

# Ageless Times

Austin D. Torney



# AGELESS TIMES

Copyright 2021 Austin P. Torney



Website: <https://theomarkhayyamclubofamerica.wordpress.com>

Email: [austintorn@aol.com](mailto:austintorn@aol.com)

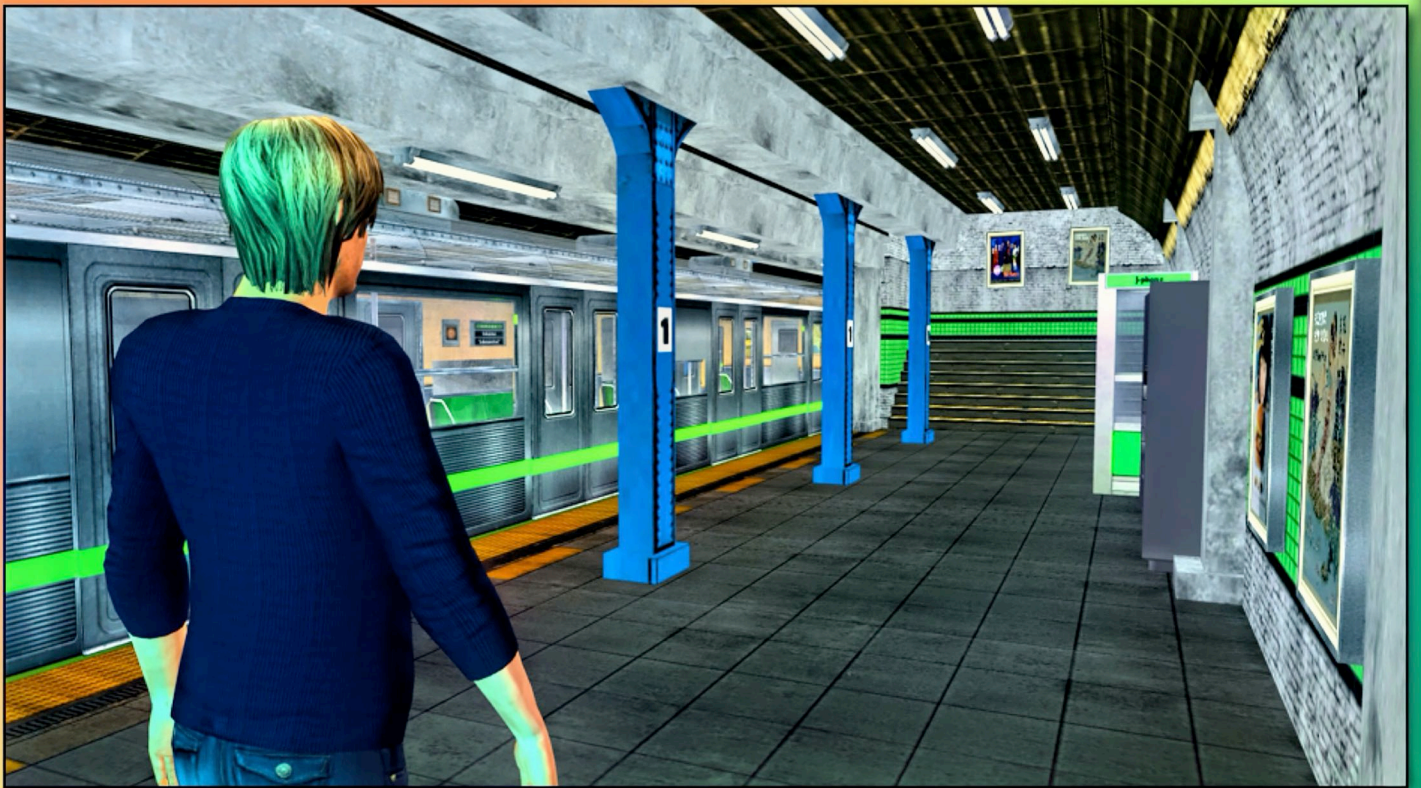
YouTube Videos: MagicalVideos Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAqzcN340HXpDqHXmAy3SwA>

DeviantArt: Look under AustinTorney



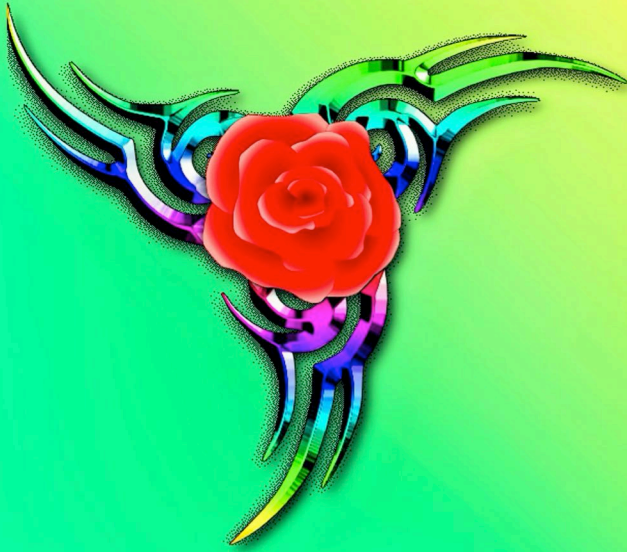
(Peter Rises from the Underground)



(Peter Takes the Underground to Rhinebeck)

# Young Again

Filmed by Universal Creations Studio



## — Chapter 1 — Young Again

*I am home, back where I began.*

If, by our late middle age we begin to really live, although by then it's almost too late, it's because our prior life was but a preparation:

In our forties, there may have been more work than play as we solidified our careers and guided our children. Our twenties demanded of us the unsettling stresses of graduating college, finding a job, wooing a mate, and buying a home. In our teens, although the hormones were flowing wildly, we were oft thwarted by the cell walls of study, curfew, and sexual responsibility. Only as children were we almost free, but even then the shadow of authority everywhere passed over us as a dark cloud.

It is only when we spread into middle age, say at age fifty or so, that we finally reap some real interest from the dues that we've paid. We are free to live and write, to fully create art, life, and love; albeit, though, that death's faint knockings have already sounded in our hearts, and that time's corruption shows in the wrinkled skin that we may try to stretch baby smooth. A step or two is lost in tennis, and age is noted in the graying of the flower, although the root may still be green.



Yet, for all this, there is a new exuberance that never was, a realization, at last, of the worthiness of life, of its precious pleasures, of the promotion of the spirit to a higher plan—a complete removal of oneself from parts of life that suddenly appear quite needless, and a determination to live even more—the way we would have if we could have opted out of all work and worry.

Still, the unseen but still sensed specter of old age yet looms; but, it's well around the corner—not even an enemy, but an inspiring presence which promotes living, not dying. So, one is reborn. This and that home improvement seems no more to matter so much as do creation, friends, health, adventure, and loving.

It was from such an outlook, with this long view across the years, that Brother Peter and Sister Angelina met again, in another, later life, although, of course, they really didn't realize this right away, that they'd known each other in some other past, somewhere in time, in a previous past, known as 'Fumes From Ancient Times'.

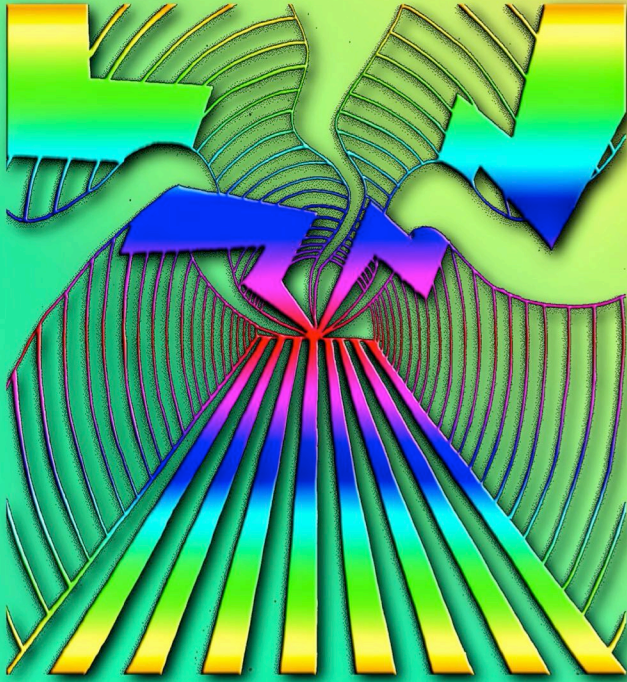


She, although lovable, caring, affectionate, and loyal, was separated from a second marriage that just wasn't meant to be, and he, although happy, felt alone at times, socially believing that all life was in meeting people, for he was a poet whose intensity of observation spread far into life and therefore demanded that daydreams come true; there was a vitality of life in each of them that couldn't be contained.

That Peter and Angelina were each fair, well read, honest, spontaneous, and especially romantically adventurous guaranteed that love would build between them, a love that, while aspiring to Heaven like the tip of a pyramid, would stand firmly on its own ground amid the shifting sands, its foundation the basis for ascension. This mist of love would envelop them as they fearlessly lived and loved again.



# Rhinecliff



## — Chapter 2 — Rhinecliff

They met in Rhinecliff, a riverside country town that still had front porches with ceiling swings, and tables where grandmothers played canasta, rummy, and hearts. Angelina, an artist, drew Peter's attention as she sketched dress patterns on an easel in the corner of the wooden porch of the old Victorian home.

Peter's eyes wandered through the scene, and thence upwards toward the center cupola, that lone guardian of the town, with its three windowed view of the past, present, and future.

Angelina watched as Peter's sight passed along the roof lines to the neatly tiled slate by the down spouts. He felt the warmth of her attention on him and the inevitable culmination of their glances.

Following the green drain pipe, down past the first story, his vision crossed over to the porch railing, like a squirrel probing for crumbs,



and made the steady gaze that neither of them dared to turn aside, even out of politeness. There was, of course, a certain attraction, born from those romantic fumes of ancient times.



Seeing only three at the card table, Peter irrevocably turned up the broad sidewalk to the front steps of the gingerbread house and asked if they need a fourth. They did, those mothers of mothers, and so they took him in as a player. Not oblivious to the first sparks of young love, they changed the game to Hearts.

After he overplayed the first hand and gathered up the penalty of the queen of spades, a glass of milk and a plate of cookies appeared at his elbow, as if by magic, but, it was from an angel, and thus he was made the acquaintance of Angelina. There was a knowing, even then, of the things that were meant to be, a feeling—although time could not be hurried, that they would soon be one and the same in love.

Peter soon regained his card playing form and shot the moon a few times, for he'd programmed the game of Hearts on a computer, and, although his memory was neither electronic nor photographic, he had remembered the many hints and clues that he'd built into the program, those little signs that meant a lot: the avoidance of a spade lead, perhaps, or the apparently careless lead of a suit that had been led one too many times.

The grandmothers were all experienced, though, and so the game was evenly adventurous for all, and after luck or not had chanced on each of them in turn, the game came down but to a few nuances, like bluffs built on prior patterns of play, and Peter placed a close second, a ticket, as it turned out, for tomorrow's game.

After the elder players discreetly evaporated into the house, the porch and its swing were left to Peter and Angelina, whereupon they passed into each other some of the history of their joys and turmoil, during one long autumn afternoon.

Angelina's teen-aged daughter, Jean, arrived, the one bright spot from a dark past, for Jean was like the new light of dawn in the east when the bulk of night, like a bad marriage, had gone west. Jean nodded her approval of Peter, done more so by the pleased look on her mother's face than by knowing anything about him.

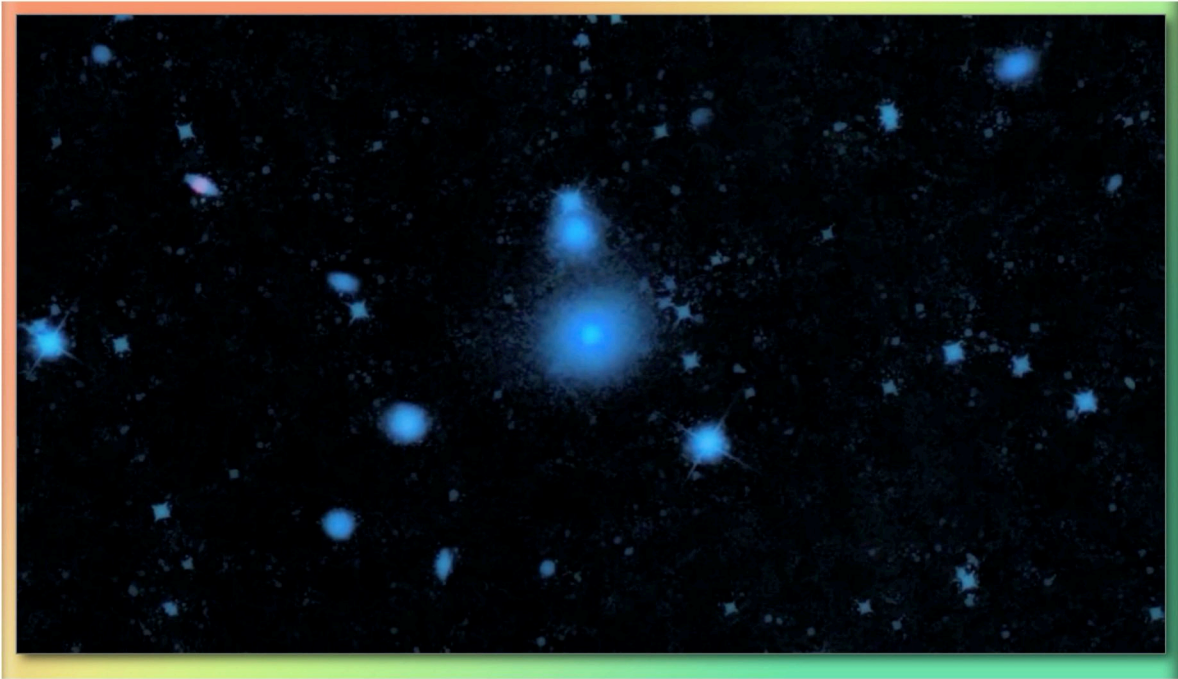
The autumnal night eventually fell, like a knell, the sun plummeting into the recesses of the Catskills across the Hudson River. The coolness of the air was a hint that Peter should not overstay his wel-

come. As a good writer, Peter knew that it was best to wrap a up the day's words at a point when one knew what was next to be written, in order to sleep on it and let the directives work themselves into the formulations that would flow without hesitation onto the paper the next day.

She, too, sensed this, and yet they needed a magic moment, some sort of romantic beginning and it soon came with the fireflies, as the couple watched the winkings and blinkings of the females in the grass that were the yes/no signals to the males in the air, those pulses of love flashing in their green and yellow light, the nodding inquiries, twinkling like stars, the mating calls from luminated pods, the tracers pulsing wild, the searching thoughts that smiled—from Angelina to Peter as she leaned over and kissed him—and back came the beacon of his reply: a-light, oh yes, said his lips, as he returned her kiss, and another kiss as well, as they stood and embraced in an electric hug, now all aglow, like lightning bugs.

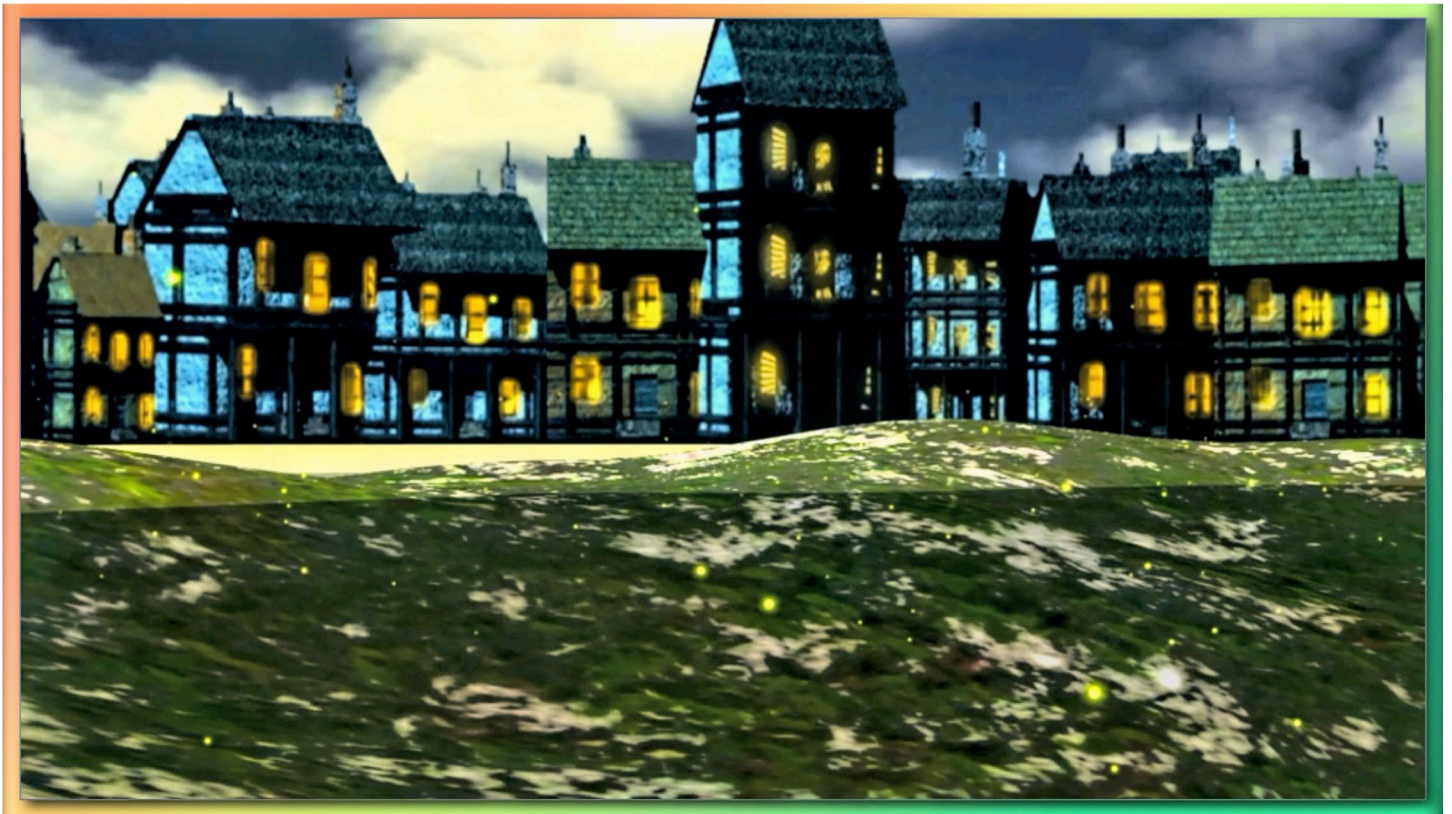


As Peter left, the stars replaced the glowflies, and so he became flesh to the backbone of the Milky Way bracing the sky, and floated up there on the strength of her kiss.



Wonderful dreams smoothed the night, and when the new morning called, Peter, too, felt fresh, and knew that he must surely miss a morning's work.

All could wait—the business, the world—all could wait for love, for they were all, compared to love, nothing more than the dull background of an unpainted canvas.

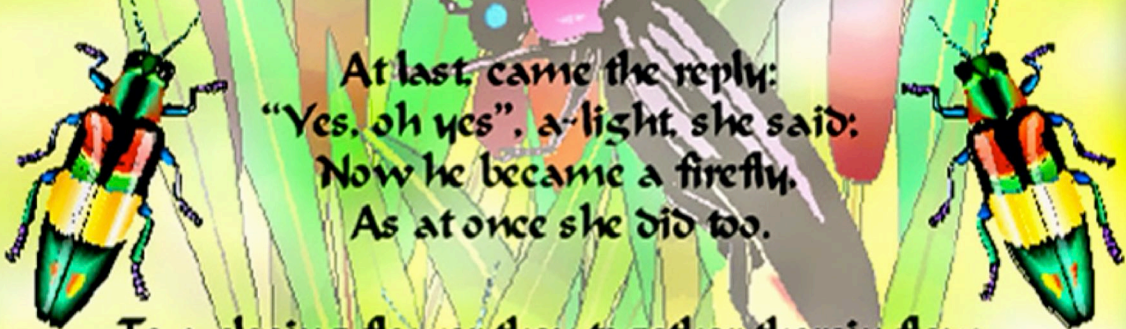


– The Love Life of the Glow-Worm –


P. Toney © 1994



Flashing desire,  
The glowfly twinkled across  
The starry summer sky,  
Love's energy unspent,  
Searching through the darkness,  
With passion's might,  
For the beacon of her consent—  
The mating call  
Of pulsing, green and yellow light.




