

# Term Limits

*Well, we could screw if you want but I have to be on top to get off.*

## One

I was, of course, pleased and relieved to have graduated from college in May of '74. At 21 years old I needed to exhale, evaluate and collect my thoughts. Four years in college had not been overwhelming or extremely difficult. I glided without much anxiety through the undergraduate program maintaining a surprising low level of stress. Earning the degree was a personal goal I aspired to since my early teens but there were times when it became a tiresome endeavor. In the last year and in the closing roundup of the final semester, the studies lost their shine and took on a dull patina, tarnished and trite. It stopped making sense and I was ready to be done with the whole affair. Without a doubt I was further informed, aware and extensively well-read but how would that meet the criteria for me to enter the mainstream world of money, competition and self-survival? If I was at a loss of comprehension how to assimilate myself into the working world, well, I was well aware of that. I kept remembering the scene in *The Graduate* where Benjamin portrayed by Dustin Hoffman was outside himself and during his graduation party a senior adult told him the future. Plastics, he said, plastics.

A vacation was needed and I contacted my friend, Kevin Blake, who I had attended high school with and was enrolled at George Washington University in DC. I wanted to arrange a visit. He was still in his sophomore year there having done some time at Hebron Academy in Maine after High School because of sub-par grades. He was a very popular guy in High School, well dressed, privileged and for all intents and purposes intended to enter the school of his choice owing to that privilege. But the grades were not on his side and a year and a half at the academy in Maine surely boosted his entry into the school they had keys to and that was George Washington University.

Kevin said, certainly you can come and visit but I'll be in the middle of my finals so I don't know how much time we can spend together. Finals? It was the middle of July and the semester had ended in June but leave it to Kevin to get some sort of conciliatory pass to take his finals later on. He always had

someone pulling strings for him, some puppet master showing him how to dance when he had barely learned to walk. I should have held off the visit but I needed to get away from Oakland and flew into DC Dulles on Monday, the 22nd and took a bus from there to Foggy Bottom passing alongside the Potomac River and centuries old canals, now empty, lush and overgrown, built to transport materials and supplies for the new city back in the day. I found my way to the house on G Street North West where Kevin paid rent, very near the campus, between the White House and the Watergate Apartments slash Office Complex. It was a beautiful day with blue skies and puffy clouds much like thought bubbles drifting in a cartoon. The entry was on the side of the house with a porch of mini-Corinthian columns, the paint peeling off in curls.

There was a handwritten sign, duct taped to the doorbell, that had suffered more than a few winters telling all that the doorbell didn't work and to knock on the door. It might have been easier to just remove the button. The door with its large brass knocker was very well worn and I wondered about this knocker's secret history while someone in time had decided to install a doorbell that ceased to be effective. Some things stop working and some things last. I knocked on the door with the knocker but there wasn't any answer. I carried a short canvas duffel bag and I set it down. I wasn't yet sure what to do. I really wasn't comfortable with just opening the door and walking in, so I knocked again. The door opened and there stood a young woman, my age I presumed, in cutoff Levi shorts with the pockets sticking down further than the cutoffs leading to thin tanned legs in high top black tennis shoes, no socks. Her brown hair was thick in braided pigtails on each side and she wore a short and red faded t-shirt that hung loose above her belly button. She was thin but not frail, healthy looking. She appeared to me like a lizard ready to spring, ready to devour any prey if available.

Hi, I'm Trace, a friend of Kevin Blake's and hoping to find him here.

She looked at me, sizing me up and not giving into any recognition or even evidence of a smile.

I'm from California, I continued not knowing how to proceed, and I'm close friends with Kev.

Yeh, that sounds right. Come in.

I picked up my duffel and followed her into the house through a large entry hall into a grand living room with floor to ceiling built in glass and wood cabinets ornamented with elaborate molding. Most of the cabinets were empty except for a few that housed empty beer cans and some empty bottles of Bushmills and Crown Royal standing like trophies as testament to some night of glory or possibly despair. From above music wafted down the staircase. It was a Steely Dan song --- *Rikki Don't Lose That Number*.

*Rikki don't lose that number*

*You don't want to call nobody else*

*Send it off in a letter to yourself.*

*Rikki don't lose that number*

*It's the only one you own*

*You might use it if you feel better*

*When you get home.*

She jumped up or rather vaulted up as if she had springs on her shoes and sat on a bookcase, grabbed a pack of Salem cigarettes that were resting on the ledge and flicked one out while seamlessly lighting it with a lighter and then picked up a book. It was a book, I guess, she had been reading before I had interrupted at the front door. She took a long drag and blew out smoke upwards trying to find just where she left off in the book. She certainly wasn't entertaining any introductory small talk.

A small black and white TV was on another bookcase and was airing an ice-skating competition. I couldn't see the screen and could only hear the commentator.

*Male Commentator / Gregor --- Next on the ice and completing their warm-up is the skating team of Demetrius Chuoff and Asarinka Asimov representing the Republic of Sharubia. This is their first appearance in the finals and you can feel the tension in their faces, can't you Lorraine?*

*Female commentator / Lorraine --- Why yes Gregor. Having been in their shoes or rather in their skates, I can assure you it's more than butterflies. It's more like nausea bordering on evacuation. That's why in my competition I never wore white for fear that ....*

*Gregor ---That's quite graphic Lorraine and thanks for your informed perception. Well now we can see they are ready and poised for the music to que. And the music they will be performing to is now let me get this straight --- an instrumental version of Inagaddadavida by the Hungarian Brass Orchestra. OK, here we go.*

My name is Trace I said and sat down on a sofa that had given up its support and firmness sometime in a previous decade. I tried to catch myself plummeting deep into the worn maroon velvet but it was no use. Yeh, you told me that just a minute ago she stated not giving me any solace.

What's your name?

Katje.

Sorry I didn't get that. Was that Cotchee?

Close enough. K A T J E she spelled out --- Katje.

That's an unusual name I said trying to get somewhere.

Yeh, that is what everyone tells me to no end. Get in line Trace. It is Dutch but I grew up in Brasil.

She pronounced Brazil with an s.

You don't look South American Katje.

And tell me what does South American look like? I could say you do not look Californian.

*Gregor --- Demetrius is displaying his strength with this overhead lift of Asarinka and then down into a camel spin exiting with double axels.*

*Lorraine ---Yes Gregor. And Asarinka might be having a wardrobe issue as I know I have in the past. That last double axel could well discharge more than wanted of her displayed cleavage if she attempts that again. It's a wait and see, Gregor.*

*Gregor --- Well that will certainly give the judges the option of a double d rating Lorraine.*

What book are you reading? I asked because outside of the TV I felt like I was in a vacuum that was sucking spontaneity from this interchange.

She took a bookmark from the back of the book and placed it where she was reading. Closing the book and reading the spine as if she needed the information she declared --- *Under the Volcano*. Glen, our roommate, that's him upstairs playing music, told me *that this is the best book he ever read and if you never read another book you gotta read this one.*

So, it's that good, eh?

Well, it is an assumption that Glen has. It is written by Malcolm Lowry and about an alcoholic British counsel in Cuernavaca, Mexico. There is more character development between the bottles of Mezcal and Tequila than there is with his wife. The booze is obviously the supportive character to Lowry with an overwhelming knowledge of consumption. I am ready to toss it but Glen, he is damn emotional about it so I am giving it my best.

I didn't, at first, detect an accent but as she talked on it was clear her English was foreign but very good.

*Gregor --- And now Demetrius and Asarinka are in parallel spread eagles suggesting a lead into a death spiral which they are now executing.*

*Lorraine --- And very suggestive it is Gregor especially with Demetrius's stretch pants clearing displaying his . . .*

*Gregor --- Well yes Lorraine. This display of talent by both of these young skaters will surely be rewarded as they exit to the kiss and cry booth to await their scores.*

It's no secret that In Washington DC and even this close to the White House that cockroaches thrive and are prevalent. I learned, soon enough, that they are not only prevalent but very large. And as I was sitting or rather consumed by the broken-down red velvet couch, a cockroach, about 3 inches long began a journey across the living room floor without any consideration to our presence. The telephone began to ring. Katje shifted the book from one hand to the other as if to dismiss the ring and then spotted the cockroach sauntering at a slow pace. The phone rang again and she let out a sigh, put the book down again and jumped off the bookcase smashing the cockroach with her high-top tennis shoe before going over to the phone scraping off the carnage on her way with the Salem still in her mouth.

Hello. No, Kevin is not here now but will be coming soon. He's taking one of the last of his finals.

You could hear some scratchy response.

Yeh I know. It is July. She raised her thick eyebrows with wide eyes to accentuate her knowing though they, of course, couldn't see this at the other end.

More scratchy.

OK. I will tell him to call you right away. He has your number? Good. Good-bye.

Katje exhaled and immediately looked over at me. You are hungry? I will make us ramen.

She didn't wait for my response and disappeared into I suppose a kitchen I hadn't yet seen. Ramen was the familiar staple of many of us college students costing about 20 cents a package and if you threw an egg into it right at the end you really felt like you were getting some kind of nutritional value.

The ice-skating was wrapping up and I got up to stand and watch the closing avoiding the messy obliteration of the cockroach.

*Gregor --- Well Demetrius and Asarinka are obviously overwhelmed by their scores which propels them into 1<sup>st</sup> place by enough points to secure the championship. Lorraine --- to you.*

*Lorraine --- Yes Gregor, they are peeing their pants no doubt as I did when I was in that very same scenario.*

I wanted to follow Katje into the unforeseen kitchen, but held my own, trying not to be the distasteful new guest from out of nowhere to throw opinions and contrive trite conversation for the sake of not being completely comfortable. I didn't feel like sitting back down in the maroon couch which felt like it was enveloping me if not having a life of its own to eventually devour me as a man-eating plant would. Katje would come back out with the Ramen and find no one on the couch. Only the remnants of my prior self, mostly my mouth, left wide open, gaping like a baby bird, waiting for the mother to bring me nourishment. Feeling comfortable, too comfortable, can be a sign that you have signed off and no longer engaged with your immediate surroundings. All this could be detrimental to any desired impression you might want to make upon a new acquaintance. It's a balance point of saying too much or too little while still showing interest.

Katje came back into the room through the swinging door with two bowls and spoons, not alike, with the ramen.

Here, she said and handed me the bowl and a paper towel. She sat down on a firm chair that was sitting by the side. I saw another chair that I had to claim for an upright eating position. I pulled the chair with one hand and slid it next to her, about 4 feet away and watched her for just a second. She was already eating and eating quite quickly, not paying much attention to me, not concerned if I was well situated or if I liked Ramen or really giving me any acknowledgement at all. We could have been eating in a soup kitchen not knowing each other which, in reality, was exactly what was happening. But we did know each other's names.

Thank you Katje but she said nothing in return. The Ramen was good enough although I guess she didn't know the egg trick or perhaps didn't have an egg to throw.

About this time, I heard the front door open and close. In came Kevin, all smiles, his trademark, in plaid shorts and imported sandals. His face lit up when he saw me slurping down Ramen with my new found friend, the elusive Katje.

Trace! He came over and embraced me and I spilled a bit of Ramen on my t-shirt before I could set it down and give it my all. We had some history, Kev and me, road trips, psychedelic trips, backpacking trips, spiritual awakenings and commiserating on love lost and future longings and desires. How to describe the incidents crammed into 4 or 5 years during high school and then college was beyond my belief. Time moved so incrementally intense in these years as if a compactor had compressed 20 years into 5.

This is fucking fantastic! he yelled and I was enthused as well. I had lost interest in the Ramen. Let's have some Scotch he decried.

Kevin had adopted Scotch as his drink somewhere along the line after high school. It fit his concept of preppie ivy league stature or really, I don't know what. I was never well versed in Scotch consumption and thought it tasted like old shoes as if I knew what that tasted like. Besides as with everything else in the liquor world there were levels of each liquor I was never acquainted with anything but the entry levels of each of them. Hard brown liquor tasted a lot alike, whether it was bourbon, whiskey, scotch or rye because I never tuned in to the differences. They all burned my throat and put me into inebriation way before I wanted to. Give me beer or wine where I can regulate the high without it sneaking up on me, harboring a sledgehammer and rendering me with fleeting coherence, unable to make distinct lucid sentences or plausible decisions that could have irrevocable consequences.

Sure, I said, but Katje interrupted.

Kevin, your sister, Karen, called. Wants you to call her back immediately. I told her you were taking finals but she sounded distressed.

Kevin had his mind set on the Scotch and you could see he needed a release from the intensity of the final he had just taken but the smile dropped from his face and he went to the telephone while lighting up a cigarette.

Yeh, this is Kevin, what's up? Pause. Oh Shit. Pause. Well, no, I still have two finals to take. Pause. I know it's July. Pause. Really? Pause. OK, I'll try to get on a flight tonight or early tomorrow. Pause. Love you too.

Kevin hung up the phone and said --- Now about that Scotch and went off to some room I presume the room he rented and came back with a damn full bottle of Johnny Walker Black Scotch and three glasses, nice glasses, appropriate for the drink at hand. Setting them down on the ledge of the bookshelf he proceeded through the swinging door into the unforeseen kitchen. He came back with a small glass of ice and dropped three small cubes into each glass not saying a word and poured the Johnny Walker Black ¾'s to the top, which in my opinion was a hefty dose. But hey, I was on vacation and we hadn't seen each other for quite some time; and even though I had just met Katje I was beginning to feel at ease with her despite a perceived reluctance.

Here's to my step father having a heart attack and being in intensive care and me going home.

It was a bit of a shock but we clicked glasses and I said I hope Frank recovers. I had known Frank, of course I had, he was barely over 50 and a plumber which I could never figure out for the lavish lifestyle Kevin had come from. Where had the money come from, but that was not my concern.

You know, Kevin started while taking a good slug of Scotch, I have never been that close to him but out of respect, what can I say or do but go to my mom's side. She's hurting or that's what my sister said and I need to go. I need to get a flight out tonight or tomorrow.

I thought that Katje was disinterested or did not think it was any of her business or concern but she picked up the glass of Scotch, downed it in two consecutive gulps and put out the cigarette in a convenient ashtray. Setting down the glass she said I will see what flights are options, to Oakland, right?

Oh gosh Katje, thanks, you don't have to do that.

I will need your credit card Kev. He shoved it out of his wallet and she went off to another room where there was another phone where she could make arrangements to the airlines without disruption. I, for one, never have had a credit card or even thought about how to get one.

Kevin and I were alone now and I told him how sorry I was that he was thrown into this predicament. I already knew that he really had no emotional connection to Frank. Frank was married to his mother and that was a mystery that none of us had time or even cared to figure out. Frank had always been nice to me through high school. He was a heavy drinker but was quiet about it and was usually too exhausted from his plumbing business to ever be that much present. He had a large truck with all the side bins, vices, ladders and pipe racks to look efficient enough. I had no realization of what real labor was in high school but seeing Frank come home all grimy and tired gave me a clue that life might be harder out there than I knew. My Dad was a bus driver and he came home tired but no worse for wear and had little desire for alcohol. Seeing Frank made me evaluate what toil he went through to come home every night and drink. I was lacking experience to judge but surely thought that I would never want to be a plumber.

You know Trace, I mean you know, that Frank is not my real father, never has been a father to me, never gave me nothing, no support, encouragement or showed interest in what I was doing. Never any goals to achieve to, guidance or even took me out in the backyard to throw around a baseball. I was raised by my sister and my mother. A girl, a woman, while they were trying to orchestrate their own lives. My friendship with you as well as other peers has been great, my salvation, but I still have this vacant space in my psyche. A longing. A longing for the love of a father, a model, mentor, someone to look up to, some comradery, someone to call Dad. He took a slug of Scotch and I could see his eyes well up. I was close enough to him to put my hand on his and met eyes as an act of knowing, understanding.

Changing the subject, I just had to remark on Katje.

That Katje is a rather fascinating person don't you think?

Oh, yeh she is. She has been a great friend but never letting me get too close. Trace, don't get too wrapped in her because I've been living with her for over a year now and have seen half a dozen guys come and go, mostly go, gone, with their hearts broken. It's not like she doesn't like each and every one

of them but she doesn't ever seem to need any of them, you know? She lacks that primal instinct I'd define as passion but that's not fair, is it? I think that all of us are looking for love but then along comes someone who proves me wrong.

Katje came through the swinging door. Kev, I just booked a flight that leaves at nine thirty tonight from Dulles to San Francisco. Could not get Oakland so you must manage from there.

Kevin lifted his glass, realized it was empty and went for the bottle.

Let me get some ice, Katje offered going back through the swinging door to the mystery kitchen.

He poured me another and she came back with a Pyrex measuring cup filled with ice. She filled Kevin's and mine but not hers. Kevin filled our glasses.

What about you Kotch? You in on this?

Christ Kev! Who will drive you to the airport?

Oh, thanks Katje. Can you borrow Glen's car?

Yeh, I know he will be fine with that.

Glen was the guy upstairs that was playing Steely Dan. I learned that he was rather well supported and had a new Honda Civic that he was generous with as long as you kept the gas level intact and paid any tickets incurred while driving.

We should leave in about an hour so you and Trace can play catch up while you pack and then off you go.

Thanks, Katje. What would I do without you?

I am sure you would do just fine. The jury could still be out on your friend though. She had a slight smile, but not much. I detected a wink as she left to go upstairs into the unexplored frontier.

Kevin and I didn't have much catch up as we went across the grand hall into to his room which was really a parlor or something of that nature from the previous century. I sat on his mattress bed to watch him place his clothes into a suitcase. He was the only person outside of my parents that still used a suitcase. It was a beige number with leather straps that didn't seem to do anything but gave it this Gatsby cargo aspect that fit his persona. He was a preppie kind of guy and he made sure he had enough Lacoste Polo shirts, creased slacks and penny loafers to get him through. He sat on the bed next to me with his never-ending Scotch and put his arm around my shoulder.

Sorry Trace that this could be a disaster for you to come and visit and that I gotta go but you can stay here in my room and I guess I am just really sorry. I love you guy.

I don't think that he needed any more Scotch so I took it out of his hands and drank it. Not sure if this was a wise decision on my part but at least he would not be an obnoxious drunk on the 5 plus hour flight back to the Bay Area.

Love you too Kev and I know you will do what you do best to make everyone feel fine back home. You're good at that, you are.

Thanks Trace.



We took Kevin to Dulles. He wanted us to park the car and come into the airport lounge to have a drink but Katje said no. We dropped him off at the outside terminal and said our good-byes. I jumped into the front seat. Katje made sure he was on his way before putting it into first and taking off.

I hope he will be ok, I said because he was just released into a shit pile of uncertainty in just a few hours.

He will need to manage. What we all have to do at different times, right? Whether we might be up to it or not. It becomes a fight or flight response and right now he's in fight mode.

I was thinking that really, he was in flight mode but that could be a matter of nomenclature.

Katje's remarks stung me but I was acutely aware of situations and where there isn't any time for decision; it becomes instinct and automatic. We have to grow into big people's clothes, fast.

There didn't seem much room for talking and Katje wasn't saying anything at all but driving very conscientiously. The news was on the radio telling us that the Supreme Court was still deliberating on the fate of President Nixon's tapes, whether they should be produced as evidence, that he was indeed corrupt, covert and secretly undermining the conventions of democracy or that he had executive privilege to sequester the tapes in question. We listened in silence to the radio until she said --- After we get back do you want to go have a drink? We can walk there from the house, not a problem.

Well sure, I said because I had nothing else to do and I was certainly intrigued by her. Seeming not to care but paying attention at every turn --- was how she operated or was that her innate nature; aloof.

She parked the car and ran into the house to put the keys back where they belonged. On her way out she carried a hooded sweatshirt, undid her pigtails to unleash her hair, shaking her head and then stroking her fingers through like a comb while still walking towards me putting on the sweatshirt. I don't know what it was but this transformation revealed a metamorphosis, with rippled disheveled hair falling everywhere but anywhere where she wanted. It was a Chameleon move I was sure to learn more of.

As we started walking she pulled out her pack of Salem's from a small purse slung from a thin leather strap around her neck and under one arm. She shook one out and lit it with a lighter that she pulled from her cutoffs. Smooth and practiced or maybe not at all but I was impressed at the efficiency of movement. The summer sky was streaked by the last signs of daylight and I found myself surprised and pleased that I was thrown into a new situation, walking along side this peculiar and spirited woman who had direction and destinations. I have never been attracted to women with whom it was my decision to plot every move, choosing for them what they might want or where they were to go.

We didn't walk far, in fact not far enough for her to finish her cigarette. She tossed it out into the gutter in front of the neon hum of the sign of the neighborhood bar we were entering. The bar was called *The Marsh Inn* and had a neon figure of an alien with pink antennas that moved back and forth. The electricity from the neon buzzed loudly and the antennas made this loud static clicking noise as they switched back and forth. I like to evaluate a bar from the sound outside to the sound inside as you enter. It was relatively quiet outside except for the sign, with a car passing now and then but going through the door there was a

din of conversation that competed with the music from the jukebox, masked in a cloud of smoke. The joint was jumpin'. *Slippin' into Darkness* by War was blasting on the jukebox. Katje surveyed the hordes of people, grabbed my hand and led me over to a group of guys and girls, all standing a good distance away from the music. Now grabbing my hand might not seem too big a deal but you have to remember that I had just met this woman less than 5 hours before, where I had found her to be evasive, elusive and not very cognizant of my existence. Now this first touch, her grabbing my hand leading me to her crowd or tribe, felt good, exclusive.

Hey Katje! One guy yelled out because you had to talk loud or almost yell to be heard.

Good to see you Katje, another girl added while putting her drink down on the smallest table in the world and hugging her.

Well now, Katje's got a new catch, another guy leaning up against a column threw into the mix.

This is a friend from California, Kevin's, who has come to visit but Kev went back home because his dad had a heart attack. I am showing him around. This is Trace.

Everyone was politely concerned about Kevin and were cordial. There was shaking of hands and can I buy you a drink and even a hug from a total stranger of a girl. She said her name was Marlene.

