

52. Doubting Promise

As with any enterprise, in order to succeed there are obstacles to overcome. For example, writing a book: If chapters were years, 52 would have had significance. This was where some great climax should occur, but actual life doesn't resemble romance novels, a reason they're so eagerly sought, particularly among frigid women longing for orgasms. Much of it wouldn't exist without a need to keep ladies at court busy during male military absences. With short attention spans, unless it's about allure of sex and promise of titillation, nobody's interested. He would've delivered some core message that made this all worthwhile, but there just isn't any, can't be found, none forthcoming. Nothing anyone could say would work for someone else inside a totally different organism in another place and time. Your life is squarely in your own hands. His writing was merely therapy for a grizzled reprobate, not good looking, couldn't even handwrite legibly, but turned on by gentle pleasures: balancing, being outside, breathing fresh air, pedaling, slight bother easy to get used to. Through biking you can shrug off alienation, despair, rage. Simple needs can be satisfied beautifully; complex ones elude.

Always on a quest, permanently distracted, Quixote on a misguided crusade, he searched for some holy grail of meaning. Brain chemistry is actually altered by cycling, so there's introspection, less angst, more courage to speak against injustice in a dispassionate way. Any guru will tell you, "For the longest of voyages, man, motionless, travels inward." Is short bad? You're probably not supposed to remain so still as to watch grass growing, seasons changing, or those twigs slowly bursting forth into gaudy pompoms of hydrangea, wet geospheres slowly turning, or pale green tassels on oaks in Spring, like amphibians or fish that inhabit a liquid planet. Perhaps a climax had yet to occur, but Al deduced a gradual decline into oblivion or more likely an abrupt conclusion. Better hurry to finish whatever you start. There are no guarantees.

In this reputedly limitless interior, many of the same thoughts reoccur, and you find yourself falling down. Mad dreams creep into serious texts. Somewhere he must've heard, "You will never amount to anything," from those he trusted during impressionable years who had no idea how to nurture another fellow human being and probably never enjoyed an example for themselves. It was repeated often in small rude ways. Smokers smoke in doorways. Shoppers eat, drink and spill all over store. Healthy drivers park illegally in

handicapped spaces. Coworkers arrive hung over or ill prepared. Motorists cut each other off. Right-of-way rules because it's what's right in a polite society. Simple etiquette would be a good start on a path to caring about others, although they say evil incarnate can be quite charming with impeccable manners. Those outraged by a lack of courtesy might really be the righteous ones. With a heavy heart he mulled over an old Pascal meditation:

No, not a reed but a bit of verdure still,
more an apple, that looks wholesome without
but is mushy, close to rotten within,
something random factions pluck at will,
empire builders in haste pick out,
then, unimpressed, disinterestedly toss back in.

Once substantial, now rubble, as a stone wall
tumbled down, which long ago defined
business boundaries since forgotten,
flesh, blood, bone, trust: gave them all;
offered more still, yet summarily declined
when unmercifully downsized and forsaken.

Left among silent stalks, a notion forms
on how to better manage livelihoods;
blades of new grass, ferns in dark woods
after rains grow strong as daylight warms.

Nurtured on nature, he could build courage enough to get out of bed, go another step, finish his damn book despite misgivings, not succumb, and suggest a better way. Almost glad he had a book to write, something to do instead of absorbing abuse or giving up. You put well reasoned words up for public scrutiny, and all you'll get back is dull derision or silence. About the best you can hope for is guilty justification. He'd heard it all, knocks out of professional jealousies, one claiming a journalism degree who deemed his work substandard, some minor poet who felt his work didn't exude emotionality, those who once wrote a few successful reports, which instantly made them experts, of course. He could argue back his academic degrees and actual acceptance among famous writers, but why play their *authority game*. Scholars don't bother with philosophies of *becycling*. Having written hundreds of thousands of pages seeking a unique voice, he learned that readers would accept or reject a book that tears off that tarpaulin which covers an overripe load of rotting refuse called a mind or simply shimmers like an ocean with unknown depths and mysteries. Writers are not obliged to please, seduce only those who wish to be.

That anyone might doubt his capabilities or find him annoying just proved his voice was alive, being vital, challenging skill sets, doing what it was intended, shaking them up. For his part, there's no point in getting angry, defensive, or frustrated over style. Not one of his critics had to write daily for a living, which, by definition, meant heavy thinking and painful extracting whether or not you're up for it and, therefore, sometimes *mailing it in*, writing less than adequately by your own principles. What readers most admire about their beloved authors are a few slim passages of extraordinary beauty, tiny tropical islands afloat in seas of mundane narrative. Most novels make you labor for small revelations, waste time.

Life's a flight of stairs with prerequisites for each tread, unknowable obligations that had to be complete before you can elevate. Think you can figure all that out? Forget it. Must be some great spirit beyond your will speaking through you, because you are an unimaginably dull vessel on your own. Only those possessed by angels and demons produce anything noteworthy. Vegetative man thrives only on excrement spread on fields of being, cross-pollinated into fruition only by proximity, nurtured to harvest only through group effort. Curiosity and intuition are your only guides, and your reward is a slightly better view from higher ground. If the purpose of life is enlightenment, better start climbing.

Once you discover you can't know anything, you consciously give *intuition* a chance. It has a demonstrable logic all its own. It's much faster than painstaking science and more useful than facts in immediate decisions. Intuitions, however, can't be easily separated from hormones, impulsive folly, indoctrination, negative thoughts, so can you trust it? Those who rely on it deny this, deciding that nature imbued them with whatever's in their own best interests, despite doubts, if they only hear what nature dictates. Gut feelings prove remarkably correct at a statistically significant frequency. Cockroaches have survived for hundreds of millions of years solely on instinct, and, humans are natural creatures, too. Reason pushes men to do not only what's in their worst interest, but what's worse for everyone around them. Reason ought always be tempered by intuition, a skill few bother to develop, unfortunately, which society tends to trivialize it as a feminine trait. Most great thinkers were intuitive, more likely to gain recognition and rewards, since those who strictly reason take forever to accomplish anything.

Intuition seems a great way to prioritize when there's insufficient information. On an evolutionary scale it predates logic by millions of years. To survive, primitives needed to assess threats in an instant. Some who rely on it disown it as if a guilty habit.

“Who, me?” Throughout his career he’d be working on a dozen projects at once, yet, despite contrary directions, some in particular would seem to scream, “Finish me first!” Just as he did, someone would frantically inquire about it. This happened so often it never seemed numinous or weird. Seldom did those not prioritized in his intuited order suddenly become urgent. Furthermore, he’d also divert early effort into unassigned chores, which often expanded into full blown projects. Outside of work, items related to ideas about which he’d been thinking seemed to appear just when he needed them, as if to fortify his inquiries and further his projects. Déjà vu, instinct, intuition, and premonition are all real phenomena for which psychologists have no definitive answer. They speak of autonomic responses, conscious *on-stage* thought, and some vague *off-stage* cognition working in an attic, as it were, like servants furiously cobbling together sentences for your mouth to speak. A more likely explanation can be found within brain’s inherent shortcomings. Since reason remains on standby until absolutely required, minds are more often engaged in subconscious recognition. People aren’t only using 10% of their brain, it’s not even 100% on logical processing. Causality gets mixed up, reality isn’t focused upon, and sudden appearance as needed results from subliminal suggestion of an idea or object gradually encroaching upon awareness. Seeds of awareness get planted months, years, possibly generations earlier. Your brain, primed to germinate this seed, automatically assembles all required conditions. Later you call it destiny, prophecy, recognition of a premonition, although it’s only just memories latched onto current events. Life patterns replicate in all members of a species. History repeats itself ad nauseam.

There’s not much point trying to load up on ideas yourself. The more you have floating around in there, the less likely you’ll be able to snatch out what you need. You’ll also be more likely to spend endless hours mulling them over, reorganizing them, just like any collection, coins, dolls, stamps, and such useless ephemera. There are differences among *awareness*, *experiential knowledge*, *fact* and *truth*, all points along a single continuum. A *hunch* might lead you to experiment and prove something useful, at least to yourself. Whereas, *facts* result from many agreeing, having experimented themselves and found their conclusions to be repeatable. A body of facts becomes a *law* or *principle*. So what is *truth*? Jefferson described some truths to be *self evident*, existing out of body and mind in a supernatural realm, as if in Jung’s collective unconscious. Society’s firmest convictions, e.g., “World is flat”, are later disproved indisputably. So *belief* must come before truth.