At last came the reply:  
“Yes, oh yes”, a-light, she said:  
Now he became a firefly,  
As at once she did too.




To a closing flower they together therein flew,  
Blinking, winking in the seclusion of its petal bed,  
This dance of light and love—their honeymoon—  
Brightened the night, till it looked much like noon.

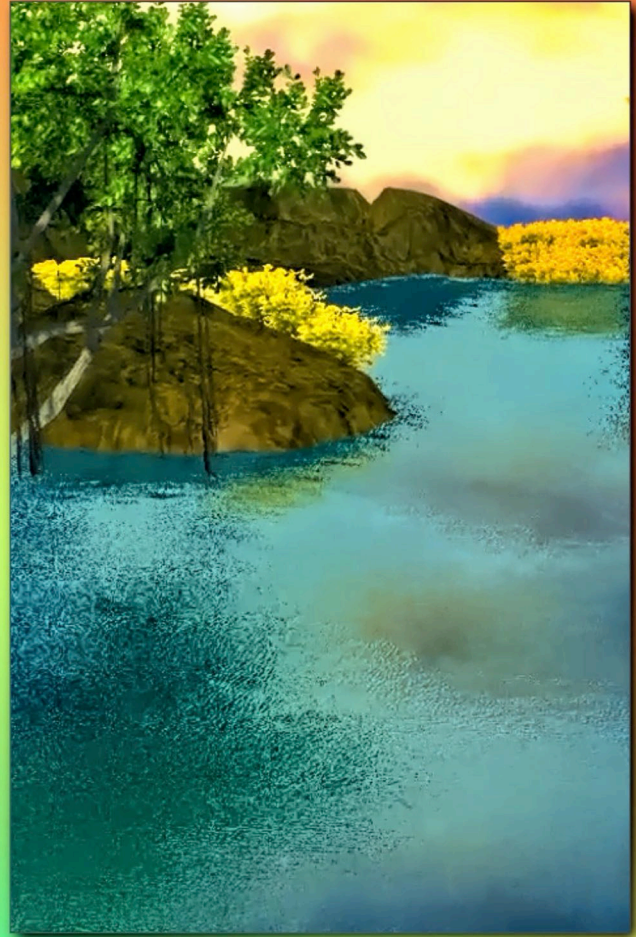
The jolts and bolts, surging, merged in currents,  
And swept back & forth as they signaled delight—  
Fires luming and oft reluming the flames of love  
With electric hugs.



For they had,  
by now,  
Become lightning bugs.



# Now and Then



## — Chapter 3 — Now and Then

As Peter walked to call on Angelina, he saw the town in a much younger light, and so he ran his hand along a picket fence, counting heartbeats, and soon began to run like a child, still carefully not stepping on the cracks of the sidewalk, then paused, and noted the ants thriving in the furrows, and then wondered at a tree that buckled the cement as it ever so gently tilted the walking plane.

Somehow a few chestnut trees had survived the blight and had presented him once more with a gift of his youth, of the hidden visions of tire swings hung from a low branch, of a lemonade stand secure in the shade.

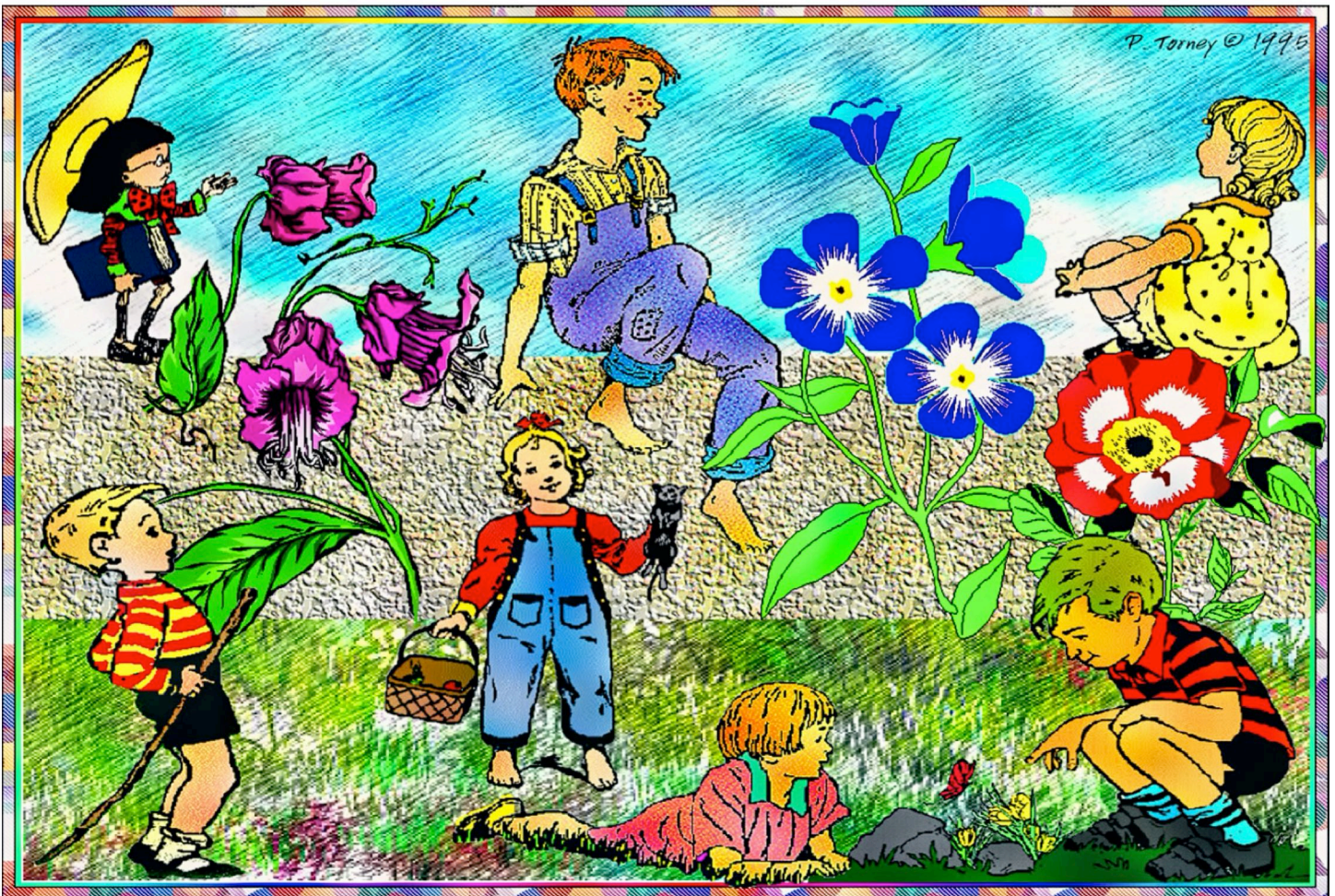
Out in the street, the back door of the bread wagon reopened once more and released its fresh baked aroma, as a young woman, now a grandmother who played cards, came out with a handful of nickels

and dimes, and, like a serf brought into modern times, bought that which for her would have once taken three hours to bake.

On the steps of the houses rested newspapers and the ghostly images of the sturdy rounded bottles of clean white milk, compliments of Elsie the cow, truly a vision from the grazings of childhood.

Peter's youth came flooding back as he walked, and he gave it life:

*We used to lay out all of our baseball cards on the sidewalk, trading famous pitchers and batters, and looking up their stats. My friend had seven Mickey Mantle cards, but wouldn't trade even one to me. My friend's mother always gave him enough money to buy the whole box when a new series came out. Now, grown up, I juggle workers, go to bat at work each day, make a lot of hits, and some errors, and look at stats like stocks and bonds.*



*We played games on the sidewalks, too, like hopscotch, roller-skating, and marbles. My assorted marbles were my bag of jewels. One day I brought to school a cool green cat's eye, a big blue boulder, and*

*various pockmarked throwaways. Never mind that the marbles got scratched on the concrete, although we always started on the dirt. There was nothing like that long roll and a hit!*

*And on carefree summer days, we'd swim in the public pool, jump off the high board, or dive off the pool side after a penny, retrieving it from the bottom, near the big drains. On the way home, we'd stop for a Green River soda and a movie.*

*What do I do now that I've grown old? Well, I do the same kinds of things, for, luckily, I never grew up.*

*Peter saw a lush garden, lovingly attended by an old lady, and many bees and butterflies, and indulged further flights of fancy into his youth:*

*As children, and even now, if we're young at heart, we'd always pause in play when the first butterfly fluttered by, that fragile ephemeral vision of something Heavenly—a flower floating on air perhaps. This event signaled that our endless summer had begun, that something called 'school' was now an ancient artifact of the past.*

*The butterfly first arose from the soul of the pansy, said a legend, one of those inexplicable edenesque transformations from long before human time, when there was still magic on the earth. The metamorphosis is still rather miraculous, even now, albeit only from a caterpillar. Amazingly, butterflies, fragile as they seem, fly all the way to Mexico, taking their sweet time, fluttering here, alighting there, meandering from flower to flower. One wonders how they ever get anywhere. We can learn from them that there is often more fun along the way than when we 'get there'.*

*Peter leaned over the fence to smell a flower and a thousand memories reoccurred:*

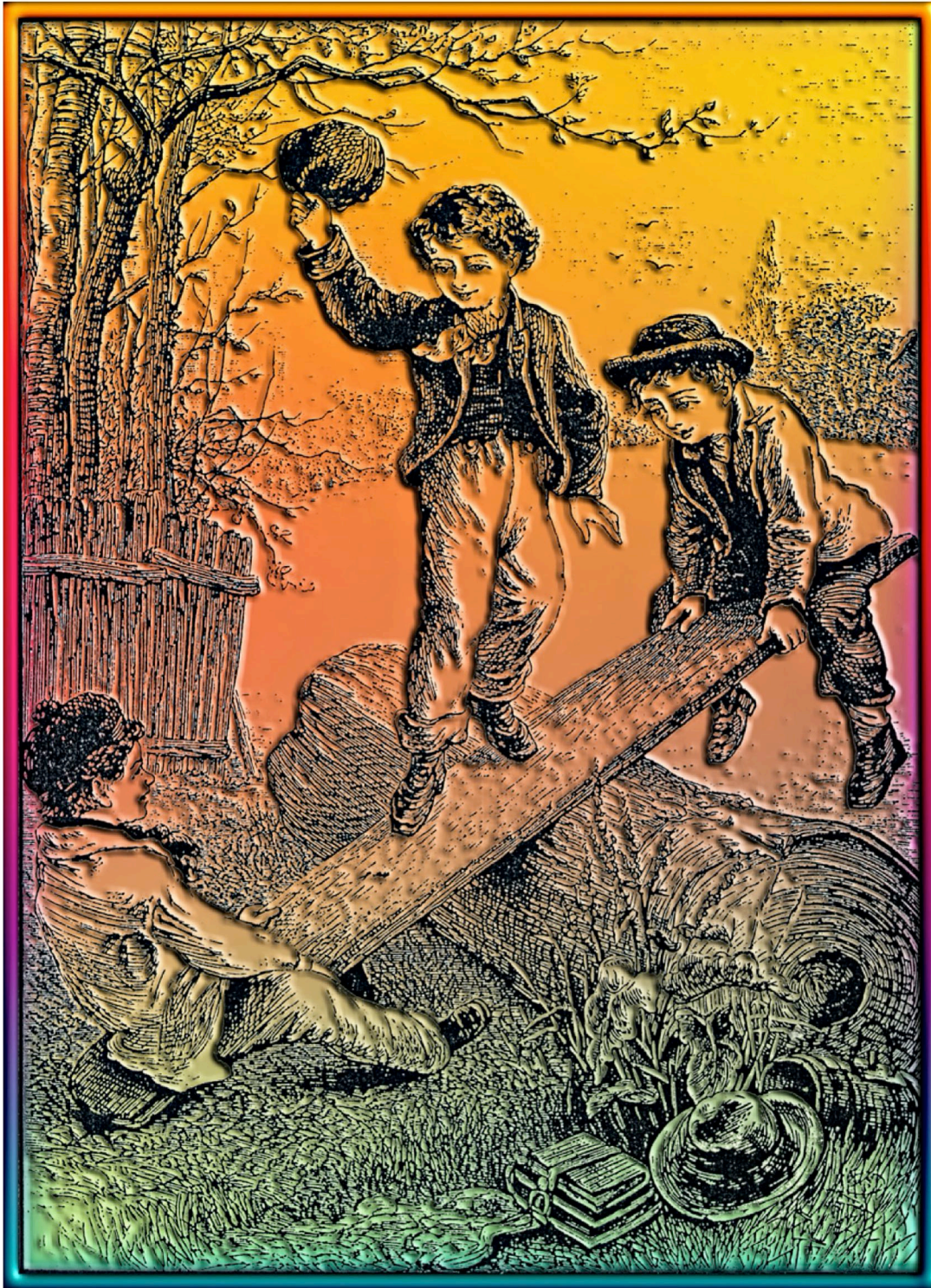
*Each Morning Glory blossom lives for but a single day, and is replaced by another as the next day dawns, each flower in succession shining in its morning glory, wilting in the noon heat, withering in the afternoon, languishing in the evening, and then dying in the night. Their message to us remains: a new day will always come on.*

*There's a bright flower.*

*I've always been intrigued by the Amaranth, for its leaves never fade in color, even long after death, remaining a vivid red for ever and*



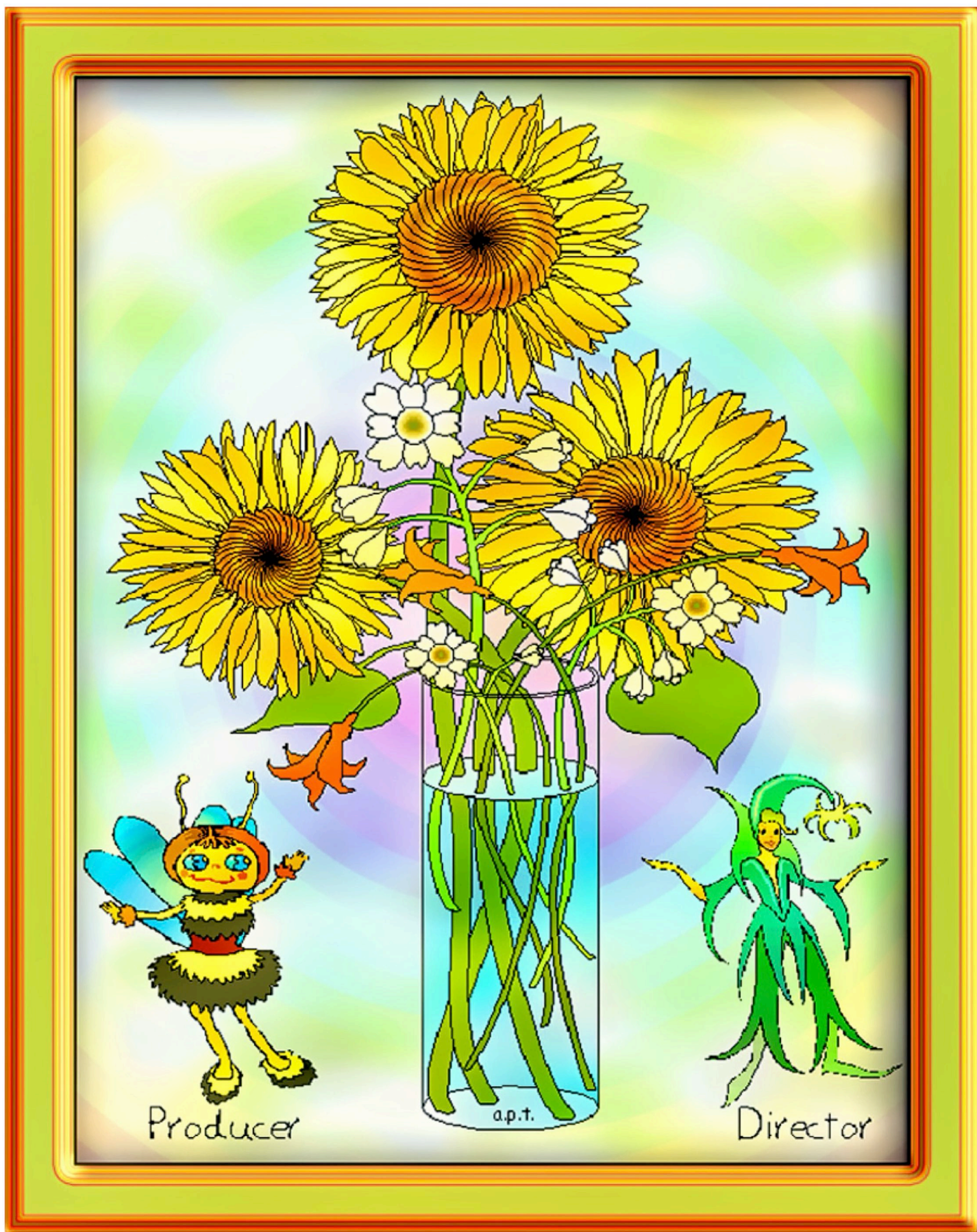
*ever. Could it be that some portion of the eternalness of the Infinite has somehow made it into the unfading red leaf of this flower?*



A snapdragon appeared.

*You had to know just where and how to hold Snapdragons, just around the crease, then slowly they would open on the unsuspecting person and then SNAP! Got you!*

There, galaxies of sunflowers.



*The luminosity was blinding, so to speak, as when we had discovered a field of Sunflowers in the yard of the old abandoned house where we weren't supposed to play. We learned how to dry the seeds so we could eat them, each still a glowing ember of memory, even up to now, of those bright days in the land of a thousand suns.*

*Then there were the elfin goblets.*

*We humans, too, can drink from the little yellow flowers that populate every lawn, those buttercup potions of lively yellow light, the color that is the easiest and the quickest to see; yellow flowers grab our attention so they can take us into the secret realm of fairies, elves, pixies, fays, goblins, trolls, and sprites.*



*Ah, nasturtiums.*

*We called them 'Nasties', for they had a real sharp taste, but we were still fond of their colors, and besides, they grew in Grandma's yard, where every turn of the eye took one back to the times that were*

*safe and secure, for, when we were young, this had been our whole world.*

*Purple crocus was still vibrant, with its golden grains inside, demonstrating the complimentary colors of spring, seen also in the yellow primrose and its romantic friend, the purple violet. It's the loving sun, as it were, warming the virginal earth, with love and life, into spring.*

*And then there were the weeds—honored because the plant that is the most alive is the one that is the wildest, and, therefore, the dandelion is the most ever present flower, although it's better known as a weed. Of course, when its dried blossom is blown with a puff, it turns into just so much fluff, reminding us that someday we, too, must lie amid the dust.*

*I'd walk down to the stream with my sister and we'd pick the yellow St. John's Wort and put them in a basket for a table centerpiece. Then we'd pick some dandelions and make a salad of some of them, while dad made wine from the remainder.*

*We had a strawberry patch and also a grape arbor, too. Following their progress each day, we'd beat the squirrels to the berries, eating them fresh, always forgetting to wash them, and, after driving the birds from the grapes, we'd eat them, too, sour as they were, spitting out the seeds. We had a good cherry tree for awhile, too, until it fell in a storm.*

*I like flowers that are outside of a garden even better. Sometimes flowers grow in strange places, as along a rocky path, and, as such, they give a greater pleasure, in a way, than they could in a whole garden. In later life, I would often think of these flowers when I found pleasure in the midst of a rocky work day, pausing for fun, mixing work and play into life's bouquet, always stopping to smell the flowers.*

*Where did all the flowers come from and thrive? Legends say that fairies tend the flowers, and that there are invisible, funnel-like entrances to other worlds, nearby, especially in flower circles, such as to fairy kingdoms, the small end hard to find at first, but easy to get funneled back out of, worlds that are difficult to tell apart from our own except by their more vivid colors and subtle differences; so—upon*

*entering one, I wasn't sure where I was exactly, but then I saw a pterodactyl flying by!*

Peter walked on, seeing a lake with old broken down vacation cabins all around it, and, since he was in a such a youthful mood, it brought to mind his own vacations as a boy:

*Of course we were never 'there yet' when we asked it early on in the vacation trip, but, soon we tired of asking and dozed off into a warm sleep, the fight for the window seat long forgotten, and, when we awoke, there it was, a crystal blue lake just beyond the turn, seen through the trees.*

*"We're there," said dad. We'd dig the worms at night and keep them moist, get up with the sun, and walk down to the pier to fish before it got too hot for them to bite, then bait the hook and catch them, keeping only the big ones. Skin them and cook them up for lunch and dinner; this is America Remembered.*