I was feeling pretty comfortable and I thought, eyeing the number of people in the crowd, that I could buy the immediate crowd a drink. I had the money, I always managed to. I never assumed to be a rich guy but did have money saved for priorities and this was one of them. I announced to the crowd that the drinks were on me. There were no arguments and I went to the bar and threw down two twenty's and gave the bartender my name and I was good for more if it went beyond that.

No problem Sport was the bartender's reply and then the parade of drinkers took me to task.

Most of the crowd had beers and some of the women had fancy drinks that were popular that I never cared for and Katje ordered an Old Yellowstone Whiskey with a water back. I didn't know what a water back was and I'd never heard of Old Yellowstone but I ordered the same as we returned back to the defined spot with glasses in both hands looking for somewhere to set them down. That small table was getting crowded with a lot of empty bottles and glasses. There didn't seem to be anyone to clear the tables. The trouble with hard liquor drinks in a social setting is that they're not like beers where you can sip them at a leisurely pace and take a while to finish. While you are talking, the hard alcohol drink seems to instantly vanish but I looked over at Katje and she had somehow managed to just drink very little.

One of the guys standing in the tribe was drinking something in a small stemmed glass with a cherry on a plastic stick and I asked him what it was that he was drinking.

Why this, most certainly, is a Manhattan.

The way he said *most certainly* sounded condescending as if everyone should know the name of the drink he was drinking, the drink that I assumed I had paid for. Katje was quick to pick up on this.

Trace, this is Preston, Preston Sanborn, and if he has not offended you yet, sit tight, he surely will.

Everyone broke out laughing and even Preston.

Now Katje, what brought this on? How have I ever offended you? Well maybe once or twice and only about your peculiar choice of the highly intangible major of Biophysics.

Yeh Preston, I never understand your absolute failure to comprehend DNA, cellular generation or even your complete ignorance of the vital systems of our bodies including what is dangling between your legs.

There was an uproar and nodding of heads.

I had to interject as Katje was about to wind up to perhaps eventually humiliate Preston. But Preston was still smiling and sipping his Manhattan.

What is your major Preston? I asked

Communications.

Oh, I said, and where do you go with that major? I only ask because my major was Humanities and I haven't found a job opening yet.

More laughter from everyone but Katje wasn't through.

He wants the weather girl job on the evening news.

Preston held up his drink as to toast or to say touché.

The music on the juke box was now playing *That Lady* by The Isley Brothers.

*Who's that lady? Who's that lady?*

*Beautiful lady, who's that lady?*

*Lovely lady, who's that lady?*

*Real fine lady, who's that lady?*

*Hear me callin' out to you*

*'Cause that's all that I can do.*

*Your eyes tell me to pursue*

*But you say, look yeh*

*But don't touch, baby,*

*No, no, no, don't touch.*

Marlene, the girl who had hugged me, came over holding her drink and stood next to me. She was much shorter than I, probably 5 foot plus, maybe five two. Her long muddy blonde hair was parted in the middle and she wore gold wire rim glasses, the same that everyone seemed to be wearing these days. The overall effect conveyed intelligence but that can also be deceptive.

Thank you Trace. This is all so kind of you.

You're welcome, hesitating for a moment because I was trying to recall her name.

Marlene. What is it that you are drinking?

This is a Rusty Nail. I waited, trying to divine more. It's 2 parts Scotch and 1 part Drambuie. The Drambuie sweetens the Scotch just enough to make it go down easy, too easy sometimes. This is my second one. Had one before you arrived.

Well Cheers! I said as we clinked glasses. Katje was off talking with two guys, gesturing and pointing into the air with her Salem in hand.

Marlene asked, How long have you known Katje, Trace?

I looked at the Belfast clock over the bar. About 5 hours going on 6.

Oh Wow, I thought you knew her from somewhere else but that's right, you're Kevin's friend from California. I'm from Cleveland.

I thought of Swan who was from a suburb of Cleveland but I wasn't going to try to make any connections.

Katje's a very bright woman she half yelled as I put my head lower to hear her. *Feelin' Stronger Everyday* by Chicago was currently blasting away with a healthy dose of horns.

Seems so. I felt like I was stating the obvious but Marlene must have needed to tell me or was she just making conversation? There was more warmth in her eyes to mine, much more than I had felt with Katje.

Katje is much smarter than she comes off. Her language barrier is sometimes a battle for her but I have to hand it to her, she speaks excellent English, sometimes a bit choppy but most people can never tell. She seems to excel in Biophysics and has no problem with the nomenclature and terminology. Much of it is Greek or Latin. In Brazil, she told me, she took Latin right along with English in high school.

Interesting. I did notice her language was sometimes rough or abbreviated. For the most part though I would never have known she was from Brazil except for that slight accent.

I love her Trace and she calls things as they are, no bullshit. I wish I could do that.

I liked this crowd or at least watching Katje and Preston spar and others joining in to rib him. They were comfortable within their immediate crowd and I felt no hostilities being a newcomer.

Katje had gone to the bar and got us both drinks of the same. Outside of the Ramen that I half-finished, all I had ingested was a couple of Scotch's with Kevin. I was pretty much of a beer and wine drinker except for that occasional sport drinking session every now and then where there was a test of limits and wits.

I was talking my ass off, half yelling over the juke box as so were the others. I was getting along just fine and then I looked down and Katje had gone to the bar and gotten another Old Yellowstone as well as one for herself without the water backs. That was number 3. Half the people were smoking cigs and politely blowing smoke in the air but the air was getting thin. I went up to the bartender to clear the bill. He checked and said you still got five bucks left. I told him that's for you and he gave two taps on the counter and said Thank you sport!

I needed some air but didn't want to ruin Katje's trip so I just told her that I would head home and see her there. She put her cigarette out in a convenient ashtray and looked concerned.

You cannot find the way home Trace.

But I can try.

She nodded to all around her and we left the bar, once again, she, grabbing my hand and at this point felt so good that I wanted to just hold her but how was that appropriate after just knowing someone for less than 7 hours. In my inebriation I felt like I was in trouble --- I was infatuated with her but I couldn't let her know. Why was all this foreplay necessary when it was obvious, or was it, that we were meant to be together?

The walk back to the house was good. The summer heat had dissipated and beneath the streetlights Katje pointed out interesting historic facts on every block of our walk that had significant importance as to the formation of the country and democracy. I found it odd since she had told me she was from Brazil. She stopped me by grabbing my hand and told me to look at the sky. She said you have to look at this even in the middle of a city, so truly amazing that you can see this.

Here above us see Cassiopeia, Saturn and Jupiter, Pleiades and Taurus. In the Southern Hemisphere where I am from, we do not see these constellations. It is much different universe, I mean, the same universe but completely different. We see Hydra and Centaurus and not so much of the Big Dipper. She was so enthused about the stars. I recalled the one guy that was giving her shit about being in Biophysics.

Katje, tell me, how can you be so into Biophysics and Astronomy at the same time? They seem like complete opposites.

Yes, I suppose they are but it is like me to gaze far out as I can or focus just as far in and am not really comfortable with in-between which is the very space in which we inhabit. It is a paradox in life of mine.

Her English was more than efficient and slightly segmented but her accent was compelling.

When we arrived back at the house I got settled in Kevin's room and Katje went upstairs telling me she would be back down in a bit. Kevin's room was pretty nice even though he hadn't done much to improve it. High ceilings and windows too high for comfort at night so I pulled the shade with a stick for just that. I thought that the door off to the side was a closet and it had probably been something like that at one time but somewhere in recent history it was expanded into a bathroom. It was a very small bathroom with a tiny sink, toilet and a narrow stall shower. This was great. I had been living in Oakland where 5 guys shared one bathroom with a bathtub sporting a makeshift shower. If and when we had guests, overnight things could get problematic. I took a much-needed piss. Coming back into the room I put my duffel on the floor at the foot of the bed and then decided that after seeing the cockroach earlier just to set it on the bed. I sat on the bed with my back on the wall feeling good and thinking about the girl upstairs. There was something about her that was captivating and inviting that I couldn't put my finger on outside that she was attractive in a that Tom Boy sense. But that was just a part of it. The thing I noticed most is that she didn't smile much or not at all. Back at the bar I don't remember her smiling even then when everyone was laughing. Was she just highly reserved?

Katje came back down into Kevin's room in a long white v neck t-shirt that went down to just above her knees. Her hair was pulled back into a pony tail and she was now wearing round gold wire rim glasses. I was pretty sure she wasn't wearing anything underneath that t shirt and that's the way my mind wanted to keep it.

Oh, you wear glasses was the only thing I could say because I could see the outlines of her tanned body through the t shirt. She looked beautiful in the almost transparent obscurity of the t-shirt

I wear contacts most of time.

She sat down next to me with her back to the wall as I had and we talked to some extent about *The Marsh Inn* and how that same bar had metamorphosized with so many names and monikers but it had been for centuries a tavern in the Foggy Bottom. This was how people congregated to discuss matters at hand, to debate and argue and hopefully raise the conversation to evolve at solutions. Whether it was civil or not, the act of discourse, examination and deliberation sifted out discord elevating the promise of enlightenment or at the least a hopeful conciliation. Our conversation was smooth and we picked up where the other left off as if in a scripted screenplay.

I wanted to touch her, hold her, but didn't quite feel the vibes and didn't want to be thrown into that unmerited feeling of rejection. Maybe it was my problem that I wanted to know if a girl I was with wanted me and never wished to violate the boundaries of intimacy and above all respect limits. On the other hand, was it she that was waiting for me to make a first move? Thinking about it became too complicated and, after all, this was only the first night I was here. I had to give it a rest. Down boy.

She yawned, not a fake yawn and then I did too as if the contagion had set in.

Well Trace, I am to see you tomorrow and if you have no plans, I can show you around this old town?

I'd like that, I said and as she left the bed her t shirt pulled up and she was just bare assed, provocative and sensuous. Many occasions in life you thank the powers that be for that moment in time. This was one of those moments.

## Two

I woke up from an uninterrupted sleep to the sound of music from somewhere, maybe upstairs or I didn't initially recognize where I was, how that happens when waking up in a new or strange place. But I put it all together, where I was, last night, in Kevin's room, falling in love with Katje and was that the biggest cockroach I had ever seen crawling across the floor towards me?

I had seen Katje jump on one yesterday but I didn't have any shoes on. In fact, I was just in boxer shorts between the sheets and was not equipped with the proper tools for extermination as it disappeared under the bed. There are a couple ways of looking at this. You could be the aggressor and destroy his (I assign gender) sorry ass into oblivion or you could set a trap to entice him into his demise, maybe place very small smut magazines with fold outs of female locusts spread eagle enticing his desire to venture into the trap or you could co-exist with the cockroach and respect each other's boundaries and live together in relative harmony. I chose the last as it was the laziest solution. Now I knew the cockroach was under the bed but had to get out of bed to pee and eventually meet the new day. I was pretty sure he, the cockroach, wasn't planning an attack and put my feet on the floor to an upright position with a foggy head in Foggy Bottom. I got up and took a shower, dressed and ventured out into the promised land, the kitchen, where I was greeted by a roommate I had not yet met.

He looked at me and smiled over the waffle iron on the island counter while sipping coffee with a joint half smoked still burning in an ash tray. His dusty blonde hair was parted in the middle and fairly long not cut very evenly. His closely cut beard was dark brown and he had wild eyes. Wild, like he had toothpicks holding them open and his thick eyebrows were dark as his beard.

Hi, I'm Glen and you are Trace. That I know from Kevin and also know that it was you that sent that ounce of weed in the carved-out book of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*. That was genius. Actually, that wasn't for Kevin but for me. I appreciate that. Thank you.

That was true. I had sent Kevin some weed and a bit risky but I cut out the center of Darwin's masterpiece I bought used and sent it at book rate through the post office for a dollar twenty-five. It was one ounce of 40-dollar Columbian, brown, fragrant and no seeds or stems. First class weed.

So, it was you. I had never known Kev to shell out 40 bucks on weed even though he would partake anytime.

Yeh, that was me. He returned his attention to the waffle at hand and then took a hit off the joint in the ashtray to make sure it was still going and handed it to me. I was no stranger to a morning high but usually accompanied it with coffee.

Grab a mug Trace. Coffee's over there in the Mr. Coffee.

Thanks Glen. And nice to meet you as I took a hit of East Coast weed that was certainly good but tasted a little old or burnt, hard to say.

I have some Thai sticks we can burn a little later but this is my morning move.

This is great I said. Feels just like home.

What did you do last night? I know Katje and you took Kev to the airport but then what?

We went to The Marsh Inn and had a couple or a few and I met the crowd.

That's fun. I'm not much of a drinker outside of beers. That crowd is kind of cool but can get obnoxious.

Everyone seemed to greet me with open arms except there was one guy, Peter, no Preston ...

Preston Sanborn, oh yeh, a real arrogant ass, smart enough, but thinks his shit don't stink.

That was him alright and he was OK but Katje dressed him down.

Well, Katje will do that. No one is immune to her caustic critique.

I wanted to know more about Katje and how people felt about her. Already Kevin had told me to hold my feelings close and now there were Glen's apprehensions.

What about Katje?

Don't get me wrong Trace. She's a wonderful friend and ally and when I first met her, I fell in love with her. Well, there are days when I still am but she doesn't reciprocate, you get it? You give her everything, unleash your feelings, give her your heart and the return is next to nothing, maybe a hug or she'll grab your hand and you'll interpret that for more than it is. She is unique and hard to read and will leave you staring at the stars.

I thought about the stars we both had been staring at the night before.

Katje walked through the two-way swinging door looking fresh in the same cut-offs and tennis shoes but with a new faded red shirt, braless, her hair disheveled and without glasses.

We were both taken aback because of the previous conversation but regained composure.

Bom dia she greeted and Glen responded with Bom dia as well. I looked at Glen for explanation.

It's Portuguese for Good Morning. Katje has tried to introduce me to her world with little success.

Smells like something here needs maple syrup she declared.

Maybe you're the syrup we need, Glen countered and I thought that some remarks might be reserved for his thoughts and not the spoken word.

Katje just looked at him blankly and then to me. Did you sleep well Trace? I hope the cockroaches did not intrude in the dreams.

No, they were fine in their endeavors but I did have a Gulliver moment and surrendered to their invasion.

I detected a slight smile from her but wasn't convinced. She had certainly become more responsive and attentive to me contrary to our initial meeting during the ice capades.

We three had waffles and syrup from Vermont with some serious coffee while Glen finished off the joint by himself. Katje drew out a Salem after the waffle to accompany her coffee blowing smoke above her head into the cavernous kitchen. There wasn't much light from the lone fixture hanging long above the



table but the tall windows on the South East side of house provided so much sun that the light fixture didn't matter. Glen had a mess on the freestanding Hoosier cabinet, a box of Bisquick, milk and eggs that had upset Katje's sense of order and she began to clean it up, not complaining but more of a personal mission. She retrieved a dish cloth from the sink and began wiping.

I thought we will take a bike ride over to National Arboretum. We can pick up lunch at deli shop on the way. Sound good, no?

I wasn't sure if she was including Glen or if it was just her and me.

Trace needs to borrow the bike Glen if that is OK. And that took care of that detail much to my concern of Glen's feelings.

Not a problem he said reaching for the last of the roach striking a lighter.

Katje said be ready in a half hour and she'd meet me out front and left the kitchen.

Giving her time to be out of hearing range, I was still sitting there with Glen, toking away on the last of the roach in the roach clip and taking in all that he could.

I had to ask. Glen, how do you feel about Katje borrowing your car and now your bike without including you?

He was inhaling the last hit and wasn't talking until he got the fullest from his smoke.

Exhaling he said, you know, it don't mean shit. For me to be included, to be a part of her life, I've found, is a useless endeavor. She has her own trajectory and it certainly doesn't include me. I like her, in fact, I love her, but I can't alter, no matter how hard I have tried and I've lived with her for two years and unable to change that in my favor. Somedays I wish she never lived here and then other days I marvel at her uniqueness and only wish I could be that guy, the one she wants. But let me tell you, it ain't happening and good luck to you. I've seen them come and go and hope you have a strong heart because she will tear it in two. It's not like she's malicious or out to avoid relationships, it's really just that she is indifferent and preoccupied in a sense that I haven't seen before. But I'm here to tell you, I'm no expert on love for Christ's sake. I've never had a girlfriend more than a month before I've been given the heave ho. He took the last hit off the roach and snuffed it in the ashtray.

Well thanks for your advice.

No Trace, it's not advice, it's just the reality of Katje, but enjoy the journey however long or short it may be. Really, no animosity here, just truths.

Thanks Glen and thanks for letting me ride your bike.

Anytime.

Katje was waiting outside the front porch with the two bikes with her hair tied back in a loose pony tail and the same short shorts but a different shirt, a thin white t-shirt, very tight and short, just above her belly button. Now I had finally been able to wear shorts this second day and tennis shoes with no socks which was my usual warm day attire. I had a Skyline Crew t-shirt from high school that was well worn. I recently had my hair cut rather short despite popular style but still on the shaggy side. It gave me access to both

sides of the fence and made no pretensions. All the hippie adornment became like a badge that I no longer wanted to wear even though I did sport a number of rings and beaded necklaces that hid inside my shirts.

Katje gave me a once over and no more before announcing the plan for the day that I could never deny just for the opportunity to spend the day with her.

We are going to go a little out of our way to shop the Greek Deli for lunch and over to the National Arboretum. Got it? Let's go.

I liked this. There wasn't any decision on my part so really there was no indecision. How clean is that? We pedaled a number of blocks, her, of course, leading the way across traffic and circumnavigating the signals in one way or another. We arrived at a Greek Deli and we both got off while she hurriedly telling me to stay here with the bikes because of theft while she would get the food. She took her hair out of the pony tail and shook her head. She had to use her fingers to comb it back out of her face.

You need some money? I asked as I was holding her bike in front of the two wide doors that were open to the deli.

Nah, I cover you.

There was a line of three people where Katje got in behind and so I knew it would be a wait. There was a news station on the radio broadcasting from inside the deli that I could hear.

*In Washington DC, the Supreme Court is deliberating for the second week about whether President Nixon will be required to hand over tapes concerning the Watergate Break In or if he has executive privilege to withhold these tapes. If ordered to do so this could have consequential effects over suspicious claims that the President might have had knowledge of the Watergate scandal.*

Katje's turn came around and she began speaking not in English to an older Deli guy behind the counter. He didn't look Greek, but was a dark Mediterranean type of a line that could be crossed. Then I got it. She was speaking Portuguese and without a problem and both were carrying on with no people waiting and certainly not talking deli sandwiches. She was very animated and using her hands to emphasize her words and the language flowed beautifully like a song. Eventually she pointed over to me outside the door and the pseudo-Greek threw me a smile. He resumed working on the sandwiches while Katje returned outside in the meantime.

He's from Sao Paulo, Antonio, and owned a deli there. He was very popular until redevelopment tore the entire block down and gave him chicken feed in return. His brother moved here first and Antonio then followed. Both them are working and saving to open their own deli but now works very hard here and makes sandwiches that are Brazilian but everyone thinks the sandwiches are Greek. They are called Bauru's in Sao Paulo and made many different ways but usually we use tomatoes and roast beef. That's what I ordered.

Sounds great! You speak Portuguese like it's your native language.

You idiot! It is my native language. There are times the thoughts in my head are jumbled, both Portuguese and English. It's not confusing to me but if anyone was listening to my brain it could get them confusing.

Antonio was waving Katje back over while putting napkins and two sodas, Mountain Dew's, in a white bag. She pulled out a five to pay him and he waved her off and they went back and forth until finally Katje grabbed the bag and left the 5 on the counter while he shook his finger at her laughing.

He never lets me pay but I told him he needs to put money away to open a true deli like the one he owned in Sao Paulo. I think he likes me.

What's there not to like I said and she blushed with only a faint detection of a smile, but not really.

After stuffing the deli bag into her small backpack, we got back on the bikes and I followed her to the National Arboretum. I had no idea that this place even existed but Katje stopped us at an information kiosk just for me to take in the enormity of it all. Developed in 1927 it has become a display of botanical research focusing on trees, shrubs, herbs and other plant diversification. Katje said we were headed to the Grove of State Trees to eat our lunch. The paths were absolutely vacant as I pedaled behind her, her hair loose and flying in a maelstrom and myself thinking I was the luckiest guy in the world never imagining that Washington DC could transpire into this. Through and over many small rises and hills she stopped and laid down her bike next to a grassy hill berm so that her bicycle was almost standing up and I did the same, wiping sweat from my forehead on this humid muggy day. We were not too far from a Cypress tree from Louisiana as the placard informed me and I wandered a little further to see Pines and Birches from New England. Then even a bit further was some small pathetic Redwoods from California. I stopped there and Katje came beside me questioning my questioning gaze.

These seem to be out of place here and are obviously not thriving but jeez, I got to give them credit for trying.

I have never been to California. I should hope to someday see the real thing.

Well maybe we could arrange that.

We went back over and sat down near the bikes and she handed over the heralded Brazilian sandwich. It was a soft roll and easy to eat and so juicy I had to hold it over the wrapping. The roast beef had some kind of peppery seasoning that was complimented by the tomatoes.

This really is good Katje, Thanks. I might not have to eat dinner tonight.

I thought you might enjoy it. Everyone does. I might save my other half until later.

That sounded like a good idea but then we found both of us going on and finishing the second half.

The sky began looking dark in the East after we finished our Mountain Dew's but the clouds overhead became random only now and then blocking the sun, shading Katje's face and then suddenly causing her to squint, her thick eyebrows down low. You know Katje, that I've only known you now for less than a day but I noticed that you don't smile very often. Why is that?

She pulled out the Salem's from her pack, lit one effortlessly, inhaled slowly and then blew smoke above her head that flew away into the breeze.

