Although William serves as her foil, he is gradually becoming the victim, not only of her physical charms, and demeanor, but her intellect, and her intense desire for the world to be transformed into a better place. William brings validity and some voice to what Catherine feels. Catherine rescues an old man from his self-imposed exile from human affairs. William might also represent the tired reality of the disillusioned world of man, a world that does not seem to have what it takes to learn the vital lessons that emerge from its past. Obviously, Catherine represents the hope, innocence, energy, eagerness of youth; and the one who takes seriously, as the veil, the message she has received through her upbringing and her inculcation.

To forewarn the reader, there will be no sacrifices herein, no one held accountable, lest it be Man himself, as he looks inward to roam his own interiority, desirous of discovering the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

*Ex Eunt.*

## *The Real Daughter*

“Catherine, if you was to ask my daughter if I had dominated her, she would loudly exclaim in the affirmative.

“Until she entered public school at the age of six, I thought of my daughter and I as bosom buddies. I’m not sure what she thought. When she entered the mandatory school system, I place emphasis on mandatory, to which I acquiesced, she became exposed to other influences. One day, not long after entering the system she arrived on the doorstep with: ‘God Said’.

“Being a naturally lousy unwise parent, I reacted to this statement as though a bomb had been thrown into the house. I told her to leave that shit in the street from which it had come.



*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

“Her war with me had begun. While, in my eyes, still ‘daddy’s little girl’, I was not a very understanding father. She began to resent her father. Not allowed to speak of God, the God of the neighborhood brats, the God who, through his twerpy apostles, Lucy, and the Nasty Little Redhead, informed her ‘unless you love Jesus you ain’t gonna be my friend’, she withdrew from daddy, something of herself. She had begun to fake it. Daddy was too busy to notice.

“Daddy dominated the situation uncompromisingly.

“So, to say the least, whenever I hear ‘God Said’ from anyone my hackles go up. My reaction has grown more succinct with time. I take it as affront to my intelligence, and an attempt to control me through the basest of methods. ‘You’re wrong’ is what I say. I don’t try to reason with it anymore. As a parent, I am not supportive of my daughter in this claptrap. Very undemocratic toward fanaticism and bigotry. I have become like them, a hardass full of denial. I have grown intolerant of this frickin’ dodge, ducking responsibility for oneself, where ignorance is the chosen venue over any desire to know the truth of things; where there is no question, there is only the dogma.”

“Wow!, there you go again, Mr. D.”

“No, Catherine, not ‘there I go again’

“I am saying these things because I know you to be exactly the opposite of them. What I would have wanted from my daughter, instead of some saccharine bullshit pitched from the pulpit, thumping on some ancient, abused, transformed, manipulated tome. Where the pulpit insinuates alienation, in every yard of it. Speak of Domination. Speak!”

“I’m sorry Mr. D.. I am sorry for your loss. I cannot give that back to you. I cannot replace her. I am willing to be me. I am willing to be your friend, and more, maybe your bosom buddy, for life, if that is in the cards.”

Visibly moved, almost to tears, William turned his head away.

“Thank You, Catherine.”



## *Reality Check Ends Day Five*

Suddenly they heard the door to the sorority opening and closing, and footsteps coming toward the dining area. A breath away from a hug.

“Hello”, a voice announced.

The housemother had returned. Catherine only momentarily revealed a fluster, but before the person appeared she had recovered. “Hello, Ms. Watson.”

Before Catherine had time to offer an explanation, Ms Watson, spoke. “What have we here?”

“Ms. Watson, this is Mr. Duranachek. He has been solving the plumbing and electrical problems in three of our sororities. We struck up a conversation; I learned that Mr. Duranachek is a writer; and I decided to invite him for dinner? This is his last day.”

“Oh! Yes. Now I remember, I forgot to tell you someone was supposed to be coming.

“Pleased to meet you, Mr. Duranachek.

“Continue as you were; I’ll be going to my quarters.”

Catherine breathed the proverbial ‘sigh of relief’.

In a lowered voice Catherine said “I’m glad it is her instead of one of my Sorority Sisters. I guess it puts a damper on things though.

Catherine began to clear the table with William’s help.

“But you know it is already almost ten PM. Maybe we should cool it.

“We are all set for tomorrow, Right?”

“Yes. I guess I should go”

“After a few. Don’t want to make it look precipitous.

“Let’s pretend to wash the dishes, then make a graceful exit.”

After another fifteen minutes in the kitchen, Catherine accompanied William to the door. Hidden from the view of Ms. Watson room, should she open her door, Catherine put her arms around his neck quickly, placing her cheek next to his, squeezing him lightly.

“Good Night Mr. Duranachek. I thoroughly enjoyed our conversation. It was nice meeting you. I hope you have a pleasant journey home”

Placing his cupped hand to her cheek, “It was all my pleasure Ms. Tellerman. Much success with your writing. Maybe one day I’ll be reading you with special interest. Good Night.”

## *The Weekend Begins*

Catherine, as she promised herself, again spent the larger part of the next day, Saturday, with her manuscript. After all the declarative and probing discussion of the past week, it was her temptation to expand. Her most pressing, most challenging, task was to keep the whole under control; confined, specific. She was feeling self-conscious about her idealism, as though it was impractical, truly an unrealistic expectation. She now realized that the origins of the ideals, as something inculcated, something influenced through the writings of other idealists. She also realized that she had ignored the cautionary tone of those writers, concerning expectations. She thought of them as hurdles easily scaled by earnestness and dedication, believing that once the argument was presented in the proper light that no one could ignore its plausibility, as well as its imperative, regardless of any seeming impossibilities. But she also reasoned that such arguments must have always been part of the human fare, which caused her to hesitate in feeling confident and certain that anything would happen, through even the best executed arguments, no matter how loquacious, articulate, and otherwise persuasive. In one ear and out the other came to mind (Mr. D.'s profound influence). How to weave one's arguments around self-interest; that seemed the real challenge.

Catherine was tempted to title her work *No Dominating*, as a commemorative of their discussions. Or *Captain Of Your Own Soul and Master Of Your Own Fate*. But the doubts were nearly taking hold.

She realized that her whole mindset had been challenged, expanded and even somewhat altered, that what she was writing did not reflect these changes. She had begun to question something she had taken for granted.

## *Saturday Evening*

Catherine wanted Mr. D. to read her paper. She took it with her as she left for their meeting at the restaurant.

William was waiting, somewhat anxiously, and somewhat apprehensively, but as Catherine appeared on time, relaxed and smiling cheerfully, he beamed in response.

"Wonderful Catherine!"

"Good to see you, Mr. D."

"Did you have a productive day?"

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

"I have finished what I had set out to do; which may receive a few corrections after a last reading. But I brought a copy for you to read, to take with you, maybe to read this evening or tomorrow morning; and maybe you would be kind enough to critique. Another head will not hurt."

"O.K., I'll give it a go."

"Don't let me forget to give it to you."

"Did you have a good day?"

"I spent the day thinking about you, about us; and I spent some time writing. Also I walked by the river."

"What did you think about us?"

"Still not comfortable with the idea."

"Look at it this way Mr. D.. It may only seem that others care about us, about how we feel, when they feel nothing for us. It is about them, not us. They would feel affronted by something they consider flaky, and maybe abhorrent."

"I do not associate with you as a challenge to them, or to social conventions."

"I say this, in case you are thinking more of them than you are of me, or us."

"Don't take me amiss, I know others are out there. Do I care what they think, or don't think, or feel or don't feel?"

"Yes!, some of them."

"Perhaps I could envision the proverbially analogous situation of two ships passing in the night of life. We see each other and we wave in acknowledgement. But suppose the sighting leads to wild excursions of the imagination, perhaps some fanciful romance, as we are wont to do. As the ships were passing, perhaps with some distance, even with binoculars we might have appeared fleeting and indistinct, as we might have done if I had casually greeted you that first day, to go about my business, allowing you to go about yours."

"As you yourself intimated, suppose I was made differently than I am; less attractive, or less eye-catching; or more formidable in some way."

"You might not have asked. 'Are they as lovely as you?'"

"Carpe Diem, Mr. D.? One thing leads to another. I did not consult the oracles, or listen to the Chorus."

"I do not feel I tread on dangerous ground. Besides, if we went away somewhere, none would be the wiser, the world would continue to turn as though we were not here, as it always does, and has it has for eons."

"But Catherine, going away somewhere is not an option. You belong in this world; you are preparing yourself for a meaningful

and vital career. You are part of the hope for the future of humanity.”

“Mr. D., don’t sanctify or beatify me in advance of my accomplishments. I am yet to be tested.

“In meeting you, Mr. D., I have become strengthened; I feel less alone. I feel a certainty in my chosen path, though it be fraught with more unknowns. I know I do not need to explain this to you. Because I sense you feel the same for yourself, but perhaps in a different way.

“I sense you feel good about my ‘youthful’ idealism. However unrealistic you view that idealism, you see yourself in it.”

“Catherine, any idealism I might have harbored was always tainted with the greatest skepticism. I did not feel I had found any kind of real kinship amongst my fellow men. Somehow or other I became exposed to, or challenged by, certain things that awakened in me a perception of the world as it should be, however pieced together from many different sources, but, none in particular.

“Yes!, Catherine, in you, I see the idealism that, I believe, lives in many of us. I so believe partly because I want to so believe, but also because I feel ideals are what lead us on, us humans, toward something that inherently benefits our lives; a mechanism, a *modus operandi*.

“Additionally Catherine, I see you, a lovely maiden, in the forefront, carrying that banner. I feel I could follow you anywhere.”

“I know you are exaggerating. You would not follow me anywhere. For one thing you would always be looking out for my welfare, forever cautioning me to do this or not do that, trying to shield me from something that I must experience. As you yourself must experience when you reveal your sentiments to the world. I cannot protect you from those, even as the beautiful damsel.”

“But Catherine, I would not be tolerated, as you might be. It is assumed that age is incorrigible. The sting of my barbs, so close to the truth, earns me harsh treatment. Its not that man does not recognize the truth; it’s that he does not cotton to it, because it is embarrassing and inconvenient. If the truth does not serve him, he dallies, equivocates, avoids, and maybe even crushes those who dabble in it; such is the expedient.

“Its possible you might also be crushed for the same reasons, but the cover up of your rubout would be more difficult than one that involved me; now an old deceiver and reprobate.”

“Oh!, Mr. D., how can you think these things?”

“I think them because they have happened in the past, throughout our history. All the sages, poets, truth tellers, and yes!, idealists, have been shamed, castigated, sent to the tower or the dungeon, and dispatched, as convenience and expedience dictated.

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

“I suspect you know these to be true, but maybe feel that today is somehow different. You are imbued with the belief, that surely no one can have missed the point, the importance of civilization and its benefits. Even as this may be true, there is a side to man that is terribly, frightfully self-serving. There is, after all, some satisfaction to be found in power and gain. While it inherently assures for nothing, it still satisfies, perhaps, to many, even more than upholding decency, fairness, equity and justice for all.”

Catherine is silent for a few minutes. Then she speaks slowly and deliberately.

“Mr. D., in our conversations, we seem to be returning to the same starting point. That suggests to me that we don’t know where we are going.”

“Catherine I imagine that to be inevitable.

“I find in my writing I experience the same thing. We are who we are, and we are all limited by who we are, by what we are, by the very nature of our design. We are not infinite, we cannot become infinity.

“In the end we all have very little to say, though we rant and rant.”

“Mr. D. I feel we have much to say.”

“Let me put it another way Catherine.

“If man would heed, and act upon what is said, there would be less and less need to say anything further.

“But as you have doubtlessly observed, man has been at war with himself in one form or another, justified by varying degrees of righteousness and/or aggression for as long as the historical record exists, and longer, if we are to correctly interpret the remnants of his beginnings. Even those who have preached ‘brotherly love’ after He whom they tout, have pursued, perhaps even as violently, as even the most violent, the purported cause of ‘brotherly love’. And upon this very day we continue to do the same.

“Like the very brambles that grow in our back yards, does this thing rise up to occupy our thoughts.

“Tell me what we are supposed to say, and how we are supposed to say it to avoid this circularity?”

Catherine did not answer. She was pondering what he had said about the brambles. What do we do with brambles? We cut them down, we dig them up, we poison them, we sterilize the earth. Yet they return, their seeds born on the wind or in the feces of the animals and the birds. Only in the desert, or in the coldest climes

do they not flourish. Neither do we, nor the animals, nor the birds, while the cold or heat perseveres, and the wind rages, or not at all.

She hesitated to say anything for fear it would set the discussion in another direction she did not want it to go. She wanted the word to be as mighty as the sword. But in truth she suspected it was not. Because the wielder of the sword also spoke.

She sensed it all turned on a Socratic method. If one was able to ask of the wielder of the sword a series of simple questions, it was supposed the wielder would see the light, that the sword was only one way to obtain a result, and in end may not be the most effective means to obtain a lasting result.

How to get the wielder to listen to the question in the first place, when he strenuously sought to avoid it, sensing a thwarting to his avowed purpose. Might makes right.

William could observe the troubled nature of her thought, her expression revealing the perplexity, and complexity of her thought.

Finally Catherine spoke. "Mr. D., my best guess is that we need to perfect our method, both to rid ourselves of the brambles, or to live in peace with them.

"If our method is to serve us properly, it must lead us to the conclusion that one thing is preferable to the other, and that, to attain the one or the other, we must follow the lead.

"Otherwise, nothing matters; it's a free for all. Let the sky fall.

"No matter how perfect the logic, if one is not obedient to it, that is, if one chooses not to recognize it, then the cause is lost."

## *The Rift*

William was tempted to smile, only smile reassuringly to her, but how not to reveal his thoughts. This exquisitely lovely creature so troubled, so desirous of an infallible method, somehow to be discovered in reason or logic, which she truly, earnestly, felt existed. There she sat across from him, this girl, who might as well be a phantom, a dream, yet so real, so perfect in herself, the girl he might have always sought as a companion, as the anima of himself.

He could not find the words. It was she who must speak again.

The author realizes he has reached somewhat of an impasse. The protagonists seem to have run out of ammunition.