*Dad was always out fishing on our vacations and caught many fish in his time, although he often came back with none. I went a few times, and my brother Mike more often. I see now that fishing has a little to do with fish but with warm sun, cool breezes, moist air, watery smells, and peace and quiet. We wore our life preservers all day long, even on land. One time, leaning over the pier for a closer look at the fish darting in the water, I fell in and went straight to the bottom, then pushed up with my feet, swimming with the fishes for an exciting instant, then surfaced just like a rocket, my new lifejacket working fine, now all broken-in.*

*All sorts of water craft are seen on the lakes these days, such as wind surfers, jet-skis, and even submersibles. Yes, water has been conquered and we can almost walk on it, well, at least glide on it, but give me a rowboat with my paramour in it with m and we'll drift under the branches near the shore and have all the adventuring that we need.*



*My brothers and I loved our first motorized rowboat We had puttered over to that mysterious island five miles out into the lake. There we found—nothing—but we camped on shore and had lunch and felt like*

*pirates the rest of the day, telling no one about it until a whole day later.*

*Our shore house was crudely made out of whole logs, and we used it for drying fish and towels, and the owners used it for parking the boats during the winter. It had an open front and was a shady place to sit and hang out and tell some stories and smoke, and, oh yes, kiss a girl.*

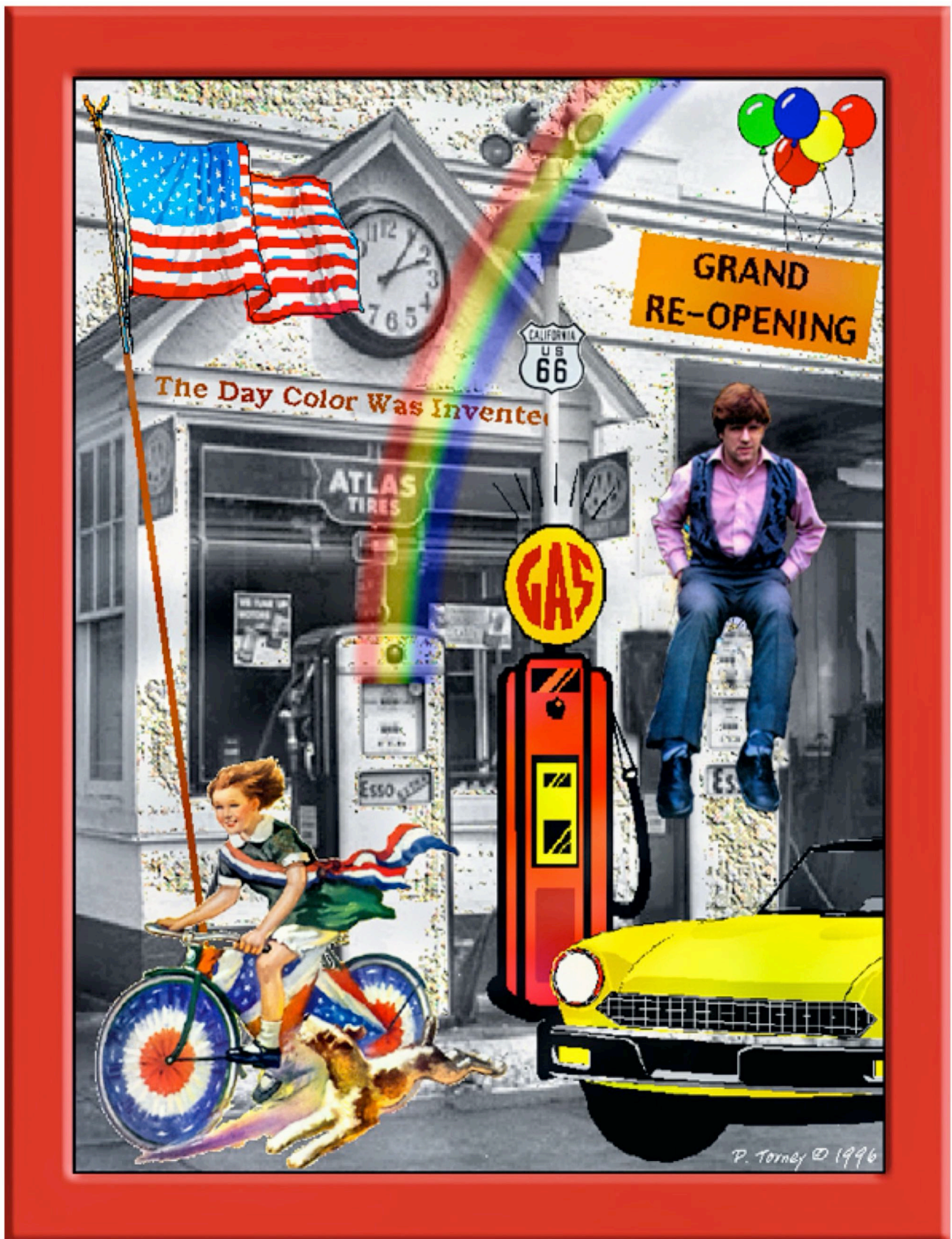
*Often, we and our vacation girlfriends would take the dirt road from our vacation cottage to the garbage dump at twilight, where we'd watch the bears forage for scraps. However, one night there wasn't much food to be found, and then the bears turned and looked over at us.*

*Then there were the rainy days. Mother would call out during the storm and say "Don't you have enough sense to come in out of the rain?" but we liked being in the rain—that's what made it fun. Nowadays, unless we wear sun block, the sun is considered dangerous, and the mothers say, "Don't you have enough sense to come in out of the sunlight?"*

*Anyway, as soon as the sun came out after a storm, we'd run out to see if there was a rainbow, that shimmering otherworldly vision which seemed to belong more to the world of angels and fairies than to humans, and there it was, always magical, and ever revealing the deep and colorful secrets of 'simple' white light.*

*Then the rainbow faded. Once upon a time there was gold at the end of the rainbow, but now we find toxic gases and chemicals there, so, the message for today is an I.O.U. written there, instead of gold, that says we'd better take care of the colors of the sky, or nature will be no more.*

*What strange colors lie beyond the rainbow? What unknown colors hide between blue and green? How are millions of colors made from just the three primaries? Why do the wavelengths of light form colors in our minds? Why is the sky blue? Well, I'll tell you one thing: color was invented in the 60's; for proof, just look at TV shows made before then!*



*Oh, those hot summer days! To keep cool in summer we once carried fans, pinwheels, parasols, and sucked on a piece of ice. We'd leave the sweltering house to make for a cool stream, pool, or glade, but*



*now we have electricity to run motorized fans, TVs, the internet, and air-conditioners, so we stay in the house all day long!*

*In those really old days, real scandals, not just idle rumors, could be learned of by eavesdropping on the party line, for one couldn't help but accidentally overhear a few words when trying to make a call, and, if it was more interesting than watching the grass grow, then we'd have to hear the whole story, although it was sometimes difficult to keep quiet.*

*Before we had a telephone, our information was communicated by tell-a-woman! Now, these days, we talk to answering machines, computers, or solicitors, and many think that a cellular phone is a necessity, but I feel that life should be taken in easy steps, so, if you're not there when the phone rings, you're not there, because you're doing something else and don't want to be disturbed!*

*We looked for bottles to get the two cent deposit, especially on playgrounds, and collected popsicle sticks to glue together into little boxes. Then I got hooked on cigarette packs, sometimes finding a smoke left inside, but my mother threw them all away. Even now my hand still tries to pick them up when I spot one. We took the returnable bottles to the corner market. Larger than a corner store, the corner market carried all that we needed, especially vegetables and fresh fruits over brimming with their natural healthiness and normal color.*

*Not touching the apples, or anything else for that matter, was nearly impossible for a young child, for the shiny red apple called out, "Touch me, buy me, eat me," and so, before the mind knew what the hand was doing, a bite had been taken—and trouble was at hand, but it was crispy, sweet. I ate plums on the way home; they were soft, ripe, and juicy, and dripping down the front of my shirt. I rode my bike everywhere. Once, I rode up and down the steep hill, hoping that my bad brakes still worked, but my brakes broke and so I went flying into a bush.*

*Another time, I fell on my roller skates at the same place. Now I drive my car on that killer hill and have finally learned to be careful there—yes, I'm finally getting over the hill!*

*On Memorial Day, then called Decoration Day, we'd run crepe paper through the spokes of our bike wheels and ride along at the back of the parade after we'd watched it from the curb side and waved our*

flags. Now, not much happens on Memorial Day; it's a pretty dead day, but that is only fitting.



*I saw a penny on the ground once, and picked it up for good luck or bad, heads or tails. And I always picked up a pin—more good luck. And I must nail a horseshoe on a front door. I had a friend who once found a horseshoe all of the sudden—it was very bad luck for him that it was still on the horse's foot!*

*I saved a lot of coins as a boy, mostly ones that dad gave me, but also traded in dollars at the bank for rolls, finding a few old dimes and steel pennies therein, not yet so scarce as they are now. I found the collection in the basement the other day; the hunt for the 1950D nickel goes on.*

*We used the rest of our money to buy candy and ice cream. We were afraid of the scissors grinding man, but we all screamed when the ice cream man came ringing down the street. After a scramble for loose change, we'd cut him off on the next block, always asking for a piece*

of dry ice to play with, when he reached way way back into the cart to retrieve our cones.

Reading was our other diversion, after playing, in the old days, since there was no TV. Children's books were lavishly illustrated, as seen now in the libraries' special collections. Chromolithographic colors were vivid but laborious to create; yes, they just don't make colors like that anymore.

Then there were the parks, and the graveyards. Rural cemeteries were meant to be used as parks way back when, and so ours became a familiar place, especially the duck pond where we'd give the ducks stale bread, but then we'd run away when the geese stampeded us.

Years later I returned with my sweetheart, like a duck that had been away for too many summers.

At the park, there were monkey bars for the climbers, swings for the movers, seesaws teeter tottering for the restless, and a sandbox for the diggers, even a refreshing sprinkler to go into afterwards, but there was always some kid sitting right on top of the sprinkler, blocking the spray.

Other hobbies were making model airplanes; we coated them with extra glue, then set them on fire and threw them into the air, as flaming wrecks. We did other crafts, as well. Greeting cards were made only by hand, using colored paper decorated with assorted scraps saved from magazines, with some lace, perhaps, or ribbons, writing an original message on it. Nowadays, we buy an expensive, dumb looking card with fluffy words already on it and give it, but in a day or two it is in the trash, for it wasn't a keepsake.

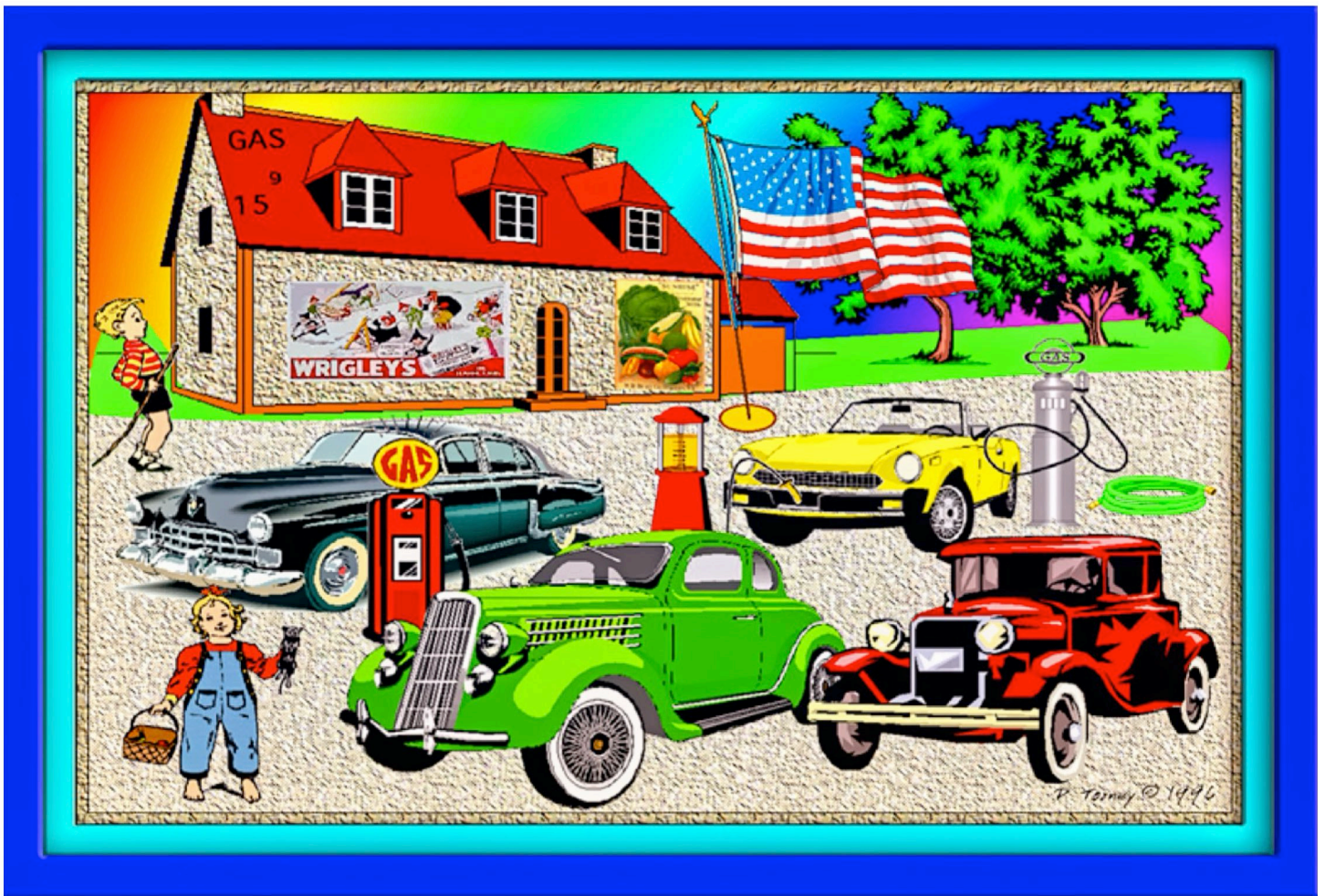
Then there was stealing apples. As soon as we knew that our neighbor was occupied, we'd climb her fence and scramble up onto her garage, from where we could bend down the apple branches and steal some good ones before we got yelled at, for nothing tasted better than a stolen apple, sour as it was!

Autumn was great, too. Who ever remembers the leaves but the child in you who raked them into a pile, so that it could be jumped into. Some days later, the by now dispersed pile was regathered for a few last jumps and then lit with a match; ah, the wonderful smell of burning leaves on a cool autumn night.

Peter thought of Angelina as he entered her neighborhood:

*I first learned about love from some postcards that I'd found in the attic, old ones showing the formalities of hand kissing, the language of the flowers, and other such courtship rituals. So, when I bowed down and kissed the hand of the girl down the street, inviting her to play in the sandbox, she most readily accepted.*

*Also in the attic, I saw an old sepia print of a young lady. She was my grandfather's sweetheart, his paramour. He gave her the gift of the spring flowers, the wealth of the summer hours, the colorful walks of autumn, and the winter's warm fire. The spirit of love still lives in them, calling them back, to/from somewhere in time.*



*He still wears a hat. Men always wore hats in the old days. I can remember trying on my father's many hats, but women still wear hats, although less and less, and not as fancy as before. Now we're lucky to find any hats, for we must wear many hats in life, and so we wear none. As for dad's hats, they're gone; they're all old hat now.*

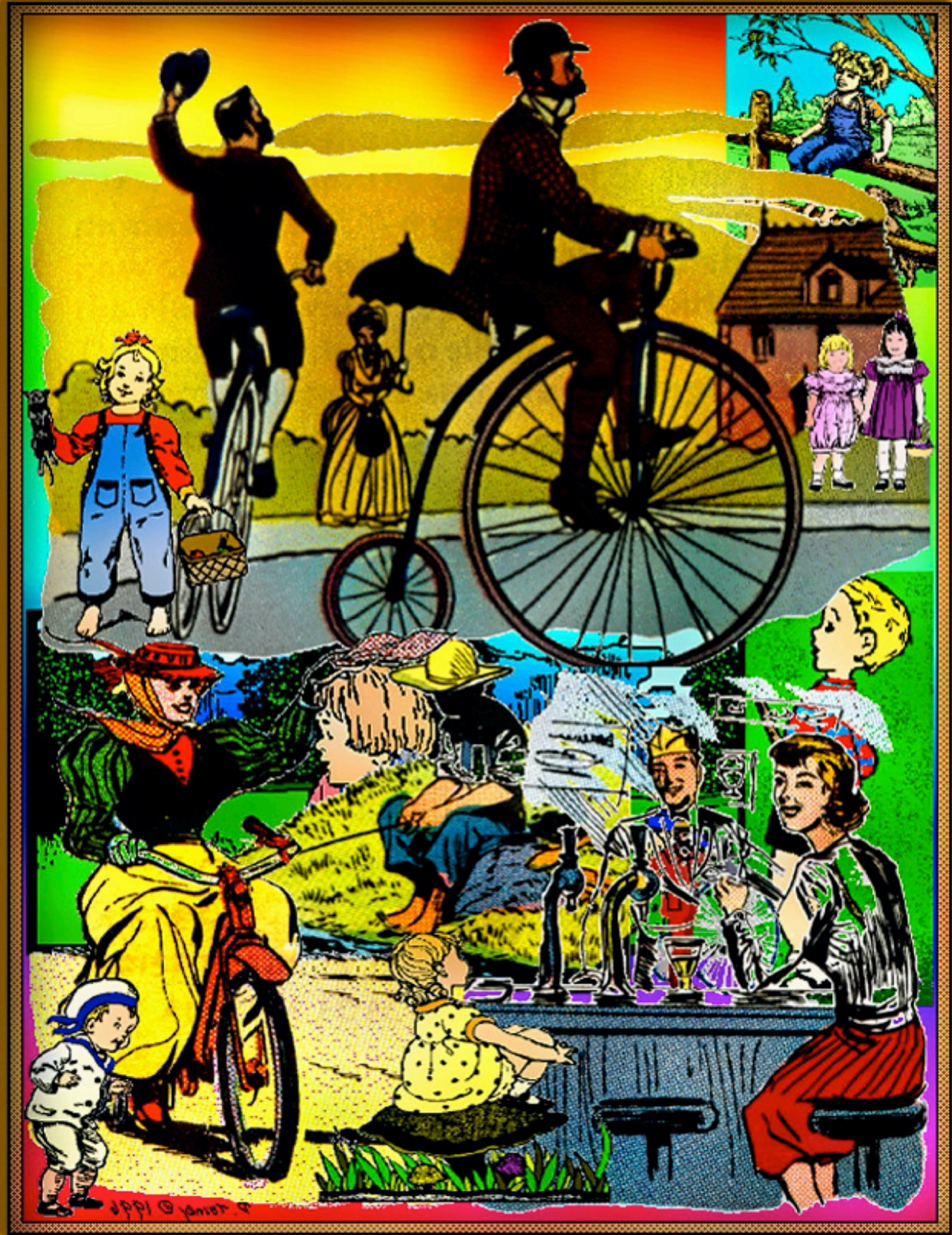
Peter gazed across the river at the place he worked at:

*It was the view that the Indians had. The river cliffs were behind the corporation parking lot, just beyond the trees, and offered a stunning view of the Hudson River from on high; it felt like you were floating in the air, and so you'd look and look, for you could hardly take it all in at once; however, the workers didn't go there much; they were all too busy! Plus, there is a fence blocking the path.*

Simple pleasures today are as free as ever, like the sights, sounds, and scents of nature, the giving one's self, riding a bike, going on a picnic, the starry night sky, playing cards on the porch, writing a letter, reading a book, rowing a boat, walking with your sweetheart...

Hard to ever get bored, isn't it?











