

Another matter: (retrieved from n24) Sometimes I catch myself meditating upon 'common' everyday things. I realize the following is not generally considered proper subject matter for the printed page. As there are just some things that are not mentioned in polite company. I ponder, without being scatological, because I wasn't being scatological when the observation was first made. I just happened to be sitting upon the throne when my glance caught sight of the nearly empty dispenser. Then it occurred to me there were many things in our common everyday life we take for granted. Ever since I can remember, toilet paper has been a part of my life. Seldom have I been forced to improvise (although I vaguely recall certain Sears Roebuck and Monkey Ward catalogues in the outhouse [on the inside of the door of which was thumb tacked a sign appropriately or inappropriately admonished one to THINK]). I thought to myself this convenience cannot have been around for too terribly long, perhaps a hundred years, if that. Of course, one thought, freely ASSociated with the next, had suggested the next, 'what had people done before that'? Yes! there was the bidet, as long as you could afford one. And was water sufficient?; and what if it was cold?; and certainly things were still wet. So, anyway, there I was imagining all sorts of improvisations, as well as standard practices, that one cannot find in any kind of outhouse literature. Heironymous Bosch made it very clear pictorially that man's alimentary canal functioned then as it does today. Rabelais and Swift indicated that bowel movements were part of the scene in their times, without giving any specific details. Of course one imagines all sorts of things about J.C., Mary Magdalene, Nobucketnozzler, Mowzez, Raychell, Antunny, Claptrapta, Seizeher, Calpurrrnia, Helen and Plastered Paris, Psycho and Eros, Orifice and Eurydice, Jocasta and Oedipussy. Odysseus and Pinelope, and the constipated ones, like Anaximander, Anaximines, Anaxagoreass, Dimocritus, Piethagoras, Sockratease, Platoe, Diogenease (that's a tough one in a barrel), Aristotle, Onassis, Jackie, and so on. Well, today, I can imagine there is no end to the amount of inventiveness being expended (patents carefully sequestered) upon the issue of wipes.

Elsewhere I have speculated, when the third world catches up to the civilized (first and second???) world, how much toilet paper will be consumed when 6 billion assholes (literally) and/or crotches are being served on a daily basis, give or take a few hundred million constipations and/or a few people in one helluva hurry, or the Kurds under fire from the Turks, Iraqies and Iranians (no place to go.) The thirds catching up will act on two fronts; presumably they will be eating more; therefore. Will the pulpy trees be able to sustain the yield? To my knowledge, t.p. isn't getting recycled. I do not know what I foresee; but a shortage will most likely not occur in my lifetime ("More Now, Less Later" in Timber Industry parlance)

unless marketing to the third world speeds apace. Most likely the average wage of the burgeoning third world will not be able to afford such luxury; so for the present, there is no danger of my having to contemplate improvisations, at my late date.

What then remains to contemplate? Why one so contemplates? Perhaps it is because I have lost interest in romance.

How could I possibly have lost interest in romance? As a matter of fact, I fantasize all the time, without the assistance of drugs; that is, I do not engage in drug-induced farfetchedness. I take my pleasures as they come. There is no way my fantasies could ever become reality, especially, when the mirror reflects the wrinkled old hunch, that I must assume is myself. But almost desperately, I do this thing. Lonely? Unfulfilled? Habit? Hope Springs Eternal? This errant thing will not last much longer; all of those schizophrenic moments will go to the bottom with me, like the Titanic. Like a cold shower. Very embarrassing, to say the least

I only wish I had had a photograph of her, so I could prove to you what I dreamed was not a misrepresentation.

I would have liked to have known Antigone; however she might have proven unresponsive to my fantasies. My own daughter suggests the latter.

Man has been fantasizing longer than he has been using t.p.. It has often been observed, when one utters a truism, or the truth, the world often stands unmoved. But when there is a movement (when ya gotta go, ya gotta go), TAKE HEED!. My personal experience will substantiate this last statement. One of several installments, this fascicle (Farsillier than D.Q.) serves as filler.

I'm sort of waiting around for the next assault. The questions I have: Will it be painful? Will it add to my deterioration, already obvious? I'm not sure if I want to ask if it will interfere with my bodily functions? Mentally, I am as questionable as I was in the beginning; I still retain the lack of discipline with which I was born. I demonstrate unequivocally that I was a poor student; and why I did not really make the grade. Despite these lacks and failures I have continued to breathe; and as I have breathed I have managed to insinuate myself until I have become a nuisance. My survival has been dependent upon my fellow man's tolerance.

I have been wallowed to fail at my own pace. Everybody insisted I had potential, I had talent, and so on. And if I had succeeded, my mug shot would have accompanied my opussies; that's more'n you can say about some of our stellar performers of the past, where some draftsman might make a pitchur that looked more like himself than his subject.

Yes! it may be a character issue. People want to be entertained. When you don't perform, people can't be entertained. Even if you make an ass outta yourself it has to have entertainment value. Failure makes of one what is everybody else. Success excites envy, and a bunch of other 'stuff'. So just fail away. I didn't need to be told to fail. Because I didn't use my potential I became a failure. I'm trying to make up for it by writhing.

I try to understand the whole process. Like I said, I don't have a picture of her, my muse, so that you could see that I have not misrepresented her. She just simply did not want me. I have not handled rejection very well.

