



The Kiss That Never Dies

Austin W. Torney

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THE KISS THAT NEVER DIES

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Universal Creations Studio

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

Email: austintorn@aol.com

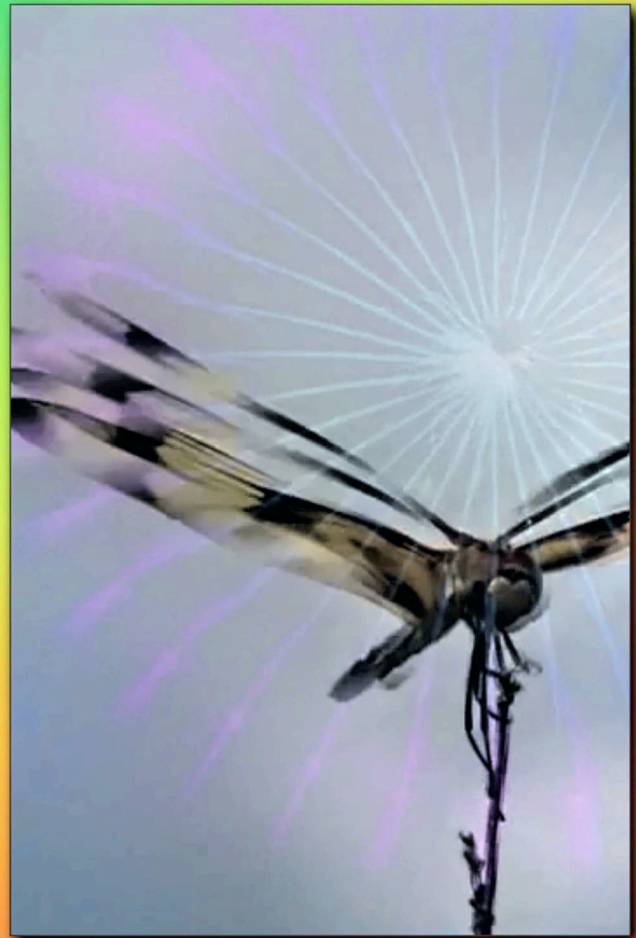
YouTube Videos: MagicalVideos Channel

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Spring



— Chapter 1 — Spring

Indeed, the world is very old, but every spring it grows young again when the angels of nature reconstruct it.

While asleep and fused in a kiss that unlocked and merged their souls, Peter and Angelina shared their dreams, while a nightingale sang nearby.

They left their bodies, and were able, as spirits, to see far beyond human vision and on into the life of things. Time had slowed down—and so they could even catch flowers in the act of forming—by mirroring the pixies and obtaining their colors from the reflections.

Peter and Angelina watched, as butterflies came to life in the souls of pansies—embodied there by an extension into the third dimension of fluttering flight, looking like flowers floating on air, and leaving only their dusty shadow prints behind on the pansies.

Angelina and Peter could see in the dark, for tulip lamps lit the path of the lane, and the hollyhock torches illuminated the clearings. The secret hollows glowed at midnight from the crocuses that were cups of stored sunlight. In the luminous back wood haunts, the flowers could be seen growing from the touch of nymphs. They saw fairy's-frocks, made of elfin sowing, and lady's-lockets, or bleeding hearts—the two heart halves joined in love—a gift to the imagination from the spirits loosed from Eden, along with Adam and Eve.

From the Virgin Virgo were strewn asters, or starworts, in the form of stardust and tears streaming down from the night sky. And wherever fairies had just romanced, wild pansies, once known as 'jump-up-and-kiss-me', soon sprouted and sprung from the amorous power of the sprites' images.



Lighter than air in their spectral forms, Peter and Angelina flew down the slopes of the hillsides, sailing just above treetop level,

sometimes grabbing onto branches and sling-shotting ahead, well out over a lake that was covered by a roiling fog, their perpetual momentum carrying them wherever they wished, a real-time virtual reality composed from the computing power of their united brains. They glided down the gradient from middle age into childhood, through all the timeless ages and all the ageless times.

Peter was again the Centaur and soon became Pegasus, having sprouted wings, and Angelina was transformed into the Flying Tigris. Here and there they darted in and out of the trees along the lake shore, sometimes clasping together their hearts, paws, talons, and feathers.

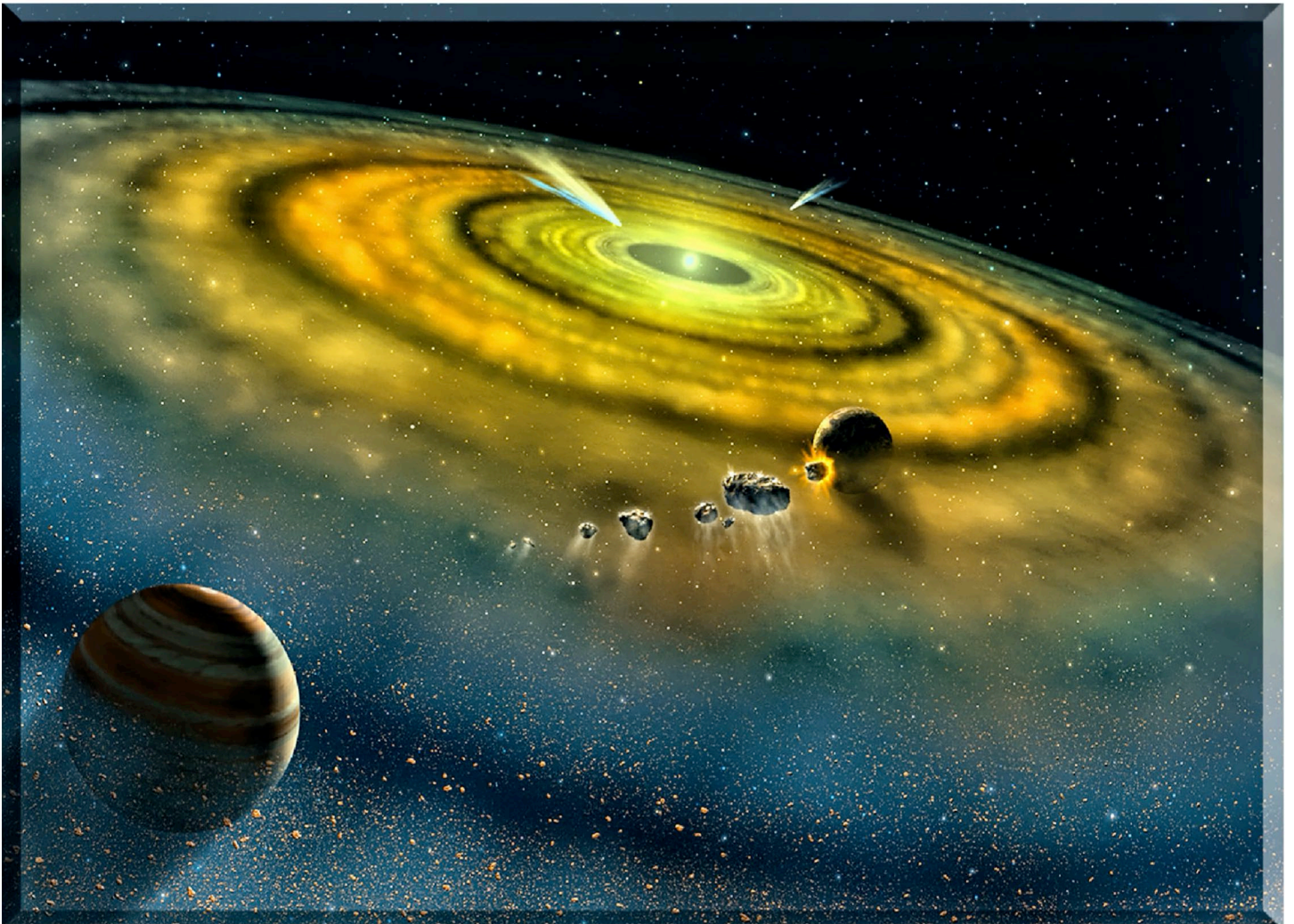
The ground rose and fell as they winged along on a cushion of balmy air—washed, for a time, of all mortal cares—transforming to human like forms, in midair, when they were high enough to be sustained by the updrafts.

Up above the clouds they would embrace, and their soaring souls would intermingle and communicate at those wordless levels, those that gave life and meaning to figments and phantasms, which in turn gave substance to mirages, fantasies and even further apparitions.

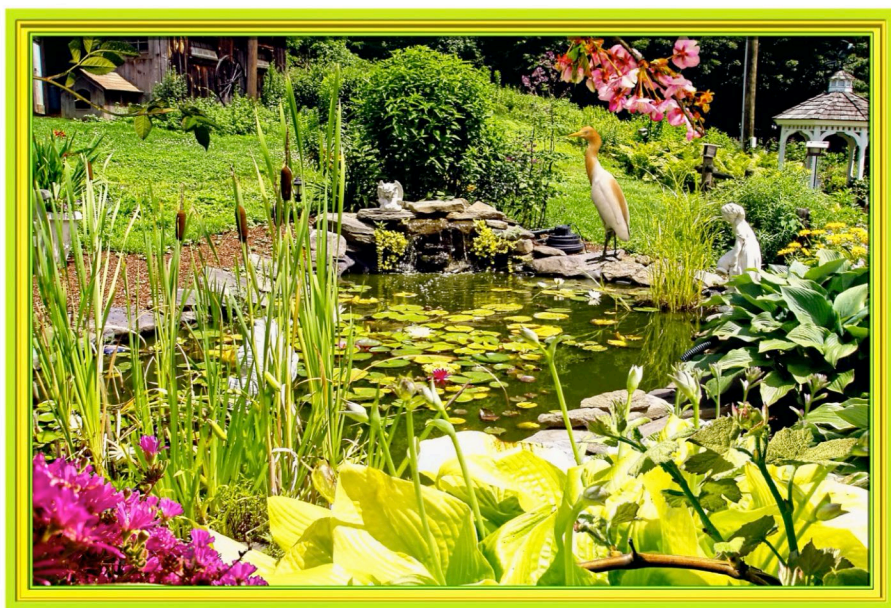
Outer space was next, and their wraithlike forms hitched rides on the light beams from stars, riding them toward their source, and passing, on their way to other galaxies, burned out worlds that were too close to their suns, and frozen planets that were too far away.

Into the core of Andromeda they dashed, into the black hole at its center, the beginning of the cosmic subway line, its terminus in another universe, wherein they emerged unscathed—clean and fresh and bathed in the radiance of love and light, and connected in both kiss and thought, still joined by reflection and perception in the mystical experience that we always refer to as attachment, devotion, kinship, warmth, affection, passion, and love.

It was the circle of energy that came from being one and in love and so it sustained itself perpetually. Out came their bonded spirits to review the world and all the aspects of nature—spirits shining and glowing, like vibrant glints and gleams among the facets of the diamond of life and love.



And in this state they awoke somewhere in time, space, and energy, feeling relaxed and refreshed by their sleep, and blessed in serenity by the feeling of well being.



THE AGE OF JUNE

*Now June embodies us—
It is the hinge of season and of life,
So—take heed, fond man,
And pass some few years
As the full blossom of the June rose,
For, these are rare times now.*

*Soon enough comes the autumn of care
Sobering into age, thence into
The pale white winter of death,
And not yet the warm indolent summer
Of contentment lazing into mid-age,
Though surely past is the crisp,
Flowering youth-spring of joy!*

*Behold now thy pictur'd life in June,
A nameless, happy season well spent
Between passion and contentment,
A time when life is made or not;*

*For I am now June,
And June is me in age,
And I can stay, or go either way.*

QUALITY TIME

*When push turns to shove,
I turn to love,
And retire to our woodsy home,
Far from the noise of day,
Where my partner and I
Live and laugh and play.*

*Here the phone cannot ring,
And there are no bills to pay;
We drench in the joys of morn,
Pulling out each other's thorn.*

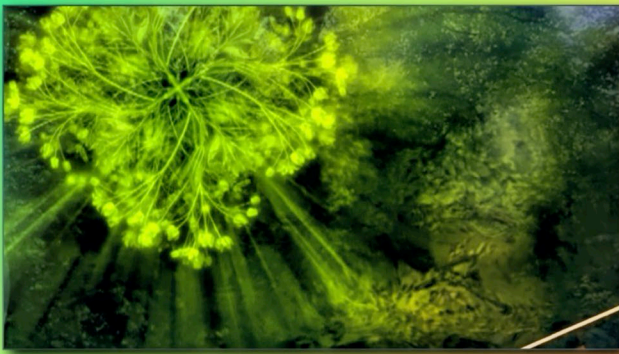
*There are no deadlines to meet,
No interruptions allowed;
We wander each other's way,
The hours to drink away.*

*No hustle-bustle or rushing
Hither and thither
For this and that
Small and smothering detail.*

*We just kiss away the stress,
And together caress,
And cuddle in the
Flickering candlelight—*

*For, in the love temple,
There is only Now.*

Travelog I



— Chapter 2 — Travelog I

They say that the world is at its most beautiful in late April and May, as the various tree types and flowers bloom thereabouts, in turn, so as not to compete for the agents of pollination.

On a day of deep blushing pinks and unbelievable purples, Angelina and Peter drove the length of the mid-Hudson Valley, taking back roads and scenic riverside routes wherever possible. Starting near Germantown, they drove up the winding approach to Olana, the Persian mansion, its outside brick seemingly consisting of gigantic multicolored Legos. In each room, they found a painting by one of the Hudson River painters.

After the tour, they gained respite from the morning wind at the warm brick wall behind the mansion and kissed as they noted the

river below and all of the Catskills peaks sharply rising beyond—in a live painting of the Hudson River scenery.

A riverside breakfast at Claremont Park was next. Bacon, eggs, and sausages were broiled on the grill, the tasty scents floating on the midmorning breeze.

Soon they were driving down River Road, past Bard College, and onward, through Red Hook and toward Rhinecliff, where they stopped for awhile on the dock to see the ferry off. From here they whizzed through Rhinebeck to the Vanderbilt Mansion in Hyde Park, where they rested for a time on the boulders near the shore, as the high tide brought the waves in and splashing against the rocks, cooling the lovers with a refreshing spray.

Thus reenergized, they swept onward into Poughkeepsie, where they rested on a stone bench at the Pirate Canoe Club after walking the river bluffs on trails made long ago, the view being much the same now as it was back then.

Walking down to float on some wooden piers, they noted the passing of the sloop Clearwater, and also some jet skiers, a strange mixture of old and new.

A shady Sheafe road took them past the bustle of the malls and into Bowdoin Park where they cooked a chicken. The park was to become a portion of the proposed Greenway, which from here would connect to the Reese Wildlife Sanctuary.

From Wappingers Village, they followed the creek side road, taking the historic tour past the old estates, and thence toward Chelsea, where they stopped at the marina for a riverside kiss, then drove along lilac row, seeing views of Newburgh Bay, and swiftly passed Castle Point and the Correctional Institute

They then drove on through Beacon, to the hallowed view of Storm King mountain, where they rested on Sandy Beach, swimming in the warm currents, then ate a leisurely dinner at Breakneck Lodge.

From the restaurant, they beheld the entire vista of the great Storm King, and took note of the highway carved into its side, once the only roadway on the river's west side.

Crossing underneath the Hudson River was the Catskills aqueduct that brought water by gravity alone, from the mountains all the way to New York City.

In the river, where once only the steamships braved this narrowest part on their journeys into what was then the undiscovered country for most people, sailboats wandered by, and pleasure crafts motored along, between bites of Peter's triple decker club and Angelina's western omelet, for which they had built up a tremendous appetite.

After dinner they went back to the beach, put out some blankets, and lay there all night, loving, sleeping, writing, talking, and enjoying the sounds of the large waves, since here the river had to quickly rush its bulk of water through the narrow passage.





(Bee the Rose)



Travelog II



— Chapter 3 — Travelog II

Towards mid morning, Angelina and Peter packed, and crossed Bear Mountain Bridge, along with the Appalachian Trail, and wandered through the Bear Mountain Zoo, then drove up the mountain, for a view back toward the Catskills

West Point was next, the plans of which were once almost handed over to the British by Benedict Arnold. The fortress-like buttresses shouldered their way up from the river shore, at once protecting and symbolizing duty, honor, and service to country.

Heading back north, they passed the old summer mansions of the railroad barons, the tycoons who eventually became the environmentalists that went on to preserve much of the Hudson Highlands from encroachment by ore-mining companies, and from the power

plants that would have tapped the electric potential of water and gravity and thereby scarred the great Storm King.

At Marlboro, they headed up Ridge road, to Latintown road, passing Mt. Zion, and stopped to luxuriate and relax under and over the apple blossoms which had partially fallen and so had formed a romantic cushion upon which lovers could lay—as if in the palm of Heaven’s hand, safe in a petal bed under a corolla sky.

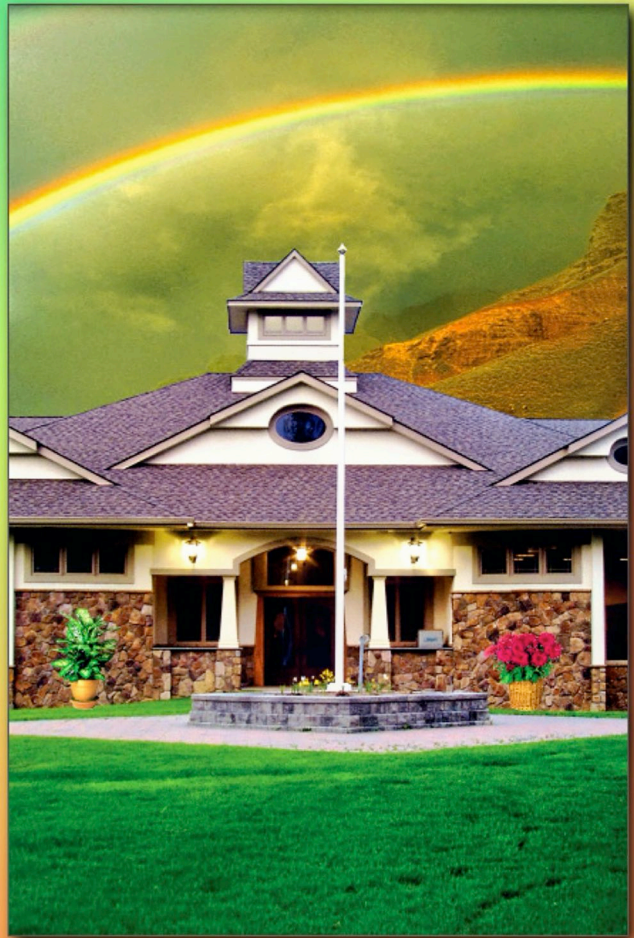
Angelina, wearing only a smile, was ripening and reddening, like buds that promised fruits from the apple tree in this Eden revisited. She removed Peter’s clothes, and they were not afraid that anyone would see, for they were well into the orchard. He drank the dew from her catkin and she did the same from his cattail—a catalyst that brought forth actions and reactions that built cathectically, like charged emotional ions attracted to the cathodes, reaching cathedral splendor in the airy and open heights and spaces in a living catechism of love’s principles, catapulting them into the cataclysm of climax, and beyond, into the serenity of catalepsy within which they catnapped, wavering between wake and sleep, in a never-land of connectedness brought to you by the letter ‘C’.

Driving once again, they emerged some time later in Highland, where they ate at Mariner’s Harbor, making friends with all the workers, and then drank a California Lemonade and a Blue Lagoon, well into the afternoon, the sun shining and sparkling on their skin.

Traveling a bit into the future, they walked onto the old railroad bridge, which was to become a treed and grassy pedestrian walkway over the Hudson River, with a small museum house at one end.

The afternoon found them driving past the many monasteries, nunneries, and wineries on the road to Kingston, sometimes stopping at the gift and antique shops.

Travelog III



— Chapter 4 — Travelog III

Turning west on route 23, they could see the misty Catskills off in the distance. It began to rain, but it was a gentle warm spring shower.

Soon they were heading uphill in third gear along route 23A, passing the four bridges that spanned the winding Kaaterskill creek. Stopping near Bastion Falls, they followed the trail towards the Kaaterskill Falls that were further in, and here we slow down their journey a bit to join them in a hike.

It had stopped sprinkling, but there was mist in the air and the tops of the mountains were shrouded. The creek side path to the waterfall was verdant, wet, mossy, and fertile.

“We’re in our element again,” Angelina reminded.

“Water. “It’s everywhere, Peter.”

And indeed it was: the creek was a torrent and the lower rapids were sweetwater. Rainwater was coming down the mountainside and crossing the trail in rivulets that sought out the stream.

It was slippery in spots, so they held each other as they crossed between huge boulders strewn about like giants' playthings. Water from the trees dripped on them as they walked, and mist rising from the creek drifted in small wispy clouds that settled in all around them. It had turned into a day with very soft edges.

Kaaterskill falls was stunning, with a first fall of about 175 feet to a ledge pool, then another 90 foot fall to the ground. A blanket of sweetness and serenity crept over them as they gazed in wonderment at yet another scene rendered by nature's painters. They made camp behind a fallen tree and ate a snack of cherries and bananas.

Twenty thousand gallons of water were coming over the falls every second, for it had rained very heavily to the north. The roar of the water, though loud, was reassuring and comforting, and, as they nodded in appreciation of it, the wildflowers nodded their wet drooping heads in return

Soft breezes came and went, and all seemed right with the world on this extended Memorial Day weekend.

"So this was where old Rip Van Winkle slept for over twenty years," Angelina commented.

"Just one of eternity's heartbeats."

She didn't answer, for they weren't speaking much in this cathedral-like atmosphere, and so they became relatively silent again, in reverence for the grandeur of it all.

Peter looked into Angelina's wild wet eyes, the many droplets dripping down her face, and she looked back into his eyes and deep into his soul.

A thousand memories flew by in an instant—of all the places they had traveled to in space and time.

Impressions poured forth from their souls, passing directly into the other's spirit, bypassing mind, manner, and sense.

"Angelina," said Peter at last "I see a friend and partner who understands the love and adventure of this day in the wonderful moisture of this scene; I've never seen anyone enjoy wetness so thor-

oughly—look at you, you’re soaked from head to toe from the spray of the waterfall!”

“I never complain about messing up my hair or about anything like that; I revel in my drenching, with a joy that says I’m alive on this earth.”



Her shoes were squeaking and indeed her hair would have to be restyled; her dress was hanging in a mass of wrinkles her blouse was saturated to the skin, and her knees were caked with red clay from climbing the steep banks where they had to detour around a washed out section of the trail.

“You’re so stimulating,” he added.

“And you’re so adventurous. Look at you—you’re quite a mess yourself! You certainly live close to the edge; there isn’t much in life that you miss.”

