



MEMOIRS OF AN OUTSIDER

JERRY KATZ

EUCALYPTUS BOOKS

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I was born at the old Cedars hospital on Fountain and Vermont in 1934. Bing Crosby, whose twins arrived at the same time, was possibly the first person, other than my parents and the hospital staff, to be aware of my existence. when I was preschool age, an older boy wandered into our backyard, where I was playing in my sandbox, and called me a "little kike." I thought he said "kite." but even not knowing the word, I knew the intent. "kite, kite, kite," I repeated the words in a faux playful tone, hoping to dispel any possible violence. I repeated the words again, in the same tone, when I went inside, but my mother, who evidently heard what had happened from the kitchen, but didn't come out, told me to "shut up." the day we moved, I was playing with a Catholic boy my age, when this same older boy came up to him, and said, "how can you play with this Jew?" he then said, "my father said all the Jews are moving out of the neighborhood." I can still remember looking down the block at the moving van in front of our house, with a vague sense of anticipation and satisfaction our new house was a tract a mile south of Pico. on the corner of Beverly Drive and Sawyer, to be exact. Beverly Drive that far south, then, was just a gravel road that looped around a small circular park. from our windows you could hear the quiet sound of car wheels turning in the gravel. lima bean fields began where our yard ended. I have an image of first day, of standing outside, viewing the den with its knotty pine woodwork and 18<sup>th</sup> century colonial themed wallpaper, from a distance, basking in the newness of the unfamiliar space. field, wallpaper, tile, the smell of fresh paint, the mousetrap on the back porch, the polished mahogany banister winding up to bed. jackrabbits, sound of crickets, no street lights (utter darkness). views of the city from our bedroom and the mountains beyond, that had once been so close from our old house on N. Crescent Heights Blvd. to the twinkle of the hillside lights that I confused them with stars. new neighborhood. newly built house, same old family. kind of weird. actually the move changed and redefined us.

years later, I'd experience a palpable feeling of release when we (my wife and I), heading north, up Crescent Heights Blvd., after visits to our parents (south of Pico) , crossed Santa Monica Blvd., on our way back to our small pad in Laurel Canyon. **moonlight and roses** was the theme song of a singer named Lanny Ross, who had a Monday night radio show, in the late 30's. I remember

hearing it from our kitchen one night, while standing outside on the back porch steps, conjuring up this very artificial image of.....moonlight and roses. another song of the period, **deep purple** (*when the deep purple falls over sleepy garden walls*), also replicated itself into a nocturnal image of our garden and backyard fence...mysterious, artificial, and other worldly – a strong aura. our backyard was a mini fruit tree orchard – fig, avocado, apricot, crabapple, orange, and lemon. overripe apricots, pecked by the blackbirds, lay strewn on the lawn.

back on Sawyer St., the 40's, in the living room, with its large front bay window, the expanse of corner and street, extending to a view of the mostly unused private park beyond. sheet music to the song, **this is a lovely way to spend an evening**, on the piano. young Sinatra with actress Michele Morgan, on the cover. relatives (my father's side), prosperous, self-satisfied. older cousin, who knew all the progressive chords, and played the piano like Art Tatum. Judy Garland on the cover of sheet music to **the boy next door**, and **trolley song**. but I felt contempt for them on Yom Kippur, watching aunts, uncles, and cousins, file out for lunch with most of the rest of the congregation.

my mother was born in San Francisco. her family moved to East L. A. after the death of her father, when she was 9. she attended Hollenbeck J.H.S. and Roosevelt High, where she enrolled in creative dance instead of gym. after graduating, she frequented the Hollywood clubs where the young and star struck mixed with older celebrities, and was preparing for a career in music and dance, when she met my father, who already had a successful business.

my father was born in N. Y. City. his father abandoned the family when he was 12. his sport was boxing. he once asked former world lightweight champ, Barney Ross (who was 15 years his junior) to spar with him at the gym where they both worked out. Ross politely declined.

in 1940, when my brother and I flaunted the flashy red and yellow buttons our father gave us, to our Mexican maid, who practiced her tennis against our good looking Mexican maid, who practiced her tennis against our garage door, she told us, "wait a week until

I get my Roosevelt buttons" (colorless blue and white), with succinct disdain. does anybody remember Wilke? (did anyone else vote for him besides my father?) my father had a very inner process. very thoughtful. very careful. he was not an intellectual. but he paid close attention. he was a physical (spiritual) person.

of the number of unpleasant recurrent dreams I've had throughout my life, ranging from depressing to true nightmare, the two most strikingly similar, almost interchangeable in function, both Faustian in theme, both regarding rites of passage at different ages, were, **Snow White** (a movie whose floating, brilliantly colored, luminous shapes, I also retained in the form of ecstatic hallucinations) and **The Picture Of Dorian Gray**, a dull but dark, ominously toned adaptation of the Oscar Wilde novel. in the night-mare, the 'wicked' witch's face would stealthily frame itself in our bathroom window, startling my unconscious. watching **Dorian Gray**, on the other hand, fear of something impending, kept me in a state of mild anxiety throughout the movie. yet, I still wasn't prepared for the final scene where the hideous portrait is suddenly unveiled (ala Eisenstein) in a burst of color. and, for some time afterwards, I would have this nightmare where the portrait would suddenly appear (with a crashing sound) shocking my psyche. it's interesting to note the difference between the words stealth and sudden. when I saw **Snow White** I was only 4. and while the image wasn't as violent as the image in **dorian gray**, it just as much affected my unconscious as the latter.

we sometimes went to the Jewish cemetery so my father could be close to the memory of his mother. one Sunday afternoon there was this newly mounted plaque for the film director, Mark Sandrich. that night (was it coincidentally?) we saw his last film, **Here Come The Waves**. the lettering of the credits bore an eerie resemblance to the inscription in the mausoleum. for a while when we went to the movie I would perform ablutions, gazing at the detail on the ceiling of the theater, ordering it symmetrically with my eyes. (there was also a mantra I had to recite) before I would be free to watch the movie. if I erred, I'd have to start over. sometime missing the beginning of the film. my brother remembers me doing this.

driving through some of the old neighborhoods on my way to

LACMA last night, I once again realized how ecologically my past existed in layers. the neighborhood around Miracle Mile, for instance, though not the neighborhood I grew up in has dense associations. as a boy, we shopped at May Co., Desmond's, and Silverwood's, sometimes went to the movies at the Wilshire, the Ritz, the El Rey, the Four Star. the old buildings now seem like a graveyard, barely poking deep feelings of early youth – the family, dependency, car. at adolescence it was an area where I first drove a car on dates – dark trees, sexual impulses added to the unconscious lure of death. days and evenings there was a part time job at imitation high fashion, Orbach's ( then at the corner of Wilshire and Masselin in Prudential Square) as a stock clerk in the wrapping department when I was seventeen – pretty girls from Fairfax and L.A. High. the luxury of driving home from work alone, nurturing introspection. as an adult the area ceased to be relevant. just a route to get elsewhere. an apartment on Beverly Blvd. in the early seventies. LACMA, light and shadow, footprints of the Modernists. Erewhon, Spanish tile roofs. and fetishes on the lawns of the African-American bourgeoisie south of Olympic. a Henry Mancini song just came into my head, and it's interesting how obvious the association. Orbach's in the early fifties was defined by the glamour, fashion, and image, of Audrey Hepburn. as is so often the case, the song going through my head was triggered, almost gratuitously, unrelated to whether any deep emotions were or weren't involved.

when I was a teenager, romantic figures were still older than me. when I was a teenager, romantic figures were still older than me. people older than me still made the culture. nighttime still felt both secure and was alive with promise (sometimes). yet I was also at the same time, an old man, anxious, worried, and insecure. this ate into it, always, from my earliest recollections. after school, the light. a bookstore, a supermarket, a theater, at night. looking for or appraising the love object. but linger too long with nothing but expectation, promise could quickly turn into empty places of isolation and alienation.

in school the icons of my life were not celebrities. they were the people around me. mostly my peers. I wasn't given to worshipping public figures like movie stars or athletes, any more than I was given to worshipping my parents, although I once

masturbated to the image of Jean Peters (as she appeared in a low cut peasant blouse in the movie, Captain From Castile), and early Tony Curtis was definitely a visual influence for all of us – the N. Y. delinquent image, the greasy hairdo. although Elvis Presley was probably the first person my age to have a transformative effect on the culture, my icons by that time were already writers, poets, jazz musicians, filmmakers, and artists. there is a luxury in being young and 'knowing' your day is yet to come. but when you still feel that way 50 years later. well.

I don't go to movies. I don't watch TV. I have a few videos – experimental film from the sixties....Brakhage, Maya Deren, Harry Smith, Robert Frank. stuff like that. I also occasion-ally check out DVD's from the public library. not too long ago, I looked at Rebel Without a Cause. still worth viewing after all these years. the film's producer, David Weisbart, was my father's cousin Gladys' husband. he used to be at family get-togethers. but I remember him clearly only once. when he walked by us at a holiday dinner at an aunt and uncles and my father said, "how's the boy, Dave?" and then, half-jokingly, something about getting "my boys into the movies," which did not please Dave at all. he frowned and kind of growled or grumbled.

high cloudy day  
waves of dark and light  
sweep the baseball diamond.

1956-60

typhoon warning. last night in Yokosuka. rain. colored paper and lights. silhouettes of giant cranes. Hyperion stacks along the Coast Highway. party one block from the boardwalk – Manhattan Beach. Bunny Tripodes – Uncle Wiggly in Connecticut. oil wells in Venice. Marty Diskin's shack on the sand no lights. creaking sound of derricks. occasional fog horn. sexual inadequacy beneath the lust. beneath that, lost love.

read Fitzgerald's Tender is the Night in my 'hammock'. deliberately go late to lunch. eat with two privileged crewmates, Mintz and Capper. Scoble, who has voiced anti-Semitic sentiments

about me, and who has let it be known he's out to get me, triumphantly puts me on 'report.' I establish post facto excuse with one of the Ship's Doctor's (who happens to be Jewish). at Executive Mast, Executive Officer, for whom Capper (one of my witnesses) works as a personal secretary, excuses me with a short, mild, lecture. admonishes Scoble when he tries to object. I learn, after I return from two weeks leave, that Scoble has freaked out, and been transferred to a naval hospital. I learn, another nemesis has also been transferred only to be replaced by a new nemesis.

Mintz, the editor of the ship's newspaper, once printed a bogus piece quoting Capper as saying, "I like Yokosuka. it reminds me of my hometown of Athens, Georgia. in fact it reminds me of the whole South." Capper started getting threatening phone calls after that. "Cappah, we'll get you." "fellas, fellas, please. wait a minute." click.

when I was overseas, there was always the ship to go back to. it was a weight (that I wasn't free). yet, sometimes I would go back even when I didn't have to! when I was back living with my parents, not too many years ago, I sometimes had dreams where I was descending below decks, and it was so stifling I felt like I couldn't breathe, and I'd kind of have to struggle to wake up.

one night on 'liberty' in 1956, a shipmate whose older brother was making the North Beach scene, took us to an upscale coffee house on Columbus called the Opus 1. typically black walled and drip candle lit, a Brandenburg Concerto played on the Hi Fi. as soon as we entered, a yearning arose in me to be a part of the warmth and intimacy of this scene. our waitress, vaguely resentful in black tights, seemed authentically Beat. the subservience of her position seemed to give her a sullen power, evoking in me sexual hunger. and abused an air as she affected, I envied her freedom, and for that matter, the freedom of the others in the room – the students and young professionals, conversing quietly at their tables. in my uniform I felt almost abject shame that I had forfeited my freedom of choice. that instead of being free to follow my senses, I was obligated, no matter what transpired, to return to the ship's trivial despotism. yet, standing outside in the ethereal S.F. night air, I could feel a gravitational pull towards something new...and though I was to make the 'real' scene, as it



evolved several years later...a dream never fulfilled.

Nov. 1957

I wake from the best sleep of my life at about 10 a.m. shower, dress, and take the A train to S.F. at a Filipino barber on Market, I spot the headline, **sputnik orbits the earth**. then climb up to North Beach and wander around until I see the open doors of Fugazi Hall on Green St. inside, poet Kenneth Rexroth is reading Ferlinghetti's, *Christmas On Fillmore*, to laid back, bluesy, jazz. afterwards, a few adulating groupies crowd around him. they all have the same scrubbed, cherubic faces, and hair tied up in buns, making them look , vaguely, like missionary nuns. I must be smirking, because one of them gives me a dirty look as she passes. when I leave, the late afternoon light is exquisite. if only I could relate this to something specific. but by the time I reach an open air art exhibit several blocks away, my joi d' vivre is beginning to fade, and by night I'm feeling the old anxiety and fatigue. there is one illuminating moment, however, in the most striking exhibit, three giant steel poles sway gently in the evening breeze. "blow job?", a homo asks, with a leer, suddenly upon me as I come out of the head. I glare, and make my way down Powell to Market, and the train ride back to Treasure Island, two days before my release.

UCLA 1958, '59

first night I visit Barry's parents' hillside house above Coldwater Canyon, debating the merit of J.D. Salinger's work with Mike Porter, his girlfriend Sandy Darnley, and Herb Yarmo.

Warren playing a few bars of Beethoven Sonata 109 on our piano while singing his made up words, "I want my Daddy" to it.

Jay on the walk between the main campus and the Med Center, telling me he identifies with the sentiments in Tonio Kroger's letter.

with Porter and Herb, seeing rerun of Jack Garfein's film, **The Strange One**. Porter and I have an argument at coffee shop on Fairfax and Wilshire, afterwards. because I refuse to talk while still immersed in the aesthetic experience, he accuses me of

playing the role of 'silent superior.'

in Barry's room listening to John Coltrane (*Traneing In, Slow Dance*) for the first time.

delicately beautiful (by my standards, then) natural blonde haired girl named Katy, with whom I share non-verbal attraction and rapport, until spell is broken by an acquaintance making a foolish attempt to date her one night at the Hamburger Hamlet in Westwood Village.

take my first roll of film with Bert Cohen's old Rolleiflex at Malibu Lagoon. Barry instructs. one shot, of scum on water, illuminated by sunlight, is my first winner. (later give photo to Dean Stockwell)

my first real attempt at painting is a palette knife rendered oil abstraction, using 3 tubes of paint (courtesy of Mike Porter) – red and 2 shades of brown, plus thin wood sticks, which I stick into the paint afterwards. I title it, *The Day The Circus Blew up*, after the poem by Archibald MacLeish.

Barry discovers Antonioni (*Il Grido*) at the S.F. Film Festival.

Porter beats me in basketball and tetherball at Robertson Playground. feel he tries to push towards a fight.

regular with Barry and Mike Cohen at the Hillcrest Club on Washington Blvd. Paul Bley Quartet is the house band. we are among the first to witness the incipient free jazz scene when Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry start sitting in there.

