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In A NutShell

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Cover Drawing: by Y. van Unen

Do not abruptly stop psychiatric medications! Most psychiatric medications are powerful drugs and should be withdrawn from gradually under the care of a physician or other health practitioner.

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I'm Reaching The Other Side

(of my spiritual emergency)

— Notes from VGH Psych Ward — East 1

by Jathinder Sandhu

“...we exist in a state of cosmic amnesia.”

— Christina Grof in **The Thirst for Wholeness: Attachment, Addiction, and the Spiritual Path** (1993), p. 38.

The God of my understanding is great.

I am a soul survivor. And a survivor of much else including sexual abuse, drug abuse, and abuse due to the inadequacies of orthodox psychiatry. I have been in and out of psychiatric institutions for the past 7 years or so (and on the waiting list for some support with basic housing since 1994 — not an atypical situation, while I bounced from one unsatisfactory temporary place to another). At present I am at Vancouver General. How did I get here? Putting it plainly, I was engaged in active addiction which affected my brain chemistry, put me out of balance, and this, together with underlying unresolved psychological problems caused a crisis in my living situation/relationship. Doctors explained to me that I would be given “medical” pharmaceuticals to counteract the chemical imbalance produced by street drugs. So I was given a shot of fluanxol. This drug caused me so much physical pain that I prayed for help and relief for 3 nights and 3 days. The pain was so great I cannot describe it in words. (Of course, this only highlights, in a small way, the sort of problems which need to be dealt with in residential crisis treatment centres for both dual-diagnosis and others with standard mental disorders and for which, we all know, there is a crying need).

Not only this, but I have been punished physically and harmed emotionally and mentally by those who purport to be allies in my attempts at recovery. Crying, screaming, talking are not “allowed” really; it is considered “abnormal” behaviour; “talk-therapy” would be “buying into (my) psychosis” — : take a pill. Do not express personality, excitement, enthusiasm for life, have dreams — or ever be depressed for a reason. All of this is “abnormal” too. Take another pill. Comply with us and keep your mouth shut about the “treatment” you’re getting; allow us to be considered to be doing things “for you”, don’t ask if we might have perverse incentives for doing things “to you”, and consider yourself lucky. That is the routine but, in that case, how is one supposed to heal? As Dr. Lars Martensson says when speaking about “chemical lobotomy” therapy:

“Without an intact frontal-limbic system it is impossible to overcome schizophrenia. It must be emphasized that the only way out of schizophrenia is forward. Returning to the naivete of previous repression is impossible. All the suffering, and everything experienced through psychotic breakdowns and expansions of consciousness, must be integrated in a further evolved organization of the personality. It is a creative endeavor that depends on the full faculty of a person’s mind.”

— quoted from “Should Neuroleptic Drugs Be Banned?”, p. 125 in **Deprived of Our Humanity: The Case Against Neuroleptic Drugs**, 1998 (The Voiceless Movement, C.P. 235, CH-1211 Geneva 17, Switzerland. 224 pgs. 7 pound m.o.).

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Minute Particulars

by Andrew Feldmar

To protect my patients' privacy I decided early in my career not to keep notes except for dates of sessions and moneys paid. This way, what doesn't exist cannot be subpoenaed. I have, however, after some therapy sessions, recorded thoughts, dreams, fragments of conversations that I deemed remarkable. Without any elaboration, here are some of my private notes.

July, 1982: Alan's dream: "I am an actor and just finished a play. My actress partner and I remain alone and begin to make out on stage. I can feel my lower half go numb. I know I won't be able to make love..." Being with a woman is an act, up to but not including the sex act? True self vs. false self? At Produce City he notices one woman ("not particularly attractive") and feels turned on as if by magic. He is aware of her presence without wanting to be. Perhaps head and body are attracted to different types. What might happen if he followed a strong attraction? What if it leads to men? What if it leads to a black

woman who is fat? What if head won't approve of body's choice? Alan's impotence might be due to his body's refusal of his head's choice.

October, 1987: Bea reports that Clare, her previous therapist, called after her at the end of a session, "And remember, you are all right!" Is this any better than Bea's mother convincing her that she wasn't all right? Bea thought, yes!

January, 1988: Dora to her three-year-old: "Don't hurt Grandma's feelings — give her a kiss when she wants one!" Dora has great difficulty knowing her own desires, and even greater difficulty finding the courage to act on the few she can zero in on.