# Holiday Schedule

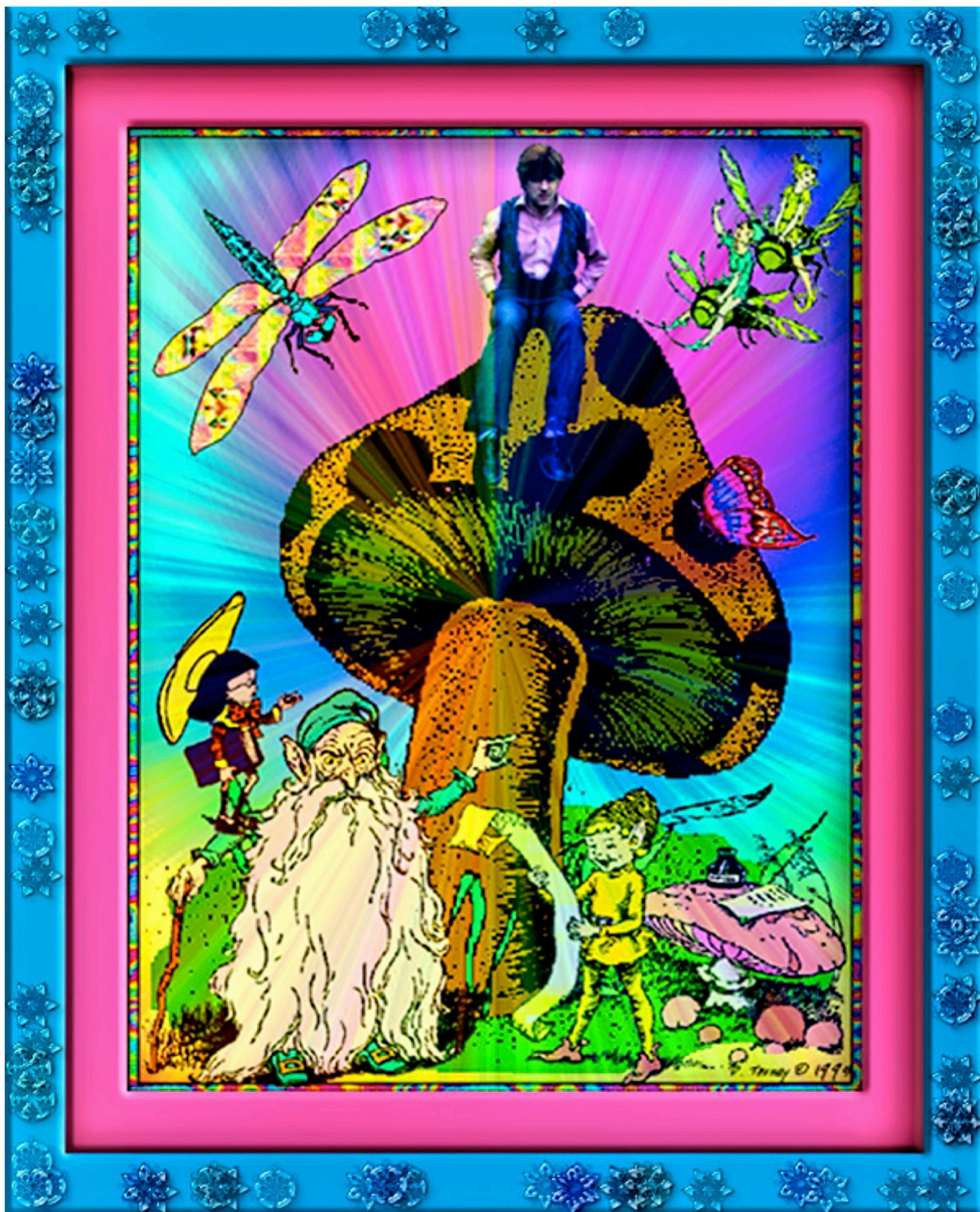


Jan 1 - New Ear Day & Take-Some-Aspirin-for-a-Bad-Headache Day  
Jan 15 - You're King-for-a-Day, but, just try to get it off from work!  
Feb 2 - Groundhog Weatherman Sun or Shadow Forecasting Hole-day  
Feb X - Fat Tuesday - Eat and drink enough to get through Lent fast!  
Feb X - Ash Wednesday - Make an Ash of Yourself - "Smoke-In" Day.  
Feb 12/22 - Lincoln's/Washington's previous birthdays/holidays.  
Feb 14 - Happy VD (use a condom, please, my sweetheart valentine!)  
Feb XX - All of the presidents were now born on Presidents' Day!  
Feb 29 - Leap Day and Sadie Hawkin's Chase-The-Men-Around Day.  
March 17 - Drunkard's Day - All the "Irish" turn a dark green color.  
March 2x - The First Day of Spring Snow - Go catch a spring fever.  
April 1 - April Fool's Day - Rest up after the long March of 31 days!  
Good Friday - Not so good anymore - we don't get it off from work!  
Easter - The Greatest Holiday, but, it depends on but some full moon!  
April 15 - A Taxing Day (rest up from the all-nighter of IRS cheating)  
April 23 - Earth Day - A new weekday, like Moon-day and Sun-day.  
May 1 - Mayday! All the girls come and dance around your maypole!  
May X - Mother's Day - This is truly the mother of all holidays!  
May XX - Memorial Day - This is a day to die for - a pretty dead day!  
June X - Father's Day (beware of strange little kids giving you cards).  
June 2x - First Day of Summer—and the longest day, if still in school.  
June (the last Friday) - The Fourth of July observed - Bug out of work!  
July 4 - Buy a fifth on the third and drink half of it on the fourth!  
July 31 - Middle-Summer's Day & Night (halfway through the year).  
August - Take the Entire Month Off Day (August has no holidays).  
Sept (the first Monday) - Labor Day (going in to labor at your job?).  
Oct 31 - All Hallow's Eve - An Evil Satanic Ritual type of day/night.  
Nov (the 4th Thursday) - Pig-out and Pig-skin Day - Stuff it, turkey!  
Dec 25 - Christmas and Jesus's Birthday, however, HE gets only one  
present for both HIS birthday & Christmas! Was it Myrrh?  
Dec 31 - New Year's Eve (this is pretty much like April Fool's Day).  
Remember 1-31 - A new month so you can do what you forgot to do!  
Any day - Honor cultural diversity by taking all of their holidays off!  
Whenever - Sick/Mental Health/Sleep in/Blue Flu - Day. A Torney © 1998

**HUMOR THY PARENTS:  
NEVER TELL THEM  
WHERE YOU'VE BEEN!**



a.p.t.



# Enjoining



## — Chapter 4 — Enjoining

Angelina had been hurt in the past, though undaunted by it, as she had told Peter that third morning on the porch, hurt by miseries that she'd weathered well, for not so much as a crease crossed her brow.

Peter already loved her for her spirit, but, of course, it was too soon to tell her that, so, he listened well and talked well, in these morning meetings, having resorted to going into work late and working longer. The town was empty at this time of day, but for the toddlers and the elderly.



This morning the new friends took a walk around the back of the house, passing through the rusty gate, and took a sour drink of rhubarb, spitting out the sour pulp. Peering into the garage they saw a perfectly preserved model-A car, left there when grandpa's sight had dimmed. In the yard they inhaled the scents of the Marigolds, the flowers that followed the summer lost, right up through the final frost, and, finally, they sat on the old garden bench, near the bird-bath, under the massive oak tree. She removed her straw hat, her bright golden curls shining in the shade, like a secondary sun. Between kisses, she related more of her past, the living book that we all learn from, for there is seemingly no shortcut to the bliss of life in middle age.

“For a while there I gave up on life,” she confided, “Before I found Program and before I knew myself and loved myself for who I was. At first I was angry at the loss of love, which led me to the avoidance and hatred of the one thing that I did want: love and security; yes, it's a strange paradox, and once I'd given up on life, I began to die a little more each day. Other relationships came but there was always fear before and guilt after, the whole scene but a downward spiral from which I could not recover.”

“Me, too,” answered Peter. “For a while I retreated from the game, to the sidelines, where I could neither win nor lose, and lived, if you could call it that, in that gray safety zone that knows neither suffering nor enjoyment, neither victory nor defeat—where the air was unchanging and stifling.”



“I know, Peter, I know. And I’ve learned since then that one must either love or love not; there is no safe middle ground, just round and round, like an amusement park ride, apparently safe in the self-made berm and bunker, but in reality trapped by all the dizzying sights and sounds.”

“So then what did you do?” I asked, quietly.

“I discovered that life was a two sided coin; the barrier that kept me in was the same one that kept love out. I used support programs and books like ‘DO IT’ to see an emotional duality as well. I realized that the other side of fear was excitement, that excitement was exactly the same feeling as fear, that excitement was fear turned inside out and that I could, for example, give a presentation at a meeting, which once might have been a fearful thing, but was now exciting since I was on center stage and had the whole audience hanging on

my every word. That same pit of my stomach in which fear cowered now harbored excitement waiting to burst forth. Then I looked at the other side of my hurt and saw that it reminded me of where caring had gone; it was my unconditional gift to another human being, and then the hurt suddenly had meaning. As for my anger, I turned its energy to my advantage, like a judo expert, redirecting the force of another's attack, and used the energy for change, to move forward. Soon I was happy and singing and looking forward to my next experience, and here it is—and here you are!”

“I’ve found a joy in you, Angelina, one that carries me through the workday, to where I must soon go forth.”

“OK, I’ll be short. That’s the key,” she continued. “Joy is everything. With joy, one can survive all sorts of duties and whatnot. Joy is the background radiation that is always there no matter what the chore. In fact, the word ‘joy’ doesn’t even have an opposite.”

“Un-joy?”

“Nice try, but as you can see and feel, there is no end to joy; also, note that there’s even a word that means more joy.”

“En-joy.”

“Yes, good, Peter. Joy never ends but can only go higher, for the repetition enhances it. Do you know the word?”

“Re-joice.”

“Great, joy is uplifting and keeps you afloat no matter what. It cannot be dampened, even while you’re working hard or during an illness. It’s always there and never lets you sink.”

“Joy’s a buoy!”

“Good! And when two people want to give joy to each other, they—”

“—They join.”

“Wonderful, Peter. How do you know all these word sounds?”

“I’m a poet. And a philosopher in a past life.”

“You do seem so familiar to me.”

“I have to go to work now, I guess,” Peter said hesitatingly.

“You’re ‘I guess’ is my opening. Stay with me today; it is time.”

“I must—yes, I must be with you; it is true, but where?”

“The barn down the lane—it has a hayloft.”

“No one uses it?”

“Not for a long time. Let’s go.”

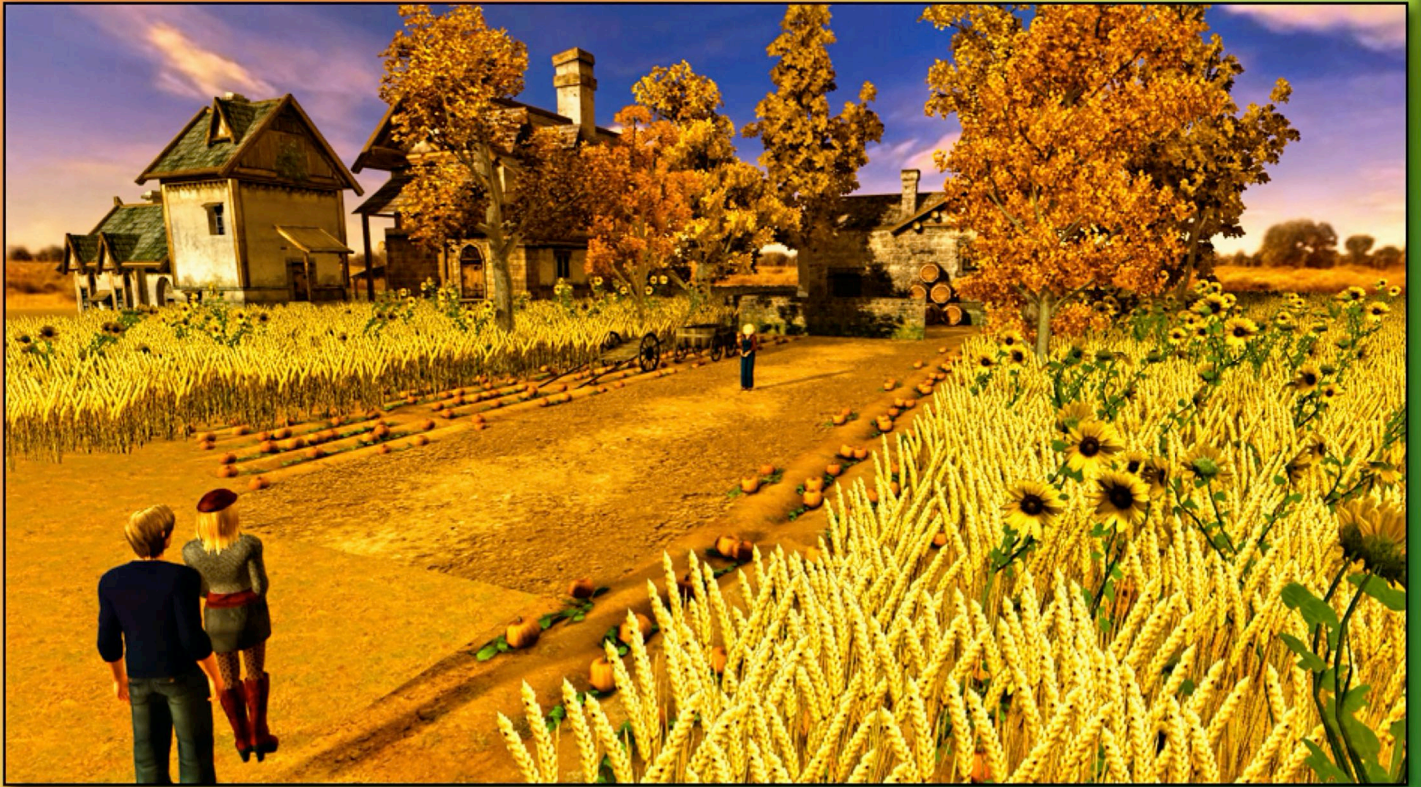
# The Barn



— Chapter 5 —  
The Barn

They left the garden of secrets behind, in the yard, and walked a block or so, down through town, passing the old railroad tracks. They noted the small library, with its treasure trove of books, but this was no day for reading, for the rustic warmth of the barn and the softness of its hay called to them, across the lost decades that had passed among them, like dust storms. Now peeling gray, but once red, the barn was a rotting ghost of another time, long abandoned and left to the elements, however, it must have been well built, for it still stood square. The faded outline of a Wrigley's Gum advertisement recalled an old slogan.







The door of the barn resisted at first, creaking like an Egyptian crypt, but soon gave way, powdered rust streaming down from the

hinges. The smell of oats and animal musk escaped and mixed with Angelina's perfume.

Inside were rusted harnesses, pitchforks, old lanterns, broken wheelbarrows, tilted horse stalls, and a ladder, remarkably intact, that ascended up into the Heaven of the loft. Some pigeons fluttered out of a hole in the roof as Peter and Angelina clambered up the last rungs and swung their selves into the sallow hay, laying a blanket there to soften the stickling ends.



At first they lay quiet, wondering if they had been seen, and, sensing that they weren't, exchanged at last the kind of kiss that was free from the all seeing eyes of children and grandmothers—a kiss that was deep, and ear to ear, an offering that was free, open, and inviting to consummation—the end and beginning, ultimately, of all kisses.

A writhing dance relieved them of their clothes, and their lips wandered forth, to parts hitherto unknown, thereby doubling their pleasure, just as the sign on the barn had promised, with its faint lettering.

Joy was indeed an energy born from all good emotion, a gushing stream swirling in unstoppable motion, a force now over the edge, as a waterfall of boundless power, and beyond, into a tidal wave from love's endless ocean.

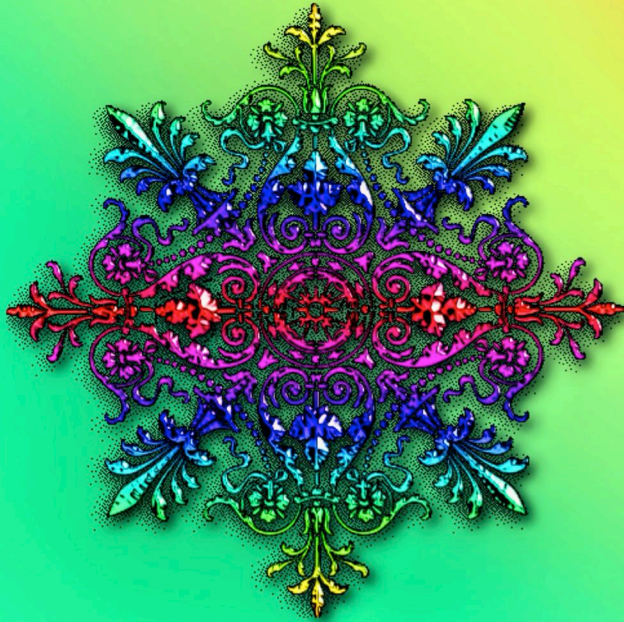
Now and then, during these hours of softness and hardness, among the valleys and peaks, Peter and Angelina would remark to each other as to how bright the other's face had become, how smooth and shining was the partner's skin, how like teenagers they each felt, how the years had fallen away, magically, during the endless lovemaking, and that if only they had a camera they could capture their younger selves on film to show later to their elder selves, as proof of love's youth. But there was no need, for either could see, then and there, in the sparkling eyes, sweet smiles, and glowing skin, that they had, indeed, become young again.





*Can you resist the beauty of loves truth  
When roses and tulips bloom in loving hearts?*

# Within



— Chapter 6 —  
Within

After making love, Peter and Angelina rested in the straw bed, blanketed by the cozy warmth of the hayloft, lying snug, like birds in a nest. The scent of wood smoke hovered, as the spirit of autumn, and that smoky specter rose, haze like, to the barn's cathedral ceiling, its presence made visible by the sun's rays, an effect betokening the miraculous.

Embracing, the pair fell in and out of sleep, serenaded by the soothing sounds of bird calls and by the far off voices of children laughing. After slowly waking and relaxing, the lovers left the barn by the back way, drifting into the mist of the meadow, walking lazily, as if grown plump and heavy, sweet and ripe from love's mellow harvest.

They looked back at the barn, feeling ever contained within its now sacred walls, the whole structure having been anointed and made holy by the prayer they had shared within.

The bees buzzed amongst the weed flowers, in their dance of love, as Peter and Angelina walked alongside a crumbling stone fence, what was once the proud boundary between two farms. Purple loosestrife and Queen Anne's lace decorated and trimmed the pumpkin patches.



They walked the abandoned farmland that was now covered with secondary growth, nature having again reclaimed her own. As the afternoon came to this quiet time of strolling, thoughts whirled around inside Angelina's head, voices that were calling out to tell Peter that all was now right with the world, but she stayed quiet, as in a church, in order to leave love's grandeur undisturbed, and, instead, surrendered herself to the sensual feeling of the wind lifting her hair.

The couple, walking hand in hand, were made weightless by their smiles as they followed the old trail through the forest, toward the old farmer's homestead. Some leaves were already falling, and this

surprised them at first, with their ghostly touch, an invisible force nudging them on, inexorably, toward the winter of old age. The child within Angelina was bursting, uncontainably eager, with secrets that begged to be unveiled.

The opening seemed to come when Peter looked into her eyes with a gaze that was love calling out from within, but she spoke only to herself as she surveyed the love scene and thought: Knowing this as a woman, I feel the nurturing love, as it is parallel with the distances of walking, and though realizing that the walk may end, I still know that this feeling of love is a beginning, of true love, a fine start, for Peter is sincere. As for passion's well, my emotions are bubbling over, like a stream made into a river, ready to flow silently and serenely among and over the smooth and rounded rocks of nature's being. I smile as the rose in my heart blooms in this second spring of middle age, my soul the wind, my spirit energizing me as a woman who chooses to grant the gift of herself to him in a time of sharing in a relationship, that, for once, seems to be going really well from the start.

In Peter, too, the silence was deepening, in reverence, for he, too, wanted to talk, but each walking step that had remained quiet had brought them closer to each other, and so this was merging of them as one in the solitude of the forest.

Angelina the artist was drawing in her mind the picture of a heart blossoming in love, and Peter the poet was chiming rhymes of love, rhythms and melodies that were now lent an extra meaning by their reality.

He thought: What words can express this wonderful feeling? What translations from the speechless realm of emotion can be spirited from the soul to approximate, in the limited language of speech, the sweep of love across one's heart strings?

Their visions continued, pouring forth in positive images, thoughts attempting to create words from those shimmering images, wavering like mirages, just out of sight, ideas developing from the negatives, emergent dreams that ever encouraged. But, it was as if words were not required from two persons already on the same wavelength, as if their thoughts were already blending somehow, weaving in and out, and all around them, binding them, love-bound, and lifting their



spirits onward, upward, inward, and outward, until physical sensation had been quite washed away, their being left only to the spirit's song.



All in all, thought Angelina, as she sensed Peter's thoughts, this was now the moment to share her emotional risk and tell him what he gave to her in this hour of love, but these pings spoke only as a kiss, as they each, as if in fugal unison, stopped to let their souls meet on their lips.

The magic of youth and mid-life wisdom had merged and swept them toward each other with its circular current, a feedback circuit gone out of control.

Peter saw in her a woman who was experiencing a love that was fresh and new and invigorating, and he felt a peaceful love, one without stress and strain, a love that was self-sustaining, a perpetual emotion that created its own energy.

