1965/ 1966/ 1967

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Preface

The well worn cliché is that anyone who actually lived through the Sixties can't remember them. But I have been blessed (or cursed) with an almost complete recollection. And I thought it important to write everything down before age and/or death made all those memories disappear.

There were three good reasons for this. First, I believe that the story I have to tell is pretty interesting and engrossing in its own right. Looking back on it all it is difficult to believe that so much happened in such a short time. If nothing else I think that it is historically important to see how in that era a person's mind, outlook, and beliefs could and did so radically change.

Second, I wrote the book so that others of my generation could remember how they themselves had been and what they themselves had gone through. Because even though my circumstances and I were about as far from Everyman as possible, and even though my changes were telescoped pretty dramatically, one of

the most astonishing, almost psychic, aspects of the Sixties was how so many people from so many different backgrounds ended up pretty much on the same path. And how all this happened without any specific books to read or leaders to follow.

Finally, and perhaps most crucially, I felt it important that those who had never experienced the Sixties would have at least one honest report on what it was like. As it happens History is usually written by the victors, or in this case at least by the people who didn't drop out, who weren't spiritual idealists, and/or who ended up losing their faith. And unfortunately most of the rest of those who were intimately involved with the Sixties became too burned out in one way or another to effectively bear witness as to how it really was back then.

In order to give a heightened sense of intimacy the book is written as a re-created journal, and it takes place solely in the present. So, for instance, when the entry is for March 1, 1965, this is how I thought then. Likewise when the entry is for April 12, 1966, or October 15, 1967. Hopefully in following how my thinking changed you will also be able to follow (after a fashion) how a generation's outlook changed.

An obvious shortcoming to this approach is that I can't in wisdom and hindsight make any comments or judgments as to whether anything I thought, said, or did at the time was good or bad, smart or stupid, right or wrong. Nor can I make editorial comments as to what I now think about events or people. I can only state what I thought then.

Similarly, I have tried very hard to use just the thoughts and the words that were in usage then. As an example: Even though the times were so rich in irony, I could not use the word 'ironic', since back then the word 'irony' was only used in a strict literary sense. Ironic, eh? As you will notice, in the three years covered my vocabulary does change with the times. But all the same I try to be careful not to weigh everything down with too much jargon or hipness.

In the end what I am striving for is to create a painting of sorts. I'm trying to present as best I can the totality of the times. Like the Sixties themselves, there are no pat explanations for whatever success or failure there is in the story.

And, like a painting, you take from it what you can.

Introduction

September 12, 1965

One benefit of being seventeen years old is that the ground isn't nearly as hard to sleep on when you're sleeping with only half of a sleeping bag between you and the ground. Not only that, but when you're seventeen it's so much easier to not be woken up through all the ongoing singing and talking and more talking that at least a few individuals always must seem to be doing at such a gathering. Finally, when you're seventeen it's almost a snap to go to bed at four a.m. and then get up again at eight all bright-eyed in the Sunday morning sun and ready to awkwardly try to fit in with the semi-hipster semi-adult world around you.

For I was here on somebody's 'farm', some semi-rural meadow, out in Paoli, Pennsylvania—the site of the Philadelphia Folk Festival—along with about a thousand other people. Most of them were secretaries and young professionals and graduate students and such during the work week, and scattered amongst them were a few scruffy full-time drifters thrown in to give it authenticity. Although to me at the time everyone there was hopelessly more mature than I, I being just a kid taking in my last weekend before I went off to college. So I suppose that I was in the middle of a semi-baptism of sorts. And here I was right out on the outer edge of what people did.

Not that the Philadelphia Folk Festival, or Philadelphia for that matter, would have ever been considered anything other than small potatoes by anyone who wasn't a small potato himself. The Newport Folk Festival up in Rhode Island was the hip, major one. New York and Boston were the major folkie centers. Nothing about Philadelphia had been hip since around 1790. But at the time I would have never even considered going to any of those places. At the time I had only once ever been more than 100 miles from Allentown (about 50 miles north of Philly), and that once had only been a few months earlier.

No, I may have been the most rebellious poet at William Allen High School, but I was still a ridiculous rube, still an innocent from the outback. In fact, the main reason I was attending the Philadelphia Folk Festival was that my older sister, the one who was a legal secretary by day and a semi-post-beatnik by night, always attended.

Well, that's not quite right, either. Actually, I—like anyone else in the early Sixties under the age of 22 and with any pretensions to intellectuality and/or cultural authenticity—was completely taken in with folk music. It was about the only thing you could identify with that showed that you didn't identify with the rest of the planet around you. It was all that was genuine in a world of alcohol and Playboy Magazine and Andy Warhol art. It was a music that was a real evocation of real people who led real lives, and not like the vulgar commercial crap that came out of Tin Pan Alley. It was simple and heartfelt. It was…

Okay, by 1965 it was already past its heyday. 1962 and 1963 and 1964: Those were the years of Joan Baez and hootenanies and 'Blowin' In The Wind'. Those were the days of Peter, Paul, and Mary and weekly folkfest television series. But with 1964 had come the British invasion, not just of the Beatles, but also—lest we forget—of such acts as the Dave Clark Five and Herman's Hermits. And although at first nobody with half a mind thought of any of said invasion as anything more than interesting and catchy new songs surrounded by teenybopper madness, in the past six months songs pop musical had started getting serious. Real serious.

First off, Bob Dylan had come out in the spring of 1965 with a new album, 'Bringing It All Back Home', on which many of the songs were backed by (mostly lame) drums and electric guitar. And at around the same time a new group, the Byrds, invented a new musical form, Folk Rock, by taking an acoustic Dylan song, "Tambourine Man", giving it half of a back beat, and turning it into an actual #1 hit.

By the summer there were all sorts of Folk Rock acts taking songs to #1, from the Turtles to Barry McGuire to Sonny and Cher. Moreover, the Beatles had begun turning the corner from creating happy tuneful songs to creating artsy tuneful songs with the soundtrack to their new movie, 'Help!' And the biggest hit of July and August had been the breakthrough song by that 'ugly' group that was fast figuring out a way to make down and dirty music catchy: the Rolling Stones' 'Satisfaction'.

But the second recent biggest hit—and the most revolutionary one—had been another song by Dylan, the anthemic 'Like A Rolling Stone'. Only this time his rock 'n roll backup was not only not lame, it was musically more powerful than anything that had come before. This wasn't just a folk song set to rock. This was something else entirely.

That the vast unwashed public would approve of a six minute song filled with surreal imagery and sung in (in their terms) a wailing screech in and of itself should have told us all something. But instead of that the recent Dylan metamorphosis had meant something entirely different to almost all folkies. Namely, that he had Sold Out to Commercialism. Indeed, three weeks previously when he had appeared at the Newport Folk Festival with his rockabilly backup band, he—the formerly undisputed Voice of a Generation—had been booed off the stage. Indeed, the Hohner harmonica company, which placed a large ad in the Philadelphia Folk Festival program thanking all the people who had had a hand in re-popularizing the harmonica as a folk instrument, did not even mention Dylan. Indeed, if there was one theme which held every folkie together as the autumn of their movement began, it was this unrelenting bitterness towards Bob Dylan and Commercialism.

Which was weird, considering that outside of folklorist Alan Lomax traveling the back roads of Carolina recording Smoky Mountain grandmothers, all folk music as we had known it had always been commercial.

The only question was how commercial you wanted it: Whether you preferred the updated backporchiness of Bluegrass, the Middle Way artfulness of Joan Baez or Ian and Sylvia, or the schmaltzy slickness of the Kingston Trio or the Limeliters.

And the Philadelphia Folk Festival itself was hardly the Keeper of the Flame of Purity. The headliner at the big concert last night had been the Chad Mitchell Trio, a group which had smooth vocal stylings in the Limeliter mold and which was principally known for a string of mildly satirical political songs.

Of course, one didn't go to a Folk Festival just for the headline act or the big Saturday night concert—one understood that those things were necessary to bring in the crowds and the revenue. No, one went to a Folk Festival so that one could hang out outside a circle of musicians, each one eyeing the others' instruments so that they could pick up the chord progressions as the song progressed. One went to a Folk Festival so that one could see the occasional character who looked like Jack Kerouac or Buffalo Bill. One went to a Folk Festival so that one could be right on the outer edge of what people did.

And that Sunday morning at 8:30 am, as I ate away at some pancakes that some tent was providing for everyone, I probably had the feeling that I was worming my way out to that outer edge. After all, the reason that I hadn't gotten to bed until 4 am was that…

Well, the night before I had met this girl, nothing romantic like, and we had watched the concert together, and then it turned out that she had to go home, and home was thirty miles away in Conshohocken. And so I asked my sister's current boyfriend Chuck if he could help us out, and he had said, 'Sure'.

Now Chuck was older than most of my sister's boyfriends had been, maybe even thirty, and he was a bracing combination of good humor, sarcasm, beatnik-dom and total sneering at the law. My sister had intimated that he had done hard time. And Chuck's car was an old Triumph two-seater with no windshield, one taillight, and maybe half a muffler. Which I didn't fully realize when I had arranged the ride, but which, once we had squooshed me in the little crawl space in the back, proved not to be any kind of drawback at all as we drove her to her house.

By the time the girl had been dropped off and we were on our way back with me in the passenger seat, however, it was about three in the morning. And the dearth of freeways between Paoli and Conshohocken in 1965 meant that we had to pass through small downtown after small downtown. Not that Chuck—it being 3 am—saw any need to slow down, not even when passing four cops just hanging out together standing outside of their two patrol cars as we…

Oh shit. As the cops did a double take at the mufflerless and windshieldless sports car going by them, and scrambled to get into their squad cars and after us, Chuck floored the pedal and we were soon blasted through town, into the night, and out onto the open highway. And as I'm sitting there getting whipped in the face by the wind in his un-windshielded car Chuck nonchalantly yells out of the side of his mouth, 'There's a gun in the glove compartment, Mike. If they get near, start shooting.'

Well, they didn't get near, so I didn't have to start shooting. And I didn't even open the glove compartment to see if there really was a gun in there. Still, compared to going to high school in Allentown, Pennsylvania, or even compared to going off to college, life was finally starting to get interesting. And this feeling that I was getting close to Something that was on the cusp of Something Else was definitely growing.

Although one could make the observation that mid-September in the Northeast always feels like the cusp of something. After all, it's usually all warm and summery, and you're thinking, 'Gee, September shouldn't be this warm.' And then a week later the sun has started sinking earlier and it's all cold and windy and you're only too aware that any warmth you've ever known is only a memory.

But on this Sunday morning the Northeast was still basking in green growth and little puffy clouds in the clear blue sky, and the sun shone down on me as I walked on over to the secondary stage (as opposed to the

main stage) to see what was happening. And what was happening was a Sunday morning concert by a black gospel choir. Except that no one referred to them specifically as 'blacks' in 1965. Nor had the term 'Afro-American' been coined yet. Although even the mainstream culture was getting kind of uncomfortable with 'Negro' and now even 'Colored' was starting to sound embarrassing. It's true that the ones who frequented coffee houses had been thoroughly integrated, and you used the term 'Spades', but that word wouldn't have been appropriate for a group of earnest churchgoers who were up there singing their praises for the Lord. So I don't remember exactly what I would have called them.

But I do remember sitting there on the grass being transfixed by the power of their chord progressions and their voices, it being the first time I had ever encountered Negro Gospel singing live. It was a little disconcerting, because they weren't on the outer edge of anything, and yet the passion that shot forth from them was more real than anything folk music had ever produced for me. For that matter, it was far more real than anything that was coming out of Motown or Harlem. And I also remember thinking, 'If only somebody could figure out a way to take this feeling out of the context of 'Colored' and 'Church' and present it to the rest of the world…'

This feeling… What feeling? That God could be felt? I probably wasn't ready to define it quite yet.

But the experience had definitely put me in a receptive mood. And so I just sat there on the grass with the other raggedy listeners on a peaceful Sunday morning as the choir members filed off the stage in their navy blue and gold gowns and a couple of stagehands moved some mikes around. And then an emcee of sorts got up and introduced some folk act only deemed good enough for Sunday morning, and a small concert ensued.

For about an hour or so various different mediocre acts performed two and three song sets. Then the emcee came forward and said, 'Our final performer this morning is the new lead singer for the Chad Mitchell Trio; last night was his first live performance with the group. Here he is all by himself. Please welcome John Denver.'

And a guy with a big smile and big teeth and big glasses and short but shaggy blond hair came front and center and sang a couple or three songs in a clear high tenor voice. Being the new kid in town (he had actually just replaced Chad Mitchell himself) he was eager to please and full of patter. But as he was about to close his set all of a sudden he got serious and mysterious.

'There's a brand new song I'd like to sing for you,' he said. 'It comes from California, and nobody seems to know who wrote it. But it's like nothing I've ever heard before.' And then in a moving and stately manner he sang:

Love is but the song we sing, fear's the way we die

You can make the mountains ring or make the angels cry
Know the dove is on the wing, you need not know why
C'mon people now, get together
Smile upon your brother, time to love one another right now
Some may come and some may go, we shall surely pass
When that which has left us here returns for us at last
We are but a moment's sunlight fading in the grass
C'mon people now, get together
Smile upon your brother, time to love one another right now
If you hear the song I sing you must understand
You hold the key to love and fear, it's in your trembling hand
Just one key unlocks them both, it's there at your command
C'mon people now, get together
Smile upon your brother, time to love one another right now
Right now
Right now

If the gospel choir had shaken me emotionally, this song came close to demolishing me. I had heard all kinds of songs in my life. Folk songs about levees breaking and unions being organized and unrequited Elizabethan love affairs. Top 40 songs about Rockin' Robins and Sugar Shacks and Summertime Blues. Broadway songs about Beautiful Mornings and Favorite Things. Even Sunday School songs about Old Rugged Crosses and Little Brown Churches. But I had never heard anything that remotely presented the idea of actually LOVING one another.

Because it was obvious from the context that this song was not meaning 'Love' as in how one loved one's girlfriend. Nor did it seem to mean 'Love' as in the spiritual sense of loving the Lord thy God. Nor did it feel anything like the 'Love of Man' that Unitarians and Ban The Bombers were always invoking.

No, the Love that this person was singing about was not romantic, it was not religious, and it was not political. It had nothing to do with Sex and it had nothing to do with World Peace. So what the hell was it, and why did this song pull on me so?

I sat there for a couple of minutes almost in a daze, and then I slowly stood up and stretched out my legs. And then a few minutes later I wandered off away from everyone else to my own corner of a field next to the main field to try and figure out what had just happened.

This feeling I had had all summer about something really important being about to happen, I knew it wasn't simply because I had just graduated from high school. I knew it wasn't simply because I was finally going to to be able to leave Allentown. I knew it didn't really have anything to do with the frustrations of your typical adolescent coming of age.

No, Something was definitely in the air. I just didn't have a clue as to what it was.

So I stood there in the mid-September noonday sun and looked distractedly at all the people a hundred yards away milling about the festival grounds, and tried one more time to put my finger on just what that IT was. And then I realized something.

I realized that I didn't have a ride out of here. Damn! I was supposed to be taking care of that this morning! I snapped out of my reverie and headed back over the empty field to the main event.

I quickly found my sister and Chuck and asked them if they had come up with any rides—technically THEY were the ones who were supposed to be handling this. They hadn't, but fortunately up on the main stage the emcee had just interrupted the proceedings to ask about rides for other people, so a quick jog up there by Chuck got an announcement for me, too. And within another fifteen minutes I had someone offering to take me up to Connecticut.

They were a 21-year-old brother and a 19-year-old sister, and in appearance and outlook they seemed to be somewhere in between me and full-time folkies. 'We're going to Hartford,' the brother said. 'How far are you headed?'

'New Haven,' I said.

My sister chipped in: 'He's going to be a freshman at Yale.'

That made the brother do a double take. 'You sure don't look like you should be going to Yale,' he said.

I thought about using the line, 'Whoa, you really know how to hurt a guy'. But that snappy comeback line had been hip last spring, not now. So instead I said in mock protest, 'Hey, I just had my hair cut so that I would fit in!' And this was true. But it was also true that the labels 'clean-cut' and 'Ivy League' definitely

didn't apply to the torn sweatshirt I was still wearing from last night, nor to the ratty suitcase and guitar case which were at my feet.

Now his sister chipped in with: 'Hey, we're not going to let Yale University interfere with us helping somebody out. Even if they do own the whole state.'

And so we agreed to meet again at 2:30 at a particular corner of the parking lot, and at 2:30 we met and I put my stuff in the back of their 1960 Lark station wagon, and the three of us and another friend of theirs all got in, and we headed on down the road.

As we wound our way to the Pennsylvania Turnpike and then fed from that on to the New Jersey Turnpike, I sat in the back next to their friend, sharing in the small talk and listening to their conversation. At one point around New Brunswick the sister turned back to me and asked, 'Have you heard any of those new Pollock jokes?'

'You mean like Elephant jokes?' I replied. Elephant jokes had been big ever since the tenth grade, but were now passe.

'Well, kinda,' she said. 'But they make fun of Polish people.'

'Why would anyone care to make fun of Polish people?' I asked.

'Exactly,' she replied. 'The whole idea is to make fun of making fun of people. And since nobody has ever made fun of Polish people…' She then proceeded to tell me several of these new riddles, the only one of which that stuck with me had to do with how many Pollocks it took to screw in a light bulb.

But after we traded a few more jokes, I settled down into being as inconspicuous as possible, and started to let excitement over my new college career take hold. In fact, after a while I wasn't paying attention to their conversation; I was too full of thoughts racing around concerning what I was going to find in a couple of hours.

Soon we were over the George Washington Bridge and into Manhattan and on to the Cross Bronx Expressway. And I had to start paying attention now, because when you lived in Allentown you might occasionally go to New York, but you never went through New York, and now here I was…

All of a sudden my attention was back to what they were saying, for the brother was talking about something he had just been reading about. Actually, it involved some chemical compound of some kind, and he hadn't just been reading about it, he had just met some people who knew where you could get it. 'It's called LSD,' he was in the middle of explaining over the car seat to the guy next to me. 'It's so powerful that you take, like, a thousandth of a gram of it. And they say that you see God when you're on it, that you lose your Ego. That you experience this amazing feeling of Love.'

There was that word Love again in that whole new context.

'I don't know,' his sister countered. 'Remember when I got really, really stoned on that grass the one time? That wasn't love. I was really scared.'

But her brother didn't lose any of his enthusiasm. 'No, it's not supposed to be anything like grass. And it's not dangerous because you take it with a person who's done it already and who acts like a guide. Some professor at Harvard discovered it, and then they fired him, and now all kinds of people up in Cambridge have done it, and they've become, like, different people. I don't know, it just, like, changes your perceptions or your personality or something.'

The guy next to me said stuff like, 'You're kidding me,' and 'Can these guys you met really get any?' I mostly didn't say anything, not only because I was seventeen and inexperienced and a hitchhiker who

didn't even know them, but also because that strange and momentous Something was resonating again, just as it had a few hours earlier with that song by the new Chad Mitchell lead singer.

For I had read plenty of science fiction in my younger days, but science fiction always pretty much assumed that although the future would bring all kinds of amazing new gizmos, these gizmos would then still be operated by the same old people. This stuff, on the other hand… Well, the implication here was that this stuff was creating amazing new people.

As we worked our way up the Connecticut Turnpike I just stayed quiet and looked out the window at the lengthening afternoon shadows. But as we passed Westport and Bridgeport I realized that it was time to direct my thoughts back to where I was going. After all, in a sense my day was just about to begin. After all, here I was, a guy for whom the good people of Allentown—whether they were praising me or damning me—always used the adjectives 'weird' and 'different', about to join a thousand other young men who were the cream of the cream of the crop. All of them guys who already had had successful careers as Class Presidents, Athletic Heroes, and Social Lions.

Who the hell was I planning to kid?

No, that's the point, I reminded myself once again. I don't have to kid anyone. This is a clean slate. I have a new haircut. For all they know I'm one of them. Anyhow, I've never really made a real attempt to fit in anywhere before. And this time I actually want to. This time will be different.

And I kept telling myself that as my ride took Exit 47 into downtown New Haven and got off on College Street. The brother and sister already knew where Yale was and they knew where the Old Campus was. And Bingham Hall turned out to be at the first corner we came to. Night was just falling as they deposited me and my suitcase and my guitar out upon the sidewalk, shook my hand and wished me well, and then got in their car again and drove off for Hartford.

I was at one of the entrances to the Old Campus, at a huge wrought iron gate that was swung open for now. People were coming in and going out all around me. Most of them were fellow freshmen, since this was still an era when parents were not expected to come hold your hand when you went off to college. Although a few station wagons were being unloaded (since many of the students came from New York or Boston, and driving was thus the cheapest and easiest way to get a student and his belongings there), the several fathers who were yet present as the evening descended were affecting the same attitude as if they were dropping their boy off at boot camp: 'You're on your own now, son. Make me proud.'

I walked through the gate and into the giant open quadrangle of the Old Campus, my new home for the next year. In front of me a friendly round green lamppost was already softening the night. Up to the left just twenty yards away was the colonial brick building called Connecticut Hall, the oldest building on campus. To my right, and now standing between me and the rest of the outside world, loomed the gray stone edifice of Bingham Hall. It stood five stories high and was about as close to a castle as I had yet come, with beveled glass window dormers and an honest to goodness eight-story tower that rose at its center and looked exactly like the rook piece in chess. I checked the number on that postcard I had been sent in August: 1128 Bingham.

This must be this entryway here. I walked in and up to the third floor, where the door with '1128' on it was already half open. I stood there with my ratty suitcase and guitar case in hand and hesitated a moment.

Because when I had received that postcard four weeks previously it had also contained the names of my two new roommates. One Steven Warner of Louisville, Kentucky, and one Daniel S. Brinsmade III, of Bethany, Connecticut. And I had joked with my friends about their likely personalities: Steve Warner was probably a vigorous All-American type, and Daniel S. Brinsmade III was undoubtedly some insufferably snotty rich kid who played polo and arched his eyebrows whenever he spoke.

However, here I was now, and so I pushed on in, and there stood Steve Warner. Well, I had been right about one thing: he was handsome, with a strong, vigorous build. But he also wore strong, Clark Kent-type glasses, and as soon as he limply held out his hand and even more limply said, "Hi", I knew that he was the sort of person I would not have wanted to sit next to at any sort of function at any time in my life.

Okay. That's one roommate. I looked around the 'living' room I had just entered. There was no furniture, but it had hardwood floors, a fireplace, beveled glass windows. Steve Warner was looking at my guitar case and saying in a dumb monotone, 'Do you play guitar?', and I was thinking, 'Well, maybe this Chauncey Farnsworth Daniel S. Brinsmade III character might not be all that bad'. And then in from out of one of the two bedrooms came Daniel S. Brinsmade III.

It turned out that Dan Brinsmade didn't come from that wealthy a family. It also turned out that he had already been a Yale freshman two years previously, but had dropped out after a couple of months, so that instead of being a Yale junior like a twenty year old should be he was back to being a Yale freshman again.

But most importantly it turned out Dan Brinsmade made ME look like a typical Yalie in comparison. Because—a good nine years after the last juvenile delinquent had traded his duck's ass haircut for an induction notice or a real paying job—Daniel S. Brinsmade III was an out and out greaser. He had his black oily hair slicked back. He had a couple of tough and scary looking New Haven townie friends, who reeked of tobacco and alcohol, who were helping him move in. And what he was moving in consisted of cigarette rolling machines, two electric guitars, one amplifier, and a giant pile of Bo Diddley and Chuck Berry albums.

An electric guitar? In 1965 absolutely nobody who had a vocabulary greater than 800 words played the electric guitar. And a guitar amp? A guitar amp was something that you knew existed, but that virtually no upstanding citizen had ever seen. Finally, Chuck Berry? He hadn't been popular since 1958, and he hadn't even been popular back then. And who the hell was Bo Diddley?

Whoever he was, it was more than obvious that this Dan Brinsmade, his number one fan, was probably not going to prove to be the warm and lovable type that I or anyone else would want to room with. I took my stuff into the other bedroom, the one with the bunk beds.

Steve had politely not already commandeered the bottom bunk, but it didn't matter, since I had always dreamed of having a top bunk back when I was in the third grade, and now here was my big chance. I put my gear at the foot of the bed until morning and sat down at the bay window with the beveled glass. Below me cars rolled by on Chapel Street, and across the street were the dead neon signs of some closed stores on a Sunday evening.

Steve stood there and made some awkward small talk. He allowed as to how he played the guitar, too, although only about three chords worth. He let on that his favorite group was the Lettermen. It turned out that he had been born in Allentown and had spent his first ten years there. Small world. He had been accepted at Princeton, but only on the waiting list. He…

I was feeling claustrophobic. I stood up, made some excuse about needing some fresh air, and headed out the door, out of 1128, past all the other freshmen, out of Bingham Hall, and back through the wrought iron gate to the world I had just left behind. I sat down on the little concrete retaining wall and just rested my bones.

After a few minutes another freshman wandered out of the wrought iron gate and was just standing there breathing in the night air, too. We introduced ourselves. He was Kent Bicknell, he had just moved in two floors above me, and he hailed from a small town and a small prep school in New Hampshire. We decided to walk for a few blocks around New Haven.

Nothing substantive was discussed. On finding out that I was from Allentown, he asked if I knew someone who went to his prep school, a Bill Bascom, and I said, 'Yes, he'd been in my sixth grade class.' Small

world. We wandered out to a highway overpass and down a New Haven street that was already being boarded up back in 1965. We got lost and asked directions and found our way back to Bingham Hall.

I went back to my room. It was 10:30 and Steve Warner was getting ready for bed. That seemed like a good idea. I took whatever bedclothes I had out of my ratty suitcase and climbed up to my new top bunk.

And a couple of hours later, when September 12, 1965, finally switched over to September 13, 1965, I was fast, fast asleep.

Part One

January 1, 1965

At 12 am of the New Year I was making out with my girlfriend Diane in the basement of some friend's house with the parents not being home. We made out with each other every chance we could. Tonight we were doing it in the semi-darkness while the radio was playing. The Number One song this week had been 'I Feel Fine' by the Beatles, with its first time ever sound of a guitar feeding back on itself. But that didn't sound as big and as new as another song that had been out for just over a week, 'Downtown' by Petula Clark. And that didn't sound nearly as big and as new as a song that we had just heard for the first time tonight, a song that had almost shocked us with its intensity. I didn't get the name of the singers, but the song was called 'You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling'.

And it wasn't really a New Year's party going on upstairs, although that's what Diane had told her parents. It was more an occasion for the two of us to get together so that we could make out.

Why had Diane lied to her parents? Because she was Jewish. And her parents had absolutely forbidden her to date anyone who wasn't. Which certainly included me.

When we had first met in February of 1964, back when I was a Junior and she was a Sophomore, I couldn't believe that at this point of the Twentieth Century there were parents anywhere in the world, let alone the United States, who would have that kind of attitude. I mean, it would have flat out never occurred to me. I mean, it was the sort of thing that I would have thought had passed away with the era of Romeo and Juliet. But there it was.

Not that that would in any way stop Diane and me. After all, it hadn't stopped Romeo and Juliet. And although the forbidden fruit aspect of our secondary school love affair must have added to the intensity of our mutual attraction, not to mention our make out sessions, the fact of the matter was that we were two rather intense teenagers in and of ourselves.

And we were both stuck in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Now Allentown was a joke. Literally. In fact, its very name was a cliché location used by comics alluding to Deadsville. Kind of like an East Coast version of Peoria or Podunk or Dubuque. Only fifty miles from Philadelphia and ninety miles from New York City, culturally speaking it might as well have been in an obscure corner of Iowa. Except that, although it was surrounded by farmland, it wasn't really rural. Nor, even though it had a big Mack Truck plant and was right next door to Bethlehem and Bethlehem Steel and The Largest Steel Mill In The World, was it really industrial. Rather, it was Pennsylvania German without any of the cuteness of Lancaster and the Pennsylvania Dutch country. Although it is common for people with artistic pretensions to claim that they come from awful, artless places, Allentown really was small minded and ingrown. Its only distinction was its utter lack of distinction.

Unless there is a distinction in being utterly German. I had grown up thinking that last names like Knappenburger and Wunschler were normal. It was common for a man of the house to have a five gallon tin of pretzels next to the chair that he watched television from. The local beers included Neumeyer and Horlacher. The most common meal in the school cafeteria was pork and sauerkraut and mashed potatoes.

The city contained about 100,000 people, most of whom lived in row houses. For those not familiar with this residential layout of the mid-Atlantic region, around the turn of the twentieth century, and about fifty years before suburbs were invented, row houses were the local developers' idea of affordable housing. And like the name suggests they were all attached to each other in block long rows, the wall of one being also the wall of another. But unlike brownstone houses in New York City or Washington, DC, the walls were cheap wood. And the neighborhoods lacked any sense of quality or dignity. Rather there was a pervasive sort of lower middle classlessness about them.

And in Allentown they stretched for about two and a half miles between Front Street and 17th Street, and for about two and a half miles between Greenleaf Street and the other side of the Eighth Street Bridge, past where the Mack Truck plant was. Sure, west of 17th Street there were areas of nice actual brick houses with small front yards and all, but for me as a young kid dreaming of living in a situation like that was way beyond my ability to dream. For me as a young kid life was an endless row of row houses.

And I don't know if the row houses contributed to this or whether it was just a function of southeastern Pennsylvania's German peasant mentality, but there was an actual nastiness that seemed to permeate the air of Allentown. People were never particularly nice to each other. Children constantly made fun of each other. There always seemed to be an air of tension and sarcasm about the place.

I had basically lived there since the second grade, me and my divorced mother and, off and on, one or more siblings. One good thing about Allentown was that it had been one of the first cities in the US to have a 'gifted' program, although maybe it wasn't that good a thing because it also meant that the students selected were much more gifted at mutual cruelty than the normal run of the Allentown mill. But at any rate I had been selected for it, so that from the fourth to the seventh grade I had been bused across town to have the best teachers and the best program available.

Which is how Larry Kistler had become my friend. Larry lived in Alton Park, an area of block after block of small ranch houses and front and back and side yards, which was Allentown's first and only subdivision. In the summers I would not tell my working mom and ride my non-geared bicycle five miles on busy city roads, all the way to the far side of Allentown, where Larry and I would play.

And Larry was my best friend, and we would 'publish' our own satirical newspaper and all, but there was another reason why I went out to Alton Park. That's because there was this amazing place there called a 'drive-in restaurant. And they sold these really tasty hamburgers with pickles and onions and mustard and ketchup on them for 15 cents. And they sold these really big milkshakes for 29 cents. To me and to any other fifth grader, we could just stand in awe of a place that could do such things.

It was called McDonald's. And that brings me back to New Year's Eve and me and Diane. For Diane's father was named Sam Fink, and he had moved to Allentown in 1956, having quit his job as a shoe salesman in Waukegan, Illinois, and having invested all of his life's savings in one of the first McDonald's franchises. He wasn't the brightest guy in the world, and in fact was also rather bigoted, but he did work extremely long hours flipping hamburgers, and by the time I had met Diane he had become one of the richest men in Allentown. Which wasn't all that difficult, since I've already pointed out that Allentown was basically a city of German peasants. But it did give him the clout, at least in his own mind, to tell his daughter that she couldn't date a Gentile.

Okay. She was also the Finks' precious only daughter. And their son, who was dull and overly pimply, was not the sort in which to invest one's hopes and dreams. So that even if I had been Jewish, they probably still would not have been too pleased with me.

For I was Heathcliff without the glamour, the sort of person who instinctively didn't fit in with any kind of society, whether it was the small society of high school or the larger society of the modern world of 1965 that I am sure the Finks wanted Diane to excel in.

Of course, Diane only saw the Heathcliff part of me, because like me she had a profound alienation from the modern world of 1965. And the fact that we were pretty much the only two students at William Allen High who shared that profound alienation made us bond all the more tightly.

Okay, it was more like a vague alienation that we shared. For one of the problems about the modern world of 1965 was that there really wasn't very much that was profound. And that certainly was true in spades about William Allen High.

It's not that everyone around me was irreversibly dumb. There were sixteen National Merit contenders in my Class of 1965. But my Class also had about a thousand students. And all in all they were a rather unimaginative lot, so unimaginative that there weren't even any cliques in my high school, just innumerable people wandering about from class to class.

And it's not like I didn't know that there wasn't some other way to live life out there. Because in the eighth and ninth grade I had lived in Plainfield, New Jersey. Only sixty miles east of Allentown on Route 22, ethnically and sociologically Plainfield was an entirely different world. About forty percent of it was Negro ghetto, which was a new experience, since there was literally only one colored family in the entire city of Allentown. But more importantly, almost all of the rest of Plainfield's working adult population commuted every day to New York City, which meant that their kids had a whole different and broader sophistication and outlook than had the ones in Allentown.

And what's more, almost nobody exuded Allentown's nastiness. For the first time in my life I had met people who actually tried to get along with each other.

But that idyll had come to a crashing end when I was moved back to Allentown at the beginning of the tenth grade, moving in with my mother to a depressing apartment two blocks from downtown.

Which takes me to the next part of my background. Because there I had been, staring out of the window during some meaningless class, about three months into the tenth grade, being blindingly depressed and scoring in the low C's, when it blindingly occurred to me that the only way out of Allentown for an economically disadvantaged lad such as myself was to get a huge scholarship to some top college.

And thus had begun my obsessive climb to the top of the Class. Which meant taking summer school courses. Taking six subjects a semester. Actually studying for tests. So that by December 15, 1964, what with an almost stellar transcript and high SAT's in hand, I had with a fair amount of confidence applied to the sort of places that guaranteed scholarships to those they accepted.

Of course, those places didn't include schools like Harvard or Yale. Because although I had sent away for their brochures, it seemed obvious to me that places like these were way out of my league. These were destinations for people who were both Class Presidents and flute virtuosi and all around good eggs. And I was so obviously none of the above.

Moreover, although in all my upbringing in Allentown and Plainfield I had never run into any Class Consciousness in America, had never felt that the country I lived in was anything but egalitarian, I had also never run into anyone who had ever done anything close to going to Harvard or Yale. So, to the extent that I thought about it at all, I assumed that somewhere out there were these sons of incredibly rich and snotty people who would take all the spaces not filled by good egg flute virtuoso Class Presidents.

But then on December 18, on the last day before Christmas break, this former student of Allen High and present Sophomore at Yale came and gave a talk to a few of us down in the grungy guidance counselor's office. And although he was impeccably attired and all, he amazingly enough encouraged me to apply,

even though the application deadline had been the 15th, saying that Yale wasn't really as Country Clubbish as people thought and that they actually sought out people like me.

I didn't really believe him, but I decided to go for the challenge anyway. But in applying I wasn't as foolish as to present myself as the real me. Rather I tried to create a vision of me that a Yale (that I was totally ignorant of) would want to accept. And so by December 29 I had submitted all the forms, gotten all the teacher recommendations and, most importantly, had gone to the interview with the Yale alumnus with a smile and a shoeshine and a coat and a tie.

Oh, one other thing. I also had a broken leg, which made the interview with the Yale alumnus all the more touching.

The broken leg had come about on November 2, the day before Barry Goldwater had gotten trounced by Lyndon Johnson. I had been playing soccer in gym class when somebody kicked my right femur instead of the ball. There was a loud dull crack like a very dead branch being snapped in half, and I fell to the ground. The gym teacher had come running over, a station wagon was called for, and I was hustled over to the Allentown Hospital, which was conveniently a block away.

There I had lain on a gurney in a hallway for a half an hour, suffering the most intense and insufferable pain I had heretofore in my life suffered, until all of a sudden Diane showed up to offer comfort. It turned out that as soon as she had heard about my misfortune, she had run out of class and down the street. Ten minutes after that a doctor showed up. A cast was wound, I was sent home, and I commenced my life as a crutch hobbler.

It certainly wasn't the worst fracture in the world, however, and after giving that appealing Dickensian sheen to my Yale interview, on December 29 the cast had come off again. But, as anyone who has ever gone through this can attest, now my calf muscle was about the size of a very flabby No. 2 pencil, which meant that I wasn't in much of a condition to drive a car.

Not that that would have made any difference, since there was no car for me to drive anyway. My mother could have probably just barely afforded to have a car if she had wanted one, but she didn't. And the idea of me getting one independently would have never even arisen. After all, outside of the McDonald's over in Alton Park, or outside of if your parents owned a store or something, in the winter of 1965 there were virtually no jobs available for teenagers in Allentown. And even if there had been I would have been expected to be saving the money for college.

So on this early, early morning of January 1, I was relying on the kindness of others. Specifically, I was waiting for my sister Claire, up from Philly with her current boyfriend, to come back from wherever it was she went after dropping me off. And Diane was waiting upon yet somebody else to come and pick her up.

The New Year had begun.

January 4, 1965

The house where Diane and I had been making out, by the way, was a brick one, and it was surrounded by a yard, and it was out by 23rd Street. Because although Allentown was dead end and unimaginative and stupidly German, it also had a smattering of Italians and Slovaks and Jews, and it also had doctors and dentists and vice presidents of Mack Trucks and Air Products and the like, and it was the kids of these people who formed whatever circle of friends that I had. By now I was the only one that I knew who actually lived in a row house. Or in an apartment to boot.

And although the typical Allentown resident might go to Philadelphia once every two or three years, and to New York City maybe two or three times in their entire life, I was already going to New York at least once a year, and every three months or so to Philadelphia.

It helped that my sister lived there. She had moved when she was seventeen, right out of high school, and had immediately immersed herself in the Philadelphia coffee house scene, working as a legal secretary by day and staying up to all hours of the night.

Not that the Philadelphia coffee house scene was an overly large one, consisting as it was of exactly two coffee houses. There was the better known alternative, The Second Fret, where actual name acts such as Bob Gibson or Ramblin' Jack Eliot might sometimes appear. And then there was the smaller, lesser known one, The Gilded Cage, where my sister hung out.

And that's where I would go when I would visit her, the kid brother in awe of the exotic expresso machine in the corner and the too many tables and chairs crowded into the darkness, and the girls in their black leotards and short skirts, and the amateur folksingers in their shaggy appearances and their shaggy clothes, each taking turns picking up their guitars and playing songs that I had mostly never heard before, and each one incomparably better than I could ever hope to be.

And sometimes she would take me to parties where guys would sing bawdy songs and make trenchant comments and talk about Impressionistic Art. And sometimes I would go with her to Rittenhouse Square, and sit on a park bench and watch the homosexuals and whatever else passed for Philadelphia hipness walk by.

And then on Sunday night I would take the bus back to Allentown and the dullness of high school on Monday morning. Again, not that it was totally intellectually enervating, since by senior year all the courses I was taking were Advanced Placement, so that theoretically I was working at a college level. But life in Allentown and at William Allen High was oh, so dull.

Here on Monday, January 4, however, the dullness was starting to get exciting. Because in a couple of weeks the first semester would be over, and those first semester grades would be sent to the colleges I had applied to. Then after that, nothing else would matter: I could get straight F's the final semester and it wouldn't affect whether or not I was admitted anywhere.

Not that I was really going to let it all slide. I had too much Good Student forward momentum going for that. But my entire life up to that point had been ruled by the inescapable prison/sanctuary of School. Ever since the age of five, it would have been incomprehensible to do anything else in life except show up at whatever school I was attending. And now there were the first glimmerings of Freedom, of a life not totally bound and constricted. It was what I had been yearning for since at least the tenth grade.

Not that I had the foggiest idea of what I was going to do with said Freedom.

But I could see that it was a'comin'.

February 15-23, 1965

This had been in the planning stages for several weeks now, and I was finally pulling it off.

As I stared out of the dark, frozen window at the dark, frozen industrial new world that the bus was sailing by, I remembered convincing my mother that a seventeen year old could take a week or so and safely and easily go up to Boston. I remembered getting the two weeks worth of assignments from all my teachers. And I remembered walking down the main high school corridor, past the assembly where a former graduate, a local hero named Lee Iococca who was now a vice president at Ford, was telling all the shop kids how he had invented the Mustang, and into the principal's office, where I rather easily talked kindly old Mr. Bartholomew into letting me play official hooky.

Here I was now, chugging along the Massachusetts Turnpike at four thirty in the morning, having been awake and asleep off and on throughout the long night. And although the bus was nice and warm I could

tell from the clarity of the air and the dull glint of the masses of frozen ice outside that soon I would be experiencing a frigid like I had never experienced before.

And what exactly was it that I was in the process of doing? I was going to check out firsthand the various colleges that I had applied to.

To me this was an entirely original idea. Certainly no one else that I knew of in Allentown had thought of this. Everyone in Allentown just looked at college brochures and sent away their applications and hoped. And even if they had thought of this, they certainly wouldn't have ended up doing it on their own. Just up and go on a Greyhound bus in the middle of a frozen night.

So the adventure was one thing: Here I was now in that mysterious New England that I'd always read about. But there was also a real and serious reason why I had undertaken the journey. And that was that I had honestly no idea what particular college I actually wanted to go to.

Right now I was headed for Cambridge and the campus of MIT, which until a few months ago had been my first choice. Because along with my poetry and my mild alienation and my folk music and all, I was also pretty good in science and math. After all, this was 1965, and mine was the generation after Sputnik.

I had been in the fifth grade when Sputnik was launched in October, 1957, and although my Opportunity School had already been providing enriched science, it's fair to say that in the ensuing years society at large and school boards in particular certainly put more attention on trying to emphasize the brainiac part of the spectrum. Of course, it would be going too far to imply that there was now an actual cachet attached to intelligence or to the junior scientist, but for smart guys like me in out of the way places like Allentown, science was just about the only game in town.

And since MIT was the premier school for science east of California, that's what I had focused on.

The turnpike soon ended, and even sooner the bus deposited me and my suitcase at the Boston Greyhound station. It was now about five fifteen in the morning, the sky was still dark, and the temperature was just as cold as I had feared. I set about trying to find my way to the MIT campus.

Across the street was an MTA station. Wow! As in the Kingston Trio novelty hit song of my youth, 'Charley and the MTA'! I tramped over there, walked downstairs, waited a few minutes, and then got on the train that would take me to Cambridge.

About twenty minutes later, as we moved aboveground and through what looked to be the suburbs, it dawned on me that maybe I had gotten on the wrong train. I got out at the next station, walked over to the other side, shivered in the cold as the sky just started to lighten, and caught the next train back to Boston and on into Cambridge.

By the time I had lugged my suitcase to the corner where Mass Ave meets the Charles River at Memorial Drive, the world was up and about. Around me hustled some of the world's smartest people, but somehow there was no romance in the cold Monday morning reality. Sure, the main building had kind of a nice looking copula, but the rest of the campus looked like the faceless government buildings I had seen in Washington, DC.

I pulled out the piece of paper that had the directions on it, and trudged on down Memorial Drive, the cold making my just healed fractured leg wince, but thankful at least that I could finally walk again without a limp. I was looking for a fraternity house.

Jack Arnold was a friend of a friend, a graduate of Allen High, and a freshman at MIT. Fortunately for me, he was already awake and eating breakfast at his fraternity dining room. We introduced ourselves and he invited me to eat.

Free food?! And all you can eat?! I looked around at Jack and his fraternity brothers. They weren't all that rowdy looking. In fact, they were almost all wearing coats and ties. But then in 1965 just about every young man on just about every college campus in America wore a coat and tie.

The plan was that Jack was going to take me around to his classes, etc., for the next few days, and that's pretty much what we did. I also had an Admissions interview, walked around the side streets (Look! That's where they make Necco wafers!), and had Jack impress upon me just how damn difficult the MIT curriculum was, and how absurdly brilliant all of his fellow students were. In the end of attending school there kind of felt like joining the Marines: Can I cut it? Can I train with the best? I knew that my current puny high school intellect couldn't handle it, but then on the other hand last year Jack Arnold had had a puny high school intellect, too.

By Thursday morning I had experienced enough of MIT, and I was ready for my next college.

Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, was known, along with Williams and Amherst, as one of the 'Little Three'. These were schools with the supposed Ivy League standards of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, but with much, much smaller student bodies. For some reason the poet and folk music side of me had been attracted to it; I fancied that study there would consist of intimate classes and New England fall foliage out the window and long afternoon teas with the low key professors smoking their pipes and their wives bringing in more cookies.

This time the bus station was only a block from campus, so I had no trouble finding the place. And this time I was one of a cast of about a hundred, inasmuch as this weekend was Wesleyan's special high school senior weekend.

It turned out that my incredibly original idea of visiting college campuses may have been unique in Allentown, but it was starting to become commonplace at other locales. Indeed, some of the participants came from as far as Baltimore, with their parents dropping them off. Anyhow, I was one of the first arrivals, and I went to a central office where they assigned me to a fraternity house for the weekend.

Jack Arnold had joined his fraternity at MIT as an alternative to the dorm situation that most MIT students faced. At Wesleyan, however, there basically were no dorms, only fraternities. And the fraternity that I was assigned to was Delta Kappa Epsilon. Also known as DKE.

The 'Dekes', as they called themselves, were a rowdy bunch. In fact, as they explained to me in a big brotherly sort of way, being drunk and uncouth was their entire identity. Oh boy, just what the poet and folk music guy in me was looking for. Although, it being high school senior weekend, they did their best not to be too drunk or uncouth in the presence of their high school senior temporary roommates.

And in my mind I decided that it was only happenstance that had placed me in the one aberrant corner of the real Wesleyan that I still imagined existed. So on Saturday, the day of the Admissions interview, I decided to let them see the real Michael Folz. Not the ersatz high achiever that I had been trying to present to all the rest of the college world, but rather the sensitive artist with the tortured soul within who questioned Society and his place within it.

I talked to them about my agreement with 'Growing Up Absurd', the current bestselling book in which author Paul Goodman argued that the modern world was made up of make believe jobs and a make believe educational system that served only to keep otherwise unemployed adolescents off the streets. Unfortunately, my world weary and quasi sarcastic style of expression probably wasn't as well-polished as Mr. Goodman's, because at the end of the interview none of the five men seated around the table seemed all that enthusiastic about me. In my own mind, however, I figured I had nailed it.

Then it was back to Delta Kappa Epsilon and their Saturday night party, which was appropriately drunken and rowdy, with them all singing endless verses of 'Son of a DKE'. What saved the evening for me was meeting a Wesleyan senior who convincingly claimed to be running a million dollar a year business selling

diamond engagement rings through the mail to other college students. I was awestruck. Whoa, the Junior Achievement side of me thought, what isn't possible for these college guys?

The next day was Sunday and I took another bus thirty miles south to New Haven. It was warm and sunny for February, and I walked the mile from the bus station carrying my trusty little suitcase.

As soon as I reached the Yale campus I could see that this was the biggest of the Big Leagues. New Haven itself was rather grotty, and its city streets cut across every part of the university campus, but …Yale's buildings! I had never seen anything so extraordinary. Each one was made of solid thick stone with leaded glass windows. Most were gothic, with soaring arches and towers and intricately carved gargoyles. The worst one I passed was better than the best building I had ever seen in Allentown.