Well, this is going to sound impolite, but I hate that question. I am asked all the time by guys, by men --- A smile would be nice --- You are prettier when you smile --- Come on just give me a smile. Do they ask boys and men to smile? It is an unconscious bias they never realize they are committing. Never do girls ask me to smile and you wonder what exactly do men want? Do they want permission to advance? The all clear Hi sign that makes me submissive to their wants and desires? I find it repulsive.

I'm sorry. I find it attractive in a strange way that you are so elusive. I'm not trying to make you and I will not hide the fact that I find you attractive and desirable.

And that is just it. Why is it always endgame? You have desire? For what? To fuck me? And then what? You have conquered me and then you move on. I don't know. It's seems to be a rerun over and over.

Well Jesus Christ Katje! So, do you have something against love, against sex, the celebration of each other, the ecstasy, the fantastic sensual experience?

This was a line I threw out and it didn't feel absolutely sincere.

You make it sound so damn glorious, textbook sex, as if it always turns out that way. It's more complicated for me, maybe not for you.

Tell me. This is all good. I asked why you hardly smile and now we're here. Go on.

The darkness from the East began to move towards us as a light wind with a drop in temperature.

So, Trace, what do you know about Brasil?

I know that on a superficial level there is Carnival before Lent and a bunch of Samba activity.

And again, that is just it. Americans are ignorant of the rest of the world. They are damn self-absorbed as if the rest of the planet revolves around them without paying any attention to anything happening outside their immediate universe.

Well, let me add that I did take an anthropology class and read Claude Levi Strauss and his foray into the ethnic tribes in the Amazon. His book *Tristes Tropiques* detailing the Nambikwara and the Bororo indigenous tribes; kind of an examination of the savage mind versus the civilized mind. He thought that basically there was no difference. I think he lived for a time in Sao Paulo. So, does that take me up a notch on the ignorance ladder?

Wow! That is right Trace. OK. I only attended a year and then some at university but he is highly recognized for his work. I am surprised you are aware of him.

I guess there is that wonderful mercy of college; initiating knowledge to hopefully instill some retention, something, almost indelible, that might enhance your perspective on life. But you know, as time passes the residual fades and all we hang onto are traces. The traces, they have to suffice, they are all that remains.

Katje looked at me for a while, staring into my eyes as if she was establishing my essence, if I was a lie or making judgement as to my worthiness and credibility. She inhaled the last of the cigarette, rubbed it out and wrapped it in the deli wrap.

The darkness was now getting nearer and you could feel the slight wind bringing it on.

That is cool Trace, really cool but would you like to hear about Brasil, something from my life experience? An experience of a hundred million people, outside your nations influence, even though the United States influence has always been felt very deeply in Brasil.

I know you are from Brazil but I thought you were American?

I am American you idiot, but South American. I was born in Sao Paulo, Brasil and am not a US citizen but very much Brazilian citizen.

She seemed to like the word idiot. I don't think she thought it was berating as it came off to be.

OK, I got it, I'm an idiot and you're an alien.

Oh, get off it, alien to who? You? We are all riding on the same planet Trace. Don't be so God damn ignorant. You asked me a question that for the first time ever I will talk about.

Oh shit Katje! I forgot the question.

You wonder why I seldom smile.

Please --- tell me.

She lit another Salem, slowly and inhaled half deliberately as if to collect her thoughts.

My Father and Mother married and lived in North Carolina, I think Madison and my father worked for Remington Arms, you know, the gun manufacturer along with Winchester that changed the face of the west and later global warfare supplying guns and ammunition at affordable costs to the armies in the world. They moved to Sao Paulo in 1947. Remington bought CBC, a well-established munitions industry, and managed it with my father at the reins. He was a big shot and smart, so smart. Learned the language and positioned himself into the higher echelons of Sao Paulo life and my mother, an artist, also absorbed the language and managed through the years to attain some avant-garde notoriety. My brother, Lars, was born in '49 and me in '52 and were citizens of Brasil by birth even though both our parents were born in the US. But that didn't give us dual citizenship. I wish it had. We lived in a very nice house in Vila Madalena though I never knew how nice it was until much later. My parents also rented a house in Ubatuba, which was about two hours from Sao Paulo. We went there once a month, maybe more, but as we were young in our teens, they sometimes left us in Sao Paulo and they traveled there, just the two of them. Ubatuba was paradise, surfers, wonderful beaches, food stands and craft shops, but it began to get overrun with tourists in the early 60's. And where we lived In Vila Madalena; even that was becoming more and more upscale and forcing most of bohemian artist types elsewhere making the whole area a bit fake, artificial.

Sounds like what happened to many places in the US like Berkeley or Laguna Beach.

I don't know what happened there but in '64 the Military had a coup and threw out the President who conservatives conveniently labeled socialist. And when you label someone socialist it will be just a matter of time where it magically transforms it to communist, or so seen in some eyes. This was all aided by the US, we cannot be sure, but those in the know knew. Life didn't change much at first and especially for me, I was 12 and just beginning to grasp world order and significance of power. By 1968 I was 16 and my brother 19. He was out of high school and intensely political. A huge influence on me. He turned me onto grass and I knew he had taken LSD on numerous occasions but we kept it all quiet because my dad was super conservative, I mean Christ, he supplied the military with weapons. My Mom was more of a free spirit, a painter and sculpturer. She had many artist types coming over to our house until my father finally said no more because of their questionable leanings and objectionable beliefs about the dictatorship. And then we learned that my father had been having numerous affairs for years with many high society type women, wives of notable men. My Mom was devastated and I was too but for her. I had already written off my father as one of those Capitalists that cannot get the full picture unless he is the main focus in the portrait. Hard for me to come to terms. Of course, he loved me but his infidelity and our evermore contrasting beliefs became a knife that slowly severed us and my brother as well.

You know Katje, that parallels so much of what life was like here in the States.

Those dark clouds from the East were now almost overhead and a fine drizzle began to mist down.

Yeh, well then things became worse. Lars, in his first year at university, became involved in a political group that began to not so much protest against the ongoing dictatorship but began to promote a new democracy. He wrote articles in University Newspaper with unfavorable articles about oppression. You need to be careful about what you say and what you do pertaining to the existing military regime. One of his Political Science Professors disappeared one day and then another professor and then another. The students had heard about the tortures and executions but it had not come so close to home. He was at a large demonstration protesting the removal and disappearance of these professors when that day he never came home. No sign or trace of him. My Mom was hysterical and I went kind of crazy too. My Father, however, was concerned but assured us that he was probably detained somewhere and all would be OK. His lack of love and compassion at that moment has harmed me to this day and find very hard to get over. The police could give no accountability nor tried very much. We never heard from Lars or saw him again and my father, fed up with my mother's hysteria and the consequences looming over the fact that he fucked women he had no business fucking, quit his job and took another high-level Executive job with Motorola at a new plant just beginning production in Guadalajara.

He just left you and your mom?

It was as if he never blinked. He was not completely callous. He has provided for my mom and me most generously, I guess, because he makes a disgusting amount of money. As a matter of fact, I am going to school here on his money and I have never gone without or heard an objection from him. He wires me money whenever I want it but I do try to be conservative.

The wind picked up considerably and the drizzle turned into a sudden downpour and without words Katje gathered her backpack and bicycle and headed for the next large tree and I followed. It was a Magnolia tree designated as Mississippi's state tree and provided us cover in the onslaught. In that very short time, we were both drenched and my t-shirt was clinging to me and hers to her braless breasts. Her hair was dripping and her chest was heaving after the brief scurry. She was nothing more than sensuous and I put both hands on her shoulders and asked her if she was alright for nothing better to say because I really wanted to hug and kiss her.

I am fine she said. There was that opportunity that I missed. While she, staring into my eyes, I should have kissed her, but we just stood there in inanimate disbelief until the spell was broken by the clouds breaking open into glaring sun. It seemed like the parting of the sea or at least some revelation of personal biblical proportion. On the horizon a rainbow, as bright as I have ever seen beamed down.

She smiled.

We dried out, despite the humidity, in the sun for about half an hour saying very little and there is something comforting about that when you first meet someone and you don't have to engage in trivial conversation. After a while she wanted to know if I was up to a trek to Embassy Row. It was only about 2 and I couldn't object to anything she proposed. She said it was interesting and the architecture of the different embassies was something to see.

Let's go.

It was a fair distance from the Arboretum over to Massachusetts Avenue and Katje took every side street there was to avoid the congested main streets. I was turned around and would have been lost if not for the trust in her direction. Obviously, she had spent some time on a bicycle traversing the city.

The reward was not disappointing and very impressive to see all the embassies that deemed it worthy to establish relationships with the United States. I questioned our national credibility having witnessed the 60's, the Civil Rights struggle, the assassinations of JFK, Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy, the Viet Nam War, the Chicago 7, the Black Panthers, the Weather Underground, Patty Hearst and the SLA and now the Watergate Scandal. But here was brick and mortar evidence, edifices of cooperation and allegiance within the world order of suits and ties, of men and the power they wield. I was unable to accept this out of order discord as antiquated and archaic as it was. We passed by the British Embassy with a statue of Winston Churchill flashing the peace sign but knowing it was actually a V for Victory sign. Was it the same?

Katje stopped and got off her bicycle in front of the Brazilian. It which was quite a modern structure with a small address pyramid in front where we parked our bikes. We sat down on a short wall that circled a patch of grass. The Brazilian flag was flying high. I felt like Katje had something to tell, something to reveal, to un-conceal so to speak and I sat down next to her, obliging, to be her attentive and exclusive audience. She started to get a cigarette out of her backpack but just gripped the pack instead and started in.

I applied to George Washington University as a transfer student from Sao Paulo University with a year and a half of credits, all of which were graded high and never in question from the acceptance board. The University in Sao Paulo is comparable to Ivy League schools in the United States. It had been arranged for me to stay in the student dormitory and I thought this would be pretty smooth sailing. When I moved into the dorm with a girl recently out of high school from Des Moines, I was eager to get out. It was not as if she was stupid. She was very sensible but she just could not shut up. It was like having the radio on to the news or a talk show that never stopped even when we were in our beds. At times I can still hear her. My finances paid housing for the semester and I moved out before I lost my sanity, losing money, my father's investment in me but I knew he fortunately had plenty so I moved off campus into the house I am in now. I have been there the longest and no one is still there that was originally there when I moved in. By seniority, I guess, I have been in charge for those that come and go and collect and pay the rent and utilities. I have had some roommates that were losers but for the most part I choose people that are well financed. I had girls room half and half with the boys for a while but there was too much drama, romance and jealousy that you can certainly expect in social interaction but did not suit me very well so now it is 4 guys and me. You know Kevin, of course, and you have met Glen and you have not met Alex or Ben who are both off doing things for the summer and paying rent to keep their rooms. I am pretty much the only one who is here year-round except for occasional excursions I might take during school breaks and now that I have graduated, well, I am not sure what I will do.

So now you have four guys in love with you without any females to screw up the chemistry.

Fuck that Trace! They don't care about me, well, not that much. I am really in a limbo space trying to decide a next move. I will most likely stay here to get the master's degree but I need a break to take it all in. It is a little tougher road to get a BS in Biophysics here than to get a BA in Communications and GW does carry some merit in regard to that.

Well, I'm really impressed how you managed to do so well after what you told me earlier of your experience in Brazil.

Hey, I'm not looking for any congratulations. No atta boys, no pats on the back. Nothing I do is planned or deliberate. I move from desperation, me against all forces that come my way and then figure how I have to deal going forward.

But you should feel good about what you have accomplished. You are sensational.

What? Are you dizzy? Or just infatuated with me? I can see it your eyes. Do not put me on a pedestal where I look down on you Trace. I am just me. I am not perfect. I have flaws like everyone else.

She nailed it. I was infatuated with her and right now she could do no wrong. I needed to readjust my perspective and remove my emotions from the equation. Easier said than done.

Katje, I know I've told you that I think you're wonderful but I will try to instill some contempt in my future outlook about you. I honestly find you disgusting.



That is more like it. What I like to hear. I think I thrive on abuse --- just a joke, she said with a smirk but not showing the smile as she did back at the Arboretum.

Well, in my second year I got the job here she said throwing her finger over her shoulder towards the Embassy without looking. My job title was “Intern” but I was more than that being I spoke native Portuguese and had a fairly good, if I must say, excellent command of English language and composition. I was never the Ambassadors secretary and I had my own office to listen and translate and transmit trade negotiations or official announcements from the Embassy to the open ears of the US Government. It was a pretty dignified position to be in, to in essence manipulate what I hear into language palatable that might have effect and at the same time not offend those in the political arena. Who me, I would ask? I was 21 and at odds with the Brazilian Government for the disappearance of my brother. I was not comfortable with making policy or at least interpreting any type of international strategy and when time went on it became more stressful while having to maintain my studies at school. I asked to be paid instead of being a volunteer intern and that’s when the trouble began. They did begin to pay me and there seemed to be some payback expected from me. My immediate American woman director suggested that I should dress differently now that I was getting paid. There were some differences between a couple of men and me that had nothing to do with work and fell outside my job description. They “let me go” almost a year ago and I found a job as an intern for a Congressman in the Capitol. Compared to what I did at the Embassy, my tasks were mainly as a clerk, looking up documents in the Library of Congress. It didn’t pay anything and I got so bored I quit about a month ago. I still have my Access Badge and privileges.

Just then two women came out of the Embassy, well dressed in heels, skirts and adorned in heavy makeup. Seeing Katje, they came over and began making a fuss over her and how happy to see her. They were locals, American, and speaking my language so I felt that I had a fair level of comprehension even though everything they said sounded like frosting on a cake you saw in a bakery window but never would eat.

We miss you so much Katje. Things are not the same without you. You were such a lovely and positive addition. And then --- We’re sorry it didn’t work out. All that wasn’t fair. Good Luck Katje and then they were on their way.

She watched them leave, walking to a transit stop a half a block down and then put her head down shaking her hair in a flurry.

That might need some clarification I asked because there was so much room for conjecture in those few statements that I was curious as to what had transpired.

She looked up at me, her hair disheveled and clinging in strands where the tears had rolled.

I did not mean to bring you here for me to unload on you my history. I am just really proud of my Brazilian heritage despite the fact that there were a couple of men inside there, she said again throwing back a finger, this time her middle finger, over her shoulder towards the Embassy, that took advantage of my naivety and them having all the power, when I denied them --- and could find no other way forward but

to let me go. Holding your ground has its consequences but those consequences I am OK with. I never fucked those fat fucks from Rio! And then she buried her head again and I put my arms around her and I felt her wet face on my neck and really shared her suffering as distant as I was from it.

I couldn't hug her enough but we got back on our bikes and traveled towards G Street North West. If we had been walking it might had been uncomfortable but on bicycles, we were separate in our individual thought bubbles and able to evaluate, discern and eventually transcend until when we arrived back at the house, all emotions were in check. Bringing the bikes inside she said she wanted to shower and if I felt like it, we could pay another visit later to the Marsh Inn.

After her shower she came down to my room and said that we were having crackers and cheese in the kitchen with Glen before we went to the Inn.

That sounded good as the Brazilian sandwich was wearing off and knew it was a good move to connect to Glen again after borrowing his bicycle and his car the night before. Entering the kitchen, I was taken back by the small spread Katje and Glen had laid out with cheeses and crackers, some beers in glasses with wedges of limes gracing the rims.

Wow, I hope this is normal procedure and not just because of me. This is fantastic.

Of course, Glen had a joint ready to go and struck a match as soon as I sat down at the large table.

What's on the agenda Katje? I asked as I really didn't want to get stoned and have to maintain in an uncomfortable environment.

We are going to the Marsh Inn and have a couple. No big deal.

In my hometown, Oakland, it would be no holds barred but here I thought better. Glen had already taken a healthy hit and was passing it to me.

I'll have to decline for the time being Glen. I don't want to come across as the stoned hippie from California even though some might jump to that conclusion or make that interpretation anyway. I'm going to stick with alcohol.

Glen looked at me and smiled and it must have been some good weed he was smoking because he didn't seem to care. I looked over at Katje and she didn't acknowledge a thing as she was putting cheese on a cracker. I felt guilty as having not obliged but my focus was on my focus and you have to remember, dear reader, that the focus was on Katje. I think I was becoming fast head over heels. I loved her in that she kept her cards close even though she had divulged so much to me in just one day. In a way I felt like I was just a friend listening, somewhat like a therapist and trying to position myself to be her eventual lover. Maybe I was overreaching my boundaries but never did she seem to resist me. If there were spells that were cast, I certainly had fallen under one.

We finished up the impromptu snacks and beers as Glen finished off the joint by himself, showing no worse for wear.

Well, we should go now Katje said and we all got up while she looked at Glen and he caught her look.

What? You don't want me to go with you? He asked.

No, that is fine Glen. But you know how most of those people just piss you off until you cannot take it anymore and then you want to leave after a short time.

Well, it's better that I leave than stay there listening to all the trite and self-absorbed conversation about what they are going to do in the world. They should be seeing what the world is doing to them.

And what is wrong with that Glen? They have aspirations and dreams and some have more direction than I have at this point. I might not agree with them but is not that the interface of social politics? Is not that how we decide what not to be?

So, is this an argument for me to come along with you or stay here?

No argument here. I just do not want to drag along a gloomy Eeyore, braying and digging in their heels at every imagined obstacle.

I laughed at the visual and Glen did as well, shaking his head in acknowledgment.

Come on Glen, I said, let's go and have a few. I glanced quickly at Katje who covertly rolled her eyes that Glen did not see. Did that mean she wanted us to go alone? Well, too late now.

Katje locked the back door of the kitchen and grabbed the same tiny purse, lassoing it around her neck and led the way to the front door and held it open to let us pass.

You got keys Glen?

Oh, shit, no but I'm with you.

No Glen, go get your keys just in case you have that hissy fit we talked about and have to leave early.

Katje --- you're ruthless he said and ran upstairs to get his keys.

Katje didn't say anything and just looked at me not smiling but that was normal at this point. Then she softly hit me with her fist to my shoulder as if to acknowledge the situation.

It was still very light outside but she turned on the porch light for the return trip and locked the door as Glen returned behind us.

Katje lit up a cigarette for the walk which was just short of a full cigarette and once again threw it out in the gutter before we even got to the neon buzz of The Marsh Inn.

Again, entering the Inn was a transformation. How could so many people be crowded into such a small building? Katje surveyed the crowd using her sonar to track down her crowd or the crowd she wanted to be around. The juke box was playing a Rascals tune from the 60's, *A Girl Like You*.

*I don't know what it's all about*

*But I feel I'll soon find out, I'm sure, never felt this secure*

*It's nothin' like I ever thought it would be*

*Someone opened up a door for me*

*A girl like you ---*

Glen walked over to the juke box and started gazing at the music selection and reaching in his pocket for change to transfer his musical tastes onto ours. It was a noble pursuit, but in this instance, songs could play one after another without anyone paying much attention. The juke box could have been playing Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* and no one would have noticed but there was always one of these guys in every crowd who needed to monopolize the music.

Again, Katje grabbed my hand and we were on our way towards the back of the tavern where a crowd, pretty much the same crowd with a few new faces were congregated around a Foosball table where no one was playing at the time.

Lots of Hellos and many hugs for Katje and Marlene, the same girl that hugged me the night before did so again. One of the guys, Lenny, said Hey it's Katje's Catch Night 2.

Preston Sanborn, I remembered his name this time, came up to me and close to my ear said, well, my friend, you lasted more than a night with our Katje, eh?

Bit of a snide remark but I said, Yeh, she seems to be putting up with me so far.

Even closer he said, putting up but not putting out.

No one heard this but me, so it was as if it was never said as far as I was concerned. Ignore it. I didn't know their history and didn't care but this guy type of remark in what is presumed to be OK among boys and men, an understandable comradery that often strays into locker room descriptions, resorting to anatomical references and crude distortions. I left him and walked over to Katje and asked her what she wanted to drink.

I would like a Pernod over ice.

Now I had only heard of Pernod in that it was what came down after most countries shut down Absinthe. There was a history there and for good reason that the wormwood in the Absinthe contributed to the deterioration of mental capacities of the imbued. The demise of Paul Verlaine, Arthur Rimbaud and Charles Baudelaire was attributed to this wormwood drink that left them akin to opium smokers, only to be adept in their own world. However, I have never been one to shun a source of enlightenment or even possible debauchery. I had previously shared some Absinthe with Sherri, who had brought home a bottle from a cruise ship in the fjords of Scandinavia and was impressed by the narcotic properties that I readily related to. However, after traversed the landscapes of LSD, Mescaline, Peyote and Psilocybin, the effect left me short of anything memorable. I felt the same way about cocaine, not much bang for your buck but who am I to judge the latest high. None the less I was a trooper for Katje and went to the bar with the request. The same bartender as last night looked first at me blankly but then knew he had a bottle up there on the top shelf that should eventually be emptied and complied. Then I said make it two.

Two shots partner?

No, two drinks over ice please. And that is how he poured.

I brought the drinks to Katje and she acknowledged that it was indeed what she had requested. The Pernod and ice had turned the drink into a white foggy slurry. We toasted each other and then and there I

felt a connection to her that would be hard to erase, a Foggy Bottom memory. Why? Because I really could feel this evolving connection, like octopus arms searching for nourishment. Her tentacles were reaching. I could see it in her eyes.

Glen came back to the fold having put on *Angry Eyes* by Loggins and Messina carrying a Carlings Black Label.

*Time, time and again I see you staring down at me  
Now, then and again I wonder what it is that you see  
With those angry eyes*

*What a shot you could be if  
You could shoot at me  
With those Angry Eyes...*

*You tried to defend that  
You are not the one to blame.*

*But I'm finding it hard, my friend,  
When I'm in the deadly aim  
Of those Angry Eyes.*

Everyone knew Glen and said their hellos but it was apparent that he had some past abrasive encounters with those gathered and held some distance, but not much, in this public display.

Preston, whose edge was sharp to encounter, greeted Glen.

Well hello Glen. I am surprised to see you venture out into public. You're terribly overdue.