He feels obliged to explain. But he himself cannot find the words.

He could simply describe them as they forked and knifed their meal, the expressions reflecting the smelling and tasting, the chewing of their morsels, the distortions of their faces, the swallowings. The method, hah!, the method of the doing of these things, the using of the fork and the knife. The eating, the consuming, the disappearance of that which would become the sustenance and substance of their lives.

Then he might describe their utter ethereality, their total fiction, their never-could-be, 'never happen'. So why bother. Do the Mark Twain thing; break the thread, introduce another character, abandon these ones, abandon the reader; mainly, keep writing.

So it may be.

He might yet find the ends of the broken threads, securing them in a haphazard knot, to keep the writing on track.

But the reader would only be somewhat satisfied. Annoyed by the trifling of the author, he might abandon the whole prospect, setting down the ragged opus, *The New York Times* Worstseller, interrupting the spell. Almost like becoming involved in a Television drama, which, at every opportune dramatic moment, is conveniently interrupted to promote some fucking piece of shit.

The author uses his tale as his platform as well. He suspects he preaches in the desert, whether through his improbable characters, or as he speaks frankly to you now. He earnestly believes he is not promoting some fucking piece of shit.

"That was quite a mouthful Catherine."

"I know I can rely upon you to make fun of me."

"Oh! geezzz, Ms. Tellerman."

Visibly irritated, Catherine burst out "Mr. Duranachek, I've had enough for one day." Firmly, almost angrily, placing her hands on the table, she rose quickly, sharply intoning, "I'm leaving." She turned-on-her-heels, pushing her way out the door, striding resolutely to her car. She quickly drove off.

William sat, somewhat shaken, watching her motions, and, as she drove off, thought he observed her body convulsing, perhaps sobbing.

The author wonders if that will satisfy the reader. A quarrel. Indignation. Who will yield? Did she sob? Did that represent a yielding?

The author, being who he was, what he was, a male, locked up inside his masculine thing, did not fully understand the feminine thing, felt he had no right to speculate on a woman's tears. He was aware of the speculations. The weaker sex, using tears in the hope of gaining sympathy, i.e, weakening the resolve of the male to



dominate her. The cruder assessment of her 'period' as a time of emotional instability. He felt these to be unfair, the limiting of a person's humanity, confining it to their sex, placing a limitation upon it as a derivation of sex, denying every thing else inherent to a human being, based on sexuality.

The farmer said, 'Aw Shit Man!' The now deceased farmer had been a friend of the author.

The farmer was a peculiarly human human being, caught in the act of doing peculiarly human things. Every morning, the farmer, truly, comparatively, a 'small' farmer, a mostly subsistence farmer, subsisting also on a small pension, would rise early. He would find his way to the kitchen. If it was dark, as often was the case, he would light the propane mantle lamp above the kitchen table. He would proceed to the kitchen cook stove, where he would lay the start of a fire to heat the kettle for 'a cup'. His pile of paper consisted mostly of the Sunday New York Times, some opened, and some unopened, which had to come a long way to reach him, any headlines as much as two weeks old, at the earliest, and forever aged, in the unopened ones. It was the book reviews, the art reviews, the synopses, the travel, culinary stuff, and the business sections, that variously held his interest, as much or more than the stale headlines; which he would have already received via his battery (car battery) operated Zenith Transoceanic, that resided upon a shelf above where he sat. Often the radio was the first thing to receive his attention after the lighting of the lamp.

Often, as he began to lay the fire, his eyes would spy something in the Times. He would hesitate, then set aside the piece he was about to crumple, and proceed with another, hopefully to set ablaze beneath the kindling, which would sound a crackling, as he sat to read the piece he had set aside. With the radio rattling away in its fulsome sapience, and the kettle heating he would chase after the import of the Times. One time while I sat in his company at that early hour, reading from the business section, he summarized his gleaning, 'Here it says that McDonald's makes 70 cents on the dollar when it sells French Fries, and 30 cents on the dollar when it sells a hamburger.' On another day he might read that Häagen Daz is a made up name, that it doesn't represent any particular country, or ethnicity, or culture, 'It's a gimmick!'. 'That's what everybody needs, a gimmick.'

He recalled another time when the farmer had been reading in one of the more contemporary versions, The American Standard Revised edition of the Holy Bible, which in his youth had been the Authorized King James version. As he would be, not seriously, reading along, some famous passage he had vaguely recalled from

his youth, he would exclaim: "That's wrong, they got it all wrong!" Something about the rhythm had changed, not resonant with his recollection.

'Aw Shit Man!'

'Gotcha there, didn't I?', the author inquires hopefully.

## *Reconciliation*

William left the restaurant, deciding upon a walk along the river, before returning to the motel.

As he walked along, he saw Catherine sitting on a grassy area very near the water, as it rushed over, and murmured loudly over a rocky place in the riverbed.

He hesitated to go on, wanting to turn back. She wouldn't have heard him, but might have sensed someone's presence all the same. He wouldn't want her to see him furtively disappearing, so he stood watching her. For the most part, she was still, with her knees drawn up to her chest, her arms crossed on her knees. Every once in a while she would put her head upon her arms. William imagined she might be crying.

At that moment he felt such a deep compassion for this wonderful girl. He called out, "Catherine."

She turned her head, only momentarily. Somehow, she wanted him to see that she had been crying.

Without any further hesitation, he was kneeling by her side, placing his arm around her shoulder. He said nothing.

Catherine said nothing, but she leaned ever so slightly into his body, letting herself feel his arm.

They were like this for a few moments when Catherine spoke, "Mr. D., I know I need not tell you that some things are very important to me. What I might think or feel, once expressed, is fair game. I know that I need a thicker hide, especially when it comes to someone who means as much to me as you do.

"I so much want your support, your reception without gibes, and without wise cracks. It's not that I do not have confidence in what I feel or think, because I do.

"I do not want you to 'just tolerate' me.

"I do want to be an exception. I want you to stick with me, not to lose the thread. If you feel I am overzealous, or naïve, keep it to yourself. Refute what I say with kindly indulgence, if necessary. But don't dismiss me.

“I know I shouldn’t care; I should tell you to go to hell or to fuck off. But my feelings for you are involved. I can’t say those things to you because they wouldn’t be true, because I desire their opposite.

“When you made that crack, ‘That was quite a mouthful, Catherine.’, I did not appreciate your mixing of metaphors, I only felt a kind of putdown. To me it was an inappropriate remark. You might have acknowledged what I was saying in a much more meaningful way. After I responded to your remark, showing my disappointment, you had to follow it with: Oh!, geezzz, Ms. Tellerman.’ How do you suppose that made me feel? Cut off, Mr. D.!

“Does any of this make any sense to you.”

“What dismays me now is the fact that you are hurt; certainly the opposite of what I desire.

“For that I apologize profusely, and want so much to regain your good graces.

“I want you to trust me, not to be on guard against me, not to feel the necessity for a tougher hide in my presence.

“But at the same time I do not want to be walking on eggs, to use another metaphor.

“Maybe this is all part of learning to relate. When it is safe to joke and laugh. I realize I am habituated to a manner, one a little bit too provocative for you at certain times. I need to be astute in recognizing those times.”

“Mr. D., you are you. You didn’t become you by being cautious around, or avoiding touchy young females. You must flow as a person. I want that without stint. I am not your mother in law, for whom you feel you must show a deference even though her vision of the world is diametrically opposed to yours.”

“I am afraid I would be in deep trouble if you were my mother in law.”

Nudging him, “Now, Mr. D., that is kind of funny.”

As he squeezed her about the shoulder, she turned to face him; “Catherine, you must tell yourself that ‘Mr. D. would never do anything or say anything to intentionally hurt me, but the very opposite, and that will be the way things will be until his dying day’.

William could see the moist areas around and beneath her eyes. He imagined the sweet sorrow, but dared not mention it.

Catherine, in turn, wondered if any evidence of the tears were still visible. Perhaps the slightly puffy eyes would give her away.

“I’m truly sorry, my lovely one.”

“I am too Mr. D.

“Yes!, I cried, Yes! wept, like a silly schoolgirl. Now I am happy.

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

“I don’t blame you entirely, which when I realized this, caused me even more grief. The writing has demanded something of me in two ways, to say what I had intended, and not to allow myself to be influenced by you. I do not feel I have hit my stride. At times, I feel like I’m casting about in waters of unknown depth. There are all our conversations, and God Bless America, lighting fires in me every which way.”

“Catherine, may I be permitted to say you are human?”

She nudged him again.

The sun had set. Twilight was fast approaching.

“Time to get back to the car, Mr. D.”

“Do you still want me to look at your work?”

“Oh!, of course, Mr. D., Yes! Yes!”

They walked slowly, side by side, holding hands. Catherine seemed buoyant now, with a lilt to her stride.

“I’m sorry Mr. D., if I caused you concern. I do feel embarrassed.

“Mr. D., I think I am in love.”

“Ah, Alas, Sweet Life, we come to the crux of the matter.

“What would you propose we summon to deal with that little happenstance?”

“Careful Mr. D., I’m still tender there.”

“You must not be, for I am your kin in such matters.”

“It would seem so.”

They came upon Catherine’s automobile.

“We still have almost four hours ‘til curfew. What shall we do?”

Catherine unlocked and opened the door to get the copy of the manuscript. “Before I forget.”

“Are you sure you want this?”

“Might I not still influence the outcome?”

“As long as I maintain a perspective with it all, it should be O.K.”

“What would be that perspective?”

“Oh, that this is a complete learning experience, that it is not about a grade.”

“Should we go over some of it now?”

“I suggest you read it in its entirety first. Do you want to do that?”

“Not here in your car; how about my motel room?”

“Sounds O.K. with me.

“You drive yours, I’ll follow.”

They drove to the motel. Once inside William's room, William asked Catherine if there was anything she would like to drink. She thought not at the time, suggesting she could find her way around in that eventuality. She encouraged him to read her manuscript.

There were two comfortable chairs in the room. William settled into one. Catherine decided to browse some of William's books, selecting a couple, settling in the other chair.

William had begun reading Catherine's writing. It was difficult for her not to watch his reactions. He defeated her in this purpose by not showing any, but was simply absorbed in the work. Observing this, she relaxed, and began to read in one of the books she had chosen, a book of plays by Frank Wedekind, and began with Lulu. She herself was soon absorbed in the provocatively interesting work.

Time passed. William had read through her manuscript.

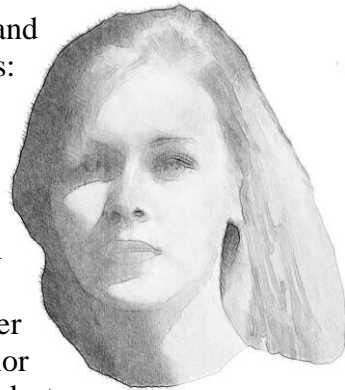
## *Catherine's Manuscript*

### *The Plausibility Of Idealism*

I am a College Junior majoring in the Humanities and Creative Writing. This paper is being written for the class: Expository Writing.

This effort intends to make clear my understanding of a subject brought about by my concerns for myself, for my family and friends, and for those who are swept aside and sacrificed through the intrigues of national and global politics.

There are those who argue that a nation must never lose its edge (Cioran). It was inferred that a strong warrior nation must remain a strong warrior nation if it intends to persevere. It must remain tough and aggressive, and can never relax its vigil. We might counterpoise this opinion with the ideal of Sparta, which was to remain vigilant, prepared, and tough – and defensive. History has taught us that a strongly defended nation is difficult to conquer and occupy. History has taught us that a hostile population is almost impossible to conquer and control. History has also taught us that an aggressor nation cannot conquer and occupy if it withholds its most offensive weapons. History has also taught us that great militant nations often overextend their conquering, or 'sphere of influence', that is, accrete too far beyond their home base as to be unable to have and hold; whether or not they use their most offensive weapons. Ironically, during my time, offensive weapons have become so diabolical that, as likened to the proverbial double-edged sword, the user cannot escape the cut.



*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

These considerations may apply to the world of today, and they may have applied to the world of yesterday. I want them to end today. I do not want them to apply to the world of tomorrow. Tomorrow's world calls for diplomacy on all fronts. It calls for a reverence for all forms of life. The planet is simply too crowded, and its resources too limited, for any other possible consideration. In my opinion World Domination by one power is not a reasonable option. World Government perhaps, receiving the consent of the governed.

I cannot know what assumptions have been made to cause another to think that the only means of survival is to become and remain an aggressive warrior nation.

I am apt to believe that humanity has been needfully subjected to and shaped by the civilizational aegis. Much is implied when one uses such a term as 'civilization'. In its basic definition we understand something culturally refined, removed from savagery, and barbarity; removed from hostility, aggressiveness and destruction, as a *modus operandi*.

I do not believe there is any compatibility between aggression and civilization.

It may be construed as an error in judgment that I so believe; that I have been misguided or warped by my zeal, or some misplaced idealism.

However, I might consider it more practical to think in these 'ideal' terms than in those which argue for aggression and eternal vigilance. In my mind, this becomes an important distinction.

Do I think it is possible for mankind to completely revert to the savage?

When I hear the doublespeak 'Preventative War', 'Preemptive Strike' and 'Collateral Damage', I suspect we have already reverted to savagery. But I still want and need to believe otherwise.

There is much we take for granted; that I take for granted.

At the 'risk of stating the obvious', we are taught, persuaded, cajoled, and mildly threatened, from our earliest days, by all those who are in a position to pass on the proverbial torch, our parents, our teachers, our neighbors, our peers, our community leaders, and our representatives in government, and our presidents.

The message is fairly clear, that we are a nation of democratic people, governed and protected by an exemplary Constitution, that is given force, and reason to be, through the consent of the governed. (That is without consenting to what we additionally profess as a 'Christian' nation).

The reality: consent is mostly an absent-minded thing. In essence, we have forfeited our consensual role; through an ill-advised acquiescence. What has not been forfeited has been largely usurped. We are barely conscious of the umbrella that governs and protects us, whether or not our consent is ever solicited.