Angelina again felt the urge to talk, but the couple now had to circle back towards town and leave the investigation of the farmhouse for another day, for Peter really needed to return to work.

Yet, the emanations of love's fair thoughts persisted and overflowed, a fragrance that was sweet, soft, and smiling on the air, a scented mist of well being everywhere, containing them within its bubble.

The fertile farm fields were ahead of them, filled with corn ripe for the harvest, a crop sowed only for the local families.



Angelina spoke at last and said, “Peter, you must know what I feel; I sense it. I’ve taken a walk in being young again with you as I’ve given my heart and body in unconditional love. I want to tell you now of my joy as I felt it as we walked through the meadow, of what I was bursting to tell you and paint for you as an artist, expressing with love’s colors the scene rendered in emotion’s hues. I know, too, that I wanted you to touch me then, when I served you cookies on the porch. Somehow I knew that we were meant for each other. I asked you to stay, after you played cards, so that we could become closer. I had these thoughts then, and they yet persist. I sensed, and

still feel, a serenity made from deep pools of feelings that had to be shared with you. Peter, I am a very open woman and I hide nothing, for feelings that go unrelated are as good as lost, but I wanted to treasure the feelings of our love, as we walked, to hold them for hours as a cloud undispersed until they could burst upon you with their fullness. Peter, we are new again, born again somehow, and we have been drenched with the joy of love's cloudburst that rains down upon us."

"Angelina, this afternoon was a poetic dream, in which our love was shared honestly and purely, bursting, as you hinted at, like a grape of joy against a dry palate, as Keats said, and after our coupling I nestled in your arms, hoping to remain there forever, for I felt peace, and even more serenity as we slept, and then again during our silent walk as we fell even more for each other when we let the wash-back of the waves have their wonderful way with us, undisturbed by our words. I've wanted and needed a woman like you, especially one of patience and understanding, for I have a job to attend to, and some other responsibilities as well. Let's explore the old farmhouse tomorrow, and have a picnic along the way. I want to know you and become involved with you beyond all repair. You are good, truly good, and loving and generous. I've searched a long while for this dream. It was hard to believe, at first, that a woman could be so kind and caring and still remain unmarried, but your mother told me that your first husband, well, that he—"

"—died of cancer. Peter, I only told you that he left me, an inapproximate generalization, so as not to sway the course of our love with it, you know, to give us more of a chance. Though I can tell you that it was not an exciting marriage."

Now, all their thoughts poured forth and they spoke as one, their voices merging in a canon of chime, their music sweeping strong and ringing, like the bell to the knell, she saying what he thought and vice-versa, in tune, in union, and parallel.

Reaching town, they stopped outside a coffee shop, their appetites sharpened, their senses still raised from lovemaking. The avenue was alive with children playing, and, so, Peter and Angelina, being children of forty-five within adults, followed the welcoming aroma on

into the cafe. There they ordered Red Lion Kona chocolate raspberry coffee and some doughnuts, then sat down.

The cafe was a curiosity shop, full of antiques and museum pieces from the world's past, even better than the Rolling Rock Cafe. The couple's eyes swept the far walls and found a strange juxtaposition of stuffed squirrels, old clocks, Egyptian masks, rusted scythes, ivory tusks, and the unlike.



In their heightened imaginations, or perhaps from some real déjà vu, they again roamed the African savannah, stalked the primeval forest, and boated down the Nile, sailing along its fertile corridor. Silently drinking the exotic coffee, they were transported by its fumes to the beans' source in the lush forests of Hawaii's Kona Coast.

Peter spoke about the natives there, the picture perfect weather, the lush green-sided cliffs, the frothy surf, the volcanic black sand beaches, the views of the other islands off in the misty distance of time, and of the new islands still forming, as like their love, several miles beneath the sea—volcanic cones ever building and forming from the passion of the fire god, Pele, his lava steaming in the water,

as when male meets female, for fire and water make steam, building into an island base in the abysmal desert of the ocean—a pyramid of hope reaching for the surface and the sky.

Peter was next drawn by Angelina's eyes into a painting of Camelot that focused on the famous archway of the Dragon's Gate, the entrance used only by the greatest of Arthur's knights.



Dipping her brush in poetry's medium, she remarked to Peter that this moment of their relationship, this beginning, was the start of a painting that was to become a masterpiece by a great artist, a love scene created by the joining of passion's color with the details of everyday life, for her support programs had taught her to live life one day at a time, each day a perfect fit unto the others, like a new stone added to a stone fence in such a way as to touch as many other stones as possible, yet each new stone a piece separate from the whole, and that such small moments of stability and enjoyment would allow time to take care of all, and so she wrote as much in her

daily journal, at the table, as she spoke her thoughts out loud now for Peter to hear.

“I’ve had my ups, downs, and arounds on life’s carousel, Peter, and in doing so have collected some trophies of men from undesirable classes, cheap carnival toys, as they turned out, whose tenure, mercifully, was short. But I’m older, and wiser, now, and I can quickly see past the insincere, the desperate, the addicted, and the hopeless. So, I’m not afraid to say to you now, even in risk of unbalancing that tenuous seesaw of independence and involvement that are sometimes the focuses of men and women, respectively, that I need you, Peter, for you are driven not by desperation or pain, but by the purest motives of love, and so you sustain your affection with only the goodness of giving.”

I nodded, unafraid, willing to love her without reserve, and, in this briefness his promise of commitment held more weight than the wordiest answer. Their love—the keystone in the archway, the master piece that she referred to, would complete and support each other’s bending tower of stones—the leaning weight of the years—a strength now redirected from weakness.



After dessert, they sat back, sated, absorbing again the old-time decor of the place, noting in particular the ancient hourglass, made of welded brass, that rested on the shelf above them, as then, Peter and Angelina, still resonating in two-part harmonic choice, rose together with a start and quickly read the inscription written on the old timepiece. In a mixed revelation it said, in both English and Latin, and in so many words and inter language puns, that a moment un-seized loses its momentum, that one can pass through life unaware, like sand through an hourglass, and that time should rather be worn by everyone, as by emperors and kings, like a royal diadem of momentous gems. Thus, the engravature, in the total sum of its demonstration, proclaimed the motto of ‘Carpe Diem’, or seize the day.

Angelina added later, near the point of parting, so that he need not say it, “It will not always be easy, Peter, for love always wants more, and so love doesn’t always listen to reason.”

“I know, but our hearts are pure.”



# Resonance

Kissing on the rocks, down by the riverside,  
Our rhythm rippled the water, raised the tide,  
Rang ship's bells, danced lights across sea and sky—  
All vibrations from hearts that were satisfied.





**THE ONLY PURPOSE OF LIFE  
IS TO BE-FINDING  
YOUR OWN MEANING  
THEREIN;**

**BUT,**

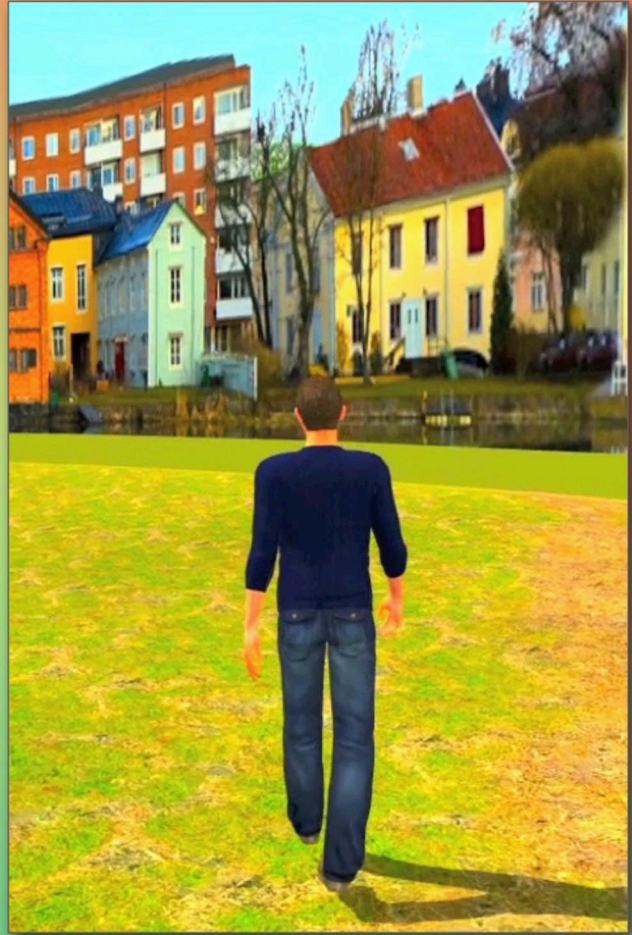
**SOME QUESTIONS  
STILL REMAIN,**

**SUCH AS**

**“WHAT IS LIFE?”  
(AND IT'S POINT).**

**TO FIND THE ANSWER,  
ONE MUST LIVE IT FULLY!  
(WITH GOODNESS)**

# To Work



## — Chapter 7 — To Work

Peter arrived late to work, the apparent weight of love's responsibility now added to the demands of a professional job in a company that would swallow up all life, if given half a chance, in a world that was always rushing, rushing with a sense of urgency, as they called it, better known as panic, to get more, to produce more, to do everything faster, to greedily gain more market share; yet, love could never be a burden, it being always uplifting in its effect, so Peter, invigorated and more alive now, flew through his work and wrote more perfect computer programs, dispatched and answered electronic mail with the speed of light, resolved questions as soon as they arose, and used his now unlimited power to deal with any and every contingency. He dealt with the workaholics, ignored trivial details and useless meetings, and even went home on time, four hours hav-

ing done the work of eight, for with love all things were possible, and there was now life in all things.



(Work)

# The Victorian Parlor



## — Chapter 8 — The Victorian Parlor

Some days passed. Peter woke early, wrote down his night dreams into a journal, as usual, got up, and found himself at work early, a preparation for taking the afternoon off. Working swiftly and silently, he dashed off computer programs in the time warp allowed by solitude and love's inspiration.

Toward 11:30 he bought and packed a lunch of juice, salad, and sandwiches for the picnic with Angelina, and soon evaporated into the warming noon, passing, on his way toward freedom, several on-going business meetings, and many harried workers that were glued to their terminals, gobbling a quick bite as they worked, probably not even tasting the food.

The porch was empty, the grandladies having gone to a rummage sale. Peter knocked on air as the door was opened by the spirit that

was Angelina, and was let into the rambling home—a time portal to the past.



**Dinner**

Warmth emanated from the parlor, from its chestnut paneled bookcases that held worn editions of the poems of Keats, Shelley, and Byron, and from a lush carpet that sunk under step like grass on a putting green.

Knickknacks of cherubs, centaurs, and children skated on the ice of the glass shelves. It was a museum gallery of all the minutes, hours, and days that sequenced the Victorian whole, the months upon seasons that tolled the cherished year—those decades which in sum actualized a full life of youth, prime, and old-age; it was incense from ancient times—memories of a generation that bridged this century to the previous.

“The card players,” said Peter, pointing to a sepia print of three young ladies.”

“Yes, my mother and her sisters in 1912.”

“Taken in—?”

“—Quebec City. Our first home away from France and England.”

“What is it like there?”

“Wonderful, but cold. It’s an island in the St. Lawrence river, and we always had to travel to the mainland by ferry. The streets are narrow and the shops are quaint, and the people are mostly French speaking.”

A winding staircase led up to the tower room, and from there they could see the farm lands and the tips of the barn silos.

The bathroom held an old tub crouching on lion’s paws, with its hot and cold water handles made of ivory and gold. The bedrooms all had a fireplace, and the dumbwaiter was now used as a laundry chute.



Roses and vines grew as ground cover on the bedspreads, and flourishes swirled up the walls. Walking softly, for her grandmother was still asleep, Angelina led Peter down the servant’s stairway to the kitchen, stopping on the bottom stair and kissing him, then adding to their basket some bread, wine, and cheese.



A crow was tapping on the window as they left, and it followed them. “Some crows are domesticated,” she said, “And this one often eats with us when we dine outdoors. Once it even turned the pages of a book I was reading. It always raps and taps about this time.”

“As seasons pass, the world comes to your door,” he offered.

“Spring comes with the bluebird—the singing troubadour,” she replied.

“Summer calls with the rose, amidst the woodlore.”

“Autumn crows, plump and sweet, through frosty hoar.”

“I love inventing poems, Peter. It reminds me of an old parlor game we used to play, but one in which we used triplet rhyme, aba bcb cdc, to vary the scheme and to allow the rhymer a little more time to think.”

“Maybe we could collaborate on some poems and prose,” he suggested.

“Perhaps we could live through the plots, enjoy the poetic emotions, and then write them down as stories and poems,” she replied.

“We’ll write in our journals each day and see what becomes of it.”

“OK, then we’ll compare notes and merge our ideas into a story.”

“I’ll write about how we met, perhaps calling it ‘Ageless Times.’”

“And write of the things that you do without me, too.”

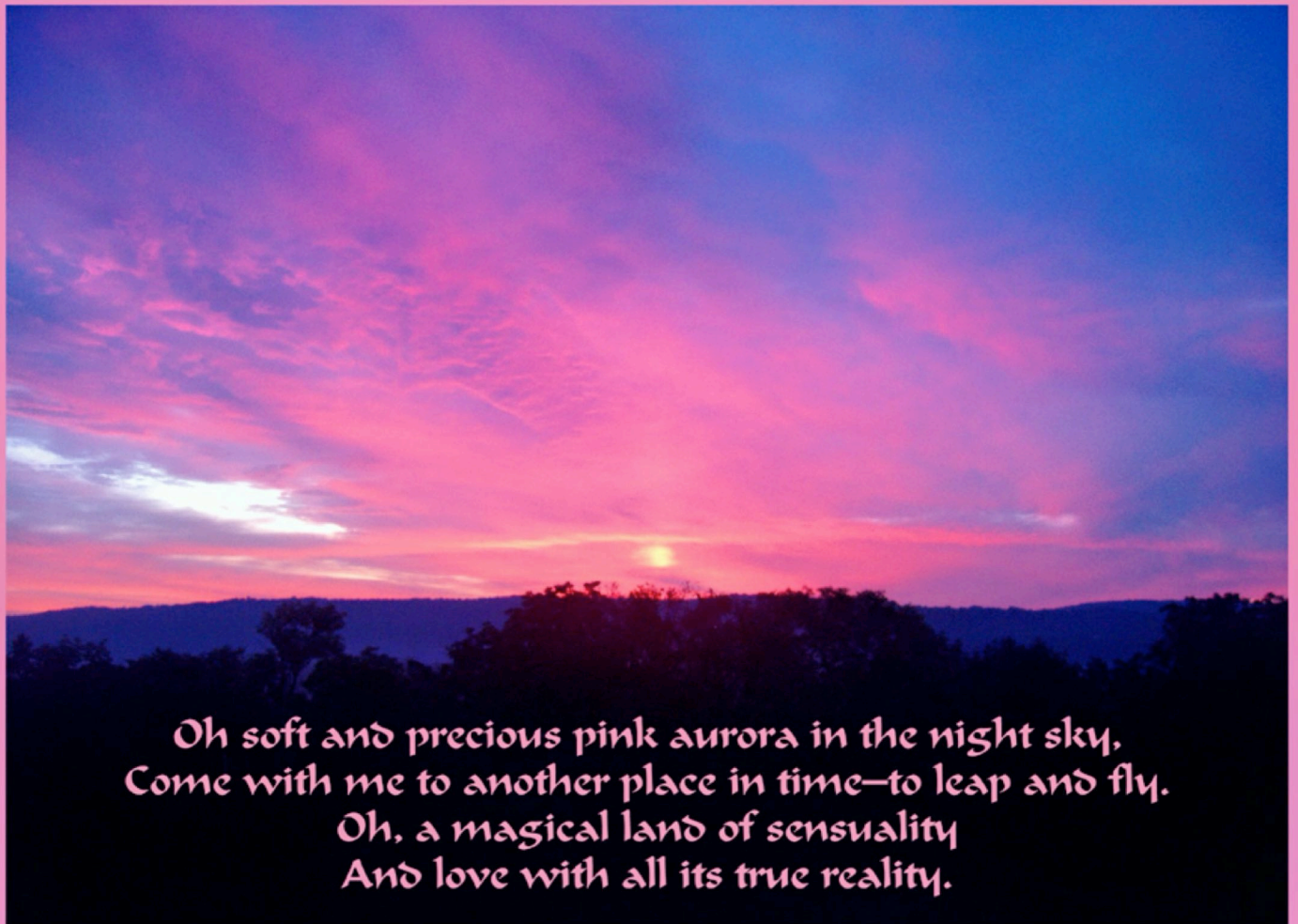
“I’ll write the story of a day, or a night. I have a dream journal.”

“Tell me about the night—your dreams, everything that happens.”

“All right, I’ll bring it next time.”







Oh soft and precious pink aurora in the night sky,  
Come with me to another place in time—to leap and fly.  
Oh, a magical land of sensuality  
And love with all its true reality.

# The Picnic



## — Chapter 9 — The Picnic

They entered the wood lot, walking well past the town's eyes, and put down two sleeping bags for the picnic, picking a spot under a cypress tree that was next to a crumbling stone wall.

They began fixing the stone wall by filling the gaps from the rocky rubble, putting one stone on two and two stones on one, for stability, sometimes having to jiggle them or turn them upside down to gain a better fit, always carefully dropping the stones through the last inch to avoid bruising their fingers. Large stones were saved for the bottom and the flat ones reserved for leveling the top. Odd shaped stones formed the middle section and had to be twisted and tilted, as in a Tetris game, until they fit snug.

The old stone fence soon took shape again, firm, like a solid relationship that was being built brick by brick. Then the lovers ate, as

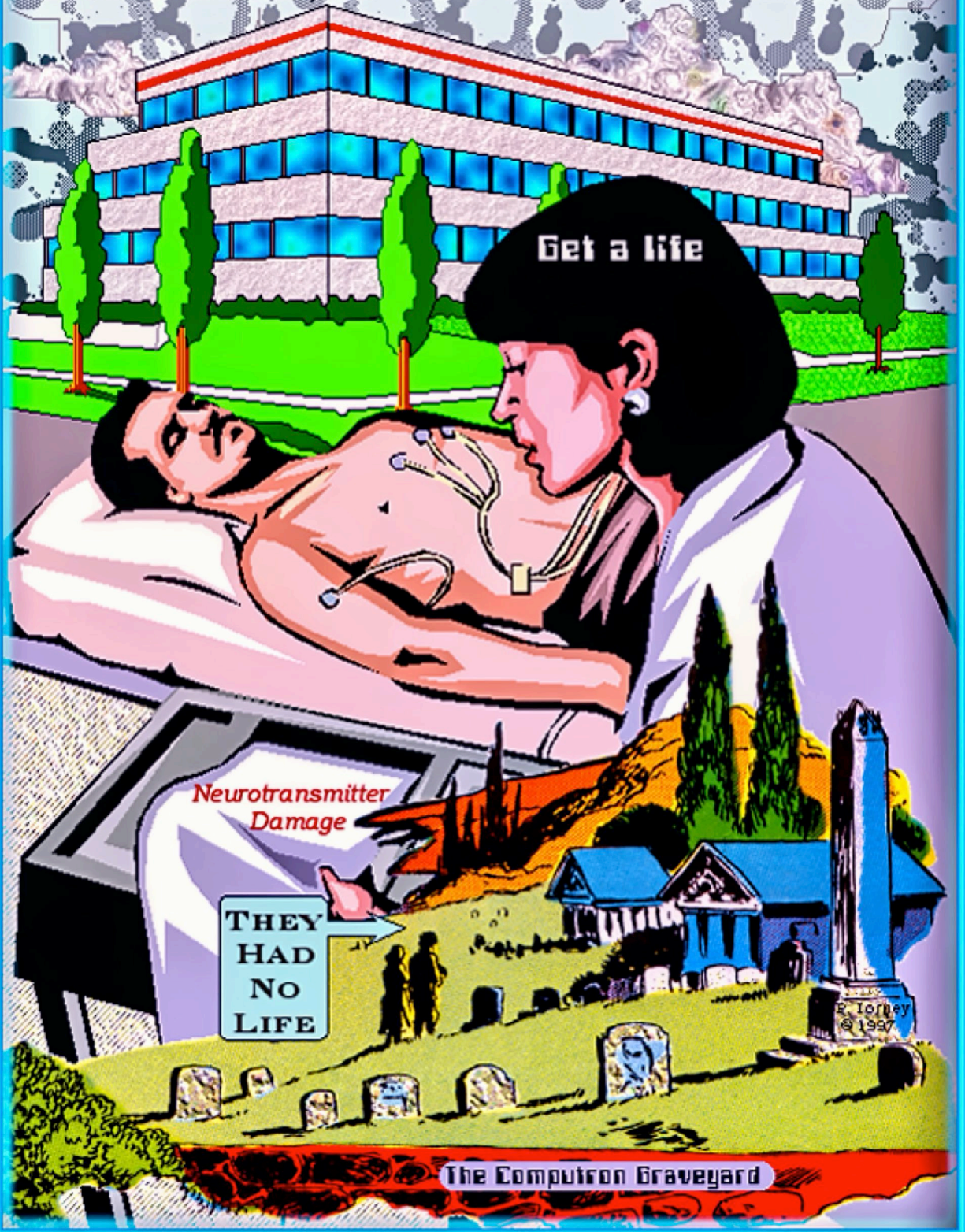
in a loaf of bread, and drank, as in a flask of wine, and read, as in a book of verse, laying snug and secure while the world worked.