You can apply postulates, assess facts, let beliefs guide your life, or simply follow hunches; each suffices to get you from cradle to grave. So why seek truth? Might truth bring ultimate power, as if some form of untapped energy? Doesn't appear anyone who ever spouted what they called truths exhibited supernatural abilities, got any better treatment, or was recognized or rewarded. Truth cannot be possessed by an individual, only by life collectively. Humans can only glimpse truth by total communion with all life, becoming part of a universal body upon which they're fully dependent yet to which they give every bit of their essence. Prayers are offered to achieve fragments of this bliss—*baraka* is the Sufi word. Capitalists never find such efforts profitable. Whoever succeeds in attaining truth will warp and woof into fabric of space-time upon which all consciousness derives and reality is constructed. There's comfort in defining what's ineffable, because it can't be logically disputed, doesn't need to be defended, stands on its own as evidence that boundaries are being probed by someone, at least, and suggests something lies beyond. This instills hope but certifies nothing.

Only recorded a few percent of his daily *ab ha's*. They came and disappeared, like a prostitute's tricks. Most likely they're repeats, bright flashes that recapture the same idea previously supposed then forgotten. Once he had several, but he couldn't write them down. Business took over or he was in his truck. Would be easier to tape record ideas than try to drive and write. But all this presupposes that writing is important. Had an odd vision of some matronly women, who were divorced from life by their incessant need to jot down ideas as they arrived. Must life be so detached and lonely? Can't you just be in a moment and remember and write it down later? This mania was like stepping out of queue to solve an algebra problem or stopping lovemaking to get a Dow Jones update. Can't it wait until after your orgasm?

Too bad he couldn't remember what he wanted to say, a doozy of an insight. It was about realistic dynamics between men and women, exploring their interactions from experiences and observations, as if anyone wants to read about this rather than experience it directly. Must have been crazy. Insights are like that, they come when you aren't receptive or stationed to store them. Noticed such things after he began his book, since without a project there was no frame of reference. Once he actually committed them to words, they didn't seem so brilliant after all, mere electrochemical lightning storms. With a book one can expand upon insights, qualify them better, relive them, sometimes gain new insights, but is this good? Doubts creep in, get spread.

Entire religion or systems of science were based on similar revelations, sudden neural triggers that combined key ingredients, linked divergent disciplines. Random observations turn into entire philosophies of life. Analogies and metaphors of mustard seeds, needle eyes and uncertainty clouds convince and engage through unrelated parables. Yup, this is how it all works. How could any institution—bureaucracy, government, religion, scientific theory—with such a fatal flaw be trusted? Confidence can only come from a truth so primitive and simple it could never be denied. As a character in *Thais* quips, “There are forces, infinitely more powerful than reason and science.” What are they? “Ignorance and folly.”

Making any statement leads to many others that further clarify, justify or qualify. Others are simply associations, something-like-that-happened-to-me recognitions. There’s forever a cycle of deconstruction-reconstruction-synthesis which spirals down and up but goes nowhere. Ideas are like water that evaporates into clouds then rain back down upon you. For people who feel, life seems a tragedy, while people who think seek to reduce all to absurdity. Either makes an actor feel sophisticated. Professionally, he indulged in neither feel nor think. During an entire career as a technical writer, he just dispassionately reported things as they are, what anyone would say if they could intuit actuality and separate it from marketing spin, phony PR, and political mischief. This includes picking on flaws and praising good deeds. His role had been to give everyone small pleasures, which come in many forms. Compliment people. Ease burdens. Make people feel good about themselves when they deserve it to encourage more good behavior, from which good will builds and others benefit. Who will take the 1st step? You might be amazed by how well people react when treated decently. But most people can’t manage this; they are brainwashed to believe, react, spend as they are told.

Speaking truths is for the fearless. They can easily be turned against you. Is this being too suspicious? After all, criminal negligence and libel only apply to mass media, not an obscure bulletin board, personal correspondence, or private memoir. Say, for example, someone wrote glowingly about a bike light, then people followed suit: bought their own, then got in accidents. Would that mean whoever recommends is potentially culpable? Clearly advice given by anyone who’s not an acknowledged professional in lighting systems should be taken with a grain of salt. If such consequences were actionable, no interaction between people, including commerce, would ever be possible. Knifemaking would cease. Medical doctors who advise taking alternative herbal remedies without

examining patients and ruling out contraindications might be liable. But you rarely win such clear cases of malpractice. Jurors loathe judging against established authorities lest institutions collapse that may later do them some good. Any suit against a witless fact repeater would be sketchy at best.

It pays to be suspicious. It doesn't pay to be forgiving, lenient, or nice except you feel better about people and yourself, regain composure. A desperate outsider has nothing but negativity or over-enthusiasm to guide him. Too many have no grace to let them in, show there's nothing to fear. He wrote carefully out of fear yet sought horror and oddity. Fear cripples *or* motivates. Watch a squirrel who risks everything to cross a road, darts out, scurries in panic, wraps tail around to protect. A tail only shelters from cold, not tons of steel. Squirrels perceive a threat, react on instinct, but understand nothing. Found many dead in gutters. Writers can be squirrels, knee-jerk reactionaries to misunderstood threats. A soul without guile is pure. But, deep inside, modern man is a disturbed soul, lonely thinker, longing to connect, looking for kinship. People out of touch with society wallow in dark imaginings, such as, "Workers of the World Unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains!" Had Lenin only been hired into a respectable profession or met a comely lass after shaving that beard, civilization could have sidestepped a failed paradigm and a lot of bloodshed. Outlandish opinions grow into monstrosities without gentle ministrations.

His opinions widely diverged from most people on what constitutes copping out, getting along, negativity, openly communicating, trolling for sources, among other things. Who's to say what's acceptable, ethical or practical? He tried getting along nicely for his 1st 50 years with its demonstrable shortcomings. One gets soft, grows vulnerable, relaxes, then gets tossed out like rubbish. You can't harden yourself for a fight and not fight. Capitalists beat competitors into submission, force them into extinction, whether they're coworkers or rival companies. "Nice guys finish last," they say. Blind ambition is rewarded. As long as they measure success by what you accumulate, you're forced to be a bastard; virtue is impossible. Machiavelli is vindicated as far as contemporary precepts allow. What's needed is a whole new socioeconomic model which rewards selflessness. It was hinted at by a handful of rich rock stars and huggers on fringes who succeeded despite an entrenched engine that funneled wealth upwards. Once material straits are secured, superior intellects invariably seek meaning their work.

As far as libel, a written defamation of someone must actually be untrue. If you speak truth, it would be incumbent on maligned

to disprove your allegations and convince a jury on a preponderance of evidence that your libel was intended to cause a reduction in marketable reputation, as well as show material loss. This wouldn't be likely from anything said on a bulletin board or in private correspondence, which, of course, can be shared and spread despite originator's intentions and objections. Free speech is still allowed if rapidly disappearing. If insurance companies weren't at odds with lawyers, everyone's mouth would be sewed shut at birth.

In America, citizens are entitled by law to accurately report facts as they know them, characterize public personalities as to their effect on them, whether bad or good, disagree with any interpretation, and seek root causes that may impact rights. What they are not entitled to do is make a blatant falsehood, like accuse those they don't like of a felony. Stealing versus taking advantage of loopholes are not, although they can almost seem, identical. Before you accuse, you must establish a chain of evidence, a black hole of wasted effort weighed against entire lives, unlikely to be in the least rewarding, unfair for victim but not violator. Those in power easily get away with whatever they want versus anyone who's weak or weary. A trial fascinates because it represents everyone's lack of any grasp on reality. Facts may be stripped naked but there's no science; it's all about creating impressions for impressionable jurors, more like selling than thinking logically. There's no logic. If you want to know about any topic, study it directly. Somebody's say so is useless. Little mentions of influences, related art forms, web links can lead you in new directions, but then you must follow your bliss. It's worse to know something wonderful exists out of reach than to remain totally unenlightened and vaguely dissatisfied. Temptations torment, while unawareness simplifies. So people take easier route, and thus get mistreated according to their level of laxity.