I don't know what I would do if I had it to do all over again. Most likely I would do nothing, if imbued with my current cynicism. And most likely the cynicism comes from my efforts at self-justification, even though I haven't any idea why I should want to justify, to exonerate myself. After all whaddoIcare what any buddy else stinks? I guess its that larvae of 'accomplishment' that was bored into me in those early days when I was so defenceless; when you told me I was truant if I didn't 'do it'. If I didn't listen to your prattle (well-intentioned, of course, like all missionaries and crusaders, 'doing good').The Fit Is The Fashion where a D cup is considered more of a success than an A cup. Absolutely Awesome.

I don't know why I even do this writhing. I suspect its an ego thing, perhaps the lowliest of motivations. I want to show somebuddy that I haven't wasted my undisciplined potential for failure. I wrote because words were a convenient vehicle for getting it on. I was fascinated by what you could do with all these guttural utterances (gutternuances), to show you that Madison Avenue and the politicians and the Media aren't the only ones who can deliver bullshit right to your front door. The kind of bulkshit I deliver has its own distinktive aroma.

I could write because I was so in love with life that I could not hold myself in, like the poet, Wit Waltman. I could write just because I had thought everybuddy could no what I no. The reason I probably don't do a better job of it, and the reason I didn't do a better job of sculpting is because I was either too lazy, or just couldn't feel the need to do things to such a degree of perfection; or maybe I just didn't know how. (Somenobuddy suggested once that I just wasn't good enough. He died.) Only so much effort at a given time in a given direction. Yeah!, I know, why do it at all? To expose myself to Suzanne Snotrag? Let it dangle, let it dangle. Oh, How's it hangin'?

To be the best? I guess I never really felt that way. What I really wanted was to be accepted for what I was at any given moment. But somehow that doesn't cut it. Do I accept myself as I find myself? Now there's a question for Hamlet.

I don't really know how to assess things that accurately. For example. Whatever I have done in the way of making an effort to do a good job, regardless of its nature, whether in the digging of a hole, or creating something pretentious, the controlling factor inherent to its accomplishment hinged on an idea, or the idea of the job as a finished thing, something pictured in the mind as an objective end. I got pretty good at digging holes, but realized that a hole was a hole, not a proving ground. But still I took a certain amount of pride in hole digging. When it came to creating something pretentious, I knew there was always more I could do if I would keep at it, but there was also the realization that I had

failed to do it as my mind's eye saw it, and that to do it right I would need to begin again. This is where my failing became obvious; I was not prepared to do it again; it was not important enough, OR, I was mostly convinced I could not do better; I could only do it differently; but it would still be lacking the something I had pictured it should be. Well, no big deal; I imagine it comes out that way with everybody. Accident and opportunity always change the course of one's creations; perhaps often for the better. But Still, for me, even with intent, accident and opportunity, I failed something that was intended. Perhaps most of all I could not find the arguments for perfecting something sufficient to attempt to perfect them beyond what I had determined was a given effort. What purpose was being served? Well if you don't do it like you say you're gonna do it, then you have become a backslider; you have lost your integrity.

Well, others who view your work can say to you they like it or they don't like it, even though they cannot tell you what it is they like or dislike, in concrete terms, or how much effort or integrity has been wasted upon it. When it comes to art work it probably helps if you have tried some of it yourself in order to be able to make an intelligible statement about what it is you like or do not like. This might even be true of carpentering. If you have determined that a thing should fit, such and such a way, or look such and such a way, then, when it doesn't, many people can see where you have not accomplished your objective. Unless of course you do things like me, wherein funkiness or rusticness, is easily adopted, but where touches of finesse are allowed.

More recently I constructed a house from logs, using a sort of primitive approach. Nothing fancy, something basic, that is, in the method of construction. By their very nature logs (non-uniform raw byproducts of nature), lend themselves to rusticity. But I made an effort to make the joints perfect as possible. There were some obvious failures which could not be redone because there were only so many logs; and practically speaking, each available log was designated to be used somewhere in the construction. So each log chosen for a particular layer was the destined log for that layer whether or not its fit was perfect, because its shaping was so uniquely determined once the process of fitting began. The only other possible destiny for that particular piece was to 'buck' it up for firewood. I couldn't afford to waste a single piece (I still wanted a forest in which to live), so what was, was. Without protracting this too much further, suffice it to say, a standard of construction was set by me which my 'integrity' would urge toward a consistent degree of craftsmanship. The finished product then showed this consistent degree of effort toward that end. Others who viewed the finished product made complimentary remarks about the end result. These 'kudoes' offset whatever lacks I knew existed in my technique. The idea was to feel comfortable in the place, and to enjoy its ambience.

Because I put so much effort into the design and construction of the eventual building, and because I do not have to suffer reminders, through negative criticisms, but often quite the opposite, I do believe, for what remains of my life, and what opportunities I will have for actually spending time there, I shall enjoy the place, and will be able to share it on those terms. There remains other required labors, which should be possible to complete without too seriously detracting from the parameters of enjoyment. I should mention, although mentioned elsewhere in another context; while constructing this edifice, I have undergone two lumbar laminectomies, one aortic valve replacement/mammary bypass, and brachytherapy for prostate cancer; one abdominal surgery; and put my mother in a nursing home. All I need do now is to enjoy the fruits of my labor by keeping it out of the hands of the taxing authorities who would take it away if I did not pay the assessment. Yes! they would come with their manpower and guns; Yes!, even in that self-consciously self-proclaimed HUMANITARIAN country of Canada, they would come with their manpower and their guns, forcibly removing me from that place. Why? Because they want their Revenue. That's why. Revenue? So the guys with the guns could get paid. Sounds a little bit like Candide, No? Or Guaranteed Income.