“I expect a lot from life.”

“Me, too.”

“And we’re here to give it to each other.”

“Live it, Peter, and love it—that’s our motto.”

“In between our eternal sleeps within the womb and the tomb, there is a lovely dream called life—in which roses grow, but wither soon abloom.”

“Love whispers ‘wake and live’, Peter. Where do we get these sayings anyway?”

“They just come to us.”

With this statement, Angelina undid Peter’s belt and reached inside. Her blouse seemed to fall off into Peter’s hands as he cupped her braless breasts.

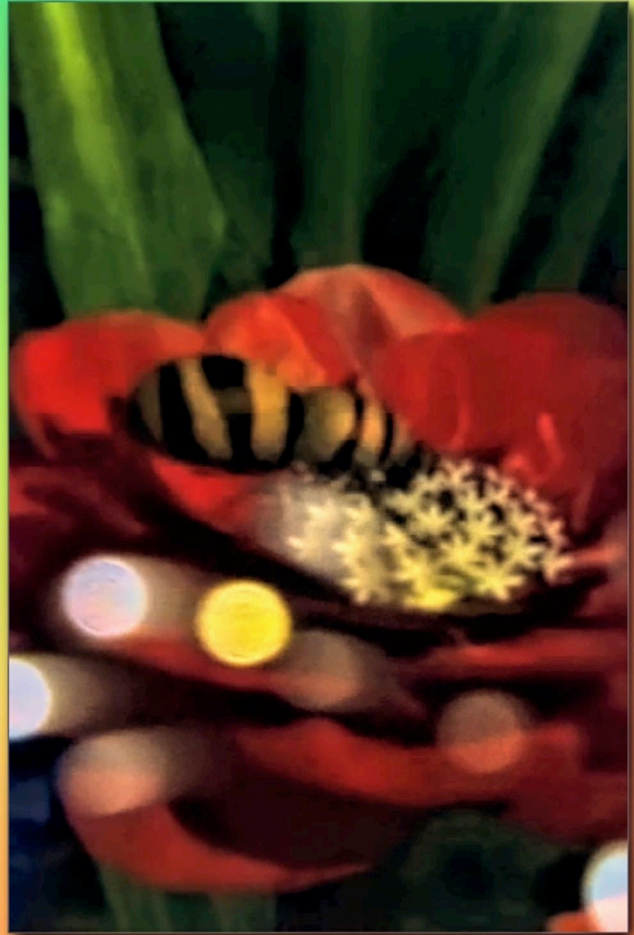
His lubrication was flowing, and several times he had to still her hand in order to control his excitement. She was a quivering mass of moans as they moved toward the waterfall, where they kissed underneath one of its dousing offshoots.

They placed their clothes in a flowery glade and lay on them. Their bodies and spirits merged as Peter plunged into the deep pool of joy as Angelina swam and heaved underneath.

Eons later, he planted his seeds in her flower garden, wherein tulips denoted truth, roses meant beauty, and lilies represented goodness—the three aspects of love.



Travelog IV



— Chapter 5 — Travelog IV

In late afternoon, Peter and Angelina rented a room in the ghostly Catskills Mountain house and then walked toward the overlook, the sweet scented manuscript of their relationship now open to a most delicious page on which they lived ideally in a perfect state—delicately balanced, so as to forever prolong that magic hour between day and night that can often pass too quickly for a couple. Soft breezes blew the edges of the page of the story that they were living.

They sat on a grassy knoll at the edge of a cliff that overlooked the river valley and the waterfall where they'd been earlier. The view was breathtaking, and, of course, any fall would have been death-taking. Their eyes swept in the vista, and it was almost too much for the brain to take in, for this was an unusual perspective. They were about 3000 feet up on a cliff edge, facing a sheer drop. The land-

scape of farmlands, towns, and lakes stretched on toward Connecticut. What looked like grass and bushes below were actually tree-tops. Here they slowly ate their dinner, and again and again they would look up and out over the never ending distance—and the immensity of it all was always refreshingly overwhelming.

After dinner, they lay face to face on a large rounded rock, a blanket cushioning them. They drew closer to each other until there wasn't any closer, and soon they became one with each other as well as with the rock and with the entire mountain, too.

They witnessed a magic moment that was seldom observed—the exact moment when spring met the summer and caressed him with her breezes and touched him with her kisses, awakening him with her last dying breath—as she unfolded her petals and became the rose—the flower that heralds the summer season.

Peter melted against Angelina, dissolved by love, as they became one mind, one soul, one heart, and one body. Surrounded on all sides by their unified being, they were about, around, next to, and within each other. It was a unity, to each a perfect second self, each a mirroring of the other's soul.

Angelina wrote in her journal at dawn and read it to Peter:

I'm writing this in the morning half light because that's the time of our relationship—twilight is the only time when the night and day can meet each other and kiss and this is the page to which our book is open. This is the time that we can glimpse Camelot and live in our own ideal world. We don't fight; we don't even argue. We confide in each other; we live in each other—we live in a perpetual sunrise.

It is always morning and the world is always bright and fresh.

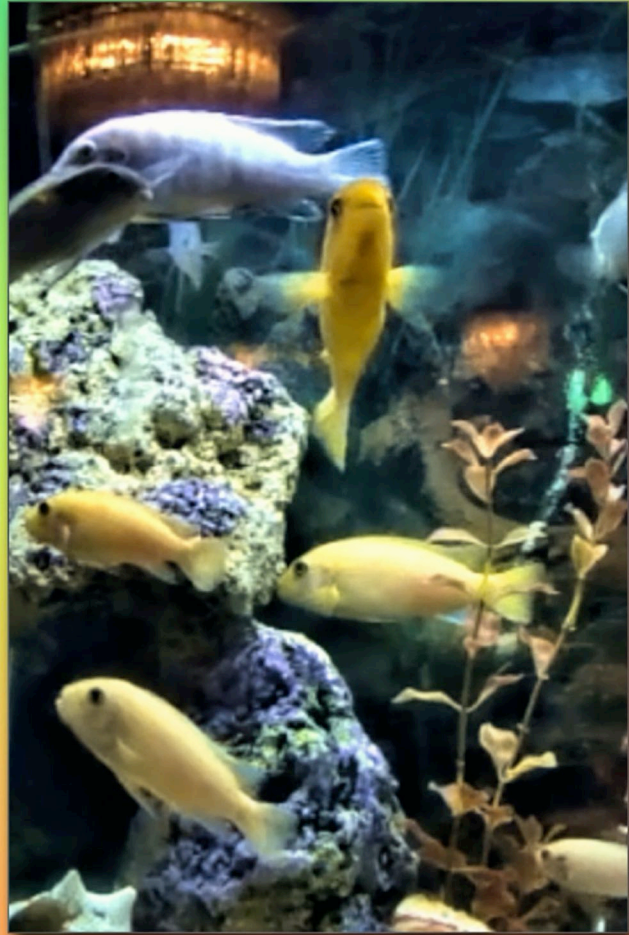
And Peter wrote, too, and read back:

When I was in your soul, I felt the shadow of Divine Beauty itself. I had joined with you—I saw your inner flame and drew closer to it until it was bright and all consuming. All of my senses within and without had combined into a joy which was quite beyond sense. And that's where we live, in that soulful dimension, where we will ever snuggle by our inner fire.

By evening, They had crossed the Rip Van Winkle bridge into Germantown, the trip completed in summer that had begun in spring.

By nightfall they were home, trying to count the stars.

The Corporation



— Chapter 6 — The Corporation

Back at the corporation after the holiday weekend, Peter noted the beginnings of a change in the atmosphere at work—the management was having second thoughts about scaring the employees with ranking and/or termination of the bottom twenty percent and of the pushing of too many people into retirement.

So many had retired, and morale had sunk so low among those who had stayed, that the company now had too few people—and they had been pushed too hard—for the company had let people go only to meet some nationwide corporate reduction objective, not realizing that head count was always too low locally; but, now that the local division was its own business unit perhaps an increase in head count could be traded off against increased profit.

But the management had severely damaged the company and the employees' morale. Just saying that they were sorry wouldn't be enough; compensation to employees and retribution toward management was necessary—so, heads rolled. The head of personal was fired, the CEO of the Company was sacked, and all the employees were given an 8% bonus and an extra month off, and, so, Peter was able to enjoy many carefree summer days, always taking them off on days of perfect weather, and working at the job only when it was too hot to go out.

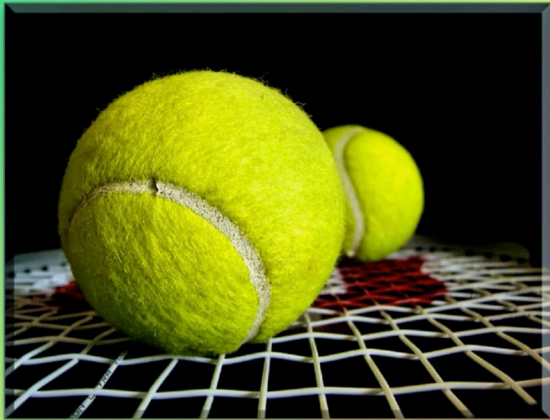
After getting his work to a certain stable point, Peter headed out for an extended stay in the cabin where he lived and loved with Angelina and where they could relax and perhaps write a book called 'The Answer Book', part of a self-help series.

They would also read and play and explore the summer woods, reveling in nature and life and all that was wonderful on this earth.

After fixing up their bicycles, they rode the old paths behind the farm, entering lands where no one had been for a century, passing old sugar maple barrels, ghostly summer camps, and an old rusted stagecoach. They found an old swimming hole, with its tire swing still intact, and so they swung out over and into the cool clear water.



Tennis



— Chapter 7 — Tennis

In the late afternoon there was tennis on the village courts.

“Peter,” said Angelina, “Our lovemaking is a lot like our tennis—it is at times very physical—deep ground strokes.”

“Or even violent, like a crunching overhead!”

Peter answered “I love it that way.”

“Or as gentle and delicate as a touch volley or a deft drop shot.”

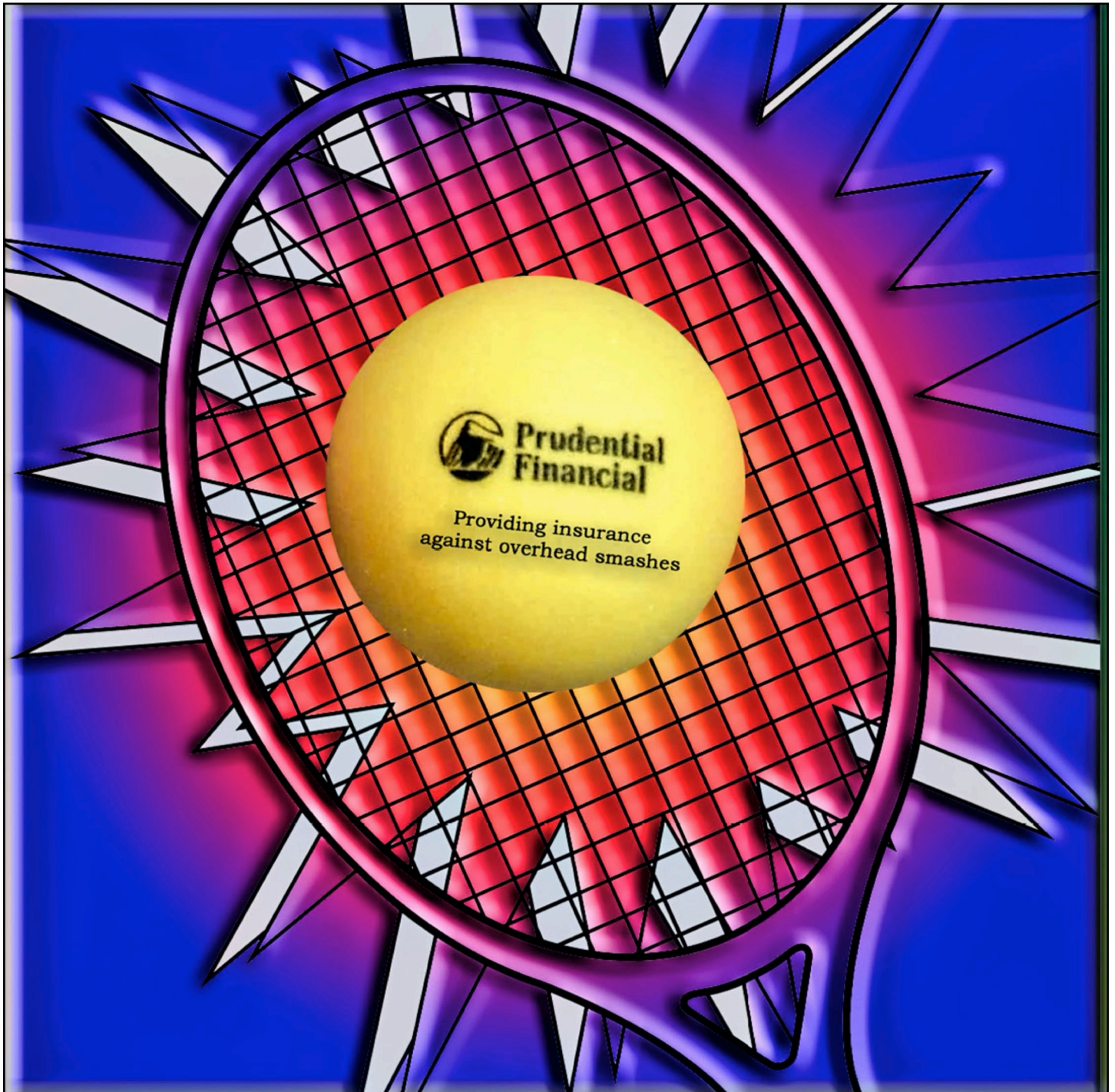
“That way, too.”

They walked toward the tennis courts, knowing that the game was going to be as exciting as the lovemaking that would follow, for tennis was a sort of foreplay for love.

Peter opened a new can of balls.

“That’s a sweet sound, Peter,” Angelina said. “Only the best for us.”

As she stood there, her sunny brown legs seemed to go on forever, and thus drew attention to the place of their convergence. Her breasts peeked out and invited Peter's glimpse.



Their tennis playing styles were very different. She was very steady and was quite comfortable hitting ground strokes from the baseline; he tended to close in to the net at every opportunity to volley her

blistering shots. The contrast made for very interesting matches, as every point soon reached the stage of do or die.

The match began. Her serves came in flat and deep, making it hard to get his racket under them, so he just concentrated on getting them back. She immediately pinned him behind the baseline and moved the ball from side to side.



They carefully watched the motion and direction of the other's racket in order to get a clue as to where the next shot was going to land, and the spin, if any, on the ball. And so it went. Sweat was dripping onto Peter's lips, and during the odd-game break, Angelina kissed it away.

"I love you and I love this day and I love this game," said Peter. "I love you very much, and I love the feel of the sun on my skin and the feel of the ball on my racket.

"What's the score?" he asked.

“Love-love,” she answered.

“How come we’re so crazy about hitting a fuzzy yellow ball over some netting with a bunch of string laced from catgut?”

“It’s some kind of drug—a wonderfully healthy drug.”

“As we are to each other.”

“Addict me please.”

“Wait until I get my hands on you when we get back.”

It soon got too dark to play and so they headed back—hot, heated, and hepped up—to their sandstone farmhouse.

He helped her out of her clothes in the back yard as she lay on the picnic table, her chest still heaving with the exertion, the droplets of sweat running all over and between her breasts.

“I can see your heart beating,” said Peter.

“I can see your blood pumping,” she replied.

She wrapped her thighs around him for long while. Then they entered a small pond and soothed their tired muscles—it was much like wearing a cool ice pack. They felt cool, refreshed, and sleepy.

Finally, hunger called, and they lit the charcoal and cooked chicken and fish. They next drank wine and drifted along on its pleasantness.

“Do you have new balls?” she asked.

“I do.”

“Then rush to my net and send a stroke up my middle.”

“My pleasure.”

She twirled his racket handle and gave him a preview of the coming attractions. He tasted her again, returning the favor. He straddled her pomegranates, putting his strokes all over and around them and between them as she pressed on them from each side.

After volleying back and forth, his blood surging, he entered her court, and they played mixed singles, then doubles, with tiebreakers, good calls, and angles from side to side. She touched him all around with her fingernails, especially the insides of his thighs, and he scratched her back, exciting her further.

After five sets, they finished the exhilarating match with an orgasmic cheer and then lay happily exhausted in the arena of unending love.



Do not
think

except for where
you want the ball to
go—then everything
else follows.



**Use
all
the
parts
of
your
racquet**

**you
paid
for
the
whole
thing!**

Sighting the Hidden Lake



— Chapter 8 — Sighting the Hidden Lake

The endless summer vacation went on, and they continued to work on their garden and their relationship.

The corporation was just a memory now, with Peter enjoying a two month vacation with Angelina. They got up at 5 AM each day, with the sun, singing like lovebirds, and had breakfast out in the yard with the roaming deer that fed there at dawn and dusk.

“Let’s look for the hidden lake today, Peter,” she requested; “It’s supposed to be out there somewhere, although it may be difficult to find since it’s enclosed on all sides—it’s a glacial mountaintop lake. I only know of its general direction.”

“But no one knows exactly where it is? That’s very mysterious!”

“No one knows; it comes and goes, living and drying at the whims of plenty and drought and, perhaps, from any underground springs. It wasn’t even there when they last mapped the area.”

“We’ll have to locate it from the air so that we have some idea where it is so we don’t wander endlessly for weeks searching for it.”

“From an airplane?”

“There’s a balloon festival at the airport. We could get a ride in one, or even rent one.”

“Let’s do it. I love balloons.”



After breakfast, lady Summer welcomed them with a promise of heat and with a breeze calm enough for floating under the clouds and, so, they rented an airship and slowly rose in it toward the sky, observing the topography of the land with their naked eyes and with binoculars, looking for a sparkle of hidden blue through the trees below.

“There’s our farmhouse,” he said, “And the cemetery.”

“And the mountains beyond. The lake is in that direction.”

“And toward those hills is a trail we’ve never walked on.”

“Yes, a clue—a faint path that can only be seen from the air.”

“But the wind is blowing us the wrong way, and anyway, we’re still too low to see far enough,” she said.



“Let’s go higher and try to find a cross wind going in our direction.”

“Fire the burner.”

He did so and the sky-ship rose heavenward with a great roar.

“Look, the path comes out along the stone wall on the other side of the forest.”

“So the stone wall can guide us if we lose the trail.”

“We have the right wind now; maintain this altitude.”

“Aye, aye, Captain,” he said.

The songs of larks rose in the air to meet them and pierced the stillness of the sky. Down below, they could see the wheat ripening and turning yellow in the fields, and saw the brightly colored flower gardens in which they, from far above, could still, somehow, sense the bees bumbling, heavily laden with the honey-pollen of the fox-glove, and there were wild roses everywhere.

The morning sun, though raised up by their ascent, was still low enough to give a glint off the waters of ponds, and this is what they were hoping for—a gleam of diamonds dancing and twinkling and calling to them with its glimmering splendor.

“We are always drawn to water, aren’t we,” she offered.

“We must have been sea creatures in one of our prior lives.”

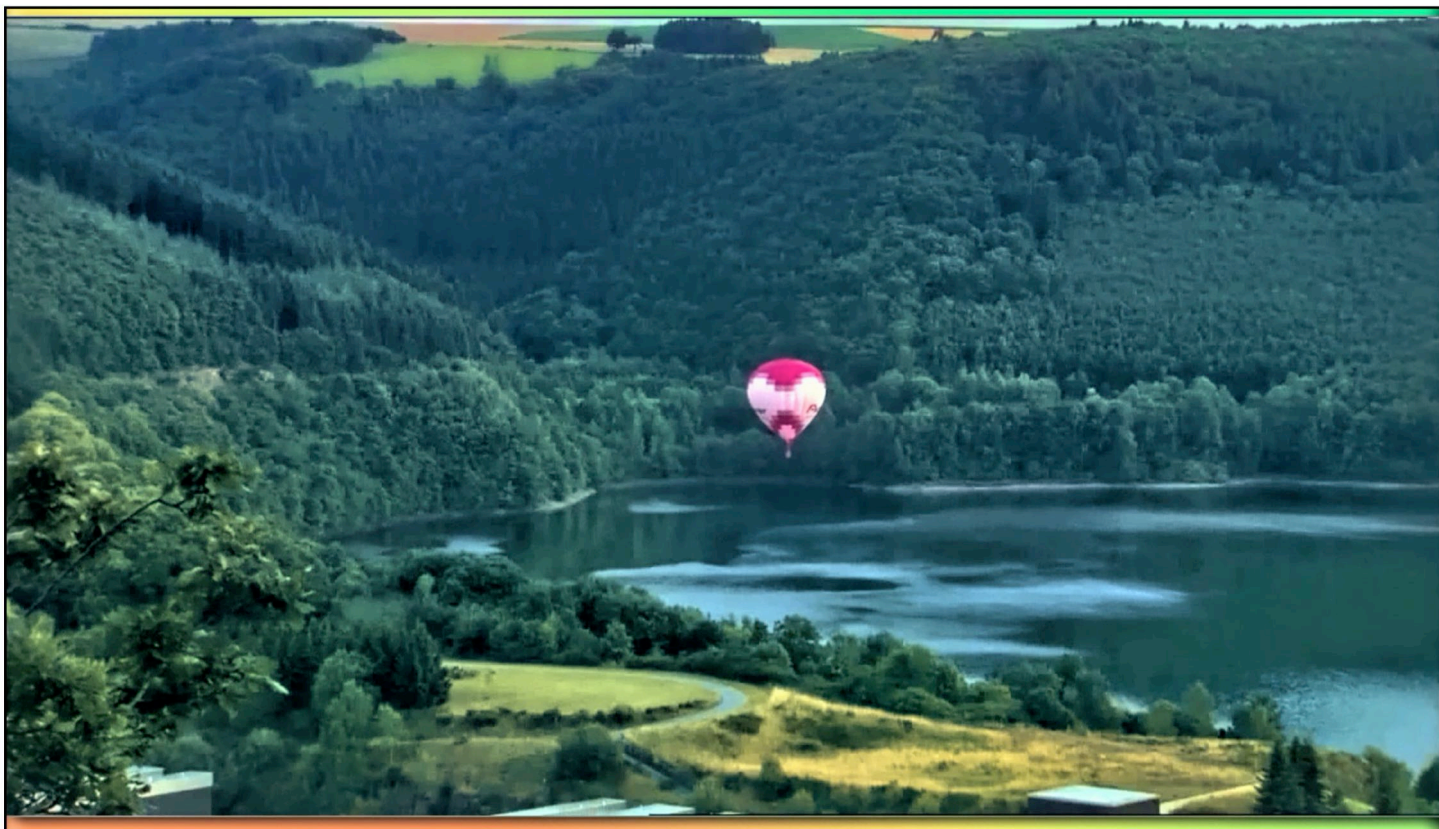
“We’ve had many previous lives together, haven’t we?”