Glen said quickly and without any filters to detain him, Preston, do we really want to get into this. I think you are a piece of shit and you think the same of me, so why should we pursue the eventual reality that, indeed, you are a bigger piece of shit than me.

Even though it was loud and crowded, people parted as if the Red Sea had called its own.

Katje interrupted and bringing her Pernod in hand to the fray.

OK, enough of this, you testosterone bastards --- there are better things to think about than whose dick is bigger. It is of no consequence. I now live in this nation that is corrupt and deceiving at every turn. I have seen bigger dicks than you in Brasil and now they seem to have migrated here. Like a bad flu, a political epidemic. We cannot be fucking ignorant and trusting in what we are expected to believe in.

Question the elite, question authority, because they are watching and will try to silence you. Vigilance is a safe defense.

Well, no one wanted to hear or even challenge this in the reclusive white college environment of GWU. Whether beyond reach or ignorant of reality, this was shock treatment, never comfortable and easily neglected. It was reminiscent of the usual diatribe that proved so true from the Mills College girls back home.

Katje sipped her Pernod and looked at me as if I could validate all that she said.

Preston took a sip and then another sip of his Manhattan. He seemed to be non-plussed from what both Glen and Katje were spouting off about. He calmly replied.

I know you are all suspending your critical faculties until the courts hang Nixon by his testicles but precisely, did he do anything more than to preserve authority and direction in the belief of the preservation of his vision of America?

Katje had to infuse.

You do not see an obstruction of justice by Nixon? Executive Privilege? That it is abuse of Presidential power and that he instructed CIA to override the FBI? This government has been called into question. You do not think they should have answers for this infiltration, these crimes?

You might be overreacting there Kotch, Preston sipped. And this really is not your country.

Glen blew into his beer bottle making a whistle as if to signal a time out to intercede.

Hold on a minute there, Master of Ignorance. Have you been hiding under a rock your whole life? Can't you see how fucked up this country is? JFK, Martin Luther King, Bobby Kennedy all murdered by who? I'd be a genius to be able to point the finger of blame but these weren't just chance circumstances. Something covert is going on here and our government is not coming clean with the answers.

Glen chugged a few more slugs of his Black Label as he was about to wind up again before Preston inserted.

Sounds like you've been infected by the conspiracy bug my friend. I bet you doubt that Armstrong walked on the moon. Watch out, that paranoia and alienation will eventually take you out Glen.

Preston remained cool and Glen was agitated and everyone else kind of peeled off to enjoy themselves except for Katje, Glen, Preston and me.

I'll tell you who is alienated, Glen added --- Jimi, Janis, Morrison, Brian Jones, Gram Parsons --- all checked out.

Now come on, you can't identify those losers and cast them upon the same stage as Bobby, Martin and John. Those were drug overdoses. Where are you going with this Stoner Boy? I suggest that you entertain a self-protecting interest concerning politics over truth.

I'm glad that Glen was indeed stoned because he should have knocked Preston's teeth out even though that hitting a guy in the mouth, I have found, is very painful to the hand.

I looked over at Katje and saw she had downed her Pernod and was deciding whose defense to come to although it was fairly obvious to me and not even worth the trouble. Preston was trying to play William F. Buckley and Glen was trying to channel Jerry Rubin, both without success. I, as a relative stranger, had to intervene.

Hey you guys, none of us here are capable of making any change in our capacity. We can't do anything. Katje fumed. No dammit! Doing nothing placates and enables all those bastards giving them license, causing disruption and chaos. The attitude of "we can't do anything" gives them a pass to do whatever they want to.

The admonishment was stinging but she was correct. I had protested for People's Park in Berkeley and then when Nixon mined the Hai Phong Harbor in Viet Nam I was there protesting with hundreds and was even hit by one of the first putty bullets used to by the Berkeley Police to deter protestors. I knew that if you did nothing, nothing would indeed happen. Oakland was home to the Panthers. The Weathermen had been bombing left and right and the Symbionese Liberation Army had kidnapped Patty Hearst. Everywhere people were doing what in their own minds was their personal form of protest against the immediate establishment. People were dying and no one was winning. It was chaos in its most sublime form.

You're right Katje. That was naive of me. Of course, we all need to do something, anything to express our rage and discontent. Katje reached for a Salem.

Preston looked like the Cheshire Cat still sipping his Manhattan finally to drive on a point of his.

Isn't this whole Watergate thing really blown out of our immediate perspective? Isn't it just simply a bungled burglary that has produced nothing, if anything substantial and never jeopardized Nixon's re-election? Much ado about nothing in my opinion.

Glen blew in his bottle again but this time a much lower note responding --- It was a crime; it was covert and it was a violation of ethics. It doesn't mean shit if they didn't find anything. If a bank robber gets caught robbing a bank before he takes any money, he's still guilty.

Katje had her cigarette lit now and quickly inhaled and blew smoke above her head.

Preston, you must be putting us on she said. If a President is corrupt on this level and gets away with it just think of the power he can wield and the consequences that could have. Power unchecked becomes a dictatorship and we all have seen how that goes.

Preston just smiled at Katje. He remained cool and got the best of all of us and he knew it. He was smug. He walked to the bar for a rejuvenation of his Manhattan. Glen was riled up and walked over to the juke box to spend more change. Katje looked like that lizard I first witnessed yesterday when I just met her, ready to spring and devour her prey. She shook the ice in her empty glass and I took that as a cue and went up to the bar waiting next to Preston for the bartender to recognize us and come over. I needed to say something.

You know Preston, I think you might have inadvertently upset Glen and Katje back there.

You think that was inadvertent? I'm a master at that. My brother tells me all the time that I was born to be an asshole. I could take that as an insult but really, I just challenge people's ideas, ethics and moral principles. I hope I didn't upset you. You seem to be on an even keel and if I did, I'm really not sorry, it's just my nature.

I still hated this guy but that was honest and to the point.

Now it's my turn. Let me buy you a drink he said and I told him I was up here for Katje as well.

Oh, Katje's drink monitor. I've seen a number of you come and go. In fact, I did some service to that effect at one point with Kotch. She's a good one to pull you in close enough to think you have a chance but it never goes much further. He paused. Sure, I'll buy you one as well as Katje and before we leave our place here at the bar, we'll toast to a long and amorous life for you two.

I'm not looking for anything with Katje I lied. I came here to visit Kevin and she has conveniently substituted for him. I'm just going with the flow.

Is that right? Come on, I can see it your eyes, the way you look at her. You're not fooling anyone Trent. No, the name is Trace.

Sorry there Trace. Don't get me wrong Trace. Katje certainly appears be an excellent piece of ass. Her body and tits are phenomenal. I would certainly reserve any option to fuck her.

You know Preston, I think you got it right. You really are an asshole I said laughing.

Nothing upset this guy. He was on his own trajectory.

Preston laughed it off and said Let's see if we can get this guy's attention referring to the bartender who was working beyond his capacity.

While waiting I looked over my shoulder and could see Katje and Glen arguing about something. It was true. Preston had upset the balance much to his delight. I saw Glen walking away again putting more change in the juke box and then walking out the door of *The Marsh Inn*.

We finally got the drinks and did the said toast before I quickly brought back the Pernod to Katje who was halfway through another cigarette and looking a little disgusted but now with a couple of friends back in the fold. It was still loud and I had to get close to Katje to hear her.

Thanks Trace. Glen needed to split as was predicted. He gets very passionate in debates and discussions. I suppose I do too.

The music was forever loud and playing a new song by a newly formed group, Bad Company.

*Bad company*

*And I can't deny*

*Bad company*

*Till the day I die, oh*

*Till the day I die*

*Till the day I die*



*Rebel souls  
Deserters we are called  
Chose a gun  
And threw away the sun...  
Now these towns  
They all know our name  
6-gun sound is our claim to fame...  
I can hear them say  
Bad company  
And I won't deny...  
Bad, bad company  
Till the day I die...  
Oh, yeah  
Till the day I die*

I had to think that Glen had played this as his swan song to exit from *The Marsh Inn*.

With Glen out of the picture the crowd gathered back around with no one holding court. Marlene came up beside me very close and gave me a smile that was vague to interpret. Her drink was empty and I don't think that was the reason she sidled up to me but I asked her if I could get her another.

That's so kind. Make it a Greyhound.

Greyhound?

That's Grapefruit juice and Vodka.

Marlene, this east coast crowd is educating me endlessly. She laughed and I proceeded to the bar again and the bartender must have thought I was sport drinking with the variations I had been ordering but he was non-plussed and kept to task. I tipped him a buck and he did the same as always --- tapped the bar and said Thank you sport.

I brought the "Greyhound" back to Marlene and saw the piercing eyes of Katje overseeing my delivery.

Thank you Trace. I think I like your California attitude or is it just you?

I can't resist buying a drink for a beautiful woman.

Katje came beside me and kept nudging me with her body and it was hard to interpret this. Normally you could look at someone in this situation and detect a smile or at least some affectionate gesture. But no. I felt so close to her but very far away, further than I wanted to be. Everyone talked about school and how they were through or how much more they had to do. Preston, by this time, after perhaps his fourth Manhattan moved next to Katje and whispered into her ear. Katje kind of pushed him away but not enough for anyone to notice but me and then he came back at her to try to whisper again but Katje was swift and

moved closer to me. I hated being put in this position of perhaps having to defend the damsel in distress. It brought back a recent memory back in Cayucas, California.

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We traveled to Cayucas to visit Kim, driving down from Oakland with Swan Willow riding shotgun, for some type of reunion of vague nature but with an attitude of all in and willing. Swan and I had to finally stop to pee and maybe have a drink or two. We stopped at *The Hoof Tavern* and after the bathroom stops situated ourselves at the bar. Not much to our surprise this was a sort of a cowboy bar but Swan and I, when we traveled together, had this invincible shield, I thought, that could circumnavigate any situation presented.

I ordered a beer and Swan ordered a Black Velvet over. There were many eyeing us at the bar, feeling that this was undoubtedly their bar and their territory and we were intruders but it was too late to re-assess what we were in the middle of. My hair was fairly long then and I adorned many rings and necklaces. Swan had a gold star pierced into her nose. She wore a braless tube top shirt, bell bottoms and bare foot to boot. One of the cowboys came up and sat in the bar stool next to Swan.

Well now aren't you a pretty young thing. I wasn't sure if this was a question or a statement.

I would have preferred that Swan maintained some cool and reservation at this moment but true to form she didn't.

Fuck off asshole.

Funny how in moments like this the juke box chooses to become completely silent between songs so in the in-between, Swan's proclamation resounded through the bar.

The cowboy was a bit startled but then he came over to me and put his hand down hard on my shoulder. Your girlfriend there, you know, she's got a foul mouth.

I didn't know where this was heading and for some strange reason this guy didn't scare me, yet.

You know, I tell her that all the time.

He laughed and he looked at the rest of the bar and they laughed too.

OK brother, let me buy you both a drink.

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Was Katje looking for defense? I think not. She could handle this except for the fact that she was more than casually high and he was drunk. He stumbled a bit but not out of control. He thought he was secretive to Katje but everyone heard.

I have this general feeling Katje that you might desire an alternative destination. Why don't we advance over to my apartment?

Katje, although she shouldn't have, having eliminated all filters due to the effects of Pernod said, Preston, you self-absorbed smug asshole. Why should I want to go home with you? We have tried this scenario before, have we not? Please do not let me reveal to our friends here, the results of that limp encounter.

Preston blushed bright in the dark bar and almost dropped his drink.

Well, I thought we both had a wonderful time.

Katje stopped short and said no more and some people that heard were laughing but really it was not a laughing matter. I felt bad for Preston and as well for Katje to resort to this moment to unleash her barrage of emotions. It was a caustic affront to Preston's sexuality.

This time, I gulped the Pernod down, I said to Katje that I'd like to go home and she didn't protest. Her drink was finished and I whisked her off without farewell. She held on to my arm long after we exited and were halfway down the street until I thought she checked her emotions.

You might have done some damage to Preston's ego there Katje.

Yeh, well he will have to deal with it. I have already gone down that road with him before.

I didn't want to ask about the road or decidedly cared that much. I had not enough time with her to develop any jealousy and how could that warrant comment that might be biased. I already thought Preston was an asshole. He confirmed it himself. So, let it be. It was even hotter this night than last but didn't stop Katje from lighting up and somehow after exhaling big and long she stopped and looked at me. Of course, I stopped as well, her and I facing each other just a foot away. I thought she was going to point out some more constellations to me.

Who are you?

What? I spoke. I didn't know where she was going with this, stopped on the sidewalk in Foggy bottom.

You, who are you? I mean you know much about me now and I don't even know crap about you except that you are Kevin's buddy from Oakland. This is too one sided.

What is one sided?

Where this is headed. Do not be an idiot Trace. I see the way you look at me and I love it and I like you. But what am I liking? Some attractive boy from California with a mystique that is held so close that I have to guess what he is feeling.

That was a lot to divulge from the queen of elusiveness but boy did it make me feel good as finally she was feeling this connection I felt.

Shit Katje! I was trying to give you some free space. No one wants to be forced into a relationship.

Relationship? Guys! Does there have to be a definition or parameter on what can be or what can happen. This is now. Let us focus on now Trace. Relationship sounds like marriage.

Well, yeh. I guess my mind is all twisted around about you. I want to be with you but don't want to force the issue. I think you are fragile in terms of, I can't say relationships because you axed that, but sexual interaction. How's that?

So, it is back to fucking me and then what?

I might not have the same opinion about "fucking" as you do. Sex, I have found, can be much better than drugs, well some drugs. I have to qualify that.

OK, this is going nowhere Trace. She started back up the street to the house. I caught up with her quickly and pulled on her shoulder to turn her around to face me and just briefly looked in her eyes and found the look I was looking for. It was a first kiss and she held me tightly and I never wanted it to end.

I still don't know shit about you she repeated, still never showing a trace of a smile.

We got back to the house and Glen was blasting music from his room. Katje just rolled her eyes and said let's go upstairs where in fact it was even louder. I had never yet been upstairs where all the bedrooms were except Kevin's. I followed her and went into her room and she closed the door to muffle the music, which helped but only a little. Her room was painted dark blue with stars painted in constellations on the ceiling that seemed to glow. She turned on two lava lamps and they didn't move as they never do until warm. A Brazilian flag was on the wall above her double bed that was on two levels of cinder blocks raising it higher than normal. I wondered if this was a cockroach deterrent. She lit two candles on a round table that looked as if it was her study desk as well, neat and orderly. She lit still another candle on a small table with two small sofa type chairs and sat down, taking off her high tops. She had a small refrigerator over near a door that looked like a closet.

I'm going to change out of these smoky clothes and she grabbed something and disappeared into the door that was next to the refrigerator. It had to be a bathroom. Glen's music was still loud and I felt bad for him. The night did not seem to go well for him. I sat and listened for a while and he was playing Emerson, Lake and Palmer. The song was *Trilogy*.

*I've tried to mend*

*The love that ended*

*Long ago although we still pretend*

*Our love is surely coming to an end*

*Don't waste the time you've got to love again ---*

*We tried to lie*

*But you and I*

*Know better than to let each other lie*

*The thought of lying to you makes me cry  
Counting up the time that's passed us by  
I've sent this letter hoping it will reach your hand  
And if it does I hope that you will understand  
That I must leave in a while  
And though I smile  
You know the smile is only there to hide  
What I'm really feeling deep inside  
Just a face where I can hang my pride  
Goodbye  
Goodbye*

I wanted to go in and talk with Glen. He seemed to be transmitting through his music to me. I was sure he was inside his own world and probably didn't even know we had come back to the house. I just couldn't leave without letting Katje know while emotions were ramping up between us. Why should I consider Glen in this equation? I did feel that he had something to do with all this Katje business and even more than I knew or did I want to know? Katje came out of the bathroom wearing a red USP t-shirt (University of Sao Paulo) with black gym shorts and had let her hair loose falling long all around her. She sensed something and gazed at me.

What?

What do you mean what? I defended.

You look like you have words stuck in your mouth trying to get out.

Well, Katje, I don't know Glen very well. As a matter of fact, I don't know you that well but better than Glen. He seems to be troubled about something.

Wow Trace! How did you acquire this incredible insight?

The sarcasm was evident and once again I thought how naive I am to think that I feel and see things in terms no one else does.

Well, maybe you could give me some understanding about the life and times of Glen that gives me some clue for his misery.

Well, what do you want to know?

Anything, only because I know nothing. I'm sensing some mystery between every guy you introduce me to as if they give me this knowing nod and a good luck pal sendoff.

Oh get off it. You can only be talking about Preston and Glen and those brief encounters never amounted to anything.

You kind of singled out Preston at the bar and none of my business but have you been involved with Glen? And again, none of my business but am curious.

It is none of your business --- but here it goes.

She reached over to the pack of Salem's, lighting one in record time, inhaling and blowing the smoke high above her head. It reminded me of the pressure cooker my dad used to cook linguica in every Sunday morning. The top would hiss to relieve pressure.

I had just started a new semester here in this house and had either rid the undesirables or they had gone on about their ways. It was an empty house except for me and I felt I was obligated to recruit new roommates and it was really up to me to choose and decide. Of course, I want only GWU students for continuity. As I told you before, the girl roommate mix with males didn't work out and so I thought after advertising that if the first person I choose is a girl then it will be all girls but if I choose a guy, well then it will be that. I never thought about myself. I have often found myself relating to boys easier than to girls and so when Glen fit the roll as the first person, it was set in my mind that it would then be all guys. Glen was here almost 3 weeks before the next guy, Alex, became the next roommate. Now where I am guilty is this --- because in those short 3 weeks there was just Glen and me in this house and we were getting comfortable with each other but in entirely different ways, different perceptions of friendship interpreted as more than that. You get it? Glen began to treat me as his girlfriend even though there was nothing like that going on. Then one night, I don't know if he was drunk or stoned or both; he came into my room naked and jumped into bed with me before I could comprehend what was happening. He hugged me and started kissing my neck and I thought it was best to keep cool rather than freak out and just calmly said --- Glen, this is not going to work out. He got out of my bed, back to his room and I thought that he might be devastated but I was at a loss on how to deal with it. The next few days were like we were two strangers in an empty house but then Alex moved in and they bonded well and that was that. My mistake was avoiding talking about that night instead of denying or even acknowledging that it ever happened . Since then, I have felt more like his mother than a normal roommate. I clean up after him, as well as the others, reprimand him for being a slob and giving him advice on the girls he brings over. He always looks for my approval and I should have never let it get to that. He thinks he is stuck on me; you know, he thinks he loves me and how can that be? I can only shoulder so much guilt and then I have to live my life.

Through this she was dragging on the cig without a pause and now looked at me for some kind of reinforcement. It was a classic one-sided romance in my eyes and had been on both sides of it, mostly Glen's.

It's obsession. Projecting love without interaction and imagining thoughts, reasons and consequences that are not actual, they're just possible figments without any consideration of reality. If he loves you, it is real in his mind, fabricating your feelings that he assumes are the same as his.

She looked at me and this time blew the smoke right at me.

Well great, Mister Psychoanalytical Asshole. Where does that leave me? You think I engineered his infatuation slash misery?

No Katje! You are unfortunately the understudy, the stand in for someone who is a no show, and in your mind was never there but the play must go on, right?

She put the cigarette out in the glazed ceramic ashtray on the table next to her and then taking both hands with fingers like combs raked her hair to the back of her head where it stayed put only briefly before falling back into her face.

Christ Trace. I don't know if you're full of shit or if you're some sick twisted angel to straighten me out, but I hear that and maybe you could come over here and sit next to me unless you want to go in and console Glen about his assumed obsession?

Well actually, I was thinking we might want to check in on him.

Her face fell from no smile to frown.

Great, then you go in and get loaded with Mister Misery and I'll put myself to bed. It's better that way. But tomorrow I was thinking we could visit the Capitol of this *wonderful* country and I could show you a few things of interest. Boa Noite.

I realized that I just passed up an opportunity that might not come again and I felt the familiar below the belt urging. There was no undoing it and I started to go over to her to kiss her but she had already turned her back to me, adjusting her pillow, so I said good-night and left, closing the door and back into the din of music.

Out in the hall I waited for the music to stop before knocking. It wasn't long and he asked Who's there? It's Trace, Glen. We're back from the bar and I heard the music and wanted to hear more.

There was silence and then a couple of shuffled footsteps and the unlocking of the dead bolt that every bedroom had.

Glen looked pleasantly stoned when he opened the door and welcomed me in. There were two black lights above each of the two windows that had the shades drawn and the walls were covered with posters, mostly of Asian nature, mandalas, Buddha and Sanskrit. On another wall was a poster of Grace Slick at Woodstock and another of Jimi Hendrix at The Monterey Pop Festival. He also had album covers all over one wall of which I recognized most all. Two guitars rested in stands, one acoustic Martin and one electric Gibson with a small Fender Princeton amplifier behind it. He also had a small refrigerator and had a bathroom as well. I sure liked this place. Everyone had their own bathroom, unheard of in my Oakland digs. The bookcase was completely full of books, not textbooks but paperbacks and on the floor was 4 feet of albums beside the stereo and turntable. It resembled my room back in Oakland except instead of guitars I had an upright piano and a waterbed.

He didn't say anything but proceeded to roll a joint from a shoe box top that had an ample amount of weed. In California, the caliber of marijuana had graduated to either flower from Hawaii or from Mendocino County and its potency was dramatic, so much so that it became almost incapacitating. This didn't appear to be that although at this point in the evening I could easily enjoy the escape.

You did leave a little early Glen. Did Preston get to you?

Naw, Preston is what he is and someday he'll have the regrets to deal with that he should.

You really think so? I think guys like that end up becoming Senators and tell us what should be.

Yeh, that could be, but he's not smart enough to be a Senator.

Who said Senators had to be smart?

We both laughed at that as he licked the glue on the Zig-zag rolling paper.