And the Yalies! Even on Sunday they were walking around in coats and ties. And each one of them was big and strong and handsome and self-assured. Well, maybe not really, but you kind of got that impression. I made my way to the far end of the campus, to where Paul Moggio, the guy who had convinced me to apply two months ago, lived. To Pierson College.

For Yale didn't have fraternities, at least not the kind where anyone resided. And Yale didn't have dorms, either. What Yale had were Residential Colleges, giant quadrilateral buildings with turrets and gables and such, each enclosing a grassy inner courtyard. And the students would share doubles and triples and quads with solid wood floors and dormer windows and tall ceilings and giant living rooms with leather couches and sometimes refrigerators and sometimes even tvs.

They didn't even listen to the same kind of music as the rest of us. I didn't hear Top 40 or folk music or even classical music wafting over the air. No, it was big, brassy stuff like the theme from Goldfinger. These guys were POWER.

My program over the next couple of days was similar to that of the last two colleges: attending classes with my host, having another Admissions interview, eating meals. Although at Yale even eating was taken to a whole other level, since the Pierson dining hall had thirty foot ceilings and there were sterling silver sugar bowls on each of the tables. And there were always those hordes of Leaders of Tomorrow, sometimes in the morning on Prospect Street stretching as far as the eye could see, always in their coats and ties, always inhabiting a world that was way past mine and not exactly real.

On Tuesday night Paul Moggio took me with him to the Sterling Memorial Library, and used his student ID to take me past the guard and into the stacks. We took the elevator up and got off. Around me as far as my eye could see was literally an acre of books, rows and rows and rows of metal shelving stretching from the floor to ceiling. And when we descended one of the internal staircases I could see above and below me the other fifteen acre sized floors of books fading into the distance. All there for Paul to browse. And maybe for me.

And then it was over. Then I was back on the bus and back to Allentown, back to school and back to humdrum. And I still didn't think I had any clear idea of where I wanted to go to college.

March 13, 1965

I had first met Diane a little more than a year earlier. We had both signed up for some after school club, and had got to talking afterwards. We then walked a couple of blocks to a drug store which was about the only place left that still had a soda fountain and where you could buy ice cream sodas, and we sipped and talked some more. Then we stood outside on the drug store's porch in the gathering drizzling darkness and talked for another hour. Twenty four hours earlier I had never even been close to having an actual real girlfriend. As I walked home that night I was head over head over heels.

She had explained her Jewish dilemma right up front, and we had immediately started on figuring ways around it. So a few days later, on an early Saturday evening when her parents were out shopping, I walked three miles over to her house in the cold, she let me in through the back porch sliding door, and we repaired to her bedroom.

I needn't go into the details, but we were so innocent and the moment was so tender that it was almost unbelievable to both of us that it was happening. When I first touched her breast it was the most sensual thing I could ever imagine. Yet at the same time we felt perfectly virginal in every way possible.

And we didn't know what to call that peaceful opening up to one another, but in the end we knew we were in love. And we were both too young and naïve to realize that maybe that we had already accomplished what everyone else in the world was going to try to achieve for all the rest of their lives.

But of course we couldn't stay in that state forever, because there was also the overwhelming dread of what would happen if her parents showed up. So we had to stop, and I had to walk the three miles back home in the cold.

The first time of anything is very often also the most intense, and memories that are sweet and fragile are hard to maintain in the busy everyday world of even being a teenager. Nonetheless we did our best to get close to that every chance we could. And after a while I came to the bright realization that instead of me risking both of our lives by me going over to her place, it was much easier for her to walk with me after school to where I lived—and from where my mother was off at work—and then for her to take the bus back home.

This meant that she had to invent all sorts of school activities with which to regale her hyper-suspicious Jewish mom, but for over a year it had worked. And what also worked was coming up with fictitious parties that she was supposedly going to on Friday nights, while in reality the two of us would go off together.

Which is what had happened again last night.

This time there had been a real party that we could use as a front. Diane had gone there, me and a friend and his date came by and picked her up, and then we all drove somewhere dark where, with the engine running to keep us warm, Diane and I made out in the back seat while they made out in the front. Then around eleven we were dropped off at our respective abodes.

So I was comfortably sleeping at five o'clock the following morning when I heard someone banging away on the back door. Now as I've mentioned, we lived in a not too terrific second floor apartment, and the back door only existed as a fire escape, except that there was no fire escape ladder or anything. For someone to get to the back door, they would have had to climb up a rickety wooden flower trellis and then maneuver themselves onto a teeny tiny porch area.

And that's what Diane had done. For unbeknownst to us the night before, her mother had called said party, and this annoying little fat French exchange student girl had informed her that Diane was out with me. And now, having just endured a nighttime of hell with her furious parents, she had decided to run away with me.

Well, my poor mother was suitably upset by all this, and she was about to call Diane's parents when they saved her the trouble by calling us. And within another thirty minutes they had come to get her.

And our jig was up.

April 15, 1965

This was the day I had waited for all my life.

Not really. It had only been a few months. But today certainly was a day that was going to help determine the rest of my life. For this was going to by my ticket out of this dump.

Okay, I already had a ticket. Three of them actually. Two weeks ago I had been accepted by my 'insurance' school, the one I was almost positive I'd get in, Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh. Then on Monday I had gotten an acceptance letter from MIT, and yesterday one from Wesleyan. Today was the last day that letters were supposed to arrive, so if the postal system worked the way it should then I was soon to find out whether or not I was four and oh.

So, okay, it really wasn't all that important, since three and one wouldn't have been all that bad, either. Not to mention that this afternoon was a beautiful spring one, and so there was no reason not to leisurely stroll the mile or so from high school back to the apartment.

My thoughts turned to music, which they often did. For I knew that waiting for me at home, besides a letter from Yale, was the new Bob Dylan album, 'Bringing It All Back Home'.

It had come out about a week earlier, and I had been eagerly awaiting it for about two weeks previously, ever since I had seen him perform some jaw-droppingly amazing new songs at a concert I had seen him do with Joan Baez down to Philadelphia. And the album had lived up to beyond expectations, especially this one cut, 'Mister Tambourine Man', which I endlessly played over and over again. I didn't know why, but I did.

I was about the only person in my high school who was into Dylan. Even the few others who were into folk music generally found his voice much too annoying. And truth to tell, although it was obvious that as a songwriter he was in a class all by himself, before this album I had spent a lot more time listening to people like Judy Collins or Ian and Sylvia or Odetta or Dave Van Ronk.

Not that all that many people spent all that much time listening to LPs or any sort. In fact, Allentown had exactly one record store, Skippy's, and it was narrow, dark and long. Twice a year it would have a sale, and I would go down and buy as many LPs as I could afford at $2.49 each. (That was for monaural, since the record player at home was a console bought about six years ago. I'm not sure I even knew of anyone with a stereo.) These albums would be mostly on Vanguard or Elektra, the two major folk labels. And then I would take them home, and play them over and over again.

It's not that I didn't like listening to Top 40 music. I always had, even back in the second grade when my older sister, Bobbie, she of the ninth grade, would carry around her slightly post bobby soxer teenager's little square case of carefully catalogued forty-fives. By the time Elvis hit in the spring of the third grade, I was listening to WAEB each and every day. Transistor radios came in the fourth grade, and through mine I heard 'Wake Up Little Suzie', 'Stagger Lee', and 'Mister Blue', and hundreds and hundreds of others. When I lived in Plainfield for two years, while walking from class to class I'd be hearing the colored girls singing 'Will You Love Me Tomorrow' and the colored boys singing 'Duke, Duke, Duke, Duke of Earl'.

And just about a year ago, halfway through my junior year, the Beatles had burst in out of nowhere. And somehow these guys had made the simple act of listening to pop music palpably exciting. And they had opened the door for all sorts of other strange and different British groups, like the Zombies and the Kinks and the Animals, so that at least once a month there seemed to be some new song and sound that wasn't like anything else that had ever been heard before.

Of course, there was still a lot of old style schlock sill being produced along with the new: this particular week the number one song was 'I'm Telling You Now', by Freddie and the Dreamers. But even at its best, nobody really thought of the music of the British Invasion as Serious. Rather it was something that you really liked and that you did your homework to.

For me music had gotten Serious when I had first heard Peter, Paul and Mary sing 'If I Had A Hammer' in the fall of my sophomore year. Talk about palpably exciting. I immediately drew frets on a long thin piece

of cardboard and tried to teach myself guitar chords. Within two months I had scrounged up enough money to get a pretty good used guitar, and, even though I never learned to play or sing all that well, it wasn't for lack of energy or commitment.

Anyhow, back to the present of a beautiful spring day, here I was at the front door to my building. I opened the door, turned the key in the mailbox, and opened it. Inside was a large manila envelope.

A large manila envelope! Yes! Everyone knew that a business sized letter meant rejection and a large manila envelope meant acceptance. But wait, where was it from? I turned it around and saw the Yale return address.

I ran upstairs and opened it. Indeed, now I was four for four. And once again I was getting pretty much a full scholarship, this time a Henry J Heinz II Scholarship For An Outstanding Student From Pennsylvania. I did some quick math in my head: Let's see, at $2800 a year for tuition, room, and board, if I went for four years to each of those four universities, I'd be getting about $40,000. Not bad when you considered that my mother's secretary job paid her about $7,500 a year.

I momentarily forgot about Bob Dylan and music and all, and went to the phone to call Diane.

Oh yeah. Things were kind of pretty much back to normal with our love affair. Because although the steam was still rising out of Sam Fink's ears, Diane's mother had rather quickly come to the practical realization that, short of taking her daughter out of school, we were going to see each other anyway, and that by 'legalizing' the situation she could better seek to control it. Also, she had gone to see kindly old Mr. Bartholomew, who had informed her what a darn good student I was. And I'm sure she also told husband Sam that this was just a fling that their daughter would get over soon enough anyway.

So I called Diane, and we talked for about an hour, and then I listened once again for the umpteen hundredth time to 'Mister Tambourine Man'.

May 28, 1965

By April 16 the hyper-competitive side of me was mad at the rest of me for not having applied to Harvard.

But I soon got over that. And I started getting used to the idea of being the center of attention, the recipient of awe, the one who everyone else talked about. For I was The Guy Who Had Gotten Into Yale.

It wouldn't have been such a big deal if anyone else in my Class had been accepted by any place important. And it wouldn't have been such a big deal if I had been already seen as someone important. But I wasn't the Student Council type, I wasn't the popular type, I wasn't even perceived of as the Class Scholar. I had the longest hair in the school—sometimes it almost nearly touched the top of my ears. To the extent that I wasn't invisible to the mass of the Class, I was mostly simply disliked and dismissed as, well, weird and different.

For although I had always had to deal with feeling like an ugly duckling my entire life heretofore, and although I had always had my fond hopes and secret dreams of future glory and blinding success, it had always been hard not to own up to a sneaking suspicion that in fact I was only going to grow up to be a big ugly duck.

Now, however, things were different. Now I had proof that I really was a beautiful swan, destined to leave this small, pitiful duck pond behind. And everyone else knew it, too. All of a sudden my poetry was brilliant. My SAT scores were inflated in the retelling. The President of the Student Council would nod to me as I walked down the halls.

Unfortunately, this wasn't about to last very long, since it was senior year and that meant that there were only about three more weeks of classes before my new little kingdom dispersed to the winds. And I hadn't really decided yet whether or not I actually wanted to go to Yale.

In my mind at least I hadn't. In my mind all three options—mental boot camp, small leafy campus, Prestige and Importance—were all equally valid. In my mind I had endless arguments about which route was better. In my mind I needed sage advice from trusted educators.

I went to see my calculus teacher, who smirked, and then laughed and said, "Give me a break, Mike. You'd be an idiot not to go to Yale."

And of course he was right. So that was taken care of. But no sooner had I made that critical decision then I had to immediately deal with another problem. And this was one that not just myself but that every other prospective college student out there, no matter what college they were going to, had to deal with.

The summer job.

As I've already intimated, jobs for teenagers in Allentown in 1965 didn't come easily. The way that most people got around it was by having a father who either could arrange something at wherever he worked, or failing that, having a father who had a buddy who could come up with something where he worked.

But I didn't have a father.

Well, actually I did have a father. My parents had divorced when I was three, and my father lived with his new family in suburban Washington, DC, where he made $30,000 a year working for the Pentagon, and from where he sent $10 a month in child support. Last summer he had bragged how he could solve my perpetual summer job dilemma through all of his contacts and because of all the summer jobs available in the DC area. I had taken him up on his offer, only to see him halfheartedly come up with absolutely nothing. Finally he had made a solemn vow that if I made $300 caddying at the local golf course, he would match it with another $300.

I had taken him up on this, and slaved away in the stinking hot humid Virginia summer, becoming, with my terrible eyesight and skinny physique, one of the worst caddies ever. By the very end of August I had reached $302. Nine months later now I had still not gotten a cent from him.

But I did have my $302, and in the beginning of May, with the days getting ever warmer and nicer, as I desperately walked around from business to business filling out job application forms, my thoughts kept turning to how cool it would be if I could just get a Honda 50.

Now up until this point in history motorcycles had been a pretty rare occurrence in the modern American landscape, and motor scooters had been some weird Vespa thing that Italians did. But all of a sudden, from of all places Japan, this little unknown company named Honda was marketing these really cute scooters that were all the rage in California and those other places where rages were important. And right now a new dealership had just opened up here in Allentown.

And they cost $300.

My mother needed convincing, both because my savings were supposed to be for college and because you could kill yourself on a motorcycle. But I repeatedly argued the points both that I was easily going to earn enough this summer to more than make up for the $300, and that I was the most pitiful seventeen year old in the entire world because of my lack of any kind of drivable vehicle. Moreover, how else was I going to get to that soon to be found summer job?

And in the end she had caved in and on Saturday, May 22, we had gone over to the dealership and I had purchased my wheels.

Which brought me up to this morning, Friday, May 28, the day leading up to the night of my Senior Prom. After long negotiations Diane's parents had decided that, yes, she could go with me, which was great, considering that I would have had no reason or desire to go to such an event without her. In a few hours I would pick up my rented tux.

But first I had a few things to do.

The first and most important of which was to go to the Pennsylvania Dutch Egg Noodle factory.

And the reason I was going there was that earlier this week, knowing that I was going to have to pay them a hefty fee if they found me a job, I had finally gone to an employment agency. And they had had this one job available. At $1.35 an hour. Which in and of itself was pretty nifty, considering that most jobs for a teenager were at the minimum wage of $1.25.

So I hopped on my Honda 50 and started over to the other side of town, the warm wind whipping through my hair. When I got there I immediately saw that it wasn't much of a factory, just a kind of small cinder block building with a few cars in the parking lot. I went in to see the owner.

Who was actually the son of the owners, an energetic strapping guy in his thirties who wore black Barry Goldwater type glasses. He energetically showed me around his enterprise, shook my hand, and told me to report on Monday morning.

That taken care of, I got back on my Honda, tooled around town finishing up my other errands, and then went back to the apartment. It was one in the afternoon. I opened the refrigerator, chipped away at the ice in its freezer compartment, and found a hamburger patty. I heated that up, made a sandwich, then ate it with a half quart of milk and a half a store bought apple pie from the tiny A&P supermarket around the corner. Then I sat down to read one of the Ian Fleming paperback novels I had just bought.

I had read literally hundreds of science fiction novels up until the time I met Diane, at which moment all other extracurricular activities ceased. But right now James Bond was the hippest thing at the movies, and a copycat tv program, 'The Man From Uncle' had been the hippest show for the past two seasons. Although both heroes played their parts with conscious irony, they also both presented an apotheosis of the modern man of the modern world of 1965: slick, buttoned down, highly sexed, as real as a glossy magazine, and yet impervious to normal human emotions. I had decided to see what the original material was like.

After a couple of hours I put the book down. It was okay, but only relatively interesting. I knew that the era of me and paperback novels was permanently over. Meantime it was three thirty and time to go pick up the tux. I had a prom to go to.

At six o'clock my ride, our prom double date, showed up and we went over to get Diane. It was the first time I had officially gone to her house. I thought I was looking pretty dramatic in my rented tuxedo, all five foot eleven and 145 pounds of me. And I wondered how she would look in her prom dress.

Generally speaking, she looked like this: Thick black hair, dark dancing eyes, a feminine Sephardic nose, a long slit of a goofily smiling mouth, and a really great figure. Tonight she looked divine. Or at least I thought so. I was really glad that we were going to get married. Or at least we thought so. We had even picked the date—June 24, 1969. That way I would have just graduated from college and we could go out and conquer the world together.

Tonight would be a practice run.

When we got to the prom and joined the hundreds of other couples, for about the first and only time in the three years I had been there I felt like an actual part of Allen High. Many of the people here were going off into the workforce, and this prom would be one of the highlights of their life. For us College Joes it would

be ever onward and upward. But here we were, all pretending to be genuine adults for the first time in our pre-adult lives, about to be spit out from twelve years of regimented schooling into the world around us.

The prom progressed as proms do, with Diane and I only having eyes for each other. And then there was the afterprom, but we only attended that for a little while, ducking out with our double date friends and spending the rest of the long night making out in the back of a car. And then at four am Diane was taken home and I was taken home.

And then at five am, as the dawn was breaking, I changed my clothes and I was out again on my Honda. And Diane snuck out of her house and we drove around for about an hour, she holding on from the back. And then I dropped her back off and went driving around by myself for a while, finally stopping at a city park and sitting on a park bench doing nothing in particular as the morning got hotter and hotter.

When I had put the Honda back into the garage and walked back upstairs it was eleven am. I had been awake for 28 hours, about 12 hours longer than ever before. I fell asleep in about twenty seconds.

May 31 - June 4, 1965

The heat had continued. Over the weekend it had gotten even hotter and stickier.

At seven thirty Monday morning it was already in the mid eighties when I reported for work at the non-air conditioned Pennsylvania Dutch Egg Noodle company. My fellow workers were shuffling to work with dull, glazed expressions on their faces. Literally. I really had paid no attention when I had come by on Friday, being so happy just to finally have landed a job, but now I got the distinct impression that except for me and the owner everyone else here seemed to be mentally retarded.

Literally.

I followed them as they entered the building and went to their respective work stations, which mostly consisted of stools where they sat and closed plastic bags as said bags automatically filled with Pennsylvania Dutch Egg Noodles. I quickly found out that my job was to work in an adjoining area, taping up cardboard boxes and filling them with those sealed plastic bags. I did that all day Monday.

On Tuesday afternoon the owner took me over to the room where they baked the Pennsylvania Dutch Egg Noodles. At least the guy running the ovens wasn't retarded, but he expected me to be constantly adding and removing giant screen-trays of noodles from a never-ending conveyor belt. Lucy and Ethel would have felt right at home, except that in this case the giant thermometer in the room read a constant 135 degrees.

On Wednesday morning I found out that there was another college kid working there. In the real world we probably would have had nothing in common, but here, for lack of any human companionship, we became best buddies. Finally, someone to talk to!

On Thursday morning the owner saw us talking to each other as we worked, and immediately made sure that we were permanently separated.

On this Friday morning he had driven me over to a railroad siding, where he opened up a boxcar and showed me the 600 hundred pound sacks of flour within. He also introduced me to the forty-five year old vagrant that he had just recruited from the same railroad siding a few minutes earlier. The two of us were supposed to transfer the entire contents of the boxcar onto a flatbed truck parked about thirty feet away.

Then he took off.

The vagrant was dull-witted and hung over to boot. The temperature soon climbed into the high nineties. I trudged back and forth all day with my hundred pound sacks, with the vagrant continually asking me for

lifting advice. By three thirty I had finished my task and the son of the owners returned to get me. I told him I quit.

He looked at me through his black Barry Goldwater glasses, sighed, shook his head sadly, and gave me a lecture on how truly sad it was that nobody seemed to have that good old American work ethic any more. I was too meek and mild, not to mention exhausted, to point out to him that it was probably kind of different when your parents owned the factory.

My mind was also too occupied right then trying to figure out how I was going to pay off that employment agency.

June 12, 1965

Well, my sparkling ability to talk my way out of difficult situations had worked, and I had talked the employment agency out of their fee. Now I would have a chance to use the old charm again.

For it was another Saturday morning, and I was off to New Jersey on my Honda 50. I was off to Watchung, New Jersey, in fact. Which was right next to Plainfield. Only I wasn't going to be able to take the direct route, Route 22, because that was a limited access road, and my Honda 50 only went forty five miles an hour. Instead I was going to have to cross the Delaware River on the next bridge south, which was all the way down at New Hope, Pennsylvania. This meant a long, long drive on back, back roads.

Not that I minded that. One of the greatest pleasures in owning my own transportation was my freedom to wander around in the middle of nowhere, out among cornfields and green rolling hills and small ingrown towns of austere nineteenth century German stone buildings. For if Allentown felt like it had been displaced from some strange corner of Iowa, that was because it was surrounded by a countryside that was even stranger. Here lived people whose families had been here for over two hundred years and who still talked with guttural and comical Teutonic accents. But here I could also be alone with my thoughts about wherever it was my post high school life was taking me.

Anyway, right now this particular long drive would give me time to contemplate my new position as Lehigh Valley sales manager for Political Magazine.

Doug, a Yale junior, had out of nowhere called me, a freshman nobody, with the job offer. Something about a ground floor opportunity with a fancy new national monthly magazine that was being launched this summer. And could I come over to New Jersey to discuss it with him?

I crossed into Jersey and maneuvered along its back roads for another couple of hours, until I finally puttered up a hill and reached Doug's address. I was ushered into his family's home and out onto the back veranda. Wow! A giant swimming pool and New Jersey stretched out below! Doug, good looking, rich, and gracious, started his spiel.

You see, at Yale the students didn't just publish the Yale Daily News. There was also a monthly political magazine. Yale Political, to be exact. And the current razzle- dazzle editors of Yale Political had decided to do what Yalie Henry Luce had done forty years ago with Life Magazine and start a major and important periodical from scratch.

He pulled out a copy of the first issue. It was big and thick and slick and as professional looking as any periodical I had ever seen. In bold print the cover announced articles by Dean Rusk, Robert McNamara, Nelson Rockefeller, and a host of others.

Whoa, what wasn't possible for these Yale Men?

Doug went on to explain that the plan was to take one topic a month and then devote the whole issue to it, giving a full spectrum of views. This first issue was on Vietnam, and in it you had everyone from Senator Eastland on the right to Adlai Stevenson on the left weighing in on the subject.

Looking at the impossibly glossy sample issue, it was patently clear to me that the concept couldn't lose. All I would have to do would be to go back to Allentown, create a sales force, and go out and write up all those hundreds of subscriptions. My salary? Well, this was a ground floor operation, but when you multiply the hefty commission by the hundreds of subscriptions…

Sitting by the pool, sipping an iced tea, gazing out over New Jersey, dreams of grandiosity filled my head. Of course I could do this! After all, I'd been selling things my whole life. And with these amazing, powerful Yalies behind it

June 24, 1965

Thoughts political and serious.

If it was not unusual for an intelligent young man to study science in 1965, it was even more not unusual for such a person to care about the political issues of the day. After all, we had been brought up with Civics and American History classes, with discussions around the dinner table, with earnest movies starring Gregory Peck and Spencer Tracy. Being informed of and passionate about current events was taught to us as being a quintessential part of being an American. Whenever bunches of intelligent young men (and women) were thrust together at a conference or suchlike, intense yet civil political debate would immediately break out. And this didn't just extend to the young politicos among us; everyone had a relatively informed opinion.

In most instances, however, this didn't mean that the holders of these intense and informed opinions were going to do anything about them besides debate. Even with the current Most Important Issue, Vietnam, nobody I knew saw it as anything more than an interesting policy discussion. As in, Is the domino theory correct? Or, Should the US declare war on the North? It was certainly a larger topic than this past January's intervention in the Dominican Republic, but qualitatively similar.

Even on conflicts that were closer to home, the main one being the tail end of civil rights, it was the rare person who got actively involved. To a large extent this was because this was seen as a totally Southern problem, and everyone in the North knew that the South might as well have been a foreign country. When I had lived in Plainfield the schools had been totally integrated and I had even had a few black friends. I had also quickly learned not to be stupid enough to ride my bicycle through the ghetto, but that particular difficulty wasn't about to be solved through civil rights legislation.

But there was another reason that active protest wasn't much of an active pursuit. And that's because the people who protested were more than a little vaguely unsavory. Even if their cause was otherwise just, their underlying motive seemed to be just downright unhappiness with their own existence. The small fringe of World Peace Ban The Bombers out there, for instance, were some of the angriest people around.

America's youth, in other words, was by and large pretty quiescent.

That didn't mean, however, that the Serious Thinkers out there didn't seriously think that everything in the modern world of 1965 was hunky dory. The wave of Beatnik nihilism of the late Fifties had passed, but so had the simple gung ho optimism of Kennedy's New Frontier. No, now it was felt that Something was definitely wrong, Something that didn't necessarily have to do with civil rights or Vietnam or atomic bombs, even though no one could put any kind of definite finger on that Something.

Just recently a slang word had arisen that maybe did put a finger on it, and that slang word was plastic.

Plastic summed up a modern world that was artificial, stupidly materialistic, and out of touch with the rest of human history. It referred to the Alton Parks of the world and their ticky tacky houses, to the Dean Martins of the world alcoholically warbling their stale emotions, to the Hugh Hefners of the world and their airbrushed, cellophane wrapped pornography. It perfectly described the Organization Man with his white shirt and his thin black tie and his 2.2 children. Plastic meant that if our civilization continued on this trajectory the end result would be the end of all Meaning.

And what happened when intelligent young men (and women) understood this was that they fell into one of two camps. They either concluded that they should therefore join the System and heroically change it from within, or, like me, they were starting to conclude that maybe perhaps the System was irreparable.

Of course, people like me didn't have a clue as to where, practically speaking, such a conclusion would lead. And none of this incipient alienation was stopping me from believing that Political Magazine was still a great idea.

But I was starting to have doubts about the viability of the enterprise. After all, I was two weeks into it now and I had netted maybe six dollars. Prospective salespeople and prospective subscribers alike were either apathetic about politics or leery that there would ever be more than this first issue. I was gamely plugging ahead with the vision, but the reality of needing $400 by the end of the summer was starting to seep in.

Today I was in Bethlehem, population 85,000. Snug against Allentown's eastern boundary, together they formed one of a handful of America's 'twin cities'. But it was a strange relationship: two different newspapers, two different downtowns, virtually nobody from the one knowing anyone from the other. I hadn't even been to Bethlehem until my senior year, and now it was only because of my Honda that I was getting to know the place at all.

Right now I was heading towards the headquarters of Bethlehem Steel. I had had the wonderful idea that a big rich corporation would certainly want to support bright young college students by buying a bunch of corporate subscriptions, and had made an appointment with the public relations officer, Mr. Miller.

I parked, entered the large ugly office building, and found my way to the third floor, where Mr. Miller, a bald guy in a blue suit, ushered me into his small office. I went into my five minute presentation.

At the end of it he folded his hands and allowed as how this was too big a decision for one man to make, but that perhaps he could discuss it with Mr. Weiss. He picked up his phone and dialed a number.

It was immediately apparent that Mr. Weiss was actually someone seated in another small office right on the other side of a thin, thin wall, for I heard a phone ring and someone answer, "This is Mr. Weiss". There followed a three minute conversation that I could easily hear both sides of, at the end of which Mr. Miller hung up his phone and explained to me that there would have to be more deliberations, and that perhaps I could call sometime next week.

I got back on the road a little dazed with my first real contact with a large American corporation. Now I was headed for something else again, the home of a Bethlehem high school teacher who someone had told me really lived politics. At least I could get one subscription this afternoon.

It turned out that he lived in a Bethlehem version of a row house, which tended to be slightly nicer than an Allentonian one. I stood on his nice little front porch, rang the bell, introduced myself, and started my five minute presentation.

I had just finished the part about how Political Magazine gave the entire spectrum of views, from Senator Eastland to Adlai Stevenson, when he interrupted me. "What do you mean, entire spectrum? What about Ho Chi Minh's point of view?"

Ho Chi Minh???!!! I was well informed enough to sort of know who he was, but who he was was some totally evil Communist who was America's sworn enemy. What kind of sick person would want to know his point of view? I started to feel very exposed here on a quiet side street of Bethlehem.

The man continued: "How can you call this a fair presentation when they only present our side? Don't you consider that the Vietnamese might see this as a war of liberation? Have you thought about all the innocent civilians that our bombs are killing?"

I might have had my shaggy hair that almost reached down to the top of my ears and my slightly alienated views. At that moment in fact I might have been the only person in the Lehigh Valley wearing leather sandals. But I had never come across anything like this. Not even at the Second Fret. This guy was being downright treasonous. As if anyone in the U.S. military would ever let their bombs kill innocent civilians!

So I concluded that he was just nuts. And I tried to end the conversation, forcing a smile and apologizing for having wasted his time.

Then I slowly backed off his porch.

July 12, 1965

I did know a thing or two about love.

First off, I knew that loving meant thinking of Diane all of the time. And not just the fallible, everyday Diane, but an idealized Diane that was good and goofily smiling and radiating all the wonderful virtues that I knew Diane wanted to radiate.

Second, I knew that when we made out because we loved each other all my full to overflowing teenage sexual energy was transformed into something that felt clean and not dirty.

And so far those two understandings had carried me pretty far. Because of them I had been happy to stay at the making out stage and content to wait to go all the way until the consummation of our idealized marriage. Because of them I considered ourselves to be a couple lifted from the pages of some nineteenth century Romantic novel.

So I did know a thing or two about love. But that was about it. And what I knew wasn't preparing me for what was happening now.

It had started back in April when I had called Diane for a prospective hour full of meandering conversation and instead was on the receiving end of a depressed and mournful tirade. Then a couple of days later she was fine.

The same thing had happened a month later in May, except now she said that she didn't really like me. I tried to argue with her that, yes, she did, but that hadn't worked. Anyway a few days later she was fine again.

By the time it had happened in June she had realized that these horrible black depressions were coinciding with her period. Her period? I knew that girls had periods, but that statement summed up my entire knowledge of the process. How could a period screw up your mind and emotions? I was way out of my depth.

Now it was July and it was the worst attack yet. Now she was so upset that all she could do was cry, and she was absolutely sure that she wanted to break up with me. I was supposed to come over to her house so that she could do it officially.

At nine pm I showed up with a heavy heart and a salesman's resolution. Could we talk it over one more time? She agreed, and we walked a couple of blocks to a nearby park. For about an hour I made my presentation, and at the end of it she had come around to being my totally devoted girlfriend once again. We walked hand in hand back to her house.

When we entered it her dad was sitting in his easy chair, confidant of my downfall and with a shit eating grin on his face. That quickly disappeared when he was apprised of our new resolution. He turned to Mrs. Fink. "Damn it," he sputtered. "Damn it, they're just having goddamn sex all the time! They were just doing it right now!"

It got worse. As I stood there part of me was mad that he was making such ugly accusations. Part of me felt sorry for him. But most of me just wanted to get out of there.

July 22, 1965

Another hot summer's day was starting and I was still unemployed. I kicked my scooter kickstand down and walked through the door of the textile mill.

Textile jobs had left New England in the 1920's and had headed south. But before they ended up in North Carolina, some of them had stayed in Allentown for a while. Dotted all around the city were forty year old concrete and industrial windowed blocks about 150 feet square and four stories high, many of them now empty and all of them dirty. I was answering a newspaper ad for a position in one of the few that were still whirring away.

By this time I was fudging it about whether or not I'd be leaving in the fall. All right, I was actively lying. But by doing that it also meant that I would be held to actual workplace standards, not the more relaxed 'college kid' ones. The manager of the mill looked me up and down with a jaundiced eye.

Finally, after I told him how much I really, really wanted and needed the job, he relented, and led me between the ceaselessly weaving monstrous machines to where rested a twenty foot long wooden pole with a little metallic mechanical claw at its end. The manager then pointed up to the top of the machines, twenty feet above me, where bobbins were bobbing away, and explained how occasionally the yarn would fall off of the bobbins. My task was to use the wooden pole to manipulate said yarn back on.

I gamely set about performing my new job, but sadly my eye/twenty foot pole/hand co-ordination was rather pathetic, made even more so by the same lack of depth perception that had previously turned me into such a bad caddy. After three and a half hours of fruitlessly waving the long heavy stick around, the manager came and told me to collect my $5.45 paycheck and hit the road.

Which I did, heading out once again on my Honda for the open road and farmland that surrounded Allentown. Out there in the rurality I was once again free after a fashion, but it was hard on this hot July afternoon to get far enough away not to feel like a failure. After all, this was, counting, the seventh job that for one reason or another hadn't worked out.

Well, at least I still had my Honda. I headed back into town and back to the apartment for dinner.

About two blocks from home I was puttering along the right of way when I saw a big black Buick stopped at a stop sign up there on the left. Then I saw him obviously not see me and head on through the intersection. Then I hit the side of him at about thirty miles an hour.

I heard the screech of brakes and the crackle of crumbling metal, and then I lost all sensual contact with the outside world. Everything went black, although somewhere in the void I had this momentary and eerie sense of detachment from my body.

So this was what it was like to be dead…

And then I came to. If I had landed on my head I would have maybe actually been dead. Probably been paralyzed. But I hadn't done that. I had landed on my shoulder. Somebody helped me up and I stood there dazed. The driver of the car got out, obviously shaken. I looked at him. Hey, I knew this guy!

Three years previously, when Diane had been in the eighth grade, she had briefly had a summer camp 'boyfriend', someone who had then grown up to be plain and uninteresting, but who nevertheless was a nice enough person who lived nearby and who I occasionally talked to. Turned out that he had just gotten his license and was driving his dad's car and hadn't seen me, and, oh crap, he was so horribly sorry.

I didn't have much time to ponder the coincidence because within minutes a policeman and an ambulance showed up. I told the policeman that I felt fine, even buoyant, and he told me that I was experiencing shock and that I would soon fall apart. The ambulance took me back over to the Allentown Hospital, where they wrapped a cast around my broken shoulder.

I came home to find that someone had kindly transported my crumpled Honda scooter on up to the house.

All in all it hadn't been that good a day for me. Now I was broke and my shoulder was broke and my poor little motor scooter was broke.

But what made it all almost worthwhile was when I called Diane as soon as I got up the stairs and said, "Guess who I ran into this afternoon?"

August 26, 1965

The next morning I had been sitting there in the apartment with a cast around my shoulder and feeling sorry for myself when somebody called and offered me a job.

Back in May, when I had been filling out job applications, I had filled one out at General Acceptance Corporation, not because they had advertised any openings, but because their national headquarters was only two blocks away. Now for some reason they wanted to see me. So I walked on over.

Allentown's skyline consisted of exactly one building, the 23 story Pennsylvania Power and Light Building, built in 1930 as a very small and very ugly version of the contemporaneous Empire State Building in New York. Other than this 'skyscraper' there were several buildings scattered around the city that made it up to five or six floors. GAC, which had recently pioneered the underwriting of automobile re-financing, or something like that, existed in a new 1961 version of one of these. I walked in, strode past a whole floor full of a hundred people working away at a hundred desks, and found the employment office.

The nice man explained that his company, being a visionary pioneer, was in the midst of implementing a brand new idea in work environments. In the next few months they were going to divide each floor into a hundred different cubicles, so that each person out there would be able to work in the privacy of their own little 'office'. Not only that, but each person out there was going to get a brand new desk to work at.

Which meant that GAC was going to sell all those old grey metal desks out there right now. But before they could do that for some reason they needed to clean all those hundreds of old grey metal desks. Which is where I came in.

He had apologized that he was offering the job of janitor to a college bound lad. He had apologized that the hours were 5 pm to 1 am. He had apologized that they were only paying $1.40 an hour.

I had graciously accepted.

Finally I had a chance to earn close to that $400 that I needed. And lying on one's back in the middle of the night scrubbing the undersides of desks wasn't all that difficult, especially since a broken shoulder was not nearly as incapacitating as a broken leg. The days and weeks flew by.

So here I was on a Thursday afternoon waiting for my workday to begin. But there was also Something Else I was waiting for. Something really big. That Something I've been alluding to. I almost couldn't contain the anticipation I was feeling. I just didn't have the remotest clue as to what that Something Else was.

To recapitulate: That I was about to leave Allentown for college, and not just any college at that, must have had a little to do with it, but that wasn't the whole picture. After all, the part of me that ever got excited about anything wasn't particularly excited about becoming a Leader of Tomorrow. No, it was more like there was this joyous suspicion that right over the horizon, outside of me and my universe, but soon to affect it, was…

What? That was the problem. I couldn't put my finger on it. I couldn't point to anything going on in the Modern World of 1965 that would suggest it. As I've already noted, there was a lot going on so far in 1965 that seemed to suggest that Something was very wrong, that Suburban Man was a dead end, that the ills of society couldn't be solved by new government programs. Etc., etc., etc.

But then there was that nagging Something Else. For instance, I didn't react to all the crap I saw in the world around me by wearing black clothes and anarchically beating on bongo drums. And neither did anyone else my age. For all my teenage cynicism, Diane and I were determinedly idealistic. Those US History and Civics classes had taught us that the greatest Americans had been George-I cannot tell a lie-Washington and Honest Abe Lincoln. The tv shows we had seen growing up in the Fifties had been simple and moralistic, but the moral was invariably that Good always triumphed in the end. And, by getting into Yale solely on my own merits, I myself, a poor nobody from Allentown, was proof that the future was built on fairness and equality.

So, seen from that light, why wouldn't there by that Something Else?

Although, as I said, I didn't have a clue as to what it might be, and absolutely no one was predicting any such thing.

Anyway, now it was four thirty and time to go to work, and so to work I went.

But I clocked out early that night, at eleven thirty, and me and John Herzog went for a ride.

I had known him a little in high school, but we had bumped into each other, it had turned out that he was also working a night shift, and so we had started to hang out together, sometimes before work and sometimes after. Tonight he had his dad's Cadillac, and on the spur of the moment we decided to drive down to Philadelphia.

The excuse was that he wanted to show me the campus of St. Joseph's, the college where he was going to in a few weeks. We got there at two am, walked around for an hour, and then drove back.

It was three thirty in the morning, a full moon was shining through a mist that was starting to fall on the Pennsylvania Turnpike, and we were the only people on the road. We started talking about how neither of us had ever gone a hundred miles an hour, and pretty soon John's foot was down on the accelerator. The needle hit 80, 90, 100, 105. We were transfixed yet buoyant, fragile yet all-powerful, fully conscious of breaking the law and yet feeling totally free.

Just us and the mist and the moonlight.

September 9, 1965

Thursday two weeks later. Yesterday I had written the first check of my life, to the tune of $23.71, for a giant black trunk that I was buying at the Army Navy store. Today I had sent it by Railway Express to New Haven. And tomorrow afternoon I was going to go down to Paoli for the Philadelphia Folk Festival.

But Diane wasn't coming with me. After lengthy negotiations, her parents had decided against it. I suppose that the fact that we would be together overnight had had something to do with it, but neither she nor I was taking it very well.

This afternoon was our last one together for a while, and I held her hand as we walked around downtown Allentown. Well, it comforted me to think, when I got to Yale I would at least have that pewter mug she had given me at graduation, the one inscribed 6/24/69--the date of our future wedding--to remember her by.

Part Two

September 13, 1965

I was sitting at the top of the balcony of Woolsey Hall, which was the main auditorium for Yale University. It was kind of similar to high school assembly, except that this place was more like a concert hall, with a domed ceiling and cushiony theater seating for an audience of a little more than a thousand. Which was convenient, since that was about the size of the Freshman Class that I had just joined, and this meant that as I looked down at the sea of coat-and-tied newly minted top-of-the-pyramid Leaders of Tomorrow that stretched before me, virtually every seat was filled.

That I had seated myself at the edge of it all should have told me something. But I had just spent all summer convincing myself that I could be one of those Leaders of Tomorrow too.

And, strangely enough, whether I belonged here or not, for some reason I didn't feel at all intimidated by any of this.

Right now some learned professor was in the middle of a lecture/talk where he was explaining that the institution of Yale was going to be totally honest with us about what it was about to do. It was about to transmit to us a classically liberal education. And by so doing it was going to achieve the goal that the classical liberalism of John Stuart Mill had always aspired to, which was to make sure that our self interest coincided with the public interest. That way when each of us nakedly pursued the power and privilege that came with being the Senators and professors and titans of business that we all would become, then we would also magically be making the world a better place.

I had never quite heard it put that way, and if I had thought about it I probably would have been dubious about the magic part, but being a first day Freshman it sounded pretty damn intelligent and learned. Back at Allen High the deepest any of that had ever gotten was the argument between me and the cheerleader about whether it was better to stay in Society and work to improve it or to reject it outright just on principle.

The professor finished his speech and then the President of Yale, with the regal and thoroughly non-Allentonian name of Kingman Brewster, strode up to the lectern. Tall and proud, with a leonine head of hair, and wearing the robe that only a President could wear, he actually did succeed in intimidating me a bit.

His talk was shorter, and it dwelt on the same subject that that cheerleader and I had gone back and forth on. According to the President of Yale, Changing Society was absolutely necessary, and anyone who did

not work to achieve this goal was simply not worth his salt as a human. On the other hand, however, there was no life more wasted than that of the rebel who was being a rebel just for the sake of being a rebel. So this was going to be a tightrope that we were all going to have to walk as we made our way through the next four years. But, he concluded hopefully, never fear. Yale's classical liberal education was just the thing to help us walk it.

He finished, and we all streamed out of Woolsey Hall. Naturally, nobody knew anyone else yet, and, what's more, I wasn't really very good at anonymous social situation. But nonetheless I stood on the front steps and did my best chatting up some of my fellow freshmen.

And then the film crew came up.

I had never seen an actual film crew before, let alone been interviewed by one. But they quickly explained that Yale had commissioned a film about what it was like to be a Freshman, and they therefore wanted to interview us. So I blathered away for a bit until they had had their fill.

But while I was blathering I couldn't help but notice that in appearance and demeanor they were very much like the scruffy arty people that I had just left at the Philadelphia Folk Festival. So when they turned off their camera I struck up a conversation with them. And all of a sudden I was no longer a Freshman, but somehow someone kind of in with their group observing and commenting on all those other Freshmen. And at the end of hanging out with them for about fifteen minutes, I said, 'You know, there's a meeting of all the people in my entryway tonight. At the counselor's room. Why don't you come over and film it?' And they thought that this was a great idea.

So, less than twenty four hours after arriving on campus, I now had my own personal film crew.

Of course, by now I already knew a lot about the Yale campus itself. As I had found out when I had come through the previous February, the upperclassmen lived in ornate, usually gothic, Residential Colleges. This was the result of a 1920's multi-millionaire deciding that Yale and Harvard should copy Oxford and Cambridge, which were not like the universities that we had in America, but rather were each a collection of pretty much independent small colleges, each with its own staff and faculty, etc. And so he had donated all the money necessary to build said colleges.

The idea of separate faculties and disciplines never took off, but such socially bonding behaviors as intramural games, kegs in the courtyard, and, most importantly, separate college dining halls meant that once you were a Sophomore the people in your college were to a large extent the people you were going to interact with. (And unless they were married absolutely no students could live off campus.)

To ensure that one at least had a chance to meet the other people in his Class, therefore, all the Freshmen were housed in the Old Campus. As its name implied, these were all buildings which predated the building of the Residential Colleges in the Thirties. And whereas each college had its inner courtyard, the Old Campus was on a relatively monumental scale, and its inner courtyard was about two large city blocks squared.

Of course, miscegenation of college residents could only go so far, and everyone in my entryway had been assigned to Silliman College. So these were the people that I was about to spend my next four years with. And so far on this first full day I had gamely tried to meet as many of them as I could. But I really hadn't gotten much further than Steve Warner and Daniel S Brinsmade III when we all met at 7:30 in the counselor's room.

As most other universities did, Yale had placed a (usually) graduate student counselor in residence for each entryway of about 50 students. Our man was Tim, who was a graduate student in Slavic Language Studies. Once I had met him, it was immediately obvious to me that graduate students at Yale, especially those studying Slavic Languages, were, shall we say, somewhat less charismatic than the undergraduates. And it

didn't help Tim's prospects as a trusted older brother figure when he immediately let it be known that he was always going to be there if we wanted to have a, heh, heh, beer from his refrigerator and 'rap'.

It was pretty hard to get all fifty of us in his living room, but we managed, most of us still in our coats and ties. And Tim was freely handing out the beers. So it was pretty heady stuff to be surrounded by all those putative Class Presidents and varsity stars telling each other who they were and what they intended to do.

Not to mention that there was my own personal film crew recording it all.

September 17, 1965

Now it was Friday, the end of my first week at college, and a hot and humid week it had been. The reason that the hot and humid part made any difference was that my giant black trunk had never arrived from Allentown, only some 165 miles away. This meant that the only coat or tie or white shirt that I had to wear were those that I had brought along in that ratty suitcase. And having worn the exact same outfit to every meal on every hot, humid day meant that by now I was starting to look and smell pretty gamy.

Even tiny Muhlenberg College back in Allentown had required coats and ties at every meal. And Yale was no different from the rest of the country. What I hadn't realized until I started doing it, though, was that one usually went to a dining hall after a class or some other activity, and that instead of walking all the way back to your room to change, it was a lot easier just to keep the coat and tie on all day.

Especially for us Freshman, since the dining hall, The Commons, was a good three blocks away. This giant stone box of a building had sixty foot ceilings, thick round wooden tables and distinguished looking wooden chairs for at least 1500 people at a time. And there was even a row of giant Greek columns as you entered the building. It was supposedly the second largest wooden beamed enclosed structure in the world.

Apparently up until the Forties waiters would come and take your order and then properly serve you. The present system had a cafeteria approach, which made for a little standing in line. But when you got to the food part you got to choose any or all of (to use one meal's example) salmon, brisquit of beef, and/or lamb. Also available would be multiple side dishes and multiple desserts, and, again, if you wanted one of everything, this was fine and dandy. Not to mention that you could come back for seconds as often as you liked.

After loading up your tray, you would then find a table and start striking up conversations. After all, we were all strangers here, and the Commons was about the only place to meet people who weren't in our particular entryways. All slates were blank. All horizons were free and clear. Most all the people had the energy of a winner. It all felt learned and liberating.

Of course, for about ten hours a week I was going to be having a slightly different vantage point. Because even though Yalies no longer had uniformed waiters to wait upon them, there were still busboys to clean up after them. And that was where I was already coming in, since part of every scholarship student's scholarship--which was about 40% of the Class--involved a bursary job. And for most freshmen that involved busing at one of the dining halls. I had drawn the Commons, and although this meant that for certain meals I was destined to be not an Ivied elite but an aproned peasant, neither I nor any of other 'bursary boys' minded it one bit.