If all this doesn't sound negative enough; I'm watching the gradual shrinkage of the building, the joints showing gaps, the logs twisting, etc.. The estimate of value in our opinion has risen from our original 'investment' price of \$32,500.00 U.S. to at least ten times that amount; others have estimated twenty or thirty times that amount. What was I saying about Envy and Taxes? Then You Die!

So, what's new? Life is hell, then you die.

And somebody else wants what you got.

As long as I didn't brandish a gun, they most likely would not shoot me, no matter how many times I returned to picket the bastards. It was one of Playto's antagonists who claimed that Justice was in the interest of the stronger. Of course, Socratease, the protagonist tried to argue that Justice served its own ends apart from the strength of manpower and bullets. The subtleties of Sock's arguments are wasted on me, because my perception comes from firsthand experience. If Justice was being served, as they are apt to speculate, well there 'just' wouldn't be any argument. Why should I need to worry about the prospective tax on something that everybody else wants, which consequently drives up the value of the said same, to such a high level that I cannot afford to pay the resultant. Have I 'just' defined what one might call 'just'? I do not believe I have defined anything, lest it be extortion.

So you wanna tell me about Government and Law, Fate and Certainty. You just wanna skip the Justice part. Prove to me you deserve Justice. Anything you wanna tell me about what happens after they shoot me. They just auction the place off to cover expenses. Even in Canada? What's

so special about Canada? Hockey Players?!?! Tax Consultants. They like to think of themselves in the forefront of every humanitarian think, when really they are trapped in their skin just like everybody else. Seein's Believin'. Justice is an afterthought. Thick Skin. And P.P. sits in the wings reading the Obits, counting widows as opportunities. Another woman's loss is another man's game, or something like that.

Actually its no different where I come from. The trouble with those guys up north is they gotta do it the same way; no individuality. How did you make your living? Taxin' 'em. Spare None, Taxol. Guns, Guns, Guns. Brute force. What's yours is negotiable, especially with the bigger calibers.

You know how it is, you can't move a hunk of land to another place, you can't hide it in a Swiss bank, or in the Cayman Islands. An unmovable object is easy to tax. Like interest on a debt, the practice has been around as long as there have been governments; for gov's, it's a way of life. Even people who can see the socially redeeming value of taxation hate taxes. Believe it or not taxation is still a political issue. Even after all the political promises to lower taxes over the centuries, one would imagine a negative value at this point in time; that is, the government paying the average bloke something just to remain as a citizen; but, NO!, taxes somehow just cling as a proprietary function of government.

Later: You see how easy it is to get sidetricked by your inSecurities.

You know what Securities are, don't ya? Little pieces of paper in a bank vault (Swiss). Gems and Gold Bull are more succore, but harder to store (that rhymes). Then there's ART, even harder to store and preserve unless its made of monel or 316 stainless steel (unlike Rolls Royces, Dussenbergs, Masseratis, and Cadillacs and the Oriental equivalents). If you don't have this stuff, you don't have Suckerity. If you have been a Government Official, most likely you have figured a way of getting your Secretary. And if you have been ruthless (grasping, unsharing, entrepreneurial) you have probably figured a way. The one with the most toys wins. If you have read Ayn Rand, or know someone like yourself, you have probably felt someone else's blessing for your accumulations. It puts a slant to life that most of us envy without really knowing why. We know its all a material thing. In our hearts we despise material things because even though they bring physical Security, if you happen to be healthy, they might stimulate a groin titillation; they bring little else, but envy. One responds to envy with walls, electric fences, barbed wire, 'Security' systems, guns, and lots of indignant and righteous apprehension. What a way to live. It puts life somewhere on the survival level with minimal aspirations, making of us a bunch of hyenas, which aint saying much about our presumptuous ascendancy. Yes! a big clever brain put to the test about which we may crow, but about which we cannot human.

Pardon the cynicism. I've said or implied these things so many times, the message should be pritty clear by now.

Writing about the saints amongst us doesn't seem to appeal to me as much as the other unsaintly dimension. However there is a saint amongst us. That's one whom I most often call Charlie; that's different from Charley. Charlie happens to be my spouse. 'Saint' may be a bit strong, but 'angel' isn't. 'Angel' carries a special connotation to which she might not object; but 'saint' would make her feel uncomfortable. She tells me that 'saints' would keep up on their correspondence; 'angels' too.

You see, I got through a whole paragraph, albeit short, without saying anything negative.

GOING DOWN WITH THE SHIP !!

21 December; the nadir of the year.

Lately I've been associating with people who are contemplating the end of their lives because they live with the high probability of a terminal illness.

Marginally I understand their predicaments since I have been confronted with the big H and the big C, neither of which have escaped the computations inherent to the big P probability. My letters of the alphabet have received the big T Treatment. The T enhances the P in the plus direction, but does not assure for anything. I often forget the latter fact, when I become involved in planning the future. I still look forward to all those unfinished things, which involve time and money, hoping to live long enough to accumulate the capital, etc.; a rather dumb practice in which we all seem to engage.

Those who are facing the big P in the negative direction who have also received the big T, with all the inherent hopes and despair associated with it, without success, seem to be in the process of cleaning house; getting rid of a lot of baggage. I know I have to do this after the many years of living in one place where my life has become a series of accumulations of junk. My spouse, that good Charlie, advocates 'garage' sales. I anticipate spending the money that would otherwise be spent on something else to hire a 'dumpster' to the front yard, large enough to hold all the junk to be carted away. Finis!

These are little tidying things that satisfy some egotistical thing about appearances. We want to leave a good impression even after it's all over. Our bequest, good intentions and good impressions. Falsity? We may do things we would not have done if we were 'healthy', with different prospects, hoping to influence 'St. Peter'.