We elect our representatives, our senators, and our presidents without truly knowing who they are, or what they stand for. If we desire to know these things about these individuals, we must be prepared to engage in a research that often yields conflicting and confusing information. The confusion arises from what we learn of an individual's voting record, and what that individual states publicly at

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

election time, and what that individual states in other public forums, depending upon the audience, and in media releases (photo ops). The individual in question does not speak to us directly, only rarely, in a controlled forum, at election time, or through the media (as in 1984). We are asked to believe the slogans, the clips, the temporizing, the deceptions, dissemblings, equivocations, lip service, the expedient, offered as substance, that appear in the media. In short we are offered an image, and a spake (propaganda), as though we were being offered a revamped laundry detergent, all without the benefit of dialogue. Equally disturbing is the fact that we don't know their agendas, or which lobbyists (vested interests) have their attention.

Events seem to always outpace us, we the people. Our response to them is often untimely. Although it is clearly stated that it is only through the consent of the governed that our nation is authorized to act, those who have that power invested in them, in trust, mostly act without that consent; they find ways to circumvent the electorate.

Acknowledging there are precipitating events, whether real or imagined, we are informed it is in our interest, a 'national security' interest, that our consent is abridged, by those who govern; so we are informed, or disinformed, as the case may be. They view such action as their exclusive prerogative. Our representatives are very often conspicuously silent and acquiescent in these matters. They can be seen waving the flag; one wonders, I wonder, if this is intended to reassure us that everything is in good hands. I wonder how much they know, as they wave the banner. I have heard it from one of my professors, whose brother is well-placed in the scientific community, teaching at a most prestigious institution (Princeton), that things are in good hands. It all sounded too pat for me, even when I wanted to believe what he was saying, and all that one might want to believe regarding prestigious institutions; instead, I was filled with apprehension, given the state of the world, Is it ever wise to believe such an illusion, such a false promise, that things are in good hands? In somebody else's hands? Perhaps, in a perfect world, wherein 'trust' has acquired a different meaning than it is so construed today.

When the untoward happens, we are seldom privy to the real cause, the underlying cause, what I want to be identified as the real truth. We are not involved in the decision making process; that is, our consent is not sought. We are informed of the necessity of secrecy. No need to be hampered by a lot of stupid questions from the gallery.

Pertaining to our current aggressive adventurism in Iraq, we are fed the acronyms and the doublespeak; WMD. Preemptive Strike. Defensive Intervention, Material Breach. Surgical Strikes. Homeland Security. Terrorists, Collateral Damage; and the ruinous Patriot Act. As previously we were fed Cold War, MAD, and the Communist, or Red, menace. Even Yellow Peril; and Domino Theory. With HUAC, Joseph McCarthy, and John Foster Dulles

Others are claiming Iraq is all about oil.

Still others, that Iraq is about human rights, (and Democracy).

I do not believe Iraq is about human rights. Our nation benignly and/or covertly, or overtly supports dictatorial, repressive regimes that are friendly

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

toward us; while we neglect (play fast and loose with) basic human rights in other nations; and within our own borders.

I strongly suspect, and it is becoming clearer, the evidence for WMD was fabricated. Hence the lack of necessity for anything remotely resembling a Preemptive Strike.

I don't want to believe that a manifest destiny gambit, in itself, a regressive rationale, applies to theft of Oil. An aggressive act for a short term gain.

Before my representatives voted yea or nay to involve our nation in this foreign adventure, they did not consult their constituency; my representative did not consult with me.

In this scenario, in essence, I have been abandoned; my family and friends have been abandoned to the whims of a government that does not want our input, does not seek our consent, or our counsel. Since we haven't any other place to go, no friendly place to receive and harbor us (because they already have too many of their own to care for), no other Frontiers on this planet, we become captives and victims of our own government; and what our government is doing to enforce that state of affairs is cause for concern for all citizens. Of course, the government will adopt the paternalistic stance in order to counter this assessment. However, the paternalism does not extend to those who suffer in want. It is construed thus that the father truly cares not for his children.

I am not resigned to this state of affairs, nor will I ever be.

I turn thus to something that lives within me. Whether deemed practical or impractical, given what I have already implied regarding statehood and statesmanship, albeit often construed as a forfeiture and usurpation of the consent of the governed, I am inclined toward a belief in ideals, that perhaps originate in the human heart.

It might be said we do not know all that much about the human heart, and because we do not, we should not trust it. Should we trust in the words of a deceitful leader, who may have only half a heart, or none at all?

Do I need to know whether or not my leader has a heart? Perhaps one to which I might appeal, a citizen, a constituent, a member of the demos? In the best of all possible worlds, one might imagine it thus, even when it is not so.

What remains then, when I am shut out, without recourse?

My desires, and my yearnings, do not cease. My heartaches persist.

It is then I am delivered into my cell to continue with my beliefs, to shape them, to give them voice, to discover their eloquence, to argue for their promulgation. The beliefs in themselves are not ill conceived. They enjoy a long lineage, and have endured in the human heart throughout the ages.

What is this human heart to which I refer?

It is the same one that has yearned for fairness, equity, and justice throughout the ages. It is the same one that is often denied in the backroom deals concocted by the vested interests, where lobbyists and sycophants seek favors, and



exemptions from government; where the human heart is perverted by grasping for power and motivated by control and greed.

Are there not some in government who do not succumb to these persuasions? We do not know for sure, but we want to believe, and because we want and need hope, we do believe. We want to believe that what has lived in the human heart for centuries is alive in those who represent us. That Ideals are not outworn, impractical, and inconvenient sentiments. That they are the most important part of the political process, and in maintaining a safe and secure civilization.

Perhaps we place an impossible burden upon the shoulders of our representatives. After all, he or she is only human, subject to all the human failings. But, somehow we do expect more of them than we do ourselves. Yes! we are the ultimate guardians of our lives, but our representatives are the ones who are designated, as our advocates, to make known, and uphold, our wishes in the world arena. We wish to trust in that. But perhaps it is only a matter of convenience, and expedience, that we trust in something that eventually betrays us.

However that may be, we assume, as we believe and trust in such a system, that we avoid so much that is destructive, both of life, and any hope of continuing with the notion of civilization. We avoid chaos. We avoid anarchy. So we imagine, so we want to believe.

We cannot be allowed to rely upon to our own devisings, because then we are turned into an animal that must fight for its survival, however it comes about. All the cultural assets that had become the testament to civilization become sacrificed in any pursuant upheaval. Beasts against beasts, more horrible than Frankensteinian monsters in their ability to terrify - because they are real, and they are us.

Perhaps I arrive too soon at my theme of the Plausibility Of Idealism.

I am anxious to arrive there, because it is what lies closest to my heart. I want to argue for this something I feel with such passion, because it is so alive within me.

I invoke no outside agent, no Deity.

Yes, I will consistently clamor for fairness, equity, and justice.

When Thrasymachus asserted that Justice was in the interest of the stronger, Socrates took him to task.

It was Socrates who was obliged to ingest the hemlock or forever suffer banishment. Because he made light of the arguments put forth by the Sophists, the street trumpeters of Athens.

It was Ayn Rand who promoted the cult of self, of selfishness, gain, as opposed to sharing the wealth; the 'I am not my brother's keeper' mentality.

It was Antigone who suffered death at the hands of Creon because she wanted a decent burial for her brother.

It was Vickie Singer's husband, and Randy Weaver's wife and son, and Branch Davidian, that were slaughtered by a mean and vengeful government.

It was Jesus Christ who was crucified because he preached a doctrine that disregarded Rome.

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

It was the Inquisition that burned the heretics at the stake.

Some of these were and some of these were not protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of The United States Of America.

Now, we, of these times, have benefited immeasurably, by the wisdom, and foresight of our forefathers, who produced this humanitarian document, we the people, we, this amassment of individuals, we can all speak at the same time. Unless we are deliberately disturbing the peace, and are not hurling threatening invective against the president, and not preaching insurrection, or advocating too numerous an assemblage, or refusing to kowtow to government harassment, or engaging in polygamy, or seducing young people into cults (not too differently than seducing them into Fundamentalist Christianity), we can go on doing this simultaneous rapping until we drop, because it is our right. However, our Constitution has endured, and is now enduring, some tough times.

Anomalously, the fourth estate has seemingly acquired more rights than the individual, because it owns the organs of promulgation, and it has more clout than the individual; and is in bed with the politicians. Because it is somewhat more immunized from the accusation of slander, and sundry other dubious activities, the fourth estate (the media) can also malign and defame public figures, and quote anonymous sources. The First Amendment is suffering some hard knocks when it tells it like it is. It is our right to know 'it is what it is', and it is their right to tell us. Still they do not tell us what we most want to know; because they do not know; and now are forbidden to speak of what they do know.

If you sense some irony in my juxtapositions, you will not be wrong. Somehow we have found ways to abridge the basic rights of the individual. From the highest office in the land we hear "There ought to be limits to Freedom" Perhaps there is a difference between rights and freedoms, but often these are construed to be the same. The highest office in the land proposes rethinking what is basic to each and every individual. The occupant of the highest office in the land wishes to silence dissent, to silence debate, to quench the questions, to circumvent the consent of the governed; he wishes to practice the tyranny against which he pretends to rail.

Our Constitution is becoming an endangered species. It is not threatened by Terrorism; it is threatened by a bully with no heart.

We must rescue our Constitution from those who would monopolize, pervert, and destroy it.

I would rather not be accused of hurling invective. It weakens my position to fight fire with fire. Fire is after all, fire. I can not dismiss the fire in my heart.

Are we then called upon to use restraint, to restrain the heart, or to restrain the viscera, to bring them under the control of the mind, the coolness of the brain? The objectivity of reason and logic? To redirect them toward a constructive venue?

Perhaps the ideal is already beginning to suggest itself. That we must step back, we must arrest ourselves in time, in order to ponder what is being

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

suggested. In my mind it is imperative we do this thing; we cease our forward or backward motions. We reassess what it we are doing, or not doing, and the reasons put forth for doing, or not doing them.

Declare a holiday, or a reassessment day, or a 'lets do it right' day. If we were to dedicate such a day, how would we use such a day?

On Reassessment Day, or Do It Right Day I would put forth the following:

I must begin by clearly reiterating the obvious (to some), the expected, (to some), and the learned and expected assumptive (to others).

All 'men' (human beings) regardless of sex, are created equal; not only in the United States Of America, however ineffectually and inconsistently we implement these precepts. To make that simple statement clear; it is not only 'under the law' they are created thus, but also in their entitlement to the fruits of the planet, they are equal; not only in the United States Of America, however ineffectually and inconsistently we implement these precepts.

I will assume, at the risk of abbreviating too much our history, that all of mankind aspires to something beyond a raw, hand to mouth, 'jungle' existence, survival by any means. I will assume that our accumulated history provides us with ample evidence that a better way exists, and that it is possible to achieve, and that mankind has made some kind of effort to discover and pursue that mien.

I will assume that each of us recognizes common interests, the one with the other. In particular, the common desire for 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness'. This last is merely a suggestive phrase. It is not clear what it means. 'Life', to me, is intended to convey the freedom from want, freedom from fear, the fearing of one's fellow man, freedom to share in the amenities found upon the planet, not only upon 'the commons', but upon a globe without fences; and a globe carelessly encumbered by pollution, and ravished of its innate attractions. Behind these freedoms, or underneath these freedoms, is the creation of an environment wherein a healthful existence is maximized in both body and spirit.

In some ways these words go without saying, they resonate within us, because we hear them expressed often enough not to mistake them for something they are not. It is understood then that 'liberty' pertains to the exercise of these freedoms unhampered, suffering no harassment.

It is hopefully assumed if these other conditions are met, that it would be possible for a happiness to flow from them.

On the face of it, these may appear as ideals, even as part of our famous Declaration; ideals that require tolerance, and the will to share (perhaps also recognized as sacrifice). Whatever we might do to implement the ideal may be construed as the means to the end; the end being an environment where all of humanity may flourish, enabling it to seek its highest level of creativity, and productivity; albeit, fulfillment. Assured of freedom from want. These are the ideals of the great majority of mankind.

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

Do not mistake what is being suggested here. Not a Utopian scheme, or a Socialistic theme. Those are mere words that require definition. If any theme is being suggested here, it is the Humanitarian theme, or the Overriding Consideration theme. Reverence for life, all forms of life, reverence, perhaps an abiding Appreciation and Love, for the miracle and mystery of life, may be construed as the Overriding Consideration. (I realize, in making this last statement, in this day and age, it might be easily misinterpreted by a 'right-to-life' agenda, to mean something it does not. 'Reverence for life' does not contain or imply any religious or moral overtones; only pragmatic and otherwise humanitarian ones.)

Having stated these few precepts, it is not without the awareness of practicality. How will we be able implement such ideals when we consider all the conflicting interests? Can we arrest time, can we contain habit, and all those forces that conspire and prevail to rigidify and perpetuate an unacceptable status quo?

At this juncture I want an honest answer from each of you; how many of you are truly satisfied with the status quo? I don't mean if you look at it objectively, which you seldom do, but as an ongoing state of affairs that involves your desires, your viscera, and whatever else motivates and satisfies you? Are you not weary of the constant proselytizing to keep up with the Jones (the other person), to acquire, to possess, to seek status, to achieve a 'standard of living', to consume, even to 'get ahead'. There are the other levels of satisfaction; to have a square meal, a bed and shelter, clothing on one's back, and to enjoy relief from constant toil, and to enjoy repose, those moments of reflection devoted to the appreciation of the ambience of nature; Yes!, even without the desire to acquire, and to consume, to possess, knowing no bounds. Irreconcilable differences? Or Common Interests?

I believe it is generally agreed that we favor an ordered and orderly society; a 'civil' society. It is to the advantage of each and every individual. Also a society that abhors bloodshed and violence. Do we not assent to the higher calling? Can we forsake the ideal for our own selfish interests? Is it to be understood that each of us is the repository of the species (the sacred sperm and sacred ova, so to speak), and that nothing, not even another human being, a look-a-like, will be allowed to interfere with that perception? Even if this was true, can we envision this condition only in a vacuum? Do we not have to account the other? The other person, the other life? Every question posed assumes some rationale that proceeds from rational people; that it is easily recognized there is the I, and the other, and that both are one and the same, in principle.