Because the Yale of 1965 wasn't anything remotely like the Yale of 1935, nor indeed like the Yale that I had imagined way back when nine months ago when I had first thought of applying. Yes, there was a small and obnoxious group of rich oafs from prep schools like St Paul's and Exeter and Andover, but theirs was no longer the predominant ethos. Indeed, they were like some soon-to-be-vanished tribe of Indians. For the third year in a row over half the entering Class was from public schools. We, not they, were now the norm. And, what's more, many of the Exeter and Andover grads would turn out to be pretty decent chaps.

That was the thing about Yale: Decency. Fair play. Noblesse oblige. Part of me suspected that it was all fake, but if it was these guys were really good at it. None of them would ever be so gauche as to point out that they had gotten 800's on their college boards or that they had won a national debating championship or that their dad was a governor. And everyone sat there so earnest and so involved and so self-confident.

Okay, I'll be honest. We all knew about the governors' kids because of their last names.

September 21, 1965

It was Tuesday afternoon and I was sitting at my Yale-issued wooden desk in the corner of my bedroom with the bunk beds. For the first time in almost two weeks I was wearing clean clothes. My trunk had arrived.

Every day for the past nine days I had gone over to Phelps Gate, which was the official entrance to the Old Campus, and inquired about whether that trunk had arrived with the railway freight. And every day the weather seemed to be getting hotter and more humid, and every day the guy at Phelps Gate would say, 'Nope, it hasn't come yet,' and 'I can't figure it out. That should have only taken two or three days from Eastern Pennsylvania.'

Indeed, the daily trunk non-arrival had become a running joke on my floor. So that when it finally did show up, three of us went over to claim it and lug it back up to the third floor of Bingham Hall. And then we emptied everything out of it and took turns locking each other in it and taking it up and down the stair case.

Not that my roommate Steve Warner was part of that. No, he was quite the enigma, assuming that the word 'enigma' could refer to something that was intrinsically meaningless. Because although he certainly looked the part of a Yalie, in reality he was easily the most amazingly limp person I had ever met. No strong personality, no strong opinions, no joy in vigorous debate. Besides the Lettermen, his one other album was 'Stranger on the Shore' by Acker Bilk. And although we had walked together across six blocks of downtown New Haven to a Goodwill store, and had both agreed to the purchase of a $15 used sofa, so far that had been about the limit of our social interaction.

And Dan Brinsmade definitely wasn't there joshing and dragging trunks. Dan was hardly ever anywhere. When he did come in it was usually late at night, along with his entourage of grungy and dangerous looking townie friends in tow. They would then all go into his bedroom and shut the door, stay there for about an hour, and then head on back into the darkness from whence they had come.

At least I had gotten to know, at least superficially, some of the other eleven people on the floor. Next door there was Yanni, a Greek national, and one of the few foreign students in our Class. His distinguishing trait, besides an enormous European ego, was that he never flushed the toilet in our communal lavatory. And caddy corner to me was the son of the famous novelist Bernard Malamud. Only problem was, not only did he never ever come out of his room so that I could meet him, but I had never before heard of the famous novelist Bernard Malamud.

In the fourth room there was Rich, a tall and not too deep type who seemed to be campaigning for something from day one. Whenever he was walking anywhere and he saw anyone he even vaguely knew, he would raise his arm, cock his finger, and say, 'Hey, how's it goin'?' There was Fred, a doofus blond athlete from South Carolina who was pugnacious, so proud to be a Southerner, and not too well prepared intellectually. And there was Danny, a friendly curly-haired Jewish guy from Houston who I could easily frustrate over my extensive knowledge of strange and obscure facts.

Speaking of which, that amazingly slick (Yale) Political magazine from the past summer had never made it past its first issue. But we did each receive a copy of the Yale Record, the University's slick humor mag. And in there was a new type of quiz that the Yale Record claimed to have just invented. It didn't ask for

just strange and obscure facts, but for facts that were strange, obscure, and also totally devoid of import. They called it a Trivia Quiz, and typical questions asked for the tag line of the Wednesday song for the Mouseketeers or the identity of the anonymous benefactor on the TV show The Millionaire.

That was the thing about Yale. What with the Yale Daily News, the Yale radio station, the Yale Political Union, academics was almost a side issue. Like to sing? You could heel (that is, try out for) the Whiffenpoofs. But if you weren't selected for that elite outfit, then there were at least ten other groups that specialized in close twelve part harmony. Athletically inclined? Since Yale, like other Ivy League schools, did not give out athletic scholarships, this meant that if you were any kind of jock in high school you'd almost certainly make the team here.

Speaking of which, there was one kind of 'athletics' that any number of freshmen were exerting themselves at on the grassy swards of the Old Campus. That was to throw to each other in a discus-like manner this round flying saucerish piece of plastic that preppie kids (who were already familiar with it) called a Frisbee. And which, sure enough, had been invented at Yale years earlier when students had flung around upside down pie tins from the Frisbee Baking Company.

Of course, I had never been any kind of jock in high school. Nor could anybody heel any of those organizations until second semester. In the meantime there was that little matter of academics…

One had to take five courses per semester. And the past summer I had applied to, and been accepted for, a special intensive honors program called Directed Studies. The 'special' part meant that instead of giant lectures and grad student mentors you got twelve person seminars presided over by (usually) full professors. So three of my classes were, simply, Philosophy I, Literature I, and History I. Being intensive, however, this meant that for each course you were supposed to read something on the level of Don Quixote every week, and then discuss and/or write a paper on it.

The past summer it had also made perfect sense to me to add two more extra-difficult courses to my schedule. I had a good argument for the first, Honors Chemistry, since I had aced Advanced Placement Chemistry in high school. I had no good reason, however, to sign up for Honors Math, since that really nice guy Calculus teacher at Allen High had been too nice a guy to require that his students actually understand calculus.

Never to mind, however. Right now I was plowing my way through one of Plato's Dialogues. The one where Socrates was lamenting that back when he was eighteen everyone he knew wanted to discuss the meaning of it all, but that now that he was an old man the only people he knew who cared a whit about such pursuits were, you guessed it, the eighteen year olds.

September 25, 1965

It was Saturday, two weeks into my Yale career. And by now I was starting to get a glimmer of the idea that maybe, even with my haircut and my coat and tie, I might not really fit in here.

It wasn't that the people all around me weren't, as advertised, fine young men and variously multi-talented. And it wasn't that they didn't (mostly) have really high SAT scores and weren't (mostly) diligently concerned with the Large Issues of Today. Compared to Allen High and Allentown, PA, well, there wasn't any comparison.

But on the other hand I had been in gifted programs most of my life, so I was somewhat used to having other smart people to compete with. And I could pretty much tell by now that I probably wasn't going to be out-brillianced by too many people. More troubling, though, was the dawning realization that this agglomeration of Class Presidents and such might well be in the end as intrinsically uninterested in what I was interested in as was my Class President back at Allen High.

Because that Something was still out there. Even though the Yale Totality was already blocking out everything from the wider world--television, newspapers and magazines, and radio--I could still feel it. For God's sake, Bob Dylan, who two years ago was so unknown (and whose voice was so strange sounding that outside of Greenwich Village it was treated like a bad joke), was now a Top 40 star. His latest song, 'Positively Fourth Street', just dripped vitriol and previously obscure In references. Even schlock fake 'folk' songs such as 'Eve of Destruction' and 'You Were On My Mind' were huge hits.

And, again, it wasn't that most of my fellow Yalies weren't decent. In fact, most of them were probably much more decent than I. Most of them were from high schools much like mine. Most of them listened to the same pop music.

But there seemed to be a little Steve Warner in all of them. A lack of whizbang pizzazz that for some reason I had kind of been expecting. A lack of, dare I say, artistic inspiration.

And the physical location didn't help. Places like Cambridge (and so I had heard) Berkeley or Ann Arbor were decent sized cities which were also intellectual and artistic oases that were total reflections of the large universities within them. But Yale was smack dab in the dead center of New Haven, yet the two entities had absolutely nothing in common. Instead of being proud that it had a major university in its midst, New Haven's attitude was a constant chip on the shoulder 'Why do you think you're so much better than us'? And Yale's response was always the perplexity of the nobility. After all, it was so obvious that it was.

So there were no folk clubs in New Haven. No bearded aesthetes surreptitiously auditing classes. Just the gritty blah downtown of a gritty blah industrial city that was inexorably trending downward. An upperclassman had already assured me that most Yalies would spend their entire four years in New Haven without ever having walked across the adjacent New Haven Green.

But what was driving me crazy this Saturday night was not the lack of folkies and offbeat characters. No, it was the total and utter lack of girls. For although Harvard and Brown and Columbia had Radcliffe and Pembroke and Barnard right next to them, and although Cornell and Penn and Stanford (as well as most every other major colleges in the land) had long been co-educational, Yale was not only stubbornly monastic but also absolutely alone. The only half decent girls' school in the entire state of Connecticut was Conn College, some fifty miles away in New London.

Jeez, had it only been two weeks since I had last interacted with a female? It felt like far more than forever. It felt like I had been a sailor at sea for the past three years.

Fortunately Yale had devised a partial cure for the problem. And it was called a mixer. This involved bringing entire busloads of young women from girls' only colleges like Vassar and Mount Holyoke and Manhattanville, dropping them off at the various residential colleges for about three hours or so of dancing to a live band and socializing, and then taking them back home again.

It all seemed like the worst setup in the world for me, especially because I hated dancing and I was far too rude for the rigors of politesse. But Silliman was holding a mixer this evening, and I was beyond desperate. What the hell. I put on my coat and tie and walked the three blocks from my room.

When I got there the Silliman dining hall and lounge had been transformed into a dance floor and, uh, lounge. Many young women in nice dresses were standing around with many young men in coats and ties. It looked a little like what I might have imagined a country club cotillion to be. But this was specifically a freshman mixer, so I needn't feel that intimidated… I walked up and awkwardly asked someone to dance.

As we slow danced, we awkwardly tried to make conversation. But it was obvious about halfway through the song that she for one was fully expecting some version of a country club cotillion. And I wasn't remotely the Yale Man that she had been fantasizing about when she had gotten on the bus.

In fact, as we walked off the floor I felt this distinct subtext of disdain from her. That didn't feel good. I stood there in the lounge, suddenly feeling totally surrounded by utterly vapid and phony rich people. I supposed that it was time to go.

And then I saw her.

She stood there by herself, all 5'1" of her. A round button face with incredibly intelligent eyes dressed in a simple brown smock/dress. And a really thick braid of medium brown hair that went all the way past her waist. She was hands down the most in every way alluring female I had ever seen.

So I walked up to her and said, 'What's a nice girl like you doing in a place like this'. She laughed and said that she was a Junior from Conn College, that she hadn't had anything to do that evening, and so on a lark had hopped on the mixer bus.

We went over and sat down on one of the leather couches which dotted the room. She pulled out her pack of cigarettes to have a smoke. I said, 'Could I have one?' and when she offered me the pack I suavely took one out and then with as straight a face as possible put the whole thing in my mouth and started chewing away.

That cracked her up. With bent over, hysterical, out of control laughter. And since I was just now discovering for the first time how truly bitter and awful it tasted to actually eat a cigarette, I was relieved that I could spit it out of my mouth. But it was way past worth it, because I could see that I had smitten her.

And she had definitely and absolutely smitten me. As we sat there talking I couldn't believe that I had met this girl of my dreams. Or should I say woman of my dreams? Because it wasn't just that she was two years older than me. It was that she was also really smart, really clever and witty, really classy, really great looking, and incredibly more experienced than I. And did I mention that she was two years older?

Having a personal film crew was one thing. But here was something and someone I would have never expected.

The country club around me evaporated. The door to Something was opening. And it looked like that door was going to be a lot more real than metaphorical. And I still had no idea what that Something was, but I had absolutely no doubt that I wanted to go there.

September 28, 1965

I had been up in the most astonishing cloud of love for the past three days.

Saturday night at eleven I had walked Bonnie out to the bus and she had gone back to New London. I then walked aimlessly around the campus for an hour trying to take it all in. After which I lay there in my top bunk in the darkness trying to take it all in.

Sunday I called her, and we talked and talked. Even though it cost sixteen cents a minute and I couldn't really afford it. And the more I found out about her, the more dumbfounded I was that she would be interested in me.

First of all, even though she claimed that her parents were the least wealthy folks in town, the town in question was the exclusive suburb of New Canaan, CT. Second, for the past two years she had been the girl friend of the oldest son of the famous modern jazz musician Dave Brubeck. Granted, he was my age, so that she was already used to dating younger men. But this meant that it had been part of her life for the past three years to go to parties at Leonard Bernstein's place, to double date with the somewhat well known

white blues/folk artist John Hammond (who himself was the son of legendary A&R executive John Hammond), to hang out backstage at the Newport Folk Festival.

Third of all… Well, once the newness of the information wore off, the first two things didn't matter. After all, in the span of a couple of weeks I had already pretty much adjusted to the taking-the-top-for-grantedness of Yale mode. What had me in such a daze and a haze was that she was so smart, so beautiful, and so already thinking in so much the way that I thought.

It was all too wonderful and all too much. It was beyond a meeting of the minds. I was head over heels in absolute love.

So I thought about her all of Monday. And then I had called her and we had talked and talked. And then I had been thinking about her all of Tuesday. And then…

Oh, horrible total crap! I was already head over heels in love. With Diane. You remember her. The one who was waiting for me back in Allentown.

Her parents, sensing their opening with me off to college, had put their feet down once again. So we had hardly talked. But we were steadily writing letters back and forth, and she was still beautiful and exotic and so on. And hadn't we vowed to get married on June 24, 1969, and live happily ever after?

Oh, double crap. Because I also had the now unfortunate trait of being, for the times, over the top moralistic. Romantic love was my highest possible ideal, and I was honestly, truly, deeply romantically in love with Diane. Not only that, but I had made a commitment

But here I was after three days honestly, truly, deeply romantically in love with Bonnie.

Oh, triple, quadruple, and quintuple crap.

October 1, 1965

Well, the good news was that I was slowly but surely finding fellow classmates who were on somewhat the same wavelength as I. What some would call the creative, artistic sort and others would call, somewhat dismissively, the non-conformists. It was a process that was almost chemical in nature, somewhat similar to like similar atoms swimming in a sea of something and slowly bonding together.

The sea was Freshman Commons, where we all ate those three meals a day, and where we were all still playing musical chairs and tables of sorts for each meal. But every so often you would meet someone who was really interesting and different. And then you would introduce them to the various other people you had met who had made it into your category of interesting and different.

Naturally fledgling groups of yachtsmen, bridge players, and political activists were also coagulating in this protean soup. They didn't have the advantage, though, of looking interesting and different.

For instance, it was pretty easy to see that there were exactly three people in the Class who had beards. (Me, I wasn't even shaving regularly yet.) And I was already pretty good friends with one of them. His name was Saul Hopper, he was from St Louis, and he had spent his senior year as an exchange student in the exotic apartheid country of South Africa. That experience, combined with his bright red hair and beard and an edgy sardonic attitude, made him come across more like a toughened semi-cynical post-Beatnik rather than someone who had gotten to Yale through sitting in countless Student Council meetings.

Indeed, he was exactly the kind of worldly politically aware person that you might expect to meet in Berkeley or Ann Arbor.

So now there was at least one person with whom I didn't have to pretend to be a snappy dresser and all around good egg. More importantly, here was a person with whom I could talk over my dilemma.

His first response had been the obvious one. That any guy in the world would want to be able to justify simultaneously having two girls to do it with. But he was a little deeper than that, and he could appreciate that I was really trying to deal with a broader philosophical question: How could I claim a pure and ideal love for Bonnie when I had already been claiming a pure and ideal love for Diane?

But he was also honest enough to admit that he himself wasn't that profound. That is to say, true to his toughened persona, he himself didn't really believe that there was such a thing as pure and ideal love. In fact, he had never even considered the possibility that there could be. That's just not the way the world was.

Okay. I wasn't so naïve as to not realize that that opinion was out there. Especially with worldly people in places like Berkeley or Ann Arbor. After all, I had talked to enough of my sister's folkie friends in Philadelphia. I had read enough issues of the Village Voice. I had listened to Jean Shepard on WOR ever since the ninth grade.

All that time, though, I had been secretly sure that there had to be other people out there who were holding out for something as corny as romantic love and inspiration. Why else would anyone care about sappy old songs like Barbara Allen? Why else would there be songs about riding that train to glory, or having one's way in this wicked world and tearing that building down? If they really believed that there was no alternative to wicked, why would they be singing?

So it was really disturbing that I was getting pretty much the same response from every single person, from hipster to straight arrow, that I had talked to about it. Because, rest assured, the question was so consuming me that I was bringing it up with just about everyone. Even people I had just met. And although many people (the hallmark of a liberal education being the willingness to debate provocative ideas) were game to discuss my problem, in the end they all gave a Saul kind of answer. That is to say, that to believe in True Love in the first place was to believe in a fairy tale.

Or, as Rich from across the hall had succinctly put it, 'Hey, man, a fuck's a fuck'.

October 4, 1965

Well, believing in something in the face of everybody else telling me I was wrong had never stopped me before. And I knew that the love that I was feeling for Bonnie was good and pure. And it felt a whole lot better and a whole lot more real than the way that Saul and the others seemed to feel with their cynicism.

What kept coming round and round, however, and what made me feel ever more guilty and confused, was that I also felt that same pure love for Diane. Was it all just some foolish projection of a seventeen year old guy hopped up on hormones? Could be, but I didn't think so. After all, having been a teenager for a while, I had already had way past my full share of lustful thoughts. And I knew that this wasn't that. But shouldn't I just make up my mind and choose one or the other? That seemed to be what people in this situation had done throughout the rest of human history. If I was not being a victim of lust, then it could surely be argued that I being was a victim of greed.

No, Something else was going on. I just knew there was. And I knew that I wasn't just one of those callow youths of Socrates' time playing with philosophy. There was that Something really important that was just around the corner…

Let's see: What was Love anyway? Was I in love with Diane the Personality or Diane the Potentiality? Well, if you were supposed to love a Personality, then I was really out of luck, since everyone had always told me that I had a terrible one of those. No, we loved the Ideal, that part of the person that existed outside

of the Personality. But did anything exist outside of the Personality? For the purposes of this discussion that didn't matter, because if I (or anyone else) did everything Right then there would be no Personality, because Personality is nothing but a particularized deviation from the Ideal.

Therefore the Ideal Diane is no different than the Ideal Bonnie. Therefore it makes perfect sense that I could and should have a pure and honest love for them both. Indeed, it then makes perfect sense that I could and should have a pure and honest love for every single person in the entire world.

Whoa. What was that? What had I just thought? Where the hell was I?

I was sitting at my wooden desk in my bedroom, looking out the window. Mine was one of the few rooms at Yale that looked out at the actual real world, and across Chapel St. there were storefronts like Johnny's Pipe Shop and Olivia's Luncheonette and varied and motley New Haven citizens walking by on this sunny fall afternoon.

Now I was in one helluva daze.

Because I hadn't just had a thought about a pure and honest love for every single person in the entire world. I had also felt that pure and honest love. For everyone. In all humility and all totality. And I hadn't even been trying to.

I sat there and tried to go over the chain of thoughts that had led me to this. Yes, they were all true, and, yes, they all followed logically. But what had resulted from the logic was not some mathematical or philosophical conclusion, but rather an entire change in outlook. All of a sudden I was in love with everyone. And everything in the world made sense in a way that it never had before.

Okay. Hold it. In love with everyone? That's crazy talk. I couldn't remember having ever even read of anyone who really believed in anything as strange as that.

But there it was and here I was. And the most bizarre part was that I didn't feel odd or afraid or unsure of myself. In fact, I was totally calm and totally confident that I had just figured out what philosophers and such had been trying to figure out since the beginning of history.

Why shouldn't I feel this way? After all, I was in love.

October 7, 1965

The glow wasn't fading all that much. I was still beyond happy. I was still wonderfully clear. And I was still certain in my hope and buoyancy.

Especially inasmuch as when I had called Bonnie and explained it all, she had listened carefully, joined in the conversation, asked intelligent and pertinent questions, and then immediately agreed that I was indeed correct. Love was something that was universal and non-directional. When souls met it was their Essence that came together, not their individualities. Now that I had pointed out to her something that she had suspected all along, it all made perfect sense.

I had also poured out my heart in a long, long letter to Diane. And although I realized that there would inevitably be a time delay as letters went back and forth, I had no reason to think that she also wouldn't see the obviousness of what I had discovered.

In the meantime I had made good use of the last three days by further refining my ideas.

The immediate logistical/philosophical problem was that even though people could and should love each other, the plain fact of the world was that they didn't. Because although I still couldn't precisely define the

word, it was pretty apparent that Love was somehow synonymous with trust and unselfishness. And, strangely, it also seemed to have a lot to do with self-denial. But as I had just been finding out in the past week, nobody seemed to believe in that stuff any more. And until the nature and benefits and practice of Love were fully explained to the rest of the world, then it would be an empty and self-defeating gesture to just stand out there all by oneself.

Not that I had any doubt in my mind that it was only a matter of time before the rest of the world, even jaded as it temporarily was right now, understood. Because once anyone had experienced the higher state that I was now experiencing, nobody would want to go back. They just wouldn't.

In the near term future, all you needed right now was a group of people who did understand and who did agree to submit to the discipline of Love. And then there would be no reason why they couldn't and shouldn't be able to live together in absolute equality and harmony. It would be like the ideal state of marriage the ideal state of chivalry, except that it would apply to an entire group. And like marriage everything would be shared. Everything.

Did that mean what I thought it meant? Yes, it did. Everything had to include those sexual relations between men and women that always seemed to come up.

Okay, I wasn't so far gone that I didn't immediately recognize how, let's say, provocative that sounded. Especially since I seemed to be one of the only people I knew who was dead set against promiscuity. And especially since I knew from first hand experience of being a teenager all these years how hard it was not to be promiscuous.

But I also knew from the first hand experience of right now that it was entirely possible to rise above all the lust. Because for the past few days for the first time since puberty all my insane teenage raging hormones were totally nonexistent. I just knew to my core that the universal love that I was talking about had absolutely nothing to do with any of that.

On the other hand, I somehow intuitively knew that, just as with regular marriage, sex was intimately tied up in it all. Anyway, it would have been utter foolishness not to recognize that you couldn't have males and females in close proximity and sharing everything without sex coming up. Not to mention that such a group would be in constant danger of being adversely affected by the attitude of the approximately three billion other people around them who were not in a state of true love.

I was going to have to think this one through some more.

October 11, 1965

Sex wasn't that important anyway. Well, yes, it was. But only when it was a function of true love and not lust. But nobody who hasn't ever experienced true love would recognize the difference. Better then not to even bring it up.

These were still warm and beautiful fall days. And I still had this big goofy grin in my mind, even if I understood enough now not to show it on my face when I was, say, in my History seminar in the late afternoon. This took place on the Old Campus, around a big wooden table in a smallish room in the smallish red brick Connecticut Hall, which dated from 1776, and which was within half a Frisbee throw of my Bingham Hall entryway. There was a plaque on the wall that said that in this room in 1915 so and so, Class of 1916, had written the song "There's A Long, Long Trail A Winding".

Professor Archibald Foote was fiftyish and distinguished looking. Except that at Yale no one was addressed as Professor, but rather with the understated reverse snobbish Mister. And Mister Foote had stated at the outset that the purpose of this course was to familiarize us with the writings of Hobbes,

Rousseau, et al, and thus with all the various and diverse ideas of the nature of human nature. Who knew?, he had said. Maybe one of us would some day be the person who figured it all out definitively.

Most of my fellow Directed Studies seminarians, whether from public or private school, were apparently much better prepared for polysyllabic discursiveness than I. But I still wasn't intimidated in the least. After all, if nothing else I was sure that I could get by in this and my other courses on my cleverness and wit.

I pretty much knew by now that it wasn't going to happen as a result of my actually doing all the work that I was supposed to. That would have taken up almost every minute of my available time. And it was bad enough that my high need for academic achievement had become satiated by my acceptance at Yale. Now I also had far, far more important things to think about than Hobbes and his Leviathan.

Not to mention the big, goofy grin in my mind. It was as if my entire sense of human being had changed. And now it was as if every minute was more precious. Who knew, but it felt like I was in the process of being the one who had figured it all out definitively. For absolutely sure I knew that I was on to that Something that the Times That Were A Changing were changing into.

Seminar over, I went back to my little three person suite. Steve Warner was sitting at his wooden desk in the living room, and Dan Brinsmade was in his room playing his electric guitar along to Bo Diddley. I went into my room, shut the door, and put an LP onto my little plastic portable $25 record player. I would have never bought a Chad Mitchell album, but this was the one with that guy singing 'Love Is But The Song We Sing'. And now that I knew what the song was talking about, it was clear that other folks besides me were coming to the same realizations.

But where were they? For my philosophizing had changed to proselytizing of sorts, and I had been explaining my ideas to anyone who I thought might be open to them. Not that there were that many of those people.

And of those, many listeners were respectful, and most of them immediately understood that what I was talking about had nothing to do with Marxism or Communism. But besides not really comprehending what the Love I was preaching about involved, the pretty much universal response was along the lines of this: 'Everyone knows that utopian communities have never worked'.

New Harmony. Brook Farm. Like myself, others also had a vague knowledge of these 19th Century attempts at intentional communities. And in literature there was Thomas More's 'Utopia' and Edward Bellamy's 'Looking Backward'. Indeed right now my philosophy seminar was reading Plato's 'The Republic'. The idea had a long history behind it, and throughout that history it had had the whiff of airy fairy-ness about it.

A couple of my listeners, though, did have a different take on my presentation. One person said that he had heard through a friend of a friend of a friend that something like I was talking about was already taking place out in Berkeley. And another said that my ideas reminded him of the stories he had read about the experiments involving LSD.

That mysterious chemical LSD again. I hadn't heard about it or thought about it since my ride to New Haven. But this guy had read about it for years, had closely followed the stories about the research that had been going on at Harvard, and he went on and on about the deep and mystical experiences that people supposedly had on it. The way he talked about it, it didn't sound sort of like science fiction. It sounded like total, living, breathing science fiction taking place right now.

I was definitely intrigued with what he had to say. But at the same time I had always intensely disliked the idea of people taking drugs of any kind. Especially if that meant losing control over one's mind. Those Health Class movies back in the eighth grade had showed how sad and tortured it was to be addicted to heroin. The 'pot' that beatniks and hipsters were supposed to smoke to 'get high' sounded really stupid.

And although I had nothing against the occasional beer, alcohol did nothing for me, and I was thoroughly repulsed by people who got drunk.

And anyway I didn't seem to need LSD. I was already as high as I could possibly be without it.

October 15-17, 1965

Today was my eighteenth birthday.

And I was scheduled to lose my virginity.

It was beyond poetry how close Bonnie and I had become, especially considering that we had only seen each other once, and were further constrained by that 16 cents a minute it cost me to call New London. But as opposed to all those fellow classmates that I had been talking to, she had been following completely what I had been saying to her, had been thoroughly receptive. She was a crystal clear fountain of inspiration, she was my vision and my muse, and soon we would be spending the rest of time together.

First, though, we were going to meet up in New York City and spend the upcoming weekend together.

To that end I had walked the mile or so from the Yale campus over to the New Haven Railroad station, had bought a round trip ticket, had walked through the underpass to the appropriate track, and was now experiencing my first official train ride ever. New Haven was about the same distance from New York as was Allentown, yet from here many people commuted to work every day.

I looked out the window as the endless industrial Connecticut landscape changed into the leafy wealthy suburbs of Fairfield and Westchester Counties. It was so difficult to believe that so many of my attitudes had changed so quickly.

But at the same time it all made perfect sense. After all, in my mind Bonnie and I were already married. So why shouldn't we sleep together? Tonight would be like a wedding night, an official sanction of the vows we had made to each other. There could be nothing wrong or dirty about that.

Nor was I being remotely unfaithful to Diane, since we would also share the same ethereal and absolute marriage soon enough. It did bother me a bit that in the only letter I had gotten from her she seemed doubtful and confused, but I knew that once I was able to fully and personally explain everything to her she would come around. How could somebody not?

The train rustled through the Bronx, dipped underground, and in a few minutes pulled into Grand Central Station. I walked out on the platform, and, surrounded by multitudes of people, shortly emerged for my first time ever in the giant hall. Bonnie had told me to find a particular spot, and there it was. As I went over to it I marveled at how mentally relaxing it was to be able to trust somebody else, a girl no less, to competently manage events.

And within two minutes of standing there she showed up. Right on time. She had been at home in New Canaan for a couple of days, and had come into New York a few hours earlier.

We took the tunnel over to the subway and then got off it at around 85th and Broadway. A couple of blocks west was a pretty large and impressive beigestone hotel called the Paris, complete with front desk and bellhops. Someone had told Bonnie about it and had said that it was really cheap. It was: $8 a night. I signed in (Don't they care that we're not even pretending to be married?), and a bellhop dutifully carried our two small suitcases to the room. It was my first official night ever in a hotel.

I threw my suitcase in the corner. Bonnie unpacked hers into the small dresser. Then we put on our jackets, went out into the gathering darkness and the slight chill in the air, and took the subway down to just north of the Village.

Last spring I had used a couple of loosely defined class trips as an excuse to muck around in NYC a bit. And I was sort of used to mucking around Philadelphia. But this was different. Very different. Now I was independent and I was with my lady. Bonnie stopped at a number of the small stores, window shopping in the glow of streetlights and understated neon.

Since it was my eighteenth birthday, and since New York was the only state in the northeast where the drinking age was eighteen, we naturally had to stop at a liquor store. (In that regard New York was Sin State doubled, since in many other places, including Pennsylvania, alcohol was only sold behind the solid doors of state liquor stores.) And I was obliged to buy something, so I got a small bottle of peach brandy. At least it would taste sweet.

We stopped at a small inexpensive restaurant and then walked around some more, me walking on even more air than I had been doing recently. And then we took the subway back towards the Paris Hotel.

When we re-entered our room Bonnie joked that now she was going to get me drunk, and being a good sport I took several deep pulls off of the bottle. But it did absolutely nothing to me. I was too much in love.

And then we got down to it. The initiation. I didn't know anything about religious experiences, but it would have been hard to see how they could top this. Bonnie's hair was down, it had almost more volume than she did, and she was beautiful. And so was the moment. When we were finally together I couldn't believe that my teenage lust still hadn't returned from where it had gone eleven days earlier.

Having an orgasm was the furthest thing from my mind, body, or soul. So after about an hour and a half we separated, and then, naked and holding on to each other, we fell asleep.

When I woke up in the morning the bright autumn sun was coming through the window. Bonnie was still asleep, but when I moved my arm she opened her eyes. I returned her gaze and we just lay there for a while looking at each other. I still couldn't believe any of this. But after awhile we got up and headed out together into the Manhattan Saturday.

As we walked arm in arm slowly and aimlessly around nowhere it was kind of like—minus the grey and the snow—the cover of the Freewheelin' album: Young poet with beautiful girl friend with long brown hair. But there wasn't a cloud in the sky and I wasn't hunched against the cold. And what made the scene even more unreal was that New York's mayoral election was just over two weeks away, every bus side and billboard was plastered with ads, and two of the three contestants involved were John Lindsay and William F. Buckley, both of them famous for being Yalies. When I was here in the spring there weren't any famous Allen High graduates doing anything. It felt a little bit giddy while also a touch terribly weird to suddenly be a member of the ruling class.

By one-thirty we had made it up to the Columbia campus at 110th St. Coincidentally the football game today was with Yale and it was just starting. I had already attended a game at the Yale Bowl, a stadium built to hold 50,000 people; Columbia's field was more like high school bleachers. More importantly, Bonnie and I had not the slightest desire to stay and watch. Instead we headed down the hill to the Hudson River and Riverside Park, and then turned south. At some point we went over to Central Park. And when it got dark we made our way back to the hotel.

And we spent another night together.

Sunday morning we slept in again. Right before noon we checked out (They had trusted me not to sneak away without paying!), made our way down to Grand Central Station, and put our suitcases in a locker. Then we got back on the subway and headed out to the end of the line in Queens.

When I was a kid growing up the idea of a World's Fair had been a pretty big deal. They only seemed to occur once every twenty or thirty years. The ones in Chicago in 1893, St Louis in 1904, and New York in 1939 had been presented as more-than-important Moments in History. And today was going to be the final day of the great New York's World Fair of 1964-65. No matter my visions of utopia, the little kid in me needed to go out and see this.

And it didn't hurt that admission today was free.

We got to the main entrance right at around one. The weather was still beautiful. As we walked through the turnstiles I knew that there wouldn't be much time to actually see many of the pavilions. Still…

It took about several hundred yards of walking before I fully realized what was going on. All around me virtually every single other fair visitor was stealing virtually every single thing that wasn't nailed down. And there were one or two people tugging away at those things that still were.

No policeman could be seen anywhere. Civilization and authority had broken down on a bright, sunny Sunday afternoon. We were in the middle of a Twilight Zone episode.

Because these weren't stereotyped poor people from the ghetto. These were all well dressed middle class people. And there wasn't the slightest hint of furtiveness, the slightest look of guilt. And it was so all inclusive that there was even somebody trying to lug off one of the park benches.

Wasn't anyone else noticing this? Apparently not. Then finally as we passed a small pavilion this woman in a business skirt and business blouse and heels came out the door raging in frustration. 'Put that down! Put that down!' she shouted to a middle aged lady in her Sunday best who was attempting to haul off the pavilion's giant potted plant. The lady in question matter of factly put it down in the middle of the walkway and then matter of factly walked off, neither looking at the woman nor at us. The business skirt woman leaned against her pavilion front and started crying.

Well, this was quite the ending for the weekend. It was kind of hard to feel utopian right at the moment.

But once Bonnie and I had left the fairgrounds the glow returned. And it stayed with me as we retraced our way back to Grand Central Station, as we got on the train to Connecticut, and then as I got off in New Haven and Bonnie continued on to New London.

October 21, 1965

I was writing songs like crazy.

At this point in time what had anything to do with what was left of folk music and folk singers had everything to do with songwriting. There were Tom Paxton, Phil Ochs, Buffy Sainte-Marie, a new guy named Eric Anderson…

But who was I kidding? Who cared about any of those others? None of them was remotely at the level of Bob Dylan. He had basically invented the genre of folkish songwriting less than four years earlier. Sure, Woody Guthrie had written 'original' folk songs back in the Thirties. But before Bob Dylan folk singing had been all about preserving cultural history, not making contemporary statements. And Woody Guthrie and his crowd had been overtly and almost painfully politically lefty. Bob Dylan on the other hand had famously turned his back on all that and his material was all about the personal and the poetic.

I could never be as good as Dylan. No one could possibly be.

Still, a fellow had to try. And last winter I had sat down and had spent a little time trying to come up with a new song out of nothing. But I had to admit that the result had been pretty flat and insipid. So back then I had reluctantly concluded that, even though I was constantly writing poetry, I wasn't cut out for putting music to anything.

But now for the past couple of weeks the song ideas were just flowing out of me. And in my considered opinion they not only had real hooks and real choruses, but they were actually pretty good.

Not that I had finished any of them.

Okay, I was almost finished with one of them. Like other folkstyle songs, and unlike popular music, it didn't have a bridge, just a verse chorus, verse chorus, verse chorus, verse chorus. And, considering how squeaky clean wonderful I had been feeling the last couple of weeks, one would have to admit that it sounded pretty dark and alienated. But that was a reflection of the fact that I was ever so slowly coming to realize that when you grasped the awe and greatness of the Something, then the rest of the world that was denying said Something would start to look rather petty and ugly.

(And, anyway, wasn't that was Dylan all about? The juxtaposition of vision and despair? The snarling sarcasm of 'Maggie's Farm' followed by the utter beauty of 'My Love She Speaks Like Silence'?)

I had written the song as an attempt to explain to Diane, way, way back in high school in Allentown, just what it was I was feeling. And I thought that the third verse was the best:

> *It's funny how the idols change when you get far away*
> *And their Gorgon heads are not obscured by mist*
> *With the pennies strewn about their feet along with all you saved*
> *And the things you thought were gold are only rust*
> *But I've worshipped at their altars and I know just how you feel*
> *But just because you're flesh and blood and just because they're steel*
> *Doesn't mean you have to bow down, doesn't mean that they are real*
> *And I won't be coming back*
> *Won't be coming back*
> *Won't be coming back here any more*

Yes, 'Gorgon heads' was way too fancy and/or obscure. But try as I may I couldn't come up with anything better.

And at least the emotions were sincere. And that reminded me once again: Why wasn't I hearing from her?

October 25, 1965

I had been wrong about there not being many artistic, creative, or whatever you wanted to call them people in the Class. There was turning out to be a whole bunch of us.

One of Saul's roommates was Gary, a scholarship student from Kansas City, and he had also been a scholarship student at Kansas City's elite private school. And he had two classmates from there who were here. Marty Cohen was a medium sized, slightly pudgy English major who was all excited about being selected for a seminar with Lillian Hellman. Bob Withers was rail thin, about six feet tall, and had white blond brillo hair which was just started to expand out of his head. He had a permanently ironic smile and permanently wide eyes.

There were two others who had been roommates at Philips Exeter. Norm Zamcheck was tightly wound and highly verbal, and was a really good classically trained pianist. Angus Ferguson was a blond and handsome laconic artistic type and was suitably from Maine.

And there was David Katz, an interesting combination of pugnacity and innocence. His dad was a postman in Baltimore,

In all there were about a dozen of us now, and the group was slowly accreting. Most were at the upper level of Yalie smartness, and all had a definitively non-Yale take on Yale. In that we were each other's support. But it went deeper. For each of us could recognize that the others were really, really original and talented, at least as original and talented as we were, and for most of us we had to admit that this was a somewhat new experience. And that was both reinforcing and comforting.

We also expanded each other's horizons. Marty Cohen told me about his favorite poet, Kenneth Patchett. Norm Zamcheck played me the songs that he was writing. Bob Withers loaned me this totally unknown album called 'Wednesday Morning 3 AM'. Saul and I annoyed everyone else with our vaudeville comedy act Fergus 'N Angus.

We met in each others rooms and talked. We walked around campus and talked. But mostly we would meet for meals at Freshman Commons, commandeer a large table, and talk.

And we understood that being surrounded by so many sharp and clever people made each of us smarter and cleverer.

Things zinged.

October 28, 1965

It was about three in the afternoon and I was trying to listen in on the phone conversation of William Sloane Coffin, Jr., Yale's semi-famous Chaplain. His offices were in what would have been a three room suite in Durfee Hall, another one of the Freshman residences on the Old Campus, and I was sitting in one of the comfortable upholstered chairs in what would have normally been the living room.

Once again, I had never actually heard of him before arriving on campus, but everyone said that he was a pretty big deal in the Civil Rights and Anti-War movements.

Which seemed an unusual connection, because I knew by now from personal experience that he was hardly your typical wobbly bleeding heart liberal Protestant minister. Patrician, proud, ruggedly tough looking, and part of a blueblood Yale family, he had served in the Army Special Forces and, later, in the CIA. Then he had turned his back on all that when he had decided to become a preacher. One thing had led to another, and now he was also my genially argumentative debating partner.

I had first met him a few weeks earlier, when I had received a mysterious notice to go to the Chaplain's office. When I had arrived, he had shook my hand, and then he had hemmed and hawed for awhile.

Finally, he let me know. My mother had contacted Yale, and she had wanted them to tell me that she had married somebody a week after I had left home, had moved to another house, and, oh, by the way, had thrown away all of the belongings that I hadn't taken with me to Yale.

Was that all?

After a moment's reflection I realized that I had never wanted to go back to Allentown anyway. But… all my stuff? And having the Chaplain tell me? My mother had her problems, but this was starting to sound like a Tennessee Williams play.

And I could figure out who the guy was that she had married. Ralph. I had met him a few times, and he was undoubtedly the most unfriendly, anti-social, not to mention alcohol dependent person I had ever seen. And, having grown up in Allentown, that was saying a lot.

I had thanked the Reverend Coffin and left. But this was way back during the time that I was forming my revolutionary (and, one could say) theological views, and when I got back to my room I realized that here was a person I could discuss it all with. So the next day I went back and talked with him for about an hour.

I had hopes that, being a spiritual and religious person, he would be sympathetic to my ideas about souls and true love. But these hopes were soon dashed. Indeed, his views weren't really that different from the avowed agnostic/atheist Saul. According to the Reverend Coffin, it would be foolish to think that we were anything but warring, selfish personalities here on Earth. And whatever peace we could find would only be a result of our crafting and agreeing to a set of morals that we would have to come up with on our own.

Gee, that didn't seem all that uplifting to me. So I had no hesitation in arguing back. And he was pretty damn sure of his position, too, so he countered. Now to his credit he didn't pull rank or act dismissive, but instead treated the points of an 18 year old as both intellectually valid and totally worthy of honest debate. Nor did he mind in the slightest that I would come back once a week and engage him in more disputation.

This afternoon we were going at it once again when his secretary (in one of the suite's 'bedrooms') interrupted to say, 'Reverend, it's Dr. King on the phone'.

THE Dr. King???? Wow, I was in the middle of History! He excused himself and went into his office (the other 'bedroom'). And I strained my ears to hear.

But it was pretty anticlimactic. They were discussing some anti-war demonstration this weekend in New York. And the Reverend wasn't sounding like a reverend at all. In fact, he sounded like some promoter from Brooklyn in a movie: 'Yeah, well let them try anything! We're gonna have reporters and photographers from the New York Times there! I would just love to see the police start hitting people!'

I just hoped that the rest of the people who had found themselves in the middle of History hadn't felt such a letdown.

October 31, 1965

Bingham Hall was situated at Yale's northeasternmost corner. Caddy corner from Bingham Hall was a ten story high brown ugliness of a building called the Taft Hotel. Psychologically as well as physically this was perhaps New Haven's most important off campus attraction.

For the Taft Hotel was the location that untold generations of Yalies had used to put up their dates and girlfriends for the weekend. After all, it went without saying that from time immemorial it had been absolutely forbidden for a female to spend the night in an undergraduate's room. It was at the level of Don't even think about it. If you got caught you would be immediately expelled.

For good.

So the Taft had been a brilliant moneymaking idea for whoever had come up with it. There were no other hotels anywhere near the campus. And it was only $5 a night, a price that almost any student could afford.

Even me.

What's more, this was a trivial price to pay to be able to have Bonnie here for the weekend. She had shown up at my room Saturday morning, we had walked over, I had signed her in, and then we spent time up in

the room being warm and tender. The rest of the day had been a more than pleasant blur. For the past two weeks I could do little else but think about her, and now here she was.

She even immediately made friends with all my new circle.

But then this morning as we left the Taft Hotel and were walking arm in arm alongside the New Haven Green she had blurted out, 'Just think! I'll always be known as J Michael Folz's first mistress!'

My mind went, Whaat?? Was this some kind of metaphor? No, obviously it wasn't. No, what she said sounded weird seven ways from, er, Sunday. Why in the world would the person who had told me that she had committed herself to me and these glorious ideals of mine for ever and ever say such a thing?

She had told me that, hadn't she?

But then she had returned to her ongoing and futile attempt to successfully kick a pigeon. And I had once again became re-infatuated with her.

Later though, this evening, when I had walked her down to the train station, and right before she had gotten on the train, she had smirked, taken out this slim paperback book and slipped it to me. 'Here,' she said. 'Read this. I think you'll find it enjoyable.'

So now I was back in my room and had just taken it out of my pocket for a look. Let's see: 'The Kama Sutra'? Wasn't that some dirty book? Well, maybe it had gotten a bad rap. I gamely started reading.

But it was immediately apparent that it was a dirty book. And a pretty stupid one to boot. All it did was endlessly catalog every conceivable permutation of sexual positioning, up to and including constructing a system of pulleys so that you could swing your partner every which way.

I did not understand at all. Why had Bonnie given this to me? Wasn't the communion that we had shared infinitely better than this junk?

She had thought that, hadn't she?

This was a little disturbing.

November 1, 1965

Then today Diane called.

Remember those horrible dark depressions she had gotten when her periods hit last summer? Well, a few weeks ago it had happened again. Only this time it was far, far worse. Suicidal worse.

I guess it hadn't been a good time to have been explaining a wonderful vision of utopia to her.

And her parents, being rich enough, had simply put her on a plane ride out to the Mayo Clinic. In Minnesota. And there she had been given all these tests. After they had analyzed them all they had prescribed all these new drugs for her. The horrible dark depression had lifted.

And now she had just gotten back.

But now she also didn't know what to think. About utopia. About me. About anything.

She sounded different, maybe a little hollow. I didn't know what to think, either.

November 3, 1965

Compared to Daniel S Brinsmade III, I was the All American high school student.

Good ol' Dan still had his black, greasy, slicked back hair. He still wore his black leather jacket. He still had his creepy, dangerous looking townie friends. He still just stayed in his room when he was around at all.

Except for the past few weeks all he seemed to be doing was staying up all night rolling cigarettes by hand with a little cigarette roller. Nobody could figure out how he stayed awake so long.

And he had always been surly and uncommunicative. More recently he had started to get downright hostile.

So I was pretty surprised this morning around eleven-thirty when he acted kind of almost friendly, and he suggested that we have lunch together. I didn't even know that he ate, least of all at Freshman Commons. And I would have been intrigued to actually have had a social interaction with him, but as it happened I had a class right then.

When I came back at around two he was gone. Along with all his things. There was just an empty bedroom. He had dropped out of college again.

Steve Warner was standing there with his mouth open as usual. 'Uh, would you mind if I took his room?' he said.

Would I? Let Steve have what was the smaller bedroom? Sure, why not. You go ahead Steve.

Less than an hour later all of Steve's belongings were out and I was surveying the realm of what was now my very own bedroom. Damn, what luck. But what was I going to do with what were now totally redundant giant bunk beds?

I soon had all of the pieces of the superfluous bunk apart and carried down to the basement storage area. When I came back I kept looking at the clunky looking metal bed that remained. It still filled up too much of the room, and what's more it just didn't feel very aesthetic like that. What to do?

All of a sudden inspiration struck me. Of course! I quickly undid the entire bed and took the frame and the box springs out of the room. Now all that was left was a mattress on the floor. But wasn't that all I really needed? It was simple and direct, with nothing artificial. And look at how big the room suddenly was!

I couldn't believe what a stroke of genius this was. I went out into the hall and brought back one of the guys from one of the other suites. 'Look at that!' I proudly said.

'So you're making a beatnik 'pad',' he said with a shrug. And then he went back out to what he had been doing beforehand.

I was stunned. Beatnik pad??? You mean somebody else had thought of this before? And I'm just a cliché?

Well, hopefully, this would be the first and last time for that…

November 6-7, 1965

It was around noon on Saturday. Bonnie and I were standing at the start of State Highway 17 surrounded by vacant lots, vacant storefronts, and a smattering of Italian-owned businesses. Just as Allentown had been informed by all things German, New Haven was an overwhelmingly Italian city. And for some reason here pizza wasn't just 'pizza'. It was 'apizza', as in Tony's Apizza or D'Angelo's Apizza. The weather around us was fine, although it was starting to get, as they say in the Northeast, a little nippy. We had our coats on. My thumb was stuck out and we were attempting to hitchhike to Middletown.