More interesting to me is the final phase. It will do us no good whatever to abandon the ship. Our fate is tied to the ship. We cannot be rescued. Pitching cargo is illusory and incidental. Currying favor is a total waste. Yes! we may jump overboard into a cold deep, or into a sea of sharks, with the help of Jack Kevorkian. Or we may be brave Captains to the last. Tears are permitted. We might join a fleet of sinking ships if that seems to help

us to remain at the helm, even though our sinking becomes a private matter once we feel the water engulfing us.

If one were to gain my admiration, dubious and complicated as that may be, the good intention and good impression I would most likely recognize in the other would unequivocally involve remaining at the helm; mostly because it seems more romantic. I know that pain will influence our decision in this matter, all kinds of pain, real and perceived. Loss of one's life is both real and perceived as well. The final moment is unknown to us. We are unerringly steered to it from the day of our birth, whether or not we remain at the helm.

Remaining at the helm gives us the perception of choice of direction.

All the things I mention in this regard are salutary recognitions of the inevitable, better confronted than ignored.

How do we make peace with the inevitable? This all goes to say I have been attempting to encourage an individual to write his 'memoirs' for his grandchildren and whoever else. It was he that mentioned doing something for his grandchildren, but felt he would need to see if he lived first. The logic of his argument escaped me. The more I pursued it he became tearful. I'm sure he does not feel he has enough time; he anticipates pain; time will be occupied fighting pain; and one's contemplation of one's own personal tragedy. "What's the use?" will arise. He begins to envision himself as the shadow he will become when he is no longer here.

Additionally he mentioned several times being involved in some SECRET work for the government where nobody talked to nobody, and where projects were terminated (funds cut off, space reallocated) without any explanation; where every one was paranoid and suspicious. He could name names but. One lives in his own fantasy after a while. I thought he could concoct a humorous tale from his experiences. This seemed to appeal to him, but he was more in tune with anticipating his death; there was no past; he and his past were insignificant, irrelevant, and SECRET.

He gave away his ten thousand dollar computer to a local hospital for cognitive rehabilitation. It goes in a tiny room, and initially went into storage; he will be disappointed. Like all the other happenings in his life; this 'gesture' will fall short of expectations. Altruism on a time line. St. Peter will briefly ponder the gambit.

Its that time of the year; a time for dying.

They were saying she had something like a TIA (tiny interior aneurysm - do you suppose?) When they had asked her what the date was, she answered January '97. Actually it was December 30, '96.

The way these things go, though, one loses his/her grasp.

Earlier in '96, after she had broken three ribs in a fall, and was struggling each day against pain, and loss of control over her everything, and was who knows what, god forbid, contemplating her future at age 95,

she would say every morning, 'I want to die!' I would ask her what she had so often uttered on other occasions about the Irish. She did not respond to my attempts to humor her.

In the old days, which could have been any time before the fall, she would have vigorously exclaim, "The Irish Never Quit!"

The 'fall' 'arose' from a dizziness after an early morning rising.

Lots of oxymorons, I realize. Her life changed after the fall, as perhaps most lives do.

The old saying goes, even when your life changes for the worst, FALL DOWN, YOU MAY; GET UP, YOU MUST. Maybe, with a little help.

What got her one morning though, in one of my more imaginative attempts to humor her, was when I had brought out my son's abandoned violin to screeeeech and scraaatch out some awful noise, Exclaiming! as I did so, "All right mother, its time to face the music!" Charline had been trying her various ways to persuade her to get up, but she was hiding her head under the blankets, but not far enough under for Charline not to notice the grin on her face.

That time she got up. After all, she got oatmeal with pre-softened raisins, and demarera sugar; orange juice: coffee; and our company.

After the fall, it was a different life, to which she objected: Assisted Living. Very little assistance, as it turned out. Those who did the assisting did only what doctors had ordered, charging for that. No initiative outside of that. Notable obesity amongst the desk and assistance personnel.

So when she seemed not herself, they might do little more than notice it. If we had not arrived when she was not herself, which led us to call the doctors, they would have done nothing. And after the call to the doctor it seemed an imposition for them to 'take' her blood-pressure, which was scheduled to be done the next morning.

They did as requested which eventually led to a 'beta-blocker'.

Somehow all for naught. She fell sometime during the night; they found her in the morning; doing the 911 (holy terror bit), and notifying us.

I eventually arrived at the hospital ER, where they eventually sewed up and cared for the abrasions and tears on her many times wounded lower legs. Her skin was more like rice paper than hide; even though one might remark, she sure has a 'tough hide'. One seldom utters 'she sure has tough rice paper'.

Once in the hospital it was time to check her out with CT scans and sundry. She was eventually located in the neurology wing. She seemed to be holding her own, with the opinion of the interim physician that she had indeed suffered a stroke, although the scan had not discovered the source. He warned that his could very easily be the beginning of the end. When we visited her that evening, she was asleep, but the nurse told us she was doing fine, responding to voice, knowing where she was; and her grip seeming firm etc. from all quarters, although the physician felt her left side

was impaired. We would have agreed that something was impaired as we watched her navigating, using her 'walker'.

When the phone rang this morning I had no real idea of the time which turned out to be 6:15. It was her regular physician telling us a nurse had notified his office that mother had taken a new turn. No response to command, no speech. Early in the morning in a hospital, that could mean anything; but, in this case, on the neurology wing, it might have meant that she was not doing well. The 'TIA' might still be leaking. So the doc and I had confirmed one of our earlier discussions that there would not be any aggressive life support stuff, just comfort care. That's where we left it. Actually it was learned that she was dehydrated. Three quarters of the globe swathed in water, and mother was in some kind of delirium from the lack of a few drops. Hospitals have other failings.