At this juncture, I need to make certain assumptions.

The first could be one or the other.

I assume that we are all in this together.

I assume that we are not all in this together.

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

Additionally I could assume a variant of a combination of the two. I would need to sort out those areas of common agreement from those where agreement could not be found.

Since I cannot converse with each individual, but only a few, I am limited in any final assessment of our degree of togetherness. Perhaps a census on the matter might not reveal any more than the sampling.

I will assume, as individuals of the same species, we do have some common objectives, as a species.

Without knowing the specific purpose of life, or the laws of nature with regard to the objective of evolution, I cannot do any more than speculate, surmise, or interpret, from my limited knowledge.

I do believe in the evolutionary process, as a more or less, observable process. I do believe that 'nature' is indifferent to the individual, that survival of a species or member of a species is inherent to the process of evolution, which to me means the process of adaptation of any organism to the environment, which, over a very long period of time eventuates in a genetic coding for certain forms of adaptive behavior, and the evolutionary (genetic) changes that seem to favor that adaptation.

I do not believe that there is any imperative to civilization. Borrowing from Sigmund Freud I will assent to the notion that there is not an identifiable 'instinct to morality', which I will rephrase as an 'imperative to morality', whereas I do believe there is a mechanism, or instinct, or even will, to survive.

Since every species seems to gain through diversity, either through environmental adaptations, or through evolved, or spontaneous, genetic variants, it would seem that no species is wholly dependent on one gene pool. That somehow inbreeding does not assure for the most viable individual. As yet we have not tested the results of cloning as means toward a more viable species, over the long term. Once we have tampered with the process, the evolutionary process, does it still contain within it the ability to resume the something, whence any tinkering is abandoned, the evolutionary something that had begun so long ago?

These questions, and conjectures, may all be irrelevant to my objective. Regardless of how we arrived here, at this stage of evolution, still assuming an evolutionary model, and assuming there is no imperative to morality, what are the issues that we can discuss with any hope of providing a consistent order to our social interaction, i.e. all individuals surviving in peace at the same time on the same planet (all things considered)?

The wise amongst us will counsel many things. Even many wise things. Many of which any 'reasonable' individual will acknowledge. Until it comes to the issue of self-interest. I cannot discount the significance of self-interest, feeling that self-interest lies 'very close to the bone'. Survival and self-interest are intimately tied together within the individual. In order to entrust the assurance of survival to another, many things have to be in place. These many things that are required have become part of our 'civilizational' aegis. We have created LAW. We have not entirely neglected spirit, because we often use the phrase 'spirit of the law'. There is the basic conception of Law which we find enshrined in the Ten

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

Commandments blazed unto Moses. Several of these commandments have very little relevance in the modern world. Laws have been modified and adapted to accommodate mans interactions throughout time; Law itself has evolved.

I feel I cannot belabor the point sufficiently what we ought and ought not do. I am not of a mind to use punishment as a means toward an end. I do feel an imperative need exists to remedy the cycles of human violence and destruction that plague the planet.

I do not believe that the loss of life and destruction of both our own and our natural heritage can bring satisfaction and contentment to any human being, man or woman; lest that individual be mad.

What to do about the mad amongst us? If we choose to institutionalize them, we cannot abandon them to total indifference. Even though what they might have done or might do may earn our wrath, and vengeance, we must retain our own humanity by treating them humanely.

"She advocates compassion for the mad"; what of the incorrigible murderer and rapist? Again, put to the test, I may need to yield to the majority. If such an individual is so incorrigible, we must secure him away from the society upon which he/she preys. Again we must not abandon that individual to indifference, because it threatens our own humanity to do so. Utility may still exist in that individual, both to him or to her self, and the world at large, but necessarily confined for both his/her, and our, protection. Needless to say, I do not advocate the taking of life as a final judgment; at least, I have personally never felt the need for that kind of vengeance.

Allow me to interject here the vengeful epithet 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'. We are compromised in this declaration by the implications of the Golden Rule. If, in fact, every act earns something in kind, we are wont to believe that a justice has been achieved. Yet we are ambivalent because when we place ourselves in the shoes of the punished, we understand we would not want that for ourselves. We know that each act we would commit that proved contrary to an expected behavior, whether committed as an act of passion, or as a calculated act, that we would feel remorse (regret) afterward. I believe that every individual, even those who commit the most heinous of acts, will feel remorse (regret), simply because it is human to feel remorse (regret, however selfish). It is my belief, therefore those who do not show any sign of remorse (regret) must be mad. Are we then to condemn the mad to death?

Doubtlessly by now you have gathered my drift. I do not view myself as quixotic, or as some kind of savior. I would not allow myself such grandiosity. It is less my task than yours. It will be your desire and motivation that brings about the peace and tranquility we all seek; there can be no equivocation. You cannot dawdle before the prospect. We all must commit together; there isn't any other satisfactory alternative. We must assure, through education, and by example, that mankind will ever be duly instructed, by these means, and others, to restrain, at all times, his savage nature. It is in the interest of us all that he do so.

In so writing this brief, I realize I have only scratched the surface of a human condition that requires the participation of all to provide the establishment of, and

to effect, if not a lasting remedy, a condition that favors preferentially and pragmatically, a consistent pattern of peaceful cooperation.

If you will trouble yourself to study history, if you will trouble yourself to examine and think about the way mankind has solved his conflicts, whether or not you agree with any action taken, it is important to be fully apprised of the magnitude of death and destruction brought about by a singularly violent species. Know this history, and carry it next to your heart; let it weigh upon you. Feel the absolute need to account for and remedy this state of affairs. The call for imperative must be obvious. The time is NOW.

Catherine wanted to add more, but knew her course had been set. While she pointedly resisted the influence of William, in the background she realized she had been given courage by Toni Smith to express her own true feelings. Finally it occurred to her to add a postscript to her writing.

‘I hasten to add the following:

‘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.

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

He rose to find a pen, and sat down again to read it through once more. Catherine noticed his movements, but soon settled into continuing with the play which had begun to intrigue her. She had also begun to wonder why Mr. D. was reading such a work.

William was making notations as he plodded along slowly.

Catherine was so involved in her reading, she didn't seem to care what he was doing.

William looked up to see what she was reading. He recognized the volume, smiling to himself, noting her absorption. He thought of trying to stand on his head, or sticking out his tongue, or thumbing his nose at her. But thought better of it. He felt nothing but love for that beautiful composition of humanity, curled up in the chair.

After a plausibly reasonable time these two suddenly realized it was nearing time for Catherine to return to her House.

"What did you think Mr. D.?"

"Now would not be the time to start on that, Catherine; tomorrow will be soon enough.

"What do think of Wedekind?"

"Very unusual, and provocative ..... and stimulating.

"Any words of encouragement, Mr. D.; so I can sleep peacefully?"

"Sleep as though you were drugged with all the happiness elixirs known to mankind. Dream dreams of glorious life in a glorious world."

"Mr. D., don't be impossible."

"Its time, Catherine, Its Time; wouldn't want to disappoint Ms. Watson."

"Alright, Mr. D."

"We'll do it in the morning."

" 'Parting is such sweet sorrow'. Mr. D.."

"Indeed it is. But we'll soon meet again."

"At the restaurant around nine?"

"Sounds fine with me."

Catherine rose, slipped into her jacket. William also rose from his chair to accompany Catherine to her car.

But before they had reached the door of the room, Catherine turned to face William, moving close, putting her arms around his neck, hugging him for a long time. William reciprocated, feeling that soft round warm inviting body pressed to his. Catherine snuggled her cheek against his, whispering, "Sweet dreams, Mr. D."



*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

She freed herself slowly, reaching for the door.  
William followed her outside. "You'll not be a gourd tonight".  
"Tomorrow, Mr. D."

William was moderately relieved the day was over; he was ready to retire. The child woman was becoming all the world to him.

In the morning he would go over her manuscript again with fresh eyes, before they got together.

He felt he knew this young woman. Her words were consonant and resonant with his. He had hoped, perhaps vainly, she might succeed in her desire to better the world. To her it seemed not only the reasonable thing to do; also, that it was vital that it do so.

But he sensed something sinister in the 'fatefully inevitable'. He had hoped that Catherine would learn to expect defeat, but once defeated, not to lose her own sense of self, her own appreciation of what was here, regardless of everything mankind was doing to make it after his own image; and Yes! to fuck it up.

Although he had never participated in any outreach program, or donated to any 'worthy cause', he knew that it was the right thing for anyone, perhaps everyone, to do. Things could not be allowed to languish, to expire, only to end in misery, and as a way to end any individual history. The world could not be abandoned to God, or to the worst in man. But he, William, had allowed this to happen. Too wrapped up in himself, in his own little struggles with fate, with his fragile ego.

William had never been like Catherine; it was only in these waning years when some things had ceased to plague him, where he was more resigned to, or wearied by, this inevitable thing, that he could respond to this enchanting young person, beautiful in every way, and Yes, awakening in him all those withered sentiments. All the baggage he had dragged around most of his life that had finally ceased to be important, being resurrected by this young person.

His idealism was a worn haggard thing, as apt to snarl and bite as to auger for a better world. He felt he could read in his bones the cruel indifference of a God, a thing that had placed man in this predicament, his highest evolutionary prospect, having delivered him half baked upon a planet where his survival was not assured, where it was more natural for him to live as a dog than as a human, and for the very dogs to take over. The human prospect was a misleading expectation, fraught with peril as the canines multiplied and roamed the planet.

Yes, no matter how dressed, in crown of gold, or draped in a resplendent banner, the two legged thing was still an animal; and a savage.

So was he, violating the sanctity of this most wonderful child.

Catherine, for her part in this improbable tale, thought not of the dire, but of hope; perhaps with no more certainty. She simply believed that there was no alternative. One needed to strive, lest all would be lost. She felt herself prepared to strive.

In William she had found affinity, despite his crankiness, and his sometimes hurtful teasing and testing. In him she found an excitement, that stirred her whole being. Was she prepared for what might follow? Would anything follow? Would a severance occur, a truncated, atrophied liaison, stillborn, wrenched away by scruples, by taboos, the forbidden? By his disenchantment?

What was she hoping for? A release from her excitement? To satisfy these notions? Suppose she didn't follow through? What kind of relationship might they have, where closeness of feeling and thought would ever be denied because of some inviolable barrier? Does one want to know what is beyond, so she might test the long-standing thesis? Can she know without experiencing first hand? One must disobey? Why construe something as disobedience? Where is it writ that one must obey, that one must be subservient to another's, anyone's, dictum?

Catherine is neither disobedient, nor defiant. But she is not willing to submit to doctrine without examining it, knowing it; acceptance is not foregone, even then.

All things must be evaluated through several criteria, not only one or the other.

## *Sunday*

### *An altercation with the Author*

The author rose early to his task.

He hardly could not think of Catherine's quandary.

He thought perhaps he and she ought to get together for a heart to heart talk. To discover how she feels about her creation, her persona.

Thus he awakened her by rousing her from her slumber as the day was breaking.

Gently shaking her, 'Ms. Tellerman, Ms. Tellermen.'

'Wha!?, who are you? How did you get in here? You are not supposed to be in here.'

'Shsss! Catherine, I am the author. We have no secrets from one another.'

'I don't care who you are, you have no right to be here.'

Shaking her again, 'Please Ms. Tellerman, wake up! I mean you no harm.'

'I am awake. You must leave.'

'Not until we have had a talk.'

'There's nothing to talk about. I am not your plaything. I have a life of my own, independent of you.'

'Only as long as I continue with this diatribe. When it ends, you end. Phhhhhh!

'I may be a bit slow, whoever you are, or what ever you call yourself, or think yourself, but if my imagination serves me correctly, unless you burn this script, that is, delete it from your little pot-boiling machine, I have been released into the world, and there's nothing you can do about it.'

'Catherine, if I may be permitted to call you such, I mean you no harm. I wanted only to discover how you felt about the person that has emerged from this rambling document.'

'Which one? You?

'Mr. D. and I are your mouth pieces, some kind of senile fantasy of yours.

'Don't patronize me.'

'Ms. Tellerman, I know Mr. D. has told you about me, and has discussed with you realities that are beyond the pale, from which you have evolved.

'I am willing to grant you the life that has emerged, because I alone am not responsible. There is something in everyone of us that yearns for something beyond what is known, and what appears to us in real life.'

'Don't try to gobbledygook me. Who the hell do you think you are: 'willing to grant you the life?'

'Ease off, Catherine. We are in this together. I am here to ask your help in finding a direction for your thoughts and feelings. I want you to become a most, the most, plausible reality.

'Yes!, I have my things I want to say, but most of all I would want to leave behind something both lovable and memorable.

'In creating you and William, I am aiming for something beyond myself even; in you, particularly.

'For one thing, I am not a female. Already I am handicapped. But I can imagine a female, however lamely, and even stretch that lame occupation by investing your persona with two sisters, much like yourself.

'A female is, after all, human, like myself. I am quite willing to acknowledge she is equipped with her own psyche, as well as her own individuality, and her own intelligence.

'Mr. D. is more like myself, with his preoccupations, and his attractions. We might even be the same person. Here I insinuate

myself into your private space, your sacred space. He might be doing the same. Such is the license we authors grant ourselves, as you will learn yourself one day, or, as you may already suspect or know.'

'Why me? Why the female, about which you know nothing? Why not simply do your rant?'

'For one thing Catherine, I, perhaps naively, see more hope in the female. I see her as softer, kinder, more empathetic, more sympathetic. She is not less intelligent. Her intelligence works for her and for humanity in ways that might be different than the male's.

I realize I must imagine your being, but I do not feel it is wholly in ignorance. I am a married man. I have lived with a female for a long time. I may be an SOB a lot of the time, but I do listen to what my spouse tells me, not always, admittedly, but I do, when it becomes important for me to do so, so that I can know her as something besides my companion in bed. I want to know her sentiments, which she often reveals to me both tearfully and angrily. She has a brain, her peculiar insights, her sense of humor, which may, or may not, have anything to do with her sex. There are moments when I have observed her objectively, dispassionately, as a figure in the landscape.