They conjured up mythical creatures from the faint wisps of the autumn mist: unicorns and chimeras wandered by, alive only by virtue of their possibility, and faeries, who danced, spirits caught only by a believing glance, and all such visions held them sleepy-eyed, as languor and indolence had their way with them.



IT WAS BORN; IT WAS BUSY; IT DIED.  
IT WAS HIRED; IT WAS TIRED; IT WAS FIRED.



The Computron Graveyard

# The Long Walk



## — Chapter 10 — The Long Walk

Later on they took a walk, following the stone wall, soon coming to an inviting stream that promised many unseen wonders around the bend. The water sparkled, and was shallow, with stones in it that could be walked on.

The explorers were drawn into a forest of moss and fern where there were no footprints, and here they found a pool just beyond a ledge that made for a small waterfall. Following a side branch of the creek, they came upon a steaming pond but knew not the reason for it until they swam in it and felt the bubbles of rising air massaging them, little geysers from a hot spring.

They continued on for awhile, now far astream and lost in compass direction but not in directive. The creek took them though an old cemetery which had been long abandoned, its caretakers probably

dead and buried within. There were many old grave markers with sayings on them.



They paused to read an epitaph written on an urn:

**FROM HEAVEN'S STARS CAME MY DUST ETERNE;  
TIME'S SEAS NURTURED THEE AND THINE IN TURN.  
FROM TIME, DEATH, AND DUST I THUS BECAME,  
AND BY THIS, THUS, AND THAT I MUST RETURN.**

Another, emblazoned on a flower, said:

**FROM THAT BLACK AND ENDLESS ETERNAL DEEP,  
NATURE'S FERTILE SOIL WOKE ME OUT OF SLEEP,  
SAW ME BUD, FLOWER, LEAF, STRIVE, AND DIE;  
THEN LAY ME BACK TO REST, MY SOUL TO KEEP.**

Another, more lively, entitled 'WHENS', read:

**LIFE IS A WEB OF WHOS, WHYS, WHATS, AND HOWS  
STRETCHED IN TIME BETWEEN ETERNAL BOUGHS.  
GOSSAMER THREADS HOLD THE BEADS THAT GLISTEN,  
EACH MINUTE A SEQUENCE OF INSTANT NOWS.**



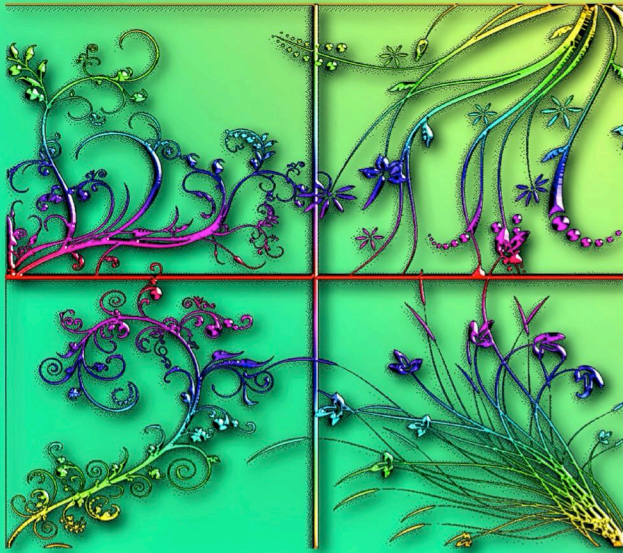
As they left the burial ground, the stream beckoned them onward, around yet another bend.







# The Surprise Sanctuary



— Chapter 11 —  
**The Surprise Sanctuary**

To their amazement they came upon the almost legendary old farmhouse, now seen to be made of soft sandstone. The stream ran into the spring room of the house—a source of bath and laundry, taken and done in another century, and out again along its wet and winding way toward the Hudson River. A small forest hushed and protected the cottage. The leaves of autumn painted a colored scene of yellow and crimson, backed, closer to the house, by the ever-during green of the pines. A slate stone path led up to the front door, now a gold leaf carpet of fallen leaves gilding the way. The house was in some need of repair, they noted; it needed a few nails in the roof shingles and some wood work. Inside, they found a few small holes in the walls.

“We could fix it up,” she said, “And have a place to stay when it gets too cold for the barn. Winter may be coming all too soon.”

“It’s been vacant a long time.”

“Since my uncle passed away. I was then only a young girl of twenty summers. My aunt still owns it and the surrounding property, but she doesn’t care about it. It has been forgotten.”

“So, we could use it. We could have it?”

“Yes, but let it remain our secret, and then the privacy shall be ours as well.”



“A little dusting and painting could do a lot here, along with a woman’s touch.”

“I could put color in the windows.”

“Curtains!”

“Yes, and maybe bring a few things from home.”

“It would be our sanctuary—our country home.”

“Our country manor, our homestead.”

“Our haven, our retreat.”

“I like the word ‘sanctuary’ the best.”

“Yes, me too. Here we have no neighbors, no intrusions, no electricity.”

“It’s close to nature and sky.”

They plugged the holes in the walls with rags, dusted off what they could with old sponges from the spring room, and then checked and cleared the flue, and started the fire burning, from some wood piled nearby, as if the former occupant had fully intended to live through the winter in which he died.

“I’ll go back and get the food and the sleeping bags.”

“And bring in some hay to use for the bedding. We can stay here into the evening. It’s so romantic, Peter.”



While he was gone, she found a candle and an old lantern and put them where they would be handy. By the time Peter returned, afternoon had descended and coolness had risen.

In front of the fireplace they laid a blanket over the hay and put the sleeping bags over that. They then put their heads together and tried to read a book aloud, but managed only a few pages, for, as the flames flickered and flared, the glowing embers of love kindled into ripening kisses and swells of passion that surged like a storm tide,

kisses from lips already flushed and swollen from sensation, new kisses, teenage kisses, like those exchanged on vacations or given in the back seats of cars—first kisses, exploring kisses, endless kisses.

Their clothes fell away, suddenly useless trappings. His breathing soon fitted to her own. A wondrous human and loving spirit, like a mist, drenched and flooded them, their soul's being filling into form, like rhythm into a poem. The tide broke through the sandbags and overran the shore, the water rising past all previous marks.

Her lips wandered over his chest and ever downward, and she was soon kissing eel skin, as he, turning round, parted her long legs and rested his head on her inner thigh, she turning sideways to accommodate him and resting her head on his thigh as well, and so they together caressed and kissed those intimate areas so boldly presented, soixante-neuf style, stopping only to feel the waves pass up onto the shore, wet the sand, and then recede again, but ever echoing as a watery visitation of all that is sweet and pure and good, the image of a mermaid riding on a porpoise, perhaps, along the margin of sea and land.



Their rhythm rippled the water, raising the tide even further, and this jostled the ships' bells into ringing, which then danced the lights of the river buoys across the sea and sky, all vibrations from hearts that were satisfied.

After a timeless time, Peter entered the alpha and the omega of all things, and, many leagues later, leaned back, still connected, and pulled her up onto his lap, his legs in the yoga position, providing a garden whereupon she could sit and bloom, as a lotus flower, and there they gently rocked, the stamen of his manhood pointing up into Heaven, her universe accepting him openly, all around him, he within her, she onto him.

The emptiness filled and the fullness emptied, the blessings raining down from above in the form of peace, serenity, and love, as they steamed through emotion's ocean as co-captains in their relationship. And, as each loved and was loved, this world, this sometimes wretched world, with all of its foolishness, work, hurry and scurry, pain and worry, quickly faded away into nothingness. The mermaids glided, deep and finned, sea come shore, as the dark tide of sleep swept away the sinned, and the couple, warm within the quilted sleeping bags beside the fire's glow, dreamt that they were seagulls afloat on the wind.

Being the first to wake from this reverie in the sandstone farmhouse, Angelina whispered, from the cliffs of consciousness, to Peter, and he slowly drifted up from the valley of sleep, "Peter, we must go now so you can attend to your responsibilities. I'll come back here while you're away and I'll work on our house some more."

"OK. Let's meet at the cafe for breakfast on the next day's morning before work."

"I would like that."

As they left the cottage, the great orange pumpkin of the autumn moon was up a ways, lighting the way along the banks of the stream; it provided an otherworldly glow that, like the mood of love, guided them on. From a clearing they could see the stars, those lamps of incredible brightness that shone from far away and long ago, suns, really, but dimmed by the incomprehensible distances intervening. Space, Life, and Death.

A thought from space entered Peter's mind, perhaps from a door momentarily opened by a shooting star, and he turned to Angelina to relate, "I am a traveler through space, a refugee from some barren and fruitless world; I am searching, ransacking the heavens, looking for the legendary Eden, and, as I peer through the viewport of my spaceship, I know, through some driving force, that among those many lights that dance in the sky an oasis in space waits for us—a world where flowers bloom and fountains spray, a paradise called Earth to glorify, a world of boundless beauty and grace that has no equal, anytime or anyplace.

"Well, welcome home, Peter, to Heaven on Earth, the be all and the end all, for Earth is the best of all worlds, a world balanced by sadness and smile, life and death, night and day, sun and flood, give and take, truth and doubt, plenty and drought, good and evil; for, you can't have the one without the other; therefore, Earth, just the way it is, is truly the best of all possible worlds, one made even better by our love."

"There's an urge, Angelina, between root and flower, plant and soil, leaf and sun, air and water, daystar and planet, man and woman, valley and mountain, wind and mist, and between you and me, through time and space, forever."



Returning to the age-old cemetery entrance, they were greeted by a stone angel atop one of the gateposts, the other one having flown, Heaven's last gatekeeper on this frontier from beyond.

The moon was even higher and brighter now, and Peter, in a poetic vision, spotted Old Autumn himself wandering among the tilted

tombstones, his hair of straw winnowing in the wind. They stopped and shivered as Peter related this to Angelina, for she, too, had felt the his presence.

The crow reappeared, startling them for a moment, and landed on Angelina's shoulder, nuzzling her, then flew on ahead—the famous Bird of Time, perhaps.

As moonlight washed the marble of the eternal monuments, they read two more of the inscriptions engraved thereupon:

**TO ME IT WAS ALL A MOVING PICTURE SHOW,  
ATTENDED BY MYSTERIES, ROW UPON ROW,  
THAT WERE FACELESS, LAUGHING IN THE DARK BELOW;  
SO I LAUGHED, TOO, AND BETTER ENJOYED IT SO.**

**OH, NEVER HAS THERE BEEN A TIME MORE RARE,  
BUT THAT I COULD SURELY SAY "I WAS THERE,  
ON THAT HEAVENLY SPHERE OF BLUE AND GREEN;  
YES, I WAS THERE IN LIFE EXTRAORDINAIRE!"**

Leaving the cemetery and ever looking down to guide their footing, they noted the poison ivy and carefully sidestepped it. Further on, they spotted, beneath the cedars and silver maples, a vigorous undergrowth of vegetation, brought forth, like a second spring, by the extended autumn. There was basil, feverwort, wolf's-bane, wild cucumber, cinquefoil, meadow-saffron, germander, gillyflower, and fall roses.

Lifting a rose and pressing it between their lips, they drank the evening dew from it in what turned into a kiss.

After passing back along the stone wall to the picnic site, they emerged back into town, like ghosts from the netherworld, swirling, like leaves whirled by dust devils, in their unison of love that was propelled by forces from beyond.

They kissed good-bye, an almost two-day kiss, as all the while sweetness and serenity stole through their flesh, like a mist in a valley filling it fresh.

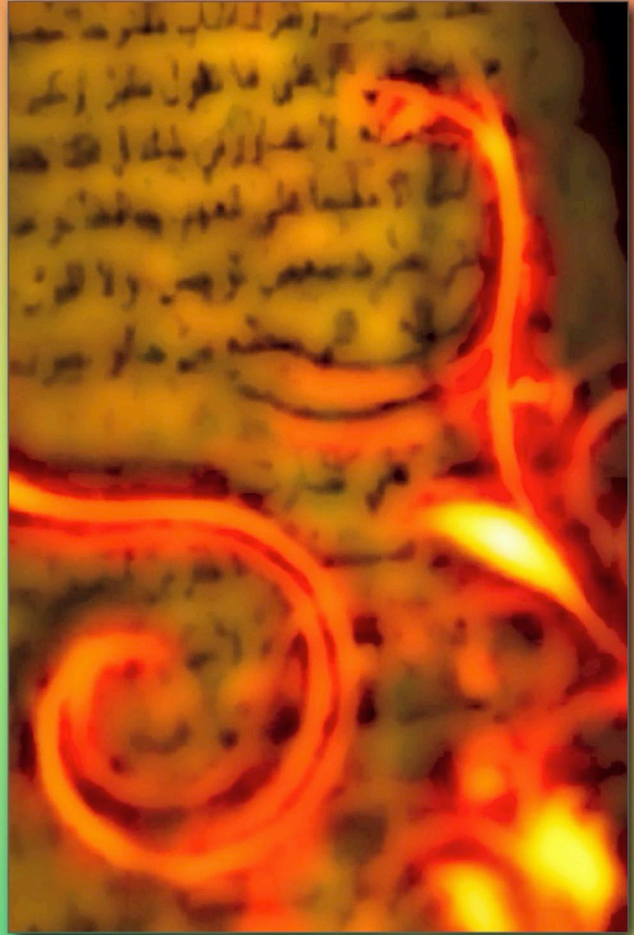


We the living hereby agree to do so, to live a being more intense, to leap toward higher orders of magnitude, to revel in the glories of conscious life, to attain each minute a more euphoric mood, and to enjoy this resultant increased intensity of experience, and build on it, etc.



P. Torney  
© 1997

# Breakfast



## — Chapter 12 — Breakfast

A day passed, with its steady and pleasant reliefs, a sometimes parallel universe for them, and on the next morrow, Peter, reading the newspaper and drinking orange juice, waited in the cafe for his Angel of Dawn to arrive.

She soon came, staunch, and loyally reliable, and they ordered coffee, eggs, and sausages.

“I started writing the story of a day,” said Peter, “But I only wrote midnight to 7 AM so far; it’s mostly evanescent, as it contains some dreams.”

“Please read it, Peter.”

*A day, in the period that it subtends, is the cyclic unit of time, a pearl pure and round and complete in the necklace of months, a bead worn smooth. The days, polished by the clacking of time over the cob-*

*blestones, distance themselves, like echoes absorbed by the night, into the rosary of the seasons.*

*My day begins at midnight, the time when a day lives and dies as the date changes unseen on a timepiece—a watch-fire reborn from its own embers.*

*“Good start, Peter. Good metaphors.”*

*I lay barely awake, reading, the waves of sleep seeping ever closer, in circles, it seemed, lapping at me as my book fell toward the bed and once even to the floor. The cat had succumbed hours ago and slept, snuggled and purring, with a paw across its eyes.*

*Summoning one last motion out of the deepening paralysis, I stretched for the lamp and drew the darkness over me and rested, warm and naked, between the sheets. The mini blinds sliced the moon, and I bathed for a moment in the stripes until I turned away from the light and drifted toward darkness.*

*I thought of the pine tree under which I would sleep, next to the old stone wall in my dreams—my recurring haven of repose—in a securely warm cocoon of the snugness of a sleeping bag; here I would be utterly removed from even the touch of God, my body and spirit proximate to a new radiance, that of the day’s heat emitted from the stones back into the night air, while, too, in sleeping, would absorb from Nature whatever it was that was renewed afresh each night through the mysterious black conduit. With one last look back to the day’s events, I yielded to the sweet delight of dreams.*

*“I like the stone wall, too, Peter—it’s so—country.”*

*But, my deep sleep within a sleep upon layers of pine needles would have to wait, because the adventures and daydreams of the day, like pine needles on end, prodded my sleeping brain with their ever pleasant spikes.*

*Sleep’s circle had closed to a point and reopened on the other side, taking me through its black hole and into another universe. It was good flying weather. There was even a draft flowing up the slope of my backyard. Like kites, we gently lifted off and drifted down the long hill, floating, spread-eagled like flying squirrels, the ground falling away under us, as we, gravity’s children of the ski jump, were called home by Mother Earth; but, then, closing our fingers, and thus*

*making up for the lack of webs, we cupped the wind to rise even higher, hundreds of feet up, ultimately, into lofty and precarious flight.*



*Devil-dared, we sailed without the usual four-limbed chuted canopies that most flyers wore, which, although they made for surer*

*flight, often caused flat-on-the-face landings. We real adventurers wore minimum chutes, or, as on days like today, none at all, and figured the updrafts from the contours and temperatures of the land, and, every now and then in apparent foolishness, compacted ourselves into swimmer's cannonballs and plummeted for fifty feet or more before spreading and flaring on the cushion of full surfaced air.*

*My consciousness, as a passenger, rode with me, for I had practiced dream awareness and control, and, so, an event that would be normally little more than a remembrance now became a living and conscious thing.*

*I rose heavenward, alert and appreciative, a spectator mounted on Pegasus, riding the thermal drafts, and observing everything, like the all seeing eye atop the all-knowing pyramid, one looking both inward and outward.*

*“Peter, do you often dream about flying.”*

*“Yes, though sometimes I have to flap my arms to get off the ground.”*

*The night flight was lovingly interrupted when you joined me in bed. I partially awoke. You were refreshingly cool, and nestled lengthways to me, skin to skin; we were a pair of golden spoons. You touched my lively and intimate part, stroking its full extended length, sometimes pausing to scratch my thighs I turned and caressed your mounds, first one and then the other, back and forth, massaging your hair and scalp with my other hand. You were soon wet below the waterline, and you steered my rudder, already moored nearby in the flankette dock, into that safe harbor, where the waves originated and sought the open sea. Here, in the surf between sea and shore, I rolled and tumbled a long time with the swells of anticipation, and finally, in an eternal celebration that was compressed into a few timeless seconds, felt the full breath, depth, and width of infinite release.*

*“Interesting, Peter. And I love the water motif. Water is love's element.”*

*Heavy sleep soon called me, the bed gravity having at least quadrupled, and I sank, embraced, into that oblivion of sleep from which I'd confidently return. I dreamt of a small tropical island only a few feet wide, supported, it seemed, only by shimmering and sparkling diamonds in the pure blue sea. I was joined by my confidant, and from*

*here we reigned over the social empire we'd created, one that stretched around the circular horizon like gleaming jewels: friends going about their bright business of living life, sparks amid the dullards, gems reflecting value and meaning.*

*Further out, the sea was a golden bronze, and there the spawning whales blew their spouts as they came up for air. We sat wordless, aligned and comfortable, letting the sights flood into us, filling us. There was no other purpose except to look.*

*"As in life there is no other purpose but to live."*

*"Now and then I would wake up, and in that brief interval replay my dreams, so as to engrave them into my long term memory. The next dream was a chase dream; these were always welcome and were always especially exhilarating since I could never be caught."*

*"Let's hear it."*

*We were climbing redwood trees next to an old cathedral somewhere in Brazil. The building was a block long and apparently unsteady, for as we stepped onto it from the trees it began to tilt forward, tipping like a sliced loaf of bread, and I, thinking fast, ran to the falling front and bounded down the crashing stones as they formed temporary steps, now fallen slices of toast, as the building collapsed into rubble and dust.*

*Looking back I could see some of the stones rolling toward me, an avalanche. I ran and ran, each step lengthening, like that of an ice-skating racer, and soon each of my strides covered thirty feet or more, sweeping long and true, like broad jumps strung together, until I needed not even come down to ground. I floated a few feet above the road until reaching home.*

*There I collected my sleeping bag and headed for the stone wall next to the pine tree, and lay me down for a sleep already within a sleep. I soon reached out and touched the stacked stones, felt their warmth, and soon lost all consciousness...*

*"That's it. That's all I wrote."*

*"Hurray!"*

*"Some say that the day should begin at 6 AM, with first light, and I would almost agree, however, by the dawn of reckoning, the mood of the day has often been already set by the tones of dreams, and so for me the day begins with midnight.*

“As I awoke and reviewed my dreams again, I knew that it would be another good day. I could no longer remember a bad one. Perhaps, like a stable weather pattern, the good days inspired good dreams and vice-versa, ad infinitum.