Those who don't have intestinal fortitude for a fight ought to fade away and leave management of trillions to those who do. Before last election Acme Nadir did say, "Running government is too important..." Luckily, presidents don't really run anything. Smarmy cabinet officers do as told by anyone who has what it takes to buy influence. They control what's done, what's said, what's spent, and satisfy their own interests, not those of mass constituency to whom government is supposed to answer. Consider hypocrisy and lies of Whitewater scandal. Chief Prosecutor Start should be doing time for repeatedly breaking laws supposedly in place to ensure rights of the accused. Grand Jury testimony can't be leaked to press; that's a felony. This investigation was supposed to be about sketchy financial dealings not fellatio. Sure, extracurricular

fun in oval office is scandalous but not illegal, yet; there's certainly plenty of precedent. What did this have to do with Whitewater? Not having proven any malfeasance, Start began to invent charges, McCarthyism revisited. Can't pee on Constitution and expect to get away with it. America must punish such criminals. Dirt on Dud is as plain as *no's* in your face: No domestic policy, no economic development, no effective diplomacy, no exit strategy from Afghanistan or Iraq, no new jobs, no policy to stem losses, no WMD found. Meanwhile, bloated fat cats suck up all profits, retirement savings, and tax revenue from struggling families. Any of these unconscionable policy decisions would be impeachable. Because you can impeach doesn't mean you should in a moment of pique, although they do rely upon citizens restraining themselves. A president who doesn't read or resolve to keep a bunch of wolves from tearing symbols of America to pieces would never represent him. Are you better off than 8 years ago? He certainly wasn't. Who'd vote for such a horrible loser? Only more losers. Ah, yes, that's the point, make more losers, paralyze voters, and play off their fears. Their game was, "If you can't please 'em, keep them off guard and miserable so you can to exploit them." As term draws to a close, Dud's legacy is being effectively skewered like Texas barbecue because it's as porous and see through as gauze, but does that help anyone? Too late? Energy hikes and high end tax frauds sucked all the life out of Americans already.

Laws of any state fill dozens of thick volumes constantly amended. Jurists spend entire lifetimes studying mere portions. Dolts wax nostalgic for days of yore when the only law was what a king decreed. Or substitute ethnic uniformity, racial purity, or simplistic nationalism. Has something to do with people's perception of institutions as corrupt, and so anything at all that has to do with them should be cast aside, yet another logical fallacy. Bad actors destroy any good a decent organization does. If a farmer is gruff doesn't mean farm's produce isn't sweet. Pederast priests in a hierarchy that takes no steps to ensure nothing like this happens again doesn't mean entire church must be held accountable. *Church* is a population that includes victims themselves; it's illogical and immoral to include victims among perpetrators. That a victim is beautiful does not exonerate rapist. That a motorist drives a luxury vehicle does not exonerate carjacker. Notion that "it takes two to tango" only applies to willing dancers. A presidential administration led by an executive who's as dumb as a post doesn't mean that entire government is totally inept; in fact, many departments have little connection with or reportage to president. Some—Library of

Congress, NASA, National Parks, Smithsonian—do grand things from which everyone benefits.

Back when knights rode forth, they didn't have to think, righted wrongs with bias and immunity. Practically anything you do now is illegal, other than stay home motionless reading banal, sanctioned texts. You can think whatever you want, as long as you don't express yourself. You're condemned to a life sentence of thinking innocuous thoughts. How can common folk avoid lawlessness? Reminded him of Woody Guthrie's ballad about union agitator Tom Joad. Tom and the preacher had to kill to do right. On lam from lawmen, Joad could only tell family, "Wherever little children are hungry and cry / Wherever people ain't free / Wherever men are fightin' for their rights / That's where I'm a-gonna be, Ma." Just to put this lofty sentiment to words made Guthrie a magnificent human and patriot. It should be the oath of every political office.

First it was fashionable to deny, then confess, now whatever you hear is spin, contradictory sides espoused in the same breath. Without admitting your faults there's no growth; doing so betrays vulnerability and invites hostility against you. Definitive doesn't work. All this tumbles down upon a basic fact that people are riddled with flaws. Willful ignorance is the original sin. People with narrow viewpoints have all the answers, rush to judgement, underestimate their opposition. Defining hubris, Herbert London wrote, "Intelligence without humility is often a prescription for failure." If you admit that alone, you tell a truth nobody wants to hear, that everyone depends upon others. Philosophers, poets, preachers, scientists who write thick DIY books and fill shelves all mislead you. In a free world, only you possess the right to say how you'll think, what you'll do, and whether you'll accept consequences. Covering yourself in tattoos might seem gnarly when your plastered, but customs are such that you'll be barred from advancement, as Naval officers do to enlisted sailors. Don't do a crime if you can't do hard time, or endure exile in purgatory, or find your own way like a rock star, strutting and styling with no other skill.

An easier way out is to ascribe all causalities to angels or evil spirits. If you can't control weather, it must be someone's fault, no? If you suspend reality, you can change minds of men, conjure all manner of charms and spells that make life better, fly into sun and not get burnt, or reverse flows of mighty rivers. Life wasn't meant to be so hard, but it's not made easier through invisible entities, rather through use of one's mind, understanding such things as chemistry, physics, sociology, and something called courtesy. During darkest days of Europe's religious millennium, Moslem scientists

made their greatest advances. Ironic how mullahs today curse technology for which Islam is ultimately responsible. If it wasn't for crusades, scientific ideas would have never spread across Europe into America. Safe to say, whatever is can be attributed to mankind collectively. Laying blame is a fool's game.

If knowledge is based on words, humans could have chosen something more effective. Language is only a convenience for people not adept at communicating universally. Words are wearisome to sort through and retain, don't convey the same meaning to everyone. Definitions change over time. Take the word *parlay*. This used to mean *talk*, then *translate*, then *negotiate*, then *successively gamble winnings so as to reap biggest return*. One can see how its meaning has been completely perverted, almost witness the process, as talking always increasingly frustrates. Pronouns are fraught with problems; *them* and *they* are populations that include who exactly? If readers don't grasp use of mere articles—a, an, the—in English, how are they going to understand anything? Since *the* denotes a particular or superlative example, it's used to push arguments to extremes, for whatever reason. Wittgenstein rightly noticed, "Most of the propositions and questions of philosophers arise from our failure to understand the logic of our language... it is not surprising that the deepest problems are in fact *not* problems at all." Words prove you comply with doctrines and regulations, more words. Laws are band-aides, fix years of inequities after patients are already bleed out. CAFE standard may have saved a billion barrels of oil, but any carmaker, like Natsin, who petitions for an easement gets it. What's the point of concocting bizarrely complex laws if you don't or won't enforce them? Way too much is text based, rather than action, image or performance based. Righteous is as righteous does. On a bicycle, you either climb a hill, go a distance, or not, nothing to misconstrue.

No man can be as wise as King Solomon, who requested, "Give me the wisdom to guide your people, who are countless." God liked this so well, HE not only bestowed it but fixed it so Solomon would be wiser than anyone, thus damning all of mankind to inferior intellect. You can be pretty smart, or too big for your britches, but never pass Solomon's threshold, always confounded, a second best loser. By time of Christ, all who could be mustered were fishermen and tax collectors with poor self esteem. A few disciples of Solomon's caliber, a legal tag-team to outwit Sanhedrin, might have changed a lot of history, he imagined. God values loyalty unto death more than life itself, laughs at your pretense at knowledge, things HE can grant or withhold on a whim. God got

bored talking to men, who not only ask the wrong questions but can't remember answers from moment to millennium. Today, wise is only associated with *wise guys*, amoral lifelong criminals with no insight into how much they hurt everyone. Or are they only unwitting dupes in service of change? Dancing on the edge of a moral straight razor takes incredible balance.

How too like gods are Internet websites, all wisdom there to gain offset by almighty damnation, fear of flames, interference in your life, surreptitious monitoring, and undeserved reprisals. Better to say nothing than question anything, unless you have a death wish. Civil and criminal justice is bought and sold through lawyer cleverness, determination of venue, fixing of juries, selection of judges, tampering with evidence, track records, but not truth. Famous defender Bailer claimed 3 in 4 victories for those known to be guilty, but only 2 in 7 for those assumed innocent. Had to do with relative glut of facts to work with and technicalities available to patently guilty but not wrongly accused. Of course, an ironclad alibi is a good defense, but who spends their life surrounded by impartial witnesses who will testify accurately under cross examination? Prisons are full of people without alibis who stayed home doing nothing taking raps for real perps who strike by proxy. At least jurisprudence makes no claim to be any more than a fuzzy forum for stacked facts. Justice is blind, deaf and dumb. The best you can do is stay as far away from it as possible.

People laud successes of science. Its failures far outweigh them. Pure researchers aren't wrong. Once a discovery is made public, businesses generally fail to apply it economically, effectively or ethically. They may cure diseases or lengthen life expectancy, but neglect to preserve a safe, sheltering environment. Legstrong's success at beating cancer became an ad for medical prowess and pharmaceutical miracles. Facts fly around only to be misinterpreted by those who'd exploit, and people were left with threats from snake oil overdosed with poisonous ingredients to systems of commerce that herd workers from comforts of home into unsafe vehicles that maim millions of Americans each year to places bristling with uncontrolled OSHA violations. Many medicines enslave patients, mask healing, only treat symptoms more profitably than curing causes. Doctors get rich from elderly suffering. They've got you coming and going. Contraindications of over-the-counter remedies was stuff upon which they base comedy skits. Who wants to flirt with liver failure to cure sniffles?