'Unlike me, she is not quick to condemn others, even when they give her the short shrift. She is more hurt through a sense of betrayal.

Through myself, I feel I understand some part of the male thing, but only some part of it. I do not understand the need, the imperative, or the will to conquer, dominate, and control. The male's more hostile, aggressive and destructive nature is not part of my nature, at least overtly.

I could elaborate much more, but suffice to say, I think the world is ready for a self-assured female, the world needs the soft, empathetic part of her nature, and a sensitive, ultimately, sincerely rational, intelligence to augment that part of what the world needs.

'The male has made such a bad job of it.'

'More gobbledygook! What gobble: 'sensitive, ultimately, sincerely rational, intelligence'.'

'How would you ungobble it, Ms. Tellerman?'

'I wouldn't gobble it in the first place.'

'Would you care to enlighten me?'

'As you know, sometimes the words do not flow, especially as we reach beyond ourselves to describe and define things that only meagerly and feebly answer to them.

‘Sensitive’ is an important word; ‘sincerely rational’ seems a necessary coupling, simply because there is so much insincere rationality. Would ‘sensitive intelligence’ have conveyed as much? Perhaps. ‘Ultimately’ is meant to convey the imperative of the requirement reflected in the need.

‘When one aims for the truth of things, that person must not hold back anything. Perhaps there is no *ratio* that man or woman has mastered, or that is available to any living being, so acutely accurate, as to reveal and define the truth of things. Perhaps it is only through a deductive process, and the suggestive nature of that process, that we will be able to arrive at an operational truth. A truth that we can apply to mankind, and a purposeful tenure upon this planet. Something more and better than we have thus far achieved.’

‘Well, Mr. Author, I suppose your heart is in the right place.

‘Maybe inventing me is the answer. I do not dislike Catherine. I do not feel inclined to argue the denouement. I need to be invested with a corpus that relates to the world, even if that happens to be Mr. D., or you, even if you happen to be his alter ego.

‘I entered the ‘picture’ as the gifted student, the dedicated student, a student who wants to make a difference.

‘Then you hung all this beauty crap on me. All this ‘open to anything’ on to me.

‘Then you hung yourself, or this old geezur on me, to prove that I am ‘open’, or some such.’

‘To correct the record, Catherine, you originally entered the lists as the beautiful creature, then the sensitive, intelligent creature.

‘You were intended to be unusual.’

‘Or nuts, maybe, or hard up.’

‘If you continue in this manner, I feel I will need to end this whole improbable tale.

‘You want what is happening to resemble reality.

‘Well, I’m not interested in the mechanics of a credible romance. Romance, such as it is, awkward, unconventional, maybe even objectionable, is all part of device to involve the reader, simply because it is not like reality, a reality which will not find its resolution in romance per se, but in a challenge to what we all assume to be reality.

‘There is no formula to this reality. I haven’t the faintest idea where it will end. It is only through writing that I will learn, and most likely learn through you. By the end of this opus I should have arrived at some kind of message that both you and Mr. D., and your sisters, and whoever else, will have helped to shape.

‘You are neither nuts, nor hard up.

'Yes!, you are beautiful. The 'openness to anything' suits you, as it suits me. Openness does not signify defiance, or anything deliberate.'

'You want me to become a most plausible reality. How about making me a little more stupid, a little less perfect, a little less open, and providing me with someone more my own age.'

'Then you would cease to be of interest to me.'

'So you like being a dirty old man. What do suppose that is going to do for your message?'

'The message will be there as it has always been there. I don't feel I can reiterate the message one more time in the usual way. I need to do something besides brood; I need to write to convince myself I am still a sentient being, so I write myself into a corner by writing something so impossible and so incredible; then I try to justify it; and try to write myself out of the corner, if at all possible; meanwhile the message insinuates itself into the happenings.'

'I am not a dirty old man to the more intelligent, more beautiful, more perfect, and completely open persona, with which I have imbued you.'

'Besides, you have ably defended that position, and have never declared yourself uncomfortable in it.'

'You mean that you have used some garbled rationale to defend that position'

'Have it your way Catherine.'

'Would you rather be writing the script? Would you rather be a more scrupulous, more offended Catherine? Do you want a nice young man? Or a hunk?'

'I suppose if I said Yes, you would abandon me'

'Most likely I would go on to write something else, or edit and print out something else that I had already written, like maybe an account of all my missed opportunities.'

'Its your call.'

'I seem not to have any choice.'

'I need to meet Mr. D. very soon.'

'Thus it will be.'

## *Morning*

Catherine entered the restaurant with a frowning expression, and a somewhat strident gait.

William observed this unexpected arrival with some trepidation.

He hoped a "Good Morning Catherine!" would somehow alter her mood. But it seemed not so.

“Mr. D. I had a most unusual visitation this morning by a friend of yours. He had the presumption to enter the building, and my room, to awaken me.

“I am imagining that you sent him.”

William sensed some devious doings by the author.

“I sent no one, but if it was the author, I have hoped that you and he could have a meeting.”

“Well, he was obviously reading your thoughts.”

“I would quarrel with that assumption.

“Was he also reading yours?”

“No, he wanted to know what my thoughts were, and threatened to abandon me if I insisted on a different persona.”

“I swear I had nothing to do with such activity, and I had not imagined such a meeting as you describe. Why would I want you to be anything but who you are?”

“Catherine, if we are to be consistent in this script, we cannot be jumping around so much in our perceptions of each other.”

“Tell that to your friend.”

“Catherine, can we begin again?”

“Hardly Mr. D. I find I am upset by his rather intractable position.”

William did not reply right away. He frowned ponderously, then spoke.

“Catherine, I am imagining something here. Every life that has been created through some artistic medium becomes somehow fixed, because when the artist leaves off with his pen or brush, we are abandoned at that moment for all time. It is only in the imagination of the readers that we are carried forth in so many ways, as pieces of what the artist had imagined, and embellished, altered, or shaped, as suits the reader’s imagination.

“As becomes true of the writer, the reader is at liberty to do as he or she pleases.”

“But it was the author who dictated the terms. He wanted to know if I wanted a young lover, a hunk. If I answered yes!, he threatened to end the script. Love it or leave it.

“So here we are Mr. D., trying to put on a convincing performance. Doesn’t that bother you? Are we not cheapened by this puppeteering?”

“I am being myself Catherine. With all my shortcomings, my tentative and dubious ethics. Perhaps I have less choice than you, being the alter ego of the creator. He knows more about me than he does you. Perhaps he can never know you.

“I do not feel I am putting on a performance. Yes! I am part of a fabrication, a cog in an implausible transient reality. But whether I am or am not some extension of the author; even invested with the

author's limitations, I can be no less than I am (or he is), responding to a situation. I might have been placed in a cell to lead a monastic, Faustian life; would that be a more probable reality? More socially acceptable?

"You could be someone entirely different. If that was the case, the whole house of cards would fall. I doubt the author would begin again. Part of what he does is to construct something that will keep his interest alive, providing a semblance of any kind of reality, using props that try to anchor the transient reality on the planet earth, however implausible its denouement. He does not create centaurs, mythical beasts, two headed monsters, many armed Sivas; two-legged creatures, that, if they were ordinary predictable people, would bore both the author and the reader to oblivion.

"I recall the suggestion I made to the sailor and his wife who had sailed the globe over, to write their story, their nautical adventure. His reply was, 'The boat didn't roll enough times'.

"I believe the author finds ordinary reality difficult to appreciate in its overwhelming mundane aspect. Even with its extremes of benevolence and malevolence.

"I believe every time he sets out to write he would grandiosely begin with a Quixotic message. An inspired delivery full of pearls, excerpted from the ages. But he knows these fall on mostly deaf ears. He knows it remains for each individual to sleuth the record as accords his interest; he (or she) will glean what suits him (or her). Even then he suspects an individual will seldom act on his own to execute (implement) the import of the gleanings.

"The image of the knight errant, setting out to right all the wrongs of the world, being unhorsed as he attempts to extirpate the Giants, albeit windmills. Is that the plausible reality of which we speak, and which holds the interest of man; another making of himself a fool, misguided with notions of serving Heaven?

"What notions do we serve Catherine?"

"None that are obvious Mr. D. Tolerance, perhaps. Tolerance of something odious."

"My children used Barbie Dolls to act out all their loves and hates, their tendernesses, and their brutality. Is it possible we are likened to Barbie Dolls? Or can we become more elevated into credible flesh and blood creatures? Ones that avoid the cruelty and the brutality? The facial expressions of the Barbie Dolls never changed, though their bodies were subjected to the most unlikely and improbable, and torturous, anatomical persuasions; and though their love might be reaching and yearning beyond their feeble construction."



“Mr. D. what takes place between myself and the author is not a reciprocal thing. He dictates. He is God, he pulls the strings. I don’t get to arbitrate for a different role.

“Don’t misconstrue what I say. I am not playing a false role. I am playing the role that was assigned me to the best of my ability. It cannot be otherwise. There is nothing to be gained by my refusal.

“I did not come into life knowing beforehand why I am here or what I seek. I have been told by others that I am a repository of continuance, as though choice was limited to things relevant to that dictum. I am expected to develop my mind while at the same time remain mindless. So it appears. Of course the author depicts me as a person who rebels against this, but not in an overt way, but instinctively, but in a careful, rational way. My growing attachment to you does not seem rational; it seems out of character, but I can not argue the case. Instead I am put in a position of justifying behavior that is outside the norm, as though I might be flaunting the norm.

“Am I allowed a full range of feelings playing opposite you?”

“Catherine, I trust that to be so. I have not felt you to be a puppet. We seem to be interacting on some mostly predictable level, however unseemly the relationship. We have spent some time justifying ourselves, while at the same time allowing the denouement to proceed.

“By the way Catherine, do you want a young lover?”

“Mr. D., I sense the question to be anomalous, irrelevant, and immaterial. As such it cannot be answered. That is not to say. ‘I am stuck with you.’ I am comfortable with the script. I do not feel we need to discuss it any further.”

A waitress approached, inquiring whether they might like to order something. William was already nursing a cup of coffee. Catherine asked for a cup, and both accepted menus.

William had already decided he wanted bacon, eggs (over easy) and hash browns. He rarely cooked these for himself. But it reminded him of his days in the fast food restaurant where he worked the night shift when he first came out west. After a night of washing dishes, swabbing the floors, ushering out the drunks, preparing the greens, condiments, and other makings for salads, peeling spuds, making up the hamburger patties, he would get a free breakfast made by the dayshift cook, and served by the usually sweet smiling dayshift waitresses. The breakfast usually consisted of the bacon eggs and hash browns he now considered ordering. Occasionally, he would order a large stack, and pour some kind of syrup over it, instead of the bacon, eggs, and

potatoes. He was narrating some of this earlier experience to Catherine. He mused to her about his infatuation with one of the waitresses, an infatuation he kept secret. He imagined the waitress had guessed his secret, because she was always nice to him.

Days gone by. Lived and unlive.

The waitress returned to take their orders. Catherine opted for a short stack; and both ordered fresh orange juice.

“Do you have many regrets Mr. D.?”

“Wow, a question like that this early in the morning.”

“I’m curious Mr. D.”

“Are you referring to the waitress?”

“Perhaps.”

“To be honest Catherine, Yes! But I would not have known what to do with that waitress. Does one regret not having experienced yet another failure, coupled with a rejection?”

“Do you believe that was the only likely outcome?”

“Yes!”

“When did you begin to have confidence in your approaches to the female?”

“Never.”

“I cannot believe that.”

“Catherine, I never poured on the charm, if that’s what you mean. That is, I was never forward. Surely, you can tell.”

“I thought that had more to do with our respective positions.”

“As you have perhaps observed, I am easily led.”

“Mr. D. I do not know that much about men, and how they operate. As I have intimated, my father’s associates at times seemed repulsively ungentlemanly. And I have never allowed the school boys, or college boys, much opportunity to explore their charms or persuasions. I have remained cool, mostly for a lack of interest. In my own mind, I am more of a person, than an object.

“Have I fantasized, as you might have with the waitress? Without going into any details, I suppose I have imagined romantic adventures that did not culminate in any sexual activity. More like the frolicking in Wild Strawberries.”

The appearance of the waitress bringing the breakfast interrupted the flow of the conversation, perhaps welcomed by both William, and Catherine.

“There you are. I’ll bring more coffee. Would there be anything else?”

“No, thank you.”

“Enjoy your breakfast.”

“Thank You.”

She poured more coffee, smiling sweetly, and deferentially.

## *A Pleasant Dalliance*

“What shall we do today Mr. D.?”

“I had thought we could sit by the river; or we might possibly drive along the river up into the mountains.”

“Either would suit me.”

“Well, let’s drive then, since we have some time.”

“Will we have time to go over my manuscript?”

“We’ll talk in generalities as we drive; and if you feel a need for specifics, then we can stop to examine them.

“We can do that whenever and wherever you like. I should caution you about seeking my opinion. It goes without saying that I should not influence you in any way. I would not want you to alter any part of it to suit my perceptions of it. I encourage you to stay with your own thoughts, logic, and manner of expression; and gut feelings, if that characterizes it better.

“I can not fault what you are trying to say. It’s a big subject that may belong in any number of expansions or condensations.

“Way back when, I can remember taking on the subject of Juvenile Delinquency in an English Comp. assignment – in one thousand words or less. Of course I got to choose the subject. Perhaps not fit for one thousand words. I received an F. I don’t recall whether it was something disproportionate about the subject in relation to the limited number of words, whether it was inappropriate for the assignment to delve too deeply, or whether it lacked in coherence and logic, or whether it suffered poor form, according to Gorrel and Laird. In the next ‘exercise’, I followed form, and chose a completely innocuous subject. I received an A. We get Fs because we break the rules, and As because we follow them.

“How does this apply to your writing?”

“It doesn’t. For one thing, you are so far advanced beyond what I was in those days. I can’t say for sure how it directs us to handle a monumental task, larger even than juvenile delinquency, which yours becomes.”

“If we cannot persuade, what is the use?”