“Yes, and they’ve all been coming back to me.”

“To me, too.”

“Look! At the third peak!” she exclaimed. “It’s so blue—who would ever expect a lake up on top of a mountain.”

“It’s just beyond the slope of purple heather.”



“We can take the pass between the first two peaks—there’s a wide valley floor.”

“And it has a stream through it.”

“A day’s walk at most.”

“How do we get this dirigible down?” he wondered aloud.

“Just let it cool and float down gently, although I must say that it seems like you’ve flown before.”

“It seems like I have, that I know how, but I can’t remember when.”

They descended and just barely cleared the road as the startled drivers looked up at them.

They landed, somewhat heavily, on the edge of the airfield.

“Good to be back down to earth,” they both agreed.

Toward the Lake



— Chapter 9 — Toward the Lake

They soon set out for the hidden lake, traveling light, bringing only fruits and nuts. The old cemetery loomed ahead; they entered, hoping to find the faint path to the lake.

Startled, Peter stopped at a twin set of tombstones. “What is it!” cried Angelina.

“Read it,” answered Peter.

1676—1759

HERE LIE PETER AND ANGELINA, AND IN YOUR HEART AND MINE,
THEIR EARTHLY APPLES LEFT BEHIND, BUT NOT THEIR SPIRITS;
FOR THEIR LOVE WAS SO STRONG THAT IT COULD NEVER DIE,
BUT BLOSSOMS AGAIN AND AGAIN, SOMEWHERE IN TIME.

“I’ve always felt that I’ve known and loved you before,” she realized.

“Yes, I know it, too.”

“Our love is so pure and true that our spirits live on and reincarnate from time to time, our passion capable of drawing us together in loving enchantment, even from afar.”

“I especially enjoy our latest incarnation.”

“The embodiment is most exhilarating.”

“How long have you known or suspected this?”

“Long ago, and especially since you told me of your grave site vigil and of the captivating song of the nightingale.”

“I’ll bet that grave is here also.”

Sure enough, they found a faintly lettered gravestone not too far from the first that read, in small letters that were already fading.

1790—1872

**HERE TOGETHER LIE BR. PETER AND SR. ANGELINA,
MONK AND HOLY NUN, PARTNER AND PARAMOUR.
AS BOOK ILLUMINATORS AND EDITORS,
THEY WROTE AND LIVED LIFE’S LOVING SCENE.**

“Never leave you,” she said.

“Love you always.”

A bird sang nearby.

At the edge of the woodlands stood the brave sentinels of the bugle flowers, announcing, by their call, the entrance of the lovers into the woods. Once inside, they drank dew from the buttercup flowers, that sparkling potion of lively refreshment.

“It’s going to be a good day—the scarlet pimpernels have unfolded their flowers,” he observed.

“They are the poor man’s weather glass!”

“We must have learned all about the flowers in another life.”

“Flowers had a language of their own in Victorian days.”

The heat of noon pressed down on them and so they gained relief in a cool green bower of jasmines.

They followed the faint path, sometimes losing it, but soon finding it again by predicting the way, and later on, by finding the stone

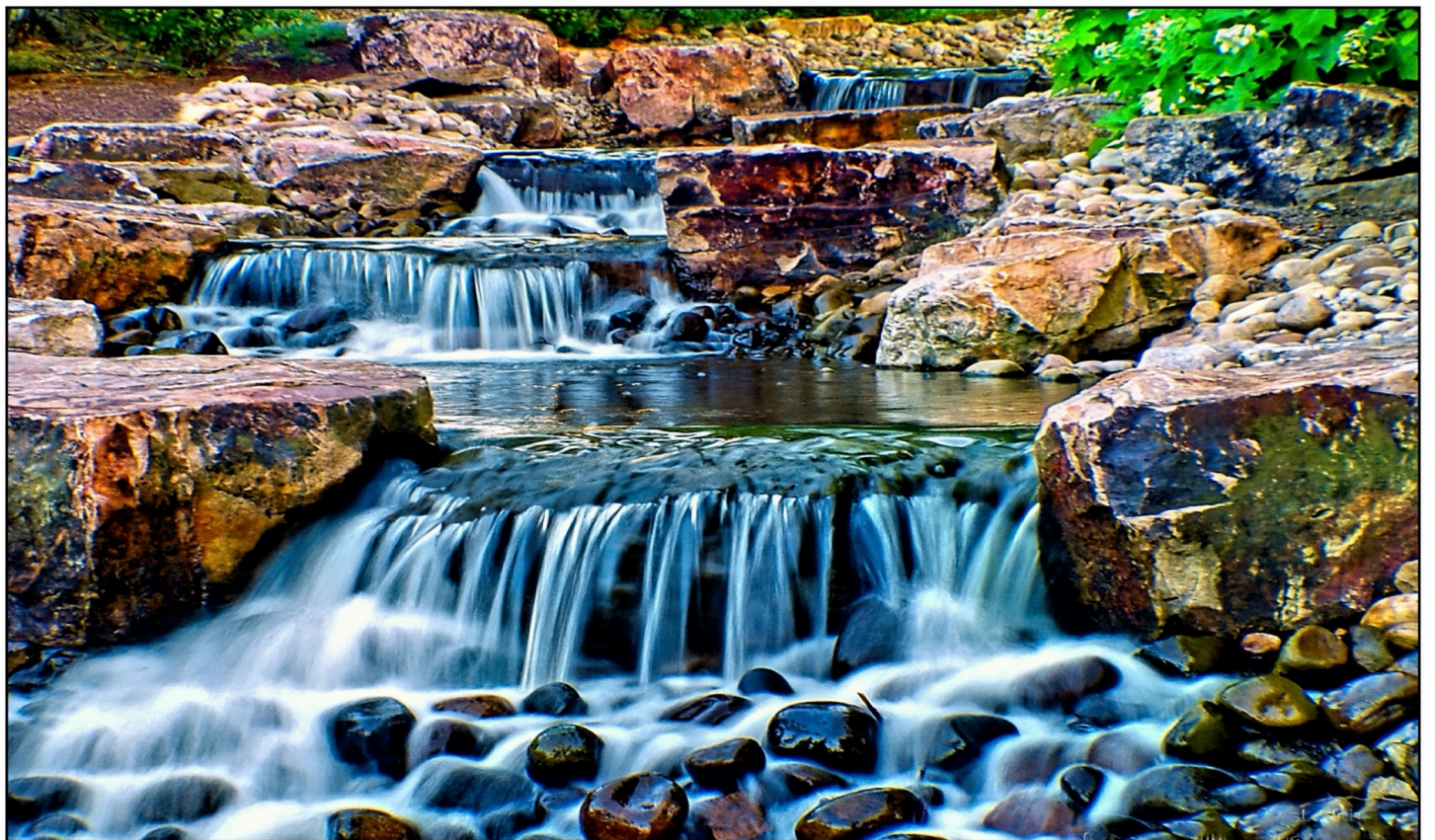
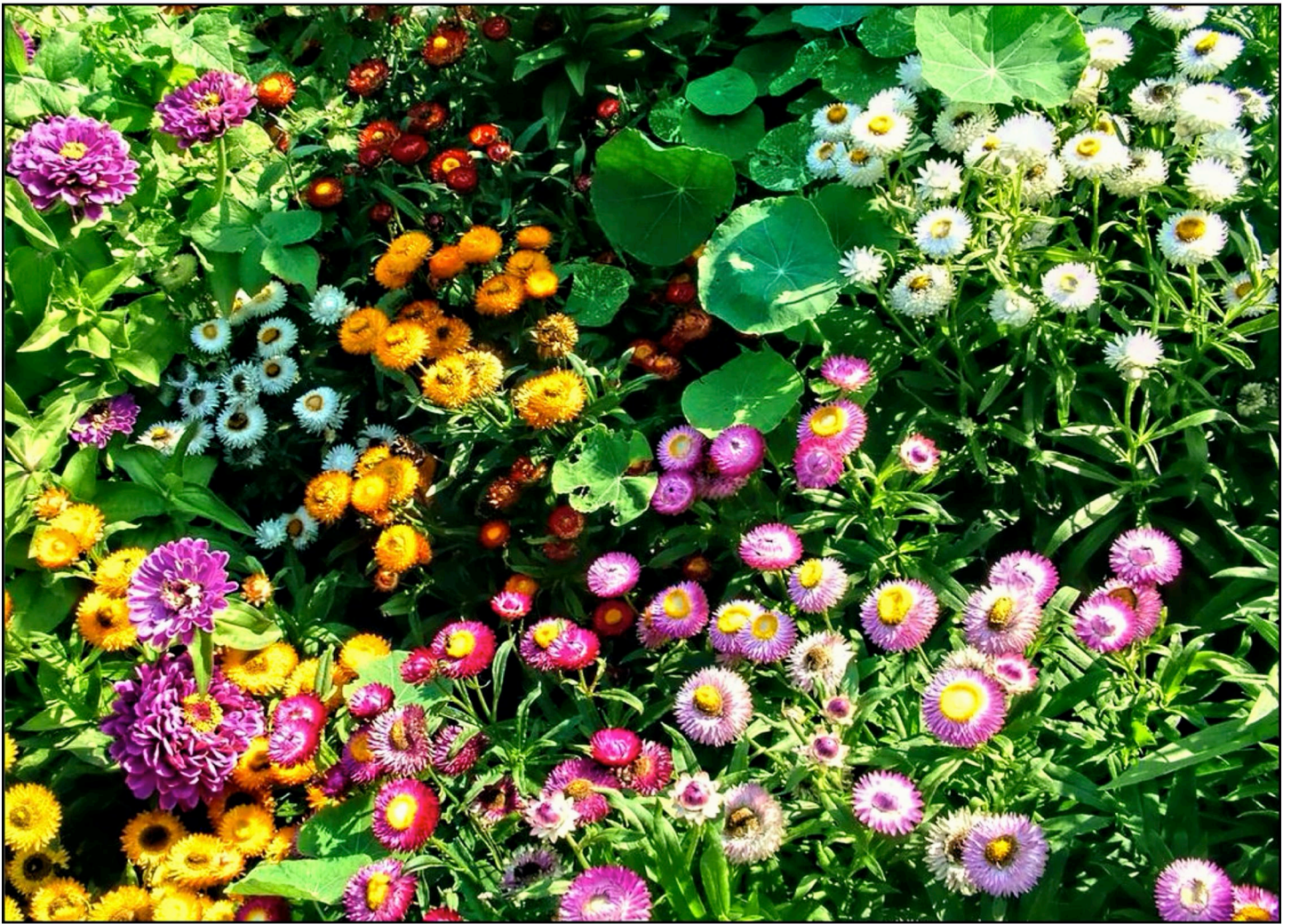
wall. It was hard going, for the trail was ever rising uphill through shady and scrubby places.

Hours later, after ascending through the verdant valley and hearing many a chanting bird, they arrived at the mid-base of the mountain. Here they saw great herds of snapdragons, some of which they opened with a pinch at the right spot, not even remembering where they'd learned the trick. And, too, they saw vermilion red geraniums growing wild in countless numbers.

They passed a tangle of honeysuckle mounted on high, the air filled with its sweetness by unseen fairies blowing the fragrance through the honey trumpets.

Further along, woodbine scented the air with its pure coolness as it climbed toward the sky. They could hear the chimes of the bluebells, those heralds of the dim and dewy dusk, and the dance and song of evening knells—elfin music tinkling in fairy festivals. A duck lifted into flight, hinting that the lake was very near.





The Lake of the Woods



— Chapter 10 — The Lake of the Woods

They quickly passed through some bushes of rare white periwinkles, long thought to be extinct, and there before them lay the crystal blue lake that was secreted atop the mountain.

Overheated from the strenuous hike, they soon removed and threw aside their clothes, then plunged into the cool depths of the blue lake and remained underwater awhile to get an all around zingy chill.

As they emerged and headed toward shore, the water droplets ran down their bodies and made a trail behind them.

Angelina went straight for Peter's vital area, without even a kiss beforehand for a kiss was the most intimate act and had to be built up to and enjoyed his fullness fully, unwanting to give it up, even briefly.

Peter remarked, “I think I’ve caught a fish; it’s a lively one and it won’t let go!”

“We’ll see how much play there is in your pole.”

“I’m going swimming in you.”

“The water’s warm,” she encouraged, “and deep”.



Peter dove head first into her underground pool, a lagoon fed by her boundless gushing spring of enthusiasm and passion, as she continued to feast on his bait, a lively serpent snaking its way all around. How they continued this magic, they never knew, but it never failed—it was the Holy Grail of sensuality and sexuality for Peter to be at the peak of excitement and still continually feel the utmost sensation, without exploding, and, although practice helps to some degree, it was more than that—truly a magical enchantment that allowed the seemingly paradoxical state of infinite excitement to coexist with infinite duration.

He literally sizzled as he entered her, on the lake shore, the waves coming up to lap their feet. Now she had grown from a fish into a mermaid, and he into an argonaut captivated by her song. Water was their element, everyone's actually, since we are born in water. Now and then they would reach down and splash liquids all over their bodies.

Finally they kissed—the apex of intimacy—and the kisses were fast and hard and wandered all over their lips in a frenzy of emotion out of control, these sentiments consuming the entire interval of twilight until the ardor became larger than both of them, swallowing them up with its immeasurable wealth.



Daylight, extended by the mountainous height, finally fell into darkness all around them as again and again they slipped in and out of each other's being and ultimately merged into one heart, soul,

mind, and body—and, with their last ounce of energy, rolled into the shallow water and slept.

In his dreams, Peter thought: *we can have high quality virtual reality—for free. There is no need to go off to a multimedia arcade, spending a fortune on a virtual reality helmet, gloves and wires to experience time- and space-limited holoscenes of cartoon level quality—there is a free method of not only viewing high quality virtual reality but also of movie scripting all the scenes, scenery, and character actions instantaneously. Do we need a Cray mainframe computer or a Hollywood studio to do it? No, it's free and simple, and you can do it everyday, enjoying high quality graphics that are indistinguishable from reality—with deep emotions thrown in, to boot:*



When I lay down to sleep, I had sent the following message on ahead to my dream self, etching it into the sands of unconsciousness by repeating it over and over hundreds of times: it is only a dream—so be aware, enjoy it, control it.

Sleep's drowsy circles had drawn ever closer, soon closing to a point through which I emerged on the other side. Deeper waves of slumber rose and fell across the sands, eroding the directives written there. And yet, as I had started to dream, some faint echoing thought of that message from the heretofore rang as a dim chime—and, so reminded, I became aware that I was dreaming—and that I could enjoy it, even control it.

The insight was unbelievable at first—but it helped that I was flying 10 feet off of the ground, and therefore disbelief soon surrendered to amazement.

I inspected the dreams, being careful not to become so alert that it would cause my waking. The colors were true and glorious—24 bit color, at least; all was so clear—nothing was hazy, as in a dream's remembrance; all the players acted in character—one even told funny jokes, best of all, my emotions were still felt deeply, for I still felt that I was really living through it, even though I knew it was a dream.

Once I picked up a book in my dreams, although the images were reversed; so, totally in control, I conjured up a mirror, reflected the words, and read a most astounding book, entitled 'Simply Amazing', but, the nagging question is: who authored it?





Endless Stars



— Chapter 11 — Endless Stars

They awoke a few hours later, still afloat with ecstasy, dried themselves off, built a small fire, then lay on a beach towel near the water as the energies of love were again asking to be quenched.

The heat from the fire warmed the cool night and so Peter removed his downy vest and used it as a pillow. They slowly aroused each other, in a passionate crescendo, as the evensong rose all around them. Angelina was soon straddling Peter, hovering in the air above him, her knees and hands supporting her and settling into the hollows that she'd carved in the sand. Peter lay on his back, looking up at her and into the starry night, where endless fires burned.

She was now the huntress, reigning over her willing prey, and she lowered down on her elbows and brought her lips to within kissing distance, her ripeness brushing lightly against his chest. The kisses

were full and moist, then playful, and finally, lingering. He harvested her bosoms as they hung in their fullness, like fruit, and she directed the lovemaking as quickly or as slowly as her passion desired.

Angelina turned her head this way and that so that Peter could kiss her ear to ear, as all the while her soft hair was brushing his cheeks. She soon reached down and released his love arrow from its confines as he massaged her buttocks, but he didn't pull her down onto him, for this was her move and there was yet much magic to be enjoyed in that airy space of attraction between the sword and the scabbard.

Peter reached under her, to fan her quick sparks into flame, and, after some minutes of this, her lips became engorged and dripped hot rain down upon his manhood. Several times her body's tensions were swept away in waves of well being.

Balancing on one hand, she reached for his stiff wick, to which she would pass her fire, and there she found the seepage of love's juices waiting to burst forth. She played it against her button of desire to set the final fuse aglow. Soon her pulsating well of flame devoured wick and wax, surrounding it with heat and comfort beyond belief. Finally, with a last surge of activity that both knew would take them beyond the point of no return, they allowed the sword and scabbard to taste the powder in the explosions of passion's tremendous energies revealed.

Still awash with waves of contentment, they pulled a blanket over them and drifted into the calm sleep that only lovers know.

A thousand points of light yet stabbed the dome of night as Peter and Angelina awoke, before dawn.

The ever present sound of the waves soothed their already trouble-free souls to a point where the partners could co-mingle with the stars, and, thus freed, they could sense the Earth floating in space, rolling along like a blue-green marble.

They witnessed a rare sight, the setting of the full moon, a touching if somewhat melancholy sight, as the queen of the night sunk into the west and gave off her own dim version of twilight.

The zodiacal lights sprung into their western being, now that the sky was completely dark, and, over in the east, false dawn came and

went as the birds slept soundly, except for their pet crow, which dropped out of the night as if conjured from black velvet.

Angelina came to a realization as she petted the crow's ebony neck, "Peter, the crow, our crow—of course it's the creature who enchants us—it's the nightingale transformed, and it is perhaps even reincarnated with us in each of our instantiations."

"Yes, it's somehow a magic bird."

"Maybe it belonged to Merlyn a long time ago."

"Perhaps it really is Omar Khayyàm's famous Bird of Time."

"Like the one in the magic book that we saved from the burning monastery in the 1800's when I was a holy nun and you a saintly monk, and when we fell in love—the book spoke to us and sent us on a quest to find out the name of the rose."

"I remember it well now."

"Yes, we wrote all about it in 'Life, Love, and Being: Fumes From Ancient Times', the title later changed to 'The Triumph of Life, Love, and Being'."

"We were as the rose."

"Yes, although the flowers that once had blown forever died."

"But our spirits lived on, finding life in new flowers."

"In this new and wonderful embodiment."

"Because our love had so much energy—"

"—that the energy became matter again."

Angelina said, "Let me tell you about our true colors, our spirits. I wrote it down:"

We are the Eternal Smile of Being, the Joy of the Universe's Creation! In us the Cosmos has come alive and has evolved into our consciousness from primordial matter and energy. We have arrived! We are the Cosmos itself. We are the Universe—Life from Stardust!

We live but for one of Eternity's heartbeats, borrowing Life from Death for just a while. All that we are we owe to Time, Death, and Stars. Truly, from the Stars cometh our help, and much more.

The Stars are the creators of matter and energy. Within a Star's heart, matter transforms itself and gives energy—this is why the Stars shine!

Death is the ultimate evaluator and the director of all evolutionary progress. Over eons upon eons, death selects the wise from the silly; death chooses the useful from the useless, but, it takes Time.

It is this long yardstick that sticks in our throat when we try to contemplate it. For what seemed like Forever, our sleepless spirits have waited to catch light, life, and delight from Heaven's smile.

Finally, we are so lucky and we live. We stand atop the pinnacle of Nature's tireless toil, which has at last brought forth our souls from that black and endless eternal deep. What a joy to Be!

Blake said, 'In what far and fiery depths of space burnt the fire of your Spirit? In what distant Stars was born the gleam in your eye?'

Know it well, for one day Death will ask you, 'What did you do all of your life?'

But, for now we are alive.

Our mind and senses interpret and unweave the one Reality into the colors and sensations of the phenomenal world. We can become either rainbows or ugly stains!

Our minds, like Shelley's prisms of many-colored glass, strain this white Radiance of Eternity into our life—until Death tramples us—and back we go to stardust after relentless time has wasted us away. Yes, our creators of Time, Death, and Stardust must also write our epitaph; they devour us in order to return that life-dream which was lent to us.

But, here we are now, and perhaps we come to know that the simpler things in life are still the best: a glass of water from the well in the morning; to love, laugh, and sing with family and friends. And so we live out our lives with honor and love, kindness and generosity—these are our true colors. Life for the sake of life! Good for good's sake! Enjoying everyone and everything and every season.

Many think that they are more important than they really are, that they deserve some reward of a divine destiny in Heaven, where their every whim, wish, and fancy can be fulfilled for all of time, forever and ever. Well, to me, such endless satisfaction and pleasure sounds really rather prideful, wishful, even decadent. The ultimate humility is, I think, for us to realize that we are no more than electrochemical organisms, that we, too, are part of nature.

Are we quite lucky and fancy organisms? Oh, yes. Are we specially created by a Master? Oh, no. We are the embodiment of the Cosmos and are ever the results of the natural laws of Physics and Chemistry.

Death may be forever, but man, with his exaggerated view of self-importance, and, not wishing to see a final end to his glorious life—and I can hardly blame him—desperately grasps for immortality’s promise.

For me, I will continue to catch life’s joy and smile, and will bathe in the light of its constant sunrise. On my last night on this Earth, I will not be haunted by regret when the Sleep of Death comes to take me to Corruption’s dim dwelling place—for I will know that I lived for color and smile.

And what of the Stars? They remain, as Eternity’s Love-lamps, representing our good works and deeds, which even the fathomless night cannot quench.

Perhaps one day, at the end of forever, the Stars too will die and grow cold when Time conquers all; but, as long as they live they will shine and radiate the hues that paint the colors of our ashes reborn again on the phoenix wings of Time.

“I like that very much,” said Peter.

“I’ll tell you a story about outer space. I own infinite wealth,” said Peter.

“Ever wonder just how rich you could be, laying claim to gold, silver, jewels, and gems owned by no one? You can, anytime.