I was still standing and he motioned me over to an overstuffed chair that matched the one he was in with a table between holding an ashtray and a roach clip.

Before lighting up he went over and took off Emerson Lake and Palmer and put on another album which I could see was *Wishbone Ash*, an alternative rock English band. I had heard some of their music but did not have any of their albums

Well Trace, I'm glad you came a knockin'. I am kind of a loner but do enjoy an occasional visitor.

He said this while setting the stylus on the album and striking a strike anywhere match on one of the cinder blocks under the shelf of the turntable.

I felt at ease. This was familiar territory. There is a certain brotherhood of weed that unites and I am not saying this exclusive to guys. Women inhale in fair proportion. Glen lit up the joint with the match, not a lighter, and took the first hit and handed it to me. I inhaled and that introduced a new reality.

Do you think, Glen, that all that we do is in vain? That we really only secure some place-marker, some tally that gets knocked off by the next generation so that we feel slighted, feel that our contribution in the whole life scheme is just futile?

Correct Trace but not so much. If each generation doesn't do their best to chip away at the last then they have failed. I'm just here to do my part. The world is in a constant period of fucked-up-ness and reaction is all we have or at least all I have.

I took a long hit. I salute you Glen. I hope your future is my future.

Our futures don't have to relate. If everyone agitates for their own particular demise then the friction will cause abrasion and that alone will create change on many levels. It's simple in my mind but complex to initiate or even to accomplish.

I guess Glen had smoked more than I had before I had entered the premise because his thoughts while not out of hand were elevated. I decided to let it flow and hear him out.

I passed the joint back to him and he held it out in front of him as if divining wisdom.

I believe there is no replacement for experience.

But really Glen, how do we have much experience in life with only 20 plus years. I think we are relatively naïve although we think not. My experiences are huge but in no comparison to a lifetime of them.

Right you are but ours are much more significant than a lifetime, they are present here and now. We are different, don't you think so Trace?



No, I don't think so. We're just cogs in history's machinery and forever and forever we continually repeat our past. Man cannot help himself but to be destructive to his own existence. We are masters at destroying peace and harmony to levels we can't restore. And we do it over and over.

Yeh, it's exhausting, life; and I'm only 22. There are days I feel like I'm on a train that is running out of track. I'm waiting for the whole thing to derail.

Glen got up and walked to the small refrigerator. You want a beer Trace?

Sure.

He had a couple of 6 packs crammed in there along with a couple of bottles of wine.

Black Label or Rolling Rock?

We didn't have Rolling Rock in California.

Rolling Rock. Thanks Glen.

He grabbed a Black Label and came back to the chairs and we both opened them at the same time.

We were sufficiently stoned now and I thought I would ask him again about Katje.

Glen, what about Katje? I mean if you are in love with her and you're not getting back nothing in return, I mean isn't that frustrating?

He took a sip of beer and then another.

You like her, don't you Trace? I can see it and you ask me this because even though we just met you have some regard to my feelings. I like that. But don't worry about me. You'll be gone in a few days and everything returns to normal. Normal being that Katje treats me how she always has which never meets up to the expectations I have. I can't make something happen that can't.

I left it at that while sipping The Rolling Rock and listening to Yes play *Close to the Edge* which conveniently provided an exit from Katje talk. When the side ended and my beer empty, I said it was time to hit it and thanked him again. His eyelids were heavy as well and he locked the deadbolt behind me.

# Three

Upon waking the next morning, I felt hazy and feeling some regret. Regret in that Glen never came to grips with his one-sided love of Katje and thus was digging himself into a hole. The other regret was that there was this squandered chance where Katje and I were connecting and I blew it off to go talk to Glen. If I had a redo I would have stayed with Katje. As often as it was there was no recapturing what was left in pieces the night before. I took a shower and noticed the water pressure was low probably due to the fact that someone else was taking a shower as well. After the shower I dressed and wandered out into the kitchen where I could smell coffee brewing. Katje was there looking alert and with wet hair.

Bom Dia she greeted and I remembered that this was Good Morning in Portuguese.

Bom Dia indeed. That coffee smells awfully good Katje.

There is plenty for all of us but Glen might be a little late. He stayed up late. I woke up at 2:30 and he was still playing music. Did you two have a good time?

Well yeh, but I left around 11:30 and he was still going strong but ...

But what?

He's over the top in love with you Katje. I wish he could focus on something or someone else but he really is stuck on you.

Katje sighed a huge sigh as if someone just dropped a lifetime of anxiety upon her.

I can only be me Trace. I cannot get involved with him just because of pity. Where would that leave me? Resentful and obligated. I cannot go there.

Well, I get that, I do, but it doesn't change the whole dynamics of loving someone and love unrequited. His focus is preoccupied by an unrelenting love for you that is not acknowledged.

So, again, where do I fit in? What would you prefer me to do to remedy this lopsided situation?

No Katje, I certainly don't have the answer. Just stating what I see.

She didn't answer and scooped some yogurt into two bowls and added some granola and then some blueberries and set them both down on opposite sides of the table bringing coffee from the Mr. Coffee. There were some muffins under a towel in a basket as well. They were warm.

Thank you Katje. This is perfect.

She didn't say anything but began to eat. It was quiet while we both ate and thought. We sipped our coffee but when finished with the yogurt both needed a refill and she said let's go out onto the porch.

These old builders of houses had something going for them. The kitchen and this sun porch were positioned, at least in July to have full morning sun and we moved to take advantage of it. The Sun, our star,

has such a rehabilitating elixir that can never be explained. Soothing in warmth, we savored our coffee and didn't say much of anything at all because how could you one up the Sun.

Katje finally spoke. I thought maybe I could show you around the Capitol, the actual Capitol because I still have a clearance that expires at the end of this month and it might mean my last hurrah.

What do you mean? A clearance?

I can take you places that no one else can.

Katje, how can I argue with that?

She laughed, getting my double-entendre.

You will have to borrow some of Kevin's preppie clothes and I will wear my embassy attire so we can flow without interference.

OK, I'll see what I can come up with

You should have no problem. Kevin dresses that way every day.

Katje, I'm well aware of that.

Meet you out front in 15.

Got it.

Katje was right about Kevin's closet. There wasn't anything I'd wear for myself but he had fancy pants and shirts to not do laundry for weeks. All his slacks were hanging from their cuffs so I picked the longest one because I was a couple of inches taller than Kevin. The polo shirt was not a problem to match the blue pinstriped seersucker pants. It was white with the prestige alligator on the chest. My sandals would have to do because my feet were much larger than his. I looked in the mirror on the backside door of his bathroom and thought I pulled it off pretty decently. My hair was short and I was clean shaven, no sideburns. I felt a bit awkward like I was in masquerade but ready to go.

I came out into the hallway or foyer of the old magnificent house and Katje was waiting for me. She was wearing a dark brown skirt and a white sleeveless shirt with bra this time and her hair was pulled back into a pony tail. She had her glasses on but still wore no makeup. She didn't need any. She had her name badge on and it was the first time I saw her last name. Funny how I never even thought about her last name. Her badge read Katje Farrell and in smaller letters State Department and then under that Congressional Aide. Perfect I thought --- Kat Farrell. A feral cat, how fitting.

She gave me the lookover with much scrutiny and came over to me and pushed my hair back off my forehead.

Yeh, you'll pass. She handed me a badge that said GUEST and in smaller letters, of, and then the next line, Katje Farrell.

What? This badge suffices to get where you want to go.

It does. Most of it is familiarity with the Capitol Guards of which I know most all. I did spend a lot of time on the "hill". We should have no problem.

Problem doing what? I felt as if we going on some covert mission to get into the innermost sanctums of the US Government.

No, were not doing anything but traveling through. You'll see Trace.

So off we went walking to the Capitol looking like two junior diplomats without briefcases. It was warm outside but at 9:30 it was not enough to yet sweat, keeping our preppy composure intact. Katje grabbed my hand at corners and crosswalks in a motherly gesture, I guess, so I did not get run over or if I did it would be both of us. I didn't mind, any physical contact with her I couldn't get enough of. She smoked two Salem's on the way and with two blocks to go and the Capitol looming ahead I asked her.

Katje, how long have you been smoking cigarettes?

Yeh, I know, you're going to come down on me for smoking. I'm not going to smoke for the rest of my life but right now I have to, I need to. You might not get it. Non-smokers rarely do but if it's a deal breaker then just deal with it.

Had to think about that. Deal Breaker. Did we have a deal? Did she have something in mind that constituted a deal? I liked the sound of this deal I had no clue of but responded.

Not a deal breaker Katje --- no way. Smoke on.

She stopped me mid-street and grabbed both of my arms just above my elbows, stood on her tip toes and kissed me burying her tongue in my mouth and I could taste the mint from the menthol cigarettes. I was really taken off guard and stepped back a step I don't know from elation or what.

Wow Katje, you're going to make it hard to leave DC.

She smiled, she smiled, she really did smile and said I'm glad to make it hard.

The tables seemed to be turning in that she was now showing signs of mutual infatuation. Kissing me on a crowded street with people passing by certainly was an indication of more than a casual friendship. Of course, I'm not adept at relationships but this seemed to take "us" to a new level that I was more than eager to be engaged with. I was now looking at her through different eyes, eyes that now saw who I was as well.

We journeyed to alongside the National Mall, America's front lawn, and came to the South Entrance where the Senate is located. The Visitor Center Entrance is on the East side of the Capitol but Katje with her badge and clearance led us to this door. To my surprise the guard recognized her and saw that she was accompanied by me and waved us through with a smile. Once inside she grabbed my hand and led me to stairs going down to where I could not even imagine.

The Senate chambers are above us and we're going to the subway tram under the Capitol to the Congressional Chambers.

There's a subway that runs under the Capitol? I asked because I never knew and couldn't believe it.

She looked and laughed and nodded and then said No more questions Trace for a while.

I took the cue as we got on this Disneyland train with seats facing each other, most men in suits and women in business suits and younger people dressed as we were. We certainly fit in and the train took

off. There was an immediate whoosh of warm air and then it became cooler almost bringing in a chill but then we ascended and the air became warm. We were now underneath the House of Representatives Building. It probably only took a minute or so but that was the most exhilarating ride I ever had. I tried not to grin but Katje saw me and gave me an elbow as if to say “maintain” godammit. Grabbing my hand once more she guided me to stairs that took us up to a hallway, not just any hallway but the hallway to the Capitol Rotunda.

Once in the rotunda you just had to look up to see some American version of Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel. It was magnificent but a little cheesier with George Washington rising to the heavens with two women at his side. I thought it was ok to talk now and had to ask.

Who are the women on each side of George?

They represent Liberty and Victory she informed me.

And then there are a lot of white horses and naked people, some with swords. What’s that about?

Jeez Trace! I don’t know that crap. It was some crazy Italian that painted it after the Civil War. Maybe he was mixed up with all the Roman Gods and made Washington some kind of Jupiter. It’s really crazy but it’s been there for a hundred years and more.

I wonder, Katje, if this Italian guy had to lay on his back like Michelangelo to paint this. Did he crawl up there once a day with lunch and a pisspot to relieve himself or did he come down for breaks?

Katje looked at me and then gave me the elbow so as not to get into it. I obliged. By this time, we were in the midst of tourists and after not to long meandered out the visitor entrance on the east side and she led me around to the opposite side where the West Lawn sloped towards the reflecting pool and off in the distance, The Washington Monument.

Let’s take a break here and she set down on the lawn that was already dry in the late morning humidity. She had a saddlebag purse and produced some water and brought a Salem’s. But it didn’t look like a Salem.

What is that? I asked

Weed. I have a Laredo machine that you can load with grass and have a filter to make it look like an authentic cigarette from a distance.

She handed it to me and flicked her lighter. I couldn’t believe it. I was going to get stoned on the United States of America’s front lawn with this magical woman I was becoming in love with.

It was good marijuana. It tasted incredible and I felt a head rush on the first hit. I handed it back to her.

Where is this from? I inquired.

Funny you should ask. California. Northern California says my friend who gave it to me a couple of weeks ago. She comes from Mendocino but says she can’t live there after going to school here. Her brother is a grower and paranoid as hell but he sends it to her in See’s Candy boxes in the lower layer. I don’t smoke much if any after all my experiences in Brasil but I knew you might.

Might what?

Might like it she said and pulled her sunglasses out of the saddlebag, handing it back to me.

I continued to take a couple more hits. I couldn't stop marveling at the fact that I was getting stoned on the Capitol lawn but then I laid down and looked at the clouds above me.

All I could see was George Washington's puffy white wig hair over and over again.

Though I was looking up I felt it when she laid down as well and I looked over at her. She had let her hair loose and untucked her shirt. I just had to kiss her or at least try. I put my hand down on the other side of her shoulder and pushed her sunglasses back on her head. She didn't resist any of this so I kissed her and it felt like I was floating with her tongue in my mouth my tongue in hers, I put my hand on her breast and she broke off the kiss.

Not here Trace.

I guess it was ok to get stoned on the Capitol lawn but not to make out. I rested my hand on her leg above her knee where her skirt had hiked up.

I have an idea she said.

I was hoping it was an idea I could get into.

The Supreme Court should be handing down their decision as to whether Nixon should hand over the tapes. It is right on the other side of the Capitol, the East side. We should go. It might just be a circus of reporters.

That option does sound good Katje but not as good as lying here with you.

Oh come on, there's time for that later. This is history.

We went back around the Capitol, not the same way we came but the other way and it was all I could do not to stop and gaze at the architecture of the building, the US Capitol, in all its glory. What a building and what a setting, so majestic and domineering as if to say, that's right, this is the seat of government and you better believe it. When we came around to the east side Katje was caught off guard.

Holy shit! Something is happening here.

And what it is ain't exactly clear I finished off from a line of *For What it's Worth*.

She grabbed my hand and dragged me at first but then caught the momentum and we hurried over to the Supreme Court Building crowded with news vans and reporters running up the stairs to the main rotunda. We were half running, she no longer holding my hand and slightly out of breath by the time we reached the building. I thought it was more crowded than it looked from far away so we had no problem crowding in among the cameras and reporters.

Our timing could not have been more than perfect as a spokesperson came out to announce the decision. In a sweeping and long explanation, she said that Warren Berger, the Chief Justice Nixon had appointed, delivered the unanimous decision of the court ordering Nixon to surrender tapes to investigators and in that not doing so would be an obstruction of justice.

There were no flash bulbs going off or any celebration. It was cut and dry and as quickly as it began it ended with the reporters filing back to their respective cars and vans and leaving Katje and me gazing at each other as if something happened that really didn't happen.

Wow I said and Katje just gave up a short laugh.

I think we just really witnessed something we might not ever forget.

Of course, I was still preoccupied with her back on the lawn and her comment "There's time for that later."

She was great though and hugged me not in the romantic sense but in the political achievement sense that we had driven the Trojan Horse into Troy and waiting for the right time to emerge, conquer and celebrate.

We walked back towards the house and she was pretty much disheveled with her shirt untucked and hair down, glasses off, looking like a schoolgirl letting loose. I had about had it with the slacks but had no option. The polo shirt I was stuck with as well. She decided we should stop at the Marsh Inn on the way back because why not?

We walked into a party of students celebrating. Someone had ordered pizzas from down the block and someone else said it was an open tab at the bar. People in the bar were hugging and celebrating for good reason. We had not had too many victories to count up to this point. We knew we had been up against a formidable opponent but always thought that the deck was stacked against us and now it became a victory dance, long overdue.

Whose money are we drinking on? Katje asked and Marlene, who pretty much appeared to be beyond her capacity, pointed at the guy slamming quarters into the juke box, It was Glen. He bought the pizzas too.

Katje and I looked at each other. Oh boy she said and said again, This might be more complicated than it looks.

Glen came back from the juke box and spotted Katje and me.

Hey Glen, thanks for the pizzas and the beer I might indulge in.

Hi there Trace. He looked completely out of it, stoned and drunk. You don't give up on her he said staring at Katje next to me.

What do you mean Glen? I thought we were celebrating the Supreme Court Decision.

He looked at me as if he didn't see Katje. She's just taking you for a ride Trace. She's with me, you know that, I know that and then he looked at Katje and said And you know that so who are we foolin', just tell me who are we foolin'?

He took a step forward and pushed against me, not pushing me but maybe he could have pushed me if he wasn't so gone.

Glen! You're drunk, what are you doing? Katje told him.

I like this guy but he's taking you away from me, from us, from what we were meant to be.

I had to speak. Glen, I do like Katje and I like you but you really don't have a relationship with her outside of being her roommate and cannot consider her to be your girlfriend.

And you, *consider*, her to be your boyfriend or girlfriend or whatever? Let's get this straight.

Jesus Christ Glen, I just met her two days ago. How can I be her boyfriend?

You lying piece of shit he said and then reared back to take a swing at me but fell off balance and Katje and I caught him before he hit the floor.

I love you guys. You saved me.

He was making no sense and Katje and I, said our goodbyes without a trace of pizza and took him out of the bar and walked him back home while he was muttering some mumble jumble about Nixon and me.

Inside the house we guided him upstairs to his room and got him over to his bed and asked him if he was ok and made sure he was alright.

I'm ok he said except you. You're with my girl and she knows it.

Just want to make sure you're ok. Are you?

Katje had removed herself from the picture.

It's ok dude, go for it, I love her.

Glen then passed out but I was pretty sure he was ok and I said under my breath, I do too.

Katje was waiting in her room and had opened a small bottle of Champagne, not the big bottle but the convenient "I'm not drinking too much" bottle.

She wasn't or didn't seem too concerned about Glen except for the fact that we had to leave the Marsh Inn abruptly and missed a chance to celebrate this monumental change in the political fabric we had all been concerned with and wished to no end without much hope for a different direction.

Katje poured two glasses and put Astrud Gilberto on her small stereo, nothing like Glens but still quite effective. She toasted us and was so excited she got up from her chair and hugged me.

I feel like the tide is changing she said

The tide goes in and out I said not to put a downer on things but There are still a lot of suits and ties making decisions on our behalf without consideration of outcomes. I can never feel too secure.

Right. But don't you think this is a key step forward and major inroad to defeat the existing establishment.

No, not at all. Katje, they have deep roots, it will take years if not decades to change their ways and means. Tiny steps do placate us for the time being.

Where is your hope?

Hope? It's not that. It's that we're up against 200 years of male, white male ideas of what should be according to their preferences. This is not the country that was 200 years ago. Our freedom has also become our shackles. We have no rules or not enough to keep us in line. And we have for all means and purposes denied the labor force that has achieved the state we are in. We are a disgusting example of opportunists, taking advantage of free labor to the greatest extremes.



You're not making sense Trace but I do realize how governments abuse their citizens thinking they are providing for all while taking more than their share. Governments can become corrupt if not held accountable and most of the time when we realize they are corrupt it's too late.

And how do we hold them accountable? I have never been able to figure that out. They are in control and our efforts are interpreted as leftist, socialist or communist. To be able to provide for everyone is an everlasting quandary. We are in their backyard and have to play by their rules.

Right Trace. I have seen this in Brasil. They took my brother. Took my brother for what? For disagreeing with them, contrary ideas that they, had no argument for, an alternative and progressive lifestyle they could provide no viable option, a solution that was obvious but they never thought of. Men in power have no empathy, no compassion for the masses. They are driven by what dangles between their legs and how they can make that work for them.

I wouldn't go that far. I have that dangling between my legs and it is nothing political.

Oh, funny how you can change this into you and me.

I never said anything about you but it is dangling and it is in the wings waiting to go onstage.

Dangling is never good.

She had that look in her eyes like a wanting but I wasn't sure. I went over to her and put my hands on her shoulders and kissed her.

I have an idea she said. We should go to New York City. I know that is what you and Kevin were going to do so let us do it. We can take the Amtrak in tomorrow morning, spend the day and night and have some fun.

The suggestion was beyond my belief and I acted like well sure that's cool but I was jumping up and down inside. Spending the night in New York City with this exciting girl, I could only respond.

Yeh, that would be cool.

Great, we can leave early, about 6. If we miss one train at that time there is another 20 minutes after that during commuter time.

And that was how the plans were made even though I would have really just slept there, in her bed that night but she said that this Glen thing was too fragile and it was better that we get away. How could I argue or even offer an alternate plan?

# Four

I got plenty of sleep having went to bed when it was still light out, and I read for quite a while in the quiet house. There was no music from Glen's room and Katje was to herself in her room. The book I picked up on Kevin's bookshelf was *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* by John Maynard Keynes. It was written after World War 1 and after The Treaty of Versailles. A best seller in its time but very dry now unless you parallel it to modern times or for that matter any time in history. Keynes believed that The Treaty of Versailles only inflicted a small hurt on the Germans, not enough to economically cripple them into any reformation that would unite them with the European nations. By being so lenient, this set the stage for Hitler to re-organize and rebuild a force to engage in a Second World War. I guess this was a detour enough to take my mind off Katje but did remind me throughout history how those that surrendered often came back with a vengeance. But what do you do when someone cries Uncle? You recede and hope that the whole affair is over. Can you turn your back on the so-called enemy? Do you always have to be looking over your shoulder? So much peace is wrought with revenge and as Gandhi said "An eye for eye makes the whole world blind." In our case, Nixon, would we be able to heal the wounds of a corrupt government handed over to the next in charge, which in this case would be Gerald Ford? Belying a trust is a hard heal and I for one along with my generation are going to find it hard to think that the status quo has changed all that much. Change is constant but not immediate in effect. Even though this decision from the Supreme Court might mean an end to Nixon, it certainly does not mean an end to business as usual.

It was good that Katje came and woke me up at 5 a.m. because the last time I looked at the clock while reading it was 12 thirty. She was still in her long nightshirt t-shirt but did not look sleepy. In fact, she looked like she was ready to launch. She told me we were leaving at 5 thirty and went back upstairs. After showering and shaving I met her in the foyer just outside Kevin's room with my same small duffel and she was wearing a print short silky dress and leather sandals with an over the shoulder type saddle bag ready to go. She looked wonderful and I was beyond belief that she was, or I was, accompanying her to New York City.