“Oh!, Catherine, you persuade me; even your tone and the arguments you use find resonance within me, as though I could be saying them myself. This is more than the author or his alter ego speaking of basic common human yearnings. There is a calling for the imperative to eliminate the suffering of one’s fellow man. If mankind is so callous as not to care, if it is provable,

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

demonstrable, that he doesn't care, and will never care enough, then we might as well all don the helmet and wield the sword.

"But you, you, Catherine, believe in the power of the word.

"The cynic who sits along side you does not. He looks ahead, wondering if you will still write as you do now forty years hence; that is, when you approach his age.

"You are stating what is most important for you now, stating in unequivocal terms what you want. As you state what you want, the reasons for the statement develop as a matter of course, and they are unmistakable in their importance; not only to you, but to your family and friends. The statement is unselfish; and cannot be argued against. It may be ignored as a matter of convenience, or inconvenience, however one chooses to perceive it.

"I have believed as you do now. I guess I have learned to be a stick and carrot polemicist. Its odd, however, that man does not often see a fair, just, and equitable society as a carrot, only cynically, whereas often he perceives the argument for them as some kind of stick. When you have to give up something to get something else, it becomes a tricky proposition. The something given up subtly appears as self-interest of a kind that is not self-evident. It is a felt thing.

"Catherine, you suggest the call for the imperative must be obvious to all; the time is Now. Once again, this cannot be refuted."

As they rode along the valley that followed the river's course, they began to ascend the first rise into the mountains; the road had acquired many bends, with occasional stretches of straightaways. There was a long silence before Catherine responded to what William had to say.

Finally she said; "Mr. D., I understand you like the irrefutable part; perhaps I should put more emphasis on what is irrefutable. The benefits, for example. That is, I do not need to argue so strenuously from the heart, when there are some issues that are self-evident."

"It's a judgment call, when to dramatize; even the self-evident requires poignancy. We are dealing with inertia, habit; perhaps bad habits; abuses to the language that destroy our reliance upon it. Surely we are always dealing with cynicism, demoralization, and disbelief. Its been a prolonged agony that has passed from generation to generation, almost as much as the hair on one's head, that 'fatefully inevitable' we have discussed before."

"Yes!, self-interest is the real bugaboo; but it's the translating of inherent benefits into the appearance of serving one's interests;

first the appearance of, then the actual fact of serving one's interests.

"I know you would argue that a rational deductive method is wasted on the general populace. There are other methods. There is the Catherine method; there is the method of Mr. D., perhaps equally wasted on a populace that does not care. There are segments, large segments, of the population that do not care, or cannot devote the time to caring. I have essentially cynically admitted that I do not care."

"That's why the interjected query how you might argue in forty years. I realize it is unfair of me to imagine you will sour in forty years. I believe I was sour as a youth, finding fuller expression of my sourness as I aged. I could not write with the skill, as you do now, until only recently. But, you believe in what you write, even through the haze of your impinging disillusionment.

"Perhaps I never cared; only about myself. If the argument had any credibility and strength, it came from the self."

"Mr. D., your God Bless America is not entirely about self."

"Doesn't empathy come from self; measuring something against the self; that is, putting one's self in the other's shoes?"

"Sure, Mr. D., but there is a sense beyond the self, of what seems right and what seems wrong. There is something else; love. You love and revere life. As do I. My family is my love; part of the strength of my argument comes from what I feel toward my family; and now, you. There is also the reverence for all life, which we both share, but I suspect you express this even more keenly, or poignantly, than I. You have thought about it longer."

"Catherine, you are giving me, as they say, 'far more credit than I deserve'. Furthermore, I suspect it is you who feel these things far more acutely than I. I do not love as you do. The wellsprings of what ever love I have are perhaps far more selfish, and now a little old and stale. But, yes, I do empathize, particularly when it comes to wanton unconcern in the harming and/or destruction of anything living."

Catherine turned her head to look out the window. She continued speaking as she stared at the fleeting landscape of evergreens with the sun flickering through their cathedral like spires.

"I suspect what we are discussing here does not alter what I have written. I choose to speak of Idealism as a plausible, even practical risk/benefit solution to the human condition. There is nothing new in such a thought. It's a recurrent theme. It is not an idle thing; it will not go away. It ought not be a cross to be borne unremittingly, as a result of an insistent selfish stupidity.

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

“I do not know what we are forgetting here. Is it that we have denied the reality of the animal? Man the animal, the protoplasmic thing that we are supposed to be revering, that we claim to revere in all other species, that we have the luxury to revere in all other species? Man the animal is abhorrent to us. Or is man the animal OK in context? It is man the presumptuous something else that we abhor. Man the animal presumes to be human, because he dons some garment. He fancies himself a human. A Penguin? Without credentials. Tell me, what is it to be human, and not animal?”

“Let's all disrobe, Mr. D.”

“You be the first!”

“Do you wish it so?”

“No comment.”

“I gave you the option.”

“Catherine, I suspect already that you are a beautiful animal. You can tell me you are, and I will believe you.”

“The time will come Mr. D., The time will come”

Silence again. The road became steeper, the forest more dense, evergreen, less occupied by ‘you know who’, more pristine, elegant, the native dogwoods had begun to bloom; all uplifting, except for the highway through it.

“Mr. D., I haven't doubted the course I have chosen, the straight and narrow, unlike this roadway; the necessity, and urgency behind the schooling; but now that I have met you, I feel some kind of inclination to chuck it all and plunge into the task that will never be discussed in the classroom. I seek to examine every assumption, from the most basic, and the most mundane, and the most transient, even though it makes everyone squirm; to the most high fluting, Quixotic and grandiose.”

“Key word there, Catherine; Transient. Yes! transience. Without particularly referencing others' perceptions of this notion, we need to think upon the implications of its meaning. Another building block to understanding, like ‘fatefully inevitable’.

“What serves one day may not serve the next.

“Language is greatly affected with the passage of time. The prefix ‘*trans*’ when examined closely, reflects moving from one state to another; albeit, **transient**, **transitory**, **transition**, **transform**. Like Heraclitus of old, we are able to confirm the constancy of a condition through observation. We are confronted with attempting to determine the implications of what we observe. Apart from the fact that we can marvel at a process of changeableness, we also must face its consequences. It is not only the advent of transition that affects language; it is the basic imperfection of the medium for

which we are seeking perfection that always eludes us; requiring new grunts (words), meanings and definitions.

“Can we live in the one moment to the exclusion of other moments? If we should write of the world today, defining each term we would use to describe it, would such diligent labor assure for a perpetuity of meaning and understanding? Would even the contemporary day and time, the day of issuance, be understood?”

“We hear terms like disinformation, doublespeak, doublethink, which one might use to describe what **transpires** between those that serve, and those being served. That is, it might seem apparent that one deliberately used language to obscure the truths of the day. We also speak derogatorily of *rhetoric* as a kind of propaganda meant to deceive. We use expressions like *equivocate*, *dissemble*, *temporize*, *lip service*, *Machiavellism*.

“Underneath it all we must recognize that language is being abused and perverted. Something that should remain fixed, so that we might facilitate the passing of the proverbial torch, is being altered by usages that were intended to persuade, to manipulate; a variety of hidden agendas (Usages) that wreak havoc with language.”

“Mr. D., a ponderous subject, to be sure. Not all in the negative however. The poet searches for other meanings. But I do imagine the schizophrenic attempting to make sense of the world under such circumstances as you describe. It would be no small wonder if we did not all become schizophrenics; attempting to sort through various realities. Which shape should we assume in order to survive in a duplicitous world? We, of more sane disposition, survive by speaking of hope for change in the morrow. But can we be who we are on the morrow should the change arrive? In Star Trekese we are confronted with the ‘Changlings’; perhaps the most valid creation of the whole fictional apparatus.”

“I can recall when I was in my early twenties, a visit with an acute and astute elderly lady (90) by the name of Moore who was a gardening client of father's. She had said something that stuck with me all these years and seems now resonantly most appropriate. The exact words escape me, but the gist was clear enough; that the young barely indulge the old. Its as though two different societies existed side by side. In the fast paced world where everything is overpromoted, even what is not considered essential for life, and where image is tantamount, one is reminded of the two separatenesses. The one darts in and out quickly, frowning at the apparent obstacle that moves sort of slowly, because it is no longer agile. The old have lost their edge, their ability to comprehend the importance of the NEW WAY. A reservoir of experience has taught them that all is transience, whether or

not they are able to conceptualize this notion; a feeling of emptiness has grown out of unfulfilled promises. There are many promises, some stated and some implied. One lives, or waits, too long; there are regrets; then life is over.

“I am not always aware of this phenomenon called *transience* as I experience most things. But my assessment of all happenings is set in this judgment of *transience*. Because that is so, I feel I cannot associate permanence to any aspect of experience. The sense of what I say may not be clear, but the gist of *transience* as a measure of all things tests its significance. It does not mean that something better or more improved is in the offing. It only means that what happens in the future will experience this same phenomenon; and because it does, change may appear as an unwanted, undesired circumstance. The assessment of the nature of the change will not necessarily improve or alter any basic truths that have been determined outside of its influence; it may serve only to reinforce these truths, or leave them in abeyance.

“There is nothing evident in what I say. There is only this sensation of separation from what it is that one is experiencing; that is, a separation from the immediate and its purported relevance. My judgment would become dangerously prejudicial; that is, I would declare the *transience* irrelevant. If life only amounts to a series of *transiences*, can it be adduced that life is irrelevant? I would assume so. The implications of my life being irrelevant, which I truly believe, are not clear in my own mind.

“Because the mass of humanity represents a threat to my existence, (of this much I am aware) on a planetary scale, I am not free to move about in his territory without being spotted. I am apprehensive like the soldier in *Fire On The Plains*. I cannot assume another shape, and I cannot become invisible. The physical host of me is precariously situated amidst that which can do it harm; within the dominant human environment. I could easily become an object for target practice.

“The tenuousness of life in these circumstances becomes alarmingly apparent. The awareness of this condition does not produce a state of paranoia, but it does instigate a fear, a fear which cautions against professing notions that are irrelevant to *transience*. One could easily say, ‘Anything founded in *transience* is irrelevant.’

“We become susceptible to a number of philosophical speculations. Substituting another word for *transience* might be ‘particular’. The ‘particular’ as opposed to the ‘universal’. It is believed that one may determine something of the universal from the study of the particulars. The universal may possess some inherent, though not obvious, quality of permanence, or absolute



truth.

“Can such speculation help one in navigating the immediate? If life is to be assessed as a series of irrelevancies, or transiencies, how are we expected to proceed? Must we fall back upon an instinctive (programmed) self if we do not trust what it is we are able to extract from the immediate? What is there to trust in living a spontaneous instinctive existence? We might envy the other wilder emanations or manifestations of life as they appear to glide efficiently through their motions. These 'glidings' are not without their dangers; but apprehension is a constant companion to all forms of life; but we, the higher being, the more evolved specimen, assume we are equipped with the appropriate 'programming' (behavior), to account for it.

“Throughout history there have been many panaceas and promises, many intended to show that we imagine we believe we possess a knowledge of a better life than what we are NOW experiencing. The reasons for this out-of-time imagining is unclear. We are not satisfied with what is found in the NOW, even when we are well off. Becoming even more well-off is a way of **transcending** the NOW. This method of operating has fostered most glorious and fanciful notions. One is the promise of afterlife, that is, a continuance of something, life, wherein a lasting fulfillment will take place, especially if one has led a certain kind of propitious life before death. The opposite of afterlife is obviously before death. Yes!, there is a before life state as well. Lets take each separately. Before life. Before death, After life. What distinguishes the one from the other? How do we define each? What is our knowledge, experience (first hand) with regard to each. Our only true first hand experience is the before death state. Through observation and a certain degree of acuity in assessing what it is we observe, we believe we are able to know something about before life and after life, more about before life than after life. We are less interested in the before life state however, and often are more interested in the after life state than even the before death state, for obvious considerations. For example, a permanence in after life that could not be obtained in before death. The permanence, as we perceive it, would involve a very different physical and social environment than that experienced in before death; as a matter of fact it might prove quite antithetic to it, or a denial of it. For example, in the after life we would do away with animal odors. Nothing would be constructed from excrement. Everything would be made of gold, perhaps. This might be the place to insert your favorite 'plug-in'.

“Oops!, there I go using computer lingo. A long time friend called a couple of weeks ago inquiring if I knew the meaning of the

'word' 'blogger'. I didn't, but knew it to be an 'internet' term. So, I searched for its meaning via the internet to discover a meaning, but no derivation. A made-up word from 'log', as 'logging on', another internet term. It refers to some use of the internet that circumvents the so-called 'mainstream' media. This is good illustration of 'transience', while simultaneously illustrates a corruption of something. If one is to be involved in the 'modern' world, he is forced to learn each of these corruptions in order to communicate with that world. Quite naturally, a person can refuse to participate; instead describe something he discovers as a function of, let's say the 'internet', in a more familiar language. Lengthy perhaps, whereas to those in the know, 'blogger' is concise and conjures a fairly specific image. Do I want to become part of that aegis? Do I want to communicate in that lingo?

"One cannot help but reflect on language, its origins and its derivations, as well as its usage. New somethings happen; changes occur; the words we have at our disposal do not describe or evoke them. Some of our most familiar terms are disposed, abbreviated, corrupted, abandoned by the wayside, as the juggernaut roars ahead, taking no prisoners.

"When I speak in these terms I feel keenly aware of my separation from my look-a-likes. Speaking of the 'changelings', I might assume the shape of a dinosaur, or I might assume the shape of a creature to yet evolve. Whichever it is I would still be aware of my isolation as well as my separateness. At times, this may be described as loneliness. Like the loneliness I see in others as they are denied by their friends, and loved ones, through a kind of distracted indifference (irrelevant preoccupation). I do not wish to feel this separateness or isolation, but I cannot deny its existence. It is the 'natural' outcome of these awarenesses, and 'fatefully inevitable' deliberations with regard to them. I feel estranged from and by my own experience.

"Despite my allusions and loose definitions, I cannot absolutely declare my life as irrelevant, and because I make such a declaration, I need to be circumspect with regard to that life. Can the opposite of irrelevant be relevant? Not so easy to answer.