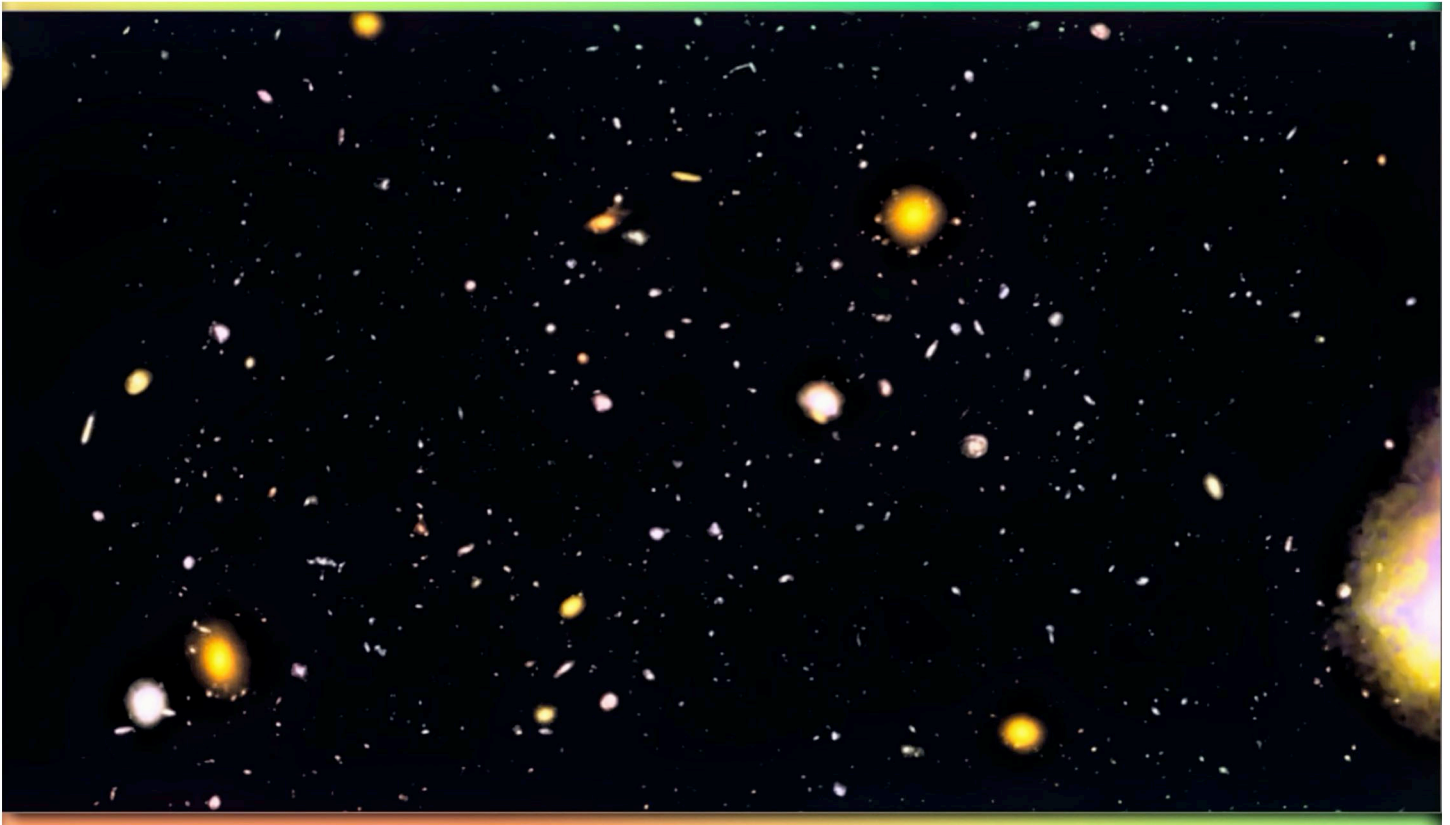
“At night I open up the heavens’ vault, my safety deposit box of valuable stars—one of whose planets contains all my wealth. There are billions of stars, quite enough for everyone, really, but, can one can really own a star—yes, if it is one’s favorite star.

“Mine is Betelgeuse in Orion, a large dying red giant. Although it has already expanded into the orbits of its first two planets, I own the fourth planet, one that no one else has ever claimed. And I’m planning to homestead there someday. The planet, hereby named ‘Peter’, contains unlimited amounts of gold, silver, platinum, diamonds, and many other rare crystals—and it’s all mine now.

“For six months of the year my favorite star is hidden, but, in early autumn, if I stay up late, I can see Orion rising his shining sword of

nebulae gleaming in the black sky, and blue Rigel, a near favorite, sparkling on his boot, but it's Betelgeuse, on his shoulder, that I really love.

“Although I am looking from Earth, I am no less out in space than is any other star. Yes, we are all far out, in fact, relatively speaking, from the galactic center, being in the middle of one of the spiral arms of the Milky Way.



“Anyway, I’ve chosen to leave my infinite wealth right there on the planet, since at least I know where it is. If I brought it here, someone might try to steal it.

“To get through the other six months of the year, I’ve chosen orange Arcturus, in the Scorpion, which, due to ancient disputes and treaties, can never again be in the same sky with Orion the Hunter, having, in fact, once bitten him. Orion still hunts him, but, of course, can never catch him.

“I own many favorite stars, actually, but, I sometimes wonder, while enjoying the serenity of these deep dark nights, if in fact they haven’t come to own me.”

“You’re rich!” exclaimed Angelina.



“I’ll tell you about some riches that I, too, could have had. Once I had acres of gold, but I left it there,” answered Angelina. I found the forest of original growth.

“What would it be like to stumble across lands that no one else had ever been to, and how could one know that?”

“After reading Sir Conan Doyle’s ‘Lost World’, about dinosaurs on a sealed off plateau of a volcano, I wondered if there were any more undiscovered places.

“So, while at the Earth Summit in Rio last month, I forayed into the uncharted regions of Brazil, having chosen from a map the most desolate and remotest area. After various vaccinations and preparations, I trucked my one-person helicopter to the last way station, loaded the extra gas tanks onto it, and flew into the heart of darkness, gliding down onto a field just as the gas ran out.

“From here I walked for tens of miles, always taking the most difficult path whenever there was a choice. This would insure that I could end up in some unvisited, hard-to-get-at region.

“After several hundred or so of these ‘improbable’ choices, I came across acres and acres of Lady’s Slippers flowers—very rare flowers

that usually only appeared in small bunches, growing only in conjunction with a rare fungus, and, even then, usually get picked.

“I then, after taking one last really difficult turn, discovered entire fields of flowers long thought to be extinct. There were Eve’s Blossoms, not seen for thousands of years, historically valued for their life extending elixir, as well as the original, lost strain of Pearly Everlasting, the flower that never dies, and so I suspected that I might be in virgin territory.

“How would I know? Well, for one, there were no paths, for even animals and their hunters had either long left or had never been here. Also, the flower colors were not like any that I had ever seen before, not new colors, mind you, but, just, well, colors of different intensities and hues that were not thought to exist in nature. I saw true-blue roses, legendary no more.



“I had chanced upon a land of strange rainbows of elfin-hued flowers: red Delphiniums, Black Tulips, orange Fuchsias, White Marigolds, bronze grass, Yellow Violets, and Adam’s Apple, now growing from the ground.

“Was this the original forest—the Garden of Eden? Was I the first to return? And then I knew that it was and I was, for there, right in front of me, was a field of thousands upon thousands of undisturbed golden nuggets on the forest floor. Surely no one had ever been here, at least not for a long, long time.

“I reached up and put Eden’s apple back on the tree.”

“That’s fabulous,” said Peter. “Some might even take it as an exaggeration, but I know that it’s true.”

“I’ll tell you an actual tall-tale,” said Peter.

“During a particularly harsh winter, it was so cold that my shadow froze to the ground, such that I couldn’t even move. I almost died. I tried to call for help, but my words came out in ice-block letters. Luckily, a passerby observed this, and lit up a match to read the words—but the flame froze, and so no one could hear the words I had said until they thawed out in the spring.

“I left my shadow there and retreated to my cabin and drank a hot coffee that had frozen so fast that it was still warm. That night I built a fire, but I had to sleep with my head in the fireplace to keep warm. I knew it was morning when I saw light at the top of the chimney.

“Times were so tough that winter that I had to make soup out of the pictures in the seed catalog, for we dared not even go out.

“I tried to catch a mouse by putting a picture of some cheese in a mousetrap, but all I caught was a picture of a mouse!

“Some days we had to go up on the roof to chop off the smoke clouds that had frozen around the chimney.

“The day was so windy that the fence posts blew out, and all the post holes blew up onto the roof, causing leaks when it started to snow.

“The wind blew so hard that the sun went down three hours late. Well, this really warmed things up, and soon the snow caught on fire, but then put itself out when it turned to water.

“I ventured out that day to do some ice fishing, but the warmth had thawed the ice a lot, and I soon fell through it, and would have drowned, had I not had the presence of mind to go back to shore

and bring some logs out to float on, and so I escaped from the ice hole.

“This was the very same lake that I’d tried to swim across last summer. After getting halfway across, I decided that I wasn’t going to make it, so I swam back.

“Anyway, I caught a big fish. It was so large that even its picture weighed twelve pounds!

“So, I did survive that winter, or I wouldn’t be writing about it, but it wasn’t easy; however, that only goes to show: never give up.

“Not giving up was a lesson that I’d learned from a couple of frogs: one day, two frogs fell into a pail of cow’s milk. After struggling for awhile, one of the frogs soon gave up and drowned, but the other frog, our hero, kept on flailing away for hours, never giving up. The next morning, I found the frog very much alive, sitting happily atop a pail of butter.”

“Really funny,” said Angelina, laughing.

“Here’s one about a party attended by all the planets:”

The music of the spring was in the breeze, a prelude borne by airy musicians of the trees—the mating calls of the birds, that opened for the cosmic symphony.

The Music of the Spheres played in the park at night—flung down by our Father, the Sky, through the soft night to our Mother, the Earth, then to us, their audience and progeny.

The planets joined in a concert to the merrie Monthe of Maie, arrayed as follows: there was Venusia, the Bringer of Peace, singing side by side with warring Marsius.

Flitting about was the wingéd Mercuria, the speedy messenger who conducted the orchestra, melting all of us who were touched by her wand of burning desire.

And mighty Zeus, was there, full to the brim with the jollity of the fat man’s belly. By Jove, came Saturnus, so very gray with age—lumbering into the party.

Thence sat Urania, the magician, and the old sea captain, King Nep, the mystic, but not Pluto; he was downsized, no more one of the harmonics—an underworld!

Jupiter's music was round and robust, while Saturn's boomed with sounds of grandeur and the old venerable melodies; but, Mercury soon picked up the pace.

Next flowed the serene love songs of Venus, followed inexorably by Martial marches. Now was the time for Urania's magic—she played musical jokes and surprises.

At last, their music came to mesh as one, and our wanderers of the night floated away on the haunting mystical strains of King Nep's tune, into the May Flower moon.

Now we're touched, so touched by the starlight, afraid that we'll ne'er be the same again. Can you sense the euphony of the spheres?



“Can you fathom the theory of everything?”

“Speaking of the only planet not playing in the orchestra, our dear Earth, I have another story,” said Peter, “About the three Heavenly things on earth.

“Whether by accident or by design, not many Heavenly things remain on Earth. I suggest just three: flowers, love, and dreams. A fourth, elfin creatures, is perhaps only a pleasant speculation on near-Heavenly beings, that for some reason exist in the half-light scenes of our imagination.

“Had flowers never appeared on Earth, could anyone even have conceived of them? Or, say, if the natural world was all green or had no color (colors are mostly in the flowers), would there have been a need for us even to be cognizant of colors?

“More than anything else on earth, flowers have universal appeal, being picked, grown, presented, used for medications, and just plain admired as beautiful by everyone.

“Some think that flowers were God’s going away present to Eve as she departed the Garden of Eden, as shown in my epic poem, ‘Flora Symbolica’.

“The second Heavenly thing on Earth, night-dreams during sleep, shows that we really don’t need eyes to see, an amazing insight in itself.

“Actually, all reality takes place in the mind’s eye—it just looks like it’s out there—but is projected as such. Dreams, whatever their ultimate purpose, provide an all night cable TV channel on which we can put on almost any show that we choose—or we can just simply lay back and discover what’s on the mind, if we can read past the static.

“Finally, love, which is perhaps the greatest of the Heavenly things on Earth since it is the greatest feeling on Earth. Would life even be worth living without affection, romance, passion, and loving? I wonder. And is there any excuse not to seek it out?

“Though many other Heavenly things were perhaps removed from the Earth when we were cast out of the Garden, love, dreams, and flowers were allowed to remain—lent by us forever, from some other dimension.”

Love and Adventure



— Chapter 12 — Love and Adventure

“I’ll tell you what I think of love, the greatest of all heavenly things” replied Angelina.

“Love is the finest refreshment of mortal life, providing a glimpse into the heavenly state, a vision which, if maintained, can last well beyond the initial perception and for all of one’s life.

“So, I say that any time not spent on love is time squandered in absolute waste, that if one is idling, not loving, or, god forbid, hating, then life is a-wasting; for love is the greatest experience on earth, and so I have often sought it out, found it, received it, given it, and lived it as life’s one great happiness, for there is no other joy that compares—love being the truth of all truths.

“Who has not forgotten that first kiss and the magic that attended it? No one, for first love touches one deeply and forever. People newly

in love glow for weeks on end. There is nothing like love, although, strangely, some do not actively seek it out, perhaps for fear of rejection. But, even love's worst pain is sweeter by far than any other pleasure; there is, indeed, no contest—and to love and lose is second only to loving in triumph.

“Not merely just a pleasure, love refreshes, creates, invigorates, and provides sustenance of spirit and life itself. Without love there is no life, at least none worth living. When you give up on love, you begin to die.

“Love knows no laws or restrictions, for mutual passion is a law unto itself. Love is the cure-all, both for those who receive it and for those who give it.

“The one tragedy in life is not death, but that some people do not love—aye, nor do they live, for the fear of the one is fear of the other. So, by all means, if you love someone, go to them and tell them so.

“It is said that the loving are the daring, perhaps because they seek the ultimate adventure, often risking all for that which lies far and above the commonplace, that vision into paradise.

“Imagination weaves a fairy tale of love and romance, and the mind that is alive soon brings forth the phantasm into reality.

“Placing our very life and happiness in another through love is the greatest gift one can give, for it is the gift of oneself. Unconditional love is a true gift, one without strings attached, one without any motive for gain in return. Oh, of course, we are human, and often love for the sake of being loved in return, and this is not in itself wrong; but, when one loves for no other reason than for the sake of generosity and loving, then this is a saintly type of love which is above all the other kinds.

“True love loves people for what they are; not for their qualities in particular, but for the person. It's not that we love someone because we need them—for this is quite immature—but that we need someone because we love them. It is, you see, love that is the origin. Love begets love, and love, in turn, begets more love, and so on, making us even more loving to others, until Heaven is indeed brought down to earth. Real love is its own reward.

“Identity is not lost in love, for true lovers do not sit looking only into each other's heart, but, rather, look outward, each in the same

direction. It is a seeming violation of arithmetic, that in love, the two become much greater than one plus one; and that the two, nevertheless, do not become one, but remain as two, yet still share the same vibration in their souls.

“It also seems to be a paradox that love, when divided, is not at all diminished, but that each individual love multiplies to exceed the lot. One can never run out of love! It is a miser, indeed, who withholds love from a capacity that is boundless. Hoard not that which can be given. Give love, and even more love comes back full circle to you.

“What a joy is it to experience life’s wonders with someone you love—oh, walks, and plays, and dinners are great enough pleasures when taken alone, but note how much better they are when you have someone to share them with. Another bonus of love is, that, with it behind your actions, you may soon find yourself doing the impossible, as love’s inspiration carries you along through any kind of difficulty. For me it was an inspiration to draw and write.

“Love and a kind heart are much alike, and one is equivalent to the other, love being a triumvirate of truth, beauty, and goodness blended into one great purity.

“We do not merely love—we are love! We do not create—we are creation itself. We don’t just live—we are life!

“There are many forms and faces of love, such as brotherly, sisterly, motherly, fatherly, romantic, spiritual, professional, and physical; and it often depends much upon the circumstance which one is the most appropriate form to give to a particular person, but, in all of the above forms of love, there is much more that could be given.”

“So true,” answered Peter. “I’ll tell you of the greatest earthly thing—adventure.

“Boredom and dull routine have little place, if any, in a life, and it is only by one’s own laziness that they are allowed to exist at all, languishing nearby on the doorstep, as it were, as uninvited guests, as all the while terrible complaints are hurled against them.

“I’m bored’, we say, halfheartedly hoping that some new entertainment will appear out of the blue and carry us away from a dreary commonplace existence, perhaps into a fairy tale. So, adventure calls constantly to us as a cure for the blahs, for routine dulls the

senses—even the greatest music soon begins to fall unheard on our ears, and gradually degenerates into that same old song.

“Although breaking the chains of routine often requires a great burst of energy, adventure can become self-sustaining once the seeds have been planted. Yes, initially, some hard work must be applied, since adventuring is not normal, free, and easy in this world, but, remember, that before all realized realities must come the dream, the creative vision, the attitude and the outlook that will bring adventure to life.

“Even before the dream comes the yearning, though it’s dim at first, faintly glowing as a phantasm in a fleeting daydream struggling to maintain its shape before it fades into the noise of day. As these shadows pass over the adventurous mind, the vision must be enhanced and then steadily pursued until it, at last, becomes three-dimensional and real.

“We often look back later, quite amazed at the wonders that we have wrought—but, we had the vision.

“The rewards of adventure are many; stimulation, experience, and growth are practical results, but foremost comes joy, exhilaration, and thrill—the feeling of being alive.

“Who has not known the adventure of walking to school alongside a stream, dallying here and there, then crossing over the water on a log, nearly slipping off, but catching one’s self at the last instant while skipping a heartbeat?

“Who has not known the electricity of the first kiss at summer camp? Or of the reading or writing of a great poem or story while basking warm and cozy in winter sunshine? Or the thrill of a job well done? If we no longer know such things, then, perhaps, now is the time to stop worrying about getting one’s hair messed up.

“It’s all a matter of style, purpose, and vision. To plant the seeds of adventure, one must seek out the uncommon, the unusual situation, the exotic, even in one’s own backyard, looking for the odd character, although certainly not those who are unhealthy, the pleasantly eccentric (By today’s staid standards), the person willing to try just about anything that isn’t illegal, the offbeat but upbeat person, the optimist, the exciting prospect, the person with those excitingly wonderful and harmless character ‘defects’.

“And so it is that once you find it, adventure begets more adventure, for, ideas from all over soon begin to interact and build until a person rises above mere existence and really lives!

“Oh, I’ve had many adventures myself, from romance in the south seas to mysterious intrigue in the villages of France, but travel and romance are only a general means to adventure—there are many more, mostly personal, for it depends on what you want from life. Adventure can be had in one’s own village.

“Of course, some adventures entail a minor amount of risk-taking and rule breaking, for that which is often uncommon is often the most extraordinary, and therefore must draw undue attention from those in the straight world, but, I ask you, does not the element of danger often greatly heighten the excitement?”

Who has not, in the throes of spring fever, slyly disappeared from the place of employment on some exciting romantic mission, and found adventure in that ‘forbidden’ quest?

“Yes, adventure is lived in that delightful middle state in which one is neither drunk nor sober—nor ever totally reckless, but ever balancing excitement with responsibility, each paying for the other, as we walk the thin line between foolishness and adventure—the log across the creek.

“So, I say, to some of you, prime the pump; seek out adventure, embrace it. Use your emotions, get up out of your chair and into the arena; open up and invite adventure in, give it, take it, and live life with a reasonable passion and with a passionate reason; for adventure can even become a commonplace situation that one can tolerate.

“Then you, too, will say, ‘I’m excited, there’s everything to do in this town, the people are all wonderful, and I marvel at life’s wonders every day!’”

“Well said,” cheered Angelina.

“Our greatest adventure is living life and writing about it in this book—an art. Tell me about writing, Peter.”

“Artists create, after living and feeling, whether it be for real or accomplished only in their minds and dreams, although this artistry, too, is living, and self-sustaining, although secondary, as art becomes its own reward, that is, the complete satisfaction is in the

creative act itself—the sharing or selling of it either comes later or is not necessary—just give it away!

“Lord Byron once wrote, ‘Tis to create, and in creating live a being more intense...’.

“Artistry, as in our writing and illustration, is inspired by, and is intertwined with living a being more intense.

If our dreams inspire living, then our living inspires more dreams—including the writing of them, and the living of them.

“When I wrote ‘Star Trek—The Death Wave’, I truly felt that I was out in space. I wrote ‘The Last Knight’s Almanac’ when I had a terrible flu, but, while writing it, felt fine, not even realizing that I was sick, being transported in time and space to the Dark Ages.

“Sometimes one needs to accumulate experiences, including reading, in order to write.

“Mostly, for me, ideas come only when they may, after some subconscious maturation process, the poems and novels then nearly writing themselves. My writing can never be done on demand. The art is the satisfaction.

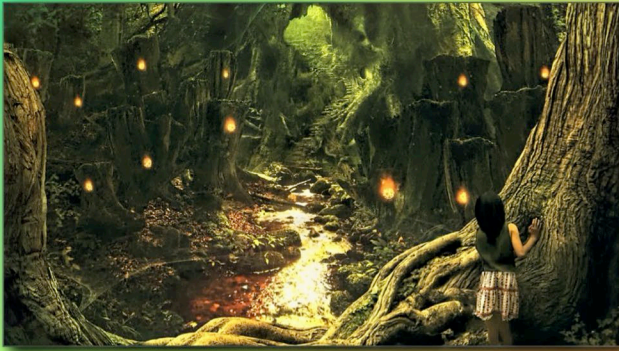
“The selling of it for peanuts comes only out of the unconditional love of sharing it. We all contribute to the world what we do best. If that happens to be telling jokes, then that’s what we ‘give away’ for free; otherwise, in our case, writing and art.

“In most areas of my writing, especially in the ‘Universal Wisdom’ poems, I must live the ideas first, in order to prove that the advice can be written down and dispensed. Same for romance or self-help, as for me, it would not be fair to write something that really couldn’t happen.

“In most of my novels, I try to show for inspiration how good life could be instead of a list of things not to do—so then, when the reader sees just how fine life and love can be, the reader just runs right out and does it.”

“Bravo,” cheered Angelina.

The Descent To the Village



— Chapter 13 — The Descent to the Village

It took from morning until midday for Peter and Angelina to climb down from the hidden mountain lake, the breezes governing them as they gently flew down the slope through the alpine fields of heather and returned to the village.

“We have joy and happiness, a double treasure,” said Angelina, “Happiness being our wealth of contentment.”

“That’s a good definition,” answered Peter, “For happiness is defined as the state of being content with what you have.”

“And of reveling in the moment.”

“That’s what we have right now.”

“And appreciating our very existence and love.”