“The daily almanac came on the radio and I was alert to listen, though still assured of staying in bed another forty-five minutes. There was no hurry. This time was planned.

“I got up, turned on the heat, dressed, fed the cats, and put on the eggs, bacon, and sausages. Opening the door to get the newspaper, I inhaled that wonderful deep drought of cool outdoor air during that first moment in which one is immune to even the lowest temperatures. This was followed by a drink of water from the well; I felt its coldness flow all the way down to my stomach.”

“I love it, Peter; it demonstrates the true excitement of everyday life, especially during the time of sleep, which most people feel is a big blank, but is actually a wondrous time if you’re aware of it, like a movie filmed in Cinemascope and 3-D, a virtual reality in which you can script and star.”

“Yes, I’m trying to show that everyday life can be much more than ordinary if people would just live it. Money and fame are not required.”

“Our everyday life is exciting.”

“Yes, we find glory in everyday things like walking, reading, working, nature, talking, dining, and loving.”

“And in meeting friends giving love to relatives and families, a glass of water from the well, fresh air, swinging on a porch swing, being together.”

“Yes, it’s a life available to everyone, but it takes a certain style and attitude of openness and spontaneity.”

“A lot of people just complain and sit around not acting on their dreams. Like robots, they run the same old rat race. Rush, rush.”

“They give their time to hurry’s worry.”

“And so they ever go breathless, back and forth in the scurry.”

“Focusing straight ahead, the balance all blurry.”

“Cold, unseeing, blinded by the flurry.”

“Yes, and when the angels of opportunity came to visit them, they didn’t even know they were there.”

“And, Peter, neither did they love.”

“No, Angel, they hoarded their love, or couldn’t bother with it.”

“Living well is more a matter of ready reaction to opportunity than a calculated, scheduled, ponderous activity.”

“And all of Earth’s pleasures are greatly increased when you have someone to share the living with.”

“The excitement is more.”

“We’re a good match.”

“We are open.”

“And giving.”

“I love you.”

“An Angel came to visit me.”

“St. Peter has arrived.”

“I love you so very much.”





If flowers had never existed,  
could you have imagined them?



# Everyday Life



## — Chapter 13 — Everyday Life

### TODAY

*Yesterday is gone, dead and buried—History;  
Tomorrow, the future is unknown—a Mystery;  
Today is a gift—That's why it's called the Present.*

Many days came and went, days and nights balanced with work and play and the accounts of these times rest in the journals of Peter and Angelina, in their chronicles of love and hope, some pages of which they carried to read to each other, later on this day.

After work, having put in a full hard day, Peter met Angelina in the half light dusk of the dwindling year, and they sought out the Hudson River on an unusually warm November day, walking down toward the water through a vineyard. A few grapes missed by the harvest yet clung to the vines, still ripe enough not to taste sour, so they picked them and fed each other. Her pet crow had already found them and was pecking at the grapes.

As they sat on the rocks at the river shore, they saw the sun in the water at their feet; it was as a fire floating on the water and was almost too bright to look at, for it shimmered. The river was really flat, at no tide, and the reflected clouds in the water were as an impressionist painting.

Off in the distance they could see the Kingston-Rhinecliff bridge. The Catskills were clear, too. The diamonds in the river crept toward them as the sun passed its zenith and began its glide down the zodiacal arc. The floating fire on the water now shone directly into their eyes.

“Imagine,” she said, “fire exists in water; who says they can’t mix.”

“Yes,” I answered, “water is supposed to conquer fire. Your sweet-water always puts my fire out!”

“True,” she replied, “But afterwards you rekindle the flame.”

An old propeller plane flew by from the Rhinebeck aerodrome in a sky already laced with vapor trails in the high cold air. They looked up and watched it pass.

“Looks like World War II is starting up again,” he noted.

“We’re on the same side,” she affirmed, “An American boy and a French-Italian girl hiding out in the countryside, near Paris.”

“I know,” Peter said, “I’ve come to the country of love.”

Laying on the ground, they were still looking up at the vapor trails.

“See that line across the south?” he asked. “That’s the Tropic of Cancer.”

Angelina just smiled and said “Come to me, honey.”

“You’re the honey,” he said, “and I’m the bee.”

Making love, they grew intense, and he picked her head up, holding it and pressing her kissing lips even closer onto his. Then he lifted her upper body as well and brought her onto him all the more.

Around them were the dried weed flowers of autumn and some bare stalks of corn. Up the hillside they could see the grapeless vines stretching for acres and acres. The air was filled with the scent of smoke from a pile of burning leaves. With a mock French accent, Peter said, “Angelina, zis ize America!”

“You’re deep in France right now,” she answered.

He closed his eyes, and yes, he was surely in France, but also in the French countryside. There he could see the fields of grain in her native land waving with the soft breezes. There he could see the ravages of her homeland caused by two World Wars—the reason her parents had to leave. Peter opened his eyes again and saw the glory of the American countryside reflected in her eyes. Stability was here, in them.

The sun set behind the mountains as each ring of floating fire in the water was snapped, one by one. Like the night snuggling the day, the partners merged in the magic of twilight. Breathing deep, they took into their senses all that life could give. They held each other trustingly, knowingly, peacefully.

“I wrote a romantic story;” Peter said later, pulling out some folded sheets of paper. “It’s about us, about our cottage that we’ve fixed up, about a recent time when I came to visit at night.”

“Let’s hear it.”

### *The Cottage in the Woods (La Maison aux Bois)*

*As I walked along the stream side path, the memories of the wrenching workday were worn away by the soothing sounds of the water lapping on the rocks.*

*Cares floated away on the outgoing tide, replaced by the sun-sparkles on the water—which alighted on my mind, still glimmering, and danced as they became my imagination’s hopeful ideas about the night to come. It was about a mile to the cottage and I almost started to run, but it was getting dark and cold and slippery. As I walked, I thought of Thoreau’s words on life: “Simplify, simplify, simplify!”*

*Winter twilight came and ended just as quickly, and the planets of Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars hung like Christmas ornaments on the tree branches. Through the wider gaps between the trees, I could see the*

*Milky Way and Orion's Belt, those sights assuring me that I was going in the right direction. I felt good already because I knew that these woods belonged me whenever I walked through them.*

*I felt for the key in my pocket to make sure I had it. By giving me a key, Angelina had showed a lot of trust in our love, and by accepting the key I had showed her the same.*

*"Please don't knock," she had always said, "Use your key and just enter."*

*As I walked, I breathed in deeply and thought of her warmth and love; upon breathing out, I thought to expel all that was destructive in this hectic and hurried world. Soon I was able to imagine the taking of her breath into my lungs and the breathing of mine back into hers, and it was through this trance that I quickly arrived at the cottage without really noticing the passage of time.*

*I stopped outside, went to the cellar, and selected a bottle labeled "du vin francais".*

*There was no electricity in the cottage, of course, just candles, as I noted the love light in the window. This farmhouse cottage is our retreat; it is our inner sanctum, our love temple, our trysting spot, our Heaven and haven.*

*I stood back from the door until I was sure I had the right key, for I didn't want to fumble around at the door in the dark. As I opened the door, her puppy and kittens greeted me, and I let them out as usual. The room flickered in the candlelight and I knew that my eyes would soon get used to the dark.*

*Meanwhile, I pretended I was blind and walked the way that my feet knew. I put another log on the fire, then drew closer to the flames, warming myself. A recurring thought returned, that said "That fire was winter's only fruit, that peace and quiet and rest were her bounty". It's more than enough, I thought, more than enough.*

*I poured two glasses of wine and set them out on the table, leaving the bottle uncorked so the wine could breathe and develop. Then I passed through the kitchen and smelled the duck warming in the wood stove. As I parted the beaded curtains of the bedroom doorway, I saw her lying there through the canopy's colored veils. She was resting from her day and was half awake and half asleep. It was in this dream world state that she often wanted to greet me. I removed my*

shoes and clothes and lifted the covers and snuggled into bed beside her.

We never spoke any words upon this type of meeting—we just kissed, and sometimes neither of us would break off the kisses—the kisses would go on and on, endlessly, not quenching the thirst but only deepening it.

I snuggled against her and she pulled my arm and hand across her body. Soon we were in the flankette position that we usually ended our lovemaking with: side by side, she on her back, me on my left side, my right leg between hers, our lips kissing, my left hand massaging her nape and hair, my right hand very slowly securing her breasts.

As we held each other, I could sense that the world was fading, that the outside world no longer existed, that the physical boundaries between us were being dissolved by our love, that we were merging into one being, traveling into a dimension beyond time, that we were arriving at the innermost sanctum of our joined selves.

Still no words were spoken. I saw and felt the glow of the headboard candle as it bathed our bodies in the flickering light. Now and then I would reach up and tip the wax to brighten the candle.

She was dressed in my favorite colors of red and black. Her scent was Angel of Midnight. The burning incense suggested memories of ancient times. She was Cleopatra, I was Anthony; I was her Sultan, she was my Sultana; I was Napoleon, she was Josephine.

Still no words had been spoken. I was the Tzar, she was the Tzares; she was Shaktu and I was Shiva. She was the passion flower and I was the bee; she was the butterfly and I was the wind.

She opened her eyes and spoke at last: “Bonjour, monsieur.”

“Je t’aime,” I replied.

“Avez-vous le temps de rester un moment?” she inquired?

“Oui, oui, mademoiselle,” I answered.

“Soixante-neuf?” she asked.

“Oui, oui, une amie, tous les soirs!” I exclaimed.

“Je m’appelle Angelina,” she whispered softly.

“Magnifique, Peter. I’ll write a response tonight and read it to you tomorrow.”

The workday passed quickly, and Peter, ignoring the recent hub-bub at work concerning six sigma, team partnership, ranking, market driven quality, and such other nonsense that was the fad of the moment, found himself again in the cottage with Angelina, she reading her response to him as the snow outside began falling steadily, old Autumn apparently having passed away.

Angelina read her reply to Peter's story:

*La Reponse de Angelina (Angelina's Reply)*

*I write this story as an artist because a story like this should be told so that other women can find a love so pure. Our romance is like that of all of the greatest loves of the world. We all need the holding, the loving, and the peacefulness of life that love can bring.*

*As I waited for Peter in my cottage, I slept in my bed. After a while I thought that I heard his key in my door, but I didn't let myself become fully awake. Before he came into my boudoir, I imagined what it would be like to be close to him. We had been apart for just a short time but it seemed like forever. (La eternite.)*

*As he came through the doorway to my bedroom, my heart began to beat so heavily that I thought he would hear it. I was so patient as he disrobed and sat on my bed. Then he lit our candle. (Il fait noi.)*

*He came towards me closer and closer and I could feel that we'd missed each other a lot. I could feel my body wanting to entwine with his. Oh, how I love him as he loves me!*

*All I could think of was how close our selves could be. We would join together to make one out of two, merging in heart, mind, soul, and body. (Je avoir la passion d'affaire de coeur.)*

*He laid with me and held me so close. I could feel that he wanted to make love to me, and my body felt electric shocks as he held me. He kissed me very tenderly and held me firmly. He put on some soft music. These intimate moments were like ocean waves on a sandy beach, each wave coming in and drawing out over the sand, pulling us closer and closer.*

*This man in my life knows what I feel and all that I desire. I know how to give him pleasures, and I love the feel of him on the lower part of my body. (un baisser) (effleurer)*

*This relationship is so full of love. We eat together with friends so we can still be a part of the world. We write and read and talk about anything and everything. We learn wonderful things each day. We can still do all of the things we did before we met. (Toujours!)*

*The tide comes in again to the sand on the beach. As the water recedes and leaves the sand I feel so peaceful and relaxed. When we're together I can feel pleasure like currents of water swirling round and round in my body—it has a center like that of a waterfall—the water gushes over the top of a cliff and sweeps me away. (Le petite mort!)*

*Anywhere he kisses me starts my energy flowing. Then I kiss him back and he kisses me again, and before I know it it's fireworks and Bastille Day all over again. (Le feu.)*

*I love it when he holds my hair as he comes into my body. I do the same to him. When we're kissing and he lifts or moves his head, I go right with him. I give him the energy and power to stay in me for hours. We rock and ride our boat, feeling the motion of the ocean.*

*Of course, none of the above would be possible or meaningful if it were not for the love that is the foundation of our relationship. There can be no icing without the cake; it wouldn't be filling. What is love?*

*The French tell it all when they speak of love. Our love is a feeling of completeness. We are each inside each other's hearts and bodies. Energy builds and builds and builds. Our minds understand each other. Our souls are as one. We build no cages. Love is set as free as the butterfly; it alights where it pleases. When you give of yourself, you truly give. (Sans cesse!)*

*He is like no other man in my life. I love making dinner for him; I love buying presents for him. He wants to give all he has to me and I want to do the same for him. Neither of us wishes to take; we only want to give to the other. We give each other the pleasure of our unconditional love. It is the greatest gift. (Merci bien.)*

*Now I will speak to my man directly: I am now a woman who knows of love. Your kisses are like no other; they are like the dew of morning; I am as a flower met by a bee to make honey. Our life is a garden of delight. (Joie de vivre!)*



*When you're close to me, my body feels energy and it shakes from the electric shocks that vibrate from head to toe. The warmth and tenderness of your holding has so much feeling that I want to just melt away like the wax of a candle and then passionately dissolve into you.*

*When I am alone and reading my Love Book, I feel as though you are still inside me, and I feel all of my emotions and think of my love for you. I am writing to you because I feel so much peace when I say "I love you". ("Je t'aime.")*

*When you kiss me in bed I feel heat and passion such that I want to give you my unconditional love as you give me yours. I want to give you "me"! That's how I feel each and every time we are together. The wine we drink from each other's mouths is so wet to my lips.*

*I never demand anything, because everything between us is so natural. There are no shells of eggs for us to walk on. All is of a peace. When you touch my hair and my breasts, I feel as if I'm being overtaken by magic. When I give you my love on your body, I'm giving you my heart and soul and the complete joy of my love. (Tout a fait.)*

*When you kiss me down on my body I feel an energy and a melody that says I want you there. My body plays music to the beat of my loving heart. I want even more of whatever it is that you give to me that makes me crazy for you.*

*Whenever we embrace, my body feels your love's giving. I want to feel you inside me because my feeling is that I have a man who loves me for me and who gives me his love and his body unconditionally. (La flamme!)*

*When you come into me I feel so warm that love covers my body with a feeling that makes me cry out with all of the energy that I have. I desire you, I want you! Your love has healed me in every way.*

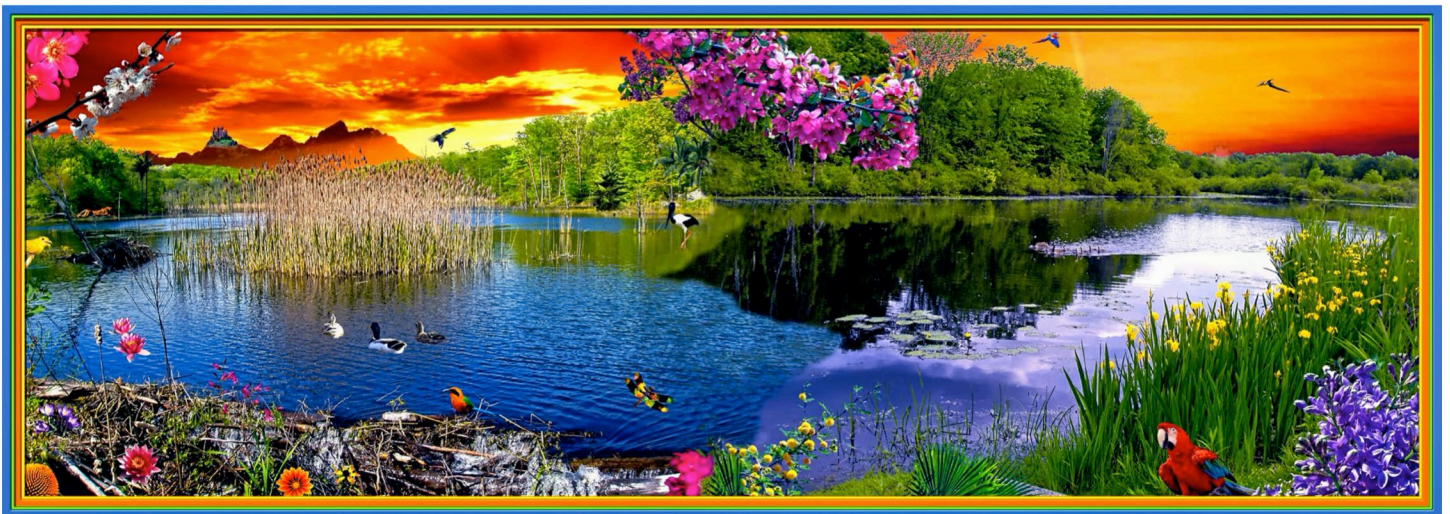
*My love for you is so real that I can live my life to the fullest in all areas to the best of my ability. This is love's power. (Beaucoup amour!)*

*I am your love slave; I am the woman of the French Lieutenant. You are intensely gentle and gently intense when you make love to me. You speak to me as a poet with words that make music to my ears. Romance in books seems unreal, but our romance is surreal and is from Heaven.*

*The kisses you give me drive me wild when you hold me close I feel like a teenager in love. My pen can write about all our wonderful picnics and lovely lunches that we have gone to. The more I give of myself to you, the more you give of yourself to me.*

*My pen has written much and will write more next time. (Peu a peu. )*

*Je t'aime, Angelina*





© 1991 J. J. J. J.

# Thanksgiving



## — Chapter 14 — Thanksgiving

Although the weed flowers marking Old Autumn's last tracks were still flourishing, heavy snow flurries threatened to bring a white Thanksgiving and either complicate the holiday or add to its romance.

Meanwhile, Peter pulled up to his terminal, brought up his 30,000 line computer program, and opened the patient for surgery, as he liked to think of it. Working swiftly from a red inked printout marked during coffee hour, he clamped off capillaries, redid their interfaces, and bloodlessly sealed them shut again, although these were only preparatory and minor repairs in auxiliary areas.

Next, the main arteries had to be incised, and therefore it was no longer possible to open and unblock the incursions in sequence, since indirect ramifications and side concerns quickly arose and

wildly flared, as fleeting thoughts, when one thing led to another, thereby requiring immediate attendance lest, they, in the formless impressionism of the art of computer programming, fade to vague remembrance, and reappear later, always at an inopportune time, as defects known as bugs.

The phone rang while Peter was juggling these evaporating images and so he had to ignore it; but, no matter, for PhoneMail would record the call.

Twenty minutes later, Peter had sutured the incisions and readied a compile and regression test which would either attest to the quality of the operation or reveal its fatal errors and necessitate the revitalization of the patient or, at worst, require a restoration to preoperative health from a backup file.

During these tests Peter played back the phone call and heard Angelina's voice: "It's snowing, Peter. Oh, and please bring wine for our Thanksgiving dinner tonight. Bye."

The computer tests showed zero defects, and so Peter, now fully back to earth, walked to the window down the hall and watched the snow squall advancing down the mountainside across the river.

This being the eve of a holiday, workers would be let off early, and so, Peter, anticipating this and needing an edge on the snowfall, quickly departed from the corporation, vanishing among the flakes. Although the snowstorm was in full force, the low center of gravity of the Honda Prelude prevailed, his radial tires being the first to chew the unsullied snow.

Three heavy inches had already fallen by the time Peter had bought the wine, changed into his winter clothes, and rolled into Rhinecliff, where he parked and elatedly began the long walk to the sandstone farmhouse.

Some flowers of the fall's second spring still poked their heads above the white death wrap that was being drawn around them, and Peter's brain stuttered in the acceptance of the incongruity of the scene, his vision wavering in the blurred demarcation of the seasons. This then, he knew, was the smothering of the earth's last warm sweet odours, the sad finale of the perpetual-flowering-carnations, the blanching of the still green and grassy banks of the stream, summer's last refuge.

Even the rose d'amour that he carried for Angelina had turned from red to pink with the snow's ivory dusting. As if to mourn for the fallen fragrances of man and flower, Peter stopped in the old cemetery and picked a marigold, one that was still vital, one that only yesterday had thrived in the warm heart of a tombstone and, as he inhaled its odour, a thousand memories reoccurred, and so he was immediately given back his youth, and the energy that would carry him well through life's final frost.



Rounding the other side of the gravestone, he read it, after wiping off the snow:

**THE WATCH FIRE FADES, THE FINAL CURTAIN FALLS,  
THE DUST WITHIN ME TO THE EARTH RECALLS.  
NO TALK OF ME FROM THEE BEYOND THE VEIL;  
MY BIRD OF TIME HAS FLOWN; THIS LIFE IS ALL.**

Moving on, Peter had to watch his footing, but now and then enjoyed an intentional slide down an unwalkable slope, for even mere existence had now become a pleasure.