"Once I am no longer, nothing exists. Mother died recently; by definition, she no longer exists. Even my memory of her does not sustain her, any more than my beforedeath thoughts of her kept her alive. She retained her separateness and her isolation in order to endure a private individual passing. The feeble little thing that was 'mother' might have been a stray cat, or the rat caught in a trap."

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

Catherine held up her hand, a gesture meant to stave off any more speculation with regard to 'transience'.

William decided to pull off the road and stop the car along the vista that overlooked the expansive lava fields that dominated the summit.

"Mr. D., I hope you are not feeling lonely now.

"Obviously you have given the subject of transience a good deal of thought. My mere usage of the word 'transient' was not intended to unearth the significances of meanings in the words we use, at least at this time, however interesting it would be at another time.

"Its not that I do not wish to continue with such heady matters, but I do feel I need to think about and absorb the drift, which by the way may not be appropriate to this moment."

"Catherine, I might put it another way, as I did in a description of a teenybopper, seeking some meshing or integration with the world, her environment, within her transience, as it was.

*"What got my attention was the fast little vehicle as it sped around me from behind in my rear view mirror, to my right side mirror, past my right side, and as it was passing, a hand flipping a burning cigarette out the open window on the driver's side. At the next light the speeding presence was forced to stop, mostly by the presence of another stopped vehicle in front of it. I came along side to observe a kinky haired youth, female, beating and thumping with her hands upon the racing-car steering wheel, nodding and weaving her head, humping her torso in her seat, all to the bump, rumble and rhythm of the 'rock' blaring from the auto's ghetto blaster. Painted and dolled, jiving, an aspirant to fast track yuppiedom; so I imagined. I wondered what went on inside of that head. Some abstraction from Vogue Magazine, Hot Rock(s) Magazine, some Madison Avenue hype, some fleeting imagery, unaccountable; something happening between her thighs, that oughta happen in a big way, instead of in this mundane musty gray drab soggy wintry fare. The Human Fiction with a pleasurable itch, yearning for the heights; DENIED; therefore careless; only restrained by some unidentified FEAR. Heading for a RELEASE; something to assuage the burning desire, the rage, the pentupness, the frustrated yearnings, endless yearnings, savage appetites of unknown origin. Too much energy; the wick always flaring up, burning out of control; the horrible waxy sink of life holding one back, all the while wanting to be consumed in the flames, before consciousness returned, dreaded consciousness, awareness of one's little self, one's meager self. DREADED. An all day high, all night too, because one couldn't sleep, one was burning*

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

*up inside, heaping the little self upon the sacrificial pyre of the Twentieth Century that had declared you aint nothin' unless you're somebody, and you aint nobody unless your somebody, and you aint nobody unless you do it like they do it; they are somebody, if you do it like they do it you will become somebody, then your tiny little self and soul will be able to rest because you will do it like they do it and because they are somebody you will feel like somebody. You will have become Relevant to your time, your **Transience** will have become validated. Your GAWD damned pitiful little life will mean something. You wont be simply another piece of insignificant protoplasm dumped on this earth by sweaty uninspired copulating parents to live in awe of all those others that look like you who presume to lord it over you because they were here before you were, who feel they have some special right to tell you where to go and what to do, to expect you to take sides in their embroilments, their conquests of the earth and of each other.*

Again Catherine seemed overwhelmed by this obviously memorized outburst, holding both hands before her head, which she had turned aside.

“I’m sorry, Catherine. A real danger in associating with me is having to listen to stuff that has churned within me for years. I should be more aware of you in all of this rant.

“I have written another thing titled ‘Jailbreak’ which purports to deal with both the desire, and the perceived need, to escape the NOW. For obvious reasons.

“But to return to your earlier statement: ‘I seek to examine every assumption, from the most basic, and the most mundane, and the most transient, even though it makes everyone squirm ...’ This could serve as an opening statement to Jailbreak.”

Once again Catherine was signifying a halt by gently putting her hand to his mouth while imploring him with a pleading expression, as though in pain.

“Mr. D., your tale of the girl is very moving; and I believe amply illustrates the implications of our concern. I imagine it points to the direness of all our lives. Even as does your beforelife, beforedeath, and afterlife quandaries. All you speculate with regard to our schizophrenic potential. I would be interested in reading the ‘Jailbreak’ theme, eventually. It sounds apropos.

“I do not dismiss any of what you are striving to say to me. It is obvious to me you have delved deeply into the implications; something I have not done to such a degree, other than to

recognize and characterize my awareness of impermanence.

“I do understand the limitations inherent to language that is forever being subverted, and brutalized, as we are often brutalized by it. But what else have we, Mr. D.? As TS Eliot was purported to have said, ‘I gotta use words when I talk to you.’

“Our burden is thus doubly increased as we attempt to insure and preserve precise meanings to our words. Words are our business, No!!? ‘Plug-in’ and ‘blogger’ notwithstanding.

“Yes!, in order to be understood in the terms we choose, we must not assume anything, we must define our terms. That, of course, makes cumbersome something we want to flow; we want to wax lyrical without constraint, allowing the language and the rhythm of the language to suggest something soaring, and moving, as much as we want it to convey coherence and precision.

“I guess we cannot escape this ‘fatefully inevitable’ burden, that we too cannot assume anything. We must be responsible, and faithful to our muse; not leaving anything to chance.

“Mr. D., not to change the subject, but look at the time; already into the afternoon. I see there is some kind of trail through the lava; let’s explore it. It seems appropriately prescient to our discussion, full of foreboding, a wasteland abandoned in the wake of cataclysmic forces.”

As they emerged from the vehicle, a chill wind was blowing, and whistling in the silence, with some low white clouds rushing by, lending the whole landscape; almost moonscape, an eerie sensation. Only on the moon there would not have been any clouds. Often the valley, and even the hill slopes would be cloud free; it wasn’t until one gained the summit that these water vapor laden formations would occur; what the meteorologists attributed to ‘orographic’ lifting of the moist air as it rose from the warmer valleys over the cooler mountainous ridge tops.

William recalled the summertime hike to the higher reaches of these mountains to camp on the lee side, only to be awakened in the morning by a freezing rain descending from the mountain as this orographic phenomenon cooled the moisture forming, as the valley air rose and rushed over the peaks, and down over the other, the lee side.

The author cannot but add weather to his opus, despite the awareness of Mark Twain’s treatment of it in his introduction to *The American Claimant*. The reader hence will be delayed in his rush to discover the meat of this opus, by his (or her) necessary exposure to the elements.

“Are you going to be warm enough, Mr. D.?”

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

“Hopefully. I do love these inhospitable places. They serve as primal, and basic, reminders that we do live out in space somewhere, lone and abandoned amongst an accumulation of lifeless spheres. An anomaly! A transient anomaly?! Your ‘wasteland’, to be treasured!!??”

“Yes! Mr. D., still to be treasured, and in this remarkable variety. Not all the same, verdant, fecund, prolific, but also devoid; but not entirely, the lichens, and little banzai like attempts at little green things to flourish, somehow capturing enough moisture, perhaps from the melting snows, and water vapor, enough to sustain them through the arid summer, and the choice of a frozen and buried existence for over half the year. But not for us, if circumstance should dictate; we would perish.”

“A different kind of transience than that about which we trouble ourselves, we anomalous ones.”

Slipping her hand and arm through his at the elbow, as they ambled along, she remarked upon their coincidence in this night of life, where two lives, two very finite lives, converged at a time embraced, on both sides, by eons, millennia. How remarkable and wonderful; and doubly remarkable, essentially speaking the same language, able to validate what each one was, and to share this moment, with this peculiar awareness.

Suddenly Catherine stopped her amble, slowing and checking William with her tightening hold through his arm; she stood to face him, looking intently into his eyes.

William tried to withdraw from her gaze. But she, sensing beforehand this would be William’s retreat, insistently stood her ground.

“Mr. D., our discussion, and our proximity in this setting, has produced this consequence, that I should be looking at you as I do.”

“Catherine, it would seem the moment is upon me once again, to proceed with, or annul, this affair.”

“You need not do either. A third course lies open to you; respond to the moment, without further ado.”

“You mean, trifle in transience?”

“If it satisfies you to put it that way.”

“Catherine, you are not a trifling matter.

“Two considerations; How I should treat you, as a gentleman, as an honorable person, as a caring person. What it means to treat you at all. I need to reassess my right even to be in your company.”

“Mr. D. you have every right; I am not opposed to it; I desire you to exercise your right to respond to my obvious invitation; an invitation for a relationship that can exist without prejudgment,

and without any knowledge as to where it might lead.

“I thought we had already discussed and understood this, for the lack of another word, arrangement.”

Catherine peered at him with such intensity that William began to feel very uncomfortable. They were out there alone; she had raised the stakes; she deliberately flaunted her desire to proceed with the ramifications of closeness in this isolated, lonely, nearly barren, place. She was waiting expectantly for him to engulf her in his arms, to hold her tightly, as though she would disappear if he merely, briefly turned his head aside. She wanted this moment to burst upon her.

Whereupon it did suddenly, as William did indeed engulf her in his arms, and hold her tightly, however unresigned he was to the implications.

“That’s better Mr. D.” lifting her face toward his, searching, hoping for something more.

“Catherine, please!”

“Please what, Mr. D. Me first? I think you suspect I will; so why not be first yourself. Will it not happen anyway: if not now, when? Mr. D., I am not trifling with you, and I know you are not trifling with me.”

These words carried an inordinate amount of importance for William. He knew this girl to be serious, to want to allow the moment its due. It was what he wanted also. With much restraint he leaned his face into hers, placing his lips tentatively upon hers, as she responded with the clear decision to prolong the moment with a somewhat fervent pressure holding her arms tightly about his neck as she did so. William in turn responded with more warmth and tenderness, but only briefly, before he felt the need to recoup.

Although disappointed in William’s desire to pull away she spoke softly, and gently, coaxingly, as Lauren said to Humphrey, “That’s even better, Mr. D., I like that.”

William hadn’t removed his arms from around her. He gazed upon her countenance, looking warmly into her eyes. Hoping she would not push the moment into other longer and longer moments.

Catherine was able to read some of this concern; his hesitancy to leap from the precipice. His precipice. She felt no precipice. She was clearly satisfied with the moment. Another would be nice as well. She reached with her lips for his, finding them yielding, and responding, however reluctantly. A lingering moment which she chose to end with a snuggling of her face along side his as she buried her face alongside his chin and into his neck, so he could brush her hair into his face. He in turn snuggled and buried his face therein, prolonging the sublime moment.

Catherine then withdrew a little. "There, Mr. D., that wasn't so awful."

"Not at all. Catherine. Even more enticing and rewarding than I had imagined it to be. You are so very beautiful, and so very remarkable. God help me, so desirable!"

"Mr. D., how did God get into this script?"

"I suspect 'desire' is a somewhat forbidden subject invented by Satan."

"I'm surprised at you, Mr. D., God in one breath, and Satan in the next. Come lets walk on, before you become completely addled."

"Catherine, I must confess to loving you, in a way that I am powerless to do otherwise."

"God, Satan, Confession. Mr. D.; are you some 'blogging bloke'?"

"It's a good thing I love you as I do, lest I would take offense at your summation of me."

"Mr. D., allow me to tease you, believing there is not an ill-intent, no desire to reform or hurt, only to fun around for its own sake."

"Do not imagine, or feel, that I would trivialize your expression of 'love'. Never!"

"Further, these heady discussions are wonderfully stimulating; I want to be involved in all of them. My life and mind have expanded and deepened in knowing you, a poet, somewhat difficult to know - I will learn. Your spoken expression does rather overwhelm me at times. I can absorb only so much each little while; it all seems like such a dream. I want to understand and absorb every detail."

"Mr. D., not insignificantly, my body responds to your presence with an urgency that I feel is quite natural."

They walked on in silence, feeling the bracing wind, listening to the eerie whistling, immersed in the forbidding landscape. Catherine had placed her arm through his again.

"Mr. D., much is happening within me. I have not doubted myself, or what I have chosen to become. I feel as though I am getting there. Then you come along, with all of your life and living experience, a person to whom I have almost immediately been drawn through various affinities of thought and feeling. For some reason I sense you will disappear forever out of my life before I have had a chance to understand who and what you are, and how you became who and what you are. I find myself wanting you to assure me you will not disappear. I find myself wanting to find a way to lasso you, to corral you, to perhaps bind and imprison you."

"I realize how selfish is my desire. I have no right to feel or think



this way. But, alas, I am human, and a woman, subject to all the whims of my kind.

“Is that a rhetorical device? I would hope not.”

“Perhaps it is a dream after all.

“This landscape speaks volumes that I might have written. Your being here with me as a witness validates the solitariness of what I feel my life has been. If you stood apart apace you would see me as I see myself. I have been given an awareness of a predicament, my predicament, for so long now, it might seem I have been born with such an acuity; but why?

“Catherine, it is not only my predicament.

“I cannot change this predicament for myself or anyone else. Why dwell upon it, if such be case?

“I do not seek sympathy, as much as I do a particular companionship. But a dull fellow I am with my preoccupations; not a very good companion. After all, who wants to be constantly reminded that he or she is a solitary figure in the landscape? That’s my peculiar apprehension. I have lived with this apprehension, and have sought to give it expression. Why do that?”

“Mr. D., what you said earlier about ‘*loving these inhospitable places. They serve as primal, and basic, reminders that we do live out in space somewhere, lone and abandoned amongst an accumulation of lifeless spheres. An anomaly! A transient anomaly?! Your ‘wasteland’, to be treasured!!??*’ is very real to you, and as you depict it, to me, also.

“You know we are expected to live, all the same; I mean, we are programmed to live. We breath, inhale and exhale, effortlessly, most of the time, lest we exert, or enthrall, ourselves. We are driven, compelled to seek nourishment, and albeit, liquid, to sustain this ‘anomaly’ that we are. Our bodies process the nourishment and liquid, flushing out the dregs, expelling the wastes. My sweet fellow, we are brought together, you and I, man and woman, male and female, by means to our liking. We might question the whole of it, but we are stuck with it until death do us part.