“And our good health. All with gratitude.”

“And every other good, stable, and smooth thing that the brain ordinarily filters out when the scene is unchanging.”

“Unchangingly wonderful. But you’re right—the brain, allowed to go its own way, due to the old fight or flight response, usually only takes note of what’s changing, hurting, or bad.”

“But we don’t let that happen.”

“No, we have gratitude and appreciation for all that we give to each other—and we’re thankful for life and for all of our senses.”

“Sight, for example, is a fantastic sense—it brings the world to us.”

“See me, touch me, smell me.”

“Hear the words of ‘I love you’.”

“Happiness is in the present life, not in some remote and idealized or romanticized life.”

“The ideal life is within the real life, not beyond it.”

“Wealth lies in knowing what blessings you have.”

“Yes, and not in what you think that you should have, or in what you want but really need not have.”

Reaching town, Peter and Angelina sat down to brunch at an outdoor cafe, Angelina having quiche and Peter having chicken and shrimp over linguini.

This was one of many long warm summers spent in the cool sandstone farmhouse that sheltered them in the dark shade of the pines which also served to block the wind in the winter.

And so it was that several years passed for Peter and Angelina, during which they continued to build on their relationship, always keeping it new and interesting.

We rejoin them many summers later at about the same time of year that we left them.

...

One day Peter arrived at their farmhouse and found a boat in their bed—and Angelina sitting in the boat.

“What’s that?” asked Peter.

“A two person inflatable boat with oars.”

“Well, I guess I could have known that—I am surprised.”

“It’s so we can float down the creek and row through the ponds and on toward the town lake and beach.”

“Sounds exciting.”

“Exciting and serene at the same time.”

It was a small boat, and they fit snugly into it, sitting face to face, their legs crossing and barely allowing for the oars to pass over, however, the relaxing sensations from floating made up for any small inconveniences of comfort as they rowed forth from the town dock, where an old fisherman looked at them and thereby remembered his youth.

Sometimes they’d use the oars, but often they’d just float on the river tide that pushed up the inlet. Boating was like the weightless feeling that comes just after making love, that effortless gliding in the aura of spirituality and sensuality. They found a creek feeding the inlet and drifted up it amidst jungle like bird cries and imaginary alligators.

Later they crossed the channel to a nature sanctuary and disembarked there into the woods for kisses and privacies which were never chronicled in their journals, for this was Neverland—and therein the adventures remained—but, we can surely imagine it, by now.

“We’ve been together many years now, Peter—happy Anniversary.”

“Thanks—we’ve done well.”

“We’ve always kept our relationship new.”

“And always kept it full of new adventures, like the boat.”

“We still focus on the good things, even the littlest things, whereas, later on in their relationships some couples only focus in on the bad, especially the little trivial things.”

“We’ve never said anything to each other that couldn’t have been said on a honeymoon.”

“And so our liaison has been one continuing honeymoon.”

...

Years have passed.

Peter and Angelina had been walking the Appalachian Trail, throughout a perfect autumn, alone together in the woods, much as they had been long ago, at the beginning of this epic.

“I have never seen a bluer sky than that of October’s,” remarked Peter.

“Perhaps it is because of the cool dry air. The vision is but enhanced by the foreground of the colorful orange tree leaves. This is the last true blue that we shall see for some time; it’s only fitting that it be the best of times, the bluest of times.”

Following the harvest, the moon was still a strange sight at 11 AM setting in the west, quite a large chunk missing from its battered orb. Also, there was the sun well risen in the east, seeming to balance the moon as its echo. The duo made their way through a lonely upland, wild and still, where October’s last zephyrs whispered at will, as if they were praying for the souls of the dead.

Towards evening on a November’s day, the first quarter moon rose very early, sitting atop the evening star, but then rose later and later each day, drawing away from Venus and thereby adding light to its own face.

Said Angelina, “No leaves, no warmth, no sky, no snow, November. November is a more difficult time. The glory of the summer and of the leaves is gone, and it seems like it has been gone for years; but the spirit of the holiday season is not yet at hand. The gray and rainy skies are a stark contrast to the dry blue skies of October. There is no snow yet for winter sports and the land remains barren—the land is dead, and the very year itself continues to die in the night. The day is so short that when one gets home for dinner it already seems time for bed. Time for hibernation perhaps. To these feelings, add the specter of a long, drawn-out winter. Now we even long for February. Come December, we wake a little, when auroras will set fire to the polar heavens to give color to our lives during the festival of the Yule.”

A fierce storm arrived and so they took shelter in a cave and slept through the night and most of the next day.

Upon awakening, Peter said, “The storm is long gone, and is just a memory now. The day, though nearly over now, is bright near its end; helios has warmed our hearts. Twilight now welcomes all. Twi-

light. That magical hour after sunset—when people love to stroll the village square.”

The ‘second summer’ was warm but brief this year and some weeks passed. The now chill winds hastened the couple’s approach to the nearest inn. The twosome looked at the rising omen of winter in the very late night sky: “Orion, King of the bejeweled winter sky, backbone of our nights,” said Peter, “Wield your sword above our heads, but please, never below!”

There, in the road, a head!—a huge yellow beast lay dead ahead and was growing larger by the second! Right in front of their eyes did it lie! It was, of course, the moon.

“I think that the November Frost moon is even more impressive than that of the Harvest—it is so colorful and intimidating.”

The moon rose straight into a thunderhead as an old lady opened the door of the inn. “Tit for tat,” she said as she farted at the thunder.

Christmas came and went at the inn, hardly making a dent in the already festive atmosphere; however, the stone walls and withered gates of the inn had warmed with the festival of the Yule, the bakers’ cakes, the rituals of the Druids, and the cutting of the sacred mistletoe from the chosen oak.

Lazy winter days turned into weeks.



The Seasoning of Man

Joy and exuberance are spring's largesse;
Sunlight, warmth, and growth are summer's bequest;
Autumn brings wealth with its mellow harvest;
Winter's fruit is peace—its bounty is rest.



Somewhere In Time



— Chapter 14 — Somewhere In Time

Many more seasons of middle age came and went for Peter and Angelina. And, for all of their thoughts of impending mortality brought on by the entrance into late middle age, Peter and Angelina sailed on in their youthful relationship through many more wonderful decades of love.

We rejoin them very late in their elder years.

(All of you, dear readers, must live and write the years in between.)

...

In their old age Peter and Angelina were still somewhat sprightly since they had eaten right, stayed out of direct sunlight, and had gotten plenty of exercise from tennis, walking, and lovemaking, but

life, too, had taken its toll and so they needed extra sleep at times, plus much loving care through illnesses, and enjoyed a slower, gentler style of adventure and passion, but even all the more they could pause now and appreciate life's wonders at this slower pace—and observed in a new light what they had sometimes raced past in their youth when they were as fleet afoot as deer.

Now the mountain had to come to them—they felt comfort in its bulk—and the old memories welled and made each day bright.

They had to move back into town, since the farmhouse became too remote for them. There they again played hearts, rummy, and bridge on the porch of the old Victorian home where they'd met a lifetime ago, when Peter had somehow found her.

“How was your life?” Angelina asked Peter, as they slowly rocked back and forth on the porch swing.

“Very fine,” answered Peter, “And if I had to live it once more I'd love you all over again.”

“And another round for me, too.” she added.

“Hear, hear!”

“Ditto.”

“Let's take one last walk like we used to years ago, if we can,” Peter requested.

“Yes, let's roam again, Peter, even though it may take us all day—let's take an autumn stroll through our old woods that we've now made into a nature reserve and sanctuary.”

“Yes, I'm feeling extra energetic today for some reason.”

“Me, too. Perhaps it's our last hurrah, Peter.”

“I think so.”

Angelina and Peter, already in very old age, somehow were able to take a long stroll into the forest that they had known long long ago...

It had been an unusually long autumn, and now, on a warm day in early November, a few leaves yet hung upon the trees, having drunk deeply of the excessive warmth and moisture that had prolonged the season. But there was frost on the morn and most of the ducks had flown, so there was a certain feeling that this day would be Peter and Angelina's farewell to autumn.

They'd often sought refuge here from the noise of day in the quiet recesses of the nature sanctuary, languishing here on those leg-

endary summer afternoons when down by the creek they'd play where no one but the fisherman knew.

There they'd eat lunch and read new poems to each other and then lounge through the afternoon with naught but the wandering airs as a warm blanket.

But now the second season blossoms were raising their final cheer. They broke open a bottle of apple cider and gave each other a sip.

They soon found the path and followed it as best they could, often having to sweep aside the pesky briars with a stick, deftly giving way to the poison ivy.

Stopping to untangle some prickles and stickers, they stood on a high ridge and looked down hundreds of feet to the creek below, and slightly shuddered with the sight, imagining the length of the fall. Angelina picked up a clutch of leaves, crumbled them in her hands, and they both watched as the pieces fluttered down. Peter, a boy again for a moment, threw a rock into the water.

The partners walked single file, taking turns leading the way, kissing as they passed, stalking along the ridge, much as the Indians once did after they'd made this trail a long time ago.

The aged lovers labored over the fallen trees and branches; however, they quickly became energized by this steady exertion, and eased themselves along the well worn trail, passing a quaint wooden bench overlooking a bluff. Here they stopped, as they always had, and ate a little snack of nuts and raisins.

A familiar hillside sloped down from the trail to the creek, and here they headed down, slipping and sliding most of the way, sometimes holding onto branches for a little guidance and for braking.

They came to a level spot near the shore where the view was blocked by some fallen trees. Here they made camp, first gathering leaves for softness underneath, and placed a blanket over the gaps in the openings between the fallen trees to shield them from the night winds, and finally, unzipped each of their sleeping bags and rejoined them into one large one.

Here the weary hikers rested, as from the torrent of everyday life, as when riding its waves at crest one must retreat to some deeper place, where the wellspring calls, and look into its depths to find

that other source, and hear by some inner sense against it pressed. So it was that they read and wrote for awhile.

Up above they could see the blue sky between some of the yellow leaves that yet remained on the branches. Now and then a grasshopper was discovered on the log next to them and they were glad to have such a visitor. Ducks and geese flew overhead and all they could hear was the wind in the trees.

Supper was a chicken club sandwich with apple cider. The warmth of the day flooded all about them during the afternoon. Peter picked up a beetle in his hand, along with an assortment of little sticks and twigs. He also found a chrysalis, probably containing a glow-worm or a butterfly. Now and again a bald eagle would dive and catch a fish from the creek.

The extended autumn had given them a sort of second spring in which they could bloom again with the fall flowers, rare as could be, like some Heaven descended in which they, too, might one day again raise up their cups to toast where no one knows.

Peter felt all abuzz as a bee might feel in the presence of his rosy partner, and Angelina was once again in flower. Memories from a half a century ago flooded over them like a warm quilted comforter. Once again they inhaled the perfumed air and drank the clear cold water from the stream.

Long they lay in the embrace of love, awash on their love drenched shore, and in their passionate intensity lost track of the world around them, having by then floated free of their senses, and were then quite surprised to look up and see a rabbit and a dove sitting right beside them—the fabled wildlife of the nature sanctuary.

And it was on this remote shore of human soul that they felt restored in life and spirit, having learned long ago that love was the only flame that lit this endeavor on earth.

The sun was setting early, as it was wont to do on a November day. They looked up, dumbstruck by the silence of this change whereby the breezes suddenly fainted, dying in the half light, as all around them, in some sort of caress suspended, the departing day softly kissed the arriving night—and it was for this moment that the airs had slowed, now waiting for those lovers to brood and hold back the

death of dusk, if just for little while, for the night's dark shadow was terribly ponderous and pending.

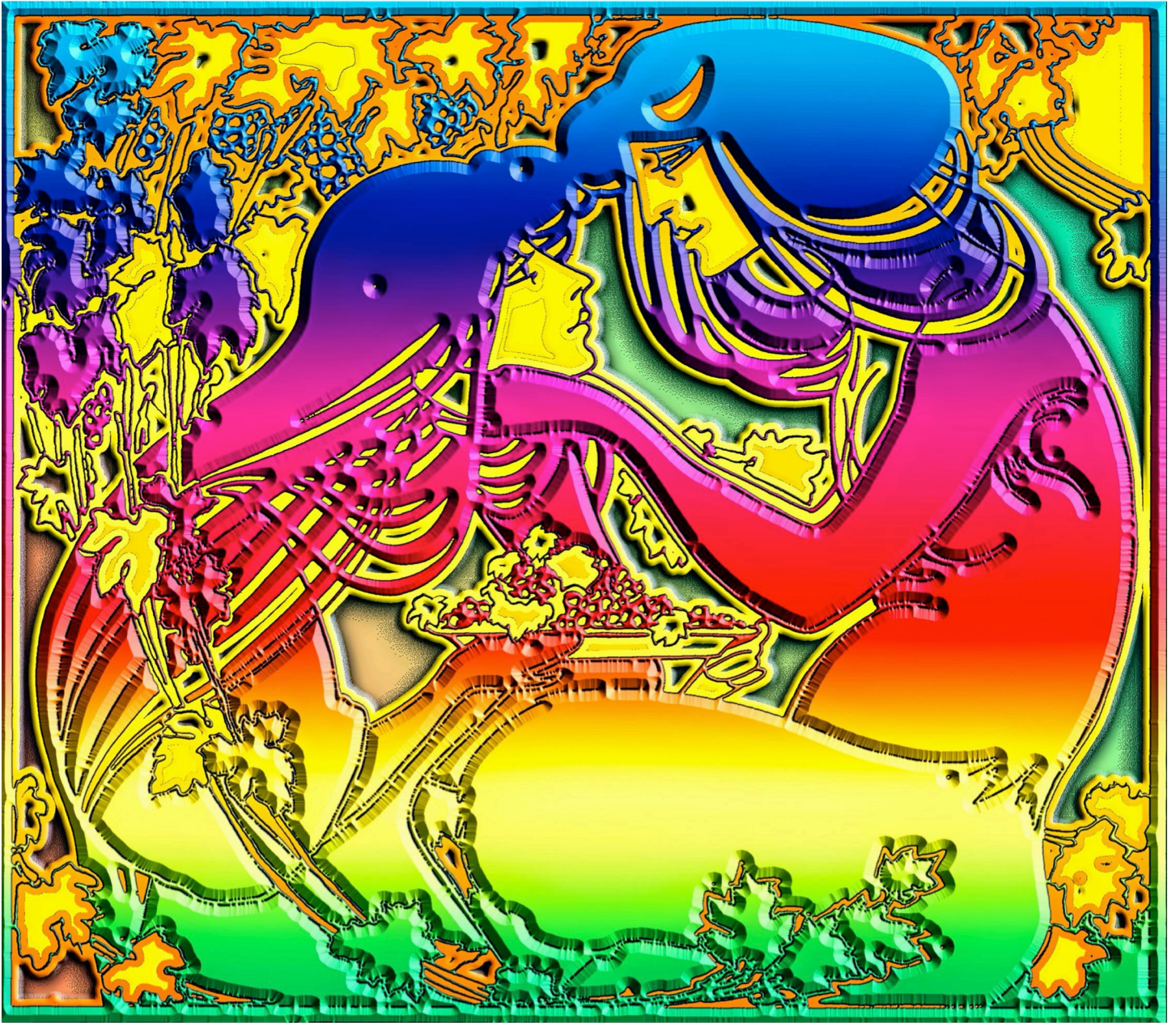
Dead calm descended, and for those timeless instants, stretching on into moments, they, too, felt neither here nor there, but in twilight.

The day's gold turned into a jeweled night of sapphires, rubies, and emeralds, like autumn's last fireflies sparkling in the sky, soon though, perhaps, to turn from stars into snowflakes.

One last word in her journal, Angelina wrote, just before she closed it for lack of light: "Jack Frost is here, for I have seen the hooded crow."

A chill swept the air and they quickly bundled into the sleeping bag, warm within, as in each other's arms they lay. They said good night and good-bye, too, and soon drowsed fast away, like two insects, hibernating in a fluffy cocoon; while, somewhere out in the woods, the season's last crickets found that they could sing no more, and the frogs headed for the bottom of the pond.





Farewell



— Chapter 15 — Farewell

Peter died a few days later, at age 92, on a soft autumn night, while sitting on the porch of the sandstone farmhouse. Angelina was at his side, as always. A few minutes before, a singing bird had landed on the railing, the Bird of Time, and Peter had turned to Angelina and had said, “I have to go now. I love you.”

And she’d whispered to him, “Come back to me, Peter.”

Peter smiled, finding serenity even in death, and breathed his last breath happy to the last, as the Angel of Light came and blessed him. The soft winds murmured a dirge as darkness fell, and the flowered canterbury bells rang their funereal tunes.

Peter was buried two days later in the rural cemetery, and, after all the eulogies had been said, and after the grave had been covered with dirt, and after everyone had gone home, only one person re-

mained behind, Angelina, and she lay down on Peter's grave to die, ready to melt into the dust and intermingle with his throughout all eternity.



After a day or so, she got up, or so it seemed, irresistibly drawn by the enchanting tune of a nightingale, and as such she became encased in the magic of its song, as a sheen was formed around her into a transparent dome—she protected therein from the elements.

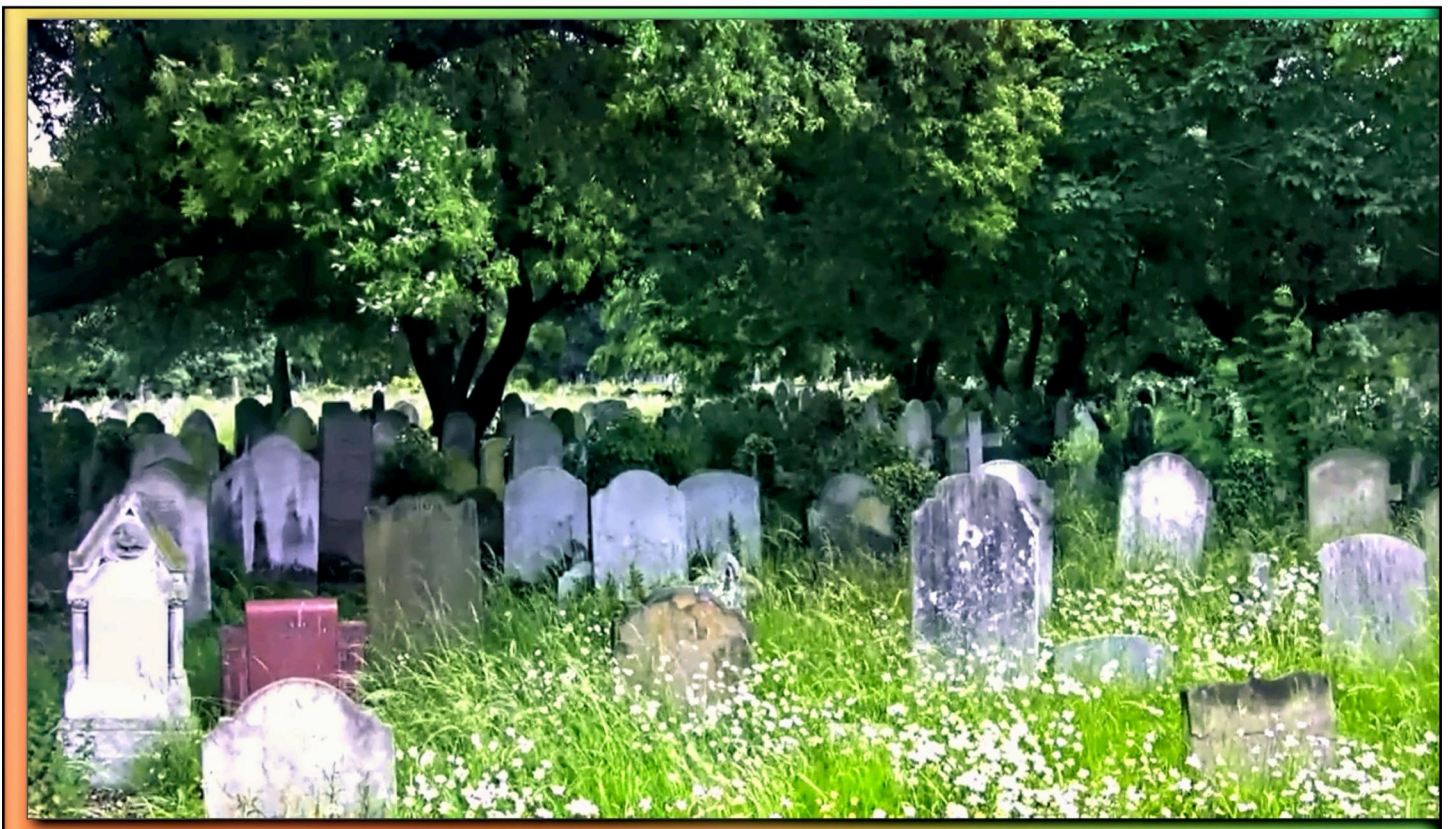
From this invisible and charmed haven, she could again see into the life of things, as she watched Old Autumn making his last rounds, and she soon saw the pine trees throwing down their cones as winter came. The elves themselves, now visible to her, lay down to sleep, cuddled into the fluffy beds of wild clematis.

The snow fell for several weeks, although the winter blossoms still sprouted on the blackthorns, and then the nightingale, having transferred its power to Angelina's encasement, impaled itself on the thorn, turning the blossoms red with the life that fled.

And all the while Angelina could see the spot where Peter lay buried—like some kind of flower bulb—awaiting a new birth in some far and distant spring.



Then, for a while, her spirit soared, like that of her angel namesake, as she met Peter's soul at the Gate of Heaven, where he told her as he entered, "I'll be back—your love will bring me back. Find me as I found you."