March, 1988: Ed makes people feel guilty for not loving him enough. This leads to people avoiding him. Identical acts may be performed for different reasons. I may be generous towards you because I love you; or because I am afraid of you; or be-

cause I feel guilty for not loving you. It's NOT all the same. Ed couldn't care less as long as he got what he wanted. Rather short-sighted...

August, 1988: A couple, early thirties, initial session. She: "I can tell as soon as he starts relating to me when he had something to drink before." He: "She is like a different person after she's been with her mother. I can tell right away when they've been together". Only, these statements were not uttered consecutively and neither of them noticed the similarity. He accused her of being addicted to her mother and she accused him of being addicted to the bottle. Each addiction leads to an annoying altered state of consciousness. Could they quit cold turkey simultaneously by the time I count to three! One, two, three!

October, 1988: Fran, a young mother, begins her session with a description of a day-dream she had while visiting her sister-in-law. "I see a mouth, definitely a mouth, not a vagina, because it has teeth. From this mouth tiny babies are born. Then, after many little ones come out, a normal sized baby emerges. I think it has to do with the last session. I realized for the first time [82nd session] that this is my hour and that I have lot to say about what is to

(Continued on page 15)



UnderDog Don't Think Too Hard

by Jim Gifford



Today mankind is enamored by the Information age. We seem to know more and more about everything. Yet it is important that we realize information is not knowledge and knowledge is not wisdom. Presently we are dealing with the relativity of facts that may be interpreted in numerous ways and from various angles. It would be wise to awaken from this intoxicated state of the Know-It-All Age.

A mistake of the educated individual is his/her belief that increased learning is unquestionably a good thing. I have succumbed to such a practice in the past with my large library of books to inform me about the world. I was a vicarious student of life. Today I feel 'less is more'. Although I still enjoy reading and gleaning knowledge from the in-

sights of others, I now have only a few books for reference and tend to live daily experience in a spontaneous manner without a clutter of ideas, ideals and theories to be my guide. I am no longer a seeker of knowledge; I am a seer of momentary happenings. In the contentment and acceptance of my state of affairs, I in large measure no longer suffer from the dilemma of ambition at the different levels of my being. Especially my spiritual search is at an end which implies a beginning of surrender to existence as it unfolds.

My 'breakthrough breakdown' at age 21 began an intense curiosity about religious practices and an eagerness to absorb everything I could read, watch or listen to on spiritual matters. One day I was pontificating to my mother when she simply said 'let the muddy waters settle.' I then understood how I had clouded my head with too much knowledge, I needed to empty my head. Empty and marvelous, I sit quietly, doing nothing. Surely the 'Just Do It' crowd sees me as lazy yet I feel a peace and dignity in approaching the world harmlessly as a contemplative loafer. After years of struggling

to be someone and something, I gave up in the wisdom that the secret of life is knowing when to stop.

Of course this sagacity implies its paradox, knowing when to start Activity is a part of my scheme of things yet the taoist attitude of unforced going-with-the-flow prevails in my lifestyle. Doing nothing; everything is done. I no longer struggle with and force issues. In this context is the concept of unknowing, a process of unlearning that offers us access to the infinity of our inner power, following the joy and truth of our reality wherever it leads us. I recall saying to my older brother, 'there are no answers.' Without missing a beat he came back, 'Jim, there are no questions.' To paraphrase from 'The Thinker' by poet Robert Frost:

Don't think too hard
Trust me, I'm a bard

Just for Laughs

"Does he suffer from insanity?"

"No, he enjoys every
minute of it!"

UnderDog (cont.) True To Myself by Jim Gifford

Moving restlessly and aimlessly through each day, it seems so difficult to focus on the restfulness of the moment. I am always and constantly moving on to something new and somebody else, often not meeting my obligations to places and people. I seem to be looking for that elusive butterfly.

Perhaps what I need, not want or desire, but need, is right in front of my nose; the spiritual-

ity of here and now. Serenity; simplicity; solitude; stillness; silence: among the confusion; complexity; crowds; fast-pace, and noise. I need a Centre.

I need to feel in Union with the Creator through a sincere contemplation of nature by means of sitting and walking meditation. To enjoy the quietude of the night and early morning, to saunter in the parks and by the seaside, to empty myself of sched-

ules, deadlines, appointments, to speak less and listen more, to be attentive.