Should we leave a note for Glen? Not sure what he might think when we go missing.

I did, she said. He will freak but . . . but . . . I never know. He should have to deal with it. C'est la vie.

We took the walk over to Massachusetts Avenue where the century old Union Station was. It was a two cigarette walk for Katje but what a surprise it was to walk into the main building.

Is every building like this in DC? I asked because it too had vaulted ceilings, arches and statues to boot.

Capitol's try to show off she said shrugging off my interest as I followed her to the ticket booth. I was headed to New York City.

She put down a twenty and got back a five and some ones for both of us and as she handed me a ticket. I asked her quickly how much I owed her.

Not to worry now Trace, we'll figure it out later and went to the platform that was headed to New York City. Amtrak was a new government sponsored transit and it was operating without little complaints and with applauded efficiency. It was 6:30 and the 6 thirty-five was coming along due in New York at 10:05. I didn't care how long it took. I'd be sitting next to her on a train to New York. How perfect was all this turning out to be? She took the window and even before leaving the station there was a man walking the aisles hawking newspapers. As soon as the train pulled out were two women, one in front and one in back of a coffee, tea and juice cart. It was the art of synchronicity as I felt I didn't have a part but Katje knew the drill and asked for two coffees and this time I was quick to pull out my wallet and cover the cost. Katje set her coffee down in the cup holder and pulled out her pack of Salem's but it was me that exhaled and finally took a look at Katje. She sat there holding her cigarette and I could see her looking at the reflection in the window, of me staring at her.

Are you OK Trace?

Oh yeh, just trying to capture and remember this moment in time.

Are you thinking you might have amnesia?

No, it's just that you continue to surprise me.

How is that?

Well, when I first met you and we were watching the ice-skating competition or at least you were, I thought that you didn't give a flying fuck about me and here we are now, side by side, headed to New York.

You are right.

Huh? Right about what?

I didn't give a flying fuck about you. She then raised the armrest between us and gave me an elbow to my ribs. I guess this might have been some sign of affection, I wasn't really sure, but that was the best elbow to my ribs I ever had. It was the same as if she just leaned over and unbuttoned my jeans.

The train rolled and you would have thought after the cigarettes and coffee that she would be alert and attentive but that wasn't so and with the armrest still up she leaned into me and fell asleep. And not just for a bit but for a long time. After about 40 minutes we were passing through Baltimore and I wanted to nudge her to wake her up but it all felt too comfortable. Baltimore was something to witness, at least where the train traveled through. I had heard about tenements and Oakland had their fair share of them but nothing like these and nothing stretching so far and wide. That realization right then and there was an awakening that even though I had no money to speak of, I was privileged. I was privileged in the fact that I had the means if push came to shove to earn money. It was as if I was in a caste system where we all had our place and order. I hadn't proved this theory yet but was pretty certain of it. These were the disadvantaged and were on an unfair playing field. This deep gut guilt engulfed me that almost made me

choke. I must have jerked or something because Katje woke up and looked out the window and then at me.

I feel so bad, these people seem so poor and have no recourse.

She didn't say anything and then shook her head.

It is just not here. We have the same in Brasil. slums. We call them favellas. In Sao Paulo there are thousands upon thousands in favellas, places beyond comprehension of our standard of living. It's so sad.

I began to think about the somewhat trivial conversations we had about politics and how these were some ideas we could argue about and then there were these people who had little time to concern themselves with altruistic activities. The main plate on the table was to provide and survive. How much time was there to engage in political discourse when you are trying to put food in your mouth or your kids' mouth? The desperation of not being able to orchestrate your life, to find salvation and hope when all other avenues of rescue have failed and to be able to reassure your children that everything is OK when it really isn't, is beyond my comprehension. As the train rolled on and out of Baltimore I for the first time began to get a clearer picture of my place in the world and how fortunate I was and how it took this detached train ride to knock sense into me. I know that in the future I will have to figure a way to support myself but how difficult can that be compared to the roadblocks and obstacles these designated souls have to navigate?

We arrived at Grand Central Station on schedule and took our time to follow the exodus of commuters and business travelers. Leave it to New York that as you ascend from the bowels of the underground, is a conveniently placed bar and in that bar is a bartender carefully wiping the bar as if it was staged for an episode of The Twilight Zone. It was not even 10 thirty.

We should check this out Katje said and grabbed my hand and just like that we were sitting at the bar, not alone I might add but definitely with a number of people not just getting coffee.

The bartender didn't say anything but just lifted his head as if that was an introduction to ask what we were having. I suppose if I would have done the same it would have been a standoff but this was his territory and I was thirsty from the road and needed a drink. Really, no, I didn't. Katje picked up the pace and ordered us both two Irish coffees. He wanted to see our ID's which was appropriate since we were both just 21. He checked us out and then Katje told me that the drinking age in New York was 19 but how could a 40-year-old man tell the difference.

He pushed the coffees to us and a small dish of shortbread cookies.

Cheers we clinked to NYC and I added a salute to you Katje for engineering this adventure.

She only gave it a half smile and I let it at that. Of course, I wanted more, for her to express how happy she was to be with me on the threshold of this amazing city. I wanted her to be enthusiastic about spending the upcoming night together and I guess I just wanted and wanted but you can't make wanted. She lit up a Salem.

The bartender warmed up to us, well maybe Katje, because she was young and sensuous. She had a worldly air about her, aloof and non-caring as if she had figured it out and it wasn't up to her to explain it to you, or anyone. It would take more to penetrate that façade but it was more like a maze, where every turn had you questioning your last move. I was following her through her maze and just had to keep up with her. He asked if we were staying long in New York and I was glad he didn't throw the Big Apple into the mix.

Katje replied – We are just taking a break from school in DC and thought we'd take in the city.

Well, he said pulling out a piece of paper from under the bar, Not sure if this is in your budget but this coupon is for half off at the Roosevelt Hotel but only for the first night.

The historic Roosevelt Hotel was renowned for luxury and its famed clientele but was probably beyond our expected expenditure.

Well, thank you Katje quickly responded and snatched up the coupon which had a signature in pen across the photo of the hotel. I think we might make that work she said and I caught her giving the bartender a wink. That was reward enough for him.

You're very welcome and hope you both have a nice stay in the Big Apple.

Damn --- there it was, The Big Apple that I was hoping to avoid reference but could not escape.

We finished our drinks and left the tip. Wandering our way out of this enormous train station, the likes of only those built in the 20's, we were aghast at the architecture in front of us just for a train station. There is not enough money now to even think about building something like this. It's like when the Pharaoh commanded that the pyramids were to be built, how cost never was a factor. There was Yul Brenner with bangs in a skirt orchestrating to the slaves what must indeed be done. Any defectors might find themselves without a job, family or even their life. When we came up on the escalator into the bright sunlight of July, I had to rethink my thoughts, gazing at the monstrous and incredible skyscrapers of the city that defined cities. Colossal in its might and beyond my realm of science fiction, stood before me that which was supernatural rising from the ground, ever present to the sky. It really did take my breath away as this was my first time visiting here. I was standing with my mouth half open, not paying attention to anything but what was here and about me.

Welcome to the big apple a guy said to me half running into me which shook me out of my stupor. I didn't want to be me, this guy, so obvious as a stranger, a visitor but I couldn't help myself and Katje, who had been here before gave me a moment but not much more before elbowing me back into reality.

Come on mister, we have some things to take care of.

It wasn't very far to the Roosevelt Hotel and I let Katje take care of things. She sparkled and arranged a room for us on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor and we got settled. The room wasn't large but was luxurious in an old stately fashion with a window that had a view of the so many tall buildings. I bounced on the bed and laid back on the pillow and Katje joined me and for the first time it felt almost certain that somewhere along the line

we would be sharing this bed, between the sheets, naked. It was my thought and I hoped was hers as well as must have been or we would not have gotten this far, right?

Kevin did tell me a bit about you and that you wanted to go to New York with him to the art museums. Is that what you want to do?

Now if I had been traveling with Kevin that's exactly what I wanted to do but I was beyond my belief here with an interesting and vibrant woman and the art was now in the back of my mind. But in previous experience, rushing to satiate carnal desires instead of letting emotions gain momentum until finally there is no other course than to surrender to each other. That should become the natural path forward.

Well yeh, I would like to see the Kandinsky exhibit at The Museum of Modern Art and would also like to take in the Guggenheim just because it is what it is whatever might be on display.

I detected a slight disappointment in her face.

Katje, what would you like to do?

No, that's great. Maybe we could after, have a late lunch out and be back here for the evening, no?

That sounds great.

We left our stuff in the room, 817, and took the elevator down with no one in it and Katje leaned into me enough for me to put my arm around her. She swung around and looked like she was about ready to kiss me when the door opened to the lobby with waiting people ready to board. She grabbed my hand and led me off in usual Katje fashion out through the front doors of the Roosevelt as if we were F. Scott and Zelda. How she knew her way around New York City was interesting in that she did know certain paths to get to places but had no problem stopping anyone and asking them directions which not one refused. She was like a sprung compass realigning herself at every turn.

We arrived at the Guggenheim first and the architecture was what I had read about. Large sweeping ramps in an upward spiral displaying exhibits that were only half the experience of being there. We spent just short of two hours there and then went on to the Museum of Modern Art.

After admission Katje gave me a look that I didn't understand.

What?

Can we do this one different? You go your own way and I'll go mine and we'll meet back up in the Museum Garden restaurant in an hour. Is that OK?

Sure, I said because I didn't want her to feel like I was abandoning her but I did want to see the Kandinsky exhibit.

Then she reached on her tip toes and kissed me on the cheek and walked off only to shout over her shoulder Three fifteen, be there.

Wassily Kandinsky was a Russian painter and just as much a theorist about art. He taught at Bauhaus after being a lawyer in Russia and eventually settling in France where as time went on his art became more and more abstract without contextual or identifiable subjects. He pushed the boundaries of sensory perception believing that you could paint music or dance a painting. His art became driven by this belief

and evolved toward a spirituality in art. He was an avid follower of Annie Besant and Helena Blavatsky, author of *The Secret Doctrine* which was the basic pseudoscientific premise for Theosophy, based on ancient religions and myths. I found his art engaging, almost magnetic in nature but at the same time lacking a tactile and tangible interface I could relate to in something identifiable, an image that could easily be shared. One can come away with a coldness, an incongruity, that leaves you wanting more. Viewing his paintings, I could only relate to Katje and how abstract we were and how it seemed to leave us both dangling in different mediums wondering how to merge into one that suited both of us.

Short of 3:15 I went in search of Katje at the Garden Restaurant where I found her smoking a cigarette with two empty bottles of beer at her side. She was looking off somewhere else when I pulled a chair out to sit down. The epitome of cool, she never even looked around at me but just blew smoke in the air, her head tilted back, her hair blowing long in the afternoon breeze.

You're early.

Perhaps, but it looks like I'm two beers late.

How did you like the exhibit? She asked.

I did like it. How about you?

Not a fan.

Why not?

Well, his early stuff was pretty good, I mean my mother's art way transcends his in my mind but she never had the fanfare or notoriety of his immediate art world. His later art is similar to Mondrian. I prefer more substance, emotion I can relate to, like Picasso's Blue Period. That moves me. I mean it's all an evolution from one established art form genre to another. The art world has to evolve and not stagnate but in the same sense has to appeal to the masses and not repel them.

True but sometimes art or music must force change, sensing the stagnancy you said to propel itself out of that sphere. I think that when Picasso presented Guernica to the world it shattered all aspects of both art and politics. He was in a position to evaluate and criticize freely owing to his artistic accomplishments that gave him this freedom. But back to Kandinsky. He might have been trying to transform his art from tangible art into the spiritual which out of consequence denies the appreciation of so many.

Does not matter Trace. It does not appeal to me.

I felt like it was an attack on my views and tastes.

She saw that I might have taken her comment as some type of insult.

That does not mean I do not like you, you silly man. She could feel my rejection of something so presently superficial as an art discussion when what I really needed to do was grasp this moment.

The afternoon air was thick with humidity in the high 80's. Inside the museum it was air conditioned but out in the garden the population was sparse for good reason. I went for a beer and a water for Katje as music drifted over us. It was *Tonight I'll be staying here with you* by Bob Dylan

*I should have left this town this morning  
But it was more than I could do  
For, your love comes on so strong  
And I've waited all day long  
For tonight when I'll be staying here with you  
Is it really any wonder  
The love that a stranger might receive?  
You cast your spell and I went under  
I find it so difficult to leave  
I can hear that whistle blowin'  
I see that stationmaster, too  
If there's a poor boy on the street  
Then let him have my seat  
'Cause tonight I'll be staying here with you  
Throw my ticket out the window  
Throw my suitcase out there, too  
Throw my troubles out the door  
I don't need them any more  
'Cause tonight I'll be staying here with you.*

We were both pretty soaked from the heat, a glaze of sweat shone on her forehead and then just a single bead ran from her neck to her cleavage with my eyes following as if chasing a wish. This was a far cry from a week ago when I imagined Kevin and I in New York. Of course, that would have been fun as well but outside the realm of this possible romance and less intriguing. I don't think I would be staring at Kevin like I was at Katje. She saw me staring at her.

What?

I was kind of tongue tied and then I said what I probably should not have.

I think I'm falling in love with you.

And you think I cannot feel that? I am not numb.

So what do you think about that? I mean how does that make you feel?

She blew smoke from her Salem straight above her head and then rubbed the filter out in the ash tray.

Well, you have ways to make me feel different than other guys make me feel and that is good, I mean --- wonderful. I like you Trace but don't think of me for more than I am. I am not special. Let us just play this for what it is. We should go have lunch.



There was no commitment from her and really what did I expect? I was going home in a couple of days and then all this would just remain a memory tucked away to pull out again, wiping off the dust, just to polish up and see if it can shine again.

She had already picked out a place for lunch and it couldn't have been better. We both had Cold Cucumber Soup. Tall glasses of ice tea with lots of lemon wedges we squeezed, while she, accidentally squirted me in the face and it was well worth it to see her bust up laughing. I wasn't sure if this was the first time I saw her laugh. I couldn't remember.

She held my hand on the way back to the hotel until I saw a liquor store and we jetted in and grabbed two bottles of Chablis and two plastic wine goblets. I knew there was an ice bucket back in the hotel room so it could be chilled. Still being only about 5 o'clock, the weekday city was still unwinding on this Thursday. Bars were just beginning to crowd as if you could feel a collective exhale and the same doorman acted as if recognized us, bowing and smiling, waving us in like a matador to the silent cheers of the arena.

The elevator was empty and in the long ride, pushing the boundaries of my affection, I turned Katje and held her. She didn't hesitate and kissed me shoving her leg between my legs into my crotch as the door opened to our floor with no one waiting. It was an enjoyable exit to our eighth-floor room. I thought that we would continue this feeling, this amorous spontaneity that gripped us but when we got back in the room, she looked concerned on the edge of worry.

I told her I would go get some ice for the bucket. She said she needed to take a shower to refresh herself before any more drinking. I went off to fill the ice bucket and she went off to the bathroom to shower. I needed one as well but wasn't sure I was steering this ship into port or I was acting captain only while she was in the shower. After getting the ice and putting the Chablis into the bucket, I sat back in the chair to reflect for the moment on the progression and the emotions we seemed to be confronting. Katje was at the helm and knew what she wanted and I was a passenger, on board to go along with that. I'm just a guy with testosterone rising above the waterline. Men should have a danger light inherently installed to warn of hormonal overload. I was feeling sure that at this point her pursuits were along the same lines as mine. I opened the window to let the air filtrate the room even though it was still muggy outside. The breeze and the street sounds came rushing in just to remind you that you were in one of the largest cities in the world.

She came out of the shower in a white hotel robe with a big cursive R monogrammed on the front and her hair in in a turban type towel arrangement. She was pretty bundled up, not looking very sexy but nevertheless not for a moment putting any dents in my desires.

That felt great! Give it a try and then we should have some wine.

Can do I said with marching orders to the bathroom with clean boxers in hand. My shower experience was filled with expectations, knowing that something would happen but apprehensive about her response, how she would react to my approaches and if she would be aggressive in love or lay low.

When I came back out in my white boxers, she had let her hair down and it was still wet but disheveled and untangled. Placing my clothes on my duffel I sat in the chair opposite her and then remembered about the wine.

I poured the wine into the plastic wine goblets and shoved the bottle back into the ice bucket. We toasted to a fine day and wonderful lunch. Was this something beyond my imagination? A beautiful woman in a high-class hotel with wine? And she was naked or I supposed. She could have been fully dressed under that robe but it was beyond odds at this point.

It was odd, not completely comfortable, as if we had rushed things, adhering to a script we had not signed off on. As for my part, signing off was automatic and able and ready to test this new passion. Let me make it clear that at this point it appeared to be my more my passion than hers.

You look beautiful I had to say as we sipped our wine.

She looked around for a cigarette but none was near and she settled back down.

Why are men so infatuated with women and how we look? Do you see how crazy that is that men love something so physical instead of the mind? She found her cigarettes and lit up.

Well Katje, you are an attractive girl, a woman, who incites desire, who has made me want more than just casual conversation however intelligent it might be and I want more than an occasional occurrence of holding hands and more than a kiss that makes me wanting even more. It's really a more and more kind of thing until we both feel that this indefinable more should be fulfilled. You get it? We both want more and here we are.

Trace, it is so much more than just rubbing our bodies together. It's falling in love with each other's minds. Our bodies, our bodies are just vehicles that are the mechanisms that propel our minds. They are like the engines on a train that get us down the track. How strange it is that we focus on our bodies when in reality it should be our psyche's that are magnetic, that are attractive to each other, that stick us together, bonding us.

She undid the ties and let her robe open exposing her breasts down to her waist.

I was surprised at first but then was riveted. I kind of knew what her tits looked like from over the last few days, the rain at the Arboretum and the night visits, but now this was the real thing up front and personal and I had to hold my own.

You get it Trace. These tits. There has been a breast fixation throughout the history of mankind. Figure out why man has been so sexually aroused by woman's breasts whose main job is to feed the offspring.

Well Katje, your tits are beautiful, I mean really sensuous and I too am guilty of being aroused. And if stimulation can create some type of bonding outside of the psyche, let me tell you I am here to assist you in any way.

She only half laughed and threw down the Chablis and refilled herself.

I think I am too complicated Trace. I think about every which way wrong and every way I can make things right. I am a bit fucked up but no more than everyone else.

And that is all fine but here we are and ready to verify that all that and everything else doesn't make a damn difference. Let's let what happens. Let's see.

She took a long sip from the plastic wine glass and then set it down and pulled together her robe that was open.

Well, we could screw if you want but I have to be on top to get off.

Rules, Katje, too many rules. Like I said, let's just see what happens, right?

She nodded and without a word stood up, undid the ties once again and let her hotel robe fall to the carpet.

We both went over to the bed and she threw down the covers and then raised her leg up in an acrobatic feat and pulled down my boxers with her toes, an admirable accomplishment and I stepped out of them and rolled her onto the bed. We had menthol and Chablis kisses and there was groping, grasping and there was petting and stroking. She was going for that on top thing and we struggled a bit until I went down on her with all my saved desires. She didn't resist, going with the flow and after a time there was a quiver and she shook and let out a moan of climax almost prompting mine but I climbed on top and before too long we both entered a different world.

Lying side by side on our backs, eyes open towards the ceiling but not seeing the ceiling, caught in a culmination of sensory emotions that became a stillness, a solemn solitude, an ethereal essence as the sounds of the city began to slowly merge back into our perception. Cars accelerated, busses braked and taxis honked to the curtains blowing inward from the open window. I rolled over and lay my head upon her breast, my leg over her legs. She sighed and kissed my head and I could not think of anywhere where I'd rather be.

That was pretty damn exciting mister.

That it was.

And after five minutes maybe ten she gently wriggled free and sat in one of chairs around the small table and pulled out a cigarette and lit up. Her hair was tangled up and, in her face, falling over the contours of her breasts as she blew smoke up above her head. I knew then and there that this was still another image I would preserve forever, this disheveled naked woman blowing smoke in the air.

She began to softly sing.

*Star light, star bright*

*First star I see tonight*

*Wish I may, Wish I might*

*Have the wish I wish tonight.*

Since it was a nursery rhyme that I was familiar with, I had to counter with another.

*Mary Mary quite contrary  
How does your garden grow?  
With silver bells and cockleshells  
And pretty maids all in a row*

Katje emitted a short laugh and gave the most genuine smile I had seen so far in my short time with her. She snuffed out the cigarette in the hotel ashtray and came back to the bed resting her head on my chest and this time putting her leg over my legs. She recited still another rhyme, her chin bouncing up and down on my chest.

*See saw Margery Daw  
Jackie shall have a new master  
Jackie shall earn but a penny a day  
Because he can't work any faster.*

I asked – How, growing up in Brazil, do you know these English nursery rhymes?

My mother sang them to me and that is how, I think, got a head start learning English that was not native to me but never knew it at the time. I could go on and on with them and it brings me back to a happy place, a time of innocence and trust, trusting before I learned not to and the dangers of the world. Aren't we born into this world pure and innocent and then as time goes on humanity grabs hold of you and shows you the ropes whether you like it or not? Life is such backwards evolution of spirituality and are forever trying to reverse it, trying to get back to that trust, devotion and innocence.

Yeh, you certainly got that right. And when so young we're like sponges soaking up everything that's put in front of us and that's what's important in those years, that some parent or teacher is feeding you input, the right information that is positive and transmits knowledge and compassion that stands true and takes on the test of time.

But you discount all the life experiences, the highs and lows, the unexpected, the out of nowhere mishaps that shape our lives. Life is not a blueprint, it is more an idea, a thought, a murky sketch where the details have to be completed as fact or fiction. We color in between the lines, sometimes outside. I do not believe that life is a path. It is for me an uncharted trail through wilderness, through brush and jungles, without signposts or direction and it is up to you to decide whether to go this way or that or to turn around and go back. All previous learning can vanish and you have to rely on instinct, a primal drive that germinates within and leads you to the next point in your journey, your eventual destination.