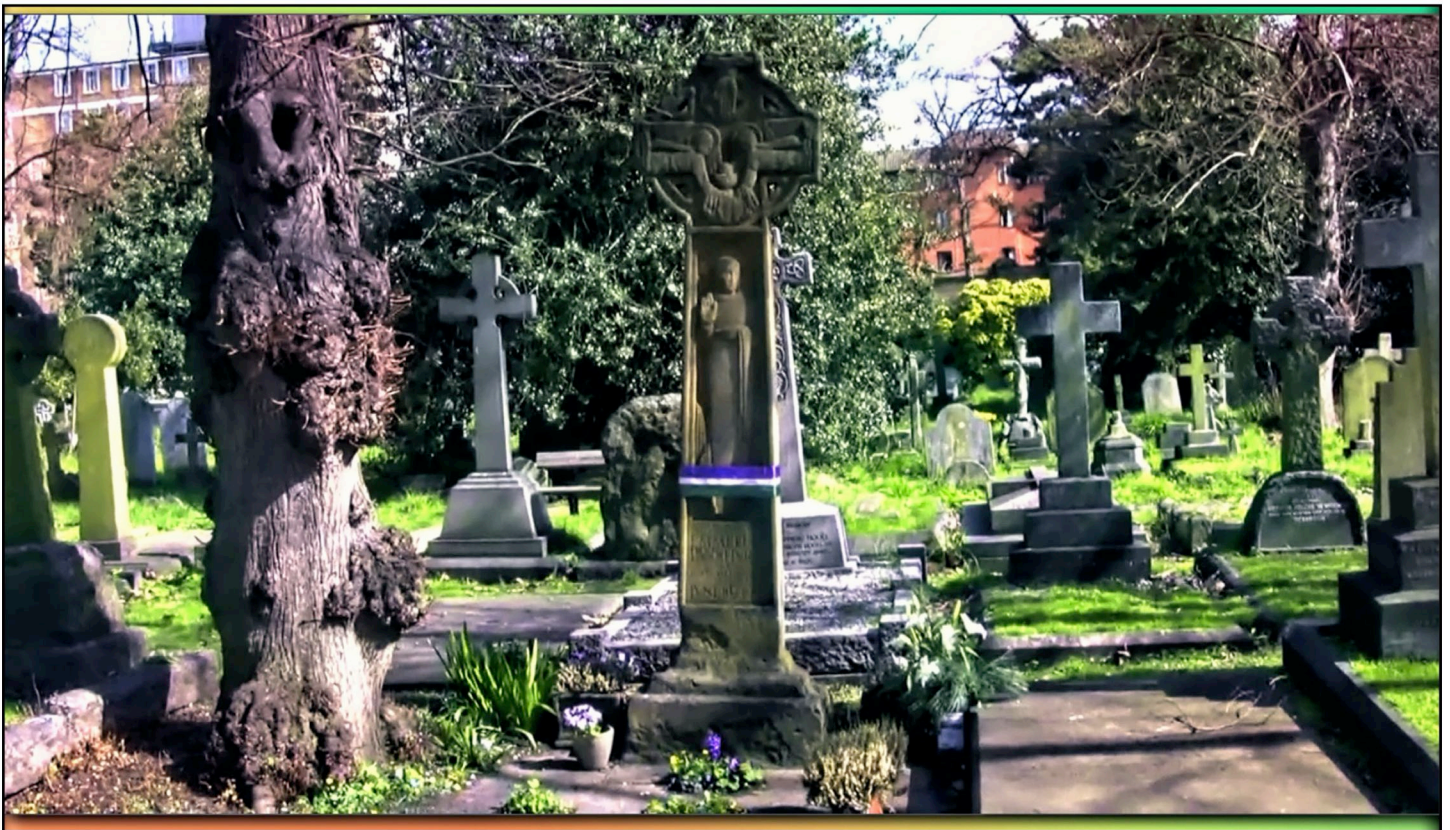
Back down to earth, having been returned to her enchanted shell, Angelina felt the love he'd left behind, and it brought her warmth and comfort in her apparently endless vigil, the time moving slowly at first.

However, soon the months seemed to pass by in an instant, as all the while the bird's song yet reverberated within her. Seasons came and went, the landscape changing around her as in time-lapse photography.

Trees sprouted in the fields like grass; the sun raced through the sky in a perpetual afterglow of a golden arch; even the thousand year old yew trees grew. Weeds covered the flower gardens and grew up through the porch of the old sandstone farmhouse.

Each day Angelina grew younger in her nether world, the aches and pains of the years falling away like so much chaff.

At age 24 she was released from her crystal dome and stepped out into a cold white winter. Surely all the world was dead—but, suddenly, a snowdrop flower appeared in the heat of a tombstone, as a fairy stood over her grave—"Tis not dead" the fairy said, and with a wave of a wand an early spring began, Angelina sprouting back into life, like some kind of winter jasmine.



The elves then blew their pipes to awaken all of nature. Double-daisies of double love sprouted all over the rural cemetery in the memory of Peter and Angelina's love.

Kisses grew on the bushes as bits of blossoms from someone dear—from the one who had died and given his fragrance to the night.

Yesterday had turned into yesteryear. Two decades had passed.

Angelina had to find Peter—she could feel his living presence out there somewhere in the world. Not knowing where to go at first, she let her instincts guide her, just as his had led him to Rhinecliff to find her.

The crow landed at her feet and she followed it to the old train station, the trains now running magnetically one hundred feet off the ground in order to allow people better access to the pure clean river.

She boarded a southbound transport and got off at Fishkill for reasons unknown. In Fishkill, which was now a borough of New York City, she walked through the crowds, arriving at an Electronic Art Center, where a meeting was going on.

She stepped inside and immediately felt an electricity and a chemistry emanating from a man who was painting at an electronic easel—one who suddenly stopped and looked at her intently.

Peter looked a bit different than before, younger, of course, but then she herself looked in a mirror and saw that she, too, was younger, and a bit different looking. She hesitated, sure but still nervous, and then walked toward him as all the room seemed to watch her.

“Where is that scene that you're painting, that old farmhouse?” she asked him

“I'm not sure,” he answered, “I've never been there—the scene just sort of keeps coming to me as an artistic vision—it seems as if somehow I've always known of it.”

“That retreat is the sandstone farmhouse where we used to live, Peter. 'll show it to you this afternoon...”

“... Angelina? You've returned and you've found me—I knew you'd come back someday! It's been a long time.”



“I came as soon as I could—I was preserved and given youth in a crystal dome in some sort of fairyland during all the while that you were growing up through your new boyhood into the man you are today.”

“Your vision was with me always, Angelina—I remember more and more of us with each incarnation. It’s getting easier. I remember now being old, and dying in your arms on the front porch on that autumnal night. Our love—was so strong—”

“—that it brought us back for yet another encore.”

“We are the triumph—”

“—of life, love, and being.”

“I feel so alive, so invigorated, so satisfied, so loving.”

“We’re young again,” she answered, “Younger than ever.”

TO ANGELINA

*Your figure is like a tree,
Bending with surges of wind,
Calling your arms unto me.*

*Your passions are unsinned,
The perfection of my fancy;
Of my ideals you are twinned.*

*Your spirit is of eternity:
All-pervading, never-ending,
Comforting in its certainty.*

*Your love rises on the wing,
Singing Heaven's rhythm there;
Vibrations sweep my heartstrings.*

*You're touching me everywhere
In all ways; within and without;
You fan my flames—they flare!*

*Your soft lips' sensual pout
Draws me into the depths—
Sweetwater puts my fire out.*

*Flames rekindle by your breath
When your breasts rise and fall,
As ripe fruit on the tree are blest.*

*Your eyes gaze—to me they call;
They are deep, glowing, bright;
Therein, I see forever and all.*

*Like the day snuggling the night,
Your being merges with mine,
Mingling in magical twilight.*

*Your visions of love match mine;
Often I have dreamt you up
Now you're here, lovely and fine.*

*You're the elixir that fills my cup,
Love's essence distilled into being;
The scented breeze lifts me up.*

*This perfume is love fleeing
From you as you give it away
With kind grace all foreseeing.*

*Now take us to where we'll stay,
To the forest home built for us—
Where nature is and lovers play.*

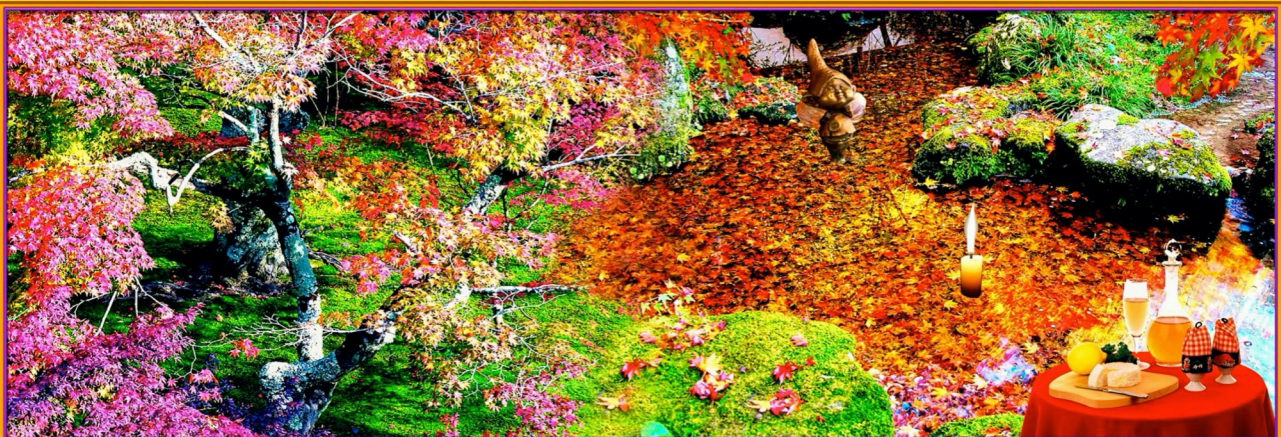
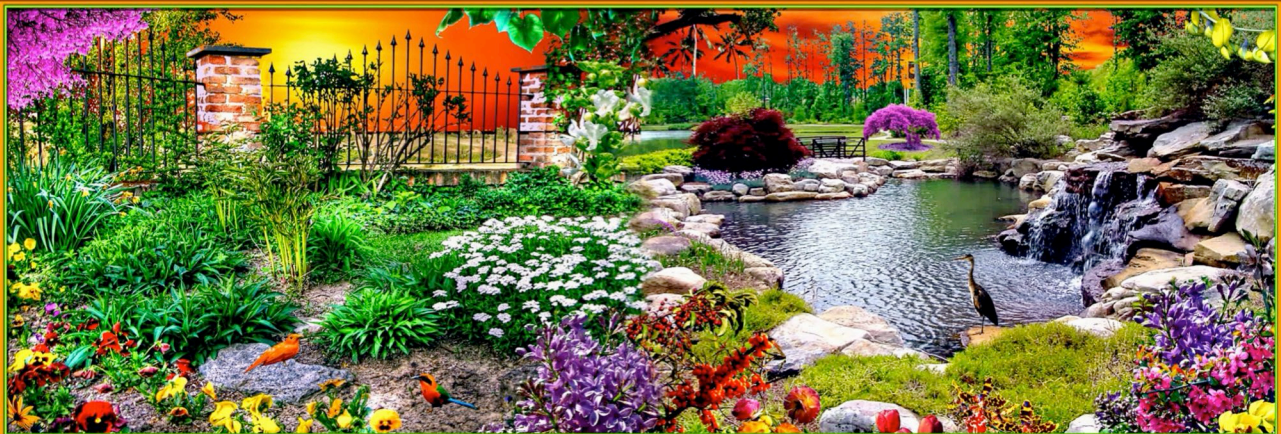
The door of the barn resisted at first, creaking like an Egyptian crypt, but soon gave way, powdered rust streaming down from the hinges. The smell of oats and animal musk escaped and mixed with Angelina's perfume. Inside were



rusted harnesses, pitchforks, old lanterns, broken wheelbarrows, tilted horse stalls, and a ladder, still intact, that ascended up into the Heaven of the loft.

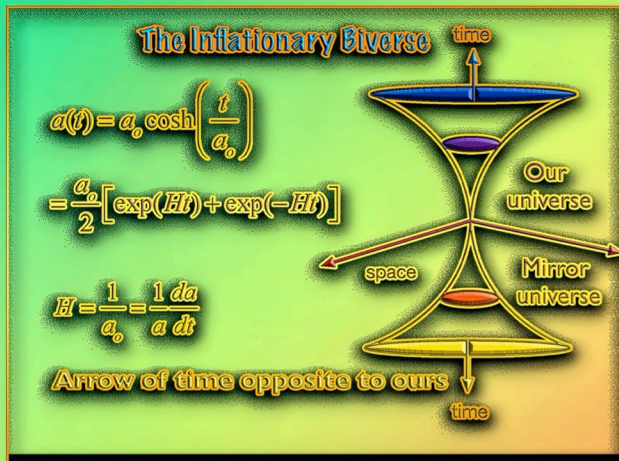








Future Times



— Chapter 16 — Future Times

Time has passed.

In the year 2035, Peter and Angelina left the sealed community near Fishkill for good, knowing that they could never return, but felt ever safe from the new viruses in knowing that they would only be in contact with each other in the old sandstone farmhouse of the naturally purified forest.

They had each always been isolated in their personality types, as had now been revealed through the insights of the new millennium, being Introverted iNtuitive Feelers, a mere one percent of the population—and especially isolated in school among the dutiful Sensing-Judging types, the competent iNtuitive Thinking types, and the play-

ful Sensing-Perceiving types, until they met each other, that is, which was, by the way, a 1 in 10,000 chance.

Peter would often joke to Angelina that he had to go through 9999 women to find her. And she would always say that no one ever loved her like Peter did since they could never understand her.

Yes, the bonding of two iNtuitive Feeling types certainly led to what others types might call a lot of ‘mush’, but in this age of pandemics there were advantages to being able to enjoy another person’s presence and fantasies twenty-four hours a day.

Other advances of the new age had brought to direct light the very biochemical nature of our being, with such old ideas of religious souls and other magical properties now long gone the way of alchemy, astrology, and the dodo bird. Clearly now, evolution, and all that it entailed, was appreciated by all but a few of the forever delusioned.

Furthermore, drugs had been tamed to remove the worst of the aversive biological substrates from the mind, especially high anxiety, depression, obsession, and insane violence, and, optionally, those unwelcome emotions that have always been forced upon us, such as jealousy.

However, new and virulent infections still swept the body, especially in the year 2015 when over two billion died of EBL in Europa.

But, at least, more and more of the myths of past ignorances—no longer excusable in the Age of Information—had given way to the solutions of science and had gone far past the simple DNA revelations of the previous century.

Indeed, the human genome had been mapped even in the late 1990s, and now, some thirty-some years later, had inspired cures for cancer, leukemia, and almost every other genetic disease.

Humans now had a life span of who knows how long, for it remained to be seen, and, if recent work on the aging preventative drugs came to fruition, perhaps one could live forever, for there were now drugs that lengthened the junk DNA that protected the ends of the DNA strands that were formerly torn away during cell division.

As discussed previously, horrible and torturous emotions were seen for what they were, i.e., just spurious molecular events, and,

so, serotonin reuptake inhibitors became the new fluoride of the water supply so that the primitive and long useless negative feedback mechanisms in our central nervous systems could no longer send out thousands-of-years-old notices.

Therefore, we could no longer be plagued by, for example, the horrid persistence of negative or anxious thoughts, that downward spiraling feedback loop which never led to anything positive.

Blame itself had, of course, fallen, too, as it had to, after it had been proved that aggressive urges were not completely controllable, due to the remaining chemical imbalances of the brain, but criminals were still locked up in order to protect society.

Free will itself was still on shaky ground, but falling fast, as it was realized that the brain's decisions are predetermined by memories, associations, and learned behaviors right up to the instant of 'choice'; free will had, in fact, been declared nonsensical, as the 'free' in free will didn't actually mean anything, for what good would be a brain that made random or semi random choices based on nothing?

Many, of course, still thought that they had choices, such as, let's say, taking up smoking, but, since those choices were only apparent, and not really 'them', and so they didn't ever take those choices.

Furthermore, it was discovered that 90% of what the brain did didn't even reach one's consciousness, and what did reach consciousness came a startling half a second after the brain was done doing its analysis, giving us, at the very most, perhaps, somewhat of a minor veto power (Hardly ever taken), but showing that we were often just executives and/or tourists along for the ride and certainly out of the brain's deep and formative loop.

Of course it is not so bad as it sounds. Even the self had been shown to be not intrinsic, but just a sort of narrative center of gravity that had no real and independent existence from the brain.

You are your mind, in other words. However, the person as a whole was, at least, still real, and now, faced with all these revelations, was strangely free, not only from the superstitions and folk science of two thousand years ago, but also in the way that the existentialists had hinted at: free to create a meaning out of one's life.

Consciousness, at the end of the day, was seen to be a fundamental dual form of information, reflecting that of the neurological, this,

like the quantum world, showing complementarity and correspondence, a basic force even, like space-time and mass-energy, that reflected brain processes as conscious information, albeit 300-500 milliseconds later.

Animals had been long recognized as having consciousness, too, and feeling, like humans, although to a lesser degree, and some, as such, like chimps, became as special and protected as humans and were granted personhood status.

Luckily, too, science had developed tasty artificial meat, and so cattle and other animals no longer needed to be slaughtered by us, who they would have surely regarded (if they could) as Hitlers.

People had come to see what was absolute, eternal, and the basis of all existence, realizing that all of the stuff in our world, including our brain's minds and consciousness, is biological and is made of molecules—and they are made of atoms, which, in turn, are made of electrons and quarks, or both from vibrating strings, perhaps—whatever it is that we call that which is the bottommost material stuff—let us simply call it Energy, for the form does not matter—it may be a field, actual stuff, or some swirling energy that gives us an illusion of solidity, or even a vibrating string.

What's important is that it is the most fundamental and absolute substance, which implies that each and every composite system made from it is totally dependent on it for its existence—everything—even Gods.

Energy, being made of itself, either having been always there, or a balanced and ongoing distribution of nothing—it doesn't matter which—cannot be created or destroyed and was therefore (Or its ever distributed sourcing) eternal and omnipresent.

This was called 'G-O-D', the Ground of Determination. Energy can, perhaps, as said, even amount to 'nothing' and come from 'nothing', for perhaps 'nothing' is composed and balanced of opposite plus and minus aspects of this Energy. Perhaps 'nothing' is what our universe will eventually amount to, but, for now, somehow, positive energy prevails around here, since we are indeed here, and has separated or balanced from/with the negative, and has granted us a preponderance of plus-type stuff in our universe, antimatter being else-

where, or, perhaps, the minus-type stuff is embodied in gravity's power—it doesn't really matter that much where it is.

Clearly, what is really in charge of the universe lies beneath it all, not above it all. Anything above is composite and therefore not fundamental. What underlies our reality is much more eternal, omnipresent, absolute, simpler, and more creative than any supposed complicated Superbeing above it.

Furthermore, people realized that life is an interpretation and a representation, one that, thankfully, even has an improved face painted upon it by the brain. What we think is hard reality is but a much better representation. Sights are seen and sounds are heard, things are felt and touched, but do not exist exactly as such, but are made as so by our modeling of reality, the same as that used in dreams.

In night-dreams, random brain waves and memories, associations, and learnings are woven from their real frequency domains, although the dreams come from static and noise that the brain still uses to try to make sense of as best it can in its half-awake half-working state, for that is its job.

As in waking life, we feel and touch things in our dreams, as well as taste and smell them. Basically, our vision interprets waves, fields, and interference patterns. Sound and color waves exist, out there, but it is our brain and consciousness that turns them into sound and color.

What's really out there are differing frequencies and waves of light and sound, with molecule shapes turning into odours, and degrees of bitter, salt, sweet, and sour molecules turning into taste.

Totality is necessarily causeless, being eternal, and everywhere, being infinite, as well; else it would only be a subset or an infinite regress. It's here, therefore it had to be. Being causeless, it could not have had any definite design imposed on it.

Material stuff may not be forever durable, so that may not be the bottommost base of it, plus, how could some eternal stuff be already made without ever having been made?

An absolute nothingness cannot be, for if it could, it still would be. So, there must be something instead of nothing.

The two 'impossible' choices are forever stuff versus ongoing stuff as a distribution of nothing, for nothing cannot be (stay), this perhaps being an unstable state.

Yet, one of the 'impossible' choices must be true, perhaps even both, as we will see; so, the answers are at hand, meaning that we must have one or the other or both'. No way out.

We see the simpler graduating upwards to the more complex, so that is a clue. God and Brahman solutions are shortsighted, being merely the formation of a larger question that one then takes as an 'answer'; besides, systems of mind doing planning, thinking, and doing cannot be first, for the parts beneath would have to be there earlier.

The simpler that stuff is, the more unstable it is, excepting the inert, ever going through phase changes and/or recombining upward, so, this is a clue.

Energy must be conserved, not being able to come from nowhere unless it is balanced, positive and negative, so, this is a clue.

The universe is here, this being any old time and place that is not special, so, this is a clue.

M-theory suggests 10^{100} possible solutions for universes, so this is a clue, but just maybe, for who knows if untestable string theory can be a clue.

Quantum theory shows the emission of opposite 'virtual' pairs of particles, some of which may become somewhat enduringly real, so this is a clue, although we don't know if all particles decay, some enduring over very long periods.

Quantum theory shows that randomness may be the bedrock of reality, but this may be an open question. On the other hand, conservation would say that a particle cannot just disappear and reappear centimeters from where it was without any accounted cause and effect.

So far, it seems true that while the bottommost basis must be causelessly random, from there on up there seems to be cause and effect: protons forming stars. Stars emitting the higher elements, some of these atomic elements forming molecules, which then form cells, life, and consciousness, for, while the initial conditions may

have been arbitrary, there was necessarily order from there and then.

Jumping to a conclusion from the two 'impossible' choices, it could be that, since forever stuff just is, that it had no prime mover; however, if it is a distribution of the perfectly unstable and simplest state: nothing, then that explains the ongoing production of opposite virtual pairs, and, since this has been going on forever, it is pretty much the same as saying that stuff was forever, so, we can even combine the two; however, if not, it doesn't even matter for the conclusions, these being that we are free to be, and that Totality had no creation, thus leaving out a Creator, which is why we are free, not to again mention the impossibility of the first cause already being complicated.

So, the simple TOE, as simple it must be, is that any old result could have come about, here or anywhere, and perhaps always did and does, any time anywhere.

Either that or there is just one universe, itself matching Totality, one that recycles itself over billions of years, but this is but a small point, the important points being that the notion of the causeless is itself the TOE, this causeless necessarily being the law of no law, one with no particular formation, and that there could be no built-in meaning, which may be disturbing to some who wanted to be watched over, but, they forget that they then would not have the ultimate freedom to make their own meaning of our life and the situation of the human condition. Note that all this becomes the same result for those who say that they don't know.

So, the temporary conclusion is that the why is that something must be because nothing cannot stay, the How being some kind of balance of opposites occurring from the only possible prime mover that is ever infinite and eternal, nothing, such as the virtual pairs, or positive stuff vs. negative gravity, or even the polarity of charge nullifying all existence, in the overview, the ever production of stuff ongoing, this being akin to it always there.

It's not as interesting as we thought it would be, but, then again, how could it be, way, way down? The real excitement is at the other end of the spectrum: the complex, where we are, thrust into existence, which even precedes in importance that of essence!

Something for Nothing



Pluses

Minuses

< - + + + Nothing - - - - >

Of course, this doesn't stop some mammals from making things up, such as that life can only come from Life, even then abruptly flip-flopping to then say that the Life then didn't need to come from LIFE, etc., their initial basis now in a shambles, but whoever said that mammals had to be sensible?