Why Middletown? Bonnie had thought that it would be a fun idea to go visit her ex-boyfriend Darius. And to me that had seemed like an eminently doable adventure on a sunny day, so why not? Was I jealous? No, not a bit. After all, I was seriously in love. And the love that I was trying to stay in touch with didn't know anything like possessiveness. If it did, then it wouldn't be love.

Also, I already knew that Darius had been turned down by Yale. Which is why he was now enrolled at Wesleyan.

As for hitchhiking, I had only ever done it two or three times before in my life, and then it had only been for two or three miles at that. But once we had had the idea a few days earlier, I had gone down to the Army-Navy store next to Cutler's Records on Broadway, which was the main Yale shopping area. And there I had purchased the only item available that anyone who had ever gone vagabonding had ever gone vagabonding with: an olive green knapsack. As its name suggested, it was basically a plain canvas sack with plain canvas straps sewn on so that you could carry it on your back.

As for traveling boots, I already had those. Cowboy boots they were, to be precise. And the way that urban edge-of-society types worn them was inside the pant legs. Since I had purchased them about a month earlier no more shoes had ever been used.

It was only a few minutes before someone stopped to pick us up. He was going all the way to Middletown, which wasn't that surprising, considering that it was only thirty miles away and it was the only place that State Highway 17 went to.

We were dropped off at the Wesleyan campus, which wasn't all that big, and went about trying to figure out where Darius might be found. There were hardly any people walking around, and one of the few that was said that this was because everybody else was over at the football game.

We made our way to the game, which was being played on another of those high school bleacher 'stadiums'. But as opposed to the situation at Columbia, these bleachers were packed.

And a group of rabid male cheerleaders in 1930's style college sweaters were using every trick in the book to rev the crowd up to near hysteria. The level of rah rah groupthink was almost frightening, and was exactly the opposite of the small calm, intellectual college I had imagined when I had applied to it.

What made it even stranger was the situation in the real Ivy League. For instance, at the game I had gone to at the Yale Bowl nobody paid attention to anything, let alone male cheerleaders, and even the marching bands didn't march, but nonchalantly stumbled over to whatever intentionally absurd formations they were forming.

Maybe part of this had to do with the fact that it had turned out that just about everybody Wesleyan was someone who had been turned down by Yale. Which meant that most of the people here were living the fantasy of what they thought it would have been like if they had been accepted there. It also probably didn't help with the scary mob mentality that all these people were living in fraternities.

At any rate, it didn't take long to find someone who knew who and where Darius was. Big fish in small ponds.

As with Yale, it was impossible at Wesleyan to live off campus. And here you had to live at fraternities to boot. But Darius got to live off campus, in a big old farmhouse miles outside of town. After a lot more asking around, we finally found somebody who would take us out there.

Well, what was really going on with the seeming special treatment was that some Indian musician had gotten on the faculty of Wesleyan. And Darius was a music major who could plausibly claim to be studying Indian music. So… When we arrived I saw a new wooden sign outside that said something like Wesleyan Center For South Asian Musicology, but really it was just a big old farmhouse.

I was intrigued, since for some reason I was already aware that Indian music existed. Sitars and tablas and all. I even owned a Ravi Shankar album. But although I saw a couple of Hindu types off to the side in their loose pajama clothes, they basically stayed in some other part of the house, and I never got to meet them. Mostly the place seemed occupied by Darius and a bunch of his shaggy musician friends.

Darius himself was a lanky six foot four with longish dark hair, though not particularly handsome. In fact he was a little gawky. But he had the sense of supreme self-confidence that I had already been noticing in people who were well to do and had famous names. All in all though he seemed like a relatively likeable fellow.

He was really glad to see Bonnie, of course. We all talked amicably for a few minutes. And then he let it be known that he had just taken some LSD for the first time. He supposed that he wouldn't know what the affects would be for another hour or so.

There it was. LSD again. Only now I was going to be able to see it in action. Darius retired to the quiet of upstairs while Bonnie and I went into the living room. It was furnished in the Indian style, and instead of sofas and chairs there were… mattresses on the floor. (Had everybody in the world stolen my idea!?) We sat cross legged on one of them and talked with some of the other folks while Indian music played on the record player.

Around eight Darius reappeared. He was talking away without necessarily making sense to me, but then I didn't know him. And there was a huge smile on his face and his eyes and his very being seemed ablaze. Finally he made it known that he wanted his friends to come upstairs and play music with him. Bonnie and I and a couple of other spectators followed them on up.

Apparently Darius was a piano prodigy like his dad had been. But tonight he was playing electric guitar. And he was really good. So were his friends. There were drums and bass and everything and they were playing straightforward rock songs like 'Walking The Dog'. Darius was falling all over himself in happiness and confusion, and was saying things like, 'B Flat is so purple. Whoa, look at that F. It's completely chartreuse'. After a while somebody came in and asked him if he wanted some pancakes. 'PANCAKES! Wow! I'd lo-o-ve some.' When they arrived he stopped playing, sat down on the floor, picked one up with his fingers, syrup and all, and started eating away. 'What a mess! But it's so delicious.'

Bonnie and I and most of the others left him to be alone with his food. Yes, it was all a bit, um, different. But I was also pretty sure that, even if he wasn't always making sense, he was operating at some higher, more intense sort of vibration. We went back down to the living room and Bonnie set about making a bed out of one of the divan/mattresses that they had told us we could sleep on.

Around four in the morning we were awoken by Darius walking around in the dark, agitated and confused. When we sat up and started talking to him he tried to explain that he wasn't really sure where his mind and his personality were any more. Having fellow humans to talk to seemed to calm and comfort him, though, so we did that for about an hour. When he was feeling better he wandered away again and we went back to sleep.

We got up around eight and went over to the farmhouse kitchen, where there was a guy with huge bushy black hair and a huge bushy black beard. A Junior at Princeton, he had heard about this place, and had just ridden his motorcycle all night to get here. He allowed as how he didn't fit in all that well at Princeton.

Outside it had gotten overcast with a drizzling rain. People sat around the kitchen and talked. Around noon Darius woke up and the three of us talked some more. In the late afternoon one of his shaggy friends—the one who had provided him with the LSD—was going into New Haven, and he gave Bonnie and me a ride.

Seven pm found me and Bonnie and this guy sitting in a booth at Olivia's Luncheonette, the little restaurant on Chapel St. across from Bingham Hall. I was writing him a check for $50. He reached into the paper bag he had on his lap and took out ten sugar cubes individually wrapped in aluminum foil. I put them in my coat pocket. We walked out of the place, he and Bonnie drove off for the train station, and I walked back to the Old Campus.

November 9, 1965

Each of Yale's residential colleges had both a Master and a Dean. The Master was always an older and married professor and was usually at least semi-distinguished. He lived in a sumptuous 'house' (really part of the college structure) and served as the distant but friendly totemic paterfamilias. Theoretically a student could go to him to discuss his personal problems or the meaning of life. But usually one only saw him as he presided over College functions.

The Dean lived in an apartment in the College and was supposed to make sure that your academics were up to snuff. Right now I was sitting in the office of the Dean of Silliman College, one John Porter. He was about sixty years old, had a bald pate, round glasses, and always wore a dark blue suit with a white shirt and red bowtie. His job outside of being Dean was being editor of the Yale Literary Review.

The reason why I was sitting here was that the midterm grades had just come out. And I had received an F in my history course.

Now that particular F wasn't really fair. It was wholly based on one essay on one test that was graded by a teaching assistant. And even though part of me was pretty concerned since I had thought that I had answered it really well, the other part of me was sure that it was all due to a dumb teaching assistant.

Dean Porter looked at me with pity and contempt. 'You should be ashamed of yourself. Somebody with your ability.'

On the other hand, Dean Porter didn't know the half of it.

I had already learned the hard way that cleverness and wit won't help a hell of a lot trying to get through math and science. The Calculus course had already been dropped; trying to grasp vectors would have been hard enough even if I had been paying attention. The Chemistry course was such that it had gotten to the impossibly complicated Schrodinger's Equations by only about the fourth week. And it didn't help that the chemistry building was at the opposite furthest edge of the campus, a mile up the Prospect St hill. Nor that the schedule included a dreaded Saturday morning class. At 8 am, to be precise.

Dean Porter was continuing. 'Don't you realize the talents you've been given? You are a rare individual. I can tell that you are that 1 in 150,000.'

What? How did you come up with that number? And what the hell do you know about me besides my high school transcript? It wasn't all that amazing. Still, if you say so, that is rather flattering. Perhaps you'd like to see some of my poetry...

Now he was finishing up. He stared at me intently to make sure I was paying attention, and he summoned up his haughtiest diction. 'Trust me, young man. In the end there's absolutely nothing sadder than to be a forty-five year old Bohemian'.

If I had been hip to what was happening, and if I had been a smartass, I could have curled my lip and replied, 'Yeah, except maybe being a sixty year old homosexual hitting on undergraduates'.

But it had never occurred to me to be disrespectful, and all I saw was that he was the Dean and the Editor of the Yale Literary Review. So I tried to be as nice as possible while not committing at all to doing anything to change my behavior.

The truth was that I really did like learning things, and at another time I might well have ended up a scholar. And part of me was still feeling guilty that I wasn't chowing down appropriately on the intellectual smorgasbord that had been placed before me. But I also had the unwavering conviction that the subjects that my mind was dealing with right now were far more important.

Anyway, now the Inquisition was over and it was dinner time. So I walked up the stairs to the dining hall at Silliman and ate there. Then I started heading back towards the Old Campus.

That's when the lights went out.

Everywhere. Street lights. Room lights. Lights that vaguely lit up the horizon and that you usually didn't notice.

By the time I got to Bingham Hall there were a lot of people outside trying to figure out what was going on. Finally someone with a portable radio reported that there was a blackout over the entire northeastern U.S.

Good. Now I didn't have to feel guilty about not studying tonight.

November 12-14, 1965

It was Friday morning and Bonnie and I were going down to Philadelphia to help my sister Claire celebrate her 21st birthday. Right now we were standing at the primary New Haven exit of the Merritt Parkway. We had already had to hitchhike to all the way out here on Derby Avenue, about five miles past the Yale Bowl.

Right now we were just waiting, because somebody else had gotten to the exit before us. It turned out that Bonnie knew him, of course. She talked with him for a minute, and as we walked away she said, 'That's John Anderson. He's a Junior and he goes down every weekend to play bass with this 'underground' rock group in the Village called The Fugs.'

'I suppose he's from New Canaan, too,' I said.

'Yes,' she replied matter of factly. 'I guess everyone is. Hey, that reminds me. Did you hear the story about that guy who burned his draft card a few weeks ago? He's my next door neighbor.'

No, I hadn't heard the story. As I've said, newspapers and television didn't really make it on to the Yale campus. I assumed that the draft card burning was a protest to the war in Vietnam, but in all truth I couldn't remember anyone spending any time discussing that since school had started in September. Which if I thought about it was pretty notable since probably virtually everyone in the Class had been the type to be on top of those current events that anyone with any sense of responsibility was supposed to be on top of.

In a few minutes John Anderson and his bass guitar had gotten a ride. Now it was our turn. We walked over to the exit entrance and I stuck my thumb out.

The clear, simple way to get from New Haven to Philadelphia was with the Connecticut Turnpike and the New Jersey Turnpike—I-95. And we could have accessed the Conn Turnpike just by walking a couple of blocks from Bingham Hall. But I had been told that you weren't supposed to hitchhike on Interstates. So what we would be attempting was going to be complicated, involving the Tappan Zee Bridge, US 209, and God knows what else.

But, hey, we had all day to go less than 200 miles. How hard could it be?

By three in the afternoon we had made it to north central New Jersey, and that was due to the sheer luck of getting a ride in Stamford with a sales rep who was going all the way around the City. Then we got all stuck up in the spaghetti of New Jersey roads, and by midnight we had only made it to a diner stuck in the middle of nowhere somewhere near Levittown.

There we got lucky, though. We were talking to someone who pointed to some other people who he said going right into downtown Philly. And just after 1 am we were deposited at the door of Claire's apartment. She buzzed us in and we walked up to the second floor.

She and Chuck were still together and of course it was nowhere near bedtime for them. We sat in her 'living room', which was large and high ceilinged, dirty and badly painted in an ugly orange, with a few pieces of dilapidated furniture and hundreds of paperback books. In one corner there was a small unmade bed.

My sister had always collected large animals that she could dominate, and right now she had two blue tick coon hounds to go along with her three cats. But she also had never been too thorough about cleaning up after her various menageries, so the smell of dog crap and kitty litter completely permeated the place. She was hospitable enough, though, to see that Bonnie and I were pretty tired, so after a few minutes of chitchat she and Chuck retired to their bedroom.

The next day was a lazy Saturday, and at around three in the afternoon we were all sitting around Claire's kitchen table. From New Haven I had told her that I had a special birthday present for her. Now I had just explained to her all about LSD, and she and Chuck were game for trying. I pulled out four of my little foil cubes, we each unwrapped one, and then we let them melt in our mouths.

An hour later we were still sitting there, though now back in the living room. 'How long is this supposed to take?' she asked. I said that I thought about an hour.

An hour and a half after that we were still sitting there. Chuck said, 'Hey, kid, looks like you've been done taken.' He didn't have to tell me that. I was already feeling pretty stupid, especially since that $50 had used up much of what was left in my checking account. Not to mention that Bonnie and I had just gone to all this trouble to get to Philadelphia.

But for some reason I had brought six of the sugar cubes along. I pulled the other two out of my pocket. 'Just to make sure I'm going to try another,' I said. 'And, Claire, since it's your birthday, you can have the last one.'

Forty-five minutes later there was still nothing. Chuck was starting to get pretty angry. Claire suggested that we all go for a walk.

A half an hour later we were walking down South Street, where all the antique shops and what passed for Philadelphia's cool bars were. Chuck was really, really pissed off by now. 'I tell you what we should do. We should go up to Connecticut and find that fucker. And then I'm going to beat the fucking shit out of that asshole until he gives you your money back.'

I didn't think that that was the exact solution, but I was still upset that I had been snookered so easily. Magic sugar cubes, no less! I opened my mouth to say something.

And then it hit me. 'Uh, I think I'm starting to feel something,' I said.

Claire stopped. 'I think I am, too.'

Bonnie and Chuck looked at us, then each other. 'I don't feel anything,' she said.

By now my whole being was metamorphasizing. Neither 'pleasant' nor 'unpleasant' described it. A strange interior tingling spread from the back of my neck and head to throughout my body. The city lights started to get this extra dimension to them. The people and traffic around us started to get really confusing. And a laughter beyond meaning started welling up, a laughter funnier by far than anything I had ever known.

'I think we'd better go back to the apartment,' Claire said uncertainly.

I barely held my mind together as we made our way back to her place. But as we took our coats off and sat down in the Salvation Army reject chairs, with the dogs wagging their tails furiously, and with the stench and the dirt all around us, the cosmic humor of it all just got to be too much. It was all almost too funny to even be worth laughing about.

Claire was really gone, too. But we would give each other knowing looks and then break out laughing. Bonnie was holding my hand, but she was just curious and maybe a little concerned. Chuck had gone and gotten himself a beer.

Part of me was trying to figure out what was going on, but it was hopeless. One thing for sure was that any sense of time was right out the window. Perhaps the hardest part was that I had absolutely nothing, not even a third person account, that I could compare or relate this to. Though after an hour or two of no time my extremely limited ability to put two thoughts together did start to realize that there was far too much energy going on inside of me for this to be altogether healthy.

And then it started to occur to me that this might be what it was like to be psychotic. Because now it was starting to change from fun crazy to just crazy. Claire and Chuck went into their bedroom.

Bonnie tried to stay up and talk to me, but I didn't have much to say, and after a while she was just too tired and she went to bed. So now it was me and the ugly walls and a slight sort of nausea. Every so often Claire would come in and we would try to communicate. There were moments when we were both instantly back to being seven and ten years old again, and then the strange wobbly psychosis would return and she would forget what we had been talking about and would head back into her bedroom and the darkness and the snoring Chuck.

Around three in the morning I lay down next to Bonnie and tried to sleep myself. Not a chance. The best that I could do was drift in and out of a consciousness that didn't know what to call itself.

Near the bed was a window that looked out onto another building a few feet away. As the light of the new day turned the space grey a light rain was falling. Little green and blue and purple flashes followed each drop. Though beyond tired my mind was starting to clear up. In fact, there seemed to be a hint of a wisdom or an understanding that was out there in the drizzle, just beyond my mental reach.

Bonnie woke up at eight and we put our coats on and walked a few blocks in the early morning rain to a downtown all night corner restaurant. I was really glad that she was with me, but I couldn't think of too much to say. So we just had some eggs and coffee.

The drug had worn off enough by now that I realized that we still had the problem of getting back to Connecticut. But I remembered that this was Princeton weekend, which meant that there would be a lot of Yalies in New Jersey who would be heading back this afternoon. Chuck's car was still too illegal, but when Claire got up she made a lot of phone calls, and finally found somebody she could cajole to drive us

the forty-five miles to Princeton. By two we were there, and by seven I was back in my room in Bingham Hall and Bonnie was on the train to New London.

November 19-21, 1965

It was Harvard Weekend, the biggest event of the Yale year. Actually, it only really happened every other year, when The Game was played in New Haven. Almost no one had been attending classes since Wednesday.

And already a lot of people had been drunk since then.

Unlike almost every other campus in America, Yale didn't have fraternities. Well, yes it did, in an area of big stone 'houses' called Fraternity Row. But because of the residential colleges, no one was allowed to live in them. Which meant that their only conceivable purpose was as places to hang out and get drunk, whether with the Saturday night party with live Motown band, or just at one in the afternoon on a weekday.

What's more, Freshmen were forbidden to join. But that didn't mean that our class didn't already have its fair share of loudmouth fraternity types. Nor that said group was limited to a subset of worthless rich preppies who had gotten in because of their Yale pedigree. It's just that usually this group was constrained by study and the prevailing ethos of over achieving sober public school grads.

By Friday evening, though, they were coming into their own. And a fair number of those sober public school grads were starting to join them. Since the drinking age in Connecticut was 21, one might have wondered how so many 18 year olds got their hands on so much alcohol, but the stores around the Yale campus were such that no one even had to bother to come up with a fake ID.

Even those of us who weren't drinking, though, were feeling pretty loose and stupid. Eleven pm found Saul and me bouncing a superball up against all the strange angles of the ornately carved hexagon of Bingham Hall's main entryway.

The superball had just hit the market a couple of weeks earlier. Rubber balls—actually sponge balls—were something that every young boy in America had grown up with. But rubber balls only bounced back less than half as high as on each previous bounce, and that's what our minds had been used to seeing our entire lives. These new superballs bounced back about ninety percent.

Oddly enough, the noise of us and the superball bothered some of the people whose walls and doors we were bouncing it off of. So after we were chased away we found a couple of other friends and headed over to Saul's room for a relatively calm evening.

No dice. Although the trio across the hall from Saul were fine and dandy, the ones next door were the worst kind of obnoxious frat boys-to-be. And the one who irked Saul the most was a guy named Steve Schwarzman. Right now he was throwing a totally out of control party, replete with open door.

Saul gave an evil grin. 'Why don't we join them?' he said. After all, the door was open. We looked at each other and then went on over.

Normally us types were the opposite of what those types would want in their room, let alone their party. But they were all shit-faced, falling down drunk, and for us that gave us the opportunity to have a few laughs by shamelessly mocking them. Then we led them all in singing The Whiffenpoof Song, and walked out carrying over half their remaining beer.

All good, clean, stupid fun.

The next afternoon was quite different. Bonnie and I were sitting in my living room, along with Saul and Greg, his friend from St. Louis who was now at Harvard. The fifth person was David Katz, and he was going to be our guide tonight.

David was another of those rare people who had been following the story of LSD for a long time now, though he was still rather nervous about trying it himself. Earlier in the week he had explained to me about how important it was to have both a proper setting and somebody around who wasn't high. He also said that it was common that you needed to take a larger dose the first time you did it.

I had four sugar cubes left. Bonnie and I took one each, and waited to see if we would both 'get off'. Within less than an hour we were both feeling it strongly. Saul was feeling very uneasy about the stuff. But his friend wasn't, so he took the remaining two.

Outside the sky was getting dark, and inside Bonnie and I sat hand in hand on that Goodwill couch. David kept asking questions about what I was feeling. I was trying to answer, but with each minute the things he was saying became more and more ridiculous. At some point Saul and Greg left to go off to some function at Davenport College.

This Saturday I was a lot readier for what was starting to happen than I had been last Saturday. But it was still so overwhelming that there really wasn't any preparation for it. And you couldn't even begin to describe it to yourself, let alone others. There was that feeling in the throat and the head, then the entire body, and then everything inside you and outside you would start to vibrate. The personality just evaporated. Thoughts didn't even come close to stringing together. Yet at the same time it felt more real than reality had ever come close to feeling.

We tried to listen to Judy Collins and some other music. But the notes just hung there in the air without any meaning to them. The room was also starting to feel horribly claustrophobic. Bonnie and I weren't holding hands any more. Somehow my mouth said to David, 'Do you think we can go for a walk or something?' We put on our coats and headed out into the hallway.

Here it was just as claustrophobic, and a lot more unsettling, what with all the noise and commotion of everybody else celebrating Harvard weekend. It took forever to walk down those two flights of stairs. When we got to the landing there were two what looked like quasi-humans throwing a football back and forth. As it flew through the air it was transformed into stop motion photography of twenty different footballs.

It was dark when we got outside, though only about six-thirty. The normally yellow lights from windows and the outdoor lamps had a three dimensional orange sheen to them. A surreal drunken bacchanalia seemed to pervade the very atmosphere as we made our way to Phelps Gate and the street.

In normal times College Street was rather subdued. The Yale campus was on one side and the park of the New Haven Green on the other. But tonight what traffic there was felt like the essence of pure chaos, and the number of drunken Yalies staggering around was amplified by the well dressed extremely drunken older alumni who were coming back from The Game.

I had gotten to such a basic level that my being was simply being carried around by my body. David led us the couple of blocks to the little plaza that the Greek columns of Freshman Commons and Woolsey Hall looked out upon. In front of us was Yale's newest building, the Beinecke rare book library. It was basically a cube of pure marble. In front of it, protected by a wall and at the basement level, there was a stark modernistic sculpture of a sphere, a pyramid, and a cube on its point.

We were all alone now. It was quiet and cold. And I was starting to get overwhelmed by the sheer, simple beauty of everything. Behind the Beinecke rose the gothic towers of the Yale Law School. Above us the sky was lit with the moon and filled with cirrus clouds which were constantly re-arranging themselves in

geometric patterns. Bonnie and I were holding each other's hands again. I was right… here…in…the…middle…of…it…all. And it all made perfect sense.

It was also getting colder and colder. David said, 'We'd better get inside and warm up,' and all of a sudden that made even more sense. He walked us back to the Old Campus and back to 1128 Bingham Hall.

Except that when we opened the door Steve Warner was sitting there at his desk in the living room. Studying intently. He was probably the only person on the entire campus who was doing that this evening. But he had gotten a bad grade at midterm, and the Dean had given him a talk, and now this was what he was going to do for the rest of the year.

He had this huge print of Picasso's 'Guernica' on the wall. I had never liked it in the first place, and now the grey figures all melted into one another in an ominous fashion. Standing there I knew deep, deep, deep down in that being that was being carried around that I had no home in this world any more.

David suggested that we go over to his place next door in Vanderbilt. When we got there I found that there was this huge living room, that sitting in it were his seemingly spiritless roommates, and that dominating it was a gigantic pyramid that those roommates had made out of beer cans. I was kind of able to talk now, and I tried to tell them just how incredibly ugly and a waste of time this pyramid was. They replied that they were quite proud of it, that I was being extremely offensive, and could we please leave.

All that David could think of to go to now was Saul's place, so he led us the hundred yards or so over to Farnham. At the third floor landing David knocked on Saul's door. But nobody answered and it was locked. I didn't have the foggiest idea of what to do now, so David told us to wait there while he went and tried to find Saul.

LSD was not conducive to chit chat. Bonnie and I stood there, a little confused and apprehensive. Our coats were still on, but I was feeling a category of naked that I had never felt before in my life.

And then the door next door opened, and out came that Steve Schwarzman guy.

Only this time he wasn't just shit-faced drunk, he was mean and ugly drunk. 'Hey, I know you,' he leered. 'You're an asshole.'

He wasn't that big a guy, and he was wobbling back and forth. But he could no doubt sense that we were totally vulnerable. He staggered right up to Bonnie's face. 'You're an asshole, too,' he said. Then he turned to me. 'What are you going to do about it, asshole?' I couldn't do anything. 'Hey, I could punch you right in your fucking face, couldn't I? And you wouldn't do anything.'

Yes, he could. And I wouldn't. Right now I couldn't have dealt with a buzzing fly. But right at that moment Saul was coming up the stairs. When he saw what was happening he immediately spit out, 'Stop bothering these people and get the FUCK back into your room, Schwarzman.' Saul wasn't that big, either, but he could get a lot more aggressive than some frat boy. What's more, he wasn't drunk. Schwarzman retreated.

Saul unlocked his door and let us in. LSD also wasn't that conducive to either anger or memory of anger, so what had just happened was now past and gone. But after we sat there for awhile, and as my mind was slowly starting to string thoughts together again, I realized with a sudden panic that here we were after ten at night, and a female, namely Bonnie, was in a Yalie's room.

And I was down far enough to fully comprehend that if we were caught it would mean immediate expulsion. It was even too late to walk her out through Phelps Gate. And even if I did, we were in no condition to sign in at the Taft Hotel. And even if we were, there wouldn't be any rooms available on Harvard weekend.

Saul was understandably nervous, but he said that we could stay in his bedroom. By now his roommates were back, and they were a lot more nervous, but in the end they agreed, too. Somebody went back to my room to get Bonnie's things and my little portable record player.

Bonnie and I. We had been together all night, but more often than not communication had been too difficult to even attempt, so that we were each in our own little six dimensional worlds. And now as our minds were ever so slowly transforming back to a mentality that was ever slightly more normal the distance seemed to be getting greater.

Because it was one thing to be over at the Beinecke transfixed by an eternal Now. But as each moment started being followed by another moment, and then another, it all began to get a little scary. I had enough consciousness to be staring at Eternity, but not enough energy left to deal with the implications.

And neither did Bonnie.

Saul got a blanket and got ready to sleep on the couch. Bonnie and I retreated to his bedroom. And we tried to snuggle and to hold each other, but there was no communion. I got up and stared out the window. The moon was shining and the clouds were still doing their dance. Across the way was a shimmering Harkness Tower, Yale's signature 200 foot high gothic structure, and every fifteen minutes its bells rang out the quarter hour.

Time. And what was I going to do about it? Bonnie was trying to cry herself to sleep. And I was too frozen and impotent to be able to comfort her. She finally succeeded in it, and then it was just me and Harkness Tower for the rest of the night.

I tried playing some records as softly as possible, but none of them made any sense. Except for that Wednesday Night 3 AM one, and even then there were only two cuts. One was 'Bleecker Street' and the other was 'Sounds of Silence'.

At six thirty Saul got up, and the two of us went out in the grey dawn and walked over to the only place that was open, Olivia's. We sat at the counter and ordered some coffee. I had tried to explain to him my problem with Time, but now I was as withdrawn as a person could get, and we weren't saying much.

There was a fifty year old waitress behind the counter who looked like every other diner waitress in the country. All of a sudden she started talking at the top of her voice to absolutely no one in particular. 'Hobbies,' she said. 'That's what you gotta do. Have a hobby. It'll fill up all your extra time, you'll see. If you don't find a hobby, you'll just go crazy. The job doesn't mean anything. Only hobbies.'

I looked around, and nobody was paying any attention to her. Yet she kept going on and on about hobbies. Saul and I finished our coffee and walked the two blocks back to his room.

'Hobbies,' he said, laughing sardonically. 'Just get yourself a hobby, Mike.'

November 23, 1965

About a week or so earlier I had heard that there was someone on the Yale faculty who had been involved with the LSD research that had been going on up at Harvard. Yesterday I had tracked down Michael Katz, and now I was sitting in his bright and sunny office.

He was young and friendly, with thick, curly black hair. When I told him about my weekend, he smiled wryly. 'Congratulations. You must be one of the first people on campus.' Then he described how lonely it had been a couple of years earlier, when he would be walking down the street and realizing that there was simply no one who you could even begin to try to explain it to. When I described to him my realization that I had no home anywhere, he nodded. 'Yeah, that's a tough one,' he said.

He continued, quoting a title of the Aldous Huxley book: 'Heaven and Hell, The Doors of Perception. You get this amazing understanding. But then you can also have these horrible reactions. And, you know, they talk about flashbacks.' He smiled again. 'We all wish…'

He well knew about Timothy Leary getting kicked off the Harvard faculty, and then declaring that all of academia was a fraud. But he himself wasn't going anywhere. To his mind the most important thing was to keep the study of LSD within the universities. After all, he was a psychologist, and wasn't the definition of psychology that it was supposed to dispassionately explore every aspect of the mind?

November 25-28, 1965

Richard Smith was another of the three people in the class who had arrived on campus with a beard. But he wasn't especially artistic or rebellious. He just liked having a beard and that lumberjack look. Not that he was from some small town in Oregon, though. No, he was from Wilton, Connecticut. Which was right next to New Canaan, and which was an even more exclusive suburb.

That didn't mean that his family was wealthy. Actually, his father had been born in Wilton long before it had become an exclusive suburb. And he had a business building homes for the wealthy. So Richard lived in a well built house, and both parents exuded a hospitality and a decency that one might imagine to occur in a small town in Oregon.

How did I know that? Because his parents had invited Saul and me to their Thanksgiving dinner. Instead of sitting by ourselves on a deserted campus we were thus able to take part in a somewhat classier version of a Norman Rockwell painting.

After dinner Richard's father showed us some of the woodworking projects he had done for fun in his well equipped shop. Then we went back to the house to have coffee and pumpkin pie. Now it was time for Saul and me to hit the road. We were going to go into New York tonight.

We decided that we should have a sign. And it turned out that there was a large scroll of heavy duty paper available and that Saul was a trained sign painter. So within a half hour or so he had produced a professional looking piece of work that read 'We Know Over 100 Amusing Jokes'. And, armed with this, we were taken to the nearest exit of the Merritt Parkway.

It was cold and dark, and two hours and hundreds of cars passed by. Many people looked at us strangely and some laughed approvingly. But absolutely no one stopped. Finally some guy with shoulder length hair in a beat up old station wagon did. We got in and Saul said, 'So you want to hear some jokes?' The guy looked at us like we were nuts and said, 'I don't give a fuck about that'.

It turned out that he was in a rock and roll band called The Elephants, and for a jaded guy he was pretty excited about the upcoming release of their cover of the Dylan song 'Queen Jane'. He was pretty sure that this was going to be their big break.

He dropped us off near the Village, which coincidentally had been where we were headed for. Saul had this other friend from St. Louis who had moved to New York, and he had an apartment of his own just a few blocks away. We quickly found it.

By mid afternoon of the next day we were standing at one of the entrances to the George Washington Bridge. But we got tied up in the spaghetti of New Jersey again, and many hours and short rides transpired before we were in Allentown. By then it was pretty late at night. But when we showed up on the doorstep of the parents of a friend of mine from high school, they let us spend the night.

I had no real reason to go to Allentown other than it sounded more interesting than spending the holiday weekend in New Haven. I did have a vague idea of trying to talk to Diane, but after a few phone calls to

different people I realized that this wasn't going to happen. So to pass the afternoon I suggested that we walk the couple of miles into downtown so that Saul could see from whence I had come.

We were still in a residential area, the only pedestrians to be seen, when I saw another one coming towards us. As he got closer I realized with a start that it was John Herzog. The person I had hung around with just about every day in August. He was as surprised to see me and of course he wanted to talk.

But it was so uncomfortable for me that I almost couldn't say anything. It's not that I felt superior or condescending, but it did feel like I was being a twelfth grader trying to converse with an eighth grader.

Because less than three months after our late night car trip to Philadelphia, he was essentially the same person, with the same post-high school life and hopes and dreams. But in comparison I had aged who knew how much.

It was like I was an alien who had just dropped in from some other planet.

December 11, 1965

It was Saturday night. Earlier a bunch of us had stood in the snow in front of various entryways belting out Christmas carols that nobody had asked for. Now it was midnight and Bonnie and I were snuggled naked in bed in my bedroom. The radiator was rattling.

I had aged a bit more, and gotten a lot braver, since Harvard weekend three weeks earlier. Having not been caught then, I surreptitiously asked a couple of people on my floor if they thought anybody would rat me out. They were flabbergasted that I would even think about it, but they had concluded that probably no one would. So I had done it last week, and on that Sunday morning Bonnie and I had sat up in bed and done the New York Times crossword together. Now it was routine.

It didn't really have much to do with my being a deliberate scofflaw. Well, maybe a little. Mostly it had to do with the fact that I was both essentially a cheapskate and essentially broke.

As for generating more money, I had actually been pretty diligent with my ten hour a week bursary job. But that only paid $1.35 an hour, hardly enough to cover the telephone calls and the vicissitudes of travel, let alone the occasional French fries at Olivia's. And now trouble was looming ahead on the income front. I hadn't cut my hair since September, and now that it was nudging over my ears the manager of the Commons had let it be known that he wasn't going to have any beatnik working in his operation. Even a Yalie one.

But I wasn't thinking much of that right now. I was in bed with my beautiful lady with her beautiful brown eyes and beautiful long brown hair. And, yes, the insights of LSD were way deep down inside of me. And so was my earlier innocent pre-LSD vision of Utopia. But right now it was a lot more primal than that. It had to do with my waking up in the morning with a woman next to me.

Oh yeah, that radiator was rattling. I got up in my nudity and fiddled around with some black lever thing that came out of it. The rattling stopped and I went to sleep.

December 19, 1965

That Sunday morning I had woken up shivering and shaking in a freezing room. At some point Bonnie had rolled away with the blanket. And, not having dealt with radiators before, I hadn't realized that turning that black lever thing had turned off the heat.

By Monday I had the worst cold ever. And it felt like I had one of the worst fevers ever. I walked up the Prospect Street hill to the Yale Infirmary. They took my temperature, discovered it to be 103, and then immediately ordered me into one of their beds.

The next day Saul and David Katz and even Norm Zamcheck came up to visit, which was pretty nice of them considering how far away the infirmary was. But they were there to say goodbye, since they, like everyone else on campus, were taking off three or four days before Christmas vacation officially started.

By Wednesday I had been diagnosed with a bad case of strep throat, and my temperature had peaked at 104. I felt like I was about to die. If so, I would have died alone, since, save for a nurse or two, I was the only infirmary inhabitant left.

Now it was Sunday and I had finally well enough to get out of bed and walk around a bit. Until today I had been too sick to even read, so that my only companion for the past five days had been an AM radio, something I hadn't really heard for the last three months. The Byrds had a number one hit with 'Turn, Turn, Turn', but by now I was pretty sick of the rest of the Top 40.

Except for two songs, which would rotate in every hour or two. The first was 'Look Through Any Window' by the Hollies, a British group that had been written about but had never made it in America. The other was totally from left field, and had somehow combined the augmented ninth vocal style of Yale singing groups with rock and roll.

These days there seemed to be a new musical revolution every two months or so. It had only been a couple of weeks since 'Rubber Soul' had been released. Now there was 'California Dreamin''.

December 23, 1965

By Wednesday I was finally declared cured enough to get out into the non-infirmary world. It was a clear, windy day, and the Yale campus was empty and beautiful as I walked back down to my room, packed my knapsack, and covered the six blocks over to the I-91 exit. I had figured out by now that it was fine to hitchhike at exits of any kind. And I-91 would take me up to Hartford, from where I could go northeast to the Massachusetts Turnpike and on into the Boston area. And when I got to Newton, about fifteen miles west of Boston, Norm Zamcheck would pick me up.

Which he did.

Newton wasn't exactly the New Canaan of Massachusetts, but it was close. It was the kind of place with big substantial houses that a Harvard professor might live in. And that's what Norm's father was: a large, intense, arrogant Harvard professor. But his mom was really warm spirited, and his younger sister was really hot.

Right now there was a party going on with people I didn't know. But everybody was sparkly and energetic, and it was about as much fun as somebody like me was ever going to have at a party. The Zamchecks were Jewish, and very secular ones at that, so I knew that there would be no Christmas on Saturday.

But other than that it was way more holiday spirit than I would have expected in the home I didn't have in Allentown.

December 29, 1965

Well, on the 27th I had gone to Allentown anyway. And a high school friend had been kind enough to drive me all the way out to Emmaus, where my mother had moved with Ralph. And when she came to the door, she took one look at me and said, 'Ralph won't let you stay here unless you cut your hair.'

Oh. Okay. So I went back into town with my friend, and his family let me stay with them.

Seeing mom wasn't the main reason I had come back anyway. By now I wanted in the most crucial way to get together with Diane and talk. The Beatles' new single was 'We Can Work It Out', and that summed up the situation entirely for me. Because by now I knew that one way or another there wasn't going to be a white picket fence in our future. But by now Diane was like a sister who was walking away in the fog, and I felt like I was the only person who could stop her.

We did meet, and we took a city bus out to the house of another friend. On the bus she informed me that she had decided that people were inherently selfish, and that this was okay with her. She had also decided that everyone should have sex with anyone they felt like having sex with.

This hadn't exactly been my vision. And when we got to my friend's house and kept on talking in the back yard I tried to explain once again about universal love. But she just wasn't the same person I had known any more. Certainly not the girl who had been so joyous and happy at high school graduation six months earlier. Yes, I was more than aware that neither was I. But from my vantage I had kept going on in the same direction that we had both been heading for. She had made some horrible right turn.

Was it those drugs they had put her on at the Mayo Clinic? That would have added a nice science fiction touch. More likely she had just gone off on that fork in the road by herself. But as we finished the conversation the relevant Beatles song had changed irrevocably to 'I'm Looking Through You'.

My friend had a much older sister who drove both of us back. She was working on her PhD in Sociology, and was married to a teaching assistant at Williams. That sounded pretty classy to me, especially for an Allentonian, and after she dropped Diane off we got on really well.

I arrived at where I was staying as it got dark. A few minutes later my mother called. She had finally tracked me down by phone and she was crying. 'Please come back. You can stay here. I don't care whether or not you cut your hair. Ralph has promised to stay out of the way.'

So I arranged another ride all the way out there.

It was actually a cute little place, a 19th century German farmhouse built of stone. I even had my own subplace, a cute little 19th century German guesthouse in back. And my mother and I had our own nice little holiday visit, with Ralph safely down in the basement drinking his beer and watching his television.

December 31, 1965

Yesterday I had hitchhiked from Allentown to Connecticut, and had even stood thumbing right out there on the freeway when I found myself stuck in the Bronx. Bonnie had picked me up when I got to New Canaan and taken me to her house.

She was right about the relative wealth of her family. The house was stone and well built, but not particularly large or fancy. Her dad was away on business, but her mother was upper middle class, upper middle-aged, and gracious, and she showed me to the guest room.

It went without saying that convention had to be followed, so hanky panky couldn't even be hinted at whilst Bonnie and I were at the house. Which is why on New Year's Eve a friend of Bonnie's picked us up and took us to their house, where all parents were long gone. And as the old year ticked away the two of us were in a bed in a downstairs room getting it on.

Unfortunately, that kind of described it. Because for all the pedestal that I still put Bonnie on in my mind, I was starting to realize more and more that she no longer was doing that with me. Utopia had definitely subsided.

And insecure thoughts were piling up. Had I just been some kind of fling of hers? I didn't want to believe that. Was it all my fault because I was drifting away into some unpleasant alienated darkness? I certainly didn't want to believe that, either. Most importantly, there was this thought: I had absolutely no idea of what to do with any of it.

After midnight the parents were expected to be coming home. So her friend drove us back to Bonnie's house. On the radio they announced that the new number one song was an electrified version of that 'Sounds of Silence' that I had come down from LSD to. The back roads of New Canaan were dark, narrow, and incredibly winding.

As we rounded one corner our headlights shone on someone who looked like a college senior standing there in a coat and a loosened shirt and a loosened tie. He was barely able to stand from being plastered. And next to him his brand new sports car literally wrapped around a tree.

Part Three

January 6, 1966

School started in again on Wednesday. But formal classes had ended right before the Christmas break. This week was called Reading Period, and then the next two weeks were to be for final exams. This meant that there was going to be a lot of free time, what with no classes to have to go to or assignments to read. Not to mention that by the beginning of the second exam week most everybody's schedule would be completely open.

On the other hand, I hadn't been pursuing my academic goals all that rigorously. In fact, I hadn't actually finished a single one of my Directed Studies tomes since back in September. But although I continued to have some sense of academic responsibility, that didn't mean that I was going to finish them all now. That was impossible. Moreover, I had read some of each of them, and I had mostly paid attention in class. Therefore I figured that my ingrained work ethic (Max Weber, 'The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism') combined with my clear thought process (Thomas Aquinas, 'Summa Theologica') would contribute to my ultimate triumph (Shakespeare, 'Henry IV, Part II').

Chemistry was going to be another matter. I had stopped walking up the hill to the 8 am Saturday classes in October, and I had stopped attending all classes around the time of my chat with Dean Palmer in the beginning of November. Perhaps if they had held the course in the afternoon on the Old Campus I would have been up for addressing the rigors of the math involved. But even then it would have been doubtful. I no longer had the slightest motivation to match myself up against the brightest minds in the scientific world.

Still, I had to get ready for that final.

This Thursday evening, though, I had a problem of—as they said in the academic world—a different quality and magnitude. Because when I had shown up for the dinner shift at my bursary job, Mr. Parsons hadn't liked what he saw. It was immediately clear that he had fully expected that my hair would be cut when I went home for Christmas. And obviously it hadn't been. In fact, it had not only reached the top of my ears, but was now slowly growing over them. So, thinking himself clever, and acting decisively, he peremptorily told me to go work in the back on the dishwashing machine.

I don't know whether he figured that it would be the indignity of having to clean dirty dishes or the indignity of having to work with Negroes while cleaning those dishes that would crush my spirit. Maybe both. But actually it was a fun job. There was this giant conveyor belt contraption (supposedly the largest

dishwashing machine in Connecticut) that had to be constantly fed with plates and cups and saucers and silverware. And my fellow workmen turned out to be a great bunch of happy go lucky guys.

Two hours into it, Mr. Parsons came to the back, saw me happily putting dishes in the racks and joking around with my new friends, and peremptorily fired me.

January 20, 1966

My mother didn't own many records when I was growing up. But one she did have was 'The Student Prince' with Mario Lanza (who was pretty big back in the early 1950s). It was an operetta which told the story of carousing privileged university students in nineteenth century Heidelberg. The implication was, 'twas ever thus.

But the 1966 that had just begun was different. The times really were a changin'. Three years earlier the wildest musical thing most college student did was to sing along to 'Scotch and Soda' by the Kingston Trio. Two years ago the Beatles hadn't even hit. One year ago… That was the point: I could hardly remember what it had been like one year ago. Neither could anyone else in our group.

And when we got together around the largest round table in the Commons and ate our meals, it wasn't anything like what I would imagine the artistic or literary crowd from, say, the Class of '31. Those people were discussing the latest plays, reading social theories and philosophies, and outlining the various novels and books of poetry that they were going to write. But although six months ago each of us might have thought of ourselves as protean artists or playwrights or scientists or whatever, now that was all out the window.

Because now we were caught up in the middle of Something. In fact, we were so caught up that we didn't realize that we were caught up. But if any one of us would have thought about it, we would have realized that this wasn't going to end up anything like the student musings of previous generations. They had compared and contrasted the various isms. Somehow we had intuited that all the isms were useless.

Thus none of us cared a whit about Marxism, let alone Capitalism. Nor did politics matter any more. We were all aware of the war in Vietnam, and most thought that it was a pretty stupid one, but it was also so stupid that it wasn't worth discussing. The struggle for civil rights had come and gone a couple of years back. Organizations of any kind seemed useless; nobody was joining them. None of us was out there marching with William Sloane Coffin.

It was probably relevant that the current president, LBJ, was a lot harder to get behind emotionally than JFK had been. But I doubt that it would have been that different even if Kennedy hadn't been shot and we were now halfway through his second term. Just like hootenannies and the Shirelles, the New Frontier and all the congressional initiatives and government programs that it envisioned were way back there in the distant past.

A couple of months earlier there had been a Directed Studies lecture on the Henriad, the four 'Henry' plays of Shakespeare. The good professor had limned the Bard's trajectory from the collapse of one order, the chaos that resulted from that, and the ensuing creation of a new order. He ended by pointing out the relevance of this to the present day.

How right he was.

But even though we kind of understood that we were probably in one of the better positions of anyone out there to Figure It All Out, this did not mean that our mood was all that terribly serious. No, we were having too much fun for that. Because the distinguishing criterion of belonging to our group was the ability to quip, jest, josh, jostle, and otherwise mingle and manipulate words. Having the additional understanding of just how absurd everything and everyone else was didn't hurt.

It's not like it was a clique; anyone else with our point of view was free to join. But most of the rest of the Class was still where they were at back in September, discussing politics and whatever. In truth, we really didn't think about them one way or another.

Our dinner or breakfast or lunch party would start a few minutes after the Commons would open, people would come and go, and it would continue until the serving ladies chased us out. Then it would resume again at the next meal. Endless cups of coffee would be drunk. Songs would be sung in six part harmony. The talent of the others would make each of the rest of us rise to the top of our game.

Okay, maybe in certain ways we weren't all that different from past student generations.

Anyway, this particular evening all the exams were over, the dinner party was over, and I was wandering back towards my room. At some point somebody else ended up walking with me. It was Kent Bicknell, the same person who I had met my very first evening on campus, and whom I hadn't seen since. Even though he lived right on top of me by two floors.

Kent had kind of sought me out because, frankly, the guys he had been hanging out with from the freshman soccer team were starting to drive him crazy with their dullness. Considering that soccer was almost as preppie a sport as squash or lacrosse, that made sense. Kent though had always seen himself as a little more reflective and creative, and he had determined that I might be that way also. Besides which, he was also really into music, and had a lot of pretty great records, so maybe I'd like to come up to his room some time…

We were stopped at a well lit area. I noted that he was about 5'9", with dark, wiry hair. More important, he seemed to radiate an upbeat sort of friendliness. So I said, sure, let's get together soon. He then peeled off to the library, and I was once again wandering back home by myself.

I opened the entryway door. I walked over to the stairs. Wait a minute, what was that over there? A Life magazine was sitting on somebody's doorstep. And on its cover were three very large letters: L S D.