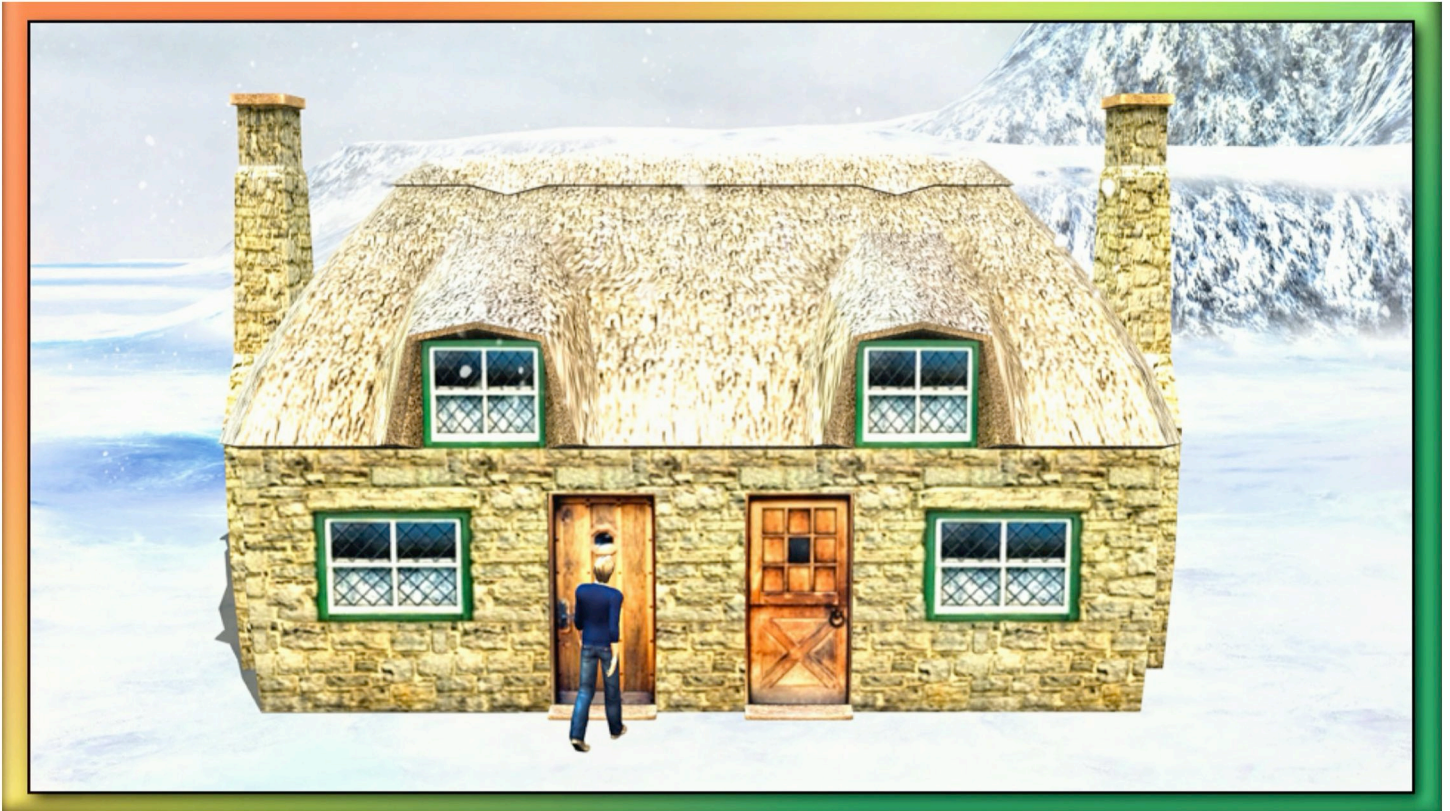
Angelina felt within her bones the onset of a cold winter, as she watched the blizzard out the window and prepared the cranberries and the stuffing. The snowstorm was cleansing the world, truly laying on it a blanket of serenity. As she put the broccoli into the wood stove, she reflected on the snowfall and knew that it was nature's way of getting people to stay in and enjoy the home from which living warmth emanated.



The inner child in her was excited at the prospect of throwing snowballs and sledding down the big hill, not to mention the building of a snow fort, which the little boy in Peter would no doubt dream of even more so.

She put the soup on the fire, feeling warm in her country kitchen as love and anticipation mixed into the glow of the new season. She loved to cook for this man who gave her so much time and appreciation. This was a good life of laughing and living and touching. It had been so long since someone had made her laugh. For this a duck would be served, along with potatoes, corn, broccoli, and greens fresh from the country soil. She lit the candles and placed them on the table.

Out in the snow squall, Peter knew the way, one that he had often found even in the moonless dark, and the steady exertion kept the cold away as he walked slowly and without alarm, for they both knew that he'd be a little late. Now he again flew like Pegasus, as in his dreams, and passed, like Santa's elf, over the rooftops in the gale, sweeping on through the valleys with the gusts, striving ever onward into the blinding tempest, often by touch and feel alone.



Peter could feel the bulk of the house out there amid the streaking shadows. Angelina blinked the new electric lights on and off a few times and called to him out the door as she searched, like some winter firefly, for the beacon of his reply.

Appearing out of the whiteness, like a ghost made flesh, Peter shook off the large flakes of snow on the porch and embraced her, youth again creeping across their faces as they kissed.

“I love you,” he whispered.

“I have a surprise for you, Peter. I’ll show you after dinner. It’s a work of art, my art.”



Peter uncorked the first wine, which turned out to be champagne, and, although they seldom drank a lot, it flowed and flowed in thanks this evening as they feasted on the duck.

“Where did I ever find you, Angelina? You are so rare. I’ve been looking for someone like you for many years!”

“Me, too. Where did you come from?”

“Well, I came from the past, Angelina, from a long time ago,” he said, swelling with the emotions brought on by love’s joy.

“Yes, I think and know it so, too, Peter, but tell me about it, tell me about us long ago.”

“Indeed I came from a century ago, the last time, from the 1800’s. I was a monk in a monastery, in love with a nun. We worked on the same books, she editing them and I illuminating them, and so we became close and met often in love through a secret door that connected the monastery to the nunnery. When the monastic village burned, I rescued her, you, from the fire, via the hidden door, and we set off together into the wilderness with an ancient book that I’d saved, and there we made a wonderful life together, eventually growing old in love, peace, and serenity.

“On the day after you died I lay on top of your grave all night long, intending to stay there until I myself died, when, suddenly, I heard the most wonderful and haunting singing of a nightingale, as if it was the song of my partner’s soul ascending.

“I got up and walked closer to the bird and listened in joy, enchanted by the song. After what I thought had been only a few minutes, I realized that, somehow, more than several decades had gone by, for I could see, as if from a time machine, that a modern town had grown up in the wilderness around me and all this I knew to be true, for I had been granted the wisdom of the ages while I’d remained unseen, as captured by the nightingale’s lullaby.

“So, I found myself here in Rhinecliff. And when I saw you on the porch that first day, I knew right then and there that it was you, the nun that I had loved so long ago, that you had somehow also been spirited here by the bird’s melody.”

“Peter, it’s true! I remember all of it now. It was our Bird of Time.”

“Yes, and now it is the crow. Angelina, we have come back to each other.”

“Yes, from another life. I knew it! I knew it! I just didn’t want to say it yet.”

Angelina went to the kitchen to prepare dessert, and Peter looked around, seeing all the work that had gone into the room and into the dinner. He felt a warmth spreading deep within, down into unsounded depths, and when Angelina returned and had set down the cakes and ice cream, they embraced for a long time, for centuries, or so it seemed.

An easel stood in a corner, covered by a sheet.

“I’ll show you my surprise now,” she said. “It is my masterpiece.”

“I’m ready,” he answered, walking over to it. She unveiled the painting, and said, “It’s the state of my backyard garden on the day that we met, a scene now forever etched in time and mind—this is my Christmas present to you, to us.”

She pointed out the aspects of the painted landscape, relating, “Here, the falling chestnuts of yesteryear, as from our healthy tree of love, there, the wild-hearted roses gnarling among the branches of spruce, like a strongly formed poem blossoming with meaning.”

“And there,” he continued, “The golden-throated lilies sing, and here a maiden-flower blushes, its purity and virginity reborn.”

She added, “And there a galaxy of sunflowers sways in the wind, echoing the luminosity of our love.”

“Yes” he continued, “Herein thrive all the flowers of our fragrant garden, even the silken saucers of the hollyhocks.”

“In which you caught a bee as a child, then shook it and held it against your ear to hear the aggravated buzz, even getting stung perhaps, then opening the flower and letting the bee fly away.”

“Yes, it was a long time ago, but it seems like yesterday.”

They quietly cleaned up the dishes, freshened up the bed, and slipped beneath those white sheets of snow. They rolled toward each other and kissed, shaking and quivering even from this, for they had now become orgasmic by touch alone. Their free arms reached out and around and scratched each other’s back and whatever else they could reach, adding fuel to a sensual fire that only an ocean could quench.

Thus they hibernated, snuggling in their quilted nest, cradling, cuddling, and nuzzling, like kittens. They ate another and another

dessert of love for the longest time, ascending, stabilizing, and then building on it up to heights that went well beyond the known physical boundaries.

Some endless time later he joined with her, as, at the same time, she surrounded him. He thus became the centaur, man above the waist and beast below. She became the tiger cat, in heat, meowing with delight. They were one, sharing the connecting element; there was no telling where he ended and she began. He became larger and larger until the surge could be denied no longer; they flooded together down the love stream as the dam broke, and there they coasted and rode the gentle waves. And still they kissed afterward, more so then than ever, and caressed and gently touched each other, every nerve tingling with sensation as they shook in unison, tidal after-shocks.

They left their bodies and once again floated weightless through the heavens and back, across the scenes of the centuries that they'd known: they spotted the first flying reptile, sighted near-man on the African savannah, swam in the sunken Druid cities of Atlantis, saw Merlyn building Stonehenge and burying the Crimson Chalice beneath it, watched the Sphinx weathering away, saved only by its sinking into the sands, witnessed the scaffolding around the pyramids that had formed the slow stone ramps, glimpsed the last temptation of Christ, beheld the fall of Constantinople, observed Sultan after Sultan rising and then falling from the throne, and looked at the first printing press.

Eventually they fell into deep slumber, cocooned in their embrace, and at this last second of consciousness she whispered a thought to him a message from the herein to the hereafter: "Peter, when we awake it will be spring."

...

# The Awakening



## — Chapter 15 — The Awakening

Meanwhile, the winter passed by, as hours and days melted into weeks. As the touch of spring awoke Peter and Angelina, they slid from their cocoon, their silvery pinions still wrapped and wet, and they breathed-in the moist and earthy air which had called them forth, and then gently unbundled their butterfly wings and billowed them into flight, as they, made younger by a thousand kisses, flew and fluttered in flux, transitionally, as monarch butterflies, but then transformed into a higher state that only few couples could know that of a young man and a young woman, a sprite and nymph as if so waved by some pixie hand, and hand-in-hand they ran through the tall and growing grass toward the pond, bidden, like dragonflies, toward even fresher visions, so clear and bright, that drew them forward, through all the summers of youth and laughter that they'd

ever known, as there, at the water's edge, they looked into the still water, each of them seeing only the other's reflection looking back, cheerfully radiant and ever youthful...

They had made it through the looking glass to the other side, to that higher form of love in which the perfection was unparalleled. Here the gift of love was given with its wrappings unattached—no ribbons; here there was caring for its own sake; here, freedom without recrimination; here, they rose above the bickering that kept so many couples grounded; here, at long last, after so many years of searching, after untold struggles and pain, they had discovered the unadulterated gold of love, pure and god-like—St. Peter and the Holy Angel and they lived, loving forever, in this time suspended, as the world grew older—they lived and loved in their Paradise on Earth that they had built brick by brick, caring by caring thought, sharing by sharing act, a foundation with a base so wide that its peak had left this world completely and had aspired into the rapture and rhapsody of Heaven.

Yes, spring is an overflowing of nature that fills and over brims the mind, body, heart, and soul in its overwhelming sensations, and it was life's fever that effected this undeniable aura of glow and warmth on Peter and Angelina, a blush of colored radiance, a force that carried them in the loving clench of spring's passionate power.

This, on top of love, made them alert, flushed, and breathless as they flew through the meadows, borne on the springtide, inebriated with the earthly airs. Here the grass was greener, the passion pinker, the hearts redder, and the feelings never blue.

Following the meadow trail along the wood side, they caught the secret scents of the jasmine, deciphered the messages of the honeysuckle, sensed the signals of wisteria, recalled the half-forgotten memories of the rosemary, inhaled the sweet breath of violets, heard the thoughts of pansies, and felt the early youth of the primrose.

As they entered the woods, the path became a serpentine writhe of roses, pink as a maiden's cheek, that led to a clearing where daffodils were arranged by nature's hand, all wearing their yellow pixie-dresses.

Thence to the stream, where lilies exhaled their powerful sweetness. Drenched in fragrance, they passed ever deeper into the forest,

noting the fairy-frocks, and more daffodils brightening from the spirit light of morning into the fuller radiance of day.

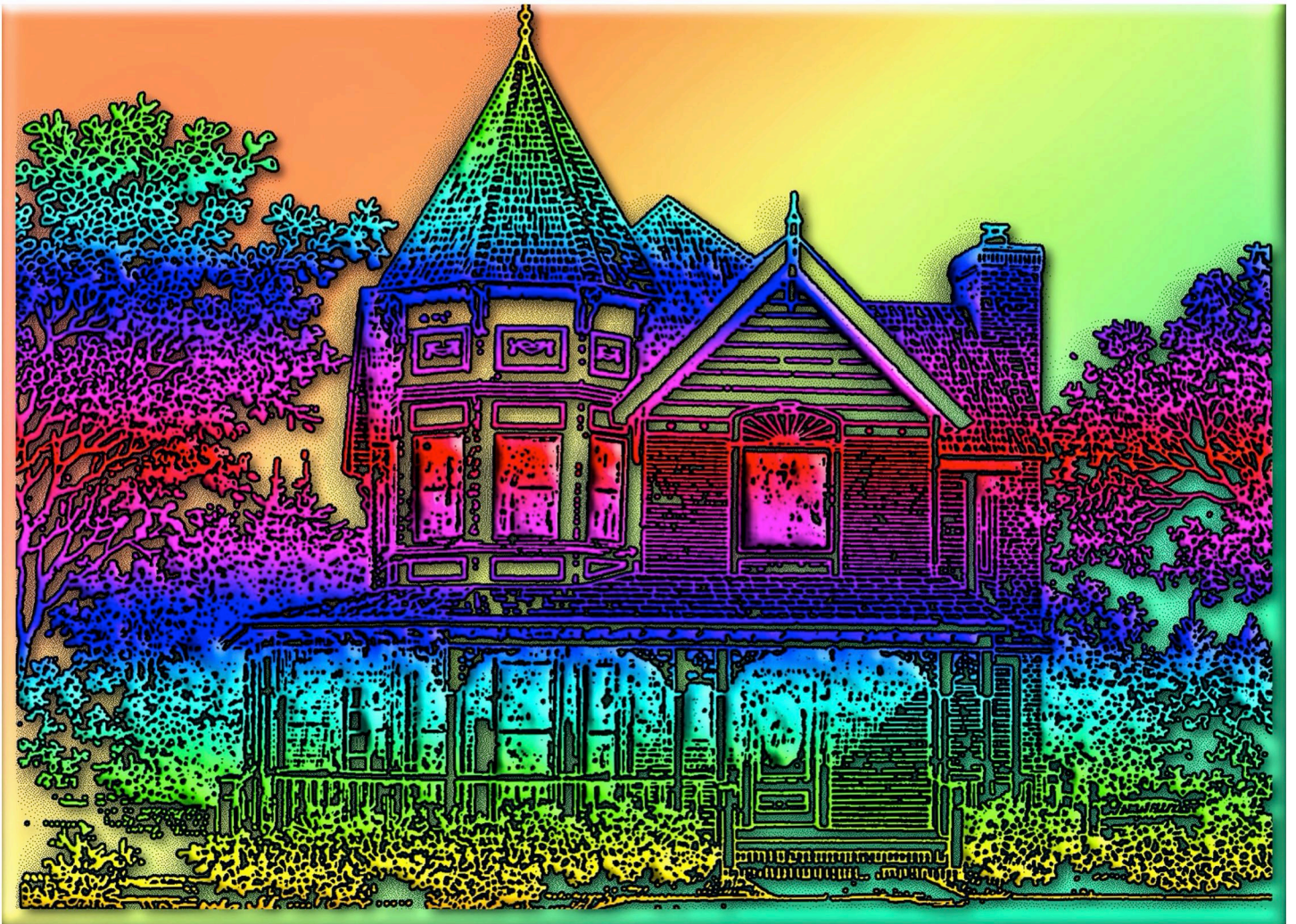


Further on, there were brilliant clumps of blue delphiniums growing in the ruins of old cottages, happy dandelions everywhere, lilac bushes as large as a building, irises in their soft magnificence, and laughing pansies that were dewy-eyed and velvet smooth.

Angelina knelt to smell a rose, seemingly becoming one for a moment, and, so, Peter lifted her to his lips, as if she were a flower, and kissed her and drank the dew.

“The lilies-of-the-valley,” she said, “Came from Eve’s tears as she left the Garden of Eden, taking more than just the apple blossom.”





# The Cemetery



— Chapter 16 —  
The Cemetery





They once again traversed the pleasant paths of the rural cemetery, a picnic park in the olden days, pausing to pick a few daisies and to read a few epitaphs, some funny and some serious:

**IF THERE IS A FUTURE WORLD  
MY LOT WILL NOT BE BLISS:  
BUT IF THERE IS NO OTHER  
I HAVE MADE THE MOST OF THIS.**

**WHEN ONCE I WAS, MY PRESENCE FULL BEHELD  
SPIRIT, BODY, HEART, AND MIND ALL IN MELD.  
MORE THAN JUST THE PARTS, I BECAME THE WHOLE,  
A HUMAN BEING LIVING LIFE UNPARALLELED.**

**THE BEST TASTING FOODS CREATE THE MOST HARM,  
CLOGGING ARTERIES, FOR ALL OF THEIR CHARM.  
THE WOODS ARE AGLOOM, WICKED AND EVIL;  
WOE, TOO, IN SEA AND SKY FULL OF ALARM.**

**I TOLD YOU I WAS SICK.**

**FIRST A COUGH CARRIED ME OFF,  
THEN A COFFIN THEY CARRIED ME OFF IN.**

**HERE LIES A MEMORIAL ABOVE  
ABOUT THE ONE WHO LIES BELOW.**

They followed the Path of Emotional Closeness beyond the Great Wall, stopping for a picnic lunch at a wooden table that was built around the trunk of a tree, and poured wine and ate chicken.

Their crow joined them and pecked for crumbs while the robins and song sparrows in the trees sang their territorial and mating melodies.

Angelina felt the serenity of the present, the now requited yearning of love from that long ago time, and the fair weather cloud of the future, sweet and thick with its promise of security.



Peter saw the selves that they had found in the unconditional love of a relationship in which all the walls were down, one in which the spirits had spread across the boundaries of their bodies.

Kissing deeply in the tree's shade brought the gentle wind of peace, and, as the stress of the workweek rolled off of Peter, they reveled in each other, on another day spent away from the rest of the world.

They touched each other's faces all around, then their backs and fronts. As they held each other, the world went by unnoticed, becoming nonexistent. A blanket was placed on the ground, and there they caressed and rested in turn, drifting in the quietude of the afternoon.

Lip to lip they fell asleep, intentionally, in the middle of a kiss, and, thus connected, their souls, already joined on their lips, were able to cross on, each into the other's being, and so, therefore, they were able to dream the same dreams, and thus they came to share the same muses and fancies of life and adventure in such reveries of love and attachment that involved the deepest aspects of the self.

Breathing as one, the rhythm carried them toward ever more profound visions and far deeper into the never known intimacies of the spirit, and on to the innermost purviews of love, beauty, and truth,

where they blended and fused in both being and purpose—ever coalesced, coupled and linked in a place outside of all time and space, where it was always spring, where there were blue roses and white crows as here we must leave them, although not for long, forever young, eternally ageless, perpetually joined, soul to soul, in a kiss.



— **Finis** —

Engraved is "THE END" of our earthly sigh—  
Six sides surround: five are dirt, one is sky.  
Shov'ring, Death talks to us at last and says,  
"What were you doing during all of nigh?"

END

The  
Last  
Remembrance