“Underneath it all, we are part of a process, a design, about which we can know nothing. We are indeed molded by a series of transiencies, adaptations to moments, and circumstances; most of it without our conscious intervention. We might be considered privileged to be allowed an awareness of this remarkable phenomenon of life, and living. Yes!

“Because we cannot know, as Paul Gauguin felt compelled to scribe on his Polynesian depiction, *D’ou Venona Nous? Que Sommes Nous? Ou Allons Nous?* ‘Where do we come from, why are we here, where are we going?’, should we be less inclined to yield

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

to the impulse; or should we become wholly impulsive, and wanton, daring the process to prevent us from such activity?

“If we were truly isolated as you claim to feel, we might so act. But look at you, full of scruples about the unseemliness of a relationship with a child-woman.”



“In the Gauguin you cite, he depicted a remarkable stasis, a non action peopled by statues. Yes!, the colors give them life; their eyes are opened, they are not lying about as though dead. Are they the ones asking the heady questions? It would appear not. As a matter of fact they are guided in their apprehensions by a witch doctor, a shaman, a medicine man, a designated sorcerer. Even he or she does not ask the questions, but merely carries on with a traditional mumbo jumbo to appease gods and devils alike, auguring for favorable conditions.

“As for what appear to be my scruples, I can only say they are a sham, a pretence. But you know what I truly feel besides a love and growing attachment, is the more common lot of man or men, a fear of being taken in, duped, betrayed by what I might feel, which at the same time I tell myself I have no right to feel. I feel that my realm of experience does not do justice to any concept of what is possible. Everything I did as a youth was constrained, and controlled by fears, more than any attempt to do the right thing. I was burdened with not knowing the right thing as a matter of my own intelligence and perception. Every thing I was seemed wrong from the outside, whereas on the inside, my feelings contradicted that outer assessment. I had been and have been conditioned in this way, and no matter how much I profess to be intellectually immune to such persuasions, the conditioning prevails reflexively. Even what I suspect is happening between us, despite what you say to assure me that you do not toy with me, and would not toy with me, and say and do only things to validate our relationship.

“Catherine, I still sense it is wrong to be involved with you.”

“Mr. D., we are not wrong. If we are not careful we will be recycling that obtuse argument that others use concerning ‘error’,

that there is no such thing as 'error'. What we are is not wrong. What is done in the name of 'making the world safe for democracy' is wrong, and cannot be excused as 'no such thing as error'. The one is stating it knows better than everyone else what is good for the world, and will excuse any act committed under that pretext. That is wrong; and culpable, and cannot be construed as a non-error.

"But you and I, No!"

"You know, its time for the author to jump all over our selves for our endless repetitions of justifications, circumventions, and contraventions, in order to continue with this relationship."

"Mr. D., the author is coming from a different place than are we. As long as we remain in the script with a life of our own, the author is given purpose. Our seeming justifications, circumventions, and contraventions are part of a larger scheme; and note, I use the word 'scheme'.

"What is plausible, possible, and probable, do not enter into the 'scheme' of things. The author cannot back away from that now, lest he knocks one or both us off, or causes us to lose our minds. I do not believe he will allow the social forces that exist to pry us apart. Simply because the social forces that exist are truly, truly, transient phases of something that is still formative, variable, cyclical, even faddish; one day living under a dark cloud, and the next full of enlightenment. On the brightest day, we will still be able to stand before the glare as two transient beings that add to the luster; and on the darkest day, ones that cannot be made over, still glowing.

"We are what we are. The author is who he is. I believe he is more like us, his creation, than he is an upholder of a scheme of things that are in transition. He only seems to be caught in the middle.

"The horror of it all is that those others are who they are, the ones who live in the dark beneath the rock of ages. I believe the author is hard pressed to deal with their reality; we are mere child's play, and a great relief, compared to the other task of dealing with them. After such a long arduous journey, there are still so many who revert, who prefer to live in the dark. It was the one George who observed that Ignorance Is Strength, wherein another George has capitalized on that phenomenon; and both George's shared in the knowledge of the brute, the animal. George the philosopher meets George the opportunist, each an exponent of his predilections. Pensive George and Vacant George.

"Depressing thought, No!?"

"What is depressing is that we, as a species, seem to be unable

*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

to rise consistently above the forces that bind us. The raw materials seem predisposed to a crawling motion, as opposed to a more uplifting posture. This observation is intended to illustrate the limitations of genesis; sadly.

“I want to think of us as the ‘happy accident’ “.

“Ah!, but you are the rebellious one.”

“Not so, Mr. D. I refuse to wear a label. As Naomi wrote ‘No Logo’.

“Mr. D.; believe it or not, I am an insider, though I might be cast otherwise. Because the outside has appropriated the stage does not imply that I am written out of the script. It is me that is set to leave the mark. It is they who are subsumed in the volatility of their circumjacence. I am purposeful, whereas they are apparently purposeless. In this assessment, I do not arrogate, but merely delineate. I become the insider through the force of argument. I will hold that position until something better comes along; in the far distant future; unless I miss my guess. I feel this to be true, better than I know it to be true. I have constructed a thesis upon intuition. Because I am able to observe the milling crowd as engaged in purposeless activity, that is, mostly unaware of what they are actually doing, or why they are doing it. Because I do not do exactly as they seem, does that make of me a rebel?! How so?

“I will stick to my original assessment that we are a ‘happy accident’, somehow in the process of becoming a purposeful one.

“Because the great mass of humanity seems bent on devising its own scheme, as though it was the only one, only signifies they are insisting on something, as perhaps the lemmings insist upon their errant course. I suppose any course that leads to ‘death’ might be considered errant. However unerringly we aver toward a mortal one.”

“A “Happy Accident’ it will be.”

“We will be, Mr. D.”

Some drizzle had descended upon them, or rather was being driven at them by the wind; a refreshing wetness upon their faces. But they were not attired for this turn of weather.

“Better beat a retreat.”

As they were returning to the automobile, the wetness became more saturated. None too soon had they arrived under cover. William started the motor to warm up the interior, to warm and dry themselves.

They sat pondering the forbidding aspect of the landscape, now being strafed and scathed by the low-flying mass of cloud, so thick at times as to seem like fog. Then suddenly it would all lift a few hundred feet, only to gradually descend again. The gusts of wind

would be so strong at times to buffet and shake the car. The precipitation caught in the wind would suddenly roar in a angular sheet against the vehicle.

All somehow reassuringly violent, and soothing. Both exposed to the elements, and safe within their metal box on wheels. So near each other, two warm beings in all that barren outside world.

Two of the most highly evolved specimens on the planet.

The author wants it known that his last statement is not a presumption, but a fact.

But it is time to write them back into the real world where they must endure the slings and arrows, even as a highly evolved pair. He knows not whither he goest in his made up scheme. He might cease altogether at this very juncture to leave to the reader the task of completing the opus.

Did Jesus Christ get it on with Mary Magdalene? A symbolic question? No, it has been conjectured, because he erupted in boils, a clear indication of his unrequited torment. Yet, it is also conjectured he could not refuse, that he was too human to refuse; temptation, temptation, temptation. Imagine having your feet washed with those sensuous trusses. Nothing Happened?!?!

What has been left undeclared in the script is amply supplied by those with lurid imaginations. They want the holy man to be tempted, and to yield to his temptation. Only then does he become human enough to understand the full dimension of what others of lesser ilk trumpet as 'sin'.

William is not a holy man, however Catherine might exist as a temptation.

The question arose 'Have you found Jesus?' The reply: 'No, is he missing?'

The author recalled the farcical judgment passed along by Mickie, the jazzercise instructor, who had become deeply immersed in the TV dramatization of the Thorn Birds wherein the priest, Richard Chamberlain spent a *helluva* long time making up his mind, or perhaps his body, with regard to Rachel Ward, with whom she had intensely identified. She ranted, 'if he don't get it on with her pretty damned soon, I'm never watching television again'. Mickie would probably have trouble with William.

What of Dimsdale and Heather? "A" wot?

Eh well, what the hell?

Poetic license. No!, the license of holy men. If you don't like the dialogue, write your own.

Pretty damned pugnacious author; showing his true colors, No?

As they were descending the mountain road, the rain had

quickly ceased, the cloud became more scattered, allowing the sun to shine through. By the time they reached the valley as the sky was turning to dusk, the sun had cast a golden glow, all about the western horizon.

It had been a very enjoyable day for Catherine, and a somewhat more troubling one for William; however he would not deny his enjoyment.

They had supped at a café on the outskirts of the more easterly of the neighboring communities, separated only by the river that flowed between them. Then proceeded to where Catherine had left her car, to converse tentatively before Catherine was to return to her sorority. The real world had begun to engulf them once again.

Still sitting in his car, Catherine inquired about the following day, wanting his assurances they would meet as planned; to which William slowly assented.

“I enjoyed today, Mr. D. I feel buoyant, happy, and loving.

“I sense in you some withdrawal, some hesitancy, even some reluctance.

“We must get beyond this, Mr. D.”

“Hold on, dearest one, here we are being furtive with the world, and you are sensing something in me. We are both caught up in something both very agreeable and very disagreeable.

“To add to that, you perceive this relationship differently than I do.”

“Disagreeable!? Too strong a word Mr. D. This relationship? Mr. D., please refer to ‘you and I’ at least.

“You must not trouble yourself about how I perceive our relationship. I desire ‘our’ relationship, and am willing to live with the constraints, for the time. Please be patient with me.”

Catherine then moved closer, twisting her body to put her arms around his neck, to offer her lips to his, which, by now, he almost predictably wanted to avoid. She was choosing these moments, almost too forwardly: for a woman, he thought.

Suppose he was to yield to a kind of passion, to somehow become this male thing, to allow his viscera to control the moment, overwhelming her with the strength and force of his body.

When one truly loves another, does this kind of possession actually happen? It did not enter his head to ‘take’ this woman.

“Mr. D. do I make you feel uncomfortable?”

“Yes!”

“Don’t condemn me or avoid me out of hand. I mean well. Also, I care for you a great deal.

“I feel very comfortable with you.

“I trust you completely.”

“You must understand that I feel awkward, despite all your

assurances. Believe me, I would rather feel and behave otherwise.

“I feel this has less to do with our age difference than my usual response to an unimaginably lovely woman. As I have indicated to you; only in my wildest dreams have I ever been this close to a truly unimaginably lovely woman. A very young unimaginably lovely woman.”

“Mr. D., I suspect you have always felt you were not intended to be happy, you were not worthy of happiness.”

“That isn’t entirely true. With my wife I was very happy, perhaps as happy as I might have expected to be; and that was after a very traumatic courtship. But it is true, that until she came into my life, I had found myself in mid-life, never experiencing true and consistent happiness.

“I might have been very content with that, with her.

“We wandered apart to some degree; and then I suddenly meet you; like a thunderbolt awakening, I am jolted into another frame of reference. An unbelievable meeting, totally without expectation or precedent.

“Suddenly, I run off my track in a new direction without any notion of where it is leading me. I have lost the imaginary equanimity that my years have brought to me. I am floundering in some sea of wonder, amazement, resurrection, and unbelievable states of being. All because of you.”

“No!, Mr. D., because of you, yourself. I am merely a catalyst.”

“I wonder about that analogy. Are you then not affected by this association?”

“Mr. D., perhaps I am both, serving as the one, while emerging as an altered being, but retaining my original state. Perhaps amorphous. Able to assume many shapes.”

“One is quite enough for me.”

It was time to part. With that last statement, Catherine simply kissed him briefly, fervently, not giving him much opportunity to respond. Removing her arms, reaching for the door handle, “Mr. D., as long as I am the only one.

“Goodnight, I had a wonderful day.”

“I too had a wonderful day.”

“See you tomorrow, as agreed?”

“Yes!, pleasant dreams!.”

## *The End Of The First Week*

The reader might rightfully wonder concerning the author’s insistence upon this arrangement, seemingly intending for it not to end. He does not feel obliged to offer more of an explanation than

he has previously given. Writing, 'creative' labors, proceed from a mythical 'Muse'. The nine daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, herself the daughter of Heaven and Earth (Uranus and Gæa). And Catherine herself, born of the same tradition, acts as the agent; or catalyst, as she offered herself, as the veritable Muse.

Realizing this to be a lot of gobbledygook, the author will reiterate that he does not engage in 'creative' labors without some kind of reason to be so engaged. At his age, the reasons for doing such a thing, seem mostly unconvincing. Whereas in his youth, the palpableness of life, the pulse of life within him served often enough as the motive force, however dubious and fractured the results. But in the waning years, of far less energy, perhaps even reduced libido, and want of inspiration, for want of finding some convincing reason to be so engaged.

But for Catherine, he would not undertake such an ambitious effort. Though a pure invention, Catherine serves the intended purpose. Might there have been another purpose, like inventing yet another creature, not unlike Don Quixote, for example, who might set out to right all the wrongs of the world through some such confabulation as the great Don; or yet a totally unimagined hero (or heroine) in more contemporary garb.

So is it reason enough for engagement to perhaps combine the two? Catherine the enticement, a palpable Yillah, more than a Fayaway, Cunegunde, or a Dulcinea, to accompany the author on his yet to become, peripatetic journey, one of lecturing humanity on its very inhumanity. In the author's own mind he sees himself, in part, as the sum of others, whom he variously recognizes without pursuing an accurate bibliography, or system of footnotes. But he also believes in his own semblance of originality, such as it is, and in the various forms it assumes. He does possess his own vision; one he believes is grounded in reality, in a kind of pragmatism, achieved through a deductive process; if one is this, he is not that. As he might declare himself, and know he is bound by his words, without making excuses, then he also holds other men to this standard. He does not trust that other men will be so inclined, he merely expects them to be true to their words. He realizes it to be a tough standard, but a pragmatic one, necessary for the survival of the species, and for the survival of civilization. Is Catherine incidental to this process? Perhaps. But the author would truly love to meet one such as she, and to while away his life in her company.



*Leaving Port  
Saving The World*

*Setting Sail  
Requires Courage*

So he shall, for the while.