I picked the issue up, sat on the stairs, and read the article. The illustrated weekly with the country's largest circulation was declaring 'acid' to be the most extremely scary science fiction monster that had ever come to destroy America. It shattered rationality. It induced psychosis. The most memorable quote was of a mother who supposedly put the drug in her children's morning orange juice so that they could 'trip out in the forest'.

The little secret was out. And the world was running very fast. In four months this had gone from something that nobody had ever heard about to being on the front cover of Life Magazine.

January 23, 1966

My first term of studies was over. Somehow I had managed to get a C+ in each of my courses. Even Chemistry.

Because I had dropped the math course back in October, I was now obligated to take two additional courses this semester. No problem. Yale had a policy that you could 'shop' any number of courses for the first two weeks of a term, and only then did you need to decide which ones would count. Surely in the vast array of course offered I would be able to find two that would interest me.

Right now, however, what really weighed upon me was that it seemed like my term with Bonnie was also about to be over. Yes, we were still a couple. She had even just been down to New Haven and in my room for the weekend. And we still held hands and walked around the campus and hung out with my freshman artistic crowd.

But now she was telling me that I was getting too dark and weird. That I just wasn't any fun any more. That I was saying way too much that Society was a useless sham. After all, she liked to look at the ads in the New Yorker. She liked the idea of taking the train into Manhattan to go shopping with her friends.

And when I tried to talk to her about love and ideals and anything remotely misty eyed she replied that she supposed that when it came down to it she just didn't have all that much poetry in her. When she was lying in bed and felt another heart beating next to hers, she did get a little something off of that. But this was about as far and as deep as she ever felt.

I was hurt and confused and hurt some more. Could this be the same Bonnie I had met four months ago? Had I been deluding myself then and ever since? Or could she have changed so radically?

Or could it have been me?

What was not in question was that what I had supposed to be my eternal love for the ages was, ever so slowly and surely, slipping away.

And I sure didn't like the loneliness that was going to be at the end of it all.

February 4, 1966

The two weeks of course shopping were over. All that I had come up with were Philosophy 14b, Introduction to Logic, and Sociology 12b, Beginning Organizations.

By far the most amusing thing about Philosophy 14b was that it was taught by—as the Yale Course Book put it—'Mr. James Dickoff and Staff'. It got a lot better, because Mr. James Dickoff turned out to be a very large, pear shaped, and extremely arrogant individual who hadn't even made it to Assistant Professor yet. And his 'Staff' was this short, comely young British thing who wore large glasses and incredibly tight fitting sweaters, and who was hopelessly devoted to him.

But—to use one of the course's favorite phrases—it was difficult to deny that the course itself was hopelessly boring.

As for Sociology, this was a strange world for me to enter. Here people were no longer people, but rather behavioral units which could be manipulated—through the proper sets of organizational parameters—to be however you wanted them to be. Even the textbook with its slick pages and modern typefaces was from the land of tomorrow today.

But this was Friday night, and I didn't have to be thinking of any of that right now. Right now Saul Hopper, Bob Withers and I were in my room with the door closed. Not that it mattered, since Steve Warner was off at the library anyway. Bob Withers had some grass that he had scored from a friend in Kansas City that he had just gotten in the mail. He had even gone to the trouble of already having rolled some joints. We were all going to attempt to get stoned for the first time.

So far my experience with smoking anything hadn't been all that exciting. When I had first arrived on campus back in September, I had bought a briar pipe. After all, the pipe and the College Man had a long and illustrious history together. But although I did like the wafting smell of cherry blend number 47, the whole process of constantly tamping, cleaning, and then unselfconsciously self-importantly holding it aloft, was just too much. In like manner, even though I had been trying off and on since the age of 14 to be a cigarette smoker, at some point in November I had looked at the lit cigarette that I was holding, and realized what a drag it was to keep remembering to take another drag. I stubbed it out, and gave up on the whole idea once and for all.

And I was somewhat ambivalent about marijuana. Because I still wasn't too keen on following the example of losers with little pointy beards who banged on bongo drums all day and recited bad poetry. But on the other hand by now I was also ready to check out just about anything.

We lit the first joint. Saul took a deep puff and held it in. I followed suit. It had a peculiar sweet taste, not nearly as harsh as tobacco. Bob took a 'hit', then the joint passed to Saul and then back to me. After we had all exhaled for the fourth time we looked at each other. Nothing. We shrugged our shoulders and the next joint resumed its rounds.

It was about an hour later and we were well into our fourth joint before it hit us. And then it did. The head felt like a pleasantly expanding balloon that was expanding awfully fast. Thoughts seemed to bend, totally lose their shape, and then fall out of the ears. Everything started to be enormously funny. For some reason the phrase 'Teen Age Scene Change' was beyond hilarious, and we kept chanting it over and over.

With LSD it had been like a whole new different, expanded, and—as they said—higher consciousness. You really felt like you were a wondrous witness to something above and beyond you. It definitely had many scary aspects to it, but it was also definitely a brave new universe.

This first experience with grass was fun and funny. More than that it was goofy. And you could goof others (and yourself) just by wiggling your fingers in front of your face. But it wasn't a higher consciousness. It was more like a stoned one.

Not that I had any difficulty with being stoned this Friday night. Hell, if somebody brought in some bongos, I might even start banging them around now.

February 15, 1966

When I was fired from my bursary job I was kind of in shock. I first had this vague hope that maybe all the other bursary boys would shake off their chains of oppression and rise up in solidarity with me.

Not a chance of that.

Then I went to see the authorities, the people at financial aid. Mr. Parsons wasn't allowed to fire me, was he? Oh, yes he was. But that wasn't fair. Why should I be discriminated against when Chauncey Von Snotten, the non-scholarship student, could theoretically wear his hair down to his knees?

Well, them's the breaks, kid. The fact is that you are a scholarship student. You even have that Henry J Heinz II scholarship, so he's actually paying all of your tuition. If you want to eat, if you want a job, even here at center-of-all-liberal-tradition Yale, then you'll have to go get a haircut.

Needless to say, I had no intention of caving. The whole thing was ridiculous. After all, I was a busboy picking up plates with garbage on them. Who could possibly care about my hair length? I determined to keep going up the chain of command.

And so far I had been remarkably unsuccessful. All the overeducated Yale bureaucrats had been totally unreceptive. Today I was at the top of the chain. I was sitting in the office of Mr. Harrison, the head of Physical Plant. Dining halls? They were just a teeny tiny part of his vast domain. And befitting his power he had the stern mien of a businessman from 1945. This didn't look too promising.

But he was actually being attentive to what I was saying. 'Yes,' he nodded. 'Why should you not be able to pay your way at Yale just because your hair is a little long?' He paused, as I sat there stunned at his reasonableness. 'But the politics would be too hard for me to put you back in at Commons.' He paused again. 'Can you type?'

Could I type? Could I ever. I'd been typing ever since the fourth grade, ever since some school administrator in Allentown had decided that the gifted program was the ideal place for him to test his theory that nine year olds would be excited and challenged to learn something that fifteen year olds find horribly repetitive. In fact, I'd never actually handwritten an assignment in my entire life.

'Great. See Margie over at our office next to Yale Station. She'll set you up.'

And that was that.

All you needed to do was find the right person to talk to.

February 23, 1966

In high school I used to joke that I wanted to become a corporate philosopher. By now the idea that I would ever be connected in any way to any corporation was more and more farfetched. But I was taking the philosophy thing very seriously.

I really didn't think that I had any choice in the matter, since not only had I taken LSD, but now I was trying to make sense of it all. As the new expression put it, my mind had been blown. And even though it had come back in a few hours, I was determined to figure out how it puts itself together.

In this it was timely that we had just been reading Descartes. Especially if you interpreted 'Cognito, ergo sum' not as 'I think, therefore I am', but as 'I am cognizant, therefore I am'. Because that's what acid did to you. The thoughts that you had thought were your identity were suddenly gone. And all that was left was a consciousness.

And I liked that Descartes had then proceeded to figure out all the rest with nothing but rationality. Of course, this was what philosophers had been trying to do all along. But by the seventeenth century it was clear that there were universal laws that governed math and physics. And the exciting new idea was that soon thinkers would be finding the natural laws that governed morality and even religion.

Because both Descartes and I agreed that whatever it was that we called mysticism or spirituality no doubt superseded rationality. But it didn't negate it. And I found it fascinating that Descartes had placed the seat of the soul in the pineal gland, which I already knew from my other reading was exactly the same spot as the Third Eye of the meditating yogis.

To him and to me science didn't negate religion. If anything it confirmed it. For instance, modern Chemistry knew that electrons orbited in specific orbitals (those Shrodinger Equations). The first set contained two, the second contained eight. Why those numbers? But because it was set up that way, it turned out that exactly one element, Carbon, 'lacked' four electrons, and that lacking that many meant that the amount of 'pull' in Carbon—not too strong and not too weak—was precisely enough for it to form incredibly complex molecules. Organic molecules, as in the stuff that life was made of.

Now it was theoretically possible that this was all due to random occurrence. But the more you found out about science, the more improbable that seemed. And on top of that there was the question: Why, if it's a random universe, should scientific laws even exist?

But it seemed that at some point in the Eighteenth Century opinion started to change. Right now we were reading David Hume, and from what I could gather his entire philosophical framework rested on Doubt. Not scientific doubt, the challenging of previously held beliefs in the quest for the ultimate truth. No, to Hume there was no Ultimate Truth, just Doubt.

Again, this was certainly theoretically possible. But it seemed to me that just stating a hypothesis didn't in any way prove it. In other words, you were free to believe in Doubt, but essentially that was no different

than being free to believe in God. They were both beliefs. You hadn't proven anything. And I didn't see how a belief in doubt could lead to anything positive.

Last year in A.P. English we had read Paradise Lost. And I had been struck by John Milton having Lucifer say that he would rather be the highest angel in Hell than have to submit to God. That sounded like what Hume and those who came after him were saying: I'm not going to submit to rationality. I'm not going to submit to Truth.

Of course, I already knew that I was in an extreme minority in my views on the subject. Even most of my friends were convinced that the world needed more and more of 'modern' thinking, and less and less of what was regarded as outmoded Victorian thoughts and morals. But, Modern? Wasn't that what had given us the Organization Man In The Grey Flannel Suit? Wasn't that what had given us the plastic suburbs and the meaningless lives of our parents that we were all disgusted with? Why the hell would anyone want more Modern?

That's why I was liking Kent more and more. Though we were from different backgrounds and he had a more outgoing personality than I did, he had that same streak of goofy idealism in him that I did.

And he also had great taste in music.

Not only that, but his roommate had a KLH component record player. These had just come on the market about a year earlier, and it meant that you had a separate turntable, a separate amplifier, and two separate speakers that you could put anywhere in the room. This all made for an astonishingly clearer sound when we listened to the album cuts of the Beatles and the Lovin' Spoonful.

But Kent also had LP's with sounds that I had never really paid attention to before. The Animals. The Yardbirds. Significantly, the Rolling Stones. Yes, I had heard all the singles, but I had never checked the groups out further than that because I had never much liked the blues. It all sounded so self absorbed. Why should I care if some singer's baby had dumped him? From what I could tell of his other songs, all he cared about was sex anyway. And if he had any class he would have married the girl.

But I could tell now that these British groups had taken the blues genre and turned it into something new and different. As in, Rock and Roll with a lot more drive than it had ever had before. It was almost as if the component system was especially made to be cranked up at full blast as Eric Burden was shouting 'We Got To Get Out Of This Place'.

It was also amazing to hear Dylan in stereo. I was ashamed to admit it now, but I hadn't listened when Highway 61 had come out in September. Maybe it was because of the ugly cover. And the fact that Dan Brinsmade had it along with all his Bo Diddley records. Nor had I listened to his 'Another Side' album a year earlier. Probably because I had thought that 'It Ain't Me Babe' was too unromantic.

Now I was making up for lost time.

March 3-6, 1966

David Katz and Saul Hopper and I were in my bedroom hanging out. The discussion was getting a little carried away, as discussions amongst former-geniuses-of-their-little-high-school-circles were wont to do, and all of a sudden David Katz was up with a magic marker, furiously marking away at any of my papers he could find. I decided to try to move the action outside a bit, and went into the living room.

Steve Warner was, as usual, studying at his desk. I noticed that about thirty feet away, directly across from us in Vanderbilt Hall, a friend was also studying at his window. I opened my window, took a penny, and threw it over. Dang, just missed.

Saul saw what I was doing and he, too, threw a penny. Pretty soon we were all throwing penny after penny, and most were hitting. The guy across the way opened his window and said, 'Geez, stop, would you. It's midnight. I'm trying to study and my roommates want to go to sleep.'

The different freshman residence halls had a tradition of taunts, water balloon fights, and other pranks. And David Katz was really worked up for some reason. So after a little more escalation, all of a sudden he was at the window with the fire extinguisher from the hall and furiously spraying it at the Vanderbilt suite. This seemed a little too over the top for me, not to mention that one of the guys over there trying to sleep had a black belt in judo. I finally got him to stop, closed the window, and called a halt to the evening's festivities.

Although I had to admit that it had been kind of funny.

The next morning, Friday, I attended a couple of classes. Then I took off for Cambridge, Mass. As I stood there by the Interstate exit, I sort of realized that this could well be my last weekend with Bonnie.

All the signs were there. The tense phone conversations. The discussions at cross purposes. She wasn't even laughing that much at my jokes any more.

Still, I could always hope…

And unfortunately that was about it at this point.

I got there after dark. Bonnie's free ride—which had been the impetus for the Cambridge weekend idea—had already deposited her. We found Saul's friend Greg—the one who had taken the leftover LSD on Harvard weekend—and he had found us a student organization's office where we could sleep. It had a sofa for Bonnie and a carpeted floor for me.

So we slept apart. And as we walked around in the grey Cambridge cold the next day we were also walking apart. It didn't take long to realize that the real impetus for this Cambridge weekend was the script that Bonnie was now running down. It contained all the myriad reasons why we were in different worlds and why we shouldn't be seeing each other any more. The day kept getting greyer and colder, and by the end of it Bonnie had conveniently found another place to be spending the night. I slept alone on the office floor.

The next morning it was sleeting and changing to snow. I walked through town to the Mass Turnpike exit and started back to New Haven.

At Worcester this talkative middle aged lady picked me up. I sat there morose in the passenger seat as the windshield wipers slapped the snow away. After a while she said, 'My Lord, why don't you say something? Don't you know that it's the hitchhiker's job to be sociable?'

She was right, of course. If someone was giving you a ride, at the very least you shouldn't be bringing them down. And I well knew already that even when I felt okay I often appeared to others like I was under a hill of doom. Now that there was an actual whole mountain of it, I could only imagine how dreadful I looked.

'I just broke up with my girlfriend,' I said.

She was having none of it. 'Girlfriend, shmirlfriend,' she said. 'You'll get another one. And, look, you're still young. There's a whole wonderful world out there.'

But right now the world was awful and cold and snowy, and I could see that the wind was picking up. This was the first time since way, way back in junior year in high school that I didn't have a steady, tight girlfriend that I could call up and talk to every day. Still, I tried my best to cheer up for the lady.

It didn't work too well. And although by the time I had made it down to southern Connecticut the wet, dirty snow had shifted back to a cold steel rain, that just made things worse. I slumped along the last mile to campus, experiencing firsthand that I had holes in my coat and my hat was none too warm.

I got to 1128 Bingham, and Steve Warner was sitting at his desk studying. Well, at least I could now fall down on my bed. I opened my bedroom door.

But instead of the simple mattress I expected, my bedroom was now totally filled up with garbage and detritus. Old cobwebbed bicycles. Broken crates. Light fixtures. Buckets of trash.

I stared in numb disbelief. What the…? Who the…? I knew that there were preppie types out there who didn't exactly love my sort, but who could possibly personally hate me that much to go to all the trouble to do this?

I heard some laughter in the hall. I turned around to see the guys from across the way in Vanderbilt. When they saw how totally devastated I looked, the guy with the black belt said, 'Don't worry, Mike. We were going to take it all out.'

I mumbled to him about just having broken up with Bonnie. He gave me a sympathetic look and clapped me on the shoulder. Then he and the others quickly took all the junk back down to the basement where they had found it. Steve Warner kept studying at his desk.

I finally had my bed back to collapse on. But as I lay there in my misery, I had to admit that it had been kind of funny.

March 11, 1966

I was climbing the stairs to the eighth floor of the eleven story SSS Tower. It really wasn't much of a tower, with only three or four small offices per floor, and I could have taken an elevator which would have announced my arrival. But I felt like walking.

The door to the office of Mister Foote, my History professor, was slightly ajar when I knocked. Thus I could hear the sound of a bottle being closed and a drawer being shut. There was a whiff of whiskey in the air as I entered the room.

There was also a whiff of pathos around Mister Foote as I sat down. After all, my impression of him had so far only been of his being learned and affable, and totally worthy of respect. But we both pretended that I hadn't witnessed what I had just witnessed, and I got down to my reason for being there.

I was supposed to do a term paper by the end of April, and I still hadn't decided on a topic. So I briefly explained to him my ideas about utopian communities, told him I understood that they had never worked, and then wondered if it would be a good idea to pick one of these attempts and try to analyze just why it had failed.

'That's an excellent idea,' he said. 'In fact, I have one for you. When I was growing up in upstate New York, there was this place that my family visited a few times. They had this big building that they had all lived in, and there were still a few old timers around who had been part of it. It was called Oneida. In fact the Oneida Silverware Company had its origin there.'

I had heard of Oneida silverware. It was one of the most frequent 'parting gifts' on morning TV game shows. This sounded interesting. I would do the research, and then write a paper showing how it didn't conform to the ideas that I had come up with. The ideas that I still knew—whatever my failures with Diane and Bonnie—would work.

And I had plenty of time to do it. Because I was going to be spending Spring Break here on campus. And outside of working at the typing pool and building up my bursary wages, I had nothing to do except study.

March 13, 1966

It was another grey, dismal Sunday afternoon, although not nearly as cold as the week before. The Old Campus had erupted in a cacophony of catcalls, as it tended to do periodically, this time with people making puns about the BAT-this and the BAT-that, having to go to the BAT-room, etc.

They were all referring, of course, to the new TV show 'Batman'. Although few if any of us had seen it, it was already a cultural phenomenon due to its fervent embrace of campiness. 'Camp' had been around for less than a year. It had previously been confined to the New York art scene, and it seemed to want to induce the reaction of 'Isn't that disgusting!' with that of 'Isn't that hilarious!' Personally, I thought that if popular American culture was indeed becoming like a backed up toilet, then there wasn't anything particularly funny about that.

Right now, though, I was dealing with something else. There were four of us sitting in a room, and we were super stoned. Bob Withers' friend in Kansas City had now sent him some hash and some DMT, or Di-Methyl Triptomine, and we had smoked the two of them together. At first there had been quite the rush.

But now my mind was both foggy and scattered. I was melting into the chair, but the thoughts that I could distinguish were full of anxiety and fear. There was a rational part of me somewhere that knew that it all would eventually go away, but for the moment—which I was now inextricably in—the moment was being none too pleasant.

After about fifteen more minutes a clear thought finally expressed itself: Explorers of new continents never had it that easy, either. And: If I was going to be going down this road, then I had better be really careful.

March 17, 1966

A few weeks earlier I had discovered that the door to the roof at the SSS Tower was always left unlocked, and that you could therefore go up there in the middle of the night and hang out with the lonely gargoyles at the top of the typically gothic Yale structure.

This had led me to explore around and see if you could do the same with the other tall buildings on campus. Except for Harkness, which had to be kept locked up because of its valuable cotillion of bells, you basically could. And some of these places had really interesting roofs. On the top of the Sterling library there was a complete miniature Swiss village. On the top of the 'rook' tower at Bingham Hall was a large telescope dome from back in the Twenties.

As one might imagine, this led to many nighttime adventures for me and my friends.

And it was a logical extension of that to see whether we could also find the famed—and dreaded—legendary Yale steam tunnels. They were famed because they were supposedly dark and spooky, and they formed a hidden underground network of passageways which connected the entire Yale campus. They were dreaded because if you got caught inside them it meant another of those instant expulsions. They were legendary because nobody could ever admit to having actually been inside them.

This had to be checked out. And on the cross campus walkway were several manhole covers which were pretty suspicious. So one night, when nobody else was around, and one of us had brought a flashlight, we pried open one of them and let ourselves down.

The legend was true. We were in a tunnel a little more than six feet in diameter that stretched off into the distance. Along the sides of the wall were assorted pipes and conduits of various sizes. About every hundred feet or so there was a little electric light. And every so often other tunnels would branch off towards the unknown darkness.

This was too much. So after exploring around for a while, we snuck back out. And then we came back the next night and explored some more. And the next night. And so on. The culmination came one time when we discovered a small lit up room with giant toggle switches all around, like in a Frankenstein movie. And one said 'Yale Medical Center', and another said 'Main Campus'. We could have shut down the whole thing.

But we could never share this experience with others. We could never tell anyone who wasn't in our little steam tunnel exploration group. That could have meant instant expulsion.

There was no such similar problem with being caught on top of a building. Not than anyone in authority ever cared to look. Anyway, once we were familiar with them all, they became places of solitude and contemplation, albeit with unique perspectives.

My favorite turned out to be the roof of the Art and Architecture building. This was one of the newest at Yale, and it was relentlessly modern. Composed of light tan pebbly concrete and glass, it looked kind of like a bunch of boxes of various sizes all glued together. No gargoyles here.

You got to the roof itself by riding to the top of the elevator and then walking along a little ledge. Right now it was about one in the morning, and Bob Withers, Saul and I were up there in the still, still wintry air. As usual, we were just talking about the meaning of meaning.

The roof was basically a flat surface, but here and there were a few added cubes. One of them was right at one of the building's corners. It was just under three feet above the rest of the roof and just over three feet square. I got up upon it. On two sides I saw straight down to the sidewalk.

Bob Withers impulsively got up and stood there with me on the tiny surface. If one of us had poked the other, they would have fallen to their death. Both of us stared at each other and grinned. 'Hey, Saul, there's room for you, too,' I said.

Saul was off to the side furiously smoking a cigarette. 'You guys are fuckin' nuts' he repeated several times.

But he was missing something.

Neither one of us had the slightest inclination to harm the other. Nor could we conceive that the other would have the slightest inclination to harm us.

It was a simple matter of trust.

March 22, 1966

The Sterling Library was just as awe inspiring as it had been a year earlier when I had first seen it. The public areas on the main floor included reading rooms with big stuffed leather chairs and large important wooden tables where people sat with piles of books and piles of notes. The massive wooden card catalogs (forget Dewey Decimal—Yale had its own system, thank you) stretched out forever. This was all in a giant arched room, complete with stained glass windows, that a cathedral would have been proud to have.

But I was up in the stacks. The sixteen floors of them that also stretched out forever. So many books and so much antiquity that once I had pulled out a very obscure looking volume, and the tag inside the back

cover showed that it had been taken out precisely three times: once in 1755, once in 1842, and once in 1921.

And right now I was sitting on the floor reading. As I had been doing all day. Above me on the shelf were the dozen or so books on the Oneida Community.

And I couldn't believe what I was reading.

Because apparently this utopian community had actually worked. For thirty five years. More than a generation. And apparently the people within it had lived both rationally and in peace and harmony. And they had done it by following the exact same thoughts and guidelines that I had theorized about five months earlier.

Here was the story:

John Humphrey Noyes had been born in Brattleboro, Vermont, in 1811, the son of a prosperous shopkeeper and Congressman. He entered Dartmouth at the age of fourteen (not that unusual then; it was common for twelve year olds to be studying Latin, Greek, Trigonometry, and all the rest). In 1831 he got caught up in a religious revival (also not that unusual then) and entered Yale to study theology. While here he had undergone an even more radical religious experience, and became convinced that accepting the Spirit of Christ made it possible, nay necessary, that a person become perfect here and now while they were still alive in this world.

This was not your standard Christian dogma. In fact, the dominant American Protestant belief held that we were all horrible and irrevocable sinners, and that even if we found Salvation then we would only see the results of that once we arrived in Heaven.

Needless to say, Noyes didn't get a great hearing from the professors of divinity.

And it would have been bad enough if Noyes had just stuck to arguing theological points and doctrines. But once he had his insight he had to take it all the way. If people imbued with the Spirit were now obliged to be Perfect, then they also had the responsibility to make this Earth into Heaven. And how would that affect their relationships? In particular, Marriage? Well, the Bible clearly stated that in Heaven men and women would not be given in marriage. Ergo, here on Earth it would all be one happy family.

Although Noyes himself remained single and celibate, and although he was intelligent and serious enough to realize that just saying that you were perfect didn't make it so, and although he therefore went to great trouble to thoroughly explicate his new theology, still it was the 'no marriage' idea that made the non-divinity professor types take notice. And it was fair to say that he ran into quite a bit of resistance.

That didn't stop him, though. He was constantly preaching, publishing newspapers, and—having been disowned by his father—desperately scrounging money. In 1840 he married a follower who was the daughter of a well to do farmer, so that sort of solved his financial problems. By 1845 there were about fifty devotees all living together outside of the small town of Putney, Vermont, just ten miles north of Brattleboro.

(It was interesting to note that the economic communism that they were developing hadn't been part of the theory. They just found it the most convenient way to live together as they were studying the Scriptures and trying to put Noyes's ideas into action.)

In 1847 Noyes decided that it was time to put the total community of persons idea into action. After much prayer and discussion, it happened. Some months after that, the wider community of Putney found out about what they were doing. And soon a mob replete with torches and pitchforks descended upon them.

Coincidentally at the same time a small group of his followers had just purchased a small farm in the middle of nowhere in the exact middle of New York state. Over the next few months all of his displaced Putney followers made their way there.

It was of course an incredibly long and complicated story. But in the end the large and prosperous and famous Oneida Community had resulted. And the community of property and the community of persons held. Moreover, many, many honest observers reported that these people were modest, sober, industrious, and—outside of their seemingly insane sexual practices—absolutely moral.

There.

It had worked.

And it could work again.

March 30, 1966

The inside of the Beinecke rare book library was even more impressive than the solid marble outside. Because once inside you could see that they had sliced the marble thinly enough so that it was translucent, which meant that the building was lit up without there being any windows.

In the small public areas there were display cases showing off some of Yale's most valuable manuscripts. For instance, just this past October there had been a national fuss over Yale's claim that it had discovered a map from 1450 depicting the heretofore mythical Vinland of the Norse. That is to say, the New World. Before Columbus. And the authenticity of the map was still being hotly debated, but if you happened to be in the Beinecke library you could see it right there in one of the display cases.

Even bona fide researchers couldn't get into the stacks here. What you did was fill out a request form, and then a clerk would go and get the material for you. And you then took it downstairs to one of the reading rooms that looked out upon those sculptures of the sphere and the pyramid and the cube on its edge.

I was here this afternoon because in the past ten days I had devoured just about everything ever written about the Oneida Community. And now I was looking at the source material. For it had turned out that Yale was just about the biggest repository for all things Oneida, including some of Noyes's first newspapers, many of the pamphlets they published, and every single copy of the weekly newspaper that they had produced for their last twenty five years.

As I now knew, there were four 'cornerstones' of Oneida's success. And as I had intuited ten days earlier, they were remarkably similar to the cornerstones I had concluded were necessary this past fall.

First, they had a charismatic leader in John Humphrey Noyes. Without a single and coherent visionary and vision, I had early on concluded that any group of people would just degenerate into an endless debating society. Of course, the vision had to be the correct one, or else the visionary, no matter how charismatic, would simply lead any group right off a cliff.

Which led to the second necessary condition: Religious Faith. Here I hadn't meant the Catholic or the Lutheran Church, but rather the understanding that there was a Spirit which enlivens the consciousness and which is somehow connected to what we call God. I had felt it back in October. It was fascinating to read that Noyes had felt somewhat the same thing at the onset of his quest. And that the people of Oneida were always determined to live by the Spirit, and not the Law. In fact, they were utterly convinced that no community could even hope to exist without said Holy Spirit.

(Which was of a whole order of magnitude different from what we might call the human spirit.)

Third there was the community of persons, what Oneidans termed 'complex marriage'. They could not have created that overarching sense of communal oneness if there had been individual families. Otherwise one's husband or wife or children would always have come first. Not to mention that somebody else's husband or wife would always be there to covet.

To this end Oneida had banned any idea of 'special' love, of one person for one other person. And so it was impossible to just 'shack up' there. If you wanted to have relations with another, you had to arrange it through a third party intermediary. (This also made it easy for one person to reject another's advance. There was never any coercion involved.)

The Oneidans took this 'sacrament of sex' one step further. Years earlier Noyes had noted that the initial chivalric impulses of sexual love always ended (for the man at least) with the self-absorbed indulgence of the orgasm. Why not, he had thought, just leave that out of the whole process? Therefore at Oneida they had developed the practice of 'male continence', whereby the man never worked himself up to the extent that he would lose control. That way sex would become selfless.

But the Oneidans considered the fourth cornerstone, their practice of Mutual Criticism, to be by far the most important one. This was superficially like the 'encounter groups' that were just gaining currency in 1966 psychology, in which groups of people sat around and criticized someone else's personality flaws. But there were critical differences between the present day and Oneida. Not only did the people of Oneida know each other intimately, but they took their job of critic very seriously, so that the judgments that resulted were considered and careful. Most importantly, their primary motivation was the actual improvement of each person being criticized, and the criticized person always knew that everyone involved had committed their entire lives to each other. This was something that encounter groups obviously lacked.

Not that being subjected to Mutual Criticism was remotely a pleasant experience. For the Oneidans had discovered rather early on that those aspects of our personality that we are most pleased with are usually the ones that annoy others the most. But they had also understood from the beginning that without extremely high standards of behavior, self-discipline, and humility, it would be utterly hopeless for a large group to live together in any sort of harmony.

I raised my eyes from what I was reading and looked out again at the Beinecke's sculptures. That was the point: They had lived together in harmony. With the complex marriage and all. Over a hundred years ago. And after reading their newspaper it was obvious that these were not brainwashed members of some religious cult, but very smart and incredibly honest people. And that they were speaking to me over the years with a clarity that I had seldom read before.

Of course, there was also an aura of sadness around it all. First, because mounting outside pressure had forced them to give up their complex marriage in 1879. Then, within a few months, just as they had always predicted, the community had fallen apart.

The other part was subtler. It had to do with their touching belief that—now that they had proven that Community was possible—soon the eyes of the world would be opened and many more would make the attempt. Yet here I was a hundred years later, sorting through rare books, one of the few people in the world who even knew of their existence.

March 26, 1966

Paul Severtson was from San Diego and was tall and thin and Norwegian blue-eyed and blonde. He had high SATs, was a virtuoso violinist, and already played in the New Haven Symphony. Although, as he was quick to point out with a chuckle, it wasn't that much of a symphony.

That was the thing about him. Unlike most of the rest of us he was genuinely modest and goodhearted. In fact, so much so that you couldn't even get mad at him for being so much nicer than you were.

He hadn't been able to afford to go back to California for Spring Break, so we had ended up alone together on the campus. And he had had this friend who was in graduate school who had a car, and I had talked the guy into taking us out to the town of Wallingford, which was about fifteen miles from New Haven.

The reason for this was that in its later years Oneida had had a branch colony here, and I had taken some time to figure out exactly where their farm had been. And I was hoping that if we found the spot that somehow I could become connected to those people of a hundred years ago.

So here we were on a hillside on a sunny day as winter was relaxing its grip. But the spot was now the site of a State hospital. And in front of us was not their fifty acres of farmland, but rather medium density housing as far as the eye could see. It was just modern day Connecticut, and it was hard to imagine souls of any kind, let alone gentle ones, laid out before me.

Whatever connection I might have hoped for just wasn't there.

Utopia would have to remain in my mind.

April 8, 1966

Today was Good Friday. In fact, it was one of the best Fridays so far, being so unseasonably warm and sunny. And I wasn't the only one to come up with the idea of saying, 'Good Friday to you' to everyone as I brought my tray over to the large round table over by the Commons doors. Soon we were engaged in one of our typically elliptical multi-dimensional conversations.

Ah, words.

I had read enough of them by now to know that they were what distinguished the Elizabethan Age. They were what energized the Romantics. And they were what our little group played with constantly. Indeed, the humorous juxtaposition of same was often far more important to us than any particular points that we might have been trying to make.

One might have blamed this on the increasing number of us who had had the experience of being stoned. But, really, we had all been fascinated with wordplay at the beginning of the school year. We had been that way before we had gotten here. It was in large measure what had attracted us to one another.

It wasn't exactly sarcasm. It wasn't exactly satire. It was certainly never meant to be mean spirited. It was the method that each of us had found to deal with the phoniness and the artificiality of the world we had been brought up in.

And a large part of that phoniness that we were reacting to had in fact to do with words. The way in which the 'War Is Peace' blasphemy of '1984' was fast becoming reality. Although the modern world of today was becoming so subtle, so brazen, and so sophisticated that even George Orwell was already a piker. I mean, calling a used car a 'pre-owned car' was somehow creepier and more insidious than 'Love Is Hate'.

For the worst part of this was that many people were even beginning to believe that if you called something something else then it would somehow be different. And it wasn't just the pre-owned car salesmen who were doing this.

For instance, Richard, an aspiring actor friend of Norm Zamcheck's from Exeter, and a young man far prettier than was good for him, was just relating about how he had been hitchhiking in Rhode Island, and how the driver had asked him if he was 'gay'.

'I'm actually pretty morose right now,' he had replied.

The man had then told him that ‘gay’ was the new slang word for homosexual. And that had struck Richard, an English major, as rather unsettling. After all, whatever you thought of homosexuality, to define the people who behaved that way as being permanently happy just stripped the English language of all meaning.

On the other hand, I supposed that there were all kinds of new kinds of beings and circumstances happening that were desperately in need of new words to describe them. For instance, what about us? Many of us were doubtless ‘artistic’ or ‘creative’, but that seemed like an awfully self-satisfied sort of thing to call oneself, especially since it didn’t remotely capture our actual outlook.

We certainly weren’t anything like the beatniks of yore, since they wore black, hung around in the dark, and seemed to existentially require a ‘square’ society for them to rail against. We were almost the opposite, because although it was obvious to us that the world that we had grown up in was heading off in the wrong direction at an increasing speed, still we all shared an implicit enthusiasm that somehow we were going to come up with something better.

So what word were we? Should there be a contest for naming us? What prize would the winner get?

My musings were interrupted by the nearby doors opening noisily. And in came Kent. Looking totally mentally disheveled. Giant dilated pupils. Ridiculously Cheshire grin. We hurriedly sat him down so that no one else would notice.

Slowly the story jabbered out. Over Spring Break some guy had told him that Heavenly Blue Morning Glory seeds contained a form of LSD. So this fine spring morning he had strolled downtown to a five and ten, had bought a few packs, and had started chewing away. The result was now before us.

We went and got him some food and drink. At first he didn’t know quite what to do with it, but finally ingested a little. I asked him if he had any of those seeds left. He fumbled around in his pockets and pulled out three packs.

Hmmm. It looked like this Good Friday was going to turn out even better than I had thought.

April 15, 1966

The Beinecke library was proving itself useful for all sorts of purposes. It had a three foot high decorative marble perimeter wall running alongside the one lane wide Wall Street. And on top of that were vents through which warm air (probably having to do with the controlled climate system) perpetually flowed. This meant that even on a cold night one could sit cross-legged on it with one’s friends and comfortably discuss abstruse questions of philosophy.

And morning glory seeds were quickly proving to be potent catalysts for raising such questions. Not nearly as intense as LSD, they took you to the same sort of elevated state (What’s a new word to call ’Beyond the ego’? Because that sounded awfully pretentious.) while still leaving your mind in working condition. Especially once the pleasant disorientation and the laughter of the initial expansive rush wore off.

It wasn’t anything like the ‘madness’ that the ever increasing magazine articles were trying to pin on psychedelics. It was actually just the opposite, a higher form of sanity. A rising above the silliness and the pettiness of our everyday lives. It was like consciousness without the annoying overlay of personality.

Indeed, at this point I was quite the missionary for this state of mind. It seemed so obvious that all anyone in the world need do is get to this point, and that then the rest would take care of itself. And I thought this even though I had heard disturbing stories. For instance, David Katz, who had been attracted to LSD before I had ever heard of it, finally took some during Spring Break. And his trip was so bad that the police

had had to be called. But he had been by himself in a motel room in Baltimore. Everyone (including David) knew that the setting was critical.

Which is why Paul and Kent and I were so happy to be setting on the grating of the Beinecke wall at three in the morning, surrounded by a campus and a city that was so quiet that you could hear somebody walking two blocks away. With those giant, expensive and expansive stone Gothic buildings all around us. And we didn't feel the slightest bit pretentious as we talked about Spirit and Faith and Truth and Reality.

After all, wasn't that what we were supposed to be here at college for?

April 19, 1966

Yale had become a meritocracy. And the Yale Men of the popular culture's imagination would pretty soon exist only in, well, the popular culture's imagination. But there were still a few traditions that the Freshman Class honored.

One was how back in September the inhabitants of one residential hall had shouted epithets at those in another. Clever constructions such as 'Durfee Sucks' or 'Vanderbilt Blows'.

A much more whimsical one took place on a Saturday morning in March, when the Bladder Ball, a leather, eight-foot-in-diameter monstrosity, was rolled out from wherever they stored it. Hundreds of freshmen had then crowded together on the Old Campus, and several hours were consumed as they passed it around above themselves without letting it touch the ground.

Tonight wasn't like that at all. It was the date of the annual Freshman Riot, commemorating some actual riot from eighty years ago when people actually got killed. As I walked across the big quadrangle there was a lot of genuinely ugly yelling, and bottles were being thrown from third floor windows onto the pavement. It would have been easy to think that this was all being directed at me.

Maybe it was. A couple of people had told me that I was going to be the target tonight of some of the jocks and preppies and preppie jocks who didn't like how I hadn't cut my hair. I kind of stood out that way. They also didn't like where me and my friends were going. Although there was of course no word for who we were or where that was.

A slight cultural fissure, perhaps.

I kept walking towards Bingham, just about the only person out there in the angry night, occasionally stepping around the broken glass. I got to my entryway and thankfully concluded that civilization still barely held.

April 23, 1966

Bob Withers' hair was pale almost to the point of albino. It was tightly wound like Brillo, and as the months went by it was slowly expanding outwards from his head. His face seemed to have a constant expression of bemusement and alacrity.

A few days ago we had been standing around on the New Haven Green. Somebody pantomimed handing him a shot of whiskey. He pantomimed drinking it, then—without twitching a muscle and as perfectly straight as a board—fell backwards on the grass. I had never seen anything like it, and later asked him what kind of training or practice he had had. He replied that there was none, that it had been totally spontaneous.

Another time we were smoking grass in somebody's fourth floor room. Bob got up off the floor, walked over to the window, opened it, and walked out. He then walked along the drain pipe to a second window, through which he walked back into the room.

So last night at around ten, when I had suggested out of the blue that we hitchhike to Philadelphia for no particular reason at all, I was not surprised when he said, 'Sure, why not?'

And now here we were at five in the morning in the middle of the New Jersey Turnpike. The sky was just turning light, and, eerily, ours was about the only car driving along the eight lane industrial thoroughfare. The car we were in was a clunker, and our driver was a guy named Louie. Small time underworld, he was telling non-stop stories about knife fights and scams. I wasn't bothering to figure out if they seemed true or not; at least it was keeping us awake.

All of a sudden in the gloaming we saw a station wagon banged up and spun around in the median strip. Standing next to it was a tall sailor in sailor cap and pea coat. A nine foot section of jagged guard rail had precisely pierced the rear seat windows and was now extruding from both sides. If it had gone through the front the sailor would have been cut in half.

Louie slammed on his brakes, stopping in the middle of the Turnpike. Then he screeched backwards, ending up in the median next to the sailor. 'Hey, buddy,' he said. 'For twenty bucks I'll take you to the next rest area.'

The sailor was obviously in shock, and he numbly pulled out his wallet. 'Ah, just make it ten,' said Louie. The sailor got in the back next to Bob, and Louie started up again. Fifteen miles later the sailor, still totally confused, was let out at a Turnpike gas station.

And Louie and Bob and I were on our way.

April 26, 1966

It turned out that preppies were good for something besides Frisbees. They had also discovered that you could get really cheap clothes at the Salvation Army.

And Kent, being a preppie, had alerted us to this. But we had added a twist. Because it was also possible to get really cheap funny clothes there: Sports coats from yesteryear for fifty cents. Absurdly gaudy ties for a nickel. I had never cared about clothes before, but now I was the proud owner of, among other things, a wide-lapel navy blue blazer with shiny brass buttons.

This was important, since we still needed to be wearing a coat and tie if we ever wanted to eat. Which kind of grated. But now we could both follow the rule and mock it at the same time.

As Paul Severtson put it, 'Blessed be the ties that blind.'

April 30-May 1, 1966

This morning it had been Bob Withers who had asked me if I wanted to hitchhike up to Vermont and attend a mixer at Bennington College. And I had responded, 'Sure, why not?'

It was now around four in the afternoon. Interstate 91 hadn't been totally completed yet, and we were standing on U.S. 5 in West Springfield, Massachusetts. We had been stuck there for well over an hour.

Not that there wasn't a lot of traffic. A car zipped by every few seconds. But the folks around here seemed none too friendly.

After just having been there for a few minutes we had noticed that people were leaning out of their windows and shouting angry and obscene phrases. It took a little longer to realize that they were yelling those phrases at us. 'Get a haircut!' 'Fuck you, faggots!' And 'Hi, girls!'

We were totally dumbfounded. Sure, we knew that we looked different on campus, but no stranger had ever come up and said anything to us. Let alone shouted so that everyone else could hear. How could we possibly be offending anyone so much just by having slightly longer hair? I had never really felt like part of society to begin with, but this was ridiculous. You could almost cut the hostility with a knife.

Needless to say, it felt unsettling. And a lot more dangerous than the riot night had been eleven days earlier. I was more than grateful when somebody stopped and we got a ride up to Brattleboro. Soon we would be back in the protected world of higher education.

Sure enough, two hours later we had made it to Bennington and its eponymous college. We found our way over to where the mixer was being held.

I had been intrigued by the idea of going up to Bennington because it had the reputation of being rather artsy and non-conformist. And of course it was totally coed. It had been almost two months now since I had had a girlfriend. I was terribly lonely and I had the outside hope of maybe meeting someone sympatica.

Boy, was I headed for disappointment.

Last September I had thought for a moment that Yale mixers were nothing but country club events. But I had been flat out wrong. I knew that for sure tonight because the dance I was in the middle of right now was indeed every bad country club fantasy come true: Fake, shallow girls in fancy dresses standing around waiting to be approached by even faker, shallower guys.

And all those fake, shallow young men seemed to have come up from Williams College. Which was really surprising to me, since Williams was another of those smallish, exclusive schools, and had the reputation of playing the small school Harvard to Wesleyan's Dartmouth.

Needless to say, Bob and I weren't fitting in too well. The girls were actually physically snubbing their noses at us. And the Williams boys were acting both threatened by our presence and disgusted by our presence. One even came up to me, poked my navy blue blazer with the big brass buttons, and asked me if I was trying to make fun of the armed forces.

The vibe was getting a little suffocating, so Bob and I left the mixer and spent the rest of the evening outside walking around the pleasant campus. When it came time to figure out where we were going to sleep, I remembered Sheila, the older sister of my friend from high school who had driven me around Allentown back at Christmas. Her husband taught at Williams. They'd put us up.

I found a phone and called information. When I dialed her number she answered and said that of course we could stay there. After some persistent asking around we found a Williams student who would drive us the fifteen miles south to the village of Williamstown.

She came to the door and invited us in. She quietly said that her husband was asleep, but that I could stay in the guest room and that Bob could sleep on the sofa. We quietly turned in.

When I awoke the next morning she was a different person, nervous and almost unfriendly. Apparently her un-hip, un-artistic economics teaching husband had gotten up, seen unkempt Bob sleeping on the couch, and (to use two new words that had been minted) freaked out. I went out to the living room, and Bob whispered to me that the husband was currently hiding in a closet.

Sheila was literally wringing her hands. So, uh, please, could we just leave? Right now?

Talk about May Day. It was eight-thirty on a Sunday morning, and we were out on the street in Williamstown. One of us put out their thumb.

It was time to hitchhike back to New Haven.

May 3, 1966

Kent's roommate had a bursary job at the dining room of the Hall of Graduate Studies. He kept telling us stories of this extremely weird graduate student who was pale and thin with wild frizzy hair. How he would invariably sit by himself. How he would engage in pointless arguments with the serving ladies. How once, when told that he couldn't have a second piece of pie, he ostentatiously put his thumb in it so that nobody else could have it, either.

So one evening Kent's roommate brought Peter Mueller over to eat with the rest of us at Commons. Peter talked with a high adenoidal voice, and he let us know right away that he had set the record on the Quiz Kids radio show in the Fifties, that he had graduated summa cum laude from Harvard at the age of eighteen, and that now he was studying for a PhD in math and philosophy here at Yale.

We couldn't believe our good fortune. This was incredible entertainment. He was a fascinating example of that type of person I had only read about: A beyond genius IQ, incredible arrogance, totally rude, and the social development of a six year old.

Not to mention that he utterly lacked the ability to understand qualities, he was oblivious to nuance, and he had not a trace of an ability to sense humor. Right now it was another night, and we were standing and talking to him on the Old Campus. Trying in his ham-handed way to make conversation, he said, 'So how do you find the Old Campus?'

'That's easy,' I said. 'Just take the College Street exit off of I-95, and it's three blocks on the left.'

He stood there in his wild frizzy hair under the street lamp, and I could kind of see the brain behind his eyes trying to solve my response as if it had been a math problem. Nothing. It had gone right by him.

'So,' he said. 'How do you think the Yale football team will do next year?'

May 9, 1966

I was still attending classes. Usually. But the Directed Studies seminars were getting harder and harder to fake, since they were much harder than normal courses and since I doing less and less of the required reading. And the places my mind was going now were getting further and further away from that of my fellow seminarians.

Only this morning in Philosophy I had quarter-seriously suggested that, since morning glory seeds were legal, we should all take some before the next class and then discuss philosophy while under the influence. A few of the others did chuckle at my proposal, but the teacher, a young assistant professor, took the pipe out of his mouth, slowly tamped it, and in total seriousness asked, 'Are you positing that the experience would of a highly epistemological nature?'

It was a beautiful spring day outside, the windows were wide open, and the birds were chirping. Right then I wasn't feeling like positing anything.

The truth was that well over 97% of my waking hours were spent not under the influence of anything. But the meaningfulness of contrasting Kant's and Hegel's understanding of the Ideal, or of tracing the themes of Freedom and Responsibility in Don Quixote, was fading fast. Dealing with all that was becoming a

useless distraction in my ongoing, ever so humble attempt to integrate utopia, psychedelia, pure reason, and actual human reality.