Once Science meant a systematic inquiry into what was and was not true. Some of these boondoggles, like seeking Harmony of

the Spheres, seemed nonsensical. Yet Kepler's search for perfect geometrical planetary orbits resulted in Calculus with its chain rule of differentiation based on independent variables, without which there would be no space exploration. No matter what the content, ancient alchemists intuited marrow, organized subtext, into core thinking that society today, with all its systematic science, fails to reach. While objectivity and skepticism are consistently touted as building blocks of science, bizarre, irrational beliefs accounted for all its advances. Pascal's wager falls far short of the mark; belief is not only a better path, it is productive and wise, as Buddha stated a thousand years earlier. Life's no parlor game, it's serious business in which dangers lurk everywhere, yet people, with their mild faith, survive them. Lose faith, lose it all. Go with intuitions and revelations... far more sensible.

As facts collected, branches of specialty had to be separated, since there was too much for any individual to learn. Biology, comparative anatomy, physiology—useful in practical matters as animal breeding, commerce, horticulture, ranching, and sanitation—only led to advances when visionaries combined them with other branches and disciplines—organic chemistry, pharmacology, mathematics of probability, statistics—through careful observation and clear communication. Math was especially useful as a common pristine language untainted by indefinite adjectives and adverbs. Exactly how much? Precise measurement is a basis of so-called civilization, yet it dehumanizes. There's no common language of mercy, no reasons to apply math except to capitalize.

Statistics lie. You must be careful when they say, "Every 16 minutes an American business fails due to foreign competition," or any such *fact*. Do the math and you'll find that every business would have already disappeared. New businesses aren't started every few minutes to compensate. Bono may be totally correct in saying, "About 67% [a fictitious percentage in itself] of all statistics are made up on the spot." Make sure they say, "Since xx/xx/xx (date) nnn (some number) has disappeared directly due to blah, blah, blah, *and*, meanwhile, nnn businesses started up because of blah for a net increase/decrease of nnn." Quoting things as percentages, you have to take into account sample's significance, size of original group (33.3% of 3 is only 1), and stat's effect on you. As a step in logic, you must always define terms. Any argument that suggest nothing but upside is a lie, because nothing exists that's totally beneficial. One should simply list cons and pros, so well informed citizens can choose for themselves. All medicines, no matter how recuperative, have contraindications or harmful side effects. Who can remember

specific statistical data anyway? Do low and middle classes make up 99.2% or 99.5% of population given 95% of wealth is held by less than 1%? Does middle class pay 92% or 94% of federal revenue in both excise and income taxes given business taxes account for only 6%. What difference does it make? You know government doesn't care about social justice and you're getting screwed anyway.

How do you define paying fair shares? Should a corporation's share be based on potential for creating new opportunities or earnings based on ledgers cooked by clever scammers? So many costs can be claimed by companies that individuals can't, you have to look at them another way. It's could be income taxes in reverse. What if the more people a company employs, the less it owes, say, credits for each employee? This would only accelerate existing trend for businesses to merge. A thoughtful candidate might seize this single point and make a promise; an entire party might create a viable platform from several such insights. Who can remember these issues come election day? One's mind is a garbage disposal that chops and drains pop trash, not accumulates and stores ideas neatly in alphabetical order on a freezer shelf.

Madigan and Thompson claim that "Without memory, there can be no mind as we understand it." With memories, though, one doesn't necessarily understand things, either. Case in point: This entire book was written (except after-the-fact much researched appendix and glossary) entirely from memory and momentary impressions. Mental processes begin with recognition, a mere empirical ability to identify an event, feeling, mood or thing. Personal memories might not be precisely accurate, but neither is most of what you read; at least they're authentic, not rehashed web threads. It's said lesser minds concern themselves with gossip, higher minds with events, and superlative minds with ideas. As with all phenomena, there's really a continuum of thought from mere stimulus reaction to pure synthesis. Minds on distinct levels don't communicate, even interact, or get along. If you're bizarrely different, you'll get 5 minutes of fame, ridiculed by press, studied by scientists using grant money and public funds, withering scrutiny. Both press and scientists are really the odd parties, slaves to bizarre systems of thought they've never really examined.

All analysis of imaginative output and mental states sounded to him like vague brainstorming from limited viewpoints, those proverbial blind men. Within groups, members do concoct lists of what they think is most important up until lunch, then they silently deal with this highest level interrupt, renewal, sustenance, as if it were a day's least important idea. Any superior intellect would

have asked, “Could it be that...?” Advancement requires discomfort with status quo. Until 19th century, thinkers mostly thought alone. This was because books and their capability of reading them were relatively rare. With learning, dissatisfaction began to spread rapidly; before long thinkers began to invent new ways of thinking then acting. Consider how innovative these concepts are: action that involves inaction, curtailing purchases, fasting, nonviolent protests, passive antiaggression. This self-asserting independence manifests itself in less productive ways from dictatorships to dropping out, from terrorism to *turtlism*. Free, he could no longer support certain activities—joyrides in hotrods, massacres, or NASCAR—that were so blatantly antithetical to life.

Stats don't equal facts, but do lead to comparisons, contrasts, which lead to provoking opinions, whether accurate or inappropriate. None of this proves data isn't invalid or suspect. To say “three out of four can't read” might sound like mass illiteracy unless you define circumstances and group location, makeup and size. In this example, to define group as three- to five-year-olds affirms normalcy, as it is to define literacy in English for a group who speaks Spanish as a native tongue. Every term must be defined to exact its facts. Who constitutes group? Read what? How well? This gets you into right church, but not right pew. Why can't these people read? If you give up asking why, you forsake truth itself. What good are facts without stating causality? Why ask for facts if you aren't going to do something about causes or effects? You can never not care.

Facts are manufactured by below average intellects around a brainstorming table. They make lists of things that seem to go together, then post them on websites that sell self-help books, which are compilations of more of the same. List mania prevails, peppers poorly constructed paragraphs. Generalities are hard to refute, and you can endlessly spin them without annoying, defaming, or getting sued. If you mention you're writing an exposé, so-called friends and subjects scatter. Only those seeking publicity want searchlights trained on them. Therefore, contemporary biographies are vague. Later, after personage is dead and statute of limitations expires, biographies can become gut-slamming exposés. By then facts are dated and worthless. Gut slamming should've been done while subject is busy destroying all that you hold sacred.

Science is supposedly founded on facts and logic. Logic can prove that black is white, while *is* can have multiple meanings. Words strung together with *is* are little falsehoods. A is not B, because B would be called A if it were so. A and B can be equivalent substitutes but never equals. People are not equals either, some

stronger than others. Those who are strong have no right to enslave the weak but do have a duty to create opportunities that provide for them, since that's how you define strength, by what they've accomplished for mutual benefit. Wolves slip into something more comfortable, sheepskins that colleges grant. You can hardly distinguish a hypocrite from a saint, since newscasters speak so well of insatiable capitalists when they die, for example, media mogul Perv Greedom, their former boss and role model.

Everything said can be deconstructed into nonsense. Pols repeat cliches, comforting, non-confrontational words that require no head scratching. Language's main role is to chew holistic experience into linear bits readily digested. It disintegrates, and therefore cannot be trusted. If carping about these shortcomings results in zero credibility, it doesn't matter. Books abound, better kindling than construction materials. What family madness possessed him to write this? His Uncle John's entire 6th floor Bronx walkup, except for narrow walkways, was crammed full of pack rat treasures: balls of found string, shoeboxes of vaguely labeled bric-a-brac, stacks of newspapers. It's a known sickness whose intellectual equivalent is a long, long book full of mental scraps. Even brilliant ideas aren't enough anymore. Go out and do, don't ask those who did. To cover their asses, they'll always advise you not to.

It's not that science is no help, it just doesn't always suffice. For instance, it's slow. Technology changes overnight. Buying decisions have to keep up. Specifications can be exaggerated or falsified, even by companies claiming the ultimate in precision, as well he knew. There's no time to gather accurate data, prioritize issues, weigh options. Markets are created by constant change. Wish it was improvement, but doesn't always prove to be, especially with software. Suspensions serve, if only to filter out extraneous detail or improbability. Knowing this is no advantage. If all is futile, there's no point to life. But if life is all important, something must be meaningful. Logic spins you around like a prayer wheel.

Some people are more attenuated for lengthy discourse. They pontificate on all sorts of ideas. Half the time their facts are wrong and other half they become quickly obsolete. All that's knowable or known won't fit on a single trekkie iso-linear crystal. "Download your cultural history," is not a phrase you're likely to ever hear. There are vast libraries, volumes upon volumes, full of half-truths and outright lies, religions and systems of thinking built on nothing more than a lunatic's raving. For a glimpse at truth, what are you prepared to give up? Never mind all that, people can't decipher a mere subset of information—lyrics to a song written as to flash

ideas then disappear into obscurity—wink to seduce, then flee and hide. Why couldn't every fact be short, sweet and true. He could flip through recipes for hours admiring their basic clarity and humanity. Given these ingredients and techniques, you can make something pleasurable to enjoy yourself or share with others.