We had finished the first bottle of wine and I opened the second one and shoved it into the half-melted ice. Excuse me I said and went into the bathroom to pee and wash up a bit. When I came back out, she was in a ribbed tank top and skimpy striped bottoms leaning back on propped up pillows, legs crossed watching the news on TV. I picked up my boxers from the floor and put them on I guess to make her feel more comfortable since she half dressed. I too propped up the pillows and sat next to her as if this had been a routine we had been doing for a number of years, no problem.

On the TV news there was a black woman speaking before the house judiciary committee. It was Barbara Jordan, a Texas Democrat, voicing her concerns about the ethics and the recently disclosed behavior of the president of the United States, Richard Nixon. She was fervently outlining the role of the president in relation to the constitution and suggesting and supporting the idea of impeachment. It was a very moving speech if not a cry of freedom to move forward with this process. Both of us sat in awe of her command of language and bravery to give voice to our dissension.

She is fantastic!

I agreed as she went for another cigarette and I went for our plastic goblets and the wine.

He thinks that he is above the law and he can do as he wishes. It is just like this in Brasil. Men in power can wield a stiff stick to get anything they want.

She put her hand on top of my boxers and began to gently rub while keeping on with the Salem with the other hand. I didn't have much to say and after a bit she went into the fly of my boxers and pulled out a revitalized erection.

Speaking of wielding a stiff stick . . . She put out her cigarette in the ashtray on the bedstand, pulled off my boxers and went to town, her hair covering the whole affair until I was about to blow but she backed off, pulled off her tank top and slid off her stripes and got on top of me just as she had told me she had wanted to before. She demonstrated sexual prowess with smooth and deliberate motion, her hair covering her face, falling onto my chest and beads of sweat starting to flow on both of us until I had to let go but she went on for another half minute or so and then let loose with a groan and sob, falling off of me to the side flopping onto her back.

That was great was all I could come up with.

She didn't say anything for quite a while and was still breathing hard, her face glistening, sweat pooling between her breasts.

So good Mister.

She reached her head over and kissed me on my neck and left her head buried there turning her body into mine. I held her close to feel every breath she would take and before long she was asleep. Then I fell asleep too and I woke hearing her come out of the bathroom and changing the channel on the TV. *The Streets of San Francisco* was on.

She saw me awake and said Hey, here is some hometown stuff for you.

It was a cop program with Karl Malden as the old wise cop and Michael Douglas as the young inspector. I never watched it, for that matter never watched much TV except *Saturday Night Live*, but knew the basic premise. It did showcase the city very well that I was so familiar with and probably did promote tourism but really did not interest me.

Katje seemed to be fascinated by Michael Douglas and I got that while I was finishing the wine she no longer was interested in. Pulling back the sheets and getting in I drifted off, never waking until morning.

## Five

The bathroom door was wide open and she was wiping the mirror with a hand towel to clear the steam and see herself. She hadn't bothered with the robe but had the turban thing going on her head. I just lay on my side, mesmerized by the sensuous roundness of her butt, the separation of halves and the indentation at the small of her back. This was nudity at its finest. She saw me in the mirror watching her and turned around affording me the I'll never get tired of this view.

Bom dia!

It only took me a second to remember her Brazil good morning greeting.

Bom dia I responded.

We have time for breakfast here in the hotel and then need to catch the last morning train back to DC.

I looked at the hotel clock on the bedstand. It was 9:30. I couldn't believe it was that late and was hoping for a repeat performance of the previous night but realized that that just wasn't going to be a possibility unless I forced her into action now. We had a wonderful and exciting time and I needed to let the residual settle in and draw upon the gratitude and love that was evolving exponentially.

I'll take a quick shit, shower and shave and be right there.

Spare me the specifics Trace.

She was smiling. Smiling once again and that for me was about as good as it gets with this woman. I laughed as she came to pass me and I spun her into me hugging her. Her body was damp as was her hair unwrapped from the turban. She stood on her toes and kissed me on the cheek. The window was still open and the morning sounds of the city were so loud it's a wonder the noise hadn't woke me up earlier. As I got in the shower, I glimpsed over to watch her getting dressed. She saw me again gawking or I guess you could call it that.

Get moving Mister! We got a train to catch.

Aye, aye, Captain.

The breakfast took longer than we thought and we ended up half running to the station with the train waiting there, tempting to leave but Katje said we had a couple of minutes. Quick to the ticket booth she got the tickets and we ran through the gates and boarded the train as it started rolling. The Amtrak train was pretty much empty and we had our pick of any seats we wanted and set ourselves down at least ten rows away from the next people. She threw her bag up above in the rack and I did the same as she again took the window seat. After sitting down, we both exhaled a sigh of relief at the same time which made us

both laugh. Now we were home free and could enjoy the ride, traversing the country and cityscapes of the railway journey. We rode for an hour or so without saying a word until I did.

Katje, I know I shouldn't say this but I think I'm in love with you.

Again? Silly man. If you knew you should not say that then why say it?

I guess to see how you feel, to squeeze out a response from you.

She looked at me and then looked out the window at the landscape of telephone poles and train tracks going the opposite way and then back at me.

Trace, I am loving the time I am having with you. But you are going back home tomorrow and I have to guard my heart and not let it run wild with thoughts of you. You'll be gone.

You're right. But that doesn't mean this has to end. We can write or visit.

That is sweet Trace but we both know that never works. What is beautiful about this, of what we have or now are having is it is like term limits.

What do you mean?

Term limits. It means an end of a defined time span. Things transform from what they were and invite change and a new order. Ideas are new, they're refreshed to get rid of stagnancy. A sort of rebirth, like snakes discarding skins or tadpoles growing legs. Things have run its course and there is that opportunity to start anew. It's not like I have not loved being with you. You have given me something very special. You have made me feel loved in such a different way than other guys and I love to be loved. Who doesn't? I think that is what we are all after or at least what most of us deep down desire and need. And I thank you Trace.

You mean it's over?

How do I make you see that love can be never ending and what we have is now, it is right now, it is immediate and we should embrace the moment for how wonderful it is and not force expectations as to what might be? You get it? Do you get it?

I get what you're saying but not feeling it. I don't want this feeling to end.

You do not get it then. The time we have spent together will be over. The feelings are not. Term limits does not ignore what was before, it lets us go on to the next place. Everything we had we have. It is all an everlasting now.

I sat in silence as the train rolled on and she had both hands on my arm as if to console me and I had to dig down deep to rationalize her logic but it really did make sense. After leaving, how could I pretend to carry on our recent bond when we would be separated by an entire continent? It would stifle growth, impede opportunities for other relations which might never happen and then instill deceit and guilt having crossed the lines of devotion. She was right.

Back into DC by 2 thirty we arrived back at G Street and both of us went to our prospective rooms to unwind. Really it was a matter of two people being together for that length of time where your own space is at a premium and time to cash in. I looked at the ceiling 14 feet above me and realized I was in a decrepit



old house with paint peeling everywhere with the landlord getting the most bang for his buck renting to college students who saw these digs as transitory. It wasn't their home of future dreams, of whatever conjures your idea of accomplishment and contentment, what you need to complete the picture that finds you ten years away from college thinking you have arrived. It was the perfect setup for a landlord entertaining deferred maintenance. Everyone rooming here was on term limits as well.

I fell asleep until Katje came down and sat on the edge of the bed. Coming out of a dream I wasn't sure of her there or anything and she wiped the sweat from my forehead looking concerned.

You OK Mister?

Well yeh, I am now.

After you wake up some more, I thought we might take in The Marsh Inn for your last evening here.

Sounds good. Is Glen here?

No, but he left a note tacked to my door.

I bet that is interesting.

Well, here it is. I'll read it to you.

I listened.

*Hey Kotch --- I'm taking a little break from DC. Going to visit my brother in New Hampshire and will be back before rent is due. I just felt weird with all that was going on and how much attention you were paying to Trace. He's cool for sure but I thought I was too. I guess I realized I'll never be the guy you want and that's my problem, not yours. Anyway, when I get back he'll be gone and we can resume our existence and I'll try to adjust. Kevin called and he's coming back Saturday, the same day Trace is leaving. Sorry you won't have my car to transport these guys but I need it. I told Kevin the situation and he said he would manage, no problem.*

*See ya --- Glen*

I feel for the guy. I know how he's feeling.

What? Don't make me out to be some kind of mean mistress. He has his own plans with me that unfortunately never include my feelings or you. I think we've gone over that scenario of my love for you but you keep insisting it has to be more than it is. I feel like shaking sense into both of you.

OK, but one difference, and a big one. Didn't we just make love last night and wasn't that a connection that would seem to last longer than 24 hours. I mean, really, Katje.

She didn't say anything and looked around, probably for a Salem but there was none. She got up from the bed and walked towards the door and I could see her wiping her eyes with one hand. Either her contacts were bothering her or she was crying. I got up quickly and turned her around and tears were stream-

ing. What did I say to make her cry? I hugged her and she began to sob onto my shoulder. Was it completely out of character or just another side of her revealed? I moved her over to sit down on Kevin's bed and she began to recover, wiping her eyes with the sleeve of her sweatshirt.

It's just that, it is that, I really do not fall, I mean I never meant, no, I just should not get so hung up on someone, I am fucked up, you really do not want to know me.

No, no , no Katje. I do want to know you and I love who you are and you made me realize that I shouldn't misinterpret what is now but I can't reverse this love for you. I love you. You get it?

Looking up and the tears were gone but she was again smiling.

Thank you Trace. You make me feel like someone. Someone I have not felt in a long time.

After recovery, we walked towards The Marsh Inn, Salem's in tow. The sky was turning from daylight to a steel blue not yet committing to true blue or nightshade. And it was Friday night at the Marsh. She said it might be crowded.

When is it isn't crowded, I asked?

Christmas and during finals was her immediate response.

The neon buzz of the Martian above the entrance was dwarfed immediately upon opening the door. The juke box played *It's No Secret by the Jefferson Airplane*. Apropos as it seemed but no one was listening but me.

*It's no secret, how strong my love is for you*

*It's no secret, when I tell you what I'm gonna do*

*'Cause I love you, yes I love you*

*It's no secret, everybody knows how I feel*

*It's no secret, when I say my love is real*

*'Cause I love you, yes I love you*

*It's no secret, when you got me jumping up and down*

*It's no secret, 'cause my heart is chained and bound*

*I love you, yes I love you, yeah*

*It's no secret, everybody knows how I feel*

The smoke was almost unbearable but cleared as we made our way back towards the Foos Ball tables where Katje's tribe was. She led me, gripping my hand, so reminiscent of the first time here. I felt like a regular but knew I was merely a passenger, a visitor, soon to vanish from all roll calls, a ghost that fostered recollections but had evaporated into the ether.

Marlene saw us both and hugged Katje and was overly eager to hug me and made the entrance all worthwhile. I had so much reluctance about coming there with all that had transpired.

Good to see you Marlene I said while holding her shoulders with my hands for probably too long but she felt it. Preston was there holding court with Manhattan in hand and the familiar faces I never learned the names of. It was my last hurrah and I still had cash to spare that I had saved to and announced once again that the drinks were on me. There was a collective but not correlated cheer that gave approval and then a slow charge to the bar before I could set standards with the bartender.

No problem the bartender said as I set two 20's and told him I was good for more if it came to that. I sauntered back to the crowd to see what Katje would want and I could see that she felt good about me taking care of her as far as this went. She wanted an Old Yellowstone with a water back and I proceeded forth and ordered her that and a pint of Black Label beer on tap for myself. For some reason I just knew that I had to keep my wits about me and the hard liquor could only put a dent into any logic I might have to offer up. Marlene was at the bar and I stood there while she was trying to get the bartender's attention.

It's so wonderful to see you again Trace. You're so generous with all these people that are relatively strangers to you.

Good to see you too Marlene. These strangers are not very different from my crowd back home. I feel comfortable here and we even have a couple of guys like this guy. I was pointing at Preston who came to the bar to refresh his Manhattan.

Are my ears burning my poor boy? Preston asked.

Hey, this poor boy is buying you a drink, you pretentious asshole I informed him with a smile and laugh.

Oh Trent, I like your spirit. Excuse me for who I am. I really can't help it.

His name is Trace, Preston, Marlene corrected him.

Oh, my apologies Trace. I do need to get that straight if you are providing me with a beverage. Or two.

Marlene just exhaled in disgust as she ordered and waited.

Oh Sir, can I get another Manhattan on this gentleman's tab.

The bartender went off and Marlene asked how much longer I would be staying in DC. I said that I was leaving tomorrow and Kevin would be coming home at the same time.

It's a little strange that I came here to visit Kevin and he had to leave and I spent most of the time with Katje.

Marlene got her drink and wanted to know if she should bring Katje hers while I was talking to Preston. The Manhattan took longer than Marlene's Greyhound.

Sure, I said but really wanted to get out of talking any more to Preston. She left with drinks in tow.

So, my good man, did Katje fulfill your desires and dreams or did she leave you high and dry?

This is info that I wasn't willing to surrender, giving him evidence or pleasure for his dim forecast. It was him that I would leave high and dry.

Well Preston, Katje has been a fine host and has showed me the sights and for that I am most grateful. I was sipping my pint as his drink arrived.

I knew she wouldn't begin to give you what you desired. She's like that. Not to be pin holed into an easy time. I feel for you buddy. I bet your balls are blue.

I guess you figured that right Preston. I picked up my pint of Black Label and found my way back to Katje who had already finished the Old Yellowstone.

That was quick Katje. Here, let me get you another.

No thanks Trace, I'll get it myself. I saw you up there comparing notes with Mister Sanborn. Did you gloat about your conquest?

Jeez Katje, I never let on to anything. That's between us, now and forever and I never saw last night as a conquest. I'd say it was more mutual lust and affection.

She looked surprised but then reached on her tip toes and kissed me in front of the crowd as Preston was approaching. The juke box was playing *Hooked on a Feeling* by B.J. Thomas.

*I can't stop this feeling  
Deep inside of me  
Girl, you just don't realize  
What you do to me  
When you hold me  
In your arms so tight  
You let me know  
Everything's alright  
I'm hooked on a feeling  
I'm high on believing  
That you're in love with me*

Off to the bar she went. I felt great for that display of affection but Preston was taken aback.

That really didn't look like she hadn't been giving you what you want, my friend.

Preston, just forget about me and Katje. I'm leaving tomorrow, that I know and not thinking about yesterday and just trying to be here now, if you can understand that? Let's enjoy what we have right now, old boy.

I had to add that old boy thing in as if I had just stepped out of an F. Scott novel. I was speaking his nomenclature except for the Ram Dass Be Here Now spiel.

I think you got me there chap. You'll be faraway and Katje and I will still be here.

Marlene was hearing all this and stepped in. She was already a little tipsy.

You know why you never get anywhere with women Preston? It's because you think they all want you. You might want to reassess that perception. You're wasting your intelligence and good looks on self-grandeur.

Whoa Marlene, I never put salt on your tail. How can you evaluate my status when you're at a loss to ascertain your own industry and patience? Don't make me take you down, I'm too good at that.

Marlene smiled. You're such an asshole Preston.

Katje walked up.

I only heard the last part of that but why are we picking on Preston? He knows what an asshole he is. There is no reason to expound on something that is completely understood by everyone.

Marlene bust up laughing. I thought this was a bit severe and dire but these two women certainly had more history with Preston than I had and now had chosen this time to sound off in their estimation. Was it because of me being here? Why was I sympathetic to him after assessing from just a few encounters that they were probably right, that his ego was interfering with his ability to progress in a one-on-one encounter with a woman. Perhaps it wasn't a woman he was pursuing. I was leaving tomorrow, leaving Marlene, Katje and Preston and for that matter Glen and how much did I really have to involve myself with this?

Preston looked unmoved by this assault on his assumed prowess and merely hoisted his drink in a toast to both. I think he got it but wasn't giving ground. Barely since she came back from the bar that Katje's drink was empty again as was Marlene's. They both looked at their empty glasses and if on cue turned them upside down to show that they were empty but Marlene's Greyhound still had ice in it and it was conveniently dumped on the sandaled feet of Preston.

OK, now that does upset me, Preston said laughing.

Such a sport you are old boy I had to add not being able to shake the F. Scott talk. Both girls broke up giggling and I knew then that Katje had more than her fill but that didn't stop both of them from doing an about face back to the bar for replenishment. I was still only halfway through with my pint of beer.

Hey Lance, I think you and I might have a chance tonight with these two. We should all head back to my apartment for a nightcap.

I couldn't tell if not knowing my name was deliberate, a way of disarming my response or was he actually that impersonal and remote in his interactions. No matter what there was no way I wanted to get involved in his apartment fantasy.

Can't say I'm in with that Prescott. He smiled at the use of Prescott instead of Preston but didn't correct me which convinced me all this name forgetting was calculated. Katje and Marlene came back with their arms around each other with their free hands holding fresh inebriants as if they needed them but I've never been one to police another and there were certainly times where I defied policing.

Are you holding each other up or is that true affection? I asked.

A bunch of both Marlene spat out.

Yeh, bunch of both, we are a bunch of both, Katje added sipping her Old Yellowstone. The water back was history. The rest of the crowd had been talking among themselves but seeing these two embraced caught everyone's attention.

What a cute couple someone called out.

We're made for each other, Marlene said, with just a slight slur. And then she reached her head up a bit and daringly kissed Katje quickly on the lips. Katje did not flinch. Not to be out done, kissed her back, but this time full throttle with tongue envelopment which caught Marlene off guard and brought a roar from the crowd. I loved this live-in-the-now Katje spirit. It reminded me when I first met her and she jumped off the bookcase when the phone rang, squashing the cockroach. I loved her and didn't want to go back to Oakland. I wanted this feeling I had for her to be present in my life and to continue.

Preston came over to me and said just loud enough for only me to hear, Perhaps that wasn't the match-up I had imagined. I gave him a soft punch on the shoulder.

You gotta go with the flow Curtis.

You're OK Trace, you're OK. And he laughed and headed to the bar.

I found myself standing there with the three of them at the bar and I just took in the music. Someone had played an oldie, The Platters, *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes*.

*They asked me how I knew*

*how my true love was true?*

*I, of course, replied*

*Something here inside*

*cannot be denied.*

*They said, someday you'll find*

*all who love are blind.*

*When your hearts on fire*

*you must realize*

*smoke gets in your eyes.*

The three came back, this time hanging onto Preston in the middle and he wasn't walking too straight either. For some reason all this drinking was wearing me out and I had only the one pint but it had been a long day with the rushing in the morning and the realization train ride where Katje set me straight on our status, present and future. There was so much babble going on among the crowd and the three of them standing there that all of a sudden in an abrupt realization, I felt like the outsider looking in. True, we had made love just the night before, but this estrangement was overwhelming, as if I was a ghost observing my own wake. I went back to the bar and ordered a Pernod over ice and settled the score moneywise and to my surprise I owed another 5 bucks. I gave him ten and he gave me the routine knock on the bar and a Thank you sport. I guess he was a fan of F. Scott as well.

Walking over to the juke box I could see I caught Katje's attention and she came over, pretty steady but using the chairs on the tables like ski poles ensuring her a direct path.

You are not going to pull a Glen on me, are you Trace? She latched onto me like the ledge in the deep end of the swimming pool.

Naw, I just can't decide whether to play the Carpenters or Jimi Hendrix I said joking but I wasn't going to play neither. I put my arm around her and threw down my Pernod. She buried her face against my chest and I was alive again.

You wanna get out of here? she prodded and of course I was all too willing and we began to leave.

Hey you two! Wait for me!

It was Marlene also doing the ski pole thing towards us.

Can I come with you guys? I don't want to go home yet and Preston started giving me those goo goo eyes.

Goo goo eyes? I asked.

Yeh, you know, like he's undressing you and that's just the start. He gives me the creeps.

Sure, come on. Katje offered up and I thought that that might be a nail in the coffin for further mattress activities. But I had to reflect on the good and keep pursuing the be here now mantra.

OK, let's go. We collectively gave a wave to the crowd or at least those that were looking and poor Preston, well he looked like his dog just died if he even had one. We left to the song *Rocket Man* by Elton John having to go sideways through the tavern door as they were hanging on to me and as a unit, we were too wide to fit.

*And I think it's gonna be a long, long time  
'Til touchdown brings me 'round again to find  
I'm not the man they think I am at home  
Oh, no, no, no  
I'm a rocket man  
Rocket man, burning out his fuse up here alone*

We must have been a strange sight, the two of them hanging on to me swerving up the street. And I knew that Katje was over her limit at the time because she never bothered to pull out her cigarettes. It was dark now and more traffic than usual on the streets being Friday evening. We managed the lights and crosswalks and got back home which seemed to rejuvenate Katje's energy as she went to the kitchen for glasses and ice. She came back with 6 glasses, pitcher of ice water and pretzels on a tray. It looked like a lot to maneuver but she was managing just fine.

Let us head up to my room. I have some Courvoisier I have been saving for a special occasion.

What's the occasion? I asked.

Your last night here, silly.

And we climbed the stairs with Marlene complaining, telling us this was just like when she went back-packing in the Blue Ridge Mountains in North Carolina.

It was horrible. You just had to put one foot in front of the other yelse you weren't going to get anywhere and we wanted to get somewhere. I felt like I was on a death march.

By the time she finished complaining we were already at the top of the stairs and into Katje's room, really the nicest room in the house that I had seen. She put Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* on the turntable and pulled a bottle of Courvoisier Cognac from her bedstand. I had drunk Cognac only once before and it was another one of those liquors you swish around in a glass and stick your nose in it as if you were divining the essence of a magic potion and then only taking tiny sips so as not to empty your glass in one swift guzzle. And if you did guzzle it, you were left with dragon throat as it burned the hell out of your gullet. But once again I was ignorant in the art of fine booze and did welcome the chance to be educated. Marlene plopped down on Katje's large bed on cinder blocks and scooted up against the wall. I pulled out the chair from the desk as Katje set the tray down on the wire spool table and poured water into glasses before pouring generous amounts of the cognac into small wine glasses. She also scooted up on the bed next to Marlene against the wall and then saw that she was without beverage.