Speaking of humility, one area that I was gravitating towards was Indian philosophy. Not that I had anything but the vaguest of understandings of what it was. But in looking over the course book for next year I had noticed one called Sanskrit 163.

Damn, that sounded exotic.

So here I was walking down a very long corridor in the Hall of Graduate Studies. I was looking for the office of Mister Insler, the Sanskrit teacher from whom I would, as an undergraduate, have to get permission. Ah, there it was. I knocked on the door, and immediately I heard someone kind of mumble loudly, 'Yes, yes. Just come in.'

I opened the door and walked in. It was a large office, but there was no desk. Just piles and piles and piles of books all over the floor. And each pile at least seven feet high. Hundreds and hundreds of more books filled three of the walls. In amongst the piles was a seventy year old man with an Einstein shock of white hair. 'Yes?' he asked, at once both imperious and distracted.

I had never seen anything remotely like this. 'Uh,' I said. 'I was interested in taking your course in Sanskrit.'

He took his eyes up from the book he was reading while standing, and looked at me penetratingly. 'Sanksrit?' he said.

'Uh, yes. You teach Sanskrit 163, don't you?'

He stood there for a few seconds, as if he were finally going to focus on me. This gave me time to notice that sitting on one of the window sills was a—What?—Tibetan monk, complete with orange robe and inscrutable smile.

'Are you proficient in Greek?' Mister Insler was asking.

'Uh, no.'

'Well, you need to study Greek first,' he said decisively. 'Go see Mister Miller. Then you can come back in two years.'

Now it was my turn to stand there silently for a few seconds in my semi-dumbfoundedness.

Mister Insler broke in: 'And what precisely is your name?'

'Uh, Michael. Michael Folz.'

He held out his hand. As I went to shake it he grabbed my arm. 'Well, Mister Folz,' he said, now pushing me towards the door, 'It's been a pleasure to meet you.' And with his left hand he opened the door and almost physically pushed me out. All the while the monk on the window sitting there enigmatically.

The door closed behind me and I was standing once again in the long empty corridor.

May 17, 1966

I had been over at the Hotel Taft for some reason and gotten on the elevator. As the door was closing I noted that I was sharing it with a Chinese-American guy with longish hair. Once it was closed he spoke up.

‘Are you a head?’ he asked.

That sounded so bizarre. ‘A what?’ I replied.

‘You know, a head. Somebody who gets high.’

Well, if that was the new word to describe people such as myself, then people such as myself were totally lacking in imagination. Not to mention that I liked to think of myself as a little deeper and a little more complex than ‘somebody who gets high’.

But we got to talking, and it turned out that the guy was another freshman. Not only that, but it turned out that there was a whole other group of ‘rebel’ freshmen who had had no contact with anyone in my group. And that’s how I got to meet Jon Rubin, Chuck Apel, and their circle of friends.

Not that I got to know them more than superficially. Because now it was the middle of May and the end of the school year. Exams were going to start in two days.

So the meal I was now having in Commons was going to be one of the last ones at a big circular table with my particular circle of friends. Next year we would all be scattered to our respective residential colleges.

But there was still one piece of unfinished business.

A big part of our meals involved drinking those endless cups of coffee. That meant that people were always going back to the coffee urn for more. And it was common to also bring back a cup for someone else. Maybe for two or three.

At some point it became a contest to see who could bring back the largest stack of full cups and saucers. And although I had never been all that coordinated, a couple of weeks back I had set the record with seven. Given the wobbly nature of cups and saucers, it had seemed impossible to top that.

But last week someone had done eight. And now my honor was on the line.

I stood there by the urn, filling each cup and placing it on the stack. By the eighth one it hardly looked stable even sitting on a counter. But I added a ninth, and then put on another saucer for good measure.

Now I had to pick them all up. I carefully held my hands at thigh level and slid the pile off. Next I placed my chin on that top saucer. And I swiveled and started walking ever so slowly towards our table. Ten feet. Twenty feet. Forty feet.

I had arrived at my destination. I ever so gently placed them on the table and stood back.

Yes!

My place in history was assured.

May 26-28, 1966

Once again the final exams were frontloaded, and by Thursday afternoon they were over. Rich Smith drove up to New Haven from Wilton in his father‘s pickup, gathered together Kent and me and our gear, and took us back to his parents’ place, where we were fed an early and large dinner. Then it was back into the pickup, and the three of us were heading due north up the two lanes of US 7 out of Norwalk. And we kept driving up and up that road into the dark, because we were heading for the Smith family cabin near Randolph in central Vermont.

It was Memorial Day weekend.

We arrived after midnight, found our way in, plugged in the fridge, etc., and crashed for the night.

The next morning we looked around at what we had come to. It was the perfect fantasy of a family cabin: all woodsy and rustic, consisting of simple rooms and simple beds, with slightly forested rolling Vermont fields outside. There was even a gurgling brook nearby.

So we just lazed around all morning in the unbelievably pleasant Vermont sun. And in the afternoon we headed off for the pleasures of Montpelier and Barre, two of Vermont's largest 'cities' at about 10,000 each. I particularly wanted to check out Barre, because since childhood I had been aware that it was the site of America's largest granite quarry.

We got to the quarry around six, just after all the workmen had left for the day. But there were no fences or anything… We tried to be as unobtrusive as possible and slipped down the first ladder.

And soon we were in the midst of any twelve year old boy's dream. For this wasn't your local abandoned quarry. This was the Rock of Ages granite quarry, grayish white and cut at sharp angles, over two thousand feet wide and three hundred feet deep. Until it got too dark to see we were going up and down ladders, walking along seams, and shouting out echoes.

The next morning, Saturday, saw us back at the cabin with a whole other purpose in mind. Rich Smith hadn't yet taken morning glory seeds, or anything else for that matter. And we were going to show him what it was like.

Kent and I had a problem, though. The first time we had eaten seeds we had just masticated away on three packs of them each. Sure, we had felt a little sick in the stomach about an hour into it, but that passed. By the third time we had tried it, though, it was hard to down them all without gagging. By now I was getting nauseous just thinking about chewing them.

To solve the problem Kent had come up with the bright idea of buying empty gelatin capsules, available at any pharmacy, filling them with mashed up seeds, and then swallowing those. So now we were sitting there at the woodsy kitchen table, banging the tough little morning glory seeds with a hammer, and trying to stuff the pieces into the empty capsules. Just the smell of it was making me sick.

After a while though we had a pile of filled capsules. And Rich produced some cold Budweisers from the refrigerator. Down the hatch they went. Just wait, Rich, I said. Soon you're going to be noticing it.

But an hour went by and nobody was noticing anything. Strange. We went for a walk down to the gurgling brook and then through the Vermont fields. Another hour expired, and maybe there was a little vague something…

We sat down in the grass, expecting it to build. But a half hour later we were back to normal.

We were back in the cabin around two in the afternoon, and had finally reached the conclusion that for some reason the seeds just weren't working. Rich suggested that we salvage something out of the day by driving about twenty miles over to a favorite local lake. That sounded good, so off we went.

And we were driving back from the lake around five, about eight hours after we had ingested the seeds, with Rich driving and Kent and I bouncing along in the back of the pickup, when all of a sudden out of nowhere I felt by far the strongest rush that I had ever yet felt. What the…? I looked at Kent, and he was obvious that he was feeling it too. Then the truck swerved over to the shoulder. Rich staggered out the door and said, 'What's going on, guys?'

Somehow something had hit us all at the exact same moment.

At this point we were all standing by the side of the road holding on to the side of the pickup, having been magically transformed into gibbering fools. After about ten minutes of this it became a little less intense. Rich felt that he could drive, so we all got into the front, and we started driving very slowly back down the road. After two or three miles we found ourselves in the middle of the town of Randolph, population 2,000. This urban setting was way too confusing, so Rich pulled over and we got outside to stand on a semblance of solid ground.

And so we were standing on the sidewalk there at the town's main intersection. And several of the town's teenaged girls just happened to notice these three strange looking young men who were obviously from outside Vermont. So they decided to come over, introduce themselves, and find out what kind of new action we represented.

Meanwhile several of the town's teenaged boys happened to notice who the girls were paying attention to, and, feeling the need to protect their territory, they decided to come over and act as aggressively as possible, so as to hopefully scare us off and out of town. What made it really ridiculous was that they were younger than us and that Rich Smith at least was a pretty big guy.

Just at that moment the most incredibly loud siren I had ever heard in my life went off just across the street at the main fire station. (After all, fire stations around these parts relied exclusively on volunteers, those volunteers lived miles away across hills and valleys, and it was necessary to get their attention.)

The siren kept going on and on for ten unbelievably long minutes. Meanwhile the girls kept trying to smile, the boys kept trying to scowl, and Kent and Rich and I stood there like the hopelessly confused idiots we were. Finally the siren had stopped, the fire trucks had all left the building, and the girls and the boys had both given up.

We were now free to leave, too.

June 8, 1966

We had gotten back to New Haven on June 1. By Friday night, June 3, I had made it down to Philadelphia.

I really had no plans for the summer. That is to say, the only plan that I had come up with was to stay with my sister (since it was free) and find a job in Philly. She was living by herself now, and had cleaned up her act substantially. What's more, she was renting a small row house, with the dogs mostly out back, and I would even have my own room.

By Tuesday evening, though, I had realized that this whole idea was turning out to be a pretty dumb one. After two days of desultory job searching, I had re-confirmed what I had learned a year ago around this time: That without proper contacts, finding any kind of summer job anywhere was pretty much hopeless.

Nor was Philadelphia much of anything beyond dead and boring. Nor did I know anyone here outside of my sister.

Then this morning my mother had called to pass on some new information. Yale had sent me a letter saying that I had failed Chemistry. Which meant that if I didn't attend summer school somewhere I wouldn't be re-admitted in the fall.

Okay, I knew all along that I was going to fail Chemistry. And I would have dropped it in January if I could have. But I couldn't, since it was a two semester course. Still, I had passed it in the first semester, which meant that I should have had 9 out of 10 credits for the year. Except that Yale had this arcane rule that if you failed the second semester of a two semester course, then you retroactively also failed the first semester.

Okay, I could go to Harvard Summer School. I already knew that it was the major summer school in the northeast. I had heard that the Chuck Apel guy that I had just met was going there. Maybe I could stay with him.

Except that Harvard Summer School cost $300. It didn't give out scholarships. Plus there would be living expenses. And I had no access to that sort of money.

That's when my mother let it be known that, uh, maybe I did. It was unclear if she would have ever told me otherwise, but it had just so happened that the government agency where she worked had started a small scholarship fund this year. And somehow my high school test scores had resulted in me being one of the first two recipients of said scholarship. For $600.

Cambridge, here I was about to come.

June 11-14, 1966

I started out early in the morning to hitchhike from Philadelphia. There was no easy way to get to the New Jersey Turnpike, but once you made it to one of the Camden exits it was pretty straightforward, and I was in New Haven by the early afternoon. The last ride was with a banker, one of the only Negroes/blacks from the Class of '51, who was coming to his 15th Reunion. He seemed like a mild mannered guy, but he was still highly steamed at William F. Buckley, same class, whom he remembered as an arrogant bigot.

I made my way over to Bingham Hall, and walked up to Kent's room on the fifth floor. Kent had stayed an extra week in order to earn some money as a janitor on the clean-the-campus crew. Which meant that he had been able to keep his room. Which meant that I had a place to stay.

As usual, Kent was up on all the latest tunes. He had just bought an album called 'My Generation' by this group called The Who, who apparently were really big in Britain even though they were totally unknown here in the States. I immediately liked them. He had an album by an American group called Love (How could he not buy it with a name like that?), but they weren't all that good. And of course he had the latest album by the Stones, its signature cut being a grunting fourteen minute paean to sexual intercourse.

The other songs on 'Aftermath' were pretty good, though.

On Sunday it was warm and we were walking across campus engaged in wordplay conversation involving vegetables (I don't carrot all for that. No, please don't turnip your nose. Okay, I'll have olive them.) when we happened upon a recent Yale graduate's wedding reception. One of the parents invited us over and we sat there sipping champagne, them in their tuxes and us in our t-shirts and jeans.

Monday it was back to work for Kent. He was very impressed that one of his fellow janitors had been the lead singer on the song 'In The Still Of The Night' ten years earlier. We met at a sandwich shop for lunch, and while sitting at the counter a lady came up and loudly asked me why I had long hair. I told her that I didn't like it myself, but that some rich guy paid me fifty dollars a week to do it. She walked away totally satisfied with the answer.

On Tuesday we went out for a walk. As we descended the stairs we noticed a couple of young Townie guys that Kent recognized from the janitor crew. A few hours later we were back in his room and ready to go out to eat. We went to get our wallets, both of which had been left in pants that we weren't wearing. They were empty. We were both now broke.

That night we wended our way up Prospect Street towards Science Hill. Right where the hill started was the Ingalls hockey rink, another brand new building, this one designed by Saarinen, the Finnish architect who had become famous for the just completed Saint Louis arch. The curve on the hockey rink, also

known as the Yale Whale, was likewise unusual, so that we had to hoist ourselves up to its roof and trippily make our way up its spine.

After this we went a ways over to where the twenty story Kline Biology Tower was nearing completion. The doors hadn't yet been installed, so we walked past all the scaffolding and what not and found the elevator. It worked, and soon we were above the twentieth floor, where all the air conditioning equipment would soon be installed. Twenty feet above us was a hole which led to the roof. And right over there was a fifteen foot step ladder. We maneuvered it to where it was underneath the hole.

Kent was the first up as I held the ladder. Then it was my turn. As I lifted myself up I also kicked a little, and we were both able to watch as the ladder swayed to and fro.

But at the last moment it didn't fall over. So now we were safe to enjoy our exploit and admire the view.

June 17, 1966

I had now been in Cambridge for just under three days. But I already had an apartment to stay in for the summer. And I already had a new sort of coterie of friends.

The Jon Rubin fellow that we had met right before the school year had ended was also from Newton, MA, although he only vaguely knew of Norm Zamcheck. That's because Norm had gone to private schools, and Jon had gone to Newton High. They also had completely different sets of interest: Norm was literary and a very gifted pianist; Jon was into racing cars and rock and roll.

Jon also had a wide assortment of Newton High friends who were still in the Boston area. And through one of them he had found a sublet of a place in a slummy part of Cambridge, a few blocks from a big bend in the Charles River, and roughly equidistant from MIT and Harvard. For some reason he had been planning to live away from home in Newton this summer, but that had fallen through. So now bedrooms were available, and I would get one of them so long as I could come up with one third of $80 a month.

Jon already had one other rentee lined up: Chuck Apel. Thus I had gotten to meet him a little more thoroughly.

Chuck was literally from the wrong side of the tracks in Columbus, Ohio. Indeed, he was the first Yalie I had met who came from as relatively poor and misbegotten a background as I. Around 5'8", with curly dirty blond hair, he was also like me in that he didn't let his total lack of financial security interfere with his supreme self confidence.

And Chuck was certainly interesting. He was also smart and quick and creative, and even charming in a certain way. But to my mind his thoughts lacked depth and discipline. And there was a point where his sardonic cynicism got a little too sardonic and a little too cynical. Finally, he had a level of oblivious self-centeredness that I could only pray struck others as of an entirely different order of magnitude and dimension than mine.

He was here in Cambridge because he, too, had failed a course, and he, too, was planning to attend Harvard Summer School. Not that he was here this Friday afternoon. No, he was already gone back to Columbus for a week or so for some reason or another.

I had also gotten to meet a few of Jon Rubin's Newton friends. The most interesting of these was one of Jon's high school classmates, Eddie Gray. A little guy, and now all of sixteen, Eddie had already dropped out of Columbia. The son of a supposedly totally insane psychiatrist, Eddie struck me as kind of balanced in his hyper-intelligence, and it was great to see the wheels turning as we discussed smart-type things. What Eddie was really into these days, though, were drugs and rock and roll.

That there was grass all around Cambridge went without saying. $10 a lid (ie ounce). $20 for the really good stuff. $30 if any mythical Acapulco Gold ever showed up, although prices like that were way beyond most people's means.

As for rock and roll, Jon Rubin and his Columbia friends had access to material that I hadn't even known existed. Not only were they already aware of The Who, they had the British 45 of their song 'Substitute'. They had other British 45s of Beatles and Rolling Stone releases, complete with obscure 'B' sides. Jon even had a tape recording of a couple of songs and a promotional poster for the unknown live Bob Dylan album that had been supposed to be released this spring.

Speaking of which, I had just been sitting on the mattress/couch in the apartment this afternoon when Eddie Gray came by with a big grin on his mouth and a record store's bag in his hand. Out of it he pulled the new Dylan double album, 'Blonde on Blonde'. I was excited as he as he hastily tore off the plastic wrap and pulled out the first disc. He reverently placed it on the apartment's record player.

But there was always this slight anxiety with Dylan: Could he possibly top his last effort?

Of course he could. Yes, as with other Dylan albums there were a few only so-so (by his standards) cuts, such as the first two and the entire third side. But the rest of it… The moments were almost thrilling each time the needle moved forward and the virgin groove of 'Visions of Johanna', 'Memphis Blues Again', or 'Just Like A Woman' started.

I could tell that I would be listening to them all hundreds and hundreds of times again.

June 18, 1966

By process of elimination I was now the resident of longest standing in the apartment. Already various unfamiliar folk were coming and going. Last night I had the pleasure of finding out how much fun it was to have a bunch of stoned people who didn't know each other try and order a pizza.

But the emergent operant rule for this type of place was that if someone had long hair and any kind of tenuous connection with anyone else that you knew, then they could crash there. And this meant that as of today two lowlifes from Columbus, Ohio, who had kind of met Chuck Apel back in March, were staying here.

Right now it was Saturday night. Kent had just shown up from New Haven this afternoon, and Jon Rubin and a friend were driving us out to Newton to score some acid. It was a hot night, and the Lovin' Spoonful's new song 'Summer In The City' was appropriately playing.

For all my recent dope smoking and seed chewing, this was actually the first time I was going to be dropping acid since Harvard weekend. And it was to be the first time for Kent ever. We got to a typical suburban Newton house, Jon's friend went up to his bedroom to get it, and a short time later we were back in the car waiting for the drug to do its thing.

There was never that much to it. Which was probably a good thing, given as to how we were at the mercy of another person's car and plan. After driving around for a while, we were taken to a spot under a bridge with a really cool echo effect, and we sat in the dark and talked for about an hour. Then Jon went back to his house and his friend drove Kent and me back to Harvard Square in Cambridge and dropped us off.

It was around two in the morning now and everything was closed. Kent and I wandered off among the darkened streets, eventually finding ourselves over the Charles River and into Brookline. We walked and talked some more.

I was reminded once again that at the right dosage acid really was a higher place of being, a different and more meaningful world. It was good to be back there. And the fact that this hit wasn't all that strong meant that we could once again feel the wonder of Existence existing at all without the confusion of a blown mind.

No confusion perhaps, but the clarity could end up being much more painful. Because we were now walking with one foot in the brave new world, and the other one in the sad, sad, old one. Intertwined with the instant of the now was the understanding of the huge gulf between Reality and reality. It was all too obvious and tragic how humanity had horribly mangled the world that it lived in.

A couple of years ago there had been a protest song that had somehow also become a pop hit. It was called 'Little Boxes', and it railed against the 'ticky tacky' nature of suburban life.

Ticky tacky. That singer had no idea of how right she was. Because the ticky tacky that totally surrounded us was far more profound than any particular Levittown. It permeated everybody's worries about social position, everybody's need for fame and fortune, everybody's endless petty disputes, and the layer upon layer of stupid dishonesty that everybody piled on top of themselves.

And we were all too aware that we were part of everybody.

But it was also clear to us that the proper reaction to ticky tacky was not the self-righteous indignation of a protest song. It had to be pity and compassion. After all, we were all victims of the beliefs in symbols and standings and pieces of paper. We were all complicit in setting this up.

We were back at Harvard Square now and the eastern sky was getting light. I stopped at two store windows, one right next to the other. The first was a liquor store, and in its window there was an oversized bottle of Johnny Walker Red. Behind that was a cardboard cutout of men and women in formal wear drinking whiskey and apparently having a wonderfully vacuous time.

The other window was for a small music store, and its display was for a new album called 'Up With People!. On the jacket cover there was a picture of a chorus of young men and women who were so enthusiastic and so scrubbed and polished in their blazers and skirts that they made the New Christy Minstrels seem edgy and decadent. And next to the picture were little blurbs by Walt Disney and John Wayne saying things like 'This is the happiest, most hard hitting way I have ever seen or heard that says just what this country is all about!'

We were standing before two thirds of a triptych that somehow summed up everything perfectly.

By now we were psychically and physically exhausted, and as the day fully dawned we made it back to the apartment. Only to find that the two lowlifes from Columbus had taken over our beds. Never to mind. They were souls, too. We very quietly tiptoed around them and found other places to sleep.

Three hours later I was woken up by said lowlifes actually kicking me and shouting like crazed hillbillies, 'Haw! Haw! These guys did acid last night! Hey! How do you feel now???' It was pure ugliness; there wasn't the slightest trace of humor in it. But I was too exhausted to even protest.

I suppose that that's what I got for believing in souls.

June 23-26, 1966

Fortunately those guys from Columbus left that evening, so that we didn't have to try to find a way around the 'everybody crash' rule.

The next few days were spent with me getting used to the idea that within about a week the dreaded and useless and boring summer school would start. On Wednesday evening I concocted the notion that Kent and I should hitchhike up to Nova Scotia for the weekend. By Thursday noon we had our knapsacks and sleeping bags and were walking through Cambridge heading for a freeway entrance that would take us north and east out of the greater Boston metropolitan area.

It was a terrifically nice day, but terribly slow going, and by nine-thirty at night we had only made it to Portland, Maine. As I was finding out about with most other New England cities, downtown Portland was old and rundown. And we were walking and walking through it. Up ahead there was a brand new flyover connection to I-95 and Coastal Hwy 1. We started up the concrete ramp. Great, I thought, another mile or more before we could find a place where cars could even stop.

Not that there were any cars this time of night.

Walk, walk, walk. Then all of a sudden a nice new shiny car sped by. And before one of us could even stick our thumb out it screeched to a stop and backed up. A door opened next to me and a dapper and stylish looking thirtyish gentleman leaned over and said, 'You boys need a ride?'

Boy, did we. I got in the front, Kent got in the back, and the car accelerated smoothly. The guy said that he was going up past Freeport, which was great news. We talked a bit, and when he found out that we went to Yale he said, 'Hey, I'm Dartmouth Class of '56. I guess we're all Ivy Leaguers here.'

A few minutes later I was enjoying the silence and the fact that we would soon be out of the greater Portland metropolitan area when our new friend cleared his throat. 'Uh, you know guys, uh, people around here, when they see fellas like you with long hair and all, they think that that's because, you know, you'd rather be with boys than girls.' He paused ever so slightly. 'You guys wouldn't, uh, be like that, uh, would you?'

'Uh, no,' I said, trying to sound polite yet emphatic. 'In fact, down in Boston and New Haven, the girls really like it when the guys have long hair.'

'Oh, well, I was just wondering,' he said.

We continued on in silence for a few more minutes. 'You know,' he started in again, 'the people around here are so old fashioned. And they're always looking into everybody else's business. But I could give a sweet shit about what they think. If you guys are into being with other guys, then I could care less. This is 1966, and I say, everybody should just do what makes them feel good. You with me on that, boys?'

I tried to grunt as non-committedly as possible. But Dartmouth man just kept going on and on about how horribly backwards and conservative all the small minded people up here in Maine were. When I asked him why he lived up here if he hated everybody so, he said that he had a good job and a great house and…

'Wait a minute, fellas. I'm only going another ten miles or so. And it's so dark out here. There's not going to be any more traffic tonight. Why don't you just come and spend the night at my place? I've got lots of beer, even harder stuff. We can watch TV, play games, just all have a really good time. What do you say?'

From the back Kent said, 'Gee, that might be nice.'

'Uh, Kent,' I said pointedly, 'We still have a long way to go. We've got to put a few more miles on tonight.'

But Dartmouth man had seen his opening. 'Yeah, sure, come on over to my place. We'll have a few beers, play a few games. I've got extra beds we can use. You guys will love it.'

'Thanks' I said. Then as determinedly as possible, 'But we've got to keep going.'

He pulled over. 'Okay, boys. Whatever you want. But nobody's going to pick you up tonight.' He was right about our prospects. We were out in the middle of the wilderness on a dark, dark night. 'Hey, tell you what. Why don't you stand out in front of me and I'll shine my lights on you. Then if nobody comes by…'

I opened the door, stepped out, and went back to pop the trunk and get our gear. Kent was half in and half out, with the guy still trying to convince him. The car was parked at a crazy angle so that its lights would shine on us and the road.

Just at that moment the one car that was going by that night was going by. And he slammed on his brakes when he saw the apparent commotion. I ran up to him and asked him if we could have a lift. Sure, he said, no problem.

Dartmouth man was now in our rear view mirror. The current ride was a semi-grizzled commercial fisherman going up to work on his boat, and he dropped us off at the junction where the road turned off for Boothbay Harbor. We unrolled our sleeping bags on a little knoll right next to that junction and lay there looking up at the bright starlit sky. The atmosphere was so still that you could hear the occasional tractor trailer grinding its gears five miles away.

Friday morning arrived glorious and summery. A crispness and saltiness was in the air. The blue in the sky up here was slightly paler than the rest of the Northeast. And so were the greens around us. We rolled up our sleeping bags and stuck out our thumbs.

By one thirty we were east of Camden and Bath and Belfast. We were on a very lonely and narrow U.S. 1, with grass for a shoulder. By now the countryside was so rural and quiet that I could have sworn it was 1949. The barns seemed to have been last painted then. The few cars and pickups that were passing us were rattling along at a very slow pace.

When one of them, a beat up old Ford Falcon, stopped, I immediately noticed that it had a really strange license plate: New Brunswick. Canada's Picture Province.

We were about to meet Andy and Jamey.

As we got in the back seat they didn't hesitate in introducing themselves and telling us their story. Geez, eh, they were about our age, eh, they were from Moncton, eh, and they had been down, eh, in Boston visiting relatives. But, jeez, they had run out of money. So here's what they'd been doin', eh? They'd pull into a gas station, have the attendant fill 'er up, then ask him for a quart of oil. Then when he'd go to get it, eh, they would just fuckin' take off.

Trouble was, they didn't appear to be very good at this. And they had just spent the previous night in the Auburn, Maine, jail. They wasn't worried about that though. They was going to get back to Moncton, eh, one way or another.

Well, this was interesting. Kent and I stretched out as best we could in the back of a Falcon on the slow, rural drive to Calais, Maine. Finally, we were through the town and pulled up to the Canadian border post. The official looked inside, determined that Kent and I were Americans, and asked us to please come into the office for an interview.

He seemed like an avuncular middle aged man, and so we explained to him how we wanted to go up to the Maritimes just for the weekend. But when he found out that we only had $8 between us I could see that we might have a problem. It also probably didn't help that by now my hair was down to my shoulders and I was wearing bell bottom jeans and engineer boots. Nor that Kent's curly dark hair was busily heading outwards in all directions, and that he had on black and white striped pants and that he had an earring in his ear.

That's when I threw in that we were, ahem, Yale students, and that I had to get back next week to attend, ahem, Harvard. I pulled out my Yale ID to show him.

It was just a piece of cardboard with my signature and an ID number. But it did say Yale University on it. He was mightily impressed. 'University lads, eh? What faculty would you be studying in then?'

I explained to him that in the U.S. one didn't have to declare their major for a couple of years. We talked for a few more minutes and then he said, 'Well, you university boys have a good time in Canada this weekend. Eh?'

We went back to the car and told Andy and Jamey that we were in. Their jaws both dropped. 'Jeez, once they take someone into that office, they always turn them back. What did you do, eh? Punch him in the stomach?'

It was a great image: 'Young men, I'm sorry, but government regulations require that… Ooof!! (Doubled over, catching breath.) Hey, you didn't have to hit so hard! (Still trying to catch breath.) Well, if you boys want to come to Canada that much, I guess I'm not the man to stop you. Just don't punch me again, eh?' And I didn't try that hard to correct them. After all, our waving of our magical Yale ID's would have been even more incomprehensible to them.

However we did it, though, here I was in my first foreign country. I took New Brunswick in as we went through the border town of St. Stephen and on into the interior. As might be expected, it was the same as America but slightly different. Slightly different road signs, slightly different houses, slightly different farms, even slightly different trees.

We got to Saint John as it was getting dark. Like Portland, it was a city of around 100,000 people. But it looked a lot more rustic and quaint, kind of like a film set for, er, 1949. Downtown was brick. Boxy wooden houses were painted bright colors. The Saint John River looked wild and untamed.

It was close to totally dark when we made it to about ten miles past Saint John. And that's when Andy and Jamey quietly parked at the end of somebody's driveway. 'Be quiet now,' Jamey said. 'We're goin' to go siphon some gas from these people's truck, eh?'

They were back at their trunk getting their can and hose, and then they were skulking up towards the people's house. Two minutes later I heard a man shout, 'I got the one, honey. You call the Mounties.'

Ten minutes later the Mounties were there and they had handcuffed them both. They saw us in the back of the car, found out that we were hitchhikers, and told us to get going and have a nice night. We got our stuff and started walking down the road.

About a half mile along there was this little roadside restaurant that was still open. We went in and had bean sandwiches for 45 cents each. Plus fries. Which came with vinegar. This was undeniably foreign.

We took our time eating, and about an hour later we decided to see if we could still get a ride tonight. We went out to the road. The first car by was the beat up Falcon with Andy and Jamey.

'Geez, they told us if we ever tried to siphon gas again we was goin' to be in big trouble, eh? Geez, you don't want to mess with them Mounties, do ya?' I couldn't tell which of them said that. We got in the back and started once again towards Moncton.

We were asleep at around three in the morning when they woke us to tell us that they might be running out of gas, eh? But right around the bend was the all night gas station in Sussex. There they sold their floor mats to the attendant for $3, and that was enough to get them to Moncton.

The sun was rising when they dropped us off at their Moncton exit. We crawled into a little thicket of trees and slept for a few hours.

Around ten in the morning we crawled out again. I looked at the map and it was obvious that there was no way we would make it to my hoped for destination of Cape Breton. We held a quick council and decided that Prince Edward Island would be a much more doable option.

Good, because the turnoff for the road to the ferry was only twenty miles away. We stuck out our thumbs. And I couple of hours later we were walking past a long line of waiting cars and climbing aboard for the one o'clock sailing.

A couple hours after that we were standing by the side of the road in P.E.I. We had already discovered that one didn't have to wait long here. Three cars, tops. There. We had our next ride.

The driver and his wife were as friendly as all get out. The radio was playing this summer's hit song, 'Prince Edward Island Is Heaven To Me'. We were now far enough north and far enough Maritime for the sky to be a pale pastel blue, and for the greens to be pale pastel greens. Potato plants tend to be pale green anyway, and we already were well aware that virtually all of P.E.I.'s 2000 square miles were covered with its one and only crop, 'seed pededas'. It seemed that for some reason if you wanted to grow potatoes that other people could then grow somewhere else, then this was the place to do it.

Oh yeah, and the dark red soil. I had heard about red soil in Georgia, but I had never seen any. And I certainly hadn't been expecting to see it here. Red soil and pale green pededa plants and pastel sky and friendly as all get out people…

They let us off at a store at a crossroads, and we went in to buy some food. The store had wide planked wood floors and goods for sale behind wooden and glass cases that looked to date from 1900. I wouldn't have been surprised to see a twelve year old girl in a calico dress licking on an eight inch wide lollipop.

When we made it a few miles further to Prince Edward Island National Park we found out that this was indeed P.E.I.'s claim to fame. It had been the setting for a famous book about a young girl at the turn of the century: Anne of Green Gables. Once again I hadn't been up on my literary references.

Most of the national park was a long strip of sandy beach stretching along the island's north shore. Kent and I munched on our food and walked along the beach for a couple of miles. Then we found a little spot among the dunes to set up our (sort of) illegal camp. We spent the rest of the day swimming in our cutoffs and jumping off of sand dunes.

This was a latitude and a time of year when the sun went down late, so we didn't go to sleep until eleven. And it came up early, so that when it woke us up it was only 4 am. But we were still dog tired, so we got out of our sleeping bags, put on our t-shirts and cutoffs, and fell asleep again.

We got up for good around ten, stretched, ate the rest of the food from yesterday, and then resumed our swimming and dune jumping. Then we very leisurely walked out of the park and hitchhiked back to the ferry landing for the 5:30 sailing. As darkness descended we found ourselves back on the mainland walking along a deserted road. My skin had started to feel a little hot.

I noticed a big old empty looking barn. Say… Weren't farmers supposed to let lonesome travelers sleep in their barns? We walked up to the nearby house.

As soon as they let us in, the lady said, 'My God! You boys are so red! Have you been sleeping out in the sun?' Uh, I guess so. When I asked them about the barn, it turned out that they weren't farmers at all, but vacationers from Toronto. And so they had their big city suspicions. But after thinking it over they said, sure, why not. They even put on some tea and served us some cookies and tried to find something to put on our sunburn. Then they got a flashlight and led us out to the barn.

I lay there in the hay, my skin screaming in agony.

June 29, 1966

We had made it back last night to Kent's parents house, smack dab in the middle of New Hampshire. His dad was the athletic director at the small private school that Kent had attended. Which is how he had gotten to attend it. And why he was so into soccer. Right now I was taking a shower.

And this song came to me:

I think I'd like to be an elephant
Then I could trumpet my horn so eloquent
I could wander through fields having sumptuous feasts
And I'd be afraid of no other beasts
And if you could see what the hell I meant
Well then you'd want to be an elephant

Part Four

July 5, 1966

Registration had been last Thursday, but summer school had just started today.

For the past ten months I had been noticing, through my limited contacts with Harvard students, that two similar situations had created opposite reactions. At Yale the result of being surrounded by exceptionally qualified people gave rise to a certain humility. When combined with the noblesse oblige that permeated the place, it meant that few if any of the people on campus were arrogant or hyper-competitive.

At Harvard, though, the fact of being surrounded by exceptionally qualified people seemed to make each and every student there ever more and more determined to absolutely prove to the entire world that they were indeed better than any and everyone else.

Not that I was going to be meeting too many Harvard students in my Intermediate French class. No, these were mostly folks from Penn State and Colorado State who were looking forward to the cachet of spending the summer on the Harvard campus and in the university city of Cambridge, Massachusetts.

As I looked around at my thirty or so fellow students, I hoped that none of them had been under the misapprehension that they were going to be taught by somebody actually on the Harvard University staff. In fact, our teacher was just introducing himself as being from Arizona State. I squirmed a little bit as he started talking. I hoped that I wasn't being snobbily intellectual, but there was just something about him that seemed weird and sub par.

Now he was explaining how our upcoming course was going to be so avant garde and different. First off, we would be spending most of our time watching movies. That's right, every week there'd be a different French classic playing continually at a nearby auditorium, and we would be expected to watch it three or four times so that we could learn how to follow along without using the subtitles.

And if that weren't pedagogically exciting enough, on a giant tripod he also had a giant new video camera. With this we would be able to review just how marveilleuse we looked as we tried to speak French.

Even if I had still been in high school this would have sounded rinky dink. I would have been looking around at my fellow students in disbelief. But, here, what did I care? All I had to do was put my time in, get my passing grade, and be back in New Haven in the fall in good standing with Mother Yale.

The introductory class was now over, and we all got up to leave. As I was about fifty yards out the door, I noticed that one of the girls from the class was still kind of walking next to me and headed in the same direction. I started talking to her.

Her name was Mary Gehan, she was two years older than me, and she was in her senior year of college back home in Saint Paul. She had almost gone to Vassar (Funny, so had Bonnie. They would have been in the same class.), but had gone to Smith instead. Then last year she had gotten homesick, and had transferred to the University of Minnesota.

As we walked and talked, I started paying attention to what she looked like: Very tall and thin, plain blondish-brown hair, and a pale complexion. She seemed somewhat hesitant and—What was the nineteenth century term?—demure.

We were passing a restaurant. I asked her if she wanted to stop and eat. She said, simply, 'Yes'. So we went in and talked some more. By the end of the meal she had decided that, since she hadn't found a place to live yet, she would come and stay with me for a few days.

And that was that.

July 25, 1966

Mary and I had become a couple in short order.

It was kind of unspoken and understood that we were only going to be together for the summer. Which was a little strange, since it had always been so important for me to hold out for that uncompromising ideal of True Love. But no doubt my recent experience with Diane and Bonnie had made me a little more realistic and a little less starry eyed.

Although that didn't mean that we both didn't really like each other. Indeed, there was a lot to like about Mary. She was both genuinely nice and totally unassuming. She was a good and modest Catholic girl who still didn't mind smoking dope and hanging out with longhairs. And she certainly had her opinions and decisions, but she never seemed to have any need to argue for or about them.

Her most telling feature was her complete absence of bush-beating-around. Ask most girls about whether they wanted to go to a certain restaurant or go for a walk or whatever, and they would treat it as an opportunity to start a conversation. At the very least they would say something like, 'Well, okay, if you want to'. With Mary it would be an immediate and a simple 'yes' or 'no'.

And we had a lot of such pre-shortened discussions because we were spending almost all of our time together. In the morning we would walk the two miles through semi-grungy neighborhoods to the Harvard campus. Then we would sit together in the French class for a couple of hours. For lunch we would go to Elsie's, a crowded hole in the wall lunch counter that was famous for gargantuanly thick sandwiches at Liliputianly low prices. Then in the afternoon we'd go and make out in the back of the darkened auditorium while those French movies played and replayed.

Most days there was nothing much else to do after that except to go back to the apartment and hang out. Usually Eddie Gray or Jon Rubin or some of the other Newton people would be there. Often a joint would be passed around.

Music would be listened to, discussions would be had. I would talk to Mary about my utopian ideals. Jon and I would theorize on whether or not it would be possible to drive to Labrador. Eddie Gray would argue with the rest of us about which was the better rock and roll band, the Beatles or the Stones.

Mary and I would lie in bed and talk for a while. Then we would go to sleep.

And the next day we'd get up and go do it again.

Not that there weren't bumps and aberrations in the steady state of our Universe. Chuck Apel had returned from Columbus right before school started. He had attended one day's worth of class and then had decided that he just didn't feel like going to summer school. Then he and I had come up with the idea of putting a band together, and somehow we had actually gotten some equipment together down in the basement. Neither of us was that good, and our commitment was even worse, but at least it got me starting to try to play an electric guitar. And starting to try to write rock songs.

Although now Chuck was mysteriously gone again.

Never to mind. Because about a week ago I had been walking down a side street when I happened upon Peter Mueller, who had just transferred back up to Harvard Graduate School. I had invited him over, and so far he had provided us with several nights' entertainment. Especially now that he was determined to join the stoned crowd.

Tonight he was trying to prove to me that Reality didn't exist. This was the sort of solipsistic thought that bright lads generally had in the ninth or tenth grade. It was then the sort of thought that people had after smoking grass two or three times. By now it was kind of quaint. But beyond the good humor of arguing rings around him, I was kind of shocked that this guy was in a Harvard PhD program in philosophy.

Now he was trying to up the ante, and bragged in his high nasal voice that he had an IQ of 185.

'Gee, Peter,' I said almost languidly. 'You know, Eddie Gray has an IQ of 188.'

I could almost see the smoke coming out of his ears. He opened his mouth, but couldn't speak. He opened his mouth one more time. Finally he stammered like an eight year old, 'Well…well…He hasn't done all that much with it, now, has he?'

August 3, 1966

Okay, the apartment had been kind of a mess. But I had looked upon it as a genteel kind of a mess. I mean, how neat and clean would anyone expect a sublet occupied by transient students spending too much time smoking grass and listening to 'Revolver' and the like to be?

Then on the 1st Bob Withers had arrived from New Haven. He had been working on the same volunteer inner city project as Kent, and now it was over. And he had us friends up in Cambridge to spend the rest of the summer with. Which was fine.

But two days later his new girlfriend showed up. And I became very surprised to find out that she was his first girlfriend ever. Apparently he had been mighty shy in high school. Which might explain his lack of discrimination. Because Janis wasn't exactly laid back. Neither was she remotely groovy. In fact, she was just the opposite: an insanely intense, wound up, small, short curly haired Italian girl from Long Island.

By way of Albertus Magnus.

For it wasn't exactly true that the nearest coed school to Yale was in New London or Northampton or Poughkeepsie. There was also an extremely small and not very selective private Catholic girls' college in

New Haven called Albertus Magnus. And it seemed to be filled with young women whose fathers wholesaled fuel oil and who had this delusion that some Yalie would meet them, be swept off his feet, and then propose marriage. Whereas the sad reality was that no Yalie who was not really, really desperate ever actually dated any of these girls.

But Janis had somehow gotten her hooks into Bob in New Haven. And she wasn't about to let go. Not with all that barely controlled neurotic energy.

So it was more than fair to say that she didn't exactly fit in with the attitude or the atmosphere of our place. But at least the apartment was now as spiffy, polished, straightened up and absolutely dust free as any upper middle class house in Long Island.

August 9, 1966

The French class had become unutterably boring.

Part of it had to do with the fact that I had never been all that charmed by old black and white French movies in the first place. And I really didn't see how watching them repeatedly made for a better intellectual experience than, say, reading actual French literature or having actual conversations with real people.

Most of it, however, had to do with the instructor. Forget the standards of the Ivy League; this guy wasn't up to the level of my high school French teacher. At the same time, the fact that he was teaching at Harvard was obviously impressing himself, and he exuded (as they might say at Harvard) a turgidity framed by bloated self-importance.

Other than that, everything about him and his class were excruciatingly forgettable. Oh, except that he was also absurdly… What was that new word that Richard had used? I mean, my tenth grade English teacher had been swishy. But this guy would pause melodramatically as he ostentatiously sucked on pieces of chalk.

All of this meant that Mary and I didn't feel at all bad when we started showing up later and later. And then when we were there we would end up sitting near the front, with the result being that our blatantly heterosexual tendencies would be clearly disturbing to him. Not to mention that I had never, ever been any good at not showing my true feelings when I found myself in a situation of stupidity and incompetence.

Nor was he very good at not showing his true feelings towards me.

August 19, 1966

I had always had really horribly bad hay fever. But when the fall season had started in with a vengeance about a week ago, I had serendipitously discovered that smoking a little grass made all the itching and sneezing totally disappear. So soon I was lighting a joint within ten minutes of waking up. And continuing on throughout the day.

This constant replenishing of medicine was made a lot easier by the fact that three of the apartment denizens and hangers on had raised $80 among them, had scored a half pound of better quality grass, and were now in the process of selling it. Of course, I couldn't in any way afford to pay for any of it myself, but still there was always more than enough around.

I had realized this afternoon that the result of all this was that I was now in a state of permanently stonedness. Not in the sense of confused and mumbling and bumbling stoned, but more like a pleasant

buzz that permeated my consciousness. Even my meaningless French class was becoming meaningless, yet fun.

And being slightly off kilter certainly didn't interfere with my other pursuits of the day, such as listening to records for hours at a time or spending even more hours trying to write rock songs using more than the three obvious chords that everyone always used.

Right now, though, it was one of those extremely rare times that I was sitting in the apartment all by myself. Mary was down the street doing the monthly laundry. Janis (she couldn't even play jacks without becoming hyper-competitive) had taken Bob somewhere. Who knew where or when Chuck Apel was? No strange people were crashing.

It was a good time to ponder just what I had accomplished this summer.

Well, 'accomplish' was way too strong a word. How about what I had done? Let's see, Kent and Jon had fashioned several pipes out of strange materials. We had learned how to make a 'bong' out of an empty toilet paper roll. Someone had even purchased a hookah, which we had then all gathered around for day after day.

Then there was a time when there was a huge commotion at the bar across the street, and all these cop cars showed up with sirens blaring, and we thought that there was going to be a race riot, and everyone got paranoid that the cops were going to find our dope.

But none of that was doing anything.

Maybe if instead I thought about what was going on around me. After all, here I was in Cambridge, the place where Joan Baez and much of folk music arose, the former home of Timothy Leary and all of his LSD experimentation. Surely, with the way that people's outlooks were changing so quickly, there must be some kind of a movement happening.

But there really wasn't. None that I could see. A couple of weeks ago Eddie Gray had brought by this mimeographed publication about rock music called 'Crawdaddy', and he talked about the teenaged 'publisher' he had met and the guy's pipe dreams of having a nationwide rock periodical. And there certainly were a fair number of people passing through the apartment and around and about my life who had long hair, a certain alienation from society, and a shared skewed and only semi-serious relationship with everyday life.

But even in a place such as Cambridge, we (if I could call us a we) were still in a tiny minority. And we still didn't even have a name. But they, the vast majority of people that I saw every day, certainly did. They had now become 'straight people'. They were the folks who had not been turned on, through pharmacology or any other method. They were the men who wore the white shirts and the thin ties. They were the women who walked stiffly down the street and gave me ugly, ugly looks. They were the working class jerks yelling crap out of their car windows as they drove by.

Ever since that afternoon last April in western Massachusetts with Bob Withers, I probably hadn't gone through a single day—especially off of the Yale campus—without at least one person loudly saying something really nasty to me. Usually out of the blue, so that I wasn't prepared for it. And usually there were a lot more instances than one.

And all that they knew about me was that I had long hair.

A neutral observer might have suggested that I solve my problem by simply cutting my hair. But I sure as hell wasn't going to do it because somebody else was telling me to. They didn't do what I told them to, did they?

Though I also realized that it went a lot deeper than that. People cut their hair in certain ways so as to fit into whatever pre-determined social group they belonged to. But what if you no longer felt like you fit into any particular social group? And had no desire to start any new ones? And what if on top of that you were fed up with the absurd artificiality of styling one's coif in the first place? Well, then, your hair would just do what it had always done. And grow.

When I was all detached and thinking clearly, like right now, I could realize that all this intense hostility being directed at me was just a sociological phenomenon. It really had to do with my explicit rejection of everyone else's implicit acceptance of all that artificiality. They were just being foolish and ignorant.

More often, however, when someone is hatefully yelling and screaming at you, you just end up getting really, really angry at them in particular and them in general.

Whoa, this being constantly stoned made it pretty easy for a mind to wander around. What had I been trying to think of? Oh yeah, what I had accomplished this summer. Let's see, what about music? The Stones had played a concert in Waltham that I hadn't gone to. Bob Dylan had had a motorcycle accident. The 'band' Chuck and I had talked about had never happened. Kent and I had gotten into truck driving music, and were often found playing 'Diesel Smoke, Dangerous Curves' and 'Johnny Overload'.

And, oh yeah: After I had written the 'Elephant' song in June, Kent and I had had this idea to write an absurd musical. It was to be called 'Warm Front', and it took place in the post-bellum South. The cast included freed slaves, poor white farmers, and the mythical all-powerful Senator Jackson. We had started five or six more songs, but the only one that had gotten past more than a couple of lines was this one:

Colored hats and things like that, that's what makes us go
Painted cars and all night bars help us out you know
And if things get a little depressing
As long as you're possessing
A little bit of the world you feel all right (You feel all right)
So-o-o colored hats and things like that, that's what makes us go-o

I fully knew that this wasn't 'Sad Eyed Lady of the Lowlands'. But I did believe that it had a certain panache.