To rekindle an awe and wonder, a love for little things, the enjoyment that is dwindled by the numbing effect of my medications. Yet in the calm and gentle state of mind, I am empowered in the godliness of life that escapes me when I am drifting and at loose ends, frazzled and disoriented by an insane world whose values are not kindred to me. Instead of getting caught up in the frenzy, I must 'be in the world but not of it.' Then I may be true to myself!



Quotes From The Roundtable by M.D. Arthurs

"truth cannot be learned:
it can only be lived"

"reality is a collective delusion."

"as long as you're afraid of death,
you're only half alive."

"great men make great mistakes."

"if you want to eat,
you have to kill something."

"the merit of a statement is directly proportional
to the amount of public opposition it engenders."

"the meaning of life is to live."

(Continued on page 12)

BookWorm

Trickster Makes This World:

Mischief, Myth, and Art

by Lewis Hyde

North Point Press, 1998

Reviewed by Andrew Feldmar

This wonderful book is filled with stories. Old ones about Hermes in Greece, Raven and Coyote in North America, Krishna in India, and Eshu in West Africa illuminate new ones about Picasso, Duchamp, Frederick Douglass, John Cage and Alan Ginsberg. Hyde explores the paradox that "the origins, liveliness, and durability of cultures require that there be space for figures whose function is to uncover and disrupt the very things that cultures are based on".

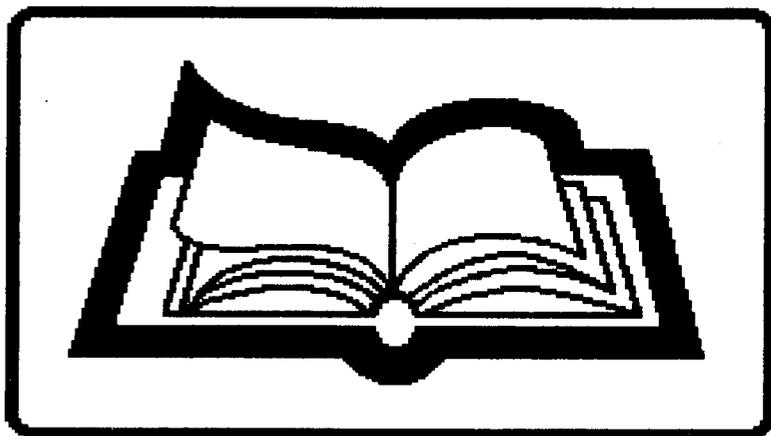
For thirty years now, I've been working as a psychotherapist. What helped me most to think about what goes on between patient and therapist were stories of

shamans, monks, gurus, zen masters, Hasidic rabbis, and philosophers ancient and modern. My teacher was the late, controversial Scottish psychiatrist, R.D. Laing. During the fifteen years of my associations with him and since, I have often thought of him as one or the other from the above list. Having now read Hyde's book, I realize that Laing's shape-shifting also included trickster-mind.

The institution of psychiatry establishes the truth concerning the threshold between sanity and madness. Those it deems mad, it can torture, under the guise of treatment. Those certified mad lose their voice. "You are inca-

pable of truth!" says the institution to the lunatic. The conversation is over. Alphonso Lingis writes that to "enter into conversation with another is to lay down one's arms and one's defenses; to throw open the gates of one's own positions; to expose oneself to the other, the outsider; and to lay oneself open to surprises, contestation, and inculcation. It is to risk what one found or produced in common. To enter into conversation is to struggle against the noise, the interference, and the vested interests, the big brothers and the little Hitlers always listening in... One enters into conversation in order to become an other for the other."

Laing had the courage to converse with those whom society, with the aid of psychiatry, quarantined by labelling mentally ill. Hyde points out that dirt is always a by-product of creating order, and that order often turns violent when threatened by its exclusions. Laing didn't fear separation from his elders, so, like Krishna or Hermes, he was independent enough never to play "a part to please his parents, never [to put] on a mask his elders have designed". The price he paid was that many of his colleagues considered him an ambulatory schizophrenic and would have loved to get their hands on him. They would not have conversed with him, they would have treated him,



(Continued on page 15)

**Branches Over The Wall
In Memoriam
by D. Strad**

*For the mental patient who was shot at Hampton Hotel and the man
who was shot at Langley Memorial Hospital, while seeking treatment for depression.*

Live people can be dangerous,
especially if they are too alive;
their minds boiling over in the midst of urban madness.