You can't just write like you talk. Doesn't work. Writing is held to a higher standard; readers expect distillation of broad thinking, scientific certainty, wheat sorted from chaff. They make snap judgements trying to increase their absorption speed. Small books of elegant verse—Blake, Byron, Lao Tzu—are often giants among tomes with hundreds of times more words. What people like about poetry is not its precise expression but the many interpretations they can press out of sparse offerings that, in turn, assuage guilt, boost their own egos, or justify bad behaviors. Any phrase that can be confused and repeated with varying intonations can begin to form a labyrinth of multiple meanings. Honesty does not repeat itself, never tries to persuade through incessant loops. Make your point and move on. Oxymorons in poetry disguise themselves as Zen truths. Gospels of John, Luke Mark and Matthew, presumed to witness God made incarnate, are slim accounts by modern journalistic criteria. Their messages are consistent, plots meager, style uncomplicated, third party perspective historically unreliable, and yet for millennia billions of readers have turned to them for spiritual guidance. Size doesn't matter. Precision is irrelevant. Revelation, however, is interesting.

What he didn't like about Ecco's *Foucault's Pendulum* was it's a mystery story that padded facts. Or was it that padded facts told a 2nd rate mystery? Either way, it could have occupied less of his time had lame elements been edited out. Wait for the movie. Bierce complained that novels were padded short stories, and proceeded to pad anecdotes into short stories. This was why he didn't read much fiction anymore, long-winded disappointment. He'd read too many books. Reading breeds more. Clemens eschewed reading too much of another's writing, preferring to focus on just a few writers, including a younger self, not necessarily bad, if self-serving, more like a survival instinct. Seemed you had to read forever to find 1 aphorism, like riding a long dry stretch in search of water. Wittgenstein explored subtext forsaking plot altogether and earned a reputation as a philosopher, but all this does is attract wankers, wannabes and weirdos who you don't want to know.

Aware that novels are passe, many books for general consumption over last generation can be classified under self help: auto repair, carpentry, cooking, gardening, plumbing, wiring and yawn.

There are even self help websites that describe how to build weapons of mass destruction. "Have any plutonium lying around?" Topping this list in sheer numbers of titles are self improvement guides for molding readers into an author's demigod self-image. In every case, they don't suggest you be yourself, a being unique, remarkably full of opposites, wonderful differences to celebrate. Unless you're insane, there's not much reason for strangers to be interested in you; then it's only to study you as if a pinned insect. Communicator or provocateur, you can't choose your own image; something personally objectionable will be thrust upon you no matter what you do. You can only choose to share yourself, like the bipolar busker who built that Puppet Bike in Chicago, something to do until he grew bored or too ticked off apathetic bystanders. But if you can't explain your simple issue on cue, you lose your chance when audiences move on. Nobody wants to hear testimony on how you became injured or mad or unreliable as a conduit to hitherto unknown dimensions, especially not jurists.

One day he expanded a conversation with redheaded librarian about viewing DVDs or videos, and told her that he often flipped through and watched only better scenes. She didn't get this. Neither are you obligated to read a book from cover to cover. She, like most people, read a story a little then either abandon or complete, then categorize it by what's on a few pages, probably missing what it's all about. Onions become harmless brown bulbs. Cryptic novels like *Trout Fishing in America* wind up under water sports. Men marry the same way, pick a wife then toss in divorce. People think linearly. Almost all artistic expressions include portions that are merely filler or superfluous. Maybe gist of a story is all you need, all you have time for, all that holds your interest. Admired Vincent Leroy's kinetic sculptures with cycling motifs since they convey so much at a glance. Another way to dive into literature is to look for only 1 point, say, *holistic*, in a collection of disparate works. This involves nonlinear thinking, surfing, unwitting matrices more aligned with actual cognition. Surprisingly, such comparisons underscore connections shared by artists and authors you'd never think were at all intertwined. Many arguments split hairs between practically the same viewpoint, often only subtle interpretations of exactly the same thing, or a matter of how words are defined, semantics.

On occasion, had to endure arbitrary complaints about objectivity in his technical writing. Expectations and style are totally subjective. If he recognized a technological buzzword being discussed, he didn't necessarily grasp its situational implications, shorthand for previous discussions he wasn't party to. For tech

writers to be somewhat objective and precise, they'd have to ask a lot of questions, which might disrupt people's schedules and limit flow of details. Constant listening is a useful habit; being defensive is not. Objectivity never trivializes any issue or point raised. There really is no total objectivity, and subjectivity based on experience can be extremely valuable. With so many practitioners around, you can hire one who meshes with your own mindset. But this doesn't ensure objectivity; quite the opposite. It compounds monomania, limits vision, or narrows perception. Better to engage contributors with unique viewpoints, who harmonize on important points, than hire *yes men* of the same mold, army buddies, fraternity brothers.

It's common for team members to perceive a meeting differently. This is why you need to take minutes. Distributing minutes among all attendees, you'll find varying levels of consensus. If you want some semblance of objectivity, audio record meetings. He'd always do this during speeches by CEOs and politicians, then could quote them directly without fear of misquoting. They hate that and are powerful enough to make your life hell. But they also hate to be quoted at all. They want to be characterized as saying something that later people think is brilliant. Whether fabricated after or before their speech wasn't important.

You can encapsulate entire history of science into a dream anecdote: A shaman finds the base of a sacred trail long forgotten. It leads uncertainly upwards through a Cimmerian forest of tall straight coniferous trees. Path rises alongside a crystal clear stream. A few silent folks are gazing into it, one fishing; shaman could see them below as well as fish swimming dreamily, all unaware of each other or shaman rising gradually above treetops. As each mental impression forms, shaman picks up a few pebbles, and continues to do so at intervals, while pebbles get smaller further up, finally becoming finest sand, all collected together into left hand getting overly full. Only when shaman gets to very top, notices symbol-laden stonework next to a portal and realizes it was not a path but a broad staircase filled with debris over time where once flowed sacrificial blood. Collected dust, transferred to a leather pouch, will later be included in a potion, which with other ingredients will produce a magic liquid to coat any device and render it invincible in battle. Strife need not come but might actually be foiled by such unbeatable preparations. Yet incantations of a shaman are iffy efforts, could work out of sheer belief, not just positive thinking, which is always tainted with negativity. Because such archetypal visions might come vividly to one in dreams doesn't mean they are real. New age superstitions based on current scientific principles

are nothing more than an expected regression. Since you can't know everything, only glimpse small slices, any interpretation that satisfactorily rationalizes what you've seen serves to preserve sanity. Spirituality has always served this purpose in your best interests.

Metaphors lead to symbolism. Anything can be pressed into duty as a symbol. A traffic rotary can be symbolic of people convening, meshing together, serving some purpose, then all going their separate ways. Companies are simply that, random collections of talents who answer a temporary need, then drift apart. Relationships based solely on longevity don't last, become corrosive, lose original intent. Rotaries suspend convention where motorist approaching from right is allowed to go 1st. Teams, too, must suspend conventions in order to work together. You can't form a team and harbor ethnic, orientational, racial or religious prejudices. The 1st step of getting a new employee on-board should be sensitivity training. Actually, this ought to be taught in high school, but teens have too much else on their minds, like parties and sex; forget grade school, where kids really have no sense at all there are other human beings living on this planet besides themselves. Young adults may or may not be humanity's conscience. Middle-aged and retired have already put up with crookedness for so long they've settled into a strategy to deal with it, concluded, "Why mess with success," unless they weren't successful.

Image is amusing. People will think you so clever if you act out part they pick for you. For them acting is the thing rather than substance beneath. *The Flying Scotsman* had to fight official resentment. Autistics aren't able to *read minds* by associating body language and gestures with what's being said. Radio dissociates voice from gestures, makes everyone listening somewhat autistic. A clever radioplay in 1930's about alien invasion resulted in the depressed and dim-witted committing suicide. Everyone is so casual about how they accept input, either don't actually hear what's important, or don't ask right questions from those who should know answers. Some very clever people are unknown or unrecognizable. By time they are, they're already burnt out, onto other things, or their memories of details have faded. Einstein lived a life of relativity. But physics wasn't Albert's sole interest: acted against racism, commented on infinite, enjoyed and music theater, made comedy films, played violin, and spouted theology. Just being better at thought experiments and spending a year recording results, Einstein's part was written, personality defined by a single contribution, although more a provocateur than a rational thinker, who'd steal genius ideas of others then "forget" to credit them.