So, after 95 years.

Our friend's wife upon the Island quoted her husband, 'They'll have to carry me out feet first'. Which is indeed what they did.

Comfort care was not an option he would have chosen, wanting to kick off in his own bed, as it was. Actually he had kicked off in the living room after eating dinner, and while watching '60 Minutes'. Watching 60 Minutes on television on the Island was a major production since it involved winding up an old one-lung diesel generator, to produce the electricity to operate a balky color T.V. with a small screen. It had to be an occasion. He left us at age 68. Somebody stole their generator from the spouse he left behind.

From this writing, you can most likely determine I am not a particularly compassionate man. Sort of matter-of-fact. But perhaps not as matter-of-fact as Albert Camus in translation, "Mother Died Today". Paraphrasing, "Or maybe Yesterday, I can't be sure." As I had sat opposite my mother in her room at the Assisted Living place, after she had experienced her TIA?, I could see the bewildered look on her face, the blinking eyes. Something had gone wrong; she seemed more unable to focus or concentrate. It was as though she were looking at the backside of her eyes instead of looking out, although she could see. When she moved about, she veered to the right. She could barely control her hands as she tried to get the key into her room lock, as she opened a Christmas present from her granddaughter. The present had been a picture of her granddaughter and her great granddaughter. She might as well have been looking at no picture, or at the picture of her own mother, or of Jesus Christ, for all the difference it could have made; no impact, no recognition; just this sort of uncomprehending bewildered look, "What's happening to me?" "Mother, you just got whacked a good one, your reward for staying around so long." Well, obviously I didn't say that. But I felt it was a dirty deal.

Mother was 'better' today, although at 95 that is a most relative term. Her speech seemed clear, her mind seemingly not impaired any more than usual. However a bit of a droop to the left side of her mouth, which may

have been as much from the lack of her dentures and her position in the hospital bed. We'll see how far this goes. She seemed determined to get out of the predicament she was in.

Jan. 1, '97 On another matter. It has to do with that juxtaposition. A juxtaposition may involve a phenomenon associated with urban life, although is not entirely relegated to it. That juxtaposition happens to fall into a not unrelated category of terms, in this case 'neighbor'.

Being who I am, I am on the run from urbia; I'm trying to get out of here. I think anybody who settles in urbia is crazy; as crazy as I have felt living therein.

So when the particular juxtaposition coincided with a particular neighbor, it seemed an opportunity for more elevated conversation. But as things go in urbia, and in this 20th to 21st century after the demise of Him, the occasion passed mostly unnoticed, or unaccessed, by me; and by them. Unnoticed by me because I have been on my way out, with the log house on the Island as my primary focus in what remains of my life.

In this discussion it may not be obvious, but I am a self-appointed scribe, partly as an extension of my ego and/or my grandiosity, lacking any other nobler purpose that is apparent, for being so ignobly engaged. As part of the grandiosity, and perhaps as part of the motivation, I have believed there are words of wisdom that I might pass on, reciprocally that is, since others are always passing on their wisdom to me. In my attempts to share such presumptuous proclivities (my friend on the Island would say I am using words too large for him [and maybe for myself], requiring the constant reference to a lexicon [please accept my apologies]) (I value his opinion, but am a habitual offender), share such proclivities, I have approached the publishing world, and have been rebuffed. I have approached agents for publishers and have been rebuffed; and I have written directly to editors with the same result. So on the first run, my wisdom was excluded from some mass organ/mass market. Some of the responses from these entities may have been instructive in how to succeed, but most likely I have ignored the good advice that couldn't make it past my stubbornness, in any case. The experience of the outreach has left me with what I have experienced in other areas of outreach, a sort of mixed, mostly stinging, message, salted with indifference. All attempts at encouragement may be genuine, and may be the result of a philosophical indulgence. The more critical have been taken under advisement, but in a measured way, since explanatory depth was lacking. What I did do as a result of the activity was to cease that particular activity, only to return to the practice of scribbling (passing on the good word; grandiosely, The Proverbial Torch) without their assistance.

To return to the juxtaposition. As mentioned, I am as guilty of my own part in this as they with their preoccupations. My preoccupations have

involved the Island, my health problems, my mother's health problems, and so on. However this has not prevented contact with other neighbors with whom we have already associated.

To get on with it then. These particular juxtapositions, newly arrived some three or so years ago, emanated from the University community and the world of literature as well as, peripherally, the world of music and art. He is a scientist, and she an author-editor; so I had been informed. It was always my intention to become more acquainted with this presence on the other side of our fence. Well, for the most part, it occasioned only the seldom wave at the mail box, a deferential nod when the rare snowstorms got everybody outside at the street, loss-of-power, level, and when University laboratory social functions (Charline worked in the same 'department' [compartment]) brought about a proximity, not necessarily on the other side of the fence. Our side of the fence rarely, almost never, served as the focus of such activity. I did not encourage it.

When in urbia, and often out-of-doors, I would see the Fed Ex vehicle 'next door'. It appeared often enough during the week that I had assumed it must have delivered or picked-up, one way or the other every day. Serious business, I might speculate. Of course I had wondered what had happened to the FAX and the Internet which is supposed to connect us with that outside world (Beyond Oregon, in this case).