Jay, Bert, Jack Maidman, and I, camp out at Joshua Tree Nat'l Monument. "shooting tin cans with a sawed off shotgun."

two week affair with Jean Wall – one weekend at her pad in Berkeley, one weekend at Porter's pad in Santa Monica.

theater arts instructor bribes me into taking a second playwriting class with him. promises me an A. which he delivers (saving a disastrous semester).

prowl the West Adams District at nights. pick up prostitutes. one night get drunk, and after passing on sex, deliberately run three red lights. hit car. "land's in jail."

Mike Cohen and I write a love song, *soft rain*, at his pad in Topanga Canyon. driving back drunk, on the way down the steep mountain incline, I come inches away from going over the edge. I swerve hard in the opposite direction to avert the plunge, slamming into the cliff wall, which sobers me up. I hold the smashed door closed the rest of the way, to a prostitute's apartment, she refuses to give me free sex, and then home.

Jimmy, Jody, Jo, Winkie, and Lori. "job" at the Westwood Bookstore. ("job" – Warren's word for anything negative or hung up) the owner, Jimmy Hakes, is a great boss.

Herb and I double date to Zuma Beach. wienie roast, toasted marshmallows and beer. Eva, Herbs wife to be, fixes me up with an unpretentious, pretty, blue eyed blonde who (out of sheer inhibition and fear) I ignore. 2 pretty blue eyed Valley Girls. I can still recall her fresh white sweat shirt with the Yale (her college to be) logo .in Eva's kitchen afterwards, free of the burden of a 'blind' date, I loosen up and show my creative verbal flair. hallucinate her garden through the pane glass as an Ernst painting.

fleeting glory. after Cohen and I test out our song at the Scorpion, a Hi Fi coffee shop in Van Nuys, it is heard no more.

influences: jazz, classical music, film, American fiction, Modern and Beat poetry, Modernist art, Existential philosophy, booze..and a lust for women.

Mike Porter's portrait of me – "hard, soft."

"to hear the sound of high heels, pressed hard by naked feet, echoing in a hallway," is the first erotic image I remember writing – while sitting in an empty classroom in Royce Hall, working on my third short story, titled, *The Homecoming-1958*, which began, "came home and the clocks didn't stop running, and the eyes were bloody tired, and the late afternoon sun reflected on her

half naked body, and again in her green-brown eyes, was a balm.” from the same story – “you sit and sweat below decks and never know it rains. lights light day below decks. lights light night below decks. and below decks there is no day. there is no night. there is no rain. just the steady rumble of the ship’s giant engines, and the irregular ear shattering blasts of the jets.”

“your war stories were full of shit.” BBK. (years later)

bored, with nothing to do, as usual, I dropped by Marty Diskin’s apartment one night, and his roommate said Marty had gone to a party, and then on the spur of the moment, asked me if I wanted to go. it was a house on a hilly street a couple blocks from the sand, in Manhattan Beach. Marty was glad to see me, and Charles introduced me to a young woman whose husband, a philosophy grad student, was there, but stayed with a small clique in the kitchen, which at least at that particular moment, she didn’t seem to be a part of. we hit it off right away – talking about J.D. Salinger (Salinger had his detractors, but in the late fifties, if you were into his writing, there was kind of an esoteric bond you shared, almost a cult). she was from Connecticut. there was his story, Uncle Wiggly in Connecticut (about a well-off but neurotic housewife, who pined for her former lover, a WWII soldier, who was killed in a freak accident while still in the Army, but not in combat). anyway, I got pretty drunk. I asked her if she had children, and when she said no, I said, with no little bravado, “you would if we were married.” Charles, a quiet but intense, politically conservative Mexican-American from San Pedro, who was very well liked by the hip lefties at UCLA, and whom I think was gay, then asked me if I wanted to go. my remark must have stuck in her head. because not too long after, on a week night at about 11 p m, my mom called me to the phone. she was at Zucky’s deli on 5<sup>th</sup> and Wilshire in Santa Monica, with a girlfriend, and wanted to let her friend leave without her. she insisted I come and pick her up, and take her back to her apartment in Manhattan Beach. after first objecting about the time, I assented. before the Marina, the Coast Highway, extending from Venice to South Bay, was unbroken. Pacific was dark at night, with the pungent smell from the oil wells, which loomed as shadows in the black specked sand, on either side of the road. riding the lonely stretch of highway South, with the Hyperion Stacks ahead, and

the shoreline lights in the distance, could be a romantic experience. I was not the first person she sought out in an attempt to escape, an unhappy marriage. she told me she hung out at the Lighthouse (the legendary jazz club in Hermosa Beach) for a while, and finally managed a one-niter with Bud Shank, a ubiquitous reedman on the West Coast Jazz scene of the fifties. "why are you doing this?," he asked. she said he was quite adequate (sexually)...but cold. we sat on the floor of her apartment, drinking wine from a bottle. her roommate walked in with a lover, and they immediately went to the bedroom and closed the door. we talked and made out. she had a regular, somewhat homely, slightly freckled face, straight hair down to her shoulders, thin but good figure (nice legs). the night ended with our dry-fucking on the sofa, and, at least, my having an orgasm. the next night, or was it the next time (the night she wore a black dress), we went to bed. a lame attempt at sex under the covers .like trying to fly an airplane blindfolded. we went back and forth a little longer. me getting more apathetic, although she tried to keep me in it. she taught 6 grade at a local elementary school, and said she adored one of her pupils, a good looking but disruptive Mexican boy. she knew I planned to move to New York in the next few weeks, and wanted to see something I had written. I stayed in NYC only three months. it turned out she had moved back to Connecticut for about the same time. one night shortly after I returned, I was surprised when my mother once again called me to the phone. this time my response was so low, she finally decided to leave me alone.

Carson McCullers' story, Wunderkind, which takes place in the harshness, warmth, and hustle, of early 20<sup>th</sup> Century N.Y. City, is about a sensitive, but neurotic girl, who plays Bach on the violin very well. her neurosis is partly exacerbated by her German immigrant teacher, whom she believes favors the more passionate playing style (Brahms, etc.) of a fellow student named Hymie. when I was in grammar school, I too wanted to play the violin. I imagined myself playing romantic music, classical or gypsy (ala Heifitz and Menuhin). what was to be me, solo, re taking private lessons, devolved into my brother and I taking class lessons with a group of uninspired young-er children. on the way home after the first lesson, my brother threatened to dump his violin case in the gully at the bottom of the hill of the street we

lived on. my dream of becoming a real violinist quickly devolved too. from then on we played duets. I played first violin, and my brother played second fiddle (so to speak). we had two numbers we played at recitals – an upbeat piece titled, *swing waltz*, and the *barcarol* from the Tales of Hoffman by Offenbach (actually, with the latter our teacher attempted to switch our roles, but switched us back, either because I found the second part too difficult without the melody to guide me, or, I wouldn't do it). our teacher, was a Bohemian Brit, who stained her legs instead of wearing hosiery. she really didn't teach us to read. for instance, instead of C, we were taught 2 fingers on the A string. that's how we learned to play. the one time the class was held at her own house, her horse playing husband and eldest son kept on the phone with their bookie in the kitchen, while she gave lessons in the living room. one Christmas she gave a little statue of an old composer to each person in her class her selection, I suppose, to some extent, was meant to denote our particular musical dispositions. mine was Paganini, the violin virtuoso. my brother's was the classically structured Handel. eventually, the Handel statuette was dropped and suffered a chipped nose. we finally got to private lessons, but by then it was too late. when we'd see our new teacher (a sister of a neighbor) chugging in her jalopy around the park across the street where we were playing ball, we'd fight about who had to go first. I never got beyond 'first position'. now I play the piano – by ear! have I good touch, and I improvise. I'd like to try the drums. with my proclivities, I'd be anything but a time keeper. I'm sure.

one night in 1965, after seeing *last year at marienbad* for the third time, I said to my wife, "let's fly up to Berkeley," where a number of our friends were living. after arriving at S.F. International, and taking the bus to the East Bay (riding quietly along with hip black youths from Oakland, who were warm towards us because the exchange of vibes was mutually sympathetic and vulnerable), the driver let us know when to get off, and as I forgot to bring addresses, we wandered around through several streets that looked familiar, until we saw a building that looked like it might be where Herb and Eva Yarmo lived. not only were we lucky (and relieved) to find their place so easily, but even though it was late, our friends, Barry and Jim, were also there, and having come out of the cold, so to speak, we were, for a change, the center of

attention. after visiting for a couple of hours, we bedded down in their small attic, but didn't sleep. Barry, Debby and I go for breakfast at a UC Berkeley hang. Barry and I discuss Antonioni's, *Red Desert*. a guy sitting with a group behind us is smirking (re my end of the conversation). I slowly turn my head and drill him with my eyes. he quickly withdraws. Barry, impressed, says, "you scared him." they were all aware of the role drugs was playing, re the change in my behavior and functioning, mostly sympathetic, though Eva, with whom I had an earlier rapport, became paranoid. she thought I was crazy. we return to Yarmo's. Barry starts talking baby talk to their toddler, Aaron. "this is Jerry," he coos. then, still trying to adapt to my transformation, adds, mostly to himself, "he's a real Beatnik." Eva plays with Leslie Tamara, Aaron's older sister. there's a slightly resentful irony in her voice – re her relationship with Herb, methinks. but her attitude is generally blase. my brother calls. I learn he had flipped out on some marijuana, and had spent a week in a mental hospital afterwards. I'm told my father and our other brother (a lawyer) had flown up to take care of financial and legal matters. this puts a damper on the trip, and when they give me the phone, we bandy back and forth whether he would come over or not. we leave it up in the air. Eva makes dinner of hot dogs and mashed potatoes. Barry ceremoniously grabs the extra dog. after dinner Leonard arrives with his girlfriend, Jacqui, his friend Terry, to whom I had taken an earlier dislike, and Terry's wife, Marsha (Jacqui's sister). we all take an evening walk near the Berkeley campus. my energy is dragged. I behave badly. "what's the matter?," Terry asks, in a mocking tone. it might be interesting to note that I freaked out at Wallace Berman's, a week or two before (the only time that ever happened, before or since), shortly after Russ Tamblyn arrived. I completely lost my center. I threw my arms around my wife, crying, "help me." although she did nothing, the contact flowed the energy back, and then I was all right. when we got home I turned on, as I did every night. could this have happened at exactly the same time that Leonard flipped – the Corsican Brothers? then Barry flipped out, also on some pot, at our place, shortly after we returned, evening of the day we sat on wood stumps at Venice Beach, and I told him, "I'm free to look at women's asses because I'm married." Debby's girlfriend, Fay, took him to UCLA emergency. Barry, Herb, Eva, and Myron (who came in time for dinner), accompany us to the airport. I

shoot some great footage of them as we depart, only to find later, that (because the camera was not a reflex) the lens I was looking through in the viewfinder was not in taking position on the turret, and nothing came out. same thing happened when I did a film with George Herms a couple years later. nothing came out except one great shot of him, downstairs in their kitchen, shirt off, trying to stare down the camera. it had a beautiful orange glow. the only reason it did was because I turned the turret to switch lenses. but I threw it away along with all my other stuff.

among Mike Porter's many women were two Sharons – an impassive, raven haired Sephardic beauty, with a perfect figure, and a languid, pimply faced, seductive, Scandinavian blonde, with a sharp tongue, with whom he couldn't quite score. we (in the group) referred to the two, as Dark and Light Sharon.

from the 'Troopers' we got no support. the one time Barry (Debby's cousin) showed an interest in us, was when the three of us had dinner at Robozos (a Mexican restaurant on Pico Bl.), the night of my fight with Porter. after that he never again tried to help, reverting back to pithy commentary. Herb questioned my motives, and when he and Eva moved up to Berkeley, they became the surrogate family for the group, as well as for my brother. Eva treated Debby with contempt, who partly asked for it by showing her a facade of humility. Eva could be cool (she had blue eyes), but, Barry wrote me, "Herb will step out on her. he doesn't like her thighs that much." Warren's contempt was directed towards me. he felt my getting married was a copout. he even wrote a poem about it. "*don't be brave church is keeper of the games blow on rice cakes are nice.*" then he changed his tune. "have a baby," became his mantra. her brother, Michael, benefited briefly from our marriage, because it allowed him to turn his attention elsewhere.

Proust (the narrator) hoped for a letter from Gilberte, reciprocating his feelings for her. of course, she didn't respond. Barry once said, that from each of his friends he got some idea that particularly stayed with him. 'psychic reciprocity' was an idea he said he got from Warren. Wallace said the same thing to me, several years later. he recalled my saying, "Beethoven wanted to be deaf." (an idea I got from Barry) Barry recalled my saying



during a gym class at UCLA (before we were friends) that the meaning of Hemingway's stories was, man can be destroyed but not defeated, which was just the standard American lit pitch, then. Barry's assessment of the art scene: "Schoenberg goosed Webern who fingered Berg."

although I was no longer in school, the New Wave films of the early sixties represented the twilight of my college life – a love of books, jazz, film, and intellectual discourse. when we moved from Cloverdale to Arizona St., I knew I was leaving the last remnants of that life behind. it was a space I could no longer inhabit. or, perhaps better put, there was no longer the space in me for it – except stoned, alone, at night. whatever the transformation from bourgeois college bohemian to hipster-head, by then it was complete. what came next, was sensual and extreme. regarding the external social world, my life was becoming extremely fragmented. neurologically I had become a hipster, with both the cool and madness. still, the deepest sublimity and sanity was in being stoned, alone (the only time in my life I actually remember saying to myself, I'm happy). the external world was going poorly, so I needed to enter an inner world, not the pretense of being a writer, photographer, bohemian, or an intellectual, but to actually be in an inner state. several tokes on a joint immediately got me there.

on a social level my friends didn't seem to be struggling as much as I was. their drug use seemed more integrated with their social life than mine. with me, the gap between being stoned and social relationships was much greater (except with my wife).

the paradigm shift (so called) came early to me. the last time I was in a jazz club was to see Art Pepper, just out of prison, at the Mannehole, in '64. he was great. but (because of the effects of psychedelics) I knew that scene was no longer my turf. in the sixties (while married), did I forsake love for pop insouciance? in the pursuit of pleasure (and peace) did forces conspire to abolish both? one day, or was it night, in 1967, lying in bed, I remember hearing a typical honey textured, female voice on the radio, singing *when sonny gets blue*, and thinking, contemptuously (in my pain), how passe. how can she allow herself such luxury? of course, across the continent, John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman,

Albert Ayler, and others, were doing everything in their power to keep the muse alive. or were they trying to kill it? yet, late at night, I could still play an old Lennie Tristano/Lee Konitz album and be moved.

there were maybe a dozen of us left in the lobby of the Cinema Theater on Western Ave., late afternoon, 1964. Andy Warhol's **Sleep** had just run down to a blank screen. it was starting to drizzle, and I overheard photographer, Edmund Teske, who was standing in a small group a few feet away, say, "I missed my bus." "I'll give you a ride," I said, almost without thinking. Teske looked over, a bit non-plussed, but accepted. I wish there was more of a story to tell than that. by the time we got to his home, which was on a hilly street in Silverlake, north of Sunset, he had warmed up and invited me in. in his parlor, there were drawers of photos, which he opened, and began to show me finely toned prints, mostly black and white, along with a few monochromes. he went through each one quickly, peeling away the tissue separations, first saying, "this", then, "that", because although I could see each was a gem, he was drawing no response. I was in no condition to get into them there. nor did I try to dialogue with him when we took a walk after, and he told me a little about the history of the area. before I left, he asked me if I would pose for him naked (ala Jim Morrison, George Herms, John Saxon, and although I said I would, to make a short story shorter, I never did. later I wrote a piece on the film, and sent it to Jonas Mekas, who held it for three years before publishing it in the spring issue of Film Culture, 1966. there had been a time earlier when such a meeting would have opened up new possibilities. but, because physically, at the time, I was not capable of absorbing the give and take necessary to establish a relationship, I was forced to remain on the surface. Ironically, from an art world standpoint, this was the period when I had the most 'public' access. ironically, also, this is what (in me) some people found attractive. women who didn't know me, for instance, were attracted to my 'style.'