Funny how you'll have an idea, then open your diary, start reading something else, then forget original idea. Does an inability to concentrate betray a lack of character? Sometimes you think a thought is a real inspiration, or revelation. But it's just a clear image in a daydream—a wake induced lucid dream (WILD), where gravity and reflectivity are distorted, and texts change randomly—clear only to you, nobody else. But dreams you wake from or WILDs are both worth capturing and writing down as soon as you have them; unable to later recall, he'd reach back and try to recreate situation in which they occurred. He had an awfully good idea while fixing his bathroom P-trap. Here he was, banging around cursing under sink, and had this brilliant lightbulb flash, some intense combination of 2 simple notions. He thought, "Soon as I finish this, I'm going to jot that down." Something came up, he forgot to, and idea was forever lost. Jung was right; ideas come and go of their own volition. Only people temporarily plugged into switchboard of collective unconscious pick up. All his early story plots somehow appeared later in comics, movies, or teleplays, usually days or months after he conceived them. Someone else picked up that same channel, tuned in, and was more efficient at committing it to paper. They had drive and will to do so; sometimes he wish he had, too. But is every idea worthy of paper it's put upon? Half the ideas he seemed to get were just mad, later mocked him, as if stolen, reflected by someone else. Might as well introduce them yourself for credit and pay. But, then, why not just bite your tongue and let someone else be berated? No matter what your insight, it was already recorded in *Bible* or some such source frequently quoted.

Specifics barely outnumber generalities. Can't ever say something definite even with increasing specificity, which then is discredited as fact padding or local bias, regionally meritorious but not universal. But regional knowledge can be useful. Take shoveling snow. You just don't shovel it any old way. There's many facets to it: a) arranging places on your property to hold piles, b) not driving or walking on it beforehand to avoid undesirable compaction, c) piling it in anticipation of more, d) scraping down to concrete to hurry melting, e) using cues and memory to find buried driveway edges. This is practically useless information in Florida, but well worth considering in Maine. What good are careful observations if you don't take advantage of them? What good are truths if they don't ensure your wellbeing? Hobbes' right to survive, Locke's fear of starvation, and Rousseau's self preservation all argue against self sacrifice. If the meaning of life is life itself, why compromise? Who wants to ever be told, "Get out of our way," by pushy rivals?

Closely observed comments simply condemn you to Cassandra's role. Are you meant to fiddle while World burns? It's like struggling through the myth of Sisyphus. Words once mattered, but only doing does anything. When did you last attend a parent-teacher, political action, town hall, Transportation Advisory Committee meeting? Call into a radio show, create a position paper, man telemarketer phones for reputable charities, or write to Congressmen? Host a demonstration? In all these cases, hardly anyone shows. People are cowered, demotivated, lazy. The rest are bewildered by facts into analysis paralysis. Nobody wants change, let alone improvement. Those who do attend to be seen resemble scavenging crabs scuttling about a seabed of self interest.

Feckless commentators bring nothing new, rely on readers' sense of recognition, see their mothers reflected in descriptions and dialogues. What about your own inner voice? Cowards never want to reveal anything about themselves; they'd rather criticize a speck in someone else's eye than the lumber in their own. Reality demands a constant exchange of emotions, ideas, and visceral contact: heart, mind, touch. To exile oneself is too sad to contemplate. Yet businesses, insurers, leaders, and religions want you to do exactly that, stay put in a solitary silo, so they can suck the life out of you. You can't survive without forgiveness.

Nothing is perfect on Earth. Things people think are perfect aren't. Take, for example, a billion dollar astronomical telescope. It is highly sophisticated, ultra precise, very nearly flawless. Yet it can never be ideal, always somewhat flawed, damaged in transport, as good as it gets. It's not held together with gum and paper clips, but it's not perfect either. Man did some great astronomy in the last century, far better than ever in history. That's how things work. Messy sloppy stuff can be studied; everyone can learn from it. Things don't need be perfect to be okay. Jesus loves repentant sinners. "Strive towards adequate goodness; dwell not on failures." Yeah, right. Important facts are gathered from failures. They reconstruct plane wrecks, and rethink fabrication techniques or transportation policies based on findings over dead bodies, which seems to say, "You may be okay. I'm okay without you." So much for reasonable arguments and wicked old wives tales. In fact, he toyed with an idea of exposing the lack of logic and self-serving lies behind so many dogmas, nostrums and old sayings that people liked to cite just to shut you up, summarily dismiss, and unmercifully dominate. Seems most people don't want to know. Didn't Tom Waits sing, "Lie to me, I have no use for the truth." Facts are ugly. Reality changes constantly. Truth can be too beautiful.

One can flirt lightly with dangerous ideas, never know how doing so will bring harm or healing. Medical doctors agree in this half-truth: "There's nothing you can do to lengthen your life beyond your genetic programming." What they don't add is, "There are countless things that will make you suffer or shorten your life." Common household cleaning agents can scar your lungs. Elbow grease and soap work wonders, although too much work damages muscles. It's just sensible to clean up at reasonable intervals and work neatly. "I prefer liberty with danger to peace with slavery," declared Count Palatine. He didn't personally know any medieval counts, at least in this lifetime, but did a lot of quoting of so called authorities, which turn out to be persons no more thoughtful than he, but somehow having historically affected change or incited discontent and were cherished by the downtrodden. Easy to form polarized camps fighting over limited resources. Tough to get camps to accept concessions and agree on a simple truth: World can provide what everyone needs once hoarding and wasting cease. If action flowed from caring and loving instead of anger, craving and delusion, no one would ever need worry.

To deal with a growing body of facts that was toppling dogma, Church founded Jesuit order, a controllable board of scientists. Later Jesuits themselves were persecuted for undeniable facts they gathered. Scientology is a godless version of Jesuits. New age lunacy arose from complete mistrust of institutions, even if institutions weren't all bad. It's like that rebound from altruism during Hippie movement; people want to cross a threshold of trust, but bad actors always show up to block way. Shouldn't let this stop you. Be the person you'd most like to meet. They're always telling you to remain calm and unemotional, be in control. Emotions are what make you feel alive. Why suppress them? Anger tells you something is amiss. Artists and writers are often severely depressed. You can only hope someday to surf waves of joy.

What just happened? Boxing contradictions? Every day, an entire life, is as though a veil; too much news to digest, with inconsistencies, matters of degree. They gin out hundreds of new movies every year, yet existing hundreds of thousands are never analyzed or seen. What do juntas in jungle have to do with OPEC oil prices? Is it all connected either by an invisible hand pulling a string or people who believe it's that simple? No way. It's complex macro chaos: giant weather patterns, key flaws in governmental policies thousands of pages long, plate tectonics, ocean ebbs and flows, simple seminal events that influence everything in a liquid medium, such as flapping of butterfly wings that might avert or cause torna-

does or tragedies. Listing things together doesn't necessarily prove causality or even connection. Sentences are just letters in a linear string meant to represent life over time, which falls far short of truth. Films are frames that show consecutive things that only simulate reality, not honestly represent it. Things in nature show self consistency, self similar at a constant of 4.669, yet never equal fullness of an ideal form, always imperfect, each unique, like snowflakes, individual but collectively perfect, so compelling that people value pictures of flowers and shells. If you want to understand things, you have to grasp the meaning of time itself. Time connects everything. They say, "Time exists so everything doesn't happen simultaneously," but a lot still does. Too much to know goes on 24/7 in an overpopulated World. You can take some of it in if you're attentive, but not necessarily profit.

Can't say everything you'd want to, just a digested bit. Can't comprehensively comment. Critics only rise in status if they give an appearance of comprehensiveness. One can thoughtlessly express impact to excess, and so bury greatness back in the filth whence it emerged. Or one can discriminatorily elevate only that which is truly great and ignore the rest. Many things deserved to be ignored. Listening is a serial event, which seems to imply logic although not at all guarantees. He was just beginning to grasp some song lyrics after listening to them since youth. You absorb what's needed as required, thus it's imprudent to ignore anything, yet too exhausting to consider every viewpoint, to oblige every need. To deal with persistent chaos you must cultivate a *Way of Being*.

The fact that most people still can't hook up a VCR hints at how far technology has become disconnected from humanity. Engineers get paid to bring science fiction to life, when what they should do is improve simple things that people struggle with or stumble over. Examples abound: Clothing that you don't have to be sewn into with decorative chain stitches; easy open yet secure product packaging; electronics that check environment or converse with you to offer settings anticipating your needs; furniture that can adapt to support any user whether relaxing or working; vehicles that automatically slow in proximity to fixed or moving objects; writing implements that don't unduly leak. Think of all the high speed chases that could be averted if patrolmen could remotely turn off engines of fleeing motorists. Transponders are already able to send signals of vehicle's safety status. Incorporating scientific strides into practical applications too often serves political intrigues. Take the guillotine, a more efficient executioner for times of mass murder, continually replaced by smarter weapons. Nobody

is working on efficient, free energy. Instead manufacturers make gadgets seeking market differentiation and performing in vitro research on you at your expense yet ignoring proven, workable solutions. Public are their cash cows and guinea pigs.