August 29, 1966

Classes were over, and we took our final exam last Wednesday. One of the essay questions was: 'Discuss the 'secret special relationship' of the two male protagonists in each of the movies 'La Grand Illusion' and 'Jules and Jim'.

This in the august halls of Harvard University.

Now Mary and I were standing outside the door to the classroom, trying to find our grades for the course. Over here were the results of a standardized test we took at the same time. On that I scored second highest in the class. But over there my final grade was a D. The person who scored highest on the standardized test got an A. So did the people who scored third, fourth, and sixth. Mary was fifth highest. She also got a D.

It was so ridiculous that all we could do was laugh. Besides, as long as I didn't fail, at least I would get the damn credits for Yale.

September 3-4, 1966

A year ago people like Danny hadn't really existed.

Danny was sixteen years old. His father was a Vice President at Gillette, and his family lived in Newton in a really nice house. A year ago Danny would have been in the middle of starting to try to get into the best college he could.

But Danny didn't live at home any more. And Danny had also dropped out of high school. For the last couple of weeks he had been hanging out off and on at the apartment.

Today was Labor Day Weekend Saturday afternoon. The complete waste of my summer time had been was getting to me. And one of Jon Rubin's Newton friends, the one whose dad had the meat packing plant, was spending the weekend up at the family's summer house in northern Vermont. So Mary and I had just decided to hitchhike up there.

Danny wanted to come along. He was only two years younger than I, but Mary and I had become his de facto foster parents. Sure, why not bring the kid?

We packed a few things and started out late in the afternoon. The idea was to go north on I-93 to where I-89 branched off, and then take that to I-91 and on up. A simple plan for a Saturday night.

The first complication arose from the fact that it was a lot harder to get a ride for three people than it was for two. The second complication had to do with the fact that the Interstates in question had not been completed, so that there were a lot of lonely two lane roads in the middle of the night.

The third complication was that people on the road in New Hampshire on a Saturday night tended to be totally shit-faced drunk. So it was a very long and slow night, with many unannounced stops for driver inebriation and driver urination.

So here we were at six am on a Sunday morning walking through the town of Danville, Vermont, population 475. Everything—country store, white steepled church, small well-kept houses—was perfectly still. Everything was also almost impossible to see, since we were walking through a pea soup fog.

Four miles to go. We started up a long, long hill, almost soaked from all the moisture in the fog. A car hadn't driven by for at least a half an hour.

As we got to the top of the hill, all of a sudden, within only about twenty feet, we were completely out of the fog. All around us was a bright and warm sunny morning, with clear blue sky and green, green grass. And here and there in the distance we could see other bright, sunny hilltops poking out.

But all around us in every direction were valleys filled with the perfect sea of white fog that we had just stepped out of.

The three of us kept walking along the quiet Sunday morning road.

September 9, 1966

Mary was back in Saint Paul. I was back in New Haven.

And it was good that I came back early. Because it turned out that Yale only gave a summer school credit if the grade was C or higher. Which meant that the D that I had received had absolutely and unequivocally proven that my summer had been totally wasted.

The immediate problem, though, was that now I couldn't start my sophomore year. For one of the few times in my life I was absolutely panicked. After all, my entire life had been spent going to school. Moreover, I had been quite good at it. And although I had always dimly known that at some point I would have to have a job and career, I had always been confident that this would never take place until some far future date.

What if that date were today?

And what made it even worse was that I already knew what an incompetent misfit I was in the workplace. And that was before my long hair had made me a social outcast.

At least I still had my righteous indignation. And I made the attempt to go around the campus trying to find someone to convince that I really did know French, and that the grade was the result of personal enmity. But I kind of knew before I started out that nobody would buy it. First, rules were rules. Second, nobody could believe that a faculty member at Harvard, even a substitute one, would be so unethical.

The people at financial aid weren't too helpful, either. Even if I did get back in, I wouldn't be getting my plush Henry J Heinz II scholarship any more. Not only would it be general funds now, but I would have to take out a $400 student loan.

So I was pretty nervous when I showed up this afternoon at the Dean's office. But after berating me for my intellectual laziness, he finally let slip that, well, Yale could always use my Advanced Placement credits from high school to fill the gap.

Which meant that I had always been in good standing.

Which meant that I had never had to go to summer school in the first place.

Gee, thanks, academia.

September 16, 1966

My dean was no longer John Palmer. It was now Seth Singleton, a PhD student in Political Science. Still in his twenties, he was a dark haired and intense Quaker, and he always seemed to have just drunk twenty cups of coffee. He and his wife and kid had an apartment here at the College.

But my College was no longer Silliman. It was now Pierson, a thoroughly red brick Georgian quadrangle, so authentically eighteenth century that it even had a white wooden area called the 'slave quarters'.

I was here because last February, when everyone picked their roommates for next year, the two friends from our circle that I had ended up with were both in Pierson. Which meant that now I was, too.

The first friend was Marty Cohen, a private dayschoolmate of Bob Withers' from Kansas City. In appearance he was shorter than average and roly poly. He was also extremely bright, an English major, and was both placid and non-confrontational.

The second was Mark Wilson, another private day school grad, this time from Nashville. He was 6'7", but gawky, and with not the slightest ability or interest in basketball. He was pretty bright, very quiet, and was both friendly and calm.

Strangely, the rooms we were assigned were the exact same ones I had stayed at when I had visited the campus my senior year in high school.

And a pretty cute aspect of the situation was that our entryway was right next to the front door of the College's Master. And that person was none other than esteemed novelist John Hersey.

Now here was a famous writer that I had already heard of. Indeed, he was one of the most famous writers of the present day. Not that this meant that I had actually read anything of his. But most high school students had. Usually 'A Bell For Adano', though sometimes 'Hiroshima'.

And now he was my next door neighbor.

September 25, 1966

Classes had been going on for over a week now. I had built up a certain small amount of resolve, and was dutifully attending them. But I really hadn't gotten more motivated than to arrive at a balance point between showing up for schoolwork and realizing that it was all pointless and crazy.

And the balance point in that had to do with certain shifting visions. On the one hand, I still had my utopian dreams. I knew that at least the natural world was beautiful, and I was sure that under the right conditions (that anyone could and should do) heaven on earth was possible. But on the other hand, it was more and more obvious that the 'civilized' world around me was artificial and bankrupt. It was painfully clear to me that all the people around me who inhabited this world were driving themselves—and me—over a metaphorical cliff.

Right now it was a Sunday afternoon, and a sunny Sunday afternoon at that. Kent and I and Bob Withers were sitting on the Cross Campus, a grassy area that stretched out in front of the Sterling Library. Other undergraduates were playing touch football and Frisbee. Kent and I were waiting for the acid that Bob had given us to come on.

As I had kept noting to myself, it wasn't like I was doing dangerous drugs all the time. In fact, this was to be only the second time that I had actually dropped acid since last November. But acid had a way of making itself memorable, and these experiences had started to become a touchstone to which I compared the rest of my in and of the world life. And I thought that I knew by now what I was getting into when I took it.

I didn't.

Because within a couple of minutes of feeling the first sensations, I wasn't there any more. This wasn't a mind being blown in the funny, goofy way that had happened in central Vermont with Rich Smith. This was more like utter annihilation in a matter of fact manner. Around us people were still playing touch football, but now the images coming into my cortex made no sense whatsoever. I was sitting there in the middle of a Sunday afternoon with a consciousness that not only didn't have a 'me' attached, it no longer even had an 'I' behind the 'me' capable of seeing that there wasn't a 'me' to see.

I tried to communicate this to Bob. But he just grinned at me with his Mad Hatter grin and said, 'Yeah, they told me it was really strong'.

We sat there for I didn't know how long. Then Bob decided that it might help us to walk it off, so he helped us each get up on our feet. Now we had to deal with the difficulties of both walking and trying to appear halfway normal.

An indeterminate amount of time later we were on Park Street, an area that had both student oriented businesses and its share of normal New Haven citizenry. Our normalcy was working, nobody was paying us any attention, but we were still completely in another world. Coming towards us amongst the pedestrians was this overweight middle-aged black lady looking dignified in her Sunday best. And twenty feet away she all of a sudden she threw her hands up in the air, shouted 'Wahhhhhh', and ran straight at us.

She kept running past us, and about twenty feet later all of a sudden she stopped, straightened out her clothes, and started walking again as if nothing had happened. She hadn't directly looked at us, her scream wasn't directed at us, and as she receded away it didn't seem like she was even aware of what she had just done. Kent and I looked around us. Everyone else was carrying on as usual, and not a single other person seemed to be acknowledging anything.

We continued walking with Bob, and soon we were at the entrance to his college, Stiles. This was a brand new residence, modern with glass and pebbly concrete, and it had also been designed by that famous Finnish architect Saarinen. The idea was that we would eat in the dining hall here, and to that end Bob left us at the entrance while he rustled up some coats and ties.

So we were sitting there in a little grassy area in our light summer clothes, the sun was going down, and somebody I knew stopped to say hello. My thought processes were only vaguely returning. 'It's getting cold,' I said, almost plaintively.

'Of course it is,' he said with good humor. 'The sun's going down. It's the end of September. Winter is coming.' And then he was on his way.

I sat there kind of dumbfounded. Oh. Did he mean to say that this wasn't a Garden of Eden? That we had to have warm clothes? And shelter? And plan for the future? That didn't seem fair at all. But the reality of life itself was once again inexorably re-imposing itself on me.

And that reality soon took a real turn for the worse. First, Bob came back with the coats and ties; I stood there trying to do a Windsor knot totally confused as to how that had anything to do with satisfying my hunger. Then, after we had entered the crowded, hyper-chaotic Stiles dining hall, Kent finally figured out that he didn't have his ID with him. Since Stiles wasn't his college, he therefore couldn't eat there.

The fact that Stiles wasn't the college of either of us soon had more ominous ramifications. Because here we were, two very raggedy longhaired Yalies, barely upperclassmen, and on top of that we were 'foreigners' to the other Stiles people. The hostility could have been cut with a knife even if we weren't zonked. And we were still very, very, very zonked. Three hundred people were shoving, sneering, even yelling at us.

Bob and I at least could get some food to share with Kent. But as we sat down the atmosphere wasn't all that conducive to dining. I tried to eat a few bites, but it all felt poisonous. We got up to leave. Everyone applauded.

Back at Bob's room we were still pretty disturbed by what had just happened. I tried playing a guitar and Kent tried to play the harmonica that he always carried with him. But it didn't help all that much. Bob suggested that we smoke a little hash. We did.

It only got uglier. An overwhelming sense of claustrophobia seemed to envelop us. Our entire beings felt polluted. We had to get outside.

But when we got there, the fresh air didn't provide any freshness. Even the out of doors felt claustrophobic. And that feeling of pollution had coalesced into something we could name. Pure, unadulterated nausea.

And although it had started in the dining hall, it hadn't arisen from anything we had eaten. It was more like an existential nausea, a repugnance to all of life, a realization that no meaning existed anywhere. And I remembered the title of one of Jean Paul Sartre's oeuvres, 'La Nausee'. Now as we were wandering around the campus, we were walking embodiments of it.

My mind was at least able to think clearly again in the midst of all this repulsion, and I set about trying to figure out the hell that we had just found ourselves in. No matter how unreligious or imperfect I had ever

been, I now realized that I had always somehow somewhere been connected to Spirit. Now, however, I was experiencing what it was like to be truly Faith-less.

And, if not sympathize, I could at least understand what it was like for Jean Paul and all of his 'little boy lost' friends to be in this state. It was also clear why virtually all of humanity was caught up in the minutiae and illusion of everyday life, not to mention why they were all so scared stiff of psychedelia. So many of them, too, were Faith-less. And they sure as hell didn't want to come face to face with that.

How about Kent and me? How were we holding up in this encounter? Somehow somewhere I knew that we would rebound. If nothing else, how could we be simultaneously experiencing this exact, precise, totally bizarre state of being if there weren't Something psychically connecting us together?

We kept on walking through the night.

September 30, 1966

I had been busily shopping various courses for a couple of weeks now, and finally my lineup was complete.

I was tentatively a philosophy/psychology major, and to that end I was taking an introductory psych course and two relatively advanced philosophy ones. I had started out attempting to take perhaps Yale's most famous course, English 77. All you had to do for it was to write an original 500 word short story of your own choosing. Every single day of every single week. And I quickly found out why it was also considered Yale's hardest course. So I had punted, and was now studying the archeology of Asia.

To me the fifth course, Religious Studies 36a, Themes of Modern Hinduism, was by far the most interesting. As a younger teen I had always been intrigued by stories of unexplained phenomena and the like, and I had an extremely cursory knowledge of India and yogis. Having experiencing psychedelics, though, the powerful and otherworldly places that my mind was going to were whetting my appetite to find out a lot more. Not to mention that most of the early prophets of LSD kept making the connection between the drug and Eastern mysticism.

The teacher was more of a pedant than a mystic, and two of the four people we would be studying in depth, Gandhi and the poet Rabindranath Tagore, were relatively mainstream. But the other two, Ramana Maharshi and Sri Ramakrishna, were genuine yogis. And both of them had been acknowledged to have attained Enlightenment.

Hopefully the course could also prove to be, well, enlightening

October 8, 1966

Bob Withers and I were standing around at a mixer listening to Kent's band.

Last spring Kent and I had been hanging around in his room listening to 'We Gotta Get Out Of This Place' by the Animals when he picked up a broom handle 'microphone' and started prancing around the place singing along. He actually had good moves. Not to mention that he had the right looks and a decent voice. I realized that he might well turn out to be a good lead singer.

The next day he went out and bought a Hohner harmonica. And soon he was halfway proficient at the blues harp.

Then when he was on that volunteer project in New Haven in July he had made friends with some other Yalies who already had a mixer band. So now it still was 'their' band, not 'his'. But he was sure having fun doing cover songs with them.

I picked up one of the paper cups of beer that were all over the place, took a sip, and sarcastically said to Bob, 'So how much of this do I have to take before it gets me off?'

In truth I had never gotten even remotely drunk on alcohol. But I continued to see enough other people get stupid and wasted and hostile on the stuff to realize what a downer it was. And when I thought about it I realized how hypocritical it was for me to ever drink any.

I put down the cup, determined never to let a drop touch my lips again.

Something similar had happened with marijuana just a few days earlier. I had smoked several times since the school year began. In fact, a couple of weeks ago I had been staring at some op art on the wall, and all of a sudden I could see with both eyes. This was a big deal because I had been born with a lazy eye, which meant that often when I looked at someone my right eye would disconcertedly be 'looking' at something completely different. And people who were already put off by my intensity would have one more reason to be bothered.

Moreover, medical opinion was convinced that a lazy eye could not be cured. But for the next twenty four hours I was able to see stereoscopically. I had depth perception.

Though soon it went away again. And each subsequent time I got stoned I realized that grass wasn't being that much 'fun' any more. It really didn't lead anywhere. There weren't deep or holy insights. In fact the more stoned you got, the more muddled and confused your mind became. It was time to put away childish things.

So I did. From now on when they passed around the joint I would let it keep on passing.

Up on stage Kent was starting in on another song. And a pretty clear thought started forming in my brain.

People said that I had a knack for writing good and catchy songs. But those same people said that I had one of the worst voices on the planet. Kent, on the other hand, could both sing and dance around. Maybe between the two of us we had what it took to put together a serious attempt at a band.

I mean serious. As in totally original. As in New York City.

Hmmm.

October 15, 1966

Today was my nineteenth birthday. Not that it mattered. A month ago I had expended all that energy just to be able to stay in school. How quickly times had changed.

A major problem was that the magic that our little group had had last year was almost totally gone. We were all at separate residential colleges now, so that the giant round table would never happen again. More tellingly, we all seemed to be going in different directions. Many of the others were edging back to becoming the responsible students that had gotten them here in the first place. For instance, when I tried to outline the plot of my anarchistic 'musical' to Angus Ferguson he said, 'Well, I for one think that the stage should be put to serious purposes.'

To me it felt like their little skyrockets were falling back to Earth, while mine was still accelerating. To some of them it might well have seemed like I was heading off in a dangerous direction.

It wasn't like there was absolutely nobody for me to relate to. Jon Rubin and Chuck Apel were roommates this year, and they were both reliably rebellious. Bob Withers too. And Kent and I certainly saw eye to eye; we even shared the same Hinduism class. But way back in last February Kent had still been mostly hanging out with his preppie soccer friends, and that's who his roommates were now. And the college that he was assigned to was as far away from Pierson as it was possible to be.

As for my roommates Marty and Mark, we were spending less and less time together. I had the single bedroom in the suite, and over my mattress on the floor I had constructed this giant canopy/tent made from bamboo poles and various cloths of paisley print. It was both symbol and reality, and I was spending more and more of my time alone in it.

In fact, a few days ago John Hersey had sent a message that he wanted to see me. I hadn't a clue as to why, but when I had knocked on his door, this tall, thin white-haired gentleman with a reserved but friendly demeanor had invited me in. As we sat down in his study he soon got to the point.

Apparently he knew more about me than I did about him. He had seen the film that had been made during the first week of my freshman year. He had also asked around. And he couldn't understand how someone so apparently sparkly and focused back then could become the longhaired gloomy person that he saw me as now.

He was as earnest and sincere as a young Methodist minister. But how could I explain to him my growing belief that the very liberal humanist ideals that informed him and that he thought would cure all our problems were the very cause of the phoniness and social ills that we both agreed surrounded us?

How could I even get that out in one sentence?

I left his place and went back to my room. I sat inside the little paisley cloth cave that I had created and considered my position. If there was one thing I was determined not to be, it was a hypocrite. And I had just concluded that the whole theoretical framework that academia rested upon was crap.

So what in the world could I possibly be doing here?

October 18, 1966

Yesterday I had had one of those bright ideas that seemed like it would solve all of my problems. Mary and I would get married. Maybe then I could start living a real life with a real commitment to a real partner. And maybe living off campus would give me a better focus on getting through university.

When I had called her last night she was suitably flabbergasted. After all, neither of us had thought of us as more than a summer love. A summer 'really like' described it a lot better.

But she called back tonight and said that, yes, she was up for it. For the immediate future, though, it would be hectic, since as a dutiful daughter she was spending every afternoon and night at the hospital caring for her dad who was dying of cancer.

And there was one other thing she needed to tell me, something that she felt horribly guilty about.

I braced myself for the shocker.

'I'm so sorry,' she started hesitantly, 'but… but I'm not two years older than you. It's three. When we met I was so embarrassed about our age difference that I lied. And then I was too embarrassed to correct myself. I'm so, so sorry.'

I had to laugh. This was the deepest sin that she was capable of? I told her it was fine. (Although this did mean that she was now older than my older sister and I was younger than her younger brother.)

And then I hung up the phone and thought that perhaps, just perhaps, this could be the ticket to getting back that sparkle that John Hersey had been so concerned about.

October 20, 1966

Bob Withers had been acting very perturbed for the past week or so, and today he told me why. Janis, that wonderful girlfriend of his from the summer, was pregnant. And he had decided that he had no choice but to marry her.

Pregnant? Having to get married? These weren't situations that college prep people, let alone overeducated Yalies, were supposed to get into. Besides which, every girl that anybody and everybody knew was on the Pill.

I was immediately suspicious of Janis. Moreover, I knew from firsthand experience that she was neurotic and domineering, maybe even downright crazy. And Bob was a sensitive soul. This could not end well.

On the other hand, I had always vociferously believed in marriage. In fact, three days ago I had just proposed to Mary. How could I possibly argue against that?

So here was a moral dilemma. My absolute belief in marriage was up against the absolute certainty that Bob's life would be ruined.

Which of the two absolutes was more important?

October 23, 1966

It was Sunday evening, I had taken a little acid, and I was by myself lying there in the paisley tent.

And I was going through what had happened so many times before: My regular mind had ceased to exist, and I was back in the land where nothing meant anything. Then I had done the Rene Descartes thing, realized that my consciousness proved my existence, etc., and then had ever so slowly built up the superstructure of rationality.

This time, after I had gone through the laborious process, I finally had an insight. I had now done this so many times and had always ended up with the same conclusions. Therefore at this point I wasn't being intellectually rigorous. I was just wasting my time. After all, when someone was constructing a proof in geometry, they didn't go back and re-prove all the other theorems that this came out of.

No, they had faith.

It was weird to think of faith in the context of mathematics. But when you thought about it, nobody had ever proven that 2 + 2 = 4. They had just demonstrated it over and over again. And it was faith that it would be that way tomorrow.

So didn't reason exist because of our faith in it? Indeed, just a little while ago I had been in a space where it didn't exist because I didn't have faith in it.

And therefore wasn't there a qualitative difference between Faith and Belief? Because you could believe anything you wanted to. I could believe that there was a pink elephant in the room, or that Mohammed was the Prophet of God, or that Jesus was a result of a virgin birth. We humans created beliefs.

But faith was what logic and math were built upon. It was the jump between the statement 'It is difficult to deny that 2 + 2 = 4' and the flat statement '2 + 2 = 4'. What's more, faith was behind the understanding that the sun would rise tomorrow.

In fact, our acceptance of an outside world existing—when you followed it back to its foundation—was nothing other than faith. And in a very real sense (that seemed more than poetic) our faith in an objective existence was inextricably tied up with our humility in accepting that out egos were totally irrelevant to the running of a Universe whose orderly laws of physics by themselves gave it meaning.

Which meant that faith in God had absolutely nothing to do with the acceptance of various religious dogmas. It had absolutely nothing to do with Belief. It was nothing less than faith in the Universe.

And that made it all the holier.

October 27, 1966

This past summer Jon Rubin had killed a man.

He hadn't told anyone of us about it. But there would be periods when he was strangely nervous and withdrawn. And then he would disappear for a couple of days at a time. About a week ago he had even cut his hair. And had disappeared again.

Now he was back and the story came out. While driving by the Mass General Hospital in Boston one day in August an old man had stepped out right in front of his car and had been knocked dead. This was strange, considering what an almost professional driver Jon was. What was even stranger was that the old man was from Labrador, in Boston for medical procedures. Labrador? There couldn't be 10,000 people there. And that's where Jon and I had fantasized about taking our ultimate road trip.

Anyway, lawyers had been hired, Jon had become clean cut, courtroom drama ensued, and ultimately he was completely off the hook.

He was still somewhat distraught, though.

November 1-2, 1966

However, not distraught enough not to get behind the wheel again. For it was Tuesday night and Jon and Kent and I were heading up the road to Vermont in a borrowed Ford LTD.

Back in April when Bob Withers and I were hitchhiking back from Bennington, one of our rides was with a middle-aged lady with a strong Vermahnt accent who told us about a tiny experimental college named Marlboro. It had only 250 total students, had few if any regular classes, gave no grades, and encouraged totally independent studies. The lady's story had been percolating through my brain, and by now I had developed the idea that maybe transferring to a place like this would be the solution.

In fact, at this point I was thoroughly convinced in my enthusiasm. At a place like Marlboro there would necessarily be all kinds of wonderfully open ended souls. Detached from the chains of this dying society, and marching together towards the new truths that were manifesting, I and they would be free to pursue learning and scholarship for its own reward.

Kent was also interested in transferring. Jon was just being a friendly driver. We got there around ten pm and found a place to crash.

The next morning was a beautiful Vermont autumn one, with burned red leaves just about to fall. We found ourselves in the middle of a small homespun campus out in the middle of rolling countryside.

After having been invited into the dining hall for breakfast, we found our way to what passed for the administration building. We talked to a guy for a short while about the hows and wherefores of getting admitted/transferred, and then he suggested that we spend the rest of the day hanging out with some of the students.

So we did. Or at least we tried to.

My high school in Allentown had been so amorphous that it didn't even have cliques. But I had spent a day once at a clique-ridden suburban high school outside of D.C., and the atmosphere there had been twisted and thwarted and ugly in the extreme.

Marlboro College was like that, but with longhairs. Somehow putting 250 anti-university, anti-establishment types together had ended up producing the spitting image of a small village of even smaller minded German peasants. Everybody looked artistic, the setting certainly was bucolic. But nobody was particularly outgoing or friendly. Nobody laughed along at jokes. Nobody acted the slightest bit interested in having anyone else join their group.

I might have perhaps felt hurt by this if I still had the slightest interest in coming here. But beyond their adolescent level of clannishness, I had also noted throughout the day that none of these people really seemed all that creative or serious.

Last May I had taken the train down to New York City just for the evening. Walking through the Village, I had passed a guy who looked really cool with really long hair. Thinking him a kindred spirit, I had immediately stopped and started to engage him in a suitably friendly and anarchic banter. But he just stared at me dumbly.

And I had realized with a dull shock that not all long haired people were necessarily artistic or hip or friendly or anarchic.

Now I had found a whole colony of them. This was depressing.

November 8, 1966

Marlboro had shot my last fantasy of somehow fitting into college life. And the weather wasn't helping much. The days were getting colder and shorter. The night was dark and confining.

By now I didn't even know if I was going to make it through the semester.

The thousands of people around me at Yale were still preparing themselves to be the Leaders of Tomorrow. They were still all voluntarily wearing their coats and ties as if to show their continuing commitment. And the few people on campus like me were explicit rejections of all that. It was often unpleasant just walking to class.

Trying to eat was even worse. It wasn't so bad at my home college of Pierson, since apparently word had gotten around that I actually had a mind inside my head, and therefore there was a certain small grudging respect. More importantly, I was by now familiar to them. I was sort of family, even if I usually ate alone.

If I wanted to go visit anybody and eat at another college, though, this would many times result in harassment and attempted humiliation by a corps/core of upperclassman frat types. And in most instances none of the other students dining there would protest or apologize for the rudeness.

All of that noblesse oblige that they had worked so hard for was out the window.

Not that there were that many people to visit any more. Bob Withers was pissed off at me for telling him that he shouldn't marry Janis. Most of the others were busy with whatever it was that they had arranged to be busy with.

And I was getting estranged from my roommates. Marty Cohen was making the laborious metamorphosis from being a protean hip person to becoming a boringly straight one. We hardly talked any more.

Mark Wilson's transformation was even more bizarre. In the spring of last year a very small group of about eight freshman had formed who went about annoyingly proselytizing their fellow students with an infantile form of fundamentalist Christianity. Yale wit had coined the term 'The God Squad' for them.

Now Mark had joined up.

How was I supposed to stay sane in the middle of all this? Maybe I should have just figured out a way to stay permanently on the Old Campus.

Actually, that might not have been such a bad idea. Because Kent and I had noticed that the few freshmen that we had met had a completely different attitude than that of the upperclassmen. In fact, it was almost de rigeur for a member of the Class of '70 to smoke grass, to look scruffy, to have a 'screw society' attitude.

Kent had made friends with this one guy, Chuck Whitehead. His dad just happened to be Commander Whitehead, one of the most recognized personae in television advertising for the past seven years or so. An impossibly urbane Brit with a white beard and a patrician accent, the man was always declaiming that Schweppe's Ginger Ale was 'curiously refreshing'.

You didn't need to smoke grass with his son to find that connection hilarious.

Speaking of hilarious, here was something that was both funny and pathetic. A week or so ago my mother had sent me a gift. The covering letter said that she was so inspired that she just had to share it with me. When I had opened it up I was surprised to find the same disturbing album that I had seen in that Cambridge store window back in June. 'Up With People'. In the real world the Rolling Stones' current release was 'Have You Seen Your Mother, Baby, Standing In The Shadows'. Their picture on the 45 had them all dressed up in ugly drag. Instead of this, though, Kent and I had recently taken to hearing our new super-scrubbed chorus heroes and heroines singing:

> *Inside everybody there's some bad and there's some good.*
> *But don't let anybody start attacking people-hood*
> *Love them as they are, and fight for them to be*
> *Great men and great women, as God meant them to be*
> *Up, up with people, you meet them wherever you go*
> *Up, up with people, they're the best kind of folks we know*
> *If more people were for people, all people everywhere*
> *There'd be a lot less people to worry about and a lot more people who care*

Kent pointed out that he had always thought that God had meant people to be humble, not Great. But, what the hell. This was some great stuff.

Now we had some competition for those trucking songs.

November 10, 1966

I had gotten another notice to go see John Hersey. So here I was again, ringing his doorbell. He appeared momentarily and invited me in.

We sat in his study for a vague and vaguely uncomfortable minute or so of chit chat. Then he got to the point.

'Michael, I really don't want to be the one to do this. I told your roommates that it would be far better for your feelings for them to tell you directly. But they declined. In short, I've been asked to communicate to you that they no longer desire for you to continue rooming with them.'

Now I could see why he was uncomfortable. I tried to let it sink in for a moment. And I supposed that on one level it was fine. Okay. We had certainly been going off in different directions. I wasn't going to miss the conversations I wasn't having with Marty about Proust or with Mark about Revelations.

But then the spinelessness of two people who two short months ago considered me to be a good friend got so creepy as to be shocking. I just sat there some more.

But John Hersey was continuing with his duties as Master. 'We do have a vacant single on the fourth floor of the entryway next to the slaves' quarters. And I can have the janitorial staff help you move your belongings.'

I mumbled thank you, but I really didn't have many belongings, shook his hand, and went outside for a walk. Appropriately, it was raining.

Heavily. After a couple of blocks I was nearing Mory's, the fabled private Yale club where the Whiffenpoofs sang. At that moment Kingman Brewster, Yale's leonine president, was just leaving with what looked like a prominent alumnus. They were still putting on their raincoats as they passed me. But that didn't stop him from shooting me a haughty disparaging look and simultaneously shielding the valued alumnus from having to cast his eyes upon me.

November 15, 1966

I had my own little room now. I didn't have to put up with the peculiarities of others. Now I could devote all my time to the study of…

What? The archaeology course was about as dry and brittle as dead bones. One week we would be reading about Harappa and Mohenjo-doro, the next about Neolithic Siberia. For some reason, though, I was still attending the weekly seminar.

As for Introductory Psychology… This had been my first experience with a huge, impersonal lecture hall, which was bad enough. But one of the requirements had been to be a subject in a psych experiment, and the one I was assigned to made me question the entire foundation of the subject.

As I was reading some text on a screen, every so often a pornographic image would flash on and off. Afterward, the grad student whose experiment it was explained to me that his hypothesis was that the subject would be motivated to learn more every time they saw a naked lady. I replied to him that I found his premise adolescent, condescending, and stupid, and did he ever stop to think that some people still saw women as human beings to share the planet with, and that this might result in an aversion to his titillation, and not a motivation?

No, he didn't think that my point was well taken. And so I left the place even more convinced that 'modern' academia was totally insane. What kind of 'science' was psychology when a leading university was funding this guy's totally unsubstantiated belief that pornography was a positive?

Speaking of which, why did 'will' no longer exist, simply because psychologists hadn't figured out a way to measure it? Were their minds so small that they couldn't conceive of something existing that they couldn't measure?

Speaking of which, how come 'consciousness' no longer existed, simply because 200 years ago someone had hypothesized that there must be a behavioral and materialist explanation for it? After all this time, where was that plausible explanation? And if there wasn't, how 'scientific' was it to accept a hypothesis that you hadn't explained, let alone proven?

Maybe they should try having some consciousness some time.

Needless to say, I wasn't attending Intro Psych any more.

The first Philosophy course I was taking, which stretched from Hegel to Heidegger, was even drier than the Archaeology one, and didn't even have strange geographical locations to enliven it. The year before, Kant had been rough sledding, but at least I thought I understood what he was trying to say. As it progressed into the Twentieth Century, though, western philosophy seemed to be getting both denser and denser and more totally vague in its conclusions.

My second course, American Philosophers, would have seemed at first glance to be oxymoronic. But it turned out that William James and his contemporaries, known as 'Pragmatists', had been actually trying to swim against the European tide and achieve some sort of clarity around the turn of the century.

What made the subject really interesting, though, was the professor, John Smith. He was in his sixties, and embodied everything traditionally noble in his profession: Erudite, wise, good humored, and still humble and willing enough to listen to new ideas. Perhaps in another time, when the world wasn't exploding all around me, I could have aspired to be a tenured academic like him.

The teacher of my fifth course, Modern Hinduism, continued to be somewhat pedestrian. But I loved the material, especially that pertaining to the two certified gurus Ramakrishna and Ramana Maharshi. After all, though steeped in spiritual imagery, Tagore had been primarily a poet and playwright. And Gandhi, though he aimed to put God first in his life, was essentially a politician. But reading about these other two was thoroughly introducing me to the nitty gritty of the life of the hitherto mythical mystical yogi.

Ramakrishna had lived the life of the bhakti yogi, that of utter devotion and surrender to the Overspirit. In fact, he was so intense in his youth that many had thought him crazy. And, since Hinduism (like Christianity) taught that spiritually speaking we are all brides to the Lord, he had even spent an entire year living as a woman.

Needless to say, that was intense devotion.

On the other hand, his main disciple, who became known as Vivekananda, was totally focused and rational, and was amazingly good at explaining God and Hinduism to skeptical western audiences. A jnani yogi, he became the surprise hit of the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, and spent the next ten years or so lecturing around the U.S and Great Britain.

Finally, Ramana Maharshi was a raja yogi. This form was the one most (sort of) known to the West: Renunciation of the world, years of austerity and physical discipline, more years of calm meditation on the higher chakra, the Third Eye, until Enlightenment ensued. This was clean and workmanlike, detached and almost scientific in its method.

Of course, none of these approaches was mutually exclusive. And they all claimed to lead to the same conclusion, Satchitananda, an extremely heightened state that combined Being (Sat), Awareness (chit), and Bliss (ananda).

For Kent and me the interest was necessarily far more than academic. Because we understood that lysergic acid was probably some form of chemical approximation of the state that the yogis had reached through all their hard work, but we had already experienced, if ever so briefly, what Satchitananda felt like.

And we definitely wanted more.

November 21, 1966

David Katz and Saul Hopper were roommates this year. And last summer they had done what any Ivy League student would have done if they had had the wherewithal to do it. They went to Europe.

When they returned in September, they told me an interesting story about what happened after they had met up in London. David had seen a poster in a subway station advertising a talk to be given by someone called 'the Maharishi'. Curious to see what this was about, they attended. And they thus met a little man who had just moved to the West from India, and who was now attempting to start a meditation movement.

The twist was, though, that he was going to charge a fee to people for them to obtain the mantra, or holy word, that they were supposed to meditate upon. To that end he asked Saul and David how much they thought he should charge American college students, since they were a large part of his intended market. After haggling with him a bit, they got the suggested price down to $35.

Then they paid their money and were duly initiated.

When I first heard the story I had found it odd and intuitively suspicious. I mean, had any sect or religion in history ever charged admission to church or synagogue or temple? Had Jesus auctioned off the rights to be a disciple? If Spirituality existed, I was absolutely certain that it wasn't like some commodity that could be bought and sold in the marketplace.

Over the next two months Saul's skepticism and cynicism had come back to the fore, and he had started to lose interest in the whole meditation thing. But David had become more and more the enthusiastic convert. We had had several conversations on the subject, and it transpired that he had become convinced that spirituality was indeed a commodity. To his mind, since meditation made you more focused and more efficient, you were therefore going to make more money as a result of it. Therefore you could put a monetary value on it. Therefore the Maharishi's fee was just him taking his fair slice of the action.

Even putting aside the economic benefits, though, the plain fact was that people were more likely to practice something that they had paid good money for. And the more likely they were to practice it, the higher their end spirituality would be.

I had to admit that his argument made a loony kind of sense. Still, from what I was picking up from my Religious Studies class, charging money for dispensing truth or wisdom went even more against the Hindu grain than it did the Christian. And how about communion with God or Whatever It Was? From all that I had gathered, that, and not increased efficiency, was what meditation was supposed to lead to.

So when David went on to argue that by practicing Transcendental Meditation (as the product was called) a servant would be able to become a better servant, I had had it. I said, 'Aren't we supposed to be creating a world where nobody has to be a servant?'

David hadn't had an answer for that.

Anyway, now it was the end of November, the Maharishi was making his first American tour, and David had arranged for him to speak at Woolsey Hall. A purple satin cushion from David and Saul's living room was at the front of the stage. David, who was already high up in the nascent organization, was doing the introduction. Kent and I were sitting in one of the front rows.

I still had my doubts, but there was a lot to be curious about. We had just spent a couple of months reading about gurus, their powerful auras, and their God intoxication. We had been reading transcripts of their speeches. But that had all been from the pages of a book. Who knew, this guy might actually be the real thing.

If nothing else, it promised to be exotic. After all, those classical musicians at Wesleyan last year had been about the only Indians of any kind that I had yet seen my entire life.

The Maharishi came out on stage in orange robes, a little man with long hair, long beard, and marigolds around his neck. He sat down cross-legged on the purple pillow, and a microphone was adjusted for him. Then he began to speak in a high singsong voice.

Kent and I were leaning forward, ready with anticipation. But as he continued to talk, we slowly relaxed backwards in our chair. He wasn't talking like Ramakrishna or Ramana Maharshi about God or the Absolute or, most importantly, Divine Love. No, he was talking about how students who used his services could get higher grades.

The talk ended and we left the hall and went out into the night. It was beyond disappointing. It was almost downright sleazy. I supposed that I had nothing against a guy putting on a suit and selling practical meditation as a way to make you smarter or more successful. But this guy was using a religious name that meant 'great sage', he was wearing all the accoutrements of an Indian renunciate.

And he was determined to make a lot of money at it.

November 26, 1966

Thanksgiving Weekend. On Thursday Rich Smith had invited me once again to his parents' place in Wilton. They were just as nice as always, but this time I was starting to feel like a charity case.

Now it was Saturday night on a deserted campus. I was in my little room, alone with just a mattress and a desk and a nicely stacked pile of clothes over there. I supposed that I should study, but I just didn't care any more.

I was still talking to Mary every day or so, and she was still a bright spot for me. But that bright spot was getting fuzzy. After all, the original conception of marriage encapsulated the idea that then I could live off campus, and between that and Mary I might well have enough to continue on in school. But now I was fairly well convinced that I was dropping out. How did that square with me and Mary being married?

I was too depressed to even frame the question properly, let alone answer it.

My attention turned to just about the only other possession I had, that little plastic portable record player. And I pulled out that new Judy Collins album that I had just bought a few days ago. Like Joan Baez, she was trying to become hip and modern and artsy in light of folk music being now totally beyond dead. And like Joan she wasn't succeeding all that well. But she did have one new song that was hauntingly beautiful.

I picked the needle up and moved it over so that it would play 'Suzanne' again. As it started playing, I realized once again that there just had to be other people out there who realized how pure a poetry the world could be, and what a pile of ugly junk we had turned it into.

I also realized once again that after a year of trying, I still didn't have the slightest idea of where they were.

December 2, 1966

It had always seemed so absurdly off the mark when straight people who had no idea what they were talking about said that people who took LSD were 'escaping'. Like it was a drug to go to a party on, or a way to not deal with your problems. In reality, acid could be as serious as Death.

And I was no longer as wild eyed about everyone becoming wide eyed. I no longer thought as I did last spring that psychedelics would magically heighten everybody's consciousness. Maybe the Presbyterians had been right, and only the 'Elect' could benefit.

For instance, Kent and I were tripping right now. And right now acid to us was being as wonderful as Love. But we had bumped into Saul a little while ago, he had followed us around for awhile, and he had kept asking us if we thought he should take it or not. It had been hard enough to explain to him that if you had to ask someone else to decide, then you definitely shouldn't take it. Further, in our heightened condition he seemed way too caught up in what could only be called ego.

So we had simply said 'no'. But then he had felt rejected, and this had caused him to start getting hostile to Kent. Which was almost frightening in our heightened condition. Which led to me playing the unfamiliar role of diplomat. And finally Saul going away at least not totally pissed off.

We were now back to our positive tripping, and I had to admit that the drug had indeed started to become an escape for me. An escape from a life that was fast devolving into grey insipidness, and back up into a world of clarity and honesty.

Honesty. That had to be the clue to it all. And it was the simplest thing in the world to do. No embellishments. No fantasies. No games. Just think how much mental energy everyone would save if only they acknowledged the simple, straightforward truth. And then just think of how they could use all that extra energy to become ever the more conscious.

Then why didn't people do that? Be honest? Don't worry, I already knew why. When you came down from these heights, soon you had a Self to protect. So you had to say and do this and that to always make sure that the Self looked good. And then you had to always watch out that the Self of tomorrow was consistent with the Self of yesterday. And then you had to make all these unspoken compacts with every other Self so that you never pointed out their lies in exchange for them never pointing out yours.

Thus it rippled on down the line, so that soon the superstructure of artifice dwarfed all creation and compromised all consciousness.

But why couldn't I stay up here above all that? Without drugs? Why was my 'normal' state becoming so subnormal? Oh well, I should just be glad for these moments while I had them.

We had now made it to the New Haven Green, and I was distracted by all the cold, leafless trees surrounding me. Gee, I had never stopped to think before that trees were nothing but teeny tiny plants that had gotten really big. And in the wintertime they looked exactly like upside down carrots, with their roots standing up in the air. I wandered around the strange alien sentinels, gawking upwards.

'Look,' Kent said, drawing my attention to the top of a ten story office building fronting the Green. There stood four giant neon letters advertising a local radio station, WELI.

'See, they're so proud of it, they come right out and shout it to the world: WE LI(e).'

December 13, 1966

This day was going to pass just like every other day had passed for the past week.

Actually, I should have said 'night', because it was six pm, and I had just gotten up.

I numbly put some clothes on and then went down the stairs and over to the dining hall, getting there just before they stopped serving at 6:30. Then I went over to visit with Chuck Apel for a while.

Tonight he told me a funny story in that overly dramatic way of his. Seems like a couple of nights ago he had taken too much acid by himself, and had ended up losing any and all touch with everything. And everybody else was either gone or asleep. Around four in the morning he was so desperate to connect with any kind of meaning whatsoever that he turned on this little black and white TV that they had. But the only channel that it got was playing 'Hopalong Cassidy In Arabia'.

After a while I left Chuck and walked aimlessly around the campus for a bit. Then I went back to my room and read aimlessly for a couple of hours. At around three in the morning I went out again.

The Pierson basement was a low, narrow, never ending corridor with twists and turns, hissing steam pipes, and assorted coin operated washing machines, squash courts from the Thirties, and very seldom used meeting rooms. You could also find various abandoned bicycles, and a couple of months ago I had dusted one off and claimed possession. I now saddled it up once more and headed off into the dark.

Aimlessly. Up and down the city streets of New Haven. Off into residential areas, trying to get lost, and then trying to find my way out again. By six or so I was back at my room, waiting for the dining hall to open.

When it did I was their first customer. And then after a hearty breakfast I was back in my room, ready to go to sleep for the day.

Even in the state I was in, it was obvious that this was not good.

December 19, 1966

Now I at least had a good reason to be holed up in a room all by myself. It was Christmas Break, and the campus was virtually deserted.

This meant that the dining halls were shut down and I had to fend for myself. So I had bought a one burner hotplate, was using the window sill as refrigerator, and was subsisting on canned chili and bread.

When I felt like splurging, I'd spend twenty-five cents for an eight ounce container of this great new dairy product thing that they had just started selling in the market. It was called 'yogurt', it had a distinctly tangy taste, and it came in all sorts of delicious fruit flavors.

And that was about as fun as anything got. I was supposed to be reading. But I knew enough about these subjects to know that I didn't want to know any more. I was supposed to be writing papers. But it seemed so patronizing and pointless to go through the motions of regurgitating the viewpoints of others, lining them up in some fashion, and then pretending to balance one against the other.

I remembered how about a month ago I was in the room of a casual friend, going on and on about how much I hated to be here. He interrupted me in mid sentence. 'Mike,' he said. 'Don't give me that bullshit. There are a million guys out there who would give their right arm to be able to go to Yale. You'd be out of your mind to throw all this away.'

I had known he was right. And I had then recalled how he had told me that he had gotten in off the waiting list, so that maybe in some way I was offending him. But without question there were at least a million others out there who would gladly trade places with me. So maybe I was indeed out of my mind to go.

But I also knew with certainty that I'd be even more out of my mind if I stayed.

December 24, 1966

Last night, Friday, had been the last shopping night before Christmas. I had deliberately set out in the cold air to walk through one of the shopping areas of New Haven. I didn't want to believe that the rest of the world was as dark as I was. Maybe I could pick up on some holiday cheer.

But if anything it made me feel worse. Because the more deeply I tried to look into people's faces, the emptier and emptier they appeared. Not a single smile anywhere. Just men and women determinedly and woodenly walking into and out of stores.

Now it was late Saturday afternoon and I was seated by the window in a Trailways bus in the middle of New Jersey in the middle of a blizzard. We were going maybe ten miles an hour. Abandoned cars were filling up the narrow shoulders of Route 22.

A long three hours passed before we finally pulled into Allentown's small bus station. I got out and slogged a block through the snow to the lobby of one of Allentown's only two hotels. I called my mother's number out in Emmaus.

My sister and her current boyfriend had just barely made it up from Philadelphia. Now they had to plow through the ten miles to downtown and pick me up. I got in the back and huddled by myself, waiting for the air from the small heater to get back to me.

It was going to be a family Christmas. Complete with Ralph.

December 26-27, 1966

Christmas Day hadn't really been that bad. Everyone behaved themselves. My mother was happy.

This morning at six thirty my sister and her boyfriend had taken me and my knapsack with them on the way down to Philly. Bright and early they had dropped me off at the entrance to the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

About a week ago I had come up with the vision of going out to Saint Paul to see Mary. Even though it was the middle of winter and I had never been west of Harrisburg. At least my wanderlust hadn't been drowned in my depression.

And Pennsylvania was as beautiful as it could be on a clear and cold late December morning. I got a ride almost immediately, and within a couple of hours I was past Harrisburg and heading for the first tunnel that cut beneath the stark, steep, dark, impenetrable ridges that defined the central part of the state. I waited for about forty-five minutes at the Bedford Exit, and then I had a ride all the way past Pittsburgh and on into Ohio.

Ohio. It felt almost like a foreign country. I had never seen such flatness, especially this dead brown flatness of winter. And the Ohio Turnpike. It sounded so exotic. We skirted Akron and Cleveland, and then kept going on through the endless hours until the Indiana border. But I wasn't remotely bored by my first encounter with the Midwest. Instead, my interest in life had returned with a bang.

There was a world out there.

The sun was long down and it was black dark when we got to the state line. A window was rolled down, cold air came in, a toll was paid, and a new punch card was issued. My ride started up again.

Although now I was starting to get a little concerned. Because I already knew that he was just going to this side of Chicago. How was I going to make it through or around that unknown metropolitan area on a cold winter's night? After all, New York City was almost impossible.