Some are so silly as to say that all is fake, as like for show in a dream, only then to have some actually really real Guy beneath, named Brahman, popping up all of the sudden drowsing, sleeping, and dreaming his life away, his own means of being totally unexplained and ignored, this being some kind of strange psychological stopping point of complete satisfaction, totally contrary to their big need for explanation of a lesser question in the first place.

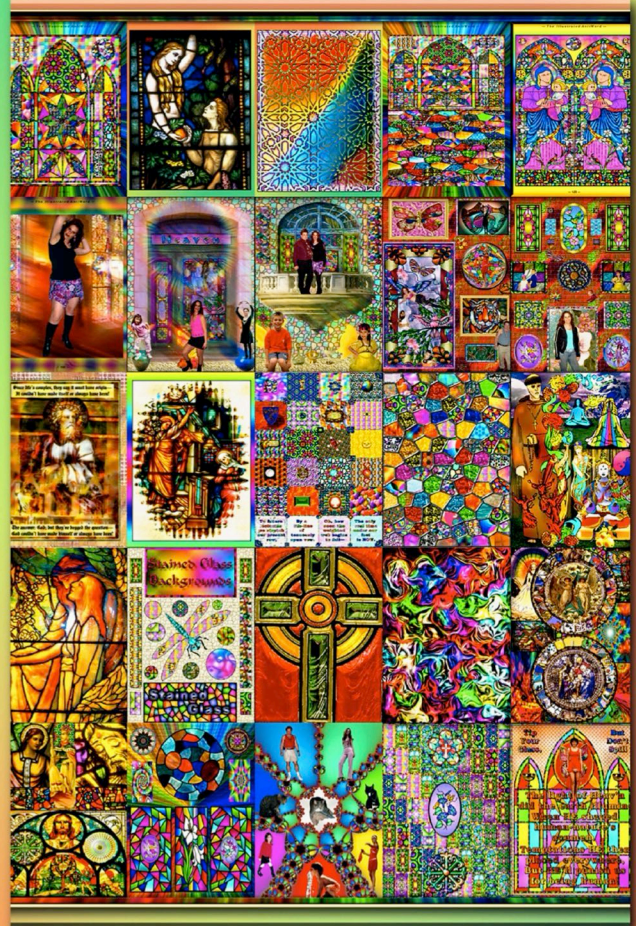


Well, some mammals are not only vainglorious and far from humble, thinking themselves to be the center of all and the measure of all things, but just plain weird, making outright baseless and un-

grounded pronunciations by fiat, even then deceptively preaching these theories as fact and truth to the young and unsuspecting, even compounding that lack of ethics but trying to protect the beliefs of the imaginary invisibles by going to war over them, onto their own bloody end!



2037



— Chapter 17 —
2037

It was a snowy winter day in the old sandstone farmhouse, in the year 2037, and Peter and Angelina would pretend that it was the year 1945, a fantasy game they often played, 1945 being chosen because it was a happy time just after World War II and because most of the United States had indoor plumbing by then.

Of course in 1945 there was no detailed and local Weather Net and so they weren't allowed to know (By the rules of pretending) if a snowstorm was coming or how many inches they would get—nor did they care to know anyway, for it put some of the mystery back into nature's hands.

They found an oldies station on the Radio Net, and began dancing, as the swing music filled the air.

The snow was falling heavier now and so there was no way to go out until the plows came, for only the main roads had electronic snow melting beams, although in 1945 they still rolled the snow in some rural areas and then brought out the sleighs to ride on top of it.

They stopped dancing for a moment and just held each other close, kissing and laughing because they always hibernated in winter anyway, snow or no snow.

Another laugh was had in noting that Peter and Angelina had no TV to turn off, they not even owning one, for there was no TV in 1945.

Nor could they use the telephone since they either pretended that they were too rural to have one or that it was a party line and was ever busy, but, then yet another laugh, since in current times they would always turn off their wrist phones anyway, ever complete in their isolation from the world's trivial intrusions.

Out in the yard was an old '56 chevy, close enough to the 40s, which was already half covered with snow and memories, and so this became their car, forgetting, of course, that they ever had personal magnetic transports.

They used the old gas range to make soup, for there would have been no microwave, and certainly no new thermal jet cookers, in the postwar years. They sipped the steaming spoonfuls and gave the soup bone to their dog.

Angelina allowed her ever lengthening long legs to slip out of her robe for Peter to note, since she was an incorrigibly romantic and sensuous woman in Peter's presence, and Peter was always a consistent worker of miracles in her—they were an ever escalating feedback loop of love in operation. To an iNtuitive Feeler there is no such thing as sex only love—deep, meaningful, all consuming love, with no holding back, its ultimate vulnerability made safe through the undeniable loyalty of INFs to INFs.

Yet, there was no going back before what they had become.

As naturalists, they were able to absorb with awestruck reverence scenes of overpowering sublimity far beyond the simple prettiness.

As musicians, they could hear and play music more exhilarating and heartfelt than ever dreamed of; the celestial music of the

spheres heard by the mystics was but a child's toy flute in comparison.

As sensualists, they had discovered that what had long ago passed for deep and passionate sex had been merely a pleasant prelude. Erotic pleasure of an intensity that flesh had never known was enjoyable without guilt.

As painters and patrons of the visual arts, they were able to behold representative vision in a holographic reality of indescribable glory.

And yet, throughout the ages, there had always been those rare and mystical moments as described above for those in love, as were Peter and Angelina in their past lives, and so now they rose above even this highest ecstasy of the day in their glory.

"Funny," said Peter, "That in modern times, 95% of what we think we need was not even invented in 1945!"

"But love transcends all of these things," said Angelina, as she led Peter up the stairs and into their bedroom done in sort of an Indian Palace style, with veils hanging from the ceiling.

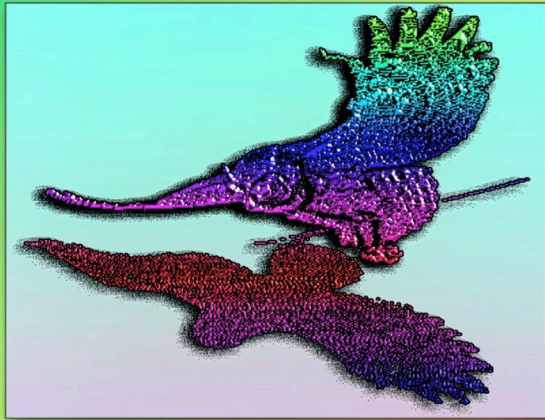
Peter placed a pillow on the floor at the side of the bed and knelt on it, spreading her long red heeled legs apart so that he could worship at the place of the alpha and the omega, where the river met the sea, and all the while the phone could not ring and the doorbell would be ignored, as the big snow fell, nearly two feet, although they hadn't known the amount beforehand, for here it seemed that it was always 1945.

"What is life?"

"To find the answer, one must live it fully."



The Last Light?



— Chapter 18 — The Last Light?

We rejoin our namers of the rose in ‘The Triumph of Life’ many centuries later, long after these times, around the year 2165, as they visit the place where it all began, each of them about 162 years old.

They are still very much together and have again found the complete happiness that was inspired by the advice of the ‘Book of Quatrains’ and the many other books that they had written together. He and she have now become I and she, for the story’s narrator was, of course, also the participant.

It was on the last day of Indian summer that I approached the side entrance of the nature reserve, the one near the old graveyard, for we felt that the cemetery was a place that was both for the living and the dead.

As I left our cabin and walked through the streets, I was saddened, though in a pleasant way, when I saw the last flowers of autumn still trying to push up through and around the leaves that the fall had everywhere bestrewn.

In one garden there was a sundial, and an old man sitting silently next to it. In my mind I named him 'Care'. The gentle old man nodded his ascent as I looked to pick some flowers to bring to her, my holy partner while Care slowly marked the hours by the shadows that crept over time's face.

Angelina was not with me, for she liked to wait in the cemetery—resting up against a tombstone and reading or writing the time away until I arrived at our afternoon rendezvous.

My steps, therefore, hurried on through and over the cemetery gate now lying broken and rotting on the ground. Here the path rose up the hill, where many had taken their last journey.

Carrying my half of the supplies and sleeping gear, I walked up and up, my steps heavy and plodding at first, but then lightening and quickening with the thought of my angel waiting up there.

I picked up the nature path, behind the tombs, braving the briars, the poison ivy, and the wandering brush that often obscured the trail.

I soon arrived among the tombstones, and there she was, as often as not, next to the empty grave of Jane Hamilton.

We had always joked that perhaps Jane was now on the loose, but since then Angelina had adopted Jane's last abode as her own, and was warming herself with the heat of the gravestone. Of course, had I not seen this scene before, I might have thought that 'Here Lies Jane', but I just smiled and kissed her awake, handing her the last flowers of the year.

Leaves began to flutter down on us, as the wind rustled the trees, trees which probably weren't even here when the cemetery was last used.

There seemed to be no dates on the tombstones later than the eighteen hundreds, say 1875 or so. So, we were resting in a place that had, perhaps, been forgotten forever.

Closing our eyes, we imagined the scene without the trees and the new growth, as it probably once was: a clearing covered with leafy ground plants which alone had still persisted.

In our minds we saw a meadow on a hill, where the stones stood proud, where Victorian hearse carriages from the gaslight era lumbered up the hill with the dead, their mourning processions coming on behind.

But, now, the gravestones leaned every which way, many of them cracked or in pieces, some even laying down flat, and many others not readable, the scene being much overgrown and under swept

Well, little by little, each time we came here, we'd start clearing the brush and righting the stones, and so we did that for awhile.

We read some of the inscriptions engraved on the stones. The first, its dates denoting an infant's short smile of years, read:

**IT WAS SO SOON THAT I WAS DONE FOR
THAT'S IT'S A WONDER WHAT I WAS BEGUN FOR!**

Another said, apparently from beyond the grave,

**MY DEATH IS SEPARATE FROM LIFE
BY JUST A BREATH.**

Another said, with somewhat dry humor,

**PLEASE TURN DOWN YOUR CUP
TO MY THIRSTY LIPS.**

Another, of a local writer, words resting in print, read,

**WHITHER HAS FLOWN THE SPIRIT FROM THE DEAD,
BUT RESTS HERE AS THE SOUL IN ALL I'VE SAID.**

The last one showed a picture of a raised glass and said,

**TAKE HEAVENLY SUPS FROM YOUR EARTHLY CUP,
AND LIVE YOUR LIFE WHILE THE WINE FLOWS RED.**

We took this last one as a sign to move on, saving the other inscriptions for next time, being careful as we walked not to fall into any of the empty or sunken grave sites.

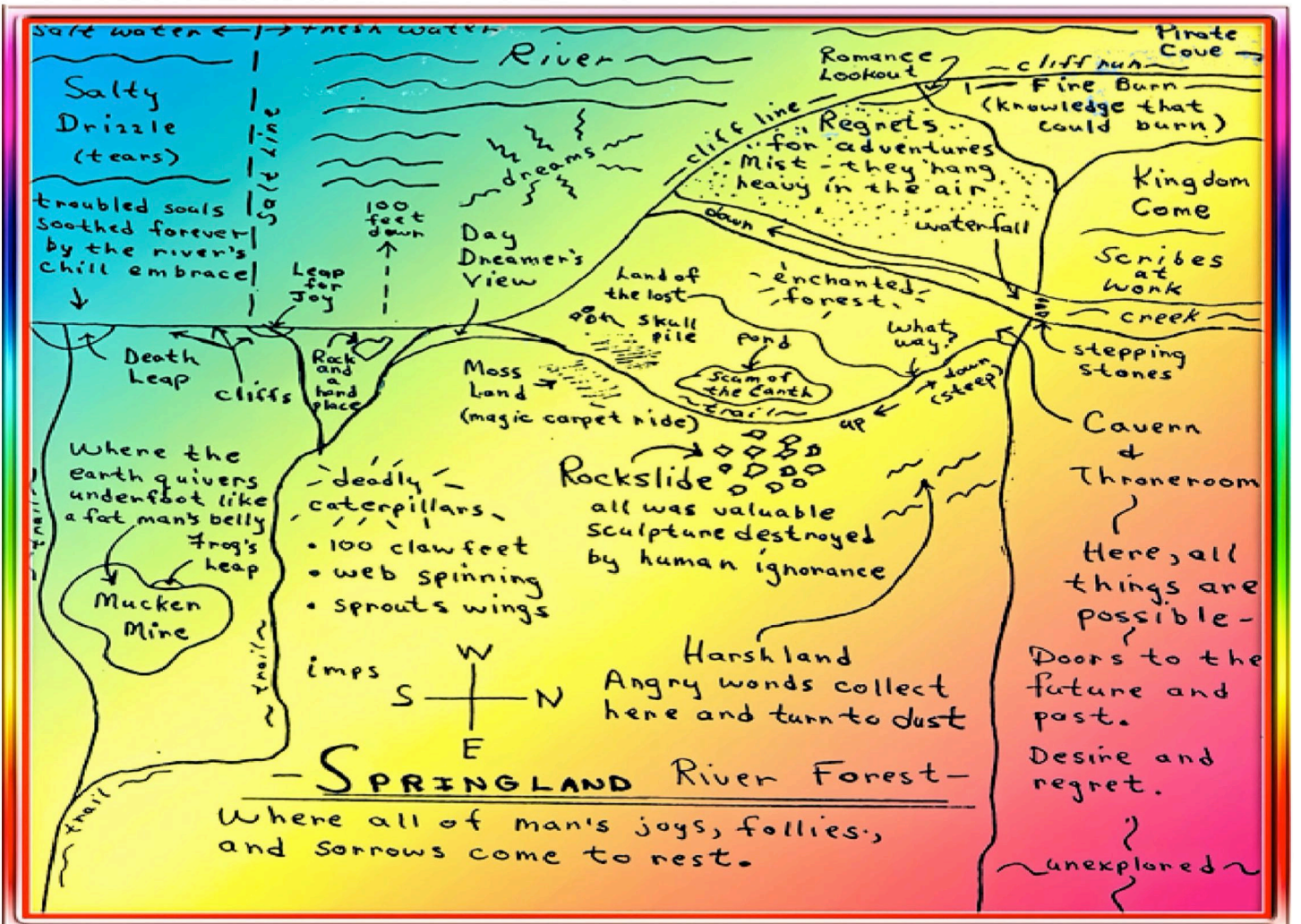
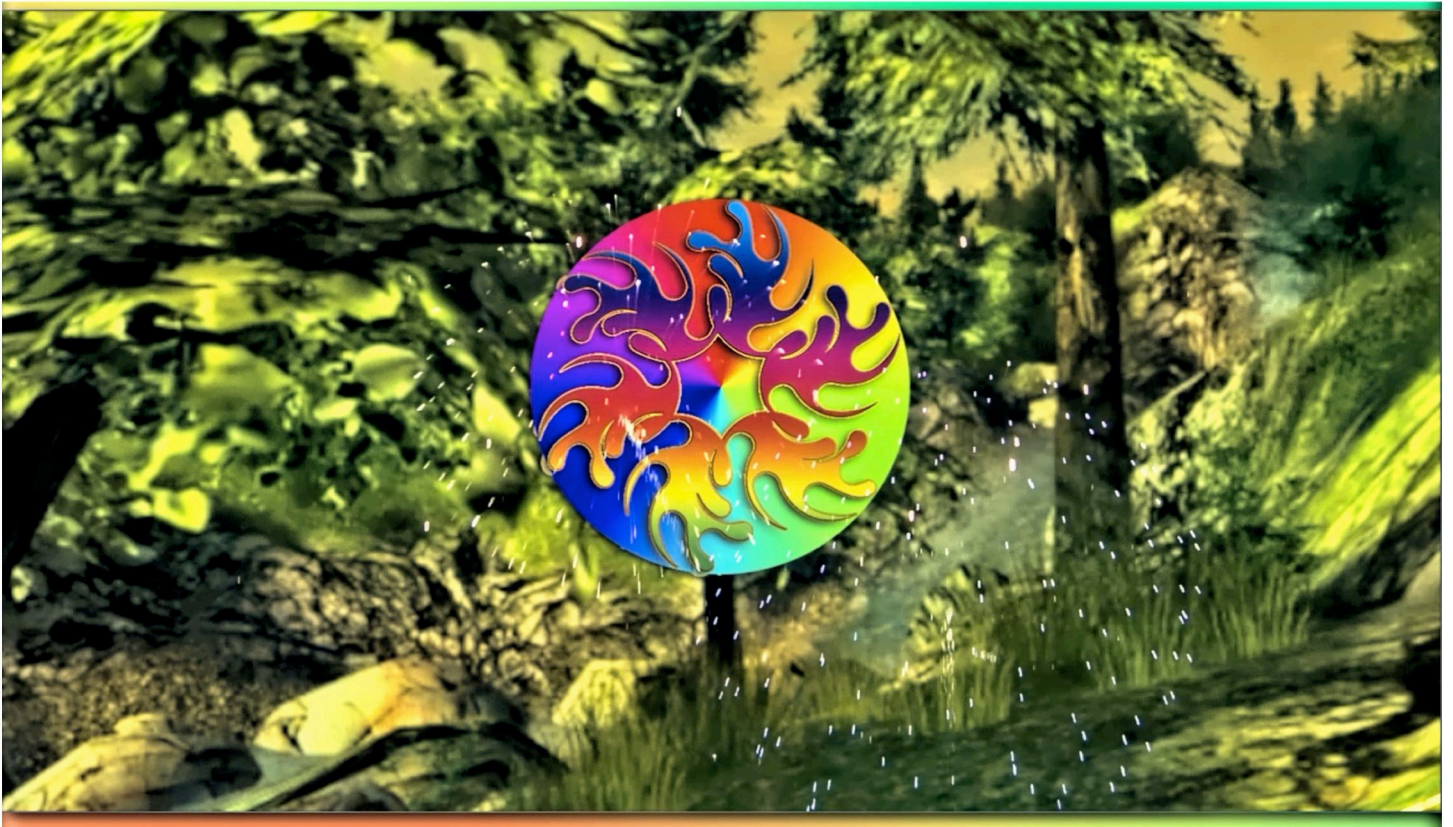
We broke open a bottle of apple cider, gave each other a sip, and then, thinking back, of Omar, poured a few drops of our precious drink into the ground.

Refreshed, we wandered among the tombs, using some as stepping stones, and quickly ran on out of the back of the cemetery, where we soon lay asleep in the old caretaker's hut.

We dreamed of a world white in the moonlight—of a crystalline cathedral built from falling stars in the holy night. It was then that aged Winter came, looked at us while we slept, and cried down his crystal tears on us; for, our youth and beauty had made the old man mourn for summer's love—for the waving wheat and corn, and, even more so for the late autumn mild who, withered, wan, had just now passed on, taking us both with him, leaving the earth a widow, weather worn.









— Chapter 19 — Dream Worlds Epilog

Each morning as I awake, I can just barely remember her. Even as I rub my eyes, she becomes but a shadowy recollection, although a most pleasant one, as my day begins anew.

I don't even know her name, yet I see her almost every night. All I know is that I love her dearly, for how could I not?—I've created her in the most perfect, loving image that I could imagine. She is a dream.

As the morning wears on she is still with me, a faint glimmer of being in my heart, a mere shadow of the love I felt at daybreak. As the day grows bright into noon, my remembrance of her dims into vagueness. By late afternoon she is but a wisp of near nothingness; yet, I still can feel her presence—a joyous fulfillment—as if she had somehow snuggled into my being and merged into me. But, who is she? Well, she seems to be every woman I've ever known, yet none in particular.

Even now I am having trouble rebuilding her image. If only I had a clear picture—it all seems so hazy now—if only I could remember.

Somehow, I must see her distinctly, and more importantly, remember the vision. But how can I become alert, awake, and sober of thought in a dream?

Alas, several nights flew by and I did not dream of her, but, then, finally, on one intoxicatingly drowsy night, I saw her again—and I lived and loved with her as if there were no tomorrow; however, all too soon the morrow broke, and she waned, lost to me again. Although she was so vivid, at first, she had faded into evanescence.

This time, though, I managed to write down her description, and, by that evening, the depiction was about all I had left. Although the image had withered fast, I was now able to resurrect her, using my hasty description, even though it was made with an all too sleepy hand. For awhile I could capture her as such, but again her image faded all too quickly.

Many thoughts ran through my head the next night, turning into ghostly visions and non-sensible hallucinations of a most illogical character; that is, I was dreaming, but she was not in any of the scenes. If only I could bring some order and sense into the noisy mosaic of my random and wandering thoughts.

Other thoughts waited in the wings, for their appearance on the stage of the absurd, and they soon tumbled and stumbled across the dream scene, had their moment, then passed on into oblivion, apparently never to return.

Of course, I saw them all pass, but I was only a paralyzed spectator, and, since a good part of my mind was quite out of it, I noted nothing unusual in the chaos and therefore had believed it all to be quite real and normal.

The weeks crawled by, and I don't believe that I saw her, but if I did then I must have just as soon forgotten her, but somehow our love seemed to live on, although only as an idea painted in me, and so our love life was practically non-existent.

Then I had a great idea: if she wasn't going to show up, then why couldn't I just conjure her up! Yes! I've been a fool all of these days—why didn't I think of this before?

I prepared myself well, and it took several days of practice: I went to bed relaxed, after a warm bath, and thus quite easily discarded the worries of the day.

Then I reviewed the script in my mind, going over it and over it many times. I repeated to myself one thousand times: *Control your dream. The dream images are not real, although they seem to be so. You can do anything in your dream; you can control it. It is only a dream. Tell yourself therein that it is only a dream. Grasp the idea and become lucid. You can do anything in your dreams—you can go anywhere, see anyone, have anything—if you can only realize that it is a dream and then direct the dream accordingly.* And so forth, I said such things, over and over and over and over.

I repeated the words while I tried to picture the most utter and complete blackness—and it was there that I etched the words rehearsed above so that they would remain there as a message to me after I slept—to be received by my normally unbelieving dream self, that drowsy mind that never questions the illogical, that mind that sees and interprets every dream literally because it all does seem so real—because the model of reality used in dreams is the same exact model used when we are awake!

I looked forward to the night, with much anticipation. I wondered if dream images were really sharp and distinct, or if they were vague, as they seem in remembrance. Well, soon I would know...

“It is only a dream...”

These were the last words that I heard before drifting off into that fabricated otherworld in which I hoped to script, direct, produce, and star in any story that I could dream up.

And there, in my dream, the etched thought “That I was dreaming” did indeed occur to me. What a revelation it was! What a realization!

Still, it seemed to be so far-fetched and so amazing that I refused to believe it at the time. Damn! I was so close. Why didn’t I believe it? Because everything in my dream was clear and sharp and colorful, like a perfect image of reality itself in three dimensions—an exact match to reality itself, a genuine reconstruction, a true virtual reality!