Somehow, in the back of my mind, I had wanted to approach this neighbor with what I had assumed was some kind of common interest, holding it in reserve for such a time when I felt the urge to sally forth with my wisdom stuff again.

The other neighbor with whom we have maintained an association, informed me that the lady of the juxtaposition was leaving for an eastern publishing house permanently, and soon, like almost tomorrow.

Well, you know me, Or I know me, I sort of fumble around at times; I just had to call. I might have politely troubled myself to have knocked on their door, but I telephoned (people do that). He answered, saying she wasn't around, but would return later, and 'where did I hear that she was leaving?'. I told him I had heard it from another neighbor who had probably been informed by his wife while shopping at the local super market vegetable stand (everybody's gotta eat). I had awkwardly explained the purpose of my phone call; anyway, not expecting to converse with him made things even more awkward. Tell you why. These guys in the University community, particularly in the field of science (the science field) do not come without inflated notions of their importance. I had dealt with them on their lower need level for years, and had suffered with their condescensions as a complimentary offering that was intended to convey their philosophical assent to humanitarianism. Something like that anyway. Being who I am, I have responded appropriately. Instead of asking them 'who the hell do you think you are?' and telling them where to go, I played the inferior game, as any good obsequious sycophant worth his salt

would do. You see, if these self-inflated ones would only come up with those 'Atta-boys' without a lot of fawning behavior, the quality of life would improve. Dream on, old fella. Not in this lifetime, or ever on this planet.

The call was not returned. So I tried again. I got the answering machine this time, even though somebody was home. The lady of the house's voice came on with a raaahhtuurr elevated pompous airre, saying something like Winkin Blinkin and Nod are indisposed at the moment (The lady of the house, child number one, child number two, and whoever else). (She came from one side of the Channel across the way, bringing that airy baggage with her). Leave your name and number beep. After the insouciant beep, foolishly, I responded with "This is your presumptuous neighbor again." Well, I got what I deserved, Nothing. As they wrote in the margin of the great epic, Ex Eunt.

Take home lesson: DON'T. It has always seemed to be my misfortune to associate with 'sUPERIOR' people. Beginning with my father. Father thought I was a 'moron'. Not a very good beginning. A good part of my working life involved a kind of servitude to 'sUPERIOR' people. So it 'smarts' when I rub up against this kind of specious evolutionary improvement. Note: My expectations, not theirs (not their responsibility, that is).

Obviously I cannot blame them for my inadequacies. I don't know who they blame for theirs, if they have any. I'm certain they do their damndest to conceal their inadequacies; so maybe they don't have anyone to blame. They are always in control of the situation, with their 'sUPERIOR' intellects. I would venture to guess that by being a smart ass, and by talking about them, however it is done, I am playing their game (they would deny there is a game, that I am just suffering from feelings of inadequacy (so what's new?). But there are times when it would do me a lot of good to tell them to their faces 'Fuck Off!'. My Island friend is more gentle; he tells me to use smaller words. Fuck Off! seems small enough, and mostly comprehensible, even though it might produce a mild shock, like watching R-Rated sex and violence.

So the juxtaposition remains just that, kind of like an abandoned vehicle with a flat tire.

Anyway, Oregon is a wet depressing place to some. Our street is located near a noisy freeway. Other Climatologically and Ambient conditions may influence one's general disposition toward a place. The enclavist University community is probably cliquish, with limited offerings, more so amongst the snobbish literati. Everybody has a hard time getting their message across. Inversely proportional to the relevance of the message is the presumption that accompanies it. (Christ Louie, if you don't stop using big words, I'm just not going to read ya!). Recognition scenes have always been fraught with basic denouements, shunnings, stabbings, etc.; the University Community not excepted.

Probably as close as I'll ever knowingly get to an editor. Don't bother returning the call. Bye! Have a good 'un in Cambridge (Mass). Closer to the Source? Wise Guy says: All-wetness has a tendency to follow one around.

You know what; it just occurred to me I don't even know these people; and here I am flaying them with petulance, indignation, assumption, and free-lance judgments. Kind of fun really, and an excuse to write.

If they want to answer this call, I would acknowledge it. One thing; the editor will be closer to Suzanne Snotrag of S.S.; only one city removed. Remember her in 'Aphasia'; the (only) one who could not condescend to answer the SASE. That's being pretty high up, I'd say. One of us is subhuman (subsumed).

There's one advantage that accrues to one when he is rejected (rebuffed), salted with indifference, and that is he gets to freely revile. If you're like me, that's mileage. And I can get to mention Mike (The Island Critic) who has become part of my conscience.

Jan. 2 Mother was doing much better yesterday. I feel fortunate in knowing Mike, much more fortunate than I would in knowing several of the other kind, previously mentioned derogatorily. For one thing, he tells you what he thinks. For another, his humanity is up front. Also, he possess skills, and savvy that are clearly lacking in the other contingent. In this latter matter, his C.V. has far greater immediate value, even to them, than their own.

It is said somewhere that 'Comparisons are odious'. In this case they are necessary; and they are enlightening.

Some people study the world in great detail, microscopically, so to speak, in order to learn certain truths (that's putting the best light upon their endeavors). Often they find things that have not been found before, from which they derive certain assumptions, putting these in language that most of us do not understand. Yeah, I know, I'm one of them.

Other people do not study the world in such detail, but are acute observers none the less, their acuity attuned from sunrise to sunset to what is happening around them, from which they also derive assumptions, putting these into a variety of vernacular languages, which most of us understand. Those of a philosophical bent sometimes obscure their findings in a high-falutin verbiage that most of us cannot understand.