Given unlimited dollars, electronic and mechanical marvels of which man is capable are mind boggling, like *Freedom Space Station*. But money fuels that trip, billions for a 30-year oil derrick in orbit. Still, it's better than spending trillions on weapons. Useful life expectancy of a bomb is in milliseconds. Value should be considered on a basis of time: service life, time it avoids to pursue something else equally useful, extent to which it extends human life expectancy, or whether it converts serially events to parallel so you can safely do more things at once. But you have to take all factors into account, not just obvious clues. Added distractions while motoring are bad. Material used to pave roads should be simple to install given usage; chip seal lays fast, concrete lasts longer; labor costs now are high, higher in future, so which do you pick? Progress might be sold on time it saves now, but at what later cost?

"Get lost?" He was actually thinking about it. If you're on a highway you never feel lost since you know they stretch between significant locales: cities, malls, national parks, suburban sprawl. But when you're on a dirt road, stones flinging up under car, you might be just yards from somewhere an think, "Wow, am I lost!" It has something to do with time. To really get lost takes a lot of time. You've got to quickly drive far away on a highway, then a while on back roads, then a long time on dirt. When you start seeing characters from *Deliverance*, where inbreeding is a natural outcome of isolation, you'll begin to feel lost. Riding around cities seems safer. Back when poor people without horses lived far apart, bicycling increased their courting radius, probably improved gene pool. It freed dwellers of unhealthy tenements to commute from suburbs. These health and social benefits are well documented.

After a career in metrology, the relative uncertainty of life hit him like a ton of bricks. Heisenberg saw that all was uncertain. Why chase a career amidst exactness if trying to escape blame and evade mistakes? He saw irony in Greek root *metis*, which means both *measure* and *nobody*. Nobody checks anything. Proudly pursuing status brings nothing but stress. Being invisible liberates. A hugger is happy to be off the grid, out of anyone's radar, unrecognizable. He tried to remain anonymous. If readers know you're really an age discriminated, displaced professional, thirtysomething waitress, or 300 pound linebacker, they dismiss everything you ever say as bitterness, PMS or 'roids talking. Typical behavior is to

dismiss elderly as senile, teens as stupid, women as hormonal wrecks. Reputations can be overrated, as well. What wrong with letting the purity of your words speak for you? He would never admit belonging to some vanishing breed of white male evangelists, who, like dinosaurs, helped nothing by thrashing around, throwing their weight, or trashing planet. Society has suddenly selected against them, probably because those good old boy networks up to now always denied equality and enforced oppression. As with everyone thus stereotyped, most aren't responsible for crimes of a few, share none of the loot, but suffer consequences undeservedly. Foundations desire diversity, discriminate against men, give grants to minorities and women. After you've written volumes, you know that it's all lies anyway. The only reason to write is attract money and sex. If you've already had enough of both, why bother? Impotent and never content, some want to maintain control and power.

If things are so chaotic and complex, what can nations do to simplify? Toss out something. For example, any notion of religion as a form of government. Allah bans man's every action. Instead man needs to erect boundaries around Allah. New Republican Right with its supporting religious fanaticism practically assures a clash with communist and Moslem fanatics. Christ was a pious commie, totally anticapitalist, so whose side do you choose? Will this bring on World War III? Only a centrist government has grace enough to defuse conflicts and handle international relations. Fact that mullahs run a few countries shouldn't bother you. Moslems are people with mineral resources and technology needs, people with whom to trade. Technologies they appreciate are stuff Westerners take for granted, like clean water distillers and purifiers, refrigerators or waste recyclers. Are Americans any good at these?

In transition from blacks and whites to grays all confusion lies. It's a youthful clear vision spoiled by worldly concerns. It's competent people reduced to burnt out ruin by Philistine needs for material and money. Among ruins treasures might later be found, some bright bauble, cherished piece, picked up, set aside to admire, used as inspiration. Hand-me-down songs once sparked an entire generation to good will. The work of long dead artisans, voices of those who've been down a long weary road, unacknowledged yet so influential, amazes and realigns attitudes. If you happen upon some during your lonely quest, they're worth experiencing.

Succeeding generations lose these threads and need to rediscover them. Each scientific advancement that supplants a long held fact needs to be carefully gone over and reabsorbed by those who might make something of it. This process now takes decades over

layers of collected information. Time works against everyone. An entire life might be spent only to arrive where your forebears were already. A principle that unifies ethics, jurisprudence, psychology, religion and science was sorely needed, if only to shrug off pointless systems concocted by people who chased dead ends out of ignorance. Einstein spent his later years looking for it, and suggested Buddhism came close. Several lame substitutes have arisen: Christian Science, New Age Holistics, Scientology. Something akin to discovering life on another planet was needed to infuse general thinking with the determination to drop all pretenses. Every so often you have to start fresh, toss out accumulated trash.

Huxley kicked open doors of perception, and thereafter nothing was taboo, however useless. People dabbled in astrology, experimented with drugs, tried extremism. The puny intellect of individuals had reverted to primitive forms of inquiry, like horoscopes and incantations. Ravings of a solitary madman should not become the basis for entire realms of thought upon which vast populations had to submit. Monarchies were no good, neither were dictators of law, substance, style or taste. Can't beg for a path to follow or cry for useful tips. Must find your own way amidst kindred minds. What works is many people thinking alike, some further progressed than others, mentors, solid faith in each others abilities and intentions, trust. "Open you heart, I'll make you love me," just doesn't work. An open heart will learn to love, not as follower but leader. Be the change you want to see. If you don't, there are always handcuffs, legal proceedings, orders for restraint, and prison terms.

Parishioners bemoan scandals of priests as sexual predators for which Church has to pay. That's a good sign. Means you can adopt policies where that can't happen again, children don't suffer, and circle of abuse is broken. Plus it removes some wealth from a primary accumulator, spreads it among ordinary spenders. He admired big class action lawsuits that won. Current administration put a priority on setting ceilings on judicial awards. He always pictured capitalism and communism as trains racing in opposite directions to wrong destinations. Neither works as a basis for economy, but that's not quite true. Where they pass each other, middle ground, is where they do work. Tenets of both pitted against one another created advantageous friction, like rubbing sticks to produce fire. Huggers pick useful shards out of ashes.

Conflicts are not necessarily things to avoid. They can be inducements, inspirations, sources to mine. You have to pick your fights carefully. Better that conflicts did not exist, but that's not likely. Instead of just letting anything tick you off, pick big, horrible

wastes. Class action lawsuits he'd soon see included: a) Estates of accident victims sue automakers and traffic planners for hazardous mo-ves and roads; b) Families of cancer victims sue oil companies for MBTE additives and other carcinogens; c) Survivors of tobacco users sue tobacco companies for danger products resulting in suffering and death. Oops, they already succeeded with c. But who was beneficiary? State coffers ripe for pilfering by same people who profit from mo-ve, oil and tobacco regulation. It's a closed loop funneling money back upon itself. Oil producers voluntarily removed MBTE following major complaints, but only after being granted immunity from prosecution, a clever, preemptive deal that evades responsibility for something they already knew was injurious. MBTE's sole purpose is to dry gas so it burns better; rather than burning itself, it bonds with water vapor, drips onto hot asphalt so bicyclists breathe it, or it filters into groundwater, never degrading, poisoning all it touches. Nice stuff, like hexivalent chromium, a rust retardant, or PCB, a coolant found in florescent light ballasts in every school, and other elusive scourges. They gave up using lead, but don't know hazards that substitutes, such as plastics, might represent. Science routinely gambles with lives.

Nobody represents public's interests. Instead there was an official liberties union, who spend all their time prosecuting fringe perspectives, like erecting crèches on public property and other faux pas of political correctness, easy targets. But they never indict those who cheat public, erect burning swastikas, incite violence, or poison waters, too dangerous. Or represent individuals beat down by system, which you'd think was their primary mission. More cowardly hypocrisy. No, they'd rather stand behind goofy liberties, like right of obese people to work from home at state's expense. Of course, such lawsuits are ridiculed by conservatives, instead of honest discussions on important issues—food, shelter, survival.

Why anger people? Why let them off easily? Why not take stock, ask questions? Corruption—Angers only the disaffected; how much longer must they tolerate? Law Enforcement—Values property over human life. Medicine—Don't care if you die as long as practice is lucrative. Simple rules don't work anymore. Today's brilliant insights are really not, more to do with getting a hook on a topic from repeatedly writing about it, squeeze blood from a stone, shock value into a saleable book. He pitched 1 controversial idea after another, baseballs swung on and missed. Great to be brilliant, but nobody cares. Self is never a topic, interaction is. What's civilization about if not benevolent interpersonal exchanges? You also destroy enemies by making friends of them, friends or mortal

remains. Some half formed thought always worms itself into any well argued debate and gets personalized as an insult.