Katz-Cohen

we both agreed a guerilla war in the streets was imminent. what year was it...67, 68, or 69?...sitting in my kitchen. we were both wrong. I said 1 year. he said 5. what our views did show, was a difference in how the compression and telescoping of time,

selectively functioned for each of us. in my case, drugs, and the speed of the culture it related to, was a bigger factor.

in the late 60's, I burned most of the books I owned, but I kept a few disparate ones I deemed special, as arch types. later, I gave the box of them to my former wife's brother. his girlfriend said to her, "the books Jerry gave to Michael are (each) so different," implying that I was either schizoid or dilettante, because she didn't have the knowledge of the books I destroyed. almost all the books I owned up to that time, literature, philosophy, and criticism, were written by men. it's interesting, because almost all the books I've accumulated since, mostly poetry, are by women.

subtlety comes out of an avoidance of repetition

#### Wild And Wise

my process. puritanical, rigor. don't eat between dinner and breakfast. don't eat lunch. run two miles every day. I'm driven...to work because my survival depends on it. I work hard to take care of myself. it wasn't always that way. but I've been doing it for a long time. it's just magic and vision I'm into. I try to transcend. no drugs or booze for many years. nor do I run with others. but I admit that I still get some of my stimulation (inspiration) from the work (and lives) of those who do or did. who have not given up their addictions or compulsions, even though they are doing themselves in. who non-the-less transcend.....who are wild and wise. is taking care of oneself as important as writing? my brother says it's as immoral to abuse oneself as it is to abuse someone else. many, perhaps most, poets and artists are cavalier. they glorify their self-abuse as vision, and chastise those who don't, for not being loyal or as committed as they think they are. yet, would they encourage their off springs to do the same, in the name of image and fame? or would there be a word of caution? artists are lechers. artists, even great artists, teach – to be exposed to the fresh energy of youth, and yes, the enticement of young flesh/love.

some people have photographic memories. objects to me, are mostly forms to reflect on – projections of my thoughts. beauty, to me, is ethereal. I can be attracted to a woman and not recall, or even initially notice, the color of her eyes.

Thom dreamt (the night before I was to show him and Debby the footage of my unedited flower film) that he had more film than he could fit on the reel. so he just wound the rest of it over the top. as a solution, this seemed to please him. not long before that, I had repeated this quote from Gertrude Stein, which I had read in the newspaper... “we’re inundated with so much information we’ve lost our common sense.” he didn’t want to believe she said it. I believe his dream was, in part, a reaction to that denial. the reel symbolized his brain, and the film his thoughts, which were more than his brain could normally hold. at the time, when asked what I thought, however, I just said the meaning was obvious. the fact that he was pleased with the solution showed, perhaps, that he enjoyed a precarious balance – being mentally on the edge. but in his behavior with me, at least, he was always very careful. even stingy about what he gave. like the film on the reel. keeping more than he gave. the first time Debby saw the footage was when we were still together, and she made no comment. this time, however, she remarked, evidently referring to the content (which was shot in a rose garden), that the movie was “feminine.” This irritated Thom, and he snapped (evidently referring to the movement of the camera), “it has a lot of guts.” I respected him for that.

the smell of tempura from a sushi house, deep frying in oil, is the most prevalent odor at the high school athletic field, where I run on weekends. though to me it smells slightly rancid, I suppose most people would say, ummm...fragrant. It’s interesting that the smells we value – perfume, flowers, food cooking, cigarette and cigar smoke, are lethal. yet, when mixed with doses of fresh air, even gasoline and diesel fuel evoke feelings of ecstasy and nostalgia. is this the nature of paradise? not true of garbage, animal excretion and decay, however. stink, stench. nothing spiritual about that.

a young couple (students) in black sweats pass me on the track. later, they’re snuggling on a bench, while I rest on another part of the field. she’s white – pretty. he’s good looking – Japanese. they are lovers. but I picture she and I together, somewhere, outdoors, at a social event, as the darkness descends, giving me a kiss, sensual and tender – the release of what she’s been holding, when we pass on the track, again, from opposite directions, this

time alone, she walking, head down, deliberately turned away, me running, is the look of love. psychic reciprocity is there in all our brief daily exchanges. no love is unrequited.

blonde day camp counselor dominatrix – straight scissor cut hair. marshalling her male adolescent charges. khaki combat pants. ample pelvis. tits swimming in a faded salmon colored t shirt. precarious.

when I was 17, the number of a prostitute named Ann was passed around outside some bungalows at my high school. I took down her number and arranged with a classmate I didn't know too well, to see her that evening. after calling her and getting directions, I had to call my friend (who was to get his father's car) several times to keep him from backing out.

her place was a dingy single above a store across the street from Benjamin's Delicatessen on 8<sup>th</sup> and Irolo. it turned out to be fairly uneventful. she was a white woman in her early thirties, with a nice figure, no makeup, hair in curlers. I can't say I was particularly attracted to her. she blew me and puta condom (we called them rubbers then) on my dick. she helped me in and we fucked. I came almost right away. I then waited in the kitchen for my friend. my fears were neither confirmed nor allayed. horny, a week later, and thinking about her on a rainy afternoon, I took the bus to see her again, after school. the result was pretty much the the same. she said she had an orgasm. it took a little longer. but when I left there was still a feeling of failure. on the crowded bus home, I felt mellow, more able to perceive warmth and compassion in the human flow. intermittent drizzle had given way to late afternoon light. at Fairfax and Airdrome, a group of pretty junior high school girls got on, and by the time the bus had crossed Robertson, we were the only ones on it. a sweet vibration radiated from them towards me. sweet and innocent, that normally would not have been. normally, there would have been a threat, a challenge, or indifference. beneath the surface, I was beginning to see just how much what we encounter is projection. it led me to appreciate the unconscious role of love in sexual satisfaction. this state didn't last long, however.

I didn't have the where-with-all to sleep around, but I did see a lot

of prostitutes during the earlier years. both in this country and abroad. even when I was married – even though I didn't have to – not that we had any transforming experiences. maybe it was the certainty I was going to have sex (illicit) with a stranger. I remember on particular day, morning. I had been up all night, and had again turned on, and I drove from our place in Topanga Canyon to the West Adams District. driving south, down Western Ave (stoned), a light fog still hanging over the city, everything was a soft gray and pink vision. ecstatic. I knew I was going to fuck a stranger. one night, earlier, during my college years, I was cruising West Adams Blvd., and I stopped for a long legged whore who was crossing the street. she directed us to the dark area with the old Victorian homes, around Arlington Ave., and we parked in a cul de sac. for ten dollars I had my choice of fuck or suck. I chose the latter. we got into the back seat. she pulled up her dress, which I believe was a silky violet and white print, and removed her bra. with the aura of darkness as background, she blew me. I felt her soft breasts and thighs. she had on a necklace made of either colored shells or sharply pointed teeth, which I fingered while feeling her up. and she had the softest inner thighs I have ever felt, with the one later exception of my wife's. on the way back to the Boulevard, she sat right up against me, shifting gears when I put my foot on the clutch, to complete the parked car, date, ritual. she said, "I'll bet you get all the girls." I knew she was just acting. but she actually seemed to enjoy her role. evidently, she thought I was still in my teens. later, when married, I also used to head down to 5<sup>th</sup> St., on Skid Row. a 'date' there, was only 5 dollars, but the experience was considerably edgier. I was in a hotel room, putting on my clothes, when the woman I had just been with, opened the door, and said, "the p-o-l-i-c-e are here. don't leave." I could hear their footsteps in the hallway, as they knocked on doors. finally she came back. "they're gone," she said, "walk straight ahead, and don't look at them when you get out." several cops were standing around a squad car parked across the street, red light flashing. when I got to my car I discovered she had picked my pockets. she left me 2 dollars (for gas). another time on 5<sup>th</sup> St., when I returned to my car, it wouldn't start. I knew I had been vandalized, and was feeling pretty desperate. then, two Mexican guys drove up and asked what was the matter. they opened my hood and pointed to where an electrical connection should have been. for two dollars

they would be happy to get one for me. of course I knew my 'helpers' were also the vandals, and I feared they might not return. but what did I have to lose? in what seemed like only minutes, they were back with what looked like a new part, in new box. the car started right up (of course). they were so friendly, and I was so relieved not to be stuckthere, that I wasn't even angry. some of the hotel rooms on Skid Row had an aura. close to Little Tokyo, the dark wood moldings and bare walls, seemed austere and Japanese. it was a spiritual aura. I was with a woman in one such room. she was an Albino, with skin as white as mine. and she projected a subtle, almost subdued, sensitive, vibe. we exchanged tokes from roaches we both pulled out (hers in answer to mine), and we undressed. she had a good figure. of all the prostitutes I'd been with during that period, her naked body is the one I most distinctly remember. I'll never know what it would have been like to fuck her, however, because, regretfully, despite the mild disappointment displayed on her face, I had her blow me, instead.

Brit – Sinner for U the first one I call (the only one I see a photo of that I like) is nice. (pause) "no, I can't do that." "ok." "thanks anyway." "bye." "bye."

"Great Head – Great Body on my knees to please! let's get it on. busty brunette. Pamela. escort. 310 281 0100."

"Pamela?" "yes." "would you be interested in posing for photos?" "do you have money?" "well (obviously) I expect to pay." "do you have \$200?" "I think that's a little too much." "how much do you want to spend?" "about \$100." "well why don't you call someone ugly." click.

Day Girl "hello, Brandi?" "yes, who is this?" Jerry. would you be interested in posing for photos?" "no, honey." "do you know somebody who might want to?" "try calling your mother or sister," she almost screams. (my mother is dead. I don't have a sister, and I don't have a girlfriend. although at this moment I wish I did) "ok". "fuck off." click.  
fuck off. that's what they say.

Nikki – Barely legal. 2pm-5am. "hello, Nikki?" "yes, who is this?"

"this is Jerry. would you be interested in posing for some photos?" (thoughtfully) "no." "ok." (sarcastically), "ok?" "yes." click.

Submissive Laura "etc." "etc." "fuck off."

Morning Beauty "I have my own place for you to come and enjoy. I'm very discreet so please be very discreet as well." "hello, Amy?" (goes into a tirade before I can say anything else. "fucking gross....etc." perplexed, I hang up.

overnight I start to think about the one offer. models can be expensive and do a lot less. if I can get the time \$200 might be ok. I get up. eat. go out and walk a couple of miles. get back by 10 am, shave and clean up, and about 10:30 call Pamela.

she says her place is not available, but she's willing to come over. \$200 for one and a half hours. she calls me, "sweetie." I want to make sure she hasn't shaved her pubic hair, so I ask. regrettably, she says she has. she offers to set something up with a girlfriend who hasn't shaved her bush. but ten minutes later when I call her back, she says her friend is unavailable. again she offers to come over, but the shaved pussy is an obstacle, so I decide to pass. then I have second thoughts. I call her and ask her if she's going to be around for a while, would it be ok to call her back if I can't find someone else, and she says, "yes."

doorbell. two ladies with "Awake." how to be alone without being lonely is their topic. "I'm alone, but not lonely," I tell them. they laugh good naturedly, and then start to show me the article in the Awake journal that gives you steps on how to be alone without being lonely. "I have my own process," I say. that gets them to leave.

after a half hour of unanswered rings and negative responses, I call Pamela. I ask her if she still wants to come over. she says, "yes." I ask her if she will be willing to do the things ask her to do? "toys?" "no accessories," I reply. "just yourself...but will you pose in whatever way I want you to...erotic, provocative, open, showing everything?" that won't be a problem." "good." I ask her to bring a light blue, silky blouse. she says she'll look and see.



I ask her to bring beige colored hose. she'll look. and thongs. "ok. I'll be there within the hour." ten minutes later she calls back. "I found the blue blouse." "good," I say. does it open in the front?" "yes," she answers, with a slightly resentful edge. "do you have \$200?" "yes, for the right time." "ok. I'll see you at 1:00." "ok, bye." "bye."

I open the windows and the front door. I clean the toilet, the washbasin, and wipe the bathroom mirror which may be useful. I sweep the carpets in the front room and bedroom. then, I arbitrarily take several small bottles of scented oil... musk, gardenia, woodspice, from a ziploc bag full of oils I had given to my mother over the years. I apply a little to the toilet top with a piece of tissue, and to the tile above the sink...musk, gardenia. I then press musk and woodspice onto the blanket of my bed. the musk on my hands smells like the cherry flavored 'jujubi's' I used to get from the candy counter during intermission at movies when I was a boy. I load film in my camera and walk around, devising shots. a full shot of her naked body, no makeup, perhaps wearing small loop earrings, against the white bedroom wall, where there's good light from the window. I think about how some colorful print material I got from a yardage store might look wrapped around her. I picture her laying on my bed, thighs raised, legs spread, holding a book in front of her face...Nan Goldin's, *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, or with her nose buried in an issue of *Poetry Flash*, for a little humor. etc.

about 20 minutes later, I call her. it rings a long time. I hangup and try again. she answers. "Pamela, I forgot to tell you to bring earrings." "ok," she says. "I'll grab a pair. I was just walking out the door. see you in a few minutes." "good. bye." "bye, bye." soon as I hang up I remember I forgot to ask her to bring heels. black. black heels, naked, on my bed.

time, 12:30. she's supposed to be here at 1:00. 1:00. 1:10. still early but I'm beginning to consider the possibility she may not come. maybe she's lost. I've got a preferred park visitor hang tab. she can also be ticketed for parking on the opposite side of the street today, 1-3 pm. 20 after. it seems more likely she won't show. but I'll wait 'till 1:30 before I call. at 1:30 I pick up the phone, not expecting an answer. "hello?" "this is

Jerry.” “who?” the voice seems totally disassociated, psychotic. (every time she answers the phone it seems like, comprehension wise, she’s starting over again from scratch). “I thought you were coming over.” silence. then, “I can cancel the number,” she says, absently. I wait a few long seconds, and then hang up. I’m not sure whether I’m glad, disappointed, or both.