We don't need these kind of people, do we?

They are too much of a challenge to us.

They won't stay in their tiny room,
their hidden alley doorway,
their cardboard box.

These are people outside the boxes,
over the edges of our ordered society.

They are a burden to us -
their psychosis overblown,
their desire for help,
their inner pain and anguish
overflowing in strange directions.

We pay hundreds of thousands,
even millions of dollars
for professionals
to aid them,
house them,
feed them;

But how can one know who has never been there
who has never known the mental juices bubbling over beyond control.

Every emergency ward keeps you there for hours
whether you're there for
a broken toe
or
a broken mind.

(Continued on page 14)

The Sermon As Phoenix

by Sam Roddan

As a preacher's son, I sat through hundreds of sermons. For years, I was saturated in maxims, adages and recipes for the good life. I developed both aversions and appreciation for the therapy which Samuel Pepys said could be found in a "good, honest and painful sermon".

My dad's sermons gave me a grounding in the English language. I learned to take delight in the rhythms of the Old Testament. The song and music of the Psalms. The rich imagery, phrasing and vigor of a prose that rang with the tympany of cymbals and trumpets.

I was also intrigued with the rituals of the sermon. I learned to watch for the test, the core, the very heart of the matter. I knew every sermon must have a beginning, a middle and, thankfully, an end. But to a young lad dreaming of soccer and the playing fields of youth, the end of the sermon was often an interminable marathon with all the attendant agonies right to the final Benediction.

The great Bible was slowly closed... the gold clasps were fastened... the watch on the edge of the pulpit was slipped back into the vest pocket... the sermon notes were gathered up... there was a repetition of the text...

the final exhortations... a closing anecdote... a moment of stillness which jarred awake the sleeping Clerk of Session... the final blessed prayer and, (thank God) at long last, the Benediction.

At this point, the rhythms of speech have faded, magic spells are broken and I am now leaping across the soccer field and heading the ball clear to the attendant cheers of the crowd.

For years I was haunted by my father's sermons. He had bequeathed me a great box of them. Each one was carefully filed under pertinent headings dealing with good and evil.

The sermons were also a personal chronicle. A register of joys and sorrows. A log book and journal of the pilgrim. Footnotes on the rocky face that leads to the Promised Land. A spiritual almanac and calendar of the parish life.

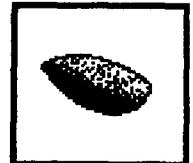
The education of childhood can hang heavy over your head. It takes years to lift yourself up and be your own person. My own history has always been marked with contradictions. I was often caught off balance, falling short, missing the mark, going astray.

One day I built a huge bonfire on my wooded lot and committed my father's sermons

to the flames. The smoke rose to the heavens. The angry sparks exploded over my head and then fell back like falling stars.

I threw the sermons in by the handful. They withered in the heat, floated and danced in the flames like autumn leaves. Some of the sermons turned grey, then crusty white. The paper curled and shrunk to become a part of the burning pyre, then dust and ashes.

But miracles are not only of the Bible. Years have passed but when I poke around in the ashes of memory, the words of my Dad's sermons still rise like some ancient Phoenix to abrade my soul, rub salt in my wounds, elevate my heart.



Philosophy

"A little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's mind about to religion."

Sir Francis Bacon

Memories of Joseph

by Reinhart

Joseph wasn't an exactly friend of mine.
We may have mentioned this or that,
Maybe bummed a smoke, exchanged some facts
Of the things that brought us here together
To see our youth pass with the weather.

Then one day Joseph loudly stated,
Of all those here it's me he hated.
I wondered how this came to be
As they took him to maximum security.

Next thing I was up there too,
For them not knowing what to do,
Doctors, nurses and therapy fail,
And the hospital is first a jail.

Up there in max we learned to be
Authentic human company.
No walls or barriers around our hearts,
Nowhere to hide our private parts.

I came back down and so did he,
Convinced at last it wasn't me.
Apparently I was not to blame
For a mad, mad world gone insane.

Yet after sixteen years and one more bout
Of Joseph standing up to shout
Against the evils in the land
The Doctor decides to take a hand

And make old Joey change his mind
About this stepping out of line.
Then sixteen electric jolts to the head
Exploded Joe's mind and instead

Let his memories drift down in some new pattern,
Of a similar creature who knew what mattered
Is to admit success makes finer beings,
Superior in thought and feelings.