Wished he'd gotten good with music; had studied diligently but didn't have the gift. Fingers weren't coordinated, hands cramped. Depends how brain is wired. Could've played so sweetly without words. Unfinished improvisational vibe of jazz is like scattered lines without chaperones of discipline or logic. Being alone with his own thoughts had to suffice, a decent melody with some historic perspective to sing in his own company. You may find wisdom if you work alone intently, probably not among rabble caught up in moments, dashing wildly about, dripping uninformed opinions. Heard a story of a musical family who visited relatives in Mexico. Upon reentering states, border guards though they were aliens. They had to whip out instruments and play a concerto to convince them. You either have talent or not, and, if you do, it's good for you to put it to use. All he'd been able to do was write dumb books and opinionated essays, but at least he was using what skills he had. Books are a lot fairer and quieter than boom boxes and radios that spill nothing but teases all around. You can easily put down a book, and nobody has to be assaulted by it. Social analyst William Gass compared books to bicycles. With both, "you travel under your own power and proceed at your own pace. Your riding is silent... No one is endangered... frightened, maimed or killed. And the exercise is good for you." Shouldn't man be past words as a species? Not quite. The best interview hosts have little to say, ask short straightforward questions, draw out guests, and that's as it should be. If he wanted angst, he'd watch news or reality television, which he seldom did. Executive producers of both freely admit they seek strife, as if staging a cock fight, where contestants are not randomly chosen but rashly pitted against one another for maximum combat. A placid greeting is more welcome than seething mania. Had enough of his own to deal with.

Futility seduces effectively. Take any historical argument and study it—Leibniz's Monads, Kant's total subjectivity, Nietzsche's superhuman transcendence. May have been argued most convincingly at the time, but now elicit laughter. Mainstream dullards or singular visionaries bury truly logical thinking. Take communism, an experiment that failed in a broken test tube. Does this negate hypothesis? No, just results. Was communism the root of Moscow's economic failure or was it human nature? If people continue to base all truth on materialism, they condemn dreams based on individual rights. Slave owners considered another race inferior, convinced white populace who yearned for free, practical labor.

When it became obvious that other races were simply different, slavery was abolished. Yet this lie, a typical straw man fallacy, is still popular. People attacked him to discredit his ideas, only they weren't insightful enough to see ideas weren't his, and he was only reflecting reality like a really clean mirror.

What if most religions were based on drug hallucinations or organic maladies, peyote or rye mold? Visions could stem from things like *muscae volitantes*—literally, flies flying about—a condition where things floating around inside an eye appear as flies. Dreams are another numinous thing. They could have simply dreamt whole thing up. When one sleeps one gets close to the essence of night, fearful sacred silence, man's tightrope walk on the isthmus of his brutality/greatness, subconscious delirium of anxious brooding. But he never dreamt of God, of heaven, that he could recall. Sun arises, dispels demons, wakes masses. Can it be as simple as that? God made an elegant universe, why stop at Truth?

Try to frame heaven in your mind. An inflexible picture of sameness doesn't inspire. He'd rather it be pleasantly changeable; new enjoyable experiences every day; not at all quiet and stately, rather bustling and cheery, more like Disney World without long lines. But he bet someone else would long for a great model train set, or nonstop supply of tickets to Mozart, Puccini, Verdi, von Beethoven, well, maybe not Ludwig... wrong venue. Heaven would have to be different to different people or nobody would want to stay. Of course, alternatives don't seem desirable, endless longing or pain. He just thought that heaven ought not be the better of evils, shelter from a storm. Know what Nirvana is? "Not blowing out the candle, but extinguishing it because of sunrise." Heaven is all fear removed. Heaven, then, must be wonderful beyond words.

All theological answers have been concluded without a scrap of definitive evidence. Can't keep moaning over Original Fall from Grace. Man is but a weed, a thinking weed, a weed in need of control. All attempts to root out man have failed. Paradise is an overgrown orchard, a strangled vineyard forsaken. Must fledge, move forward, and stretch wings of intellect, turn to ethical behaviors that work. Nothing wrong with old moralities, except prejudice against equivalent spirituality. Religion without prejudice can be practiced fully, partially, or perhaps ignored as long as you shun lawlessness and lack of caring for your fellow man. Despite crippling doubts, buy-in occurs, good stuff gets done.

Heard Greensplain pontificating about market economies as if they were the only thing that could ever work just because deregulation was tried and things did seem a little better. Was economic

tinkering by Federal Reserve a cause or effect? Something else may have accounted for these superficial gains. Or inflation served wealthiest few for awhile, then a low, stable interest rate served them better. Certainly true for those who own banks. Unless bank interest rates rise, you're better off spending than saving. When you amass great fortunes, inflation diminishes it, spreads it thin, stifles buyouts and land grabs. Pontificate all you want, never has the distance been greater between poorest and richest. Nobody considers Marxism anymore, a dirty word. Lenny Bruce ridiculed communism: "Like one big phone company." But they threw the baby out with the bath water. Its underlying concept had merit: Employment for everyone, nobody left out, overthrow tyranny of bosses subjugating minions and wage servitude. What made America's economy take off in the last century was workers listening to Marx, forming trade unions, negotiating from strength in numbers. Cold War costs and economic collapse were where communism failed, as will capitalism if it doesn't adopt a serious socialist side: free utilities, resource sharing, retirement security, socialized medicine, and so forth. Extremism doesn't work, uniformity cripples. Only by blending opposites do you arrive at something viable. When economy in America gets so bad nobody can afford to live, everyone will organize against state. But class actions against corporations and recalls of officials required grassroots campaigns, massive efforts, not worth effort if things aren't terribly bad. He had no interest in politics where people take sides against one another. World should be beyond politics by now. Too bad some nations haven't progressed past primitive.

One can blithely concoct all sorts of reasonable arguments for community minded euthenics and public policies without the least understanding of how they affect anything else. Few can extrapolate from a given situation what might occur, just as few can tolerate the mental challenges that simple games of Chess or Go represent. You need an organizing construct that aligns all efforts. He had suggested a shift away from current paradigm, but irrespective of such detail, there's already is a construct, *kindness*. If you care about everyone, you'll implement things that work cooperatively, wind up with a better community and fair policies. You can readily judge people for yourself based on how kind they are. It's a bottom up approach that works, if you can get people to practice it.

Not ghosts in clouds, gorgons in treelines, terrors at night when steam pipes clank, fear only fear. Had to face real threats, hateful monsters too distant from contact who know you not but hate you anyway, space aliens who want you only for your minerals.

Listen to these words, “I don’t hate you or wish you ill.” What good is power if you can’t use it for good? Can’t use it to reach across gulfs of differences? What’s wrong with bending to Mecca or caking your skin with mud and quaffing kava? If betel nuts and feathered headgear make your mind soar, bless you. Great to greet life with enthusiasm, not cower from interaction, new experiences, powerful adversaries, potential friends. After all, genuinely liking other people and their customs makes you instantly familiar, sets off a chain reaction of mutual admiration.

He didn’t want people to follow rules fearfully, he wanted them to agree out of caring and compassion. You don’t need a doctrine, law, or regulation for this. This ensures some will remain apathetic losers absorbed by self interest, others will subvert system and smugly call themselves clever to get something for nothing. One sided relationships are costly and tedious. Most people’s company isn’t worth keeping; letting relations lapse *with them* is the win-win. But a small minority will bask in pleasures of each other’s warm company while it lasts, the only way to apply freedom and not wind up alone and miserable. You may be curious about many, but only get to really know a few, and love one or two. There’s just not enough life span for more. This he knew is an authentic desire leading to peak, visceral experience—the core phenomenon of what humans call *living*, reaching out to make contact, satisfactorily securing some, unwavering throughout all doubts.

You must fight for an equitable arrangement. Naysayers try to steer you from it. Exploiters will make it your ball and chain. Managers will let it be your baby while they exact their toll. The greedy, as usual, will want it for free. The impatient, who always want results right away, will say “it’s good enough” and settle for less. “Whatever” is its enemy. Any product of yours you’ll want to be just right, errorless, a reflection of your inner vision, worth fullest attention, concentration, effort, passion. Nobody will ever know it as you. What is it? It’s the *perfect enterprise*—for you. Mythologist Campbell dubbed it “following your bliss”. Solitary madmen and would-be novelists have it easy, finding it readily within. Average people aren’t so lucky, require leaders to provide.

Begin the denouement.