Stay there I said and took my glasses and the pitcher off the tray and placed the tray on the bed between them. A simple maneuver but they both thought this was ingenious and thanked me before starting the swirling and nose routine that they both were familiar with. They both took sips and then Katje spoke up.

Trace, I'm sorry, you have done so much, we have had so much fun and I just want to toast to you. You are the best. And could you bring my purse to me.

Feeling the oppression of servitude but so eager to serve I brought Katje her purse which I knew held her Salem's. She was beyond a fumble to locate her smokes and lit up only to ask me again if I could bring her an ash tray.

At your service I said, not snarky, but with really trying to provide and secure peace.

You're so sweet Trace. I wish I had a boyfriend like you, Marlene said.

He is not my boyfriend, Katje quickly corrected and the hurt hailed down like spears from the sky.

She looked at me and saw the flush on my face, the total disregard of the last 72 hours, of what we shared, of our naked bodies embraced, the trusts we imparted and the solace of lost souls. I think that she would have chosen to taken the comment back but we all say things we can't retrieve, things we can't make right.

No, no, Trace, no, do not go there. I have loved the time we have had together but you are not my boyfriend. I have no way of making you understand. You have a fixation attitude I cannot fix. I am drunk but I know my feelings and know that I know, that I know that what we have, or now have had, is special. Nothing will replace it. Is that the right word, no, nothing can replicate it, how's that for English?



Marlene sat witnessing the interchange somewhat dumbfounded but sighing as if she was watching a soap drama. She downed her drink without the sipping procedure. Katje followed and for the first time I became the sipper.

I wasn't going to be the dejected boy but had to muster up to be a man. A man that was callous, hardened and could shrug off any woman's scorn. I was not that man. My eyes welled up and only then did I down the Courvoisier as if I was drinking a Socratic hemlock. I was hurt but did not show it.

We three talked for a while and after their second healthy drink they stopped making sense and I left them in their incoherence and mutual affection, saying good night and retreating downstairs to bed.

Passing by the big room with the very small television I thought it would be nice to check in though I rarely did. Clicking on the news brought me back to a new reality I often chose to miss.

*Leon Jaworski today asked the court to set a 10-day deadline for the White House to respond and yield the tapes demanded by the Supreme Court. This motion seeks to avert delay in a coverup trial that could eventually show involvement by the President in the Watergate breakin.*

*And in just recent news from Provincetown, Massachusetts, a woman's nude body was discovered less than a mile East of the Race Point Ranger Station in the Cape Cod National Seashore. She was found resting on one half of a beach towel as if she was sharing it with someone. Her head rested on a folded pair of jeans which was found nearly severed as well as the woman's hands that were missing. There were signs of sexual assault, probably post mortem. She was a redhead and appeared very fit. Her toenails were painted pink.*

All this was most startling as I felt that the world was indeed enhancing and stretching the boundaries of reporting. Her toenails were painted pink? I shut off the TV as I always seemed to do and went into my room, Kevin's room.

I had my clothes off when Katje came into the room. She was wearing just the long t-shirt that teased desire.

What time are you leaving tomorrow? I forgot to ask.

Flight leaves at 10 thirty. Probably safe to leave here at Nine.

I will walk with you to the Airport transit.

Katje, you don't need to do that.

Oh yes I do. You might get lost and then I would be stuck with you for who knows how long? Boa noite.

She smiled and turned around and left most likely to crawl into bed with Marlene. If I had to rewrite my last night in DC it would not have ended this way. After brushing my teeth, I looked in the mirror trying to see inside my head and after a bit I smiled and laughed a short laugh. Yeh Trace, you are one lucky guy. I had found love when I wasn't even looking for it.

## Six

I woke up early, about 6 thirty and thought I would check out the two upstairs. I slowly opened the door and the first light of day shone down on Katje and Marlene half embraced and still fast asleep. Images come and go but this was another one I was sure would stay with me quite a while.

In the kitchen I opened several cupboards for a filter and coffee to start the Mr. Coffee. My roommate, Kemit, back in Oakland had one so I was no stranger to the drill and made up a pot with the Italian ground espresso that was on hand. It was still doing its dripping when I heard the water running from upstairs and shortly thereafter Katje came through the kitchen door wearing the turban head and a robe similar to the one at the Roosevelt but missing the large cursive R.

Bom dia Trace. That coffee might work.

Bom dia Katje. Want a shot of brandy in it to ease re-entry?

Not a good idea. What a strange sleep I had. At one point I forget everything and think I am with you and was rubbing your chest but it wasn't you. It was Marlene.

Did she enjoy having her chest rubbed?

Well, she did not protest.

Coming over to me she removed her turban unleashing her wet hair.

I feel like I might have been mean to you last night.

Oh? I don't think mean is the correct word but I did feel discarded.

Discarded?

Yeh, you know, that kind of love 'em and leave 'em attitude.

But that is not how I feel about you Trace. You have made me feel good about myself and not as if I have been taken advantage of. You have been --- well you have been great. And I am sorry to see you go especially before Kevin gets here.

I guess I'll have to be satisfied with that Katje. Maybe we could stay in touch.

She didn't say anything but put her arms around me, her wet head beneath my chin.

I wish I could just crawl inside of you Katje.

We held each other for quite a while until Marlene came through the door.

Hey, that's the woman I slept with last night. What's going on here?

Marlene and I laughed and Katje attempted a smile.

I'll make breakfast if you let me scrounge around the fridge and cupboards for whatever I can come up with.

Katje and I both nodded as Katje went upstairs to get dressed carrying a cup of coffee.

Marlene was like a swirling dervish gathering from the refrigerator and anywhere else eggs, cheese, tomatoes, salami, pickles, bowls, utensils and frying pans. She was operating like a short order cook in a diner all the while sipping coffee. Everything was coming together fast when I just had to ask?

Where have you found such speed and competence to prepare breakfast? Did you work as a short order chef?

She had a towel draped over her shoulder to wipe her hands on.

I am the oldest of my 2 brothers and 2 sisters and my mother was a single mom working, especially on weekends so I had to pick up the slack. I never thought about it much. It was something I grew into. When I finally left for college, I'm sure it was a rude awakening for them. They probably now survive on pop tarts and toaster waffles.

She had the toaster going nonstop, buttering toast while one after another she plopped down perfect omelets on the three plates. She put down the plates on the table with napkins, forks, ketchup and Tabasco sauce just as Katje walked through the swinging door.

Wow Marlene! Can I marry you? she burst out.

I thought that was consummated last night I blurted.

Funny man Marlene said laughing while Katje was expressionless. I suppose she was foggy from last night but she remained quiet and in semi stealth mode. I became resigned that for some undefinable reason Katje and I were becoming disconnected minute by minute. The absolute and only true path out of this was to get on a plane and go home, holding on to the days we had together that resonated with emotional explosion and confessional discourse. I would always remember this time in DC.

After a thank you and goodbye to Marlene, I packed up my duffel and was ready to head out to the transit station. Katje came up and said that Marlene was heading home and that she could point me in the right direction. She didn't see any need to escort me.

Of course. I see, I said and looked at her for some sign of love, of attachment we had, of anything.

She grabbed my hand as she had so many times before.

Trust, hope and love Trace. This is what you have given me. That is what I have been meaning to say. Thank you.

Kissing me on the cheek and turning up the staircase was her exit as I was dumbstruck and only whispered good-bye.

On the bus I did everything to bring myself into the reality of leaving, of going home and the empty void Katje had left me with. Why was I so hung up on her? I had women I had been involved for much longer and we parted ways time and time again. This was nothing new, but was it? Was it the mystique, the never giving me too much or just the slow turning of her hardened soul finally caving into me, to become us? I had to check myself not to exaggerate what actually was as to what really was. I played back in my mind our time together, examining it as if it was a suspect specimen in a petri dish only to discover that what we had together was pure joy and only wish and hope that in the future it might happen again.

Just then in a traffic jam at a stop light where the bus was not moving an inch, in the opposite lane going in the opposite direction was a bus also impeded by traffic. And there to my shock and surprise, on the bus, was Kevin, and our eyes connected at the same time. It was crazy. Two panes of glass separating us but still there was communication, some knowing, some understanding, that can only be relayed between friends. Laughing and waving and then the moving away from each other as the traffic began to advance. How strange that was as if we were in alternate universes moving in different directions, unable to fully connect.

Thank the powers that be that my roommate, Kemit, picked me up at the airport and he, staying so focused on own his life only asked the routine questions as if I had a good time. That was fine. I was still recoiling from my crash involvement with Katje and had to process my emotions as well as decompressing to back home reality. I had the job, as a telephone operator and the girlfriend, Lindsey, both that I was comfortable with if not feeling fortunate. But Katje, I knew, was going to be one of those seeds that having been planted, begins growing, sending down roots to eventually be a tree you have watched grow and need to deal with or cut down. I was captivated by her and could not shake her from my mind.

Retiring to my room, my immediate sanctuary, I tried to relocate my feelings to music and I kept coming back to the Beatles. I had to relate to *You've got to hide your love away* ---

*Here I stand head in hand*

*Turn my face to the wall*

*If she's gone I can't go on  
Feelin' two-foot small  
Everywhere people stare  
Each and every day  
I can see them laugh at me  
And I hear them say  
Hey, you've got to hide your love away  
Hey, you've got to hide your love away  
How can I even try  
I can never win  
Hearing them, seeing them  
In the state I'm in  
How could she say to me  
Love will find a way  
Gather 'round all you clowns  
Let me hear you say  
Hey, you've got to hide your love away  
Hey, you've got to hide your love away*

## Seven

It is said that time has a way of healing but also said is that absence makes the heart grow fonder. I wasn't one to make a big splash in a pool of pity but at the same time I held this place in my heart for that time together, as brief as it was, it was pretty intense and I was soaking in that pool.

Nonetheless for wear and moving on, Patty Hearst was found in the Sunset District of San Francisco and the main focal point of the news was that she peed her pants when discovered. It was like the pink toenails. I secured a new job at the AT&T KMI Microwave Station in Point Reyes as an Operations Clerk due to the one skill I learned in high school. I could type. I moved to Bolinas into a beautiful house I called the "Chateau" half a block from the Pacific Ocean. The rent was high but I was making decent money. I notified those who cared of my new P O Box and some months later I received a letter from Kevin.

*Trace --- Glad to see you are situated in your new digs. The place sounds fantastic and I hope I can make it out there some time. Step-dad Frank will be ok with some life style adjustments. All concerned are at ease for the time being. Hey! How was that, seeing you in the bus going the wrong way? That was crazy! Just chalk it up in yet another of our encounters. Not sure what went on here with you and Katje but she is forever asking me about you, our history and really anything she can dig up out of me. I might be out of stories now and have to make some up. Not really. Our past is our foundation for the future, right? I remember how on Psilocybin when we journeyed to the UC Berkeley campus we came upon this giant clock set into the hillside with these tiny short bushes designating the hours. I jumped on and held onto the minute hand and you, laughing so hard, tried to coax me off. I said I was riding time and needed to see where time would take me. I guess I didn't see anything wrong with this but I looked up and above us was the Chancellors house of the University and they were having some kind of function. The whole luncheon party was standing at the edge looking out the window at us, well really just me cuz I was riding time. And then at Big Sur we took hefty capsules of Mescaline and after a while on the upper reaches of Ventana Creek we took off our clothes, so stoned, but so aware and I ventured down towards the creek and was enjoying the vista when a deer, a buck, with big antlers that could stab my flesh, could cause some serious wounds, came up slowly next to me. How strange that he felt OK with me, I guess, because I was naked. Hey, I was buck naked. Just thought of that. It was a standoff and I looked at you and you just shrugged, not saying anything but relaying to me to go with the flow. After not too long a doe, a deer,*

*a female deer, you know the tune, came down to the creek for water as Mr. Buck stood next to me until finally he went down to drink as well. You know Trace, people throw around the word "cosmic" left and right and don't really have any basis for it but for me at that moment --- that was cosmic. I guess I could keep going on. The many nights trying to decipher the philosophical diatribes of Sartre, Plato, Jonathan Swift and I Kant remember who else while inhaling something from Thailand and me funneling Scotch down your throat. Someday you'll find your taste for it, believe me. Anyway, take it as it comes and for me I'll still be here for at least another two years until the BA in Economics finds me or I get a job at MacDon-ald's.*

*Stay clear of the wide and open highway --- Kevin*

I enjoyed Kevin's recollection of the not so far past but questioned why he bothered to bring it up. Some things never become history until the passage of time has stretched so far that it breaks open wide and you can see it for what it was. I was happy to hear that Katje, perhaps, had some interest in me but I wasn't putting too much faith into that. I sent a short letter back to Kevin though short has never been my calling card but told him I was glad about Frank. I also told him that Katje and I had gone to New York City as he and I had planned to do. And without saying more, I left it at that, allowing him to reach his own conclusions.

Much to my almost forgotten hope and surprise, after a few months I received a letter from Katje.

*Hello Trace ---*

*I began writing to you several times in the last year but never felt I had anything to say but now I do. Kevin has told me you have a new job and living in Bolinas. I have a friend whose parents have a house in Stinson Beach and I will be visiting out there at the end of August. I was hoping to be able to visit you as well. I will be continuing in my 2<sup>nd</sup> year at GWU to attain a Master's Degree in Biological Sciences. The program has been difficult but I have managed to maintain the schools' high standards. It is very different from Undergraduate studies. The focus is much more intense on what is pertinent rather than zig zagging all over without spending much time on any one thing. I am enjoying it! Let me know if you want to get together. We really did have fun for the few days you were here and I will always hold dear to my heart our time in New York. You woke up something inside of me that was hiding.*

*See saw Margery Daw --- Katje*

It was hard to read between the lines as to what a visit would entail but was more than excited to see her again. I wrote back telling her I would certainly love to see her and if it was during the week I could even take a couple days off. I gave her directions and the phone number at the Radar Station because I didn't have a phone at the house and to let me know a couple of days ahead of time. I did not hear back

from her until the last week in August. She phoned the station and as Operations Clerk, I was the one usually answering the phone. I was configuring the payroll from the past week.

KMI TD2 Microwave Station, this is Trace.

Well hello Trace. This is Katje.

She didn't really have to identify herself. I could tell right away it was her from her accent.

Katje! So good to hear your voice again. Are you still coming out to the west coast?

I am and I would like to visit you this Saturday.

Great!

OK. I will see you then, about 12 o'clock. Good-bye now Trace.

Yeh, OK, bye now.

And that was it. I wanted to ask her so many questions as if she was planning on spending the night, if she needed me to pick her up in Stinson or how long she would be staying. But she was staying true to character, never one to wear her heart on her sleeve. It was an ideal time for her to stay as there would be no one visiting on the weekend. Since I had moved to Bolinas there had been a steady stream of friends of whom I loved to see though I found solitude scarce which was one of my main reasons for migrating from Oakland.

Saturday morning came and I was anxious and found myself doing busy housecleaning which did not even have to be done. Everything was in order and I had drunk too much coffee. I finally decided to put on some music and wait. In between songs I heard someone coming up the stairs to the deck where the entrance was. I went out on the deck just as she was turning the corner. She looked fantastic in shorts and a faded red Sao Paulo t-shirt and she was smiling. She dropped her same small purse on the long table I had built from wave worn lumber from the beach behind the radar station and quickly came to me.

Hello Trace.

She put her arms around me, hugging me like there had been no time lost.

Oh Katje. This feels so right. So glad you're here.

I had my face buried in her hair that smelled so good hugging her feeling as if this was going to be a good day when I looked up and there was a guy who had followed up the stairs behind her. I loosened my hold on her and she did as well having sensed what I had.

Oh Trace, this is Scott. He is going to Law School at GWU. His parents have a place over in Stinson.

I was speechless and knew I had to recover. I went and shook hands with him as someone would right before a boxing bout.

Hi Scott --- Trace. Glad to meet you.

What a lie. Of course, I wasn't glad to meet him. In mere seconds the whole visit with Katje had been destroyed and I think he could see it.



This is quite a place you have here Trace. His comment would have been well received under normal circumstances but at this moment the wheels in my head came to a grinding halt as if someone or in this case, he, had thrown a wrench into the works.

Yeh, it's nice I said not being able to come up with anything.

Then there was an awkward silence except for the waves crashing on the beach half a block away.

Katje, I think I'll go take a walk and explore the beach. I've always wondered what the beach was like on this side of the inlet. I'll see you in about an hour.

He was referring to the inlet from the ocean into the Bolinas Lagoon that separated Bolinas from the Seadrift Spit of Stinson Beach. The lagoon was a wildlife treasure filled with seals, sea birds, rays and sand sharks.

OK Scott. That will give Trace and me time to catch up.

And off he went as I visualized this giant clock over my head ticking down from one hour. I could see him turn out of the driveway down to the ramp of the beach next to Grace Slick's former house.

It is great to see you Katje but you could have told me you were bringing your boyfriend.

Trace, he is not my boyfriend! she half yelled.

I had heard that line before and wondered how Scott might feel about that

But you fuck him, right? I blurted out without hesitation.

That is my fucking business and why is that an issue? I am here seeing you now. I did not think this would turn into an argument about who is fucking who, it is about right now, I am here looking at you face to face. See me Trace. Your eyes, my eyes, they connect do they not?

In that split second, coming from nowhere, without cause or reason I might have had an epiphany about love and connections and the way the human mind structures experience, how it shapes belief, expectations, develops fear and instills faith. I am the driver of this car, my mind, and should be able to steer it wherever I want, even off a cliff if I so desire and when the car breaks down I can either abandon it or figure out how to repair it. It sounds trite but we *can* be in charge of our own destiny. I had created my own conception of Katje and me just as Glen had done and the last piece of the jigsaw, which was Katje, will not, does not fit unless you destroy the piece in the process. Katje had come to visit me because I must have meant something to her. She was here now.

Yes Katje, they do connect. I'm sorry for overreacting.

Her eyes were welled up and I suppose mine were too and we hugged each other for a while until I asked her to come inside and sit down for a bit. The clock was still ticking but now the concern had vanished and I wanted to cherish the time with her. I thought how unique and brave she was to come to me with her boyfriend. How that didn't matter to her. She wanted to see me.

She was talking about school and went on how she quit smoking, which was monumental and the house on G Street and then Kevin and Glen and then Marlene and it was as if the words were drifting off beyond me like the smoke she used to blow above her head as I stared at her thinking how I could never be the

one to make her commit to love or even admit to it. I went over to the turntable and put on *Desperado* by Linda Ronstadt singing an Eagles song. I politely interrupted her.

Katje, listen to this song. The last verse seemed to sink in through both our tears.

*Desperado, why don't you come to your senses?*

*You been out ridin' fences for so long now.*

*Oh, you're a hard one*

*But I know that you got your reasons*

*These things that are pleasin' you*

*Can hurt you somehow*

*Desperado, oh, you ain't gettin' no younger*

*Your pain and your hunger, they're drivin' you home*

*And freedom, oh freedom, well that's just some people talkin'*

*Your prison is walking through this world all alone*

*Don't your feet get cold in the winter time?*

*The sky won't snow and the sun won't shine*

*It's hard to tell the night time from the day*

*You're losin' all your highs and lows*

*Ain't it funny how the feeling goes away?*

*Desperado, why don't you come to your senses?*

*Come down from your fences, open the gate*

*It may be rainin', but there's a rainbow above you*

*You better let somebody love you*

*You better let somebody love you*

*Before it's too late*

She came over to me and for the last time, went up on her tiptoes and kissed me on my cheek. She walked out and down the stairs towards the beach, hopefully, to let somebody love her and return her love as well.

# Music Credits

*Rikki don't lose that number* – 1974 – Donald Fagen, Walter Becker. Performed by Steely Dan

*Slippin' into Darkness* – 1971 – Papa Doc Allen, Harold Brown, B. B. Dickerson, Howard E Scott, Lonnie Jordan, Lee Oskar, Charles Miller. Performed by War

*That Lady* – 1973 – Ronald Isley, Rudolph Isley, O'Kelly Isley. Performed by the Isley Brothers

*A Girl Like You* – 1967 -- Eddie Brigati, Felix Cavaliere. Performed by The Young Rascals

*Angry Eyes* – 1972 – Kenny Loggins, Jim Messina. Performed by Loggins & Messina

*Bad Company* -- 1974 – Paul Rodgers, Simon Kirke. Performed by Bad Company

*Trilogy* – 1972 – Greg Lake, Keith Emerson. Performed by Emerson, Lake & Palmer

*Blowin' Free* – 1973 – Andy Powell, Ted Turner, Martin Turner, Steve Upton. Performed by Wishbone Ash

*Brazilian Tapestry* – 1971 -- Astrud Gilberto, Stanley Turrentine. Performed by Gilberto & Turrentine

*Tonight, I'll Be Staying Here With You* – 1969 – Bob Dylan. Performed by Bob Dylan

*The Streets of San Francisco* – 1972 – Patrick Williams. Performed by The Henry Mancini Orchestra

*It's No Secret* – 1966 – Marty Balin – Performed by The Jefferson Airplane

*Hooked on a Feeling* ---1968 – Mark James. Performed by B. J. Thomas

*Smoke Gets In Your Eyes* – 1958 – Jerome Kern, Otto Harbach. Performed by The Platters

*Rocket Man* – 1972 – Bernie Taupin, Elton John. Performed by Elton John

*Rhapsody in Blue* – 1963 – George Gershwin. Performed by Duke Ellington

*You've Got To Hide Your Love Away* – 1965 -- John Lennon, Paul McCartney. Performed by The Beatles

*Desperado* – 1973 – Don Henley, Glenn Frey. Performed by Linda Ronstadt