However, the driver was from around here, and he had already figured out to let me off to ask around at the last rest area before he exited. And soon up ahead it was. In fact, it literally straddled the turnpike (so that drivers from both directions could use it) and thus dominated the night like some kind of weird futuristic vision.

An hour and a half later I was still working the rest area restaurant, walking up to complete strangers and asking them if they were going on past Chicago. But at least I didn't have to worry about standing out as a longhair among all these burly characters. For I had come up with a completely original idea of putting my hair up under my knit woolen hat. Now for all intents and purposes I was one of them.

In fact, I was so confident that I walked up to an older gentleman in an Army uniform drinking some coffee at the counter. He thought it over for a second and then said, sure, he was going up into Wisconsin, and, sure, he could use someone to help keep him awake. Ten minutes later we were walking out towards his car.

Soon we were past the Illinois line and driving on the Northwest Tollway, swinging around the Chicago suburbs. And I was starting to realize that this guy was a lot older than I had first thought, and that his brain didn't seem to be able to work that well. He was driving erratically, switching lanes on a whim, and not seeing other drivers until almost too late.

We were on I-90 headed for Rockford in the dark, and now I started getting really concerned. Because back at the rest area they had been talking about this snowstorm that might well be coming this evening. And a couple of times already I had had to almost shout at the guy to keep him from dozing off.

The first flakes started falling just as we crossed the Wisconsin line. A few miles later it was coming down pretty thick. A few miles after that it was a wind howling blizzard that made the New Jersey of a few days ago look like amateur weather night.

Very soon we were down to one open lane and thirty miles per hour. We oh so slowly approached Madison and oh so slowly went past its exits. Now it was twenty miles an hour, with zero visibility, and almost frighteningly rural. I had to keep up a constant jabber to try and keep the old Army sergeant awake. Every time the occasional big rig passed him the resulting snow blow would leave him totally disoriented. Every time we came to an exit he started to drift/drive up it.

And all the while he had the heater on the passenger side going at full blast. But if I took off my coat then I would have to also take off my hat, and then my long hair might well totally freak him out. On top of which I was genuinely tired from my long day. So I was desperately biting my tongue and pinching my skin and biting my tongue again to try and stay awake myself.

Highway signs were telling the distance to the ominously named Black River Falls. In my confusion I couldn't figure out why they weren't using numbers in Wisconsin for County Road B and County Road N. Finally, at around one thirty we reached the exit for Wisconsin Dells, his destination. He swerved off the road one last time, stopped, and let me off. I watched him wobble off, and now I was alone in the frozen whiteout wilderness.

Fortunately the cold and wind woke me right up. And fortunately the exit was lighted. So fortunately the next trucker by took compassion on me and screeched to a stop. I ran up, pulled myself up the steps, plonked myself down on the seat, profusely thanked him for his mercy, and promptly fell asleep.

When I opened my eyes the dawn had just broken. Clouds were gone from the sky and white snow lay all around the slightly rolling frozen dairy farms. The radio was tuned into the farm report. We trucked along for about a half hour more.

He dropped me off outside of Eau Claire, on a piece of road that wasn't yet Interstate. I stood there with my thumb out. In my mind, with apologies to Dylan, I was merrily singing, 'Eau Claire, can this really be Wisconsin? To be stuck on the side of Highway 12 when you've hardly ever been to Madison.'

My cleverness had returned.

And shortly I had a ride for the last eighty miles to Saint Paul. I got dropped off at the downtown train station and called Mary. She came down within the half hour and we staged a big loud theatrical hug to the delight of everyone else at the station.

Then we went back to her place and I promptly fell asleep again.

December 29, 1966

Mary was finishing up her student teaching requirement, and was sharing a giant old Victorian house with two other young teacher women. It was on a giant lot, and was replete with turrets and gables and staircases.

It also was haunted. All three had stories of bumps in the night, objects being moved around, and, most eerily, a semi-permanent cold spot on the staircase landing. Not that they were remotely frightened. If anything, they were fascinated by it.

Right now we had just finished eating dinner in the Victorian dining room. Mary had just reported that a brief account of our train station meeting had made it into the Saint Paul newspaper. And she and her friends were wondering if there was something, anything, even remotely exciting to do in Saint Paul tonight. Since they had come up empty, I suggested that we all drive to Duluth. They loved that idea.

Within the half hour we were all sitting in Shirley's giant old Buick, with me and Mary in the back seat so that we could spoon. Shortly thereafter we were on I-35, past the Twin Cities suburbs, and heading for the frozen north at seventy-five miles per hour.

Outside it was below zero, which they assured me was normal for Minnesota. There was hardly any other traffic on a Thursday night. In two hours we had sped through the 150 miles to the isolated city at the head of Lake Superior that had always seemed so strangely romantic to me.

Not to mention that this was the area that Bob Dylan had grown up in. (And who could forget 'When you ain't got nothin', you got nothin' Duluth'?)

We slowly drove through the deserted 1930s downtown and past the giant grain elevators and stacks of iron ore along the deserted winter docks. Then we found our way past the north end of town and on up Highway 61 as it headed towards Canada.

Soon we were driving along the wilderness shoreline of Lake Superior. After about sixty miles, where the sign said Silver Bay, we pulled over, stopped, and got out of the car.

It was bitter, bitter cold. Each breath felt like a knife cutting into the lungs. When I opened my mouth to speak, the words seemed to hang in the air and freeze solid.

From horizon to horizon no light of man could be seen. But the moon was illuminating everything. On the one side was the white frozen expanse of the great lake. Rising on the other side of the road were old rolling ancient hills covered with spruce and firs that were covered with snow.

It was well after midnight. We still had to drive all the way back. There was ice on the road. And no one to help if the old Buick broke down.

But this was Christmas break. Nobody had work to go to tomorrow.

This was the kind of foolishness I could believe in.

December 31, 1966

During the past three months in New Haven the Mary in my mind had become the most ideal, wonderful, perfect woman in the entire world. Now that I was here, though, reality was totally out of kilter with the vision I had created.

And it wasn't like with Diane or Bonnie, about whom I could still argue that they were the ones who had changed from their original beings. Mary was the same nice person she had been last summer. But she had never cared about being a revolutionary. She suffered no illusions of grandeur. She was perfectly content to spend the rest of her life teaching school here in Saint Paul.

Had I changed in the interim since Cambridge? Yes. My understanding that the world as it was was unlivable had progressed from intellectual to visceral. I was more and more becoming separated from the society that I had grown up in. And I was more and more longing to get to the root of all consciousness.

So why the hell was I in Minnesota?

We were at somebody's place in Minneapolis. He had just said that he had some acid. I asked Mary if she wanted to do some with me. She said no, but she didn't mind if I did some by myself. I said that it was New Year's Eve tonight. She said that she didn't care about that. I could just go ahead and do some. She would hang out with me.

At around seven thirty I dropped it. At around eight we were back at her house. Her roommates were out for the night and we would have the place to ourselves. Maybe we could regain some common ground.

As soon as it started to hit me, though, I realized what a horribly dumb mistake I had made. There was no way there was going to be a meeting of minds or anything else if we were both on totally different planets.

Especially since the planet I was now being helplessly accelerated towards was evil and ugly and trying to possess me. This was scary. And maybe it had something to do with the haunted house. But I was too far gone to put it in those terms. And anyway I needed all of my attention just to try to continue fighting this.

Mary's sweet face was looking at me. 'Are you all right?' she was saying from a thousand miles away. I tried to communicate back but it was useless. Finally I was able to say that it would probably be better if I were left alone.

Hours passed. The threat subsided. But in its place my mind was now invaded by endless streams of two dimensional grotesque dayglo cartoon figures running riot. Playing baseball, falling out of buildings, fighting with each other. Leering at me, laughing at me. Because they were real and I wasn't. I was nothing but a movie screen that contained them.

Somewhere in my deepest recesses, down below the resurgent nausea, I was trying to understand whether or not I had become the cause or the effect. Was this all simply a regurgitation of all the animated crap that

I had seen in my life? Or had Walt Disney somehow tapped into a totally psychotic place in the subconscious?

Around four in the morning I finally started getting some glimmer of control over my thought process. All this time I had been sitting alone on an overstuffed sofa in a darkened living room. I lay down on it. I wasn't out of the woods yet.

But my self was back sufficiently for me to realize that I shouldn't be having that high an opinion of it. All that garbage that had just consumed me had come out of my mind. Which meant that I wasn't all that noble or realized a soul, now didn't it? And when I looked back at my mental outlook the past few months I was even more disgusted. Poor little depressed Yale student! No control over his wretched little life! Miserably chained to his weakness and indecision!

At this point, strangely, clarity returned. I now knew more resolutely than ever that I was going to drop out. I was going to regain the freedom that I had glimpsed so many times. Instead of whining about the world as it was, I was going to do what I could to create it as it should be.

It was all that simple.

By seven I was sufficiently down. Daylight was returning. And my mind and body and being were utterly exhausted. I climbed the stairs to Mary's bedroom. On the floor by her record player was a Dionne Warwick album.

I looked at her peacefully sleeping. And I thoroughly realized how delusional I had been. Mary wasn't for me. I wasn't for Mary. All I had been doing was messing around with her life and her emotions and pretending, pretending, pretending.

I lay down next to her and tried to get some sleep.

Part Five

January 2-3, 1967

I was once again surrounded by nightmarish dayglo images. But I hadn't needed to take dangerous drugs in order to get there. This time it was on the natch.

It was seven pm and I was standing on Highway 41 at the northern end of Waukegan, Illinois, just a few yards south of the Wisconsin state line. Apparently margarine was illegal in Wisconsin, because I was totally surrounded by highway fruit stands that weren't selling fruit, but rather OLEO. And they all had huge signs with only that word in garish orange, green, and red.

The day had started out well enough when Mary and I had kissed each other goodbye in Saint Paul. It had turned out that she was really relieved that we weren't going to marry. Not that she didn't like me. But she had known all along that I was too intense and that she was too… Mary. And being Mary she had of course been too polite and modest to point that out. Now though we could just be friends. And for once I could believe an ex-girlfriend when she said that.

And then it was time to hit the road on a relatively moderate winter's day in Minnesota. Several easy rides through Wisconsin, this time going east from Madison to Milwaukee, and then down along the lake shore.

Until I got here. Somehow I had let someone take me off of the Interstate and onto this totally local side road. Surrounded by OLEO signs. And the cold winter's night was getting colder.

Time passed for another two hours. Finally I got someone going as far as Evanston. Then a short ride to the Loop area. Then a break and somebody driving all the way to Indiana. We went around the South Side after midnight. Just to the north of us, for what seemed like miles and miles on into and past Gary, were endless, eerie red-belching-in-the-night steel mills.

A long, though thankfully warm, wait at an Indiana Toll Road rest area restaurant. Right before dawn I found a salesman who was going all the way to just this side of New York City. Whoopee! A sunny, relaxing day through Ohio and Pennsylvania.

And not only that, but I then got a ride from New Jersey on into Connecticut, thus obviating all the New York Metropolitan Area hassle. By not too late that evening I was back in New Haven in my insecure bed at Yale.

January 12, 1967

It was one thing to slowly drift towards dropping out. It was quite another to try to take the bull by the horns and facilitate the procedure. So the next week was filled with the efforts of me becoming an active participant in my academic demise.

First things first. I had to try and salvage what I could from this semester. Who knew? I might need those credits some day. Unfortunately, I had finished all my term papers right before Christmas, and in all but one I had been rambling and almost deliberately beside the point of what had been asked for. There was still time for me, though, to study for finals, and for the last few days I had been deliberately trying to do just that.

This didn't help for the Introduction to Psychology course, however. Nor had I expected it to. So last evening, as if in a bad dream, I had been sitting there taking an exam for a course that I had never attended and which I had never read any of the study materials for. All that got me through it (besides the obvious absurdity of it all) was the realization that my prospects for the other four courses were somewhat better.

Although even if I hadn't been able to summon even the smallest motivation or sense of self-respect to pass them, there was still that dirty little secret that we had all learned once we got here. Yale was indeed difficult to get into. But it was even more difficult to get out of. My scare of the previous September notwithstanding, the authorities made it nearly impossible for anyone to actually flunk out.

(Last summer Peter Mueller had produced this giant ream of papers containing the academic statistics of every single member of our class. He said that he had found them whilst walking past the Admissions Department dumpster(!) The astonishingly low SAT scores of some of the scions of famous Old Blue families perhaps explained why the University had developed its policy of being so tolerant of failure.)

And you couldn't just walk away, either. As my freshman roommate Dan Brinsmade had demonstrated last year, so long as you 'officially' dropped out they would always give you at least one free pass to come back in whenever you felt like it.

Therefore the angle that my dean and others had suggested to me was that I get a medical leave of absence. Even though I had no record or background of any disease, physical or mental. So here I was at the Undergraduate Health Services sitting in the psychiatrist's office. And he wasn't asking me if I was suicidal, if I heard voices, or even if I was particularly depressed. He knew what was going on. This was just a pro forma visit so that they could check it off in my file.

And now he was getting to the most important part. 'Here's the name and the number of a guy in Westport,' he said. 'He's really against the war. And he's definitely writing letters for people.'

January 16, 1967

Somehow Jon Rubin had gotten his hands on a cute, nifty, kind of beat up white Triumph Spitfire. Not that we were feeling that snazzy what with its ragtop on and its pitiful heater straining away. But Jon was being nice enough to drive me down the Connecticut Turnpike to the shrink in Westport, so I wasn't about to complain.

Ah, the draft. And not the one seeping in through the windows. The one we'd all been dreading ever since any of us had started talking about the practicality of dropping out of school. All the shams we'd heard about and talked about: Pretending you were homosexual. Being totally stoned or otherwise socially unacceptable on the day of your induction. Faking some kind of physical handicap. The best idea, of course, was if you could get a psychiatrist to write a letter saying that you were nuts. That way you didn't even have to pretend anything at your induction. You just handed them the letter. The only problem with this approach, of course, was that you had to actually find that willing psychiatrist.

And now I had.

Again, it wasn't like we spent much time or effort thinking or talking about the American involvement in Vietnam. The war, although tragic from just about every angle, like everything else political was essentially trivial. That's because the world that it all occurred in was essentially dead. The real war that was going on was the one between Truth and Illusion going in our brains. As well as in the larger society.

In fact, I wasn't even sure how I felt about the particulars of the conflict in Southeast Asia. My viewpoint was a lot wider than it had been in high school, but that didn't necessarily mean that I was more 'liberal'. First, I realized that nothing there had very much to do with ideologies. This was basically the latest incarnation of a civil war between the Vietnamese North and South that had been on again and off again for centuries. Second, I could see absolutely no reason why I should be sympathetic to Communists. Not only were they a bunch of materialist atheists, but I fully understood that if Marxists ever took over anywhere, my kind of person would be the first one they'd come after.

On the other hand, it wasn't like we Americans were the good guys, either. By now I had had any number of rides with soldiers, officers, retired military, you name it. And I had never met anyone who was in the military for that noble vision of 'serving their country', except in the most basic tribal way of suiting up for the home team. You know, My Country Right Or Wrong. Usually they did it for the camaraderie. Or because they couldn't think of anything else to do. Or because if they enlisted they'd get a better deal than if they waited to be drafted.

Most pertinent, I had never met anyone who ever expressed even the remotest interest in actually helping the Vietnamese people. Which was purportedly the reason we were sending everyone over there. There was only disdain, even hatred, for the 'gooks'. No, what they talked about was getting laid in Saigon. Fragging their lieutenant. The ugly heat and humidity. Getting drunk in Saigon.

Weirdly enough, they usually told the stories like they enjoyed all that. It's not like they were using their down time to study philosophy. And I just didn't see that there was anything in any of this that contained anything virtuous that I would want to be involved in.

And it wasn't even that I was afraid of being killed. For some reason, whether because of having taken acid or because of my underlying personality, the prospect of being dead just didn't bother me all that much. Far more important to me--actually the central issue--was that I didn't want to be put in a position where I would have to kill.

People had told me about how in basic training you would have bayonet practice, and as you shoved bayonets into dummies the sergeant would yell out, 'What's the purpose?', and the soldiers would have to reply, 'To KILL! To KILL!' None of this sounded all that manly to me. It sounded pretty sick.

I supposed that I could have applied for conscientious objector status. But that was hardly ever given, and I had questions as to whether two years mopping floors in a psychiatric hospital would do all that much good anyway. Nor could I see how it could be 'selfish' of me not to do what I didn't think other people should be doing anyway.

So here we were outside of the doctor's office. Jon sat in the waiting room while I went in to see him. The guy told me that as a psychiatrist he thought that the war was utterly insane, and he had no compunctions in helping anyone trying to get out of it.

For the token $25 fee he would write as strong a letter as possible to my draft board.

January 18, 1967

Today my life was saved by the Rolling Stones.

Though there were certain aspects of me that had always appeared gloomy and overly serious to others, to myself I had never felt particularly depressed. Except for the couple of times in the past year when I had taken a benzedrine pill to help me study. The 'up' part had me suitably flying in super-concentration. But then the 'down' side had wracked me in hope dead despair. I shuddered to think of anyone who was hooked on any kind of speed.

So the suicidal thoughts that had popped into and out of my head in the past couple of days had been somewhat the surprise. If one could use that word for hope dead despair. I actually found myself contemplating the steps to be taken in order to fling myself off the roof of one of my favorite tall Yale buildings.

That was crazy. But it also was.

This morning, though, I had been passing Cutler's Records when I saw that the new Rolling Stones album, 'Between The Buttons', had been released. I ponied up my $3.59 (Why not? Who needed money once they had jumped off a building?), and brought the album back to my room.

I numbly took the wrapping off, placed the record on my little plastic turntable, and placed the needle on the first track. This was 'Let's Spend The Night Together', which I had already heard about and which was supposed to be dirty. But it didn't sound that way to me. It sounded sweet and upbeat. The second song was something forgettable. But then the next one was 'Ruby Tuesday', and that was plaintive and sweet and upbeat. This was followed by something called 'Connection', which for some reason sounded so upbeat that I started to remember that life might well be worth living. Finally there was the almost hymn-like 'She Smiles Sweetly', and that made me remember what it felt like to know that life was indeed worth living.

I knew that no one expected the Rolling Stones to be providing life-affirming messages. But today they did. For me at least. And lying there on my mattress on the floor, staring up at the ceiling, somehow strangely elated, I also was remembering what a powerfully positive force music could be.

Yes, I didn't know if I could really write songs that would make it to the Top Ten. Moreover, that would not only be fun to dance to but to also help people get back in touch with inspiration. But if there were any chance that I had the talent to do this, then it would be utterly stupid and cowardly for me not to try.

January 19, 1967

The situation for Kent was somewhat more complicated than just somehow getting around the draft. For one thing, he wasn't totally sure that he could so readily drop out.

It wasn't that he wasn't as alienated as I. But he happened to still have a family that he was close to. And they would be really upset if he upped and left this all behind.

What's more, it had probably been a much bigger deal for him to get into Yale in the first place. As for me, it had almost been a whim. And I hadn't really expected to be accepted. Further, I had had a knack my entire life for not getting along with any elites, be they private school or public. He had greater difficulty in not being sociable and in not being part of an established group.

Not to mention just how psychologically hard it was for anyone to ever step into the unknown.

So Kent and Jon Rubin had come up with a fallback, end around, crazy-assed idea. They had petitioned the authorities for permission to live off campus. Something unmarried undergraduates had never been allowed to do.

Now, just a week before the second semester was to start, they had received it. What??? Yup. The impossible had been accomplished. Word was that one bow-tied professor had turned to another on the pertinent committee and said, 'Well, I suppose that this takes care of our problems with that sort.'

Jon had already found a house near the beach out in East Haven, an area of mostly summer homes long milked by graduate students during the off season. This weekend they would be moving in.

Although Kent still was still pretty sure that he didn't want to stay in school.

January 22, 1967

Last Sunday had been a really warm one for the middle of January. Windows were open to Pierson College's inner courtyard, and as I went past one suite, one of the few with a television, I could see upperclassmen, relaxed in their privilege and well chiseled good looks, sitting on a leather sofa and watching a football game. It was that new championship that I had vaguely heard about, the Super Bowl. And it momentarily felt to me like it had (seemingly) thirty years ago when I had stayed here at Pierson while still in high school.

Today it was much colder as I walked by. Now most of my few possessions were locked away in my big black trunk somewhere in the basement. The rest were in my olive green rucksack. I was headed for the bus station.

This was my last day here.

I left the inner courtyard and was out in the semi-workaday world. I walked slowly down Elm Street. Past the Green. Past a few blocks of New Haven's uninspiring downtown. Bought a ticket for New York City.

I felt more than empty as the bus took off towards Bridgeport. So how exactly nuts was I? How could I be throwing this all away? The gold plated education. The sterling silver sugar bowls in the dining hall. Like my friend had said, there were a million young men out there who would give their right arm to be in my position.

One day last year I had been walking across campus between classes, and I had bumped into the admissions officer who had interviewed me for Wesleyan the year before. Only now he was a graduate student here. We started talking almost as if old friends, and I jokingly asked him why, when Yale and MIT had granted me specially named scholarships, Wesleyan had only offered general funds.

He suddenly grew serious. 'You know,' he said, 'You acted so alienated that we almost didn't accept you. Because we figured that you would either become one of our best students or that you would drop out midway through your Sophomore year.'

Well, I guessed that the guy had nailed me. Holden Caulfield redux. A self important fool who just didn't have what it takes to buck up and knuckle down. Or to benefit from this wonderful meritocratic opportunity that the goodness of society had presented me with.

I stared out from inside my void. And cold, grey industrial Connecticut wasn't helping matters, either.

No, I thought/fought back. C'mon, give me a break. This culture, this society had all been a lie. Maybe even a well intentioned one, but a lie nevertheless. And it would be worse than a lie to continue my part in it by pretending that somehow its center was still holding.

My entire life I had been told that the primary purpose of my education was not to make contacts for the future, was not to obtain that high status degree. It was to find the Truth so as to live the Truth. That's what they had said. Now I was supposed to be a failure because I had actually followed through on what everyone had tried to inspire me to do?

Still, as the bus entered the oversized, congested drabness of the Bronx, it was hard to ignore my present position. I knew absolutely nobody here. I had zero prospects for gainful employment. I was at best a mediocre musician who nonetheless had dreams of creating an amazing rock group.

I got off the bus at the Port Authority and took the subway up towards Columbia. I did have the name and the address of a friend of Eddie Gray's, so I got off at 96th and walked up the stairs to the street level. By now there was a brisk wind and the air was bitterly cold. A bank thermometer read 8 degrees. That's cute, I thought, because I have exactly $8 in my wallet. I walked into a corner store and spent 25 cents of that on a container of strawberry yogurt and a little plastic spoon. Then I started looked for the guy's address.

A large, old, ugly red brick building stood a block away. In giant Old English lettering on its side were the words 'The Wages Of Sin Is Death'. This was the place. There was no elevator, so I carried my pack up the six flights of stairs.

Now I was faced with a narrow corridor painted a horribly pukey green, with doors on each side placed about every ten feet. The walls seemed to be as flimsy as cardboard. I found his number and knocked.

No answer.

With no other idea of what to do, I sat down on the floor and waited for him to return. Hours passed. At one point an old bum showed up, but he continued on to another door way down the hall. Finally at around midnight I realized that my only option was to go to sleep right there in the corridor.

I also realized how hungry I was by now. Well, at least I had that little yogurt treat. I pulled out the carton and opened it up, expecting to be greeted by those cheery pink strawberries.

But, What!? There wasn't any friendly fruit or fruit coloring. Just a pasty white solid, with water creepily resting on top. Wait a minute, this wasn't the Knudsen yogurt that I knew. This was something called 'Dannon'.

I covered it back up. The growling in my stomach just got worse. All of a sudden the awful pitifulness of my situation overwhelmed me. I lay down on the dirty, hard wood in the cold unheated hallway, and had to stop myself from completely falling apart and whimpering myself to sleep.

January 27, 1967

There. That wasn't that hard.

Eight the next morning a friendly, though rather surprised, grad student almost tripped over me. When I sat up and asked him about Brad in room 607 he said that Brad hadn't lived here for at least a month. But he did fortuitously have Brad's forwarding address, only three blocks away. I thanked him and hastened to stand up.

Oh, and about that yogurt. The fruit's at the bottom. You're supposed to stir it up with the plastic spoon.

I hustled over to Brad's apartment, and he was up and about. Turned out that Brad was really cheap, and the 'Wages of Sin' building was by far the cheapest rent within walking distance of Columbia. Trouble was, about six weeks ago he had started noticing this terrible smell. And it just kept getting worse. Finally, the police arrived and removed the dead, rotting body from next door. At this point Brad had decided that he wasn't that cheap.

So now he was in a regular apartment with other students. And, sure, I was welcome to stay a few days while I got my bearings. He had me take my stuff to his bedroom. I looked around. Gee, nice place: High ceiling, soft carpet to sleep on, great album cut on the radio…

Album cut? On the radio? And when it finished another one came on. What kind of radio station was that?

'Yeah, it's WOR-FM,' said Brad excitedly. 'They just started doing this. Playing real music like Buffalo Springfield or Dylan. And not just Top 40 crap.'

But WOR? Their daytime AM station was famous for its mind numbing middle of the road middle aged talk shows. And FM? The government had been making halfhearted attempts to get that band of wavelengths up and going, but absolutely nobody listened to it. It wasn't even on most radios.

'Maybe that's it,' Brad suggested. 'Might as well try programming for us freaks.'

Well, it did give me pause to think that we had reached a large enough number that they thought that we were worth advertising to. Not that I knew anyone of us with enough money to just go out and buy something. Or anything that they would care about buying assuming that they did have the money.

It turned out that Brad and his roommates were a good introduction to Eddie Gray's little crowd of Columbia longhair druggies. And the next day I met another. He was a dark haired sardonic guy from Long Island named Peter Litwack, and the two of us immediately hit it off. He was also a piano player, and after he heard a little of my material he was immediately enthusiastic about putting a group together.

Okay. Step one accomplished.

So here I was on Friday, with my pack and my sleeping bag deposited in his seventh floor single dormitory room here on the Columbia campus overlooking Broadway and 110th. His sleeping-on-the-floor offer was completely open ended.

Step two accomplished.

January 31, 1967

Hundreds of record albums filling up three and a half very long shelves. All meticulously alphabetized. Many of them never even opened. A top of the line stereo component system with extra large speakers. Over there on another shelf five labeled jars, each containing a different precise variety of marijuana.

Peter Mueller was trying to get hip.

My situation in New York having stabilized so quickly, I had hitched up here to Cambridge on a hunch. I had had the impression last summer that Peter had a lot of money, either from his quiz show winnings or from well to do parents. And I remembered that he had been very impressed by my songwriting. Maybe he would want to take a flyer on my proposed rock group…

Now I was realizing that this idea of mine might actually work. In fact, right now Peter was out walking around thinking it over.

Not, by the way, that he had remotely succeeded in actually getting hip. His mind still only worked in a purely quantitative manner. He was as likely to listen to the Grass Roots as the Rolling Stones. He still had no discernable sense of humor.

But, hey, Brian Epstein hadn't exactly been Mister With-it either. And Peter certainly did have a lot of energy. Downstairs I heard the door open, and then I heard his footsteps tromping upwards.

He came in the room, all angular motion and thin, frizzy hair. 'Well, Mike,' he said in his usual high nasal voice. 'Just as a proposition it's highly improbable that you are the next Dylan. But you're better than most of the other idiots who are out there. If you put a group together, then I'll come down to New York to hear it. And if you're any good I'll help to back it.'

Yes! Now there was nothing I needed to do for the rest of the afternoon and evening. Maybe just listen to some of those albums.

Except that around eight that night Diane came over. She was a freshman now at Boston University. Except that she also brought along the young man that she had just married. After knowing him for a month. It was so sadly wrenching to see someone with the same face and body that you had once loved but now with a totally different mind.

Well, at least she wouldn't have to be a Fink any more. From now on she could be an Ackerman.

And at least her parents would be pleased. The guy was Jewish.

February 7, 1967

Barnard College sat across the street from Columbia. Although it was known as one of the Seven Sisters, it also had the reputation of being the poorest and plainest in the family. This had a lot to do with its high proportion of studious, glasses-wearing Jewish girls from the outlying Boroughs.

Jon Rubin's current girlfriend from Long Island went there. And she had told him stories about this really out there freshman named Kris from Potsdam, way up by the Canadian border. How she was an unabashedly shameless groupie, sleeping with all the members of the Blues Magoos, a teenybopper band down in the West Village. And how she now was with this freshman from Columbia who was also named Chris. Who just happened to be the most incredible eighteen year old guitarist that anyone had ever heard.

And that's how I got to meet Chris Donald. Five foot ten, thin, shy, with longish black hair flopping around, he was nonetheless totally self confident when it came to music. Once I saw how his fingers moved around the frets I realized that he had every right to be. What was even more amazing was that he was really interested in playing guitar for the group that I was forming.

Then there was Woody Woodsen, a really loose, middle class black guy from the city who was a Columbia sophomore. He was going to be the drummer.

So now there was an almost theoretical band together. As for me, I was going to play the bass. Since it was only one note at a time, how hard could that be? Since December I had been working my clumsy

fingers away on the neck of my acoustic guitar. Between Peter and Chris and Woody someone was going to come up with a real bass for me any minute now.

And then all we'd need is a place to practice.

February 13, 1967

Last weekend I had hitched back to Connecticut and had stayed with Kent at his new digs out in lonely East Haven. While walking at night behind all the deserted beach houses, we saw a light on in this little shack. When we looked inside there was this giant hammer and sickle flag. The nebbishy, balding, people averse thirty-five year old guy who lived there turned out to be an admirer of the Soviet Union. No reason, really. But he was trying to figure out how he could move there.

Now Kent was here in New York. Tonight we had finagled some time in an empty Columbia hall, and all the people and equipment would be there for our first full on practice. Right now we were sitting in a booth having hamburgers and fries at The Lion's Den, a little eatery/hangout at Columbia's utilitarian student union building. On one side of us there was a much too earnest discussion among 1950's-bearded Serious Male Students about Marxism in eastern and central Europe.

But on the other side of us were some whose beards were more like the Eddie Gray crowd. And a guy standing up was talking about how he had just gotten back from San Francisco. I was listening in, finding it hard to remember ever having heard somebody being so jazzed. The climax came when he burbled, 'You won't believe this, man. But they give you free food.'

The free food part didn't excite me. I had just turned down Yale's endless supply of it. But it was hard—even for someone like me who only saw the occasional newspaper or television—to ignore all the rumblings that were starting to happen about what was starting to happen in California. On January 14 there had been a Human Be In, a kind of deliberately positive, anti-protest sort of demonstration. There had been 20,000 people. Timothy Leary had shown up and uttered his now famous summary of everything all of us had figured out in the past two years:

Turn On. Tune In. Drop Out.

What else was there left to say? Except that there was even a new name for the people out there. Hippies. Hmm. Still not very dignified, but at least it was better than 'head'.

I had no idea what was really going on three thousand miles away. Was utopia actually bursting forth out there? My natural skepticism was more than ready to doubt. Especially now that I was here in hard bitten New York. But it was also hard to deny the genuine enthusiasm that this guy behind me—who had just been there—was displaying.

I looked at Kent, cocked an eyebrow, and ate another French fry.

Ten minutes later, appropriately enough, the radio station being played over the PA unveiled the new Beatles song, 'Strawberry Fields Forever'.

February 21, 1967

The New York City subway system was a wonderment. You could start out anywhere in the city, and for twenty cents make your way to anywhere else in the city. So long as you were familiar with the different lines, the different stops, the different transfer points, then the whole place was yours.

It was great fun. From 242nd Street in the Bronx all the way out to Far Rockaway in Queens. I had even spent an entire night with Chris Donald trying to see how many different subway stops we could get to before dawn.

But now things had gotten serious. We had had several practices. Chris Donald could play rings around any other guitarist. Kent was half decent with the blues harp and with strutting around. People were impressed with my songs. Even Peter Mueller had shown up, and though he thought that my bass playing was terrible, he was actually excited (as much as someone like him could get excited) about the prospects of the project. It looked like we might have something real and actual within a few months' time.

But all of this was nothing but fairy tale talk unless I could come up with a place where I (we) could live, gather, and, far most importantly, practice. What made it a lot trickier was that I (we) also needed money. And I knew that Peter Mueller (or anyone else) was not really going to come up with any backing unless we had a working group. Which, of course, brought it back to finding a home of some kind so as to produce said group.

Without any money up front.

In trying to pull this off, the established wisdom was that I thus had to go out and find a cheap, unused industrial loft. These were all over Manhattan, many of them clustering around 20th Street. Having been built around the turn of the century to house small garment factories and the like, what with sweatshops closing down many of them were empty. And it was only in the past couple of years that artists and bands had realized that these (comparatively) huge empty spaces were perfect for large canvases and loud music. So it was still theoretically possible to find commercial real estate agents who were ignorant of these places' 'artistic' worth.

Which, I was finding out the hard way, was easier said than done. Yes, I was able to find empty lofts. But sometimes they lacked even the rudiments of a bathroom. Sometimes they required a three year lease. Sometimes the agent was sure that you couldn't get away with living in a commercially zoned building.

What's more, running around like this was about as far away as possible from the creative artist that I was kind of convincing everyone that I was. I certainly hadn't written any song for the ages recently. What kept me going was my inner certainty that my inner beauty and verbal cleverness would save the day once we cranked up the volume and cranked out the chords.

In the meantime, I did at least have a name for us. XOX. Mathematically it was wonderfully symmetrical. It was also kind of zen and meaningless. Or you could consider it egoless and perfectly meaningful.

Whatever.

XOX.

February 24, 1967

I had already left New York City several times. And every time I would come back I would walk down the street with a whole lot of pizzazz and energy. And I'd be amazed at how lifeless and blah everyone else all around me seemed to be. Then a few days later I would notice that I was pretty lifeless and blah myself. Something about the city just sucked it right out of you.

Nobody ever smiled. Nobody. And nobody seemed to think twice about that. Which was really weird, inasmuch as I never smiled myself. So you would think that if it bothered me it must really bother normal humans. But nope. It was kind of like I was living in the Underworld.

Kris had this friend, though. A sidekick, really. A big boned girl with short cropped slightly blonde hair. And the strange thing about her was she always smiled. A goofy, happy, great day in the morning here on the farm kind of smile. Radiating cheer right smack dab in the middle of Hades. Every time I saw her.

Her name was Susan.

Intrigued by how somebody could be so consistently happy while immersed in blah, I started talking to her. She wasn't really from a farm, but rather San Diego. Coming from California, she had had no way of knowing that Barnard wasn't nearly as prestigious as Wellesley or Radcliffe. She had actually chosen it because she had had a schoolgirl dream of marrying a Yalie. Her dad was an English professor. She had been the type of young girl who had read the dictionary for fun, had skipped a grade, and was still only seventeen. Last year while in high school she had written the winning entry in a city-wide contest to Meet The Beatles.

Being connected to Kris, though, had helped her pick up some bad traits. She had taken up smoking. She had become a groupie trainee. She had gotten into a teenage girl vice of deliberately lying to people to see if she could get away with it. Immediately designating myself as an older brother, I resolved to wean her away from these behaviors.

Soon, however, our inclinations started to get less brotherly and sisterly.

Problem was, I couldn't exactly take her up to Peter Litwack's room. And she certainly couldn't take me up to hers. As with every other women's college in the country, Barnard would only allow males to visit girls' rooms for a few hours on the weekend, and then under very close supervision. Alternatively, a coed could come down to meet you in the very public waiting room. But even that was watched over by a disapproving matron.

But tonight we were in luck. I had this friend from Yale named Matt who was a quintessentially shy, awkward math whiz type. His parents were gone this weekend from their New Jersey home, he had their black late model Lincoln, and he just happened to be in New York.

Let's go.

First we drove down to Philadelphia on the pretense of saying hello to my sister. Then it was up to Trenton, east to the Jersey shore, and cruising the boardwalk area of Asbury Park in the wintertime. Then it was over and up to West Orange and Matt's parents' empty house. Now it was three in the morning and Susan and I were in the spare bedroom.

Let's go.

February 28, 1967

Here I was in New York City, but all of the amazing new musical action seemed to be either in England or northern California. For instance, right now everyone was talking about this trio of astounding musicians that the famous British guitarist Eric Clapton had put together. Named 'Cream', they were supposed to sound like three geniuses on acid and speed who could at the same time hold it all together. I had just heard their album, and although it wasn't my particular cup of tea (with cream), that description certainly fit.

Then there was all the buzz about all the bands springing up from whatever it was that was happening in San Francisco. I had heard everything from the scene being a fountainhead of pure, new cosmic music to it all being a bunch of out of tune crap except for this girl singer named Janis Joplin. Among a small group of cognoscenti the release of the Grateful Dead's first album was thus eagerly awaited.

The other group from out there that was already famous even though no one had heard them was the Jefferson Airplane. So the fact that they were about to play their first east coast gig at a small club near the Village might have interested me. And it might have if I could spare the $5 it would cost to see them. Which I couldn't.

But Peter Mueller did. And he was in town again. And he thought that Kent and I would benefit if we went and checked out the competition. So here we were at a small table in that small club, about five feet from the performer's microphone.

The performer at this point being the opening act, a black guy getting his start named Ritchie Havens. Certainly distinctive, but basically a folk performer who was trying to jazz it up a little. And this was 1967 and folk was utterly dead.

Okay, warm up act over. Now we were about to hear the latest representation of what the hip musicians who were into folk back in 1965 were doing now. The 'stage' didn't really exist, and so all six of them had trouble trying to fit themselves into a very small area. The drummer maneuvered himself onto his stool and adjusted his bass pedal. The bassist quickly ran down a scale.

There, that's one thing. The drummer, bass player and lead guitarist didn't look like no ex-folkies. They looked like they had always played in bars. The really tough kind.

On the other hand, the two other male singer/guitarists not only had the air of confident college fraternity presidents, but their longish hair seemed actually clean and coifed. Like they knew exactly where they were going to end up on the charts and how they were going to get there.

Then there was the chick singer. She definitely had a strong, bell like voice, but with her upswept 'do and the lack of depth in her eyes she looked to me for all the world like a cosmetology student.

They were indeed tight. Slick even. And their sound was definitely different and new. But sitting five feet away from them somehow it just all didn't add up. There was no sense of genius, musical or otherwise. I supposed I was looking in vain for some sign of transport, of abandon, of longing. Of an electrified version of that feeling of Something Beyond that the song 'Get Together' had given me way back at the Philadelphia Folk Festival.

After all, they were from San Francisco. And they even included 'Get Together' in their set. But it wasn't the same. In fact, their version sounded canned and commercial to me.

Maybe I was expecting too much. But whatever it was that they were singing now, it might have had energy. It might have had polish. It might even have been psychedelic. Whatever that was. But the song wasn't Love.

March 4, 1967

It was the next weekend, and Susan and I were in East Haven. It was her first stint hitchhiking. It was amazing how easy it was to get rides when you had a girl with you.

We had been spending most days together. Well, parts of most days. She still had her classes and her impregnable dorm. I was still on Peter Litwack's floor. And it wasn't like there were malt shops in upper Manhattan that we could hang out together in.

Still I was getting to know her a little better. She certainly wasn't a rebel or outcast: Candy Striper, school newspaper editor, musical taste not much further along than Joan Baez. Until a couple of weeks ago her big dream in life was to become a reporter for Time Magazine. On the surface we wouldn't seem like the perfect match.

On the other hand, her youthful energy and friendliness kind of lightened up my heaviness. And if she was a bit of an enthusiastic puppy, that also meant that she was eminently moldable in the right direction.

Nor was she totally the naif. She had always been big for her age, and by skipping that grade she had also become a cultural year older. She had two baby brothers, and had been given a lot of responsibility over them, so that by now—if nothing else—she had changed thousands of diapers.

Also I had never met anyone who so delighted in and savored words. 'Perspicacious', 'pertinacity', 'peripatetic', she enjoyed them all so much.

Right now there was enough of the gallant still left in me that I thought that it would be rushing things way too much to press for full sexual relations. But that didn't mean that we couldn't be romantic, both in bed and out. And there was that beach two blocks away where we could go for long walks in the cold, early March drizzle.

March 7, 1967

Kent and I had been snookered in for the free music.

We were sitting only about ten rows back from the stage at Columbia's main auditorium. And, get this, we were listening to Phil Ochs.

That's right, the same Phil Ochs who used to be seen as a possible competitor to Bob Dylan. Back when Dylan wrote protest songs. Except that even when Dylan was writing 'protest songs' most of them were more poetry than protest.

You couldn't say that about Phil Ochs. He rhymed competently, but the anger of us versus them just seethed through everything he wrote. I had an album of his from high school called 'I Ain't A Marchin' Any More'. When Kent saw it freshman year he assumed that the message was that Phil was sick and tired of protest marches. Uh-uh, Kent. Phil's never going to get tired of that.

Unfortunately for Phil, everyone else had moved on.

In fact, at this point he was such a blast from the distant past that when I saw that he was going to give a free concert in support of some political this or that, I just had to check it out.

So here we were. And there he was. His voice was sincere yet strident. He was still even wearing an earnest sport coat, kind of like a young faculty member. And in between his old chestnuts he was throwing in some of his newer material, his attempt to become more poetical.

I had to give him credit for trying. But, really, his forte was dealing with issues that were black and white. Or at least turning them that way. And we were all way beyond that now.

Or were we? Because since Kent and I had partaken of this free music, we were now somewhat obliged to listen to the harangue of whoever had set it up. And the haranguer, even though he kind of looked like a longhair, was using the same old leftist political 'Which side are you on?' crap that I had thought had ended in the Thirties.

What particularly irked me was his use of 'we' when he should have been saying 'I'. Thus, instead of saying something like 'I will fight for the rights of the working people' it had to be 'We will fight for the rights of the working people'. Hey, speak for yourself, asshole. This trying to work the mob to get them to do what you want wasn't any different from those aggressive cheerleaders back at Wesleyan. Or for that matter from the frat boys at any chapter of DKE across the country.

Anyway—once I thought about it—what was it that Kent and I thought that actually lined up with the views of the political left? We certainly didn't believe that some new government program was going to save anyone's soul. It was pretty clear that it was an individual's stupid desires that ended up debasing them the most, not somebody else's exploitation. And the whole process of us dropping out/being kicked out of society arose from the simple proposition that we believed that we should have the freedom to live our lives as we chose. That was pretty classical right wing, wasn't it?

The point was that what was welling up within and around us, this new way of seeing the world, had nothing to do with traditional notions of 'right' and 'left'. To me the terms were almost childish at this point. Yet I knew that the powers that were would always try to see it that way. That's how newspaper reporters already knew how to write the story. Superficially.

Worse, I knew that most of my fellow longhairs (and virtually all of the writers on all of the 'underground' papers that were appearing from nowhere) originally had started out on the 'left'. So that was their original foundation. And that after they had come down from all the acid they took, it would be so easy for them to slip back into that frame of mind.

Especially if creeps like this guy kept trying to milk them.

March 18, 1967

Susan and I were back in East Haven. We needed a place to relax from our high pressure life in the big city.

And this was a much nicer weekend here at the beach. So nice in fact that a few brave souls were daring to enter the water, if only to wade.

Two of those souls were Wayne and Little Bob. Wayne was from the artsy community in Columbus, Ohio. He was very tall, frail, almost feminine, and his hair was long and thick and matted together. Little Bob was (appropriately) pretty small, very friendly, and was a tenth grade vocational school dropout from the industrial city of Marion, Ohio.

And here was the kicker: Chuck Apel had been having them stay in his room at Yale for the past several weeks. Taking them to the dining hall. You could imagine how well that went over with all the other Yalies in their coats and ties.

Even I found them pretty out there. Especially with what they ate. They were vegetarians. Not only that, but they were practicing something called macrobiotics, which so far as I could figure out involved a lot of bizarre oriental beans and condiments. And which you did so that you avoided being sanpaku, that dreaded condition where the lower whites of your eyeballs were showing.

The kinds of nutty things these kids are into nowadays…

March 22, 1967

This wasn't working out at all.

How many times was I supposed to walk up and down avenues, walk up and down stairs, trying to find something that was feasible? Especially when if I did find anything then I'd have to hustle like crazy to come up with the money to cover it? This was all too pointless. Who did I think I was anyway?

I jaywalked across the street as I answered my own question. Idiot, you don't know how good or bad you are. Or let's put it this way: You don't know how good or bad other people will think that you are. That's why you're putting a band together. So that they can hear it and pass suitable judgment.

But I'm not putting a band together. We haven't practiced in weeks. I still don't even have my own bass. Outside of Kent, the others are losing interest as I walk. Besides which, maybe New York isn't the place to do this. Greenwich Village might have been the epicenter of the folk movement. But this ain't 1962 and this ain't the folk movement. Greenwich Village itself has become this ridiculously commercialized tourist trap where teenage girls come into on weekends to groove to ridiculous teenybopper 'psychedelic' bands like the Blues Magoos.

Anyway all the action has moved over to the East Village, which I'm slumping through right now. (And 'slumping' describes it perfectly, since the area is a cross between a slum and a dump.) But what kind of action is it if it's all lowlife action, albeit lowlifes with long hair? Not only are these people totally non-commercial, they're totally non-artistic. At least not any art that I recognize. I mean, I'm not so far gone that I think something's art just because I say it is.

And wasn't I supposed to be dropping out of Yale and/or society in order to get back to Nature? The only thing 'natural' here is all the dog crap lying around.

What's more, for the past eighteen months words and music had been popping into my head spontaneously. It's like I almost couldn't stop myself from wanting to do music. But there's not much pop happening right now. Just drudge.

By now it was dark and cold and windy. And I was still slumping down Second Avenue. Ah, a neon sign. Oh, it's the Psychedelicatessen, that store for heads and trippers that I'd recently seen profiled on local TV. Maybe this will do it for me.

I walked inside the lonely, largely empty store, the only customer on a Wednesday night. The way the news had described it this was an incredibly profitable capitalist venture, a suitably cynical exploitation of peace and love. But there wasn't much here. Just some hookahs and bongs and rolling papers. And various plastic items in dayglo colors. What was it that made people think that horribly bright colors had anything to do with mind expansion? The guy behind the counter looked like he wished he wasn't here.

Well, that made two of us.

March 26, 1967

It was Easter Sunday morning. Everyone had been talking about this for days. In Central Park there was going to be a Be-In. Would it be able to rival the one in San Francisco two months earlier?

Susan and I definitely had nothing better to do. And it was a really nice early spring day. We put on as festive a clothing as possible and started our slow stroll down Broadway.

Kind of like an Easter Parade.

About halfway there I stopped at a corner fruit store and bought a pineapple for 29 cents. Somehow it seemed fittingly simple and baroque at the same time to bring it along.

We arrived at Sheep Meadow at around noon, and already it was starting to fill up. Many of the participants were even more suitably attired than we, and there were plentiful hair, beards, beads, and long flouncy skirts. But there were maybe even