I’m not sure why she decided not to come. in going back and forth we seemed to have developed a kind of rapport. maybe she was afraid I didn’t have the money. maybe she was afraid I was going to push the envelope beyond our accord, or that I was gaining too much control, or she had second thoughts about photos being out there. maybe she felt she wouldn’t be able to please. maybe I was being set up for a con. nah.

now, a strong fragrance is on my bed. musk at the bottom. wood-spice at the head. I’m walking around with the perfumed smells in my nose. almost as if I had another life.

maybe she just simply didn’t want to do it. and I called her bluff.

I once before called the Weekly classified. first and only other time I read the Adult Ads. I spoke with an ad girl. asked her if those obviously coded messages could really be taken literally. I told her, if so, they were out and out ads for prostitution. she didn’t disagree. she said, “you’ll have to talk to the people who place the ads. a lot of people respond (positively) to them.” I called a 310 number, expecting a recorded message. “just what does an escort do?,” I asked, too nervous to show even a modicum of tact. click. after writing this down, I listen to the 1969 scandal provoking song, *je t’aime....moi non plus* to unwind.

p.s. now I have a roll of 800 speed film in my camera, which is too fast for the light conditions I mostly shoot in. what am I going to do with it?

“hello, Brenda?” no, I’m just kidding.

p.p.s. I found a use for the film. I got out the manual and studied how to use the self-timer. then took off my clothes, and turned the camera on myself. for free.

is there a quiet, sexy, compassionate, woman (soul), who will play with me? a lithe, but shapely, girl/woman, who will be my sex toy – for a very short time? who will enjoy and not feel defiled or turned off by the intensity (or form) of my erotic feelings? who will appreciate and allow me to assess her beauty? who will not summarily dismiss me because of my age? who will understand that the object is the necessary surface...not demeaning. and that both subtle desire and lust can be tempered into abstract, transcendent meaning.

I want to make a woman's heart beat faster. the rush, the thrill, is what I'm after.

three emails

Subj: **(no subject)**  
Date: 12/12/04 7:29:07 PST  
From: Jer L Kat

to 'the girl from the north country.'

Hello, Edna

you did forget to take something? the turquoise (chewed at both ends, evidently) paper mate pen? generally, there's some sexual symbolism when one leaves something behind. please don't make too much out of that. I'm still trying to filter the effects of our meeting yesterday. I'm not sure what to do about it, although the fact that you didn't e mail me last night, should be enough of a clue. part of my difficulty yesterday was (and is) ambiguity about commitments. you were very assertive about that. still, the numbers 70 and 21 hold a certain fascination. there seems to be some magic in that combination. I like you. you seem to be worldly, wise, and not cynical. one difference between us, as I see it, is you're "on the road," so to speak, at present, and I'm nurturing my privacy, hopefully evolving into and towards something at my own pace. I would like to have a **female friend**, which would probably include some romantic feelings. please don't make much of that, either. anyway, these are just my thoughts and feelings of the moment I wrote them. I hope you

don't mind my sharing them with you. whatever,  
whenever.

Jerry

Subj: **RE: GOOD TO HEAR FROM U!!!!!!!**  
Date: 12/13/04 12:46:41 AM PST  
From: [espektacular8000@hotmail.com](mailto:espektacular8000@hotmail.com)  
To: [JerLKat@aol.com](mailto:JerLKat@aol.com)

Hey Jerry

I

I'm Really glad you wrote me!!!!!!

I was very pleasantly, to hear you care, sooo, much!

Plz keep in touch !!! /My digits for the time being are:, 210-314  
7008, Kate's house and Nathan, really sweet people from New  
England. Keep in touch you give off a lot of positive energy.  
@!!!!!!!!!!

Con carino,

EDNA AMAYA

Subj: **RE: (no subject)**  
Date: 12/14/04 5:21.34 AM PST  
From: [espektacular8000@hotmail.com](mailto:espektacular8000@hotmail.com)  
To: [JerLKat@aol.com](mailto:JerLKat@aol.com)

**MOVE IN WITH ME..**

I like you too!

if you are serious about what you just said, respond As Soon  
As Possible.

I WANT very badly to have **MALE** friend such as yourself. I am  
extremely flattered by your comments. you have security,  
intelligence and honor, and i respect that above all else that this  
country represent, wealth and power through corruption greed, i  
am desperate to talk to you. please consider this offer,

**MOVIE?**

How about on sunday of the coming weekend? **I AM FREE!**

sort to speak.....i want very badly to philosophize to you about my  
thesis paper, it's on the foreign film about el Che Guevara, would

you like to see it with me...?  
I'm inviting you

if your serious call me at:

(310)593-1517 asap!!

love ya, Edna

I think the terms of my desire was always determined by distance. in a family of four males and one female, my mother, pretty, with a good figure, was the symbol of quiet, cool, sensuality. she didn't, like some mothers, pamper or seduce us. her sexuality was more subtle, aloof, even repressed. sex before I knew what it was, was glimpses of her legs and breasts, when she wore a slip at her dressing room table. in the beginning, it was always pretty, quiet girls, to whom I was mostly attracted, whose silence and self-possession seemed almost intimidating, an expression of contempt and rejection, directed towards me, a tool my mother must have used (if only unconsciously) to counter the yang energy of her domineering husband and three sons. my mother is the only female I've ever known, who never wore a pair of pants, even for her generation, this was unique.

last night I had a dream during a fitful sleep. the content remains vague, but typical of futile striving. there were a bunch of young people of both sexes. we were going somewhere, possibly to Topanga Canyon (where I lived for four years in the 60's). one of the girls who was going (perhaps with me), I was interested in, although I didn't believe she was interested in me. (I have an ingrained defense against ageism) I was thinking, she always wears pants, while looking at a pair other beige colored jeans, laying on a pile of pants stacked on a closet shelf. but when we got there, she was the only woman wearing a dress – actually a peasant type blouse, dark blue skirt, and shades. her aura was a bit like P.J. Harvey's, whose mid 90's image (photos of her wearing a blouse and skirt) I had been studying, and whom I had fantasized about earlier that day. but she seemed aloof (like my mother), and I still thought she wasn't interested until someone in the group, a male, said, "she's the only one not wearing pants.

she's wearing that dress just for you."

it's not always the best songs that evoke the strongest memories. the first songs I remember dancing to, for instance, were, *again*, in my mind a mediocre ballad that topped the charts with versions by Mel Torme and others, and *some enchanted evening*, sung by Ezio Pinza, both circa 1948-9. the former was at an after school ritual called Co-ed Dancing, the one time I got up the nerve to go – a sex walk with a girl with big tits named Vera. it's recollection brings back images and auras of Pasteur JHS and the area around it – the scent of night blooming jasmine, La Cienega Park and Pool, etc. the latter was a party at a friend's house – a stiff walk with a girl who called herself 'Joy', but whose given name was Helen (the same name as my mother's). it was the party itself, in his parent's Tiki decor den, however, that was the signifier. no chaperones. rum and cocoa ooh la. and while I then thought the worst of the song which, in my adolescent mind, was both pretentious and arcane, I've since been moved by the peculiar portent of the lyrics, more than 50 years later.

Jazz was the first art form I consciously cultivated from the beginning. the first Modern Jazz musician I ever heard was Jimmy Guiffre (at the second and last meeting of the UCLAJazz Club, hosted by art curator to be, Walter Hopps) in 1953. he sounded very abstract. I didn't know what to make of it. but it was the fluidity with which the music was played that first drew me to it. this is what made it different from the more static, operatic, popular song that was dead ending into the Rock era. in the beginning, it was also the 'cool' image. the first improvised solo I really listened to was Art Pepper's *over the rainbow*, on the Shorty Rogers 10 inch LP, Modern Sounds. Jazz rescued the standard (love) from banality. it not only energized it, it made it rich, regal, and sublime.

the Standard American Song has been a catalyst most of my life. I grew up with the standard. through all the junk on the charts, there was Sinatra singing *Laura*, Mel Torme singing *bewitched and blue moon*, and Nat Cole singing *embraceable you*. I had the King Cole Trio 78 of *embraceable you* when I was in high school, a song of course I knew, having grown up with the schlock Hollywood musicals. but it was the way he sang it, so smooth and mellow. I

felt the same way about his version of *for all we know*, which was on a 10 inch LP reissue of Trio 78's a few years later. Sinatra, Mel Torme, and Chet Baker, were kind of emotional guides, who both cut into and defined the banality of everyday life in the early 50's. I guess it corresponded to my first adolescent vision-fixation, that "Juliet is the Sun," which aside from moment to moment hedonism, was my first, at least conscious, *raison d'être*. in fact, I have a specific recollection of when the idea first presented itself to me. it was my first semester in junior high school. one afternoon I had just left my house, and was walking down the street, looking at the sky, when I had this epiphany, that the female image (mated to the cosmic universe) was the motivating factor in my life. from that day on, my conscious ambition was to be a lover (to this day, largely, unfulfilled).

from David Raksin's description of how a Dear John letter from his wife, precipitated the creation of Laura. "all I could make of it was that it said something I didn't want to hear. so I put it in my pocket and hoped it would go away. by Sunday night I knew my big chance was fading fast (Preminger had given him the weekend to come up with an alternative to Sophisticated Lady – or else). I really didn't believe in any of the themes I had written.. from the time I was a boy, when music wouldn't flow I would prop up a book or poem on the piano and improvise...I took the letter out of my pocket, put it up on the piano and began to play. suddenly the meaning of the words on the page became clear to me: she was saying hail, farewell, better luck next life and – get lost! knowing that, I felt the last of my strength go, and then – without my willing it – I was playing the first phrase of what you know as Laura."

the most serious music to come out of the popular culture of the sixties was psychedelic – the bands that jammed quietly and intensely, sometimes using a sitar along with the guitars. I once heard an album of such music at the One Life restaurant in Ocean Park in the early seventies but failed to ask who they were. I had seen a short clip of another such band on TV coverage of the Bay Area Hippie scene, still in the sixties, playing the same authentic, quiet, intensely stoned, non-vocal music, in a saloon type bar in Berkeley, and it had the same effect. these were not the super bands that headlined the Fillmore and Avalon! they were, and

remain, virtually unknown.

in 1958 a friend signed up for a Sunday morning jam session at the Hillcrest Club on Washington Blvd. he hadn't played more than a few chords before Les McCann, who ran the sessions gave him the hook. after another session in Hollywood some time later, a mutual friend told me Charles Mingus had come up to the same friend and said, "you'll do." Stan Brakhage said the same thing to me after seeing my first film.

one of my favorite songs in Charlie Haden's American Dreams album is, *it might be you*. maybe I just like the title. gives me hope that love is still possible.

once when I dropped by George Herms' house late at night, as I periodically did in the 60's when we were both living in Topanga Canyon, I brought along a Benny Goodman Sextet album, as much for this great cover photo of Charlie Christian, as for the music. and after playing some of it, before I left, George asked me if he could borrow it. although I had pretty much stopped listening to jazz for a while at that time, I ended up borrowing his Stan Getz/J.J. Johnson, Jazz at the Opera House. a couple of visits later, George still wasn't done listening to it, so we automatically agreed to call it a trade. one track, of Getz, solo, blowing the Rodgers and Hart song, *it never entered my mind*, a breath-less and intimate moment of unsurpassed balladeering, weaving the delicate thread of feeling and memory from a very different time in my life into the present, was more than compensation.

in the fifties, there was this great music store, Music City, on Sunset and Vine. I got my first Charlie Parker album there – a demo copy (deeply scratched) of the album later called Swedish Schnapps, with the David Stone Martin cover of a fat bird playing saxophone in front of a music stand, and a lot of small birds blissfully swooning around it, for a buck. the Sunset Blvd. side of the store was lined with enclosed glass booths, where you could listen for hours without being roused if it wasn't too crowded. I also bought my first Bob Dylan album, Bringing it all Back Home, there, in 1964, stoked, after listening to Mr. Tambourine Man a number of times. the fifties was also the era of the discount record store, forerunner to the record chains.



generally, I'd check out an album at Music City and then pick it up elsewhere for \$3.00 less. when they finally folded in the seventies, one observer noted, "they were a Perry Como store in a Led Zeppelin world.." now, there's the internet.

in my way of looking at it, Dylan's, *it's all right ma*, from the same album, is the first true rap song.

I've got a lot of John Zorn records, going back to the early eighties. he can do a lot of different things well. the key to his music is that it can be both abstract and emotional at the same time. listened to the 20 minute **cartoon music**, from his *Classic Guide to Strategy*, vols. 1&2. it's one of the standout solo improv pieces I've yet heard – totally unique. yet, what do you hear about it? just because you've done (or heard) something of worth, doesn't mean anyone else is going to know about it. and if they do, it doesn't mean they're going to care.

I also listened to some Bob Dylan from his earliest albums. **it ain't me babe**. not a misplaced word. I don't know why it so truly stated my own personal feelings back then. it's interesting how often we identify with the opposite of what seems to be our behavior.

while briefly dozing in a chair after fantasizing about the differences in the sax playing of Lee Konitz, Ornette Coleman, John Coltrane, and Charlie Parker, I dream these words –  
*as cut tones in a Chinese.....*

one thing I think I can do...is play her body (any body) like amusical instrument. looking across Stoner Park in WLA, after running, at the houses in light mist, reminding me of morning gym in junior high school – empty spaces to accommodate new visions (of sex, love, and freedom) that disappear like smoke when you get too close. but the distance, in itself, delicious.

two weeks later, I'm listening to Lou Reed's CD, **the raven**. track 6, first disc – *valley of the unrest*, says the same thing. only Poe's perversely gothic vision of the specifics is different. "distance is the soul of the beautiful." Simone Weil. am moved by Reed's *vanishing act*, disc 2, track 7. close as I put my ears to the

speakers, I can't get all the words. there's one word I keep hearing I know is not there – Kiss. this time it turns out I do not creatively mishear.

#### The Nearness of You

every aura belongs to the age when you first come into something. when your belief and ability to respond are strongest. art would be nothing without the aura to transport you. with jazz, that would be the pre-drug (for me) days of the fifties. the richness, the brilliance, the darkness of jazz. the darkness of the clubs. I was drawn to it. the way a ballad was played. a cool tenor sax. there was an aura of junk. I was getting the drug experience without knowing it. it all came back to me one morning, when I listened to Warne Marsh's tenor sax on the radio.

#### Ears For You Only

if you cut off a piece of sky from a Botticelli or a Cimabue, it will become just another patch of blue, probably neither as interesting nor as beautiful as a piece of faded blue paper lying in a vacant lot. this is the alchemy of creation and dissolution of art.

eliminating "waste accents unnecessary halts and repetition" made Lennie Tristano's **Lineup** and **East 32<sup>nd</sup>** more lucid because of the increased momentum. similarly, in Albert Ayler's, **For John Coltrane**, the lucidity of the ideas were enhanced by the frequently modulating changes. at the other end

there's always been a craving for the familiar. all the innovators played ballads.

whether **For All We Know**, sung by June Christy at sundown, is a cliché or a deeply moving experience, depends on your receptivity at the moment you hear it. furthermore, it's not the passion in these transformed moments to which we respond, but a puritanical form of love.

it's Saturday afternoon, and the small park across the street is filled. the sounds and sudden silences, varied and beautiful abstractions with no aesthetic intent, once again cause me to reflect.