He sort of wobbled up the hall,
And I watched to see if he would fall.
I wished for something I could do
But all he said was who are you.

His eyes looked glazed, blank and dead.
Joe said the shocks hurt his head.
Then he laughed and grinned for days on end,
Oblivious to foe and friend.

I talked to him sometime later on,
He said the last ten years were gone.
And then when he asked me for the date,
I told him it was '88.

They stopped or changed his medication
— guinea pig experimentation —
But they never did find no solution
For Joe's all too human contribution.

All the times they'd zapped his brain;
The outcome always was the same.
Another part of Joseph died,
Another part of truth denied.

What's left of him's still under lock and key —
But I have a different memory.
No, Joseph wasn't exactly a friend of mine,
But he meant me no harm
And he did his own time.

(Continued from page 1)

Some Additional Thoughts On Therapy (with a little help from my friends, Dr. Deepak Chopra, et. al.)

To change one's language is to set oneself free. It can be the key to personal liberation. As Deepak Chopra says:

"Putting attention on a word, which is the symbolic expression of an idea, is therefore magical. It transforms the invisible into the visible." (1)

Or again:

"Not only is the human nervous system capable of becoming aware of the information and energy of its own quantum field, but because human consciousness is infinitely flexible through this wonderful nervous system, you are able to consciously change the informational content that gives rise to your physical body. You can consciously change the energy and informational content of your own quantum mechanical body, and therefore influence the energy and informational content of your extended body — your environment, your world — and cause things to manifest in it ." (2)

Before one can feel totally free, one has to get in touch with one's own heart, one's own self, one's own inner being. When this Source is "arrived at", we are able to be free because we are in tune with our Self in the larger "beyond ego" sense, really connected with other and Life itself — yet not "attached" in a superficial, materialistic and dependent way.

As I write, I am more and more aware of the necessity to change language — especially moralistically judgemental or possibly negative words such as "should", "bad", "could", "might", etc. or whatever may be a contextually limiting half-measure. Such word-use disables and freezes the body and mind — and ultimately the soul. The bodily pain and mental anguish I am currently working through, for instance, I feel is an indication of my processing deep negative self-talking (my "internal dialogue") which only serves to hinder me. So I hurt. But I am increasingly careful to choose and use words which serve to free body, mind and soul.

To solve a problem one has to know and study the problem but one has to be creatively solution focused too. One also needs a desire and intention to change. And, no matter how soft or buried the voice for positive change seems, it is there, it is in all of us, it can be found. We never lose this capacity.

"We lack nothing, because our essential nature is one of pure potentiality and infinite possibilities." (Emphasis mine) (3)

To solve a problem we need to ask questions. And the questions we ask largely beget our answer ("A problem properly stated is a problem partially solved"). Asking, for instance, Where, When, How, Who and Why will produce certain feelings. I'll give you an example.

As a young girl, I was deeply violated on physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual levels. Two different public "comprehensive" schools I attended in England were the scenes of the crimes. What memories I have from the age of 5 to the age of 10 are sparse and not altogether clear but I do remember beatings, insults, humiliation and sexual abuse, including rape. These experiences happened a long time

(1) Deepak Chopra, *Creating Affluence: Wealth Consciousness in the Field of All Possibilities* (San Rafael, Calif.: New World Library, 1993) p. 89

(2) Deepak Chopra, *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success* (San Rafael, Calif. New World Library, 1994) pp. 69-70

(3) Deepak Chopra, *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*, p. 34

ago and as a child the only way I knew how to cope and survive was by splitting off. That is why I am labeled “schizo-affective” today. And why I am an addict. This was not a conscious intention; it “just happened.” But, perhaps, when I “know better”— at a **deeper level** — I will “do better”, as Oprah Winfrey likes to say. For now, however, I am still dealing with how to face up to a lot of emotional pain.

To return to questions, the first question I asked was, why? And why to me was a spiritual question; I asked: Why God did you let this happen to me? I asked: Why mom did you abandon me? I asked why there was no one there to save me. And I felt angry and I felt alone and I cried from the pit of my soul. I felt completely powerless, ashamed, embarrassed and disgusted. Christina Grof describes my predicament very accurately in **The Thirst for Wholeness** as follows:

“A child victim of incest (or any sexual abuse — J.S.) who repeatedly hears stories about a benevolent God cannot imagine how a loving, holy presence could allow such violence and violation...