What is refreshing in all of this is the mark of individuality; the more of it, the more we are refreshed. And the more down-to-earth the more immediate relevance to us. Don't take me wrongly, individuality sometimes has its shortcomings; and I do not mean where it ends in gross violations of social or legal tenets. For one reason or another each one of us might be driven to such violations in spirit, but in practice, we hold ourselves in check, for one reason or another. I can't say that anything that produces a reaction in the other constitutes a shortcoming; perhaps two shortcomings on a collision course.

Comparing individuals should be odious, because it reflects upon us. Do we wish to be compared? Albert Schweitzer and Mother Theresa might serve as role models. To whom did they compare themselves? Did they? Did their egos play any role in their choice of activity; would it matter if it had? Unavoidably they became sort of cult heroes, at least celebrities, whose activities were watched with keen interest by the all-pervasive Media (waiting for them to screw up). Individuals they may have been, admirable, and perhaps inspiring in their doings. Some might inquire, but, did they have a life? Was it all as it seemed, an apparent self-sacrifice? What, no smut? Most of the cult heroes do not pass the test. And most individuals do not pass the test. We stray, even from that which passes as our own personal integrity, becoming different from that which we profess and project.

We become involved in area of judgment that is best reserved for the individual, and perhaps St. Peter. Would Albert and Mother get deferential treatment at the gate? Perhaps. Would we all agree they deserved something we did not? Sainthood perhaps, like an extra badge as good scouts. Albert and Mother were good scouts? Good!

I have been good on occasions, but often with reluctance and sometimes with evil thoughts.

I do not have any difficulty choosing the one individual over the other; my own personal comfort makes the choice easy.

I might perceive myself as a bridge between one kind of individual and another, relating to both kinds with relative ease, because of the nature and scope of my experience (not through my credentials - that is to say, my experience is my credentials). I am not a walking evaluator without feelings. When I relate I expose myself to the attitudes of the other; I'm sure I project a certain attitude as well. Since I have felt condescension, I try my best not to project that attitude, even though I may feel the same (condescension implies a sUPERIOITY). I tell myself, this individual to whom I am relating is different from me, so different in fact that in relating to him or her, I might have a feeling of revulsion, such a strong feeling that causes me to lose all hope for the species. I do not feel this way often, for in most individuals there is some redeeming characteristic. But if I feel that an individual is barely scraping by in his effort to survive, that is, that he is putting out a minimum effort, I feel it spells trouble for the rest of us, who may be more resourceful or more inspired to put out a certain effort, regardless of any other consideration, e.g., ill fortune, bad weather, or daggers in the back.

Seldom have I stood in awe of another. I might misconstrue the accomplishments of Albert S., but on the surface they do inspire one toward something to which we all pay lip service while doing little. So Albert S. may affect us all in a similar way. There are those who make it their business to discover what has gone on in Albert's underwear in the

hopes of tarnishing an image we all have of him. So far no one has unearthed anything. But beware the innuendo which has proven many an individuals downfall, insufficient to defend themselves against it, whether living or dead.

Few have withstood the slanderous remark. It seems incredible how difficult it is to remove the taint once it has been uttered and applied. It seems we harbor a perverse intention to destroy certain images. Most of us view ourselves as poor excuses for that which we wish to uphold, being little able to overcome the baseness of our natures. Inspired we may be, but with short-lived convictions. Hence some ill-conceived reaction to the perfection in others of whose baseness we are convinced exists, yet concealed in some manner. Exposing the bad in others does not improve the good in us. Or, exposing the weaknesses in others does not necessarily strengthen us. I suppose it is 'good' that some withstand the onslaught; we do benefit by the exemplary. It is our own fault when we deprive them of their humanity by sanctifying them. Surely they must have enough moles and warts that will satisfy us of their like-us-ness; it shouldn't be necessary to remake them in our own image. Sounds good, but satisfying in only a grandiose way.

Later:

Greenwich Mean Time

Anno Domini

Inheritances

Birth Growth Decay Death

Free Enterprise

Democracy Socialism Computer Gliches Porn Coumadin Mevacor Life Support Hippocrates Hypocrisy Stephanie Weinstein became a Captain Crunch Juror.

She told me she had been Robbed in California and suffered from Domestic Violence in Oregon. Age 39 selling Real Estate While I had become a Lucky Charms (Marshmellow Head) Juror.

All that really matters is getting back to the Island.

What matters is Peace without restraint.

Even though I am a happily married man, and love my spouse, I would still like to engage in a long conversation with S.W. on the island; just because life is a such a chance thing at times. Good looking women with low self-esteem always seem to get into trouble with shitty men; I must say theirs is a more interesting story than the run of the mill, which is invariably? dull. S.W. is just four years older than my daughter.

Real Estate!??

Never saw her again, never got called as juror; some unlucky woman, and some unlucky person didn't get justice.

Will Helen (Trent) ever find happiness? R-Rated for sex and violence?

My daughter was married at 23, philandered at some point, dismembered spiritually, even though she had God (her soon to be ex. also had a piece of God), divorced at 33, now approaching 43 she is mostly a wreck in God's care. Her daughter is living with its father. Probably not getting any; its immoral, unsafe, and damned frightening to get involved. Better to find a same-sex partner; in my mind, that's OK for girls; but being constructed in the male configuration, I just can't envision the connection. Fornicating with an imaginary deity (Helen) might be more preferable to the last.