Coltrane paid for his 'evolution' – for the sixties belief in radical change and deconstruction of form. a belief which, ironically secured him a place in the linear construct of 'history.' the very thing he and his peers appeared to be undermining.

Ginsberg said Kerouac hated Jolson because he had the typical New Englander's fear of the night.

*“Watchman, tell us of the night,  
What the signs of promise are:  
Traveler, o'er yon mountain's height,  
See that Glory-beaming star!  
Traveler, yes; it brings the day,  
Promised day of Israel.  
Dost thou see it's beauteous ray?”*

interesting, in that almost every Jolson song I can think of, has some allusion to daytime – sunshine, flowers, etc. e.g., *“there's a rainbow on my shoulder and a sky of blue above. the sun shines bright the world's all right 'cause I'm in love.”*

so sorry, Boris Vian, Amiri Baraka. George Gershwin was an authentic American genius.

The Girl I Love Is ON A Magazine Cover

one school night when I was 10, my mother (after a fight with my father) told my brothers and I to put on our dress clothes, and after dinner took us on the bus up to the Pantages, to see the movie, **Cover Girl**. partly because of the unusual circumstance, and partly because of the movie, itself, which included a typically corny plot, a gorgeous simulation of Modern(e)ity in the form of a dreamy fashion magazine sequence, and a great love song, *long ago and far away*, the movie became a mythic milestone in my movie going past. I guess, seeing it in a more lavish theater than the neighborhood movie house, midst the neon dazzle of Hollywood Blvd., added to the glamour and further enhanced the aura. I didn't think of it at the time, but I suppose I felt my mother's brief independence was mine, also.

it was (in addition to the toy dept.) the perfumed cosmetic counters of the drug and department stores, the transformed

world of fashion most removed from drudgery that even as a boy, I was drawn to. today I wandered into Sephora on the 3<sup>rd</sup> St. Promenade, checking out the sensual displays and watching the young girls who court and covet that world, a few of them actually transfixed by magic. I've only recently realized how much my photo aspirations now extend to fashion – not to showcase or advertise a product, but to be close up with women, sexy, extreme, in a totally created material environment.

it's hard not to believe Gershwin wasn't intuiting his death when he wrote what was, evidently his last song, **Love Our Love Is Here To Stay** (Ira Gershwin wrote the lyrics to it after his brother's death), which asserts the transcendent power of love over materiality, and even death. the basic subtext in the songs of all the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American songwriters were stories about being modern – i.e., romance mated to the material, but with a lightness and grace of motion that illuminated the ethereal, embracing the poignancy and impermanence of life, and by implication, the inevitability of death.

a song is not a poem. the tritest lyric and the most pedestrian melody, combined, can evoke a moving and meaningful response. when perceived together, the craft and resourcefulness of each element, interrelated, takes on a meaning that could not exist separately. most of the great love songs are redeemed cliches.

this is as true of Bob Dylan, Paul McCartney, and Jim Morrison, as it is of Ira Gershwin, Larry Hart, and Irving Berlin. this doesn't mean to say that any given line or phrase wouldn't be great in a poem, or as influence or inspiration for one.

back in the sixties I spent a pleasant afternoon with a friend of a friend, who entertained me in his herb garden studio. he had invited me over so that I might take home some of his abundant pot harvest. as the conversation progressed, he told me that when he was living in N.Y., he had the same heroin connection as Bill Evans. he said they would go to Evans' apartment after they scored, and he and Evans' wife would sit in the dark and listen to Evans play the piano for hours at a time. frequently, when I listen to Evans' music, I think of that story. it was so conclusive.

most of the popular songs I liked when I was a teenager wouldn't be worth mentioning were it not that they are markers of the past. one song from my high school days, however, I still hold in regard, both for the quality of the song itself, and for the memories that it evokes. the version etched in my mind was sung by Doris Day, I believe around 1950 (although as it turns out she never recorded it), and I vaguely recall dancing to it at a backyard party at the house of a girl I was dating, around 1951. I don't remember whether there were stars or moonlight that night, but the lyrics make it hard to visualize it any other way. many musicians have subsequently recorded the song, which has since become a classic. the first time Bill Evans did it was with his Trio at the Village Vanguard sessions in 1961. and Astrud Gilberto did it with a large orchestra in 1967. both of these versions bring back that moment in time, but in different ways. Gilberto's gives romantic meaning to the flow of lines like, *the night is like a lovely tune*. the Evans, Scott La Faro, version is contemplative rather than expressive. it's introspective tempo speaks of melancholy and loss – the slow dance – reawakening the fragile, long forgotten and heretofore unreachable auras of that night. to me, the true success of a cover is how effectively it establishes a link without imitation.

listening to the ultimate whitened cliché, I get up and start to dance, and I realize the incompleteness I've been feeling in my body, the need to connect with something, is the need to dance – the romantic mood and rhythms I grew up with but lacked the assurance to show.

the George Shearing I remember was his early somewhat formulaic block chord renderings – the blind pianist, wearing dark shades, head nodding side to side like a robot monk. but sit in the dark late at night and listen to his Ballad Essentials (Concord Jazz), a compilation of standards from various albums recorded in the eighties, that are truly visionary outings – for me, a revelation. a homage to love and subtle technique, borrowing liberally from the Impressionists, seamlessly and ingeniously melding these elements into the songs, giving them a rare depth. the opening cut, *while we're young*, the pensive duet with guitar great, Jim Hall, on, *Emily*, the somber, *for every man there's a woman*, the impeccable (subtly swinging), *don't explain*, and the yearning,

almost mournful, *long ago and far away*. an element of strangeness and possession is in these works. this is a man who has learned to live with solitude, and who has masterfully translated his emotions through these 12 gorgeous, timeless songs, into surprising moments of lyrical invention.

*don't think twice it's all right*. well, this is a very personal song for me. I listened to it many, many times, late night/ early morning, four years in Topanga Canyon. like, *it ain't me babe*, it's hard to be sure why my identification with the lyric is so strong. in that who wasted who's 'precious time' is up for grabs. and I suspect that's the way if often is in life. let me talk about it in a 'round a bout way. of the 196 recordings of it listed in the All Music Guide, I've heard only two (other than Dylan's) – Jack Elliott's straight forward folk version of it in the sixties, and jazz vocalist, Judy Wexler's recent cover on her impressive, well-crafted album, *easy on the heart*. despite a short sensitive intro by pianist, Alan Pasqua, to set the mood, it's clear, by the end of the second vocal phrase, there are no devices there she can use to circumvent the directness of the song, and obliquely make her case. neither the tough irony nor the vulnerability of the song's creator is there to allow the song's lyricism to emerge. so simple. yet, so complex.

when it came to popular music, excluding Hillbilly (which for some reason the alienation and dispossession of moved him), Dick was pretty cynical. he liked to parody the lyrics of the love songs of the day. the one exception was Moon River. "I really like that song," he once said to me. one evening I had just walked back the mile or so from his house to mine, and my family was in the den watching the Andy Williams show. it was the end of the program and he was singing Moon River. whenever that song comes up I think of Dick. he was my "Huckleberry friend" (although in my earlier youth it was my brother, Leonard) in that bygone era. I think of walking home after dark (itself an echo of an even more distant past), lights shining in the windows of a neighbor-hood where I had begun to feel I no longer belonged, and I think of my parents, whom I can visualize sitting in the semi darkness, for it was the last time I had the feeling of watching TV as a family. I knew that too had come to an end.

*I know an angel on the east side of heaven who lives in athird*

*story room she sits on the rooftop and dreams in the dark when the lights of New York are in bloom all through the daytime it's the same old Manhattan when evening again sets me free then I turn off Broadway to the east side of heaven where an angel waits for me.* I first heard it as a boy. my father once said it was his favorite song. although arcane, and sentimental, the imagery made an impression. once in the sixties when I did a few girlie collages, while rummaging around in a used bookstore on Alvarado St., looking for material, I came across an edition of Black Lace, the high end of the girlie mag trade. as in all the other features, an otherwise naked woman posed in (and out of) black lace underwear. but there was a text to this one – the lyrics to my father's song. the presentation was sentimental. it was not parody. it was meant to be arty, poetic. of course I experienced the pothead twist in this bizarre coincidence. but after cutting out all the pictures, I threw them away. it just wasn't something I could either exploit or absorb.

*but I feel so gay in a melancholy way*

it was a rainy day after school. the voice of Margaret Whiting singing **It Might As Well Be Spring**, on the radio\* I was in the breakfast room, looking out the window at the grey sky, the rain pelting the puddles in the street and vacant lots, and the flowers, which seemed oddly cheerful inundated in the heavy showers. hot Ovaltine and angel food cake. a partially finished jigsaw puzzle on a card table in the living room. the landscape outside, boundaries obliterated, totally transformed into a Charles Burchfield painting.

many years later, I remember looking out a window of our rented house in Topanga Canyon, at the melancholy but dogged presence of the calla lilies in our front yard, deluged in a late winter storm.

it had been a stormy winter. parts of Topanga Canyon Blvd. had broken up and washed out. for a short time, after dark, we lived by candle light. except for a tedious mountain road to Malibu, there was no entrance or exit. a romantic aura pervaded everything. light streaming through thick grey clouds. walking along the wiped out highway, which was just packed dirt and mud, at dusk, we encountered the newer, eager to interact

bohemians, who had begun to move in. this could have been an opportunity for a twilight romance around our relationship – for recognition and redemption of the hardships we faced and imposed on each other – were it not that our world, as from the beginning, was in a state of suspension. although it took four more years and two gurus to do it, she was getting ready to break away. while I had already begun the long road to habilitation. still there was bright light and beauty in that last year before gentrification forced us to move back to the city.

\* from Rodgers and Hammerstein's second musical, State Fair. the only image I remember in it is Jeanne Crain on a Ferris wheel.

then, there was the more vivid Ferris wheel scene in East of Eden, where James Dean and Julie Harris kiss. at first, identified with their romance (actually still do) until I realized I was not James Dean. I was his older brother, who didn't fare too well in the hands of my man, Kazan, who, in his best movies, seemed to have an obsession with fratricide. On The Waterfront and Viva Zapata, are two others.

the most striking Ferris wheel scene I can recall, however, is the distorted image of Stan Brakhage's first wife, Jane, in his film, Anticipation of the Night.

I grew up with the misconception that Abel was the older brother, and Cain, the younger. I had this uncomfortable identification with Abel, who from the standard Bible portrayal, I projected to be physically weak, sissified. it's interesting that Steinbeck, in his novel, East of Eden, consciously twisted the myth the same way I unconsciously did, although for entirely different reasons.

Burt – “come on Linny”

Lens – “I was your shadow”

as is made evident in Alice Notley's poem, **kiss of fire**, the most florid (and false) material can become the basis of poetry, simply because of the realness of those who perceive it. children redeem cliches the way trees and plants convert carbon dioxide into oxygen.



the sixties counter culture wasn't a monolith. could anyone mistake the affluent Tom Hayden and Jane Fonda for the hippie couple hitchhiking to Oaxaca, baby in tow. or the Bay Area political 'radical' with the N.Y.-L.A. hipster-head. they lived in different worlds. a different process. different goals.

libraries are the most humane places left on this planet. for the homeless and spiritually hungry they are still sanctuaries. those served are not customers. no currency is involved. on my way into the main library in Santa Monica, I pass two women, both pushing strollers with twins in them. I smile in a slightly conspiratorial way and they each quickly smile back. I feel a small glow of happiness come over me, because they are happy. I'm beginning to see if you want happiness in your life, like pleasure, you have to allow it. you have to see it's there.

in the public parking lot behind the Santa Monica Library, meter time expired, a couple walks by. he, red headed, red beard and back pack, wearing khaki. she, dark copper hair, playfully swinging her hips. they leave in a white VW van. they were the politico- boho literary couples I knew in the late fifties. some things never change. shadow on her green sweater, on her burnt umber hemp pants. late afternoon sun illuminates his red beard. light streaming in on an opened book. on a scorched page.

drop your drawers  
spread your thighs  
lift your butt a little bit  
a little more

Jan. 6, '03. almost midnight. Santa Ana breeze stirring night blooming fragrance. but will it reveal its secrets without brushing across faces, hair, other peoples' talk?

"Gerald, Swing." words w.b. applied to a ventriloquist's dummy—1962 or '63.

warm November day, cutting through the WLA Civic Center courtyard, to pick up books sent from downtown to the branch library. the odor of fries wafts in from Dolores', while a fresh face girl with glasses and a man's haircut, spiked and streaked blue-

green (probably a dyke), puts money in the meter, reeking some exotic perfume, bringing sensuality back into the equation. going out to dump the unrecyclable trash this evening, after masturbation and dinner. drier, warmer, yet – hint of Santa Ana. next evening. even more sensual. what to do with it?

Bergamot – Sat. night, Sept 6, '03. all that booze. all that 'yin' energy to devour. but, not a drop to drink.

a picture of Joyce Carol Oats in the Weekly. and she looks like a vegetable. I had the same sensation when I looked at the photo of Martha Ronk, another poet, some years ago, on the back of one of her books – totally disembodied.

homeless lair on Santa Fe by 4<sup>th</sup> Street bridge. shit stained toilet paper there, where ripe cherry tomatoes grow on vines among the weeds.

the angst in the plays of William Inge are by products of guilt towards the Plains Indians. and the light and nostalgia, the afterglow.

the reason motels have such strong auras is because unlike apartments, houses, or even hotels, they're immediately accessible. esp. the seedy, isolated ones at night.

meritocracy evolves into aristocracy because access to power is handed down. this is as true with the arts as it is with any other pursuit.

11-8-02

it's a rainy day. I packed my camera and drove around looking for shots. then I passed the red 'open' neon in the Beyond Baroque bookstore window. I had intended to go there soon anyway. now I'm sitting in my parked car, looking through the rivulets on the windshield. it's not that my feelings (for her) is anything but a momentary ache. it's more like the piece about hugging in Ron Padgett's book, You Never Know. yes, warmth and love do return in the glimmer of desire. but the mood after a latent moment is no longer just enough. I can't retire. though my writing is as plain as the plainness of my life. poets lie. but need love and warmth

be denied?

two little miseries -

when my brother's Jaguar pulled into our driveway, just as I was finishing listening (lucidly) to Albert Ayler's version of Summer-time – to every nuance and squeal. when my sister-in-law and niece came over after I had just masturbated and was nurturing a rapport with the softly sensual rainy afternoon, and they stayed to view Seventh Seal and another Bergman movie on our VCR (my niece's homework for a class), while I walked in the light rain – ruined. waiting for Godard.

I read poets like Kim Addonizio, who write about romance – linked to alcohol, drugs, and studied wildness... *"I breathe your familiar smell – Tuscany Per Uomo, Camel Lights, the sweet reek of alcohol and keep from looking at your face, knowing I'm still a sucker for beauty,"* and feel the same sharpness for sex and desire for personal communication. but I no longer drink, smoke, use drugs, and so because of this feel a two way barrier...neuro energy moving on two different planes...locked out of one universe while locked in another – ironically , by my own freedom. the mainstream world (so called) is too slow (re the actual internal movement of molecules).

I didn't have a car for about four years in the seventies, and one afternoon I took the bus to LACMA to see Michael McMillen's installation, **Inner City**. a pitch black passageway led to a space transformed into a miniature replica of a block of the seediest section of Downtown, L.A. – street, parking lot, buildings, and a peek into a shabby pool hall, done with incredible craft and precision, reducing a projection of the macrocosm into pure poetic contemplation. listening to the recorded muted sounds (murmurs) of traffic, echoing as an after image in my ear, after having just come off the street, was nothing short of blissful communion. I've walked in and out of the installations of many other gifted artists, including Ed Keinholtz, Anna Homler, Eleanor Antin, Terry Allen, and although I've been poetically and aesthetically engaged by their works, I've never been as moved as I was, viewing Michael McMillen's **Inner City** for the first time.

one Sunday afternoon back in the eighties, I went to a downtown

art show at a vacant warehouse on Olympic and either Hope, Olive, or Grand. much of the art was of the fantasy-kitsch variety. this included the building itself, oppressive, with its airless crumbling facades, and garishly painted walls. after wandering up and down five floors of endless exhibits, ranging from paintings to installations, several of which included dyed water pumped over rocks and other material, I was glad to finally get out, breathe the relatively fresh air, and look at a blighted tree. as I walked back to my car, I spotted a small closed diner – plastic chairs stacked on the patio. drawn to the empty ambience, I peered inside and was ecstatic to find a bright red waterfall of Hawaiian Punch, spouting in a container on a stand above the counter...for no one. I was so moved and cheered at this sight of actual and accidental beauty, the attachment that had tied up my senses, disintegrated. my only regret was, no one was there with whom to share this happy vision.

my thoughts from drawing with my eyes closed. the drawing stems more from feeling than sight. sight guides the form. but the impulse is inner. thought does not reside in sight (although sight provides reflection for thought). the more the drawing comes out of the purely visual, the more separated from feeling, the more static and conventional the image. potential is in the inner feeling. drawing gives me a third point of contact. leverage to undo attachment.

“the hungry heart is gathering.” these words came into my head as I was drawing.

she undresses to kiss.

the older man who sold newspapers on the corner of Pico and La Cienega, huddled by a pot of fire on cold nights, sold me my first girlie magazine, when I was in junior high, at the newsstand at the same corner, inside the Big Town market. he took my money with respect and kindly tolerance. he didn't ask my age.

memories are turning back the clock – on death. moving in the opposite direction. nostalgia is just a longing for life. no problem is resolved until your unconscious allows it. in the auras of the past is the hope for a new reality.

it's easier to forgive someone who's done something to you than it is to forgive someone you've done something to. we tend to scapegoat the ones we've harmed, rather than the ones who've harmed us. we're more likely to punish someone whom we've done something to, than someone who's done something to us. psychological twist. "twist not now." ?

walking down North Beverly Drive, there's a noir feeling in the perfumed afternoon – faces, faded prettiness, sensual, traces of seduction (fatally trapped, semi ruined). decadence linked to a concept of fame, fortune, freedom, and good looks. hip to bourgeois. the same vibe. same meaning.

children play – heat, indolence, musical commotion. it's activity oblivious to mood that sets off poetic introspection.

Tokyo – 1956-57. like a toy. but totally impenetrable.

is it really life or just language we're trying to come to terms with? weapons of mass discussion.

the first time I heard Carol Rosenberger play Schubert's Impromptu No. 3 in G flat major, I imagined her to be a sixteen or seventeen year old German Jewish girl, circa 1930's, and it moved me almost to tears.

*I'll be looking at the moon but I'll be seeing you*

fragments of afternoon light filtering through the Venetian blinds, onto the knotty pine woodwork of our den. shining on my Mother's House & Garden, Cosmopolitan, Ladies Home Journal, and Silver Screen magazines.

watching some art school students (presumably) at George Herms' **hot set** exhibit. there was a seriousness there, possibly a hungering for something spiritual, something turned inner, unrelated to Art World acquisition and pretense – not visible since the fifties. for me a fresh reminder, even the clothes, that made me want her to relate to me, as an object of her concerns and passions.

looking out the window at a deeper sensuality, shredded pink, white, and blue flowers in a hoary palm, I realize my work is

oversexed. to the degree that I'm not getting enough of that other thing, the deeper love, as shadows darken into night.

"Jerry thought there was a group. there was no group." Shirley Berman to my former wife, shortly after Wallace's death.

Saturday on Melrose. the magic is a tentativeness that will never reach fulfillment beyond itself. air. late afternoon light. freedom. energized by the funky scene. the perfume. untouchable, unconsumed. but who will meet a stranger and be transformed? will date night and the young girl's expectations correspond? no. what's there is in the moment. it won't get better.

Art Spiegelman got the crux of it in one of his Comix. 9/11 prevented us from thinking about ourselves for a while. although it may sound strange, it's for this reason I hate holidays. in a sense 9/11 was a holiday that wouldn't go away. that can be devastating, because when events occur beyond our control, we suffer the one thing our egos (or selves) can least afford, a loss of identity, short circuiting our ability to experience pleasure. therefore, looking at the TV footage, morning, 9/11, we were experiencing something beyond our capacity to absorb. not the strangeness of the contrast between the dreamy aesthetic of the slowly crumbling buildings and the knowledge that this was really happening, but the mess we all knew was in store for us. Stockhausen called the event, "great art." but all he saw was the movie.

in 1969, the day the astronauts landed on the moon, I spent the afternoon drawing with crayons in our apartment, while my wife went to my parents' house to watch the 'historic' event on TV. of the comments made afterwards, the only one that's stuck in my mind is Jean-Luc Godard's, concerned, "I hope there will still be a lover's moon." but three decades later, when I looked at the brightly frozen beauty of the photos taken of that and a subsequent landing in 1973, I was reminded of what Jonas Mekas termed the first spacewalk, "frozen spirit."

the self is essentially subversive. while it seeks recognition, it requires anonymity to remain whole.

there was a time when we were collectively innocent enough to not be fully aware of the effects of commodification on our psyches. Pop Art liberated us from this naivete. by bringing it to our attention, Pop Art redeemed the elements of mass culture without ever really being a part of it. we no longer can claim such innocence. there can never again be such a moment. we all have our influences, however. I got a Mickey Mouse watch for my birthday when I was five. it was still the thirties. Europe's Jews, although in big trouble, were still alive. I loved the happy face, the bright colors, the friendly tick, the gloved hand that broke almost as soon as I got it. precious as a jewel. then forgotten.

as soon as Nixon took office, rents went way up. at the time, we lived in a \$110 a month 1 bedroom house in Topanga Canyon. first the rent climbed to \$150, then a month later, to \$185. then, a recent PhD in sociology from UCLA, became the new renter. my wife asked him if he wanted to buy any of my books, when he came by. "the only book I'm interested in is the Kama Sutra," he replied. the day we moved, he said to me, "I hope you find a place as nice as the one I found."

in Blowup, Antonioni depicted the sixties London rock scene, stoned bodies slowly undulating on the dance floor (the most absolute and magnetic image in the movie), as a descent into hell. whereas the final breezy shot of the well-dressed Beatle-coiffured protagonist, striding resolutely across the frame, to the improvised lines of a lyrical jazz sax solo, suggested at least release, if not ascension –in short, a conservative Dante-esque moral parable. in Antonioni movies, regardless of the weaknesses he reveals in them, the bourgeoisie is always favored over the other forces, the high, low, and idealistic. but, in this respect, weren't his earlier Italian language films more convincing?

it was Sat. night at Movies 'Round Midnight. Cinema Theater, 1964. I don't remember what 'underground' film was paired with it, but **Swingtime** was the feature. when Ginger Rogers, with a lot of goop in her hair, stepped into the frame, and Fred Astaire began to sing *the way you look tonight*, naturally, the whole crowd in the packed theater burst into laughter. but I had tears in

my eyes because it made me think of my parents. Ben and Shirley Talbert looked over from across the aisle and smiled, because not too long before that, at the same theater, the audience climbed on my first film, which included two and a half minutes of my former wife and I having sex. when my film went on with some jerky tracking (done from the the bed of a moving pickup truck), Ben groaned from the seat behind me. "oh no, my eyes can't take it. let me know when your movie goes on, Jerry." after it was over, Wally Berman, who was sitting in the row in front of me, turned his head and said, "cool." then Dean Stockwell, who was sitting next to him, turned his head and added, "cool." a few years later, I cut the film in half, edited the fucking sequences so that it had the quick motion of a silent movie, and played a portion of Christopher Tree's, **Spontaneous Sound**, with it. what I really did was excise out all the vulnerability. both aesthetic and personal. this was not what I was originally out to do, however. **Swingtime**, to the Cinema Theater audience, at that time in history, was so far removed from their sense of normative reality, that it could only be appreciated as Camp. reception of all art is based on an ability to suspend belief in the mundane. this is what allows us to transform.

one night I decided to see Diane Di Prima do a poetry reading at the Topanga Corral. driving up the canyon, I stopped for three hippies. all of them piled into the back seat of my green stick shift '56 Chevy, two guys and a girl. so I was alone up front, like I was driving a taxi. we drove in silence for a spell, the light coming in and out, shining on my just shampooed shoulder length hair. "you have beautiful hair," the girl said, finally breaking the silence. "yeah," came the chorus. "where are you going?," one of them asked. "up to the Corral," I answered. "oh good, so are we," said the other guy. "we can play pool together." "no", the very attractive girl corrected, noting he was imposing. we drove a little further. then the girl said, "I work at the Corral. I'll buy you a beer when we get there." we parked in the lot. the two guys went to the pool table. the girl went to the bar. I sat down at a table, forgetting her offer, and waited. she came over with a glass of suds almost as soon as I sat down. that's all there was to it. the reading was a non-event. Di Prima seemed wasted. I knew she had done a lot of speed. all I remember is an upbeat one liner. "I like Gerard Malanga. he's as tart as orange sherbet."



there was a certain point in the late sixties where I felt I couldn't (literally) come down and still function. looking out the front window by my work table, down the hillside. and imagining L.A. far below, feeling suspended, I said to myself, I can no longer handle that. I can only function when I'm high. when I transcend. not too long after that I stopped getting high altogether. and after we got gentrified out of the mountains I actually preferred driving on the streets, avoiding the freeways. stopping and starting at signals gave me a new process. a chance to reintegrate.

one morning Dean Stockwell came by and told me Jack Hirschman was going to give a reading that night at his house. Allen Ginsberg was going to be there. when I mentioned it to Debby, she said, evidently feeling it was special, and thinking I needed the space, "why don't you go alone."

it began well enough. visiting with friends, and chugging wine from a gallon jug. then, waiting for the reading to begin, I began to feel isolated. I was sitting on a hand rail in Dean's large front room (which except for a kitchen, and a small bed and bathroom downstairs, was pretty much the house). Peter Orlovsky was also sitting on it a few feet from me. he turned and asked me, in what I took to be an officious voice, "what's your name?" "I don't have a name," I snapped, and he quickly turned his head away.

the reading didn't go well – confessional poetry about marital problems, I think. I felt the whole evening was a pretense, and at one point I laughed out loud (very). but nobody looked except Toni Basil. finally, Jack broke down. "the text, the text," Ginsberg urged. but Jack, knowing the evening was a farce, and that he was just going through the motions, stopped. and the party began. Jack was gracious when I came up to him afterwards. "Jerry, I'm so glad you could come." I said something totally inappropriate, likening his reading to Prufrock. "is that where I'm at?," he responded. then, Jack's wife, Ruth, who had been positioning herself to get in a shot, gave me a big smile. but I was too cool to let her suck me in.

meanwhile, Ginsberg was talking with a small group of people, and when I walked by, for no particular reason, I said, in a quiet

voice, "Allen," to which there was no reply, and I sat down on the floor, back to the wall, in a corner. moments later, he came over and sat down next to me. "yes," he asked. "yes. what?" "Yes?," he repeated, you called me." then, when addressing him, I used the word, "man," he corrected me. "don't call me man," he said. "call me Allen." so we chatted for a while.

he kept saying, "you're handsome," followed by putting his hand on my thigh. I guess he was on the make. every time he did, to compensate, I put my hand on his head. at one point I brought up Norman Mailer's friendship with Michael McClure, and Allen said, "you shouldn't be jealous of Michael's friendship with Mailer." then I brought up his friendship with Bob Dylan. "you shouldn't be jealous of my friendship with Bob Dylan," he said, but adding that Dylan had given him the gift of a new tape recorder. while we were talking, John Fles ( who, earlier, had been both a friend and a mentor) walked by. "take John, for instance," I said, jokingly integrating him into our conversation, and then asked John if he wanted to come over later. he thought very carefully, and then, I think, feeling he was being used, said, "no."

by this time, Julius, Peter's brother, had taken off his clothes, moving and grunting, and when I looked up again, Peter had all his clothes off, and was undulating urgently towards Allen. finally, Allen said to me, "you should take off your clothes and dance." I said something gratuitous about poetry, just to be ornery, and then he said, "you are stupid," patted me on both the head and thigh, got up and started dancing with Peter.

a few nights later, Ginsberg and Orlovsky did a performance at the Cinema Theater. Debby and I sat on the floor directly in front of the stage, as there were no seats left when we got there. Allen and Peter were up on the stage, seated opposite each other, in a kind of canopy or shrine. during the performance Allen recounted how Peter had sucked his cock (as something mystical and spiritual). "didn't you?," and Peter nodded, yes. then Peter looked straight at me, as if to say, look at me now, and again, I laughed (out loud), and again, the only person to look at me was Toni Basil.

Ginsberg stayed with the Berman's during that trip. Wallace told me Allen wanted to know who could be "counted on" in case a guerilla war erupted. (believe it or not that was the mentality that existed then). he said he drove Allen around Topanga, pointing out all our houses.

our houses, unlike some of our artist friends of the sixties, were not totally organic outgrowths of creative activity. although aesthetic, there was still the compartmentalization one might associate with the more mainstream dwellings. although filmmaker Larry Jordan, once described a house we lived in on Arizona St. in Santa Monica, as "comfortable", the manifestation of my work, except for small artwork and propped up photos, was confined to my work table, situated in a corner of the front room of wherever we were living. our living space was primarily shelter. the light on the walls served as space to 'meditate' on. no objects resulted. there was always an element of containment in my process. an element of privacy and intimacy, regarding sharing, that was not necessarily a Bohemian trait. a desire to be pure. puritanical?

in 1963, I sent Wallace the same photo I sent to a dozen other friends, of myself, naked torso from shoulders to knees, framed in a mirror which shone like a jewel, surrounded by the blackness of an unlit bedroom. I took it from the bathroom after I had just stepped out of the shower, and saw my reflection in the bedroom mirror across the hall. in the foreground of the shot the bedroom door was ajar. the doorknob a bare fixation. one night, several years later, while standing in Wallace's garage, which he used as a studio in Topanga Canyon at that time, he pointed to the photo which was stapled to the wall. "I hope you don't mind, I really like it," he said. "no, I don't mind," I replied, flattered. then he picked up the frame he used for his hand held transistor series, placed it on top of an image he had cut from a magazine, put it in the Verifax machine, jiggled the chemical a little, and copied it. "how does it look?," he asked, somewhat mockingly. "good," I answered he then pasted it into a large grid of transistor images he was working on. "always use Wilhold," he said, in an oddly sentimental tone.

it wasn't until years later, standing in a gallery, that I had a sudden

realization, almost an epiphany, of the link between my photo and his Radio Aether series, as a progenitor. first, the visual similarity of the image. the naked body in the luminous mirror, suspended in a rectangle, surrounded by total blackness. secondly, the Kabalistic inferences that led to both the rectangle being held, and the bare doorknob that suggested a hand. whether Wallace, himself, was conscious or not of the link that night, is open to question, but the implication of his behavior is that he was. for a long time after that, when I'd see one of those pieces in an art gallery or museum, or would read an analysis by some critic, I (sometimes) experienced a twinge of pain, because nobody else knew, or will know, because, in all probability, the photo exists no longer, at least one of the sources that helped bring his most famous (although not necessarily his best) work into being. there wasn't anything wrong with what he did. it was a creative extension. although the exchange between us indicated to me his unconscious (at least) was probing mine to see if I got the link. if I'm right about the link, I came up with a mirror image of myself, and he expanded it to include everything else.

John Fles told me he saw my photo up on the Filmmaker's Co-op wall. Jonas Mekas thought it was a film still. and in fact it was similar to a shot from my first film, which due to some of the content, Mekas had gotten processed for me. the film, which had about two minutes of a pre-wound camera recording my wife and I having sex, was somewhat notorious. P. Adams Sitney, the film archivist, told some friends of mine, that there was about two and a half minutes of footage worth viewing in it. When Sitney called, I remember it was a clear Halloween night. my wife and I were sitting in our front room. I was looking good, i.e., handsome, she was looking pretty. I had a romantic feeling. but I was in the worst shape of my life. Sitney introduced himself and said he had seen my most recent film (a film of my wife reflected in a broken mirror, with superimposed images, using color filters ("one of the best super-in-position films I've yet seen" – Stan Brakhage), at Peter Kubelka's film museum in Vienna, and that he'd like to come over and look at my films. by that time I had actually destroyed all of my dozen or so films, with the exception of the negative of my first film, and two reversal prints, a color abstraction, shot with no lens of neon lights on Hollywood Blvd. and Downtown Broadway, and the aforementioned movie, and

remembering the remark he had made to my friends, I told him that I was no longer interested in film, and that my films no longer existed. there was a pause, and then he said, "well, that's that." then, thinking it's a nice night, and we're doing nothing, I could invite him over for coffee, and show him the surviving prints. I started to say something and he quickly responded "yes?," in what I took to be a solicitous tone, perhaps out of eagerness, vulnerability, or just self-interest. but I stopped, and said, finally, "nothing." we then politely said goodbye, and I hung up. as far as my filmmaking goes, it would have made no difference, as I was well on my way towards a complete withdrawal from external manifestations. still, I regretted not having invited him over. I see it as one of a number of blank spots, gratuitous, and typical of a pattern of self-destructive negation that marked my behavior during that period.

once when Wallace and I were talking, the topic of my films came up, and I said, "a lot of people don't like them." he said he knew people who told him they did. I asked, "who?" and he snapped back, "you don't have to know. just do your work." the implication being that if I did my work and didn't worry about recognition, my work would do the talking. I always believed this myself. but it hasn't happened yet. and possibly never will. it's like the tree falling in the forest when nobody's there to hear the sound. so this is the sound of one hand clapping! but everything that exists has a vibration. and therefore, influences. I'm not sure I agree with McClure (whose work I especially admire), that "the hand that doesn't move is not love." I've more and more begun to feel only that which is unstated matters.

in 1967 my former wife and I were still living in Topanga Canyon. I was still using psychedelics. but while I was looking good, i.e., attractive to people, I was in bad shape and the drugs were having less and less effect. one night a friend from my bohemian college years, whom I still saw occasionally, called. he wanted to come over with his girlfriend, play a tape on my reel to reel Sony, and let her see some of my "things." I had met her when I ran into my friend and another college acquaintance outside a movie theater a couple of weeks before, and as a moon shot, laying on my bed one night had even fantasized a relationship with her. not feeling up to it, I said, "come alone." predictably he brought her

anyway. small talk and I forgot to swing open the cabinet doors to the speakers. so the voice of the soprano folk singer he was trying to turn us on to was muted. she sat straight in a chair, not saying anything. I passed her one of my "things", a photo I had painted over of a man corn-holing a woman. more small talk and at one point my friend did a little dance with her, moving his pelvis in rhythm in mock complaint, that, evidently, instead of the more jaded aspects of sex, he just wanted to fuck, which perhaps they weren't doing at that particular time. then, in the misery of the physical trap I was in, I blurted out, "Lori, I love you." I'm not sure exactly what happened immediately after that (the last two events may have occurred in reverse order). in the universe I was living in it was just another ginned out social act. obviously everyone was affected. she was a little embarrassed, but mostly flattered. my friend was friendly. he, may have even partly brought her over to smoke me out. stoic as ever, my wife said nothing. for me the party was over, so I went into our bedroom, lights out, and lay on my back, facing the ceiling. shortly, she came in, went to the adjacent bathroom, then walked over to the bed and sat down beside me. a lithe seeming natural blonde, straight scissor cut shoulder length. face pretty but plain. she frowned when I started to remove her glasses, but then acquiesced. oddly I don't recall the color of her eyes. she leaned forward and I rose – to kiss (it was like the kiss in the Lichtenstein painting, 'we rose slowly upward', only in reverse), slow and gradual in its consummation. in the front room my wife and friend were talking. she had put Glenn Gould's version of The Goldberg Variations on the record player. then The Doors first album. the words, *before you slip into unconsciousness I'd like to have another kiss, and, the days are bright and full of pain. enclose me in your gentle rain*, filtered in appropriately. this was all there was to it. really not a story. my friend acted a little hurt when they left. later my wife told me they too had kissed. she said it was a warm deep kiss. she said the smell of his clothes was familiar, like an old friend. it was the only time in our marriage up to that point, that she actually had the vulition to play a record album on her own.

what happened next in my mind is sketchy. we (my wife and I) both had a "that kiss" (Lori's words) to deal with. a few days later, I guess, I called her number. I felt I had to follow through. my

friend answered. we were friendly. he said she wasn't there but he'd tell her I called. soon after, she returned my call. our phone had a long extension cord and I was standing in the front yard. she said, "you know I'm attracted to your schizophrenia." shortly after, my friend called. my wife answered. he told her he had "feelings." he wanted to see her. she told him she didn't have "feelings" and they got off the phone. not long after that she called. I was already in bed. it wasn't more than 10 or 10:30, but after about a decade of staying up all night, nothing was working, so I started going to bed early. The Goldberg Variations was on the record player. the first thing she said was, "that song." she could tell by my voice I had gone to bed and apologized. but I said, "no, come over." we sat in the dirt parking space in front of our house in her VW bug. the road was half mud. it was raining and it had been a wet winter. outside lights flickered on her face and hair. a girlfriend of my wife's drove up in her VW bug and parked next to us. she quickly walked through the gate without looking. I don't remember a thing that was said except her saying, "she can go to hell" (re my wife I imagine). we both toked from a roach I took from my pocket. eventually we rode down the hill and parked at the bottom (prepare for cliché). I started to pull her to me. she gently resisted. "it's not that I don't want to." (end of cliché) when she was ready to go she started up the car. we both were a little stoned. it was very dark and the earth was very soft. she started to turn the wheel and the tires started to dig in. if she had turned it any more we would have been mired. I got in front of the wheel and let the car roll backwards in an arc until it had done a 180 degree turn and we were on the asphalt facing the opposite direction. much to my relief and her quiet admiration.

a short time later at about the same time as before, she called again. again I was in bed. again The Goldberg Variations was on the record player. again she said, "that song." again she was apologetic. again I said, "no," and (this time) "I'll come over." she had given up her apt. in Venice. my friend was in N.Y., living with another girl (she would soon join them for a threesome). she was living with her dentist father and her little brother on Veteran Ave. across from the UCLA campus. the entrance to her room was a door that opened to the driveway. she had her homework out, a paper on W.H. Auden. we kissed. unlike the first, she kissed

hard, which truthfully I had not much energy to answer. I unzipped her jeans and started to pull them off. like with her glasses she frowned and pulled them off herself. she led me between the sheets (which I thought rather quaint). she put her hand on my cock. I brusquely directed her fingers onto the head and it sprung erect. then she said, "go kid go." but she was tight and I feared if I forced my way in I'd come immediately. impatient, she shoved my hand in her cunt and I masturbated her 'till she came. "did you have an orgasm?," I asked, faux credulously. "that's all right. I can keep going." but I was looking for a way out. I was rundown, and the musculature affecting my nervous system was tied up and twisted. plus I knew that things could go nowhere for a number of reasons, but mostly because neurologically I simply couldn't function. to come then under those circumstances would have been defeat, and under those circumstances I didn't want to give up my semen. I got up. put my Navy issue black turtleneck on. she sat on the bed, looking sedate and prim. firm breasts and nice willowy figure, naked. she got up embraced me, kissed me and said something I should remember, but forgot!, then wanted to know if she could see my films. she used the phrase, "your notoriety." so I assumed she was thinking of my first film. I said, "no." I made a couple of false exits and left. when I got home I put on a Billie Holiday album. then cried. not because of any emotional attachment, but because of the futility of my situation. I told my wife what had happened. and as with everything else, she said she didn't care. a week or so later, I got a letter telling me to "forget it." something about so many "frames per second," and "go, go, go" (I had brought up Charles Olson's essay on Projective Verse. I had commented that he was trying to substitute poetry for fucking. I was mostly kidding). anyway, I replied with a messy, probably unreadable note, parodying hers. she also included a photo of herself. I had mentioned I liked a photo my friend had taken of her. but it didn't seem to be the same photo. about five years later and living with my parents, I saw her communal space in Berkeley, where she was living also, with her husband and small daughter. because my 'friend' and I missed our connection at the airport, things didn't go well after that. I had slept well for three nights before I left and was rested. everything was together. the trip went like clockwork and I was ready for (inter) action. then I went to the wrong level (although I had been warned!) for my



ride, and then missed the page, because I didn't know how to respond. I'll never forgive the narcissistic bastard for splitting without me.\* by the time I had maneuvered an unfamiliar transportation system, and then got lost trying to find his place in an unfamiliar neighborhood, I had blown the trip. that's how tenuous my mental state (i.e. a reliance on a continuity of process) was then. as for Lori, I would rather not have seen her. she was reasonably friendly, though at one point (when I gave her the opportunity) sarcastic and hostile.

\* the following is from an e mail I received shortly after Barry Klinger's death, in Amsterdam, Nov. 1, 2004, from Michael Cohen ,Barry's cousin. it was intended to be read at Barry's funeral, by proxy:

"I became a jazz musician (seriously) because he showed me where the soul was. He taught me that there is "art" in everything; and that the only meaningful artistic difference is between good art (which contains sincerity, insight and skill) and bad art (which doesn't). He taught me that, because the meaning of a photograph (or any art) is determined by its frame and the perceiver's understanding of that, the meaning of life is dependent on a person's capability of understanding how his own frame determines his perception and how that frame can and must be able to change. He taught me to love the truth."

Bob Dylan and Joan Baez best symbolize the last two years we lived in Topanga Canyon. Baez' *Farewell Angelina* album was one of only two record albums my wife bought the whole time we were married. the songs in it evoke the richness of late afternoon light shining into our small wood frame house, situated about 100 feet above the fire station. I was in the habit of staying up all night, every night. many times listening to the Stones or Bob Dylan in the wee hours. there actually was a rooster that crowed "at the break of dawn," every morn.

Topanga Canyon  
stoned  
difficulty functioning  
in the so called real world  
of arbitrary space  
light and darkness

heavy rainfall  
cold winters

stoned reality!  
difficulty functioning  
outside of that

**zen love poem** by Idell

*"i did not miss you  
so much in the garden,*

*but in the village  
where the young dancers  
unfolded their delicate  
tales  
i longed to touch  
your sleeve  
and see you smile."*

(on) fire. couple sitting together in car.  
kissingly tight.

in school I wasn't much of an athlete. I did have an 'eye' in basketball. but in a team situation I totally lost my sense of presence. (I felt both isolated and like a spotlight was on me at the same time). although I did pretty well as a distance runner in high school, I was self-conscious about the way I ran, then, and even for a long time after. in football I lacked speed, and more to the point, power. I jacked off every night starting at age twelve. the first time was an accident. home in bed with a cold, possibly my second week in junior high school, after listening to a radio soap opera, I accidentally rubbed my stiff penis against the sheet. it felt good so I kept rubbing until I had an orgasm. still home in bed the next day, I did it again, this time ejaculating semen as well. I jacked off every night from that time on – well into manhood. I never connected masturbation with the feeling of lacking power until long after I stopped, however.

so what future is there for me? I still have the ambition to look good. the desire to fulfill a romantic urge. I still have an adolescent mentality. does it really hinder my ability to relate?

*“of the school-friends of my childhood, most did well.  
by the five tombs in light cloak they ride their sleek horses.”*

*“my ambition, to be pictured in Unicorn Hall:  
but my years decline where the ducks and herons troop.”*

*“where is it, the sad lyre which follows the quick flute?”*

right here.

*“resplendent light, most treasured reason.”*

to be sure. but also, precious silence.

Tu Fu – Autumn Meditation

Tu Fu – Autumn Wastes

Li Shang Yin – Untitled

Apollinaire – In La Sante (VI)

wind rattles my bedroom window. moon shaped lights  
reflect the puddles outside my door. the rain shimmers  
and glistens in the dark, making serene sounds, there,  
through the shelter and barrier of these walls.

“it’ll work itself out.” g.h.

self -portrait.

when one looks deeply and absorbed at an object, the  
object becomes a projection. to look at a camera this way is a  
contradiction. neither can one project on a person’s eyes,  
however, one can absorb oneself in a person’s look, and vice  
versa. a camera, on the other hand, in this respect, is useless.

when I doze out reading her I’m more on a plane with what I’m  
reading. does she write on a plane closer to sleeping? not a bad  
idea.

I visually look at art two ways. with a critical eye and with a  
visionary one. both are equally physical.  
society defines reality as anything that is not pleasure, and escape

as anything that is.

“I can’t see you anymore, Johnny.” Janis Ian

I look at my empty duffle bag (after my recent trip) – at the rich black canvas and red zippers – at its suppleness.

frequently people will let you know they know something just because they fear if they don’t, you will assume they don’t know. information based on the ego’s need to cover is anathema to communication. properly, the burden should be on the receiver to not assume that what has not been given. if the giver assumes this burden, it just reinforces a cycle of miscommunication, because the deeper intent (non- verbal) has been violated. voided.

Bill Clinton didn’t inhale? you know, he may have been telling the truth.

odds and ends

it’s a gray day. luminous. not cold. green everywhere. perfume coming from the street immerses me in longing, making me wonder why the smell is such a catalyst.

circa 1950’s. view from a house on a hill above a canyon) always the longing. the aura. the loving I didn’t get to match the aura.

my little finger accidentally brushing the clip and page is (in reverse) the touch of your skirt and bare leg.

poise a poem can come aesthetics light of your face a glut a rose a dream a disillusionment this is a fabrication the color of her lipstick.

I’m sure she’s quick for pleasure.

if looks were the perfect fuck

world’s shortest play. “you thrill me.” “you thrill me.”

morning aura. bright but overcast. dress liftings somewhere on

the Boulevard. whited out. the hour half past.

white  
assassination  
new day flutters

light      the candles  
knock      on doors  
smuggle    bones

is the emphasis of Jewish history – Chanukah, Passover, Purim, etc. – on oppression and deliverance from same, a problem of Jewish identity? is there a reciprocal relationship between anti-Semitism and Jewish identification with being oppressed? does the word anti-Semite have a unique (self-fulfilling) function beyond actual description? is part of what has traditionally driven Jews to ‘success’, fear of the masses? Jews in Palestine, the history of Palestine, and the importance of Israel: ironically, the age old vilification of Jews as ‘rootless cosmopolitans’ has shifted to the vilification of it’s flipside, Zionism. I, myself, am uncomfortable with the term, Diaspora, as a description of non-Israeli Jews. I think it is a projection on the part of some Israeli’s, which may or may not apply to Jews who live elsewhere. discrimination aside, a person’s physical and spiritual home can be anywhere (or everywhere) on this small planet. I’m clearer now why both Sephardic and Ashkenazi roots have engendered a sense of Jewish mysticism – Chassidic rituals, body and soul. the aspect of Jewish thinking that emphasizes the interchangeability of the material and the spiritual. ironic, in lieu of the current plight of Israeli Jews, that Goyim, the Yiddish word used to describe non-Jews, literally means, ‘people with land.’

art and propaganda are mutually exclusive. art exists on its own terms, whereas propaganda is a tool to rationalize an agenda. I’m not saying art and politics don’t mix. anything can be art. but whatever the content, to be art, it has to be in the service of aesthetic concerns. not the other way around. of course, to the politically obsessed, everything is politics – sex, love, art, etc. but I think this is a scam. for instance, a person can love freely and selflessly....not be trying to influence a response or shape an agenda, and in fact, want nothing in return. it can be that pure.

which is not to say that needs are not being fulfilled. but this is different. what Gandhi was doing was political because of the effect he hoped to achieve. but love itself is not political. neither is desire. the same is true of art. yet every manifestation is felt, and therefore has influence. ironically, art and love have more effect when not goal oriented. every orientation has its valid practitioners. if you suppress that then the function of projection is you may become what you suppress. countless art icons have been bigots. many others espouse views which are fallacious. does this necessarily make their works propaganda? it bothers me when so called progressives attempt to censor works of art on the basis of content. because the only difference between their actions and that of so called reactionaries, is the element of control. the latter still has the means and power to control. controversial works should be seen, not banned. so that both their aesthetic and social value can be perused. our freedom depends on that.

here's to  
the mullahs of the art world talking  
heads by the numbers track record  
quid pro

real poetry  
difference between ephemeral and disposable  
between what has outlived its usefulness  
and what's value has been enhanced by its  
elusiveness and fragility

it's ironic that both 'nature' and 'art' are mostly accessible to the  
rich – and unjust

a poem is a poem is a poem  
neither better because it's been published  
nor worse because it's not been read

are we coming to another age (like the renaissance)  
where only the wealthy can afford to reflect?

sometime in late 1962 or early '63, Wallace Berman gave me  
some peyote buttons and said, "wait until about a half hour after

you've taken them, then call me and I'll come over." not too long after, I took the peyote. a few days later I wrote a piece. then in the late sixties, burdened by the physical state I was in, I destroyed all the creative works I had done up to that time – including the few stories and essays I had written, a volume of correspondences to a friend, small artwork, a dozen 16 mm films, most of which had been shown publicly, and photographs, both color and black and white, the only work I occasionally miss, as well as most of my library of books. I therefore no longer have the piece, and I can only remember the separate elements I chose to highlight. through the years I've read, of course, others' psychedelic accounts. but it wasn't until recently, arbitrarily flipping to Walter Benjamin's 1930, *Myslovic-Branschweig-Marseilles (The Story of a Hashhish Trance)*, the first time I opened the book, and picking up some of the aura of the piece, that I had the desire to re-immense myself in that first peyote experience – the hallucinations, the moments of sharp focused lucidity, the contradictory changes, the expansion of time and space, the physical hunger (literal), and the "infinite tenderness of the wind that was blowing the curtains on the opposite side of the street." only for me it was a red neon sign in the fog, softy beckoning to kiss.

maybe it was just the timing.

the following is an outline of that first peyote trip based on my recollections of it and the short piece I wrote afterwards.

call Wallace. Bill there. waits for something to happen. splits. Lynn stops by. it's beginning to work. Lynn's shin is livid (purple) to lamplight. Lynn splits. getting dark. Wallace arrives. clicking grooves (most intensely concentrated part of trip). my mind clicks in and out of grooves. each 'groove' is an equally lucid mind set. each click obliterates the previous one. maybe three of four different grooves. immensely pleasurable. but then frustrating because just as one pattern of thought is about to resolve itself a contradiction occurs, and the grooves click again. (even shortly afterwards I have no recollection of what I've been thinking.)

Wallace, flippant, bored. but the security of his presence along with his apparent disinterest in the experience I'm actually having

tends to instead draw out my vanity. although this is only speculation, it may also be curtailing exploration.

absolutely engaged special density. heightened color. the red neon in the fog is like lipstick. a soft beacon of love and desire.

Debby calls out something from the kitchen to Wallace about Lynn. moments later Wallace walks over to my typewriter and taps out: "Gerald speaks of (clicking) grooves and Debby says things. me no hurt nobody. me go back to the hill. bye Lynn."

hunger. eat hot dog and tuna. features of Wallace sitting in rocking chair is truly classic (Curtis) American Indian.

about midnight. we're out of cat food. Wallace says he'll drive me to the market and then go home. we listen to a few bars of Jackie McClean's Swing Swang Swinging album before going out. 100 miles and 100 years later we reach Pico and Robertson. I freak out at the check stand with a half dozen cans of Kitty Queen in my hands, where the checker's already begun to ring up a working man's full cart of groceries. seeing I'm high on something, and probably wanting to quickly get rid of me, they both graciously let me go ahead.

back on Cloverdale, we walk once down and back up the street. the painted brick red doorsteps are garish as Pluto's tongue. Wallace leaves.

I go to bed. going on and off. oscillating between ecstasy and ill ease. still immersed, I feel Debby up. dense and slow. feeling the possibility of whole fuck forever. but there's no response. she's asleep and I realize I'm molesting her.

on being stoned.

I didn't have aspirations towards heroism, though I did have sexual aspirations. largely unfulfilled. but mostly I would fixate on the white walls for hours. seeing in the hints of color and form quietly ecstatic nonverbal and untranslatable nuances of meaning. although peyote and LSD were more dramatic, my most profound drug experiences were with pot. stoned every night for seven years, alone, frequently well into the next day, it was the



cumulative effects of the familiar and strange, seen with a fresh eye, the haziness of anxiety stripped away, the constancy of light and solitude, and yes, the absence of freedom (*"I'm not sleepy and there is no place I'm going to"*) that fueled the vision. occasionally my wife would come up to my work table, wearing a worn cotton nightgown, smelling sweet after a bath, kiss me goodnight, and then go to bed.

there was a loose pattern to it. after two or three tokes, I would be 'attuned', transformed to an 'elemental' awareness. first too stoned to do anything but re-enter pre-verbal cognizance and sensate. then come down slightly – dualistic level. a word would emerge with intense meaning and form a particularly significant concept when equated to another word. I would write the equations down, I had several pages over several years, but they no longer exist. is significance intensity of association? basically, what pot did was to cause me to stop thinking. everything else came out of that. each booster brought me back to that. perception became lyrical. I think the basic awareness was that it forced me to be in the present...i.e., 'turned on'. from there, whether it was artwork or music, fixating, or listening to silence, this state precipitated magic.

early films like Snow White – age four, The Wizard Of Oz – age five, and The Reluctant Dragon – age six, were psychedelic experiences. in my view, psychedelics should be seen as a beginning, not an end. so long as the more static conditions and obligations that have temporarily been alleviated (transcended) still exist underneath, to be eliminated they still (in most cases) must be confronted. knowing this, I'd be in a pure stoned state and not mess with it. not try to force an application. I didn't want to wreck the purity of the potential, believing it would be there in the future, when hopefully my situation would be freer. I did go through, in the sixties, extreme abuse. but never when I was actually stoned (at least not with pot).

marijuana took the place of friendships. our relationship was basically Zen. that's why we were both able to tolerate disinterest, dissension, and neglect, for so long. ironically, it may have been the distance between us that kept us together. we were neither happy nor unhappy. just isolated and, ultimately,

alienated. it was her secretiveness, not her actions, that made me feel denied. there was a basic natural respect. we didn't mess with each other. she respected my solitude. but could I recreate her? it wouldn't be valid. there would be no freedom. no room for romance. the reality of what we already knew would mock it. we didn't start with romance, or it would still be buried there.

"the sound of the tune precipitated in him a sort of ecstasy and it was with that ecstasy he viewed what happened to him now. it was a mood of intense appreciation, a sense that, for once, he was magnificently attuned to life and that everything around him was radiating a brightness and glamour he might never know again." (from F Scott Fitzgerald's, Winter Dreams)

Fitzgerald was the first writer I read who touched this central aspect of my dreams. was this too a psychedelic experience?

it seems there's no end to having nothing to do (socially). in the lack of social gratification I seem to be pursuing ghosts. I probably would, anyway. beauty.

one reason the Navy was a unique time for me is it served as a reflection of the person I was immediately before going in. listening to an old Chet Baker (**chet baker sings**) record, I can recall the visual image of myself during that period. my aspirations towards being a lover. my psychological and cultural baggage. and then, how it was being filtered through the prism of something very different. something that couldn't support it. it was also a bridge to change. as the older self-image began to disintegrate and a newer deeper one began to emerge. and though I tried, I realized I couldn't go back. I realized that just prior to going into the service I was hoping for a place to hide. a place where time stood still for a while. and of course what occurred was just the opposite – it accelerated change. yet, to some extent, that did happen. because I was placed in a context outside of my usual circumstances, I was, therefore, no longer as susceptible to the events that had previously shaped my ego, which, in a way, placed me out of time. later, during the drug years, time was suspended to the extent that there was little or no context to external relationships.

Barry had already told Porter that he thought I was an interesting guy. so naturally, Porter was cool when we met. Herb later said, Barry was the only one in the group who thought anything of me. I didn't care for Cohen when I first met him. I thought his behavior was obnoxious, and I didn't like his looks, either. but I was impressed by the way he played the piano. Warren named the group. he was clever. he cultivated an air of mystery. I felt he sometimes patronized me. at first his mental illness seemed a lark – actually gave him status. then his dilemma got more serious. Camarillo, Metropolitan – they fucked him with drugs. he eventually committed suicide. I don't think any of us clearly perceived a tragedy developing.

we all had a passion for culture. in all its sick manifestations. esp. for the arts. projection, twisting, and acting out emotions, were the three related no-no's that were constantly violated. but they did put wind to my spastic sails, accelerating my drift towards the margin of this cunt culture.

in the game of musical chairs I perceived myself, perhaps wrongly, to be the odd man out. I didn't like my position. everyone seemed to be pulling away. I was forced to move on to the next square. even though I was not totally prepared. although I paid a price, it was good I did.

I was never a good existentialist. too romantic. in fact an existential mindset was killing my earlier passion for writing, which was based largely on 'romantic pain.' with drugs, however, there was, through direct perception, the possibility of transcendence. this was the visionary phase. however, I emerged from this stage on the outside of social relationships, with considerable dues to pay. and my path from there on has been pretty much alone.

re- the sixties head scene... **we** created the aesthetics of the counter culture. but we weren't political. for us, creative consciousness itself, was the new reality.

it's better not to develop an idea. the more you rationalize it the less clear. the germ of it is all there is. the quicker you move on the better. the idea is just the shell of something deeper and

becomes emptied as soon as it's aired. better that an idea leads to another idea that keeps the non-verbal meaning alive, rather than turning in on itself.

the more I read of others the more it humbles me to write plainly because some of it is very good. but also because it makes me even more aware of the vanity of words.

when I think of my mother dying I know (to get by now) I have to be more loving

I've already forgotten.

married I was free to be alone in stoned presences with the support of one who enabled me to explore the bliss of emptiness – of pure light. but I also felt cut off, trapped. it was physical.

I have to shave, wash my face and wet my hair tomorrow. I should write about where I'm really at.

I should talk about my cock. this tie up in my neck and around my ears. and no cock.

to be back at the beginning with the knowledge we have now, said Eliot (or to that effect) at the end of his last Quartet. is this the point? No. we pay with our lives to know, without which paradise would be impossible.

a mature woman puts on makeup, applies lipstick, as cooler air comes in from the outside. lawn, plants. timeless. if life is essentially tragic (and I'm not saying it necessarily is) then live it in a romantic way. without boundaries. edges. there's no perfect beauty without strangeness.

although he and his family became wealthy relatively quick, he seemed to fear a return to poverty. one recollection from his youth was of watching a man high on coke, in his undershirt, running in the snow. "he said he wasn't cold."

it's true Roberts left a book I had given him, a collection of short stories by Saroyan (with a note), opened to the first page of a

story, titled, LOVE (a story which had especially affected me, and which I had turned him on to) by the apartment door of a woman he had chanced to see from a distance, driving a VW bug. a school teacher, she called the ship the next day, and soon they were having an affair.

on Fifth St. in Santa Monica, a sexy girl, impatient in shades and shorts, gets back into her parked white convertible, radio left on blaring a pop love song, and with a cool air of sensual malevolence (as I look at her thighs) drives off. is my attraction to surface (looks for instance) Faustian?

it's interesting how kitsch works when context transforms it into something sublime. if romance is serious, it's partly about death. the more I face rejection based on ageism, the more desperate my need, the more (sometimes) love in my heart. it takes faith to get to a place of bliss. I never thought necessity would work that way. I'm getting purer.