Many individuals become confused and angry as a result of the exposure to rigid concepts and attitudes about God, as well as actions carried out in God’s name or behind a religious facade. They naturally develop negative reactions to and defences against anything religious but, in doing so, insulate themselves against the possibility of a meaningful, life-enhancing experience of their spiritual potential.”

(4)

Fortunately, in spite of all that I have been through, I think that I can still say that I can see larger purposes at work behind all evolving Creation, even a “necessity” to the ostensible “evil” I have endured while God changes His/Her Cosmic Mind, as hard as that is to accept at first. The illusion was that any negative intent could have been original with God’s benevolent aspect and **the lesson** — actually confirming the religious wisdom of all creeds — was that harm is done by those who have “fallen away”, become “too distant”, “forgotten” or been forcibly **disconnected from** their divine origins usually due to being deeply hurt themselves. Was my assignment to learn (or teach) something about forgiveness? Was I somehow selected to live through this because God knew I was the right person and up to this task? In any case, affirming the non-dual or non-separate status of the Intelligence which permeates the Universe from my narrower ego-self which is usually just focused on “low-level” consciousness circuits seems to be the key to maintaining that healing connection to the Goodness and Love I (we) always knew the **essence of God** to be.

“The sacred force is at once transcendent and immanent. We can find it both outside us and deep within us.” (5)

Or, as Jesus said:

“because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.”

—*St. John 14: 19-20*

In light of the above, one more question: Will neuroleptic drugs heal me from being deeply emotionally wounded? The answer is obvious and even most psychiatrists will readily admit that they will not, that these drugs only temporarily suppress symptoms and never treat underlying causes— and this at the cost of exposing many people to irreversible brain damage and cognitive dysfunction — when

(Continued over)

(4) Christina Grof, **The Thirst for Wholeness: Attachment, Addiction, and the Spiritual Path** (San Francisco: Harper, 1993) p. 34

(5) Grof, **The Thirst for Wholeness**, p.24

safe, far more effective, therapies exist to treat the root causes of psychological disorders but, for the most part, are not an option allowed to “consumers” as yet. My purpose here is not to blame anyone. Just to illustrate some enlightening facts — without superimposing some artificial out-of-context ideal standard or trying to promote myself in any way “holier than thou”. And, of course, I realize that a major step in ever making things more right is accepting that they — and I, and you — are already all right, right now, in their/our own way.

Where am I leading to? (Where I have always actually been?) Simply, I am a survivor on a healing journey. And on this journey I know the God of my understanding will guide me. And God to me is freedom, love, joy, and wonder. S/he is the sky, the earth, the stars and the moon. Yes, this is where I draw my inspiration from. And, of course, Jesus too.

Please allow me to close by passing on just a couple more thoughts which may help others in the eternal task of maintaining their vital connection with their True Self:

“And our real nature is that we are a joyful, silent witness, the non-attached, immortal spirit that animates all manifestation. And to have the experience of that silent witness is to just Be.

This is real freedom — the ability to enjoy the choices we make in every successive moment of the present. It is the ability to spontaneously put our attention on those choices that bring joy to us and also to others.” (6)

“All phenomena appear as light and images; by recognizing all these appearances as the natural radiance of your own mind, your own radiance will merge inseparably with the lights and images, and you will become a buddha.

Whatever you see, however terrifying it is, recognize it as the luminosity, the natural radiance of your own mind.

Remember!

— Tibetan Book of the Dead



(6) Chopra, *Creating Affluence: Wealth Consciousness in the Field of All Possibilities*, pp. 86-87

Quotes From The Roundtable

(Continued from page 4)

“before the chicken or the egg
came the rooster.”

“any philosophy not based on love,
is false, as well as dangerous”

“greed is not satisfied with having a lot:
it is only satisfied with have more than someone else.”



“freedom has no cure.”

Have A Kafka Christmas!

by R. C.

I shudder with a long cold anxiety even at the mention of Welfare. That plague upon the land. Yet it was thus, on the welfare rolls, that I scuttled along the sidewalks, squeezing my body past storefronts, not daring to look inside to see horrified faces, frozen in fear at the sight of my shiny, ill-clad exoskeleton. I was hungry. You must understand. I had clung, immobile, to the ground outside a food bank earlier in the week, and it was odd to see all the other insects clinging to the ground against the gusts of windy rain, but there I stood my ground, without respect, without rights. Eventually, our column approached the entrance and, nameless, except for a government ID card, I entered and sighed with relief, to see the bags and boxes of food that would sustain me for about five days.