There are a few success stories, on the surface. There was Kathryn whom I met at the Student Union where I would go occasionally to get away from the work place. She was in the process of finishing her BS in public relations. She had parted from her 'n'er-do-well' husband who was somewhere in California, while she had found her way to Oregon. She was a nice looking buxom creature. I really had no business looking at her, but I did anyway, and somehow became involved in the periphery of her life. She was the mother of two children, a girl aged ~ten and a boy aged ~seven. She lived temporarily in a trailer park, and was making plans to relocate onto an acreage into a brand new factory built, and seemingly intending to remain in the area to try her hand at public relations. The public relations field was saturated, so Kathryn opened an advertising business, which consisted mostly of writing spiels identified as ADScripts. I believe she was receiving some financial aid from her father in California. I suspect she did not fare well in her business because she also gravitated to selling real estate. And, her love life seemed sort of complicated with older men who seemed the only ones really tolerant of her 33 years and attendant offspring. There were others, co-workers, or co-realtors, married or otherwise, looking for a piece of tail without any kind of strings. Kathryn was very cautious about becoming too involved with another 'n'er-do-well', or, it seemed, anyone just on the lookout for cookies. (to use a high-tech metaphor) As luck would propose, although many forces conspire to dispose, her son seemed to require some involvement with an older male, hence the introduction to a 'big brother', who also became mother's lover, and new mate, all whisked away to Montana, where he had found employment as a n'er n'er do well (two negatives making a positive). He was six years her junior; talk about luck; naw; she had what it took. The daughter, who might have shown some spiritedness, might have been shipped off to California to live with her 'n'er do well? father. Anyway, we can hope her life was all roses after that; we never do hear what happens after the curtain falls. The son that unites. Perhaps there were more children. Just think! Another Chapter? At this writing (revision) in March 2004 Kathryn would be aged ~57. Still capable of having fun!

I had become involved in the periphery of Charlie's life; see where that got me. Geeeezzz, already, how may peripheries can a person do in one lifetime?

Recently (at this time of revisionism (not as much as the term might suggest [more honesty perhaps]) I have spent some time this past winter scanning photos of Charlie before I knew her. Its been a rewarding experience to see the expressions of the girl becoming the woman; the outgoing, ready to please, tomgirl, changing into the inner, subdued, almost brooding, ever so beautiful woman. The hormonal thing? The body yearning for purportedly delicious things, culturally set in stone. The chipping away, leading to feelings of guilt constantly overwhelmed by desire. The stone monument crumbled under the assault. What she did then, she also did for me later; a very powerful woman. But there was more than the brooding. A transformation to be sure, full of smiles still, but deeper, radiating some quality of person that defies description. Facial expressions so subtle, so differentiated from any norm, all encased in lines that define something individual, yet somehow universal; the wonder of transformation. I have been privileged to have lived long enough to have come this far without performing any act that would violate or desecrate the wonder of this person. What I might have thought, or what temptations I had entertained, somehow, through fear or guilt, love entering the ledger only later, and after all these years, more to love than to answer fear or guilt. Surely phantoms pursue us all; and they disappear in close proximity. What is real, living and breathing fire, SHE! True warmth, and passion. And the word she so often uses toward me: Love! I am not a believer; but when she utters: love! I feel something with the insistent nature of the utterance; though often repeated, ordinarily challenging credibility, her chipping away has broken down the walls of disbelief; she, a powerful wielder of the tool of her trade: Love. Remarkably, to me, she makes her utterances with such relief, no longer able to hold them back.

This guy professes too much. What's he on?

Yes!, one needs to get by the farts and bodily odors. When her decorum cannot contain the animal; Hello! Even with all that, there are glimpses of the desirable object. And one must remind himself, that, with all the temptations one has escaped, he has also escaped adjusting to certain undesirable traits, otherwise recognized as turn-offs.

I have not asked Charlie specifically what about me turns her off; even though she might laugh heartily at a real loud one, more or less timed for emphasis, she might do more than wrinkle her nose as the vapor diffuses throughout. Although she might seem to put up with my amorous attentions when I smell more like an old sneaker than a freshly laundered thing, it is an unfair test of her powerful tool. If she can love me like this, truly she must love! But to her greater stimulation is the fact that I might glance at another of her sex longer than seems necessary to avoid a collision. There are unwritten, and perhaps unstated, conditions placed upon all relationships. The equal application of certain aberrant behavior may be tolerated, but one must avoid exciting passions that become

corrosive to a relationship. It goes without saying that understanding and forgiveness are crucial ingredients to any relationship. By this I mean it is human to err, to be tempted, and so on; it may even be human to find in another something very desirable, so desirable, in fact: Well, there you have it, something beyond understanding and forgiveness. The violation of trust. The foundation of trust, the giving over of the self to the care of the other; that is, the seeming mutuality of a basic unification, of becoming the fortified repository of vulnerabilities, fortified in the protective aura of trust.

I recall the title of a book: *The Intimate Enemy*, wherein Basic Unit #1 (of nine years standing) goes camping with Basic Unit #2, neighbors no less, wherein the interlacing of intimacies, that is, shared secrets, and mutual trusts add a dimension to each of units' perimeter of vulnerabilities. Alas! during a card game that might have been played upon any evening in the neighborhood, the distaff side of the nine year unit begins to unveil secrets untold, secrets ruinous to all assumptions with regard to the unveilee. Ouch! The dam had ruptured, the disgust overflowing, drowning for all time the relationship. I do believe the moral of the tome suggested that one not store resentments, that one ought express what it is that one feels, not only love, before the stream of life becomes clogged with debris. All lasting relationships require full exposure and full disclosure; that is, a little bit each day revealing both our humanity and our animality, as well as the proverbial anomalies and vicissitudes.