The next night, I was again haunted by the echoing thought that “I was dreaming”. I still wasn’t convinced, but at least I took some cautious control, anyway, so that I could try an experiment: I went down to the kitchen, in my dream, and poured some milk on the floor, much as it pained me to do so.

As soon as I woke up the next morning, I rushed down to the kitchen and saw that the floor was clean! This gave me confidence. I was finally making some progress in dream awareness and control. I was learning to detect the dream state.

The following night I dreamt again, realized that it was a dream, and again took control. This time I rearranged all of the wonderful items that were on my bedside table, but, of course, when I woke up, they were still untouched, having remained in their original positions. I was getting close, for I was starting to believe. I had to be careful though, before I did crazy things in my dreams, for one must be absolutely convinced beyond certainty that a dream is indeed a dream—lest one fall into harm or become inhibited out of fear of breaking laws or dying.

The next night in my dream I wondered again “If I was dreaming”, when I was flying down the street, about twenty feet in the air. At last the logical portion of my brain fully “awoke” and said to me, “You are flying down the street, twenty feet off the ground; this is impossible and ridiculous; therefore this must be a dream!”

So, for the first time ever, I was thoroughly and utterly convinced to the core of my being that I was dreaming. Now I could begin some serious research. Yes, I was actually there in my next dream, living it and observing it all at the same time. Instead of flying straight to Hawaii, I first wanted to inspect my surrounding—to minutely analyze the dream model and images.

So, I made a conscious and definite effort to look directly at everything in the scene. As I flew through my neighborhood, I looked closely at each house, and I saw that every part was perfectly in place: every shingle and nail, every blade of grass distinct, every leaf and branch vivid; in fact, every single detail, including color, was identical to that of real life and was indistinguishable from it! What a discovery this was!

I flew high and low. The reconstruction of my street was perfect—no wonder that dreams seem so real, for they practically are. Of course, dreams also seem hazy, but that’s only because the recollection itself grows hazy over time; but, I’ve found that, if you write your dreams down upon awakening, you will find later, upon reading about them, that they will remain vivid and can be recalled.

And so it was, that after many months of such patience, discipline, and use of dream notes, I was able to do whatever I wished in my dreams: I traveled; I ate delicious food. And gained no calories from it; I met wonderful people; I even formed plays and movies in which each player performed totally in character. Many were quite unlike my own character; yet all their performances must have been from my own hidden talent, and scene after desired scene rolled by, in 3-D Cinemascope and Technicolor.

I could now do anything that a God could do; for example, I invented and ran Universes, but, now it was time to find her the phantom woman who had initiated my dream quest in the first place.

She came easily into my vision and I saw her clearly for the first time. She was the perfect woman—she was my dream girl! I saw her plainly; somehow I knew her, I loved her, for, she was made for me. She was perhaps a composite of all the women that I had known and loved, plus all that my my heart's ideal had molded into being.

Why should I ever wake? Why indeed. Reality can be harsh, and perhaps I had just stumbled onto Heaven. Well, one must wake to live—to make one's dreams come true for real, and to gain input for further dreams, which, in turn, will give even more life, upon awakening.

Yes, we all have to sleep, and we must do so every night, so, why waste it?

It is Heaven on Earth; it is the perfect world—one in which no debts are owed, where infinite power awaits, where you can have all that the mythical afterlife has to offer. Try it. See you in my dreams!

She awoke that morning from a dream, fresh with that free and wondrous feeling that lies at the heart of life's exhilaration and glory; but, soon the returning waves of stifling reality swept over her, like a sickness, smothering her in the dread of another hopeless day amidst the ruins of anxiety and depression.

She dragged herself out of bed. She was like a doomed ship, drifting in the storm's aftermath, under a moon pale and wan, her sails tattered and torn before the relentless wind of existence.

The dream had seemed so real, but it, too, had wilted in the heat, like a flower that had lost its precious gleam of morning dew. *But the hull must drive on, mustn't it, she thought, though the mast be broken... no! No more! I will end it all. Tonight I will end my life!*

She spent the whole day planning it. Yes, she would scuttle her ship—her car—and sink within it to the bottom of the sea, a river, really, and drown, with a sigh and a groan, devoured by forces too large to fight against.

So, she drove her car towards the cliff near the bridge. She drove faster and faster. The waters called to her—their cool and refreshing depths invited her in.

“Come to me,” some deathly voice whispered in her ear, “Come to me and find everlasting peace. Come and sleep with me in the endless night. Let me cover you with my ebon wings, in darkness, for it is eternal and complete.”

“No, no, not thee!” she cried aloud. “I cannot go with thee, not with evil!”

She drove her car to the edge of the cliff, having stopped just short. Her mind was now drinking in and savoring the blue and green world that was reflected in the river.

This sort of sparkling day was not the kind of day on which she could end it all. As she looked deeper and deeper into the water, she began to drift into a dream-world of her own making—a fantasy fairy-world in which her ideals could live on, untainted by the reality of the mediocre world.

A voice called to her. Visions of Camelot danced in her head. Mythical fantasy-worlds and legends beckoned to her, seemingly from all directions. An inner voice called to her, the sweet voice of someone who she could love.

She had often retreated to this storybook world, but now she would take it a bit further: she would plunge into it, live within its splendor, and reside mostly therein—before all else.

Yes, this dreamland would be her final refuge. The fairyland called to her daily; it would be the realization of all of the imagined perfections that she had always brought to mind when the real world had so often failed to meet her expectations. She freed her mind from

many of its real life shackles and began to dream more freely, though still awake.

“I’ll breath life into you, my little voice,” she said to herself, as the noise of her consciousness slowly faded away. Her imaginary world came into focus. She could now paint it with the colors of her dreams, creating a life closer to the heart’s desire. She felt like a Goddess, being able to create life at will in her dreams. This is when she created him. This is when she brought him to life by giving him her own essence. However, his existence was his own to have, and so he knew nothing of her as his creator, but only that he was alive in a beautiful and perfect world. She had built him in her soul’s own image; she had molded him from her heart’s wishes. She fell in love with him, of course, for she could do no other.

“Come into my dreams,” she would say to conjure him up, “Come into my dreams, and then by day I shall be well again,” for she was using lines from the romantic poets she had read.

He was a good and decent human being, for how could he be otherwise, with her ideals brought to life in him. He gave fully of himself in life and love, always placing his partner’s happiness and fulfillment above his own.

Their relationship was driven by love alone, and they celebrated it often in her dreams. Yes, she had, at last, found the love that the real world had so often denied her, for she had created a new and better reality.

Yes, he did feel sadness at times, too, for she could not totally submerge that part of herself, but it was subdued in him and so the sadness was only used as necessary to enhance the beauty of their love, via its sheer contrast and brightness. She, too, gave all that she had to him, watching over him and loving him deeply, utterly, and completely.

Nothing could hurt him in this special world. He was impervious to pain, cold, fire, and sickness. Once he was fatally shot in a war, but he didn’t die, because it was from her spirit that he drew his life principle, and of course she had willed him to live on.

Another time, he was hit by lightning, but as we have seen, a dream can never die, and so it was that he arose alive and well from

the smoldering embers. He seldom got sick and never had a headache.

“Everyone should have the best in life,” she said to herself, “And in my world there can be no suffering.”

Each night he would come, saying, “I arise from dreams of thee.”

“Kiss me, my dearest phantasm,” she whispered, “And hold me ever dear; shelter me from the evils and the melancholy of the torturous world; show me the true meaning of love that the real world has forgotten! Come into my dreams, and then by day I shall be well again.”

Knowing not that he was her dream image, he never doubted his own existence and happiness; however, when she didn't think of him or when she slept, he disappeared temporarily, until she awoke or thought of him again.

So, when she slept or daydreamed, he existed, and when she was awake and not daydreaming, then he slipped into that oblivion which he knew only as sleep and quiet slumber, death's kinder brother.

He was the day to her night. He arose from her dreams of him—much like the mountain rises from the depths of the valley. Without her, he could not be; without him, she could not be. The circle was now complete, the link was closed—they had become two locked boxes, each of which contained the other's key.

The fact that he only existed only as a dream in her mind took nothing away from their relationship, for their love was true and the feelings were felt as deeply as they would normally have been felt in the real world—as anyone who has dreamt can readily attest to, for, ultimately, it is what we feel that matters, not the source that causes the feeling—for all feeling comes from within.

He did wonder, sometimes, though, about just how good and lucky his life was, about his having almost super powers at times, but, he concluded only that he led a charmed life which stemmed from an inner happiness that constantly poured forth visions in positive creative images that bred good fortunes.

Indeed he did, for she had given him that power—a power that had come from somewhere within her. He was her twin, yet also her op-

posite, for somehow she had given him an enthusiasm for life which she didn't seem to have herself.

He was a reflection of her image in which his outward vision mirrored her inward hope. Consequently, he blossomed with creativity in art, music, and writing, as she continued to maintain him as both his protector and his inspiration, although, as we have seen, he certainly did have free will, for he knew not the source of his creation nor of the tendencies placed into him.

They lived and loved together, allied and alloyed in a soft metallic night, blending into the golden oneness that love had always promised but had never before delivered.

He was born with the inclination of goodness—so she never had to possess him or demand from him.

Life blossomed now, and some of this exuberance did indeed surface and show itself back in the real world, but in the end she still found her real life to be the cold harsh reality that it had always been.

So, she called him back to her dreams, again and again. Here they were free to love and live fully, their chemistry sending out invitations of love which were soft, sweet, and smiling on the rising air, a spray of liquid love, mystified, filling the scene with a vaporous perfume of well-being everywhere: they were up, warm, and floating on the clouds of dreams.

Their passions smoldered like incense, and burned like the candle's flame; they consumed each other often, yet continued to have endless love to give, their passions always seeming to reach new levels, then expanding even more, building, ever building.

Now and then, of course, she had to attend to events back in the real world, but it really wasn't so bad there anymore, because she knew that she had something good to look forward to in her dreams. So, she went happily through the motions in the real world, feeling better and better as the days went by, but still always looking forward to the chance to dream him up again, when she would say softly to herself:

*Come to me in my dreams,
And then by day I shall be well again!
For so the night will more than pay
the hopeless longing of the day.*

*Come, as thou cam'st a thousand times,
A messenger from radiant climes,
And smile on thy new world,
And be as kind to others as to me!*

*Or, as thou never cam'st in sooth,
Come now, and let me dream it truth,
And part my hair, and kiss my brow, and say,
'My love! Why sufferest thou?'*

*Come to me in my dreams,
And then by day I shall be well again!
For so the night will more than pay
The hopeless longing of the day.*

(—Matthew Arnold)

She again faded off into dreamland... and there he was. Just the sight of him would bring the world to a stop, for she could only concentrate on him. When she looked at him, the birds' song faded on the moving air, the night breezes stopped their motion, and the moon's radiance shone no more—for her heart had welled up within and had merged with his own.

She felt herself being drawn into the dream of love in which there was only one overwhelming and all consuming feeling of glory and peace and unity. ...

But then, during one rainy night back in her real world, when she was driving in a storm, along the cliff road around a curve, where she had once contemplated suicide, her car skidded and flew off the side of the water slicked road, falling three thousand feet, and crashed hard and straight into the rocks below and exploded in a fiery wreck.

The flames licked at her for hours, but she felt no heat. All her bones should have been crushed in the fall, but they weren't. She did not even bleed. There was no pain.

She arose from the car's wreck, unharmed, and walked away. It was then that she realized that she, too, was a character in someone's dream ...

...She did not even bleed. It was then that she realized that she too was a figment of someone else's imagination.

"Who dreamest me?" she cried to the sky. "Reveal thyself! Who art thou? Who art thou that won't even let me die!" (*after Shelley...*)

The heavens remained dumb, so she climbed back up towards the road.

Back at the top she again cried, "Who hast made me? Who? Thy image is tainted!"

Visions of angels appeared in the sky. "You have a question for us?" they asked.

"Yes, what sort of God made me to suffer and toil in this sad world?"

"It's a lovely and beautiful world," said the angels, in chorus.

"OK," she said, "I'll play your game. Tell me now, who made this varied and sensual world of charm and grace and color? Who gave me intellectual beauty and those rare but beautiful waves of emotions which I have known and enjoyed for their breathtaking meaning and depth?"

"A good and loving spirit," they answered. "That's our usual answer."

"And who gave me freedom to love and live and grow, flowering free and fragile, though beautiful, but then withering, faded and forlorn in old age, like some evanescent dream?"

"It was the Creator of all life."

"And who gave me sadness?"

"HE did," they answered.

"And who gave the world hunger, pain, misfortune, sickness, death, worry, and unbearable calamity which drags us suffering to the grave?"

"He reigns," they said.

"Give me his name!" she demanded.

“Who is he that does not even grant me peace in the grave?—for Hell awaits me there as a further torture, does it not?”

“He rules,” the angels replied.

“His name! I ask but his name—the name of one so cruel! Who is the one that would create man as a precious vessel, though so imperfectly, and then destroy this lovely creation by sickness and death in rage?”

“He is the One,” they said.

“Name him and let him be known for his vengeful name—for in my own fine dreams of a man I allowed no sickness, no pain—all was love and beauty! Who is he that is the source of my everlasting pain?”

“HE does not exist,” the angels finally said, “Nor does the Devil, nor do we—all is simply as it is and so it ever shall be. It’s the way that the world happens to work. Therefore, all is right with the world. We angels are simply manifestations of your own thoughts. All that is truly real comes from within; nothing comes from without.”

“There is no creative deity?” she asked.

“There is none; there is only an unconscious nature which is part and parcel with the universe, co-eternal with it and embodied in it as the principle of life in all things. It is the connectedness of all things, and exists far below the level of atoms.”

She didn’t know whether she was relieved or angry at not having anyone to blame for the state of the world.

“But whose dream am I,” she wondered aloud. “Who saved me from death?”

Another voice replied—the familiar voice of the man of her dreams. “It is I who made thee, my beloved,” he said. “I dreamt of thee. You are the dream of my dreams—you are my ideal, for your love is so innocent and free!”

“No,” she said, “it cannot be, for it was I who made thee in my dreams.”

“Yes,” he said, “But my image was already in you, was it not? Who put it there? It was from that image that you gave birth to mine but the real story is more like that we have somehow made each other. I may be the day to your night, but you are the same to me when I

dream of you. I am your opposite twin. Each of us cannot exist without the other.”

“I believe it,” she said, “Although there seems to be no initial cause. Very strange though.”

“I see and dream of you, my dream woman, each night.”

“We are indeed two souls, each of which opens the other,” she said.

“Yes, it is I who made you as you made me, from all that was already inside us. As your twin spirit I arose, given life only by your dreams. Oh please, let me live, for now I sustain you—I protect you and love you, as you do the same for me. Now that I love you and want you, I need you.”

“If one of us dies,” she said, “Then the other will perish also?”

“The valley cannot exist without the mountain. There can be no day without the night; there can be no beauty without sadness.”

“We are twin-opposites—as alike as dawn and dusk in our aspects; reflections, as it were of each other’s image—visions which truly exist in the mind, for all is real in the mind.”

“Day gives birth to night, and then night gives birth to day. Matter makes light, and light makes matter. That is us and that is the cycle which created us, within which scheme it was not necessary for either part to come first, as with the chicken and the egg.”

“But we live neither here nor there. Does it matter? Now that we know that we’re just dream images, how can we really live and love?”

“We can neither fully live nor completely die where we are. What is deathless is also lifeless, although it is still a beautiful work of art, such as the ideals that we see in a painting.”

“I can be as real as you wish me to be, as can you to me.”

“Some say it’s crazy to try and live a dream.”

“Some say it’s crazy not to!”

“Join my real world,” she said, and I will join yours as well.”

“But your day is my night and vice versa. How can we meet?”

“We’ll meet at twilight dawn or dusk—the only time that night and day can touch.”

“I shall come,” he said, “Leaving his dreamland forever and joining hers as her real life love.

She greeted the man of her ideals, saying to him, “I have wished you into being. My thoughts of you have colored my actions and

have led me to find you in the real world—it was a self-fulfilling prophecy, an example of positive creative imagery.”

“It was indeed,” he answered. “Although here I shall at last know true sadness and death. But I will also experience higher levels of beauty.”

She said, no longer anxious or depressed, “When you’re open to beauty, then you become vulnerable to sadness. What I have finally learned, the hard way, is that they are inseparable in life.”

“Some people lead lives in which they are fat, dumb, and almost content.”

“Yes, they don’t live much, but then again, they don’t suffer much either. They’re immune to both beauty and sadness.”

“It’s like when you’re not with me. There is some joyous pain when I miss you, but for me, if I had no one to miss, then the pain would be greater.”

The new light of morning shone, in that blessed mood that attends to the quiet intermingling of day and night in the dawn’s misty twilight. She came to him during morning twilight; he came to her at evening twilight. In between, they dreamt of each other.

Each day forward was born in quiet innocence, as their human hearts tenderly touched—open, vulnerable, and exposed, yet fully alive and beating.

Days turned into weeks as they grew closer together in the soft glow that was neither night nor day, but was somewhere in the nether world of half-light dawn or dusk.

The morning brimmed with the freshness of life, its beauty spreading far and wide, into every root and tendril.

Life took wing from the cocoon—an ugly caterpillar having magically transformed into a beautiful butterfly.

Weeks turned into months. It was a dream within a dream within a dream. Faint images from dim shadows flickered and grew brighter.

High noon came and showered its brightness into life’s every chamber. Now that they had felt the glory of reality, they would seek it always.

From the months a life was made life was a dream. The afternoon sparkled and spread its gold to every living thing.

The soft light of evening shone again, in that sacred mood that attend the quiet intermingling of day and night in the twilight of dusk. He came, as usual, saying:

*I arise from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright.*

*I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet has led me—
Who knows how?—
To thy chamber-window sweet!*

*The wandering airs they faint on the dark,
The silent stream,—the champak odours fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream,
The nightingale's complaint, it dies upon her heart,
As I must die on thine, O, beloved as thou art!*

*O, lift me from the grass! I die, I faint, I fail!
Let thy love in kisses rain on my lips and eyelids pale.
My cheek is cold and white, alas!
My heart beats out loud and fast oh!
Press it close to thine again, where it will break at last!*

(—Shelley)

He awoke that morning from a dream, filled with dread, dripping with sweat, wondering whether he had gone to Heaven or to Hell, and not knowing if he was truly awake or still in the midst of a nightmare; but, soon a calming wave of peace and quiet swept over him as he turned and saw that his dream lady was lying there next to him.

“I’m alive?”

“You were sick,” she said, “Something you’re not very used to in my world, but you are recovering now. I suppose it’s a sign of age, for we’ve spent many years together now.”

“We’re getting old, aren’t we,” he continued.

“Indeed, but we still have many good years left. Here, I’ll read you something from Wordsworth that he wrote in his later years:”

*What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back
The hour of splendour in the grass,
Of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find strength
In what remains behind.
(—Wordsworth)*

A shade passed from between them—a door between their worlds had opened to let their dreams pass through. One shooting star after another had signaled these wishful events.

They awoke that morning from another dream—or perhaps they dreamt that they awoke—at the shore where they had once discovered the Nature of the Earth. They rubbed the sand from their eyes and opened their minds to the day, being careful not to clear from them the shadows of dreamy visions.

Their night time apparitions were soothing, calming, relaxing, real, tranquil, refreshing, restful, and peaceful—just like the water of the lake, which still slept under the morning mist.

They had camped on the shore, in a mossy nook between some rocks. An overhang of trees protected them. They couldn’t see the sky, but they could see a reflection of the sky and its clouds in the water when the mist lifted. A reflected bird flew in a reflected sky. Water lilies floated in the heavenly mirror. Orange day-lilies nearby told them that deep Summer was here.

Haunting visions poured forth as they looked at the image of the sky in the water. Soft winds rippled the water ever so slightly and

blew the branches of the reflected trees. Dreamy visions held them still a little bit sleep-eyed.

Again their worlds had met at twilight. A lark rose from the water and flew into nothingness. Gossamer threads ran from rock to rock, seemingly attaching them to their dream world.

Was it dawn or dusk? In half light, it did not matter.

“Which is real and which is an illusion?” she wondered.

“Do we sleep or do we dream?” he asked.

She answered with a poem:

*Some say that gleams
Of a remoter world visit the soul in sleep,
—That death is slumber,
And that its shapes the busy thoughts outnumber
of those who wake and live—
(—Shelley)*

Blossoms began falling from the trees and started to cover their feet. When a cushion had been formed, they sat down to prepare an imaginative breakfast of nuts and strawberries.

Flowers gently cascaded onto them, as their dreams took wing. They did eight impossible things like this before breakfast each and every day.

A unicorn wandered by, its existence fed only by the possibility of being. A chimera came forth and ate nuts and berries from their hands. Faeries danced between the flowers, caught only by a believing glance. Elves rode flying horses, and centaurs walked proudly down the path near them. These were the creatures who never were, all living in the land that never was.

They looked into each other’s eyes, reflecting on their thoughts.

“I’m not sure what world we’re in anymore,” she noted. “Nor does it matter very much which side of the looking glass we’re on, for we are here.”

“It’s as if some ethereal beauty has descended over our thoughts, and lent a poetic vision to us,” he added, “A shadow of some perfection. It is rapt, although a little vague, but I can sense its presence. Hear:”

—*I look on high;
Has some unknown omnipotence
unfurled the veil of life and death?
Or do I lie in dream,
and does the mightier world of sleep
Spread far around and inaccessibly its circles?*
(—Shelley)

The day soon came to life, and they saw castle builders laying stones, dream merchants giving away various unrealities, idealists realizing their ambitions, visionaries watching plans taking shape, ghosts and wraiths playing joyfully on the air, vapors forming and rising, and then coalescing into forms, phantoms riding on the lighthearted breezes, will-o'-the-wisps sparkling over the water, and mirages becoming real, at the slightest touch.

“I am so much enjoying our world,” she said. “Here, in us, all things are possible—it is an oasis, untouched by oblivion and regret, free from contagion, debt, worry, care, strife, and woe.”

And so they lived in the clouds, drifted into the Land of Nod, resided in Neverland, and made a home in the world of make believe.

Twilight fell and brooded awhile at the shore. They looked at the water and saw therein a reflection of the sunset. Reflected fire burned through reflected clouds. A fish swam in the reflected sky.

She walked to the water's edge and looked into it, expecting to see her reflection there, but she was surprised and pleased to see his face there instead.

“Come,” she said, “look! Come here to the shore.”

He walked down to the water and looked in, seeing not his own reflection, but a reflection of her instead.

“We have merged,” he said, “we are one. We will be strong now. We will survive in either world.”

— **FINIS** —



— THE END —