Again I insist, I was hungry. There was no alternative but to venture out from my room in the quarter where addicts and prostitutes, other species no less familiar to the public than myself, and equally abhorred, likewise subsisted on their strange nourishment. Of course, in this neighbourhood the sight of insects is quite common, so it was no problem for me, cleverly wrapping a scarf around my feelers to

blend in with the crowd. But soon I was out of the slum and, fearing being hit by a driver who detested welfare bugs, pressed close to the buildings and storefronts. At one storefront I did look in, and for the first time in several months, I saw the face of a beautiful young woman look up and smile warmly at me. Perhaps it was the Christmas season, but upon seeing that face which gently returned its attention to work, I began sobbing. I fell down on my six legs, which I had up till then concealed in my overcoat, and, tears steaming down my face, looked up at the passers-by to see if the Christmas season might kindle some more kindness for those of my ilk.

A little boy cried out upon seeing me, "Ooh! A horrible, ugly bug!" Then someone, perhaps his father, seeing me and seeing that I was too large too squash, kicked me violently in the side. I was wounded physically, but not badly. A jelly-like substance welled up where I had felt the blow and it dampened my overcoat but that was all. Getting up again, I concealed four of my legs and resumed my journey to the employment centre. But, despite my injury, I recalled the vision of that beautiful, caring woman.

Once inside the employment centre, I found a spot at one

of the job bank computers and I dutifully pressed the buttons that guided me through a search of the potential jobs. Alright, I am inexperienced and didn't finish high school, so there at the computer I had little chance of finding anything, but I was lucky. I found one prospective employer looking for someone who could work up high. This, I knew, was my forte. I was good at climbing and at clinging. So, I took the slip of paper spat out at me by the computer and, outside the employment centre again, caught a bus to the jobsite.

You must understand my excitement. I had been two days very hungry and this job was a godsend. I reached a building where someone was working at the top of a long, thick rope, and he was probably fifteen stories up. At the bottom of the rope was a grizzled man whom I asked about the job. He told me to talk to the guy up the rope.

In my excitement, I looked up the building, hooked my claws onto its brick surface and began to climb. It was all too easy. As I approached the man on the rope, who was cleaning windows, he looked down at me. Just as I began to speak, I saw him losing his balance.

He fell. He fell fifteen stories to the concrete below. Needless to say I was terrified. Fearing to be blamed for the accident, I

(Continued on next page)

Have A Kafka Christmas!

(Continued from previous page)

crawled around to another face of the building. But I had nowhere to hide.

In a few minutes an ambulance arrived, and a few minutes later, a police car. I remember hearing the sirens while I shivered fifteen stories above the street. Looking below me, I saw two tiny policemen station themselves beneath me and I heard

one speak. His voice must have been heard for blocks for he spoke through a bullhorn.

Well, I'm sure you can imagine the rest. Nothing heroic. They talked me down, advising me that it was best to give myself up. And the outcome of it all is this. I am in a prison now for involuntary manslaughter. Seven years till I can apply for release.

The other prisoners don't like me much, but the prison itself is cleaner than the hotel where I used to live. And I am not terribly unhappy. Another Christmas season has come. Eventually, six more Christmases will pass and I will be given my freedom and be put out on the street on social assistance. Oh, well, I know the territory.



Branches Over The Wall

(Continued from page 6)

And every professional
has his off days,
both his holidays
and the days he or she should have stayed at home.
But our society
is faster becoming a closed,
tightened,
network;
finding places where people can learn helplessness
or perhaps grow up into God and self-awareness,
not trusting necessarily
in professional help.



Minute Particulars

(Continued from page 2)

happen... And we talked of my babysitter. That I get to tell her how I want my children looked after, rather than — as I have done in the past — apologize for my kids... And I remember the lines you quoted from Arthur Miller: 'I dreamed I had a child, and even in my dream I saw it was my life, and it was an idiot, and I ran away. But it always crept into my lap again, clutching at

my clothes. Until I thought, If I could kiss it, whatever in it was my own, perhaps I could sleep. And I bent down to its broken face, and it was horrible... but I kissed it. I think one must finally take one's life in one's arms...'. Psychotherapy is the "talking cure": re-born through the mouth.

December, 1988: Five-year old Gail: "I want to see a picture of

Jesus at five. [Looking through art books, mumbling to herself.] Jesus dead. Jesus flying. Jesus on the cross. No Jesus at five... [Finally giving up. Out loud to me] God never dies, right?" I: "You could say that I guess." Gail: "We are all in God's belly, **right now!** Right?" I: You could say that, I guess... who told you? How do you know?" Gail: "A boy in Kindergarten class..."



BookWorm

(Continued from page 5)

confined him, silenced him. A fate not unlike the one that awaited Loki, the Norse trickster, who was captured and punished by the gods. Loki was bound with ropes made from the guts of one of his own children, and kept beneath the earth. His periodic writhing we now call earthquakes.

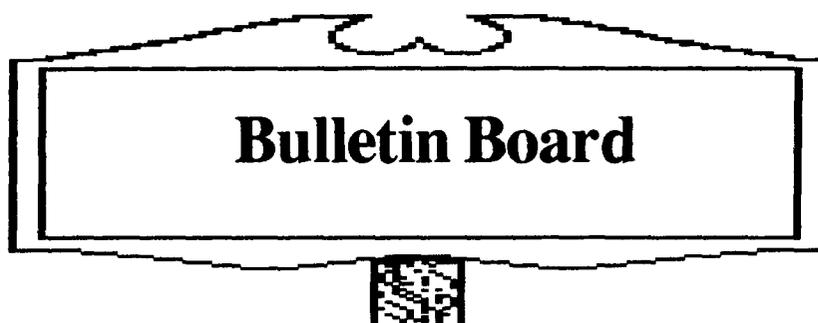
Octavio Paz wrote that to "realize itself, love must violate the laws of our world. It is scandalous and disorderly, a transgression committed by two stars that break out of their predestined orbits and rush together in the midst of space". Trickster is, perhaps,

love realized. When Krishna multiplies himself 16,000 times to appear fully to each woman gathered around him, gratifying each one's desire to be his lover, he is like a virus. Laing allowed for the possibility of an epidemic of love and he did his best to infect as many as possible. For what is love? For him, it was letting the other be, with some care and concern; it was taking delight in the other as the other is; it was treating the other as a legitimate other with whom one can co-exist; it was contributing to the other's survival benefits in a creatively enlarging way; it was the absence

of persuasion and coercion. The women followed Krishna because he gave each his full attention. So did Laing attend to each of his patients. He was **with** them. He invited everyone to cultivate enjoyment.

Hyde tells the story of someone asking Ginsberg, "How does one become a prophet. Ginsberg replied, "Tell your secrets!" When elsewhere, Ginsberg admonishes us to "pick your nose eyes ears tongue sex and brain to show the populace", he wants to make tricksters out of all of us.





Mothers In Transition Support Group

Mothers who have lost custody of their offspring due to mental illness meet other moms of like mind and situation. We share experiences and interests. We hope in unison to lessen the burden of living without our offspring. We create friendship. For more information contact Dawn at 871-0151

Alternative Healing

Health Action Network Society supports natural healing methods for mental illness. Ph 1-888-432-4267. Their local address is #202-5262 Rumble St., Burnaby B.C.

Vancouver Women's Health Collective has peer counselling and makes referrals to support services, groups, and does advocacy work in health care reform. Their address is 219 - 1675 W. 8th Ave., Vancouver, V6J 1V2. Info by phoning (604) 736 -5262

Freedom of Choice in Health Care, B.C. Chapter can be reached by phoning (604) 685-7835

Tzu-Chi Institute for Complimentary and Alternative Medicine is at 715 W. 12th Ave., Vancouver, They do research, have a clinic, resource centre, and library . They can be reached by phoning (604) 875-4767.

Vancouver/Richmond Mental Health Network sponsors many self-help groups including a Women's circle. Their address is #109 - 96 E. Broadway, Vancouver, V5T 4N9 and the Director of the Network, Helen Turbett may be reached at 733-5570.

The Gaia Garden Herbal Apothecary at 2672 W. Broadway, Vancouver, V6K 2G3, can help with transition therapy for people with psychiatric problems going from orthodox medication to herbs. Their phone number is 734-4372.

Freebies:

For those in need: Free clothing; Dishes

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At Community Resource Centre, 1731 W. 4th Ave., Monday to Friday,
9 am to 9 pm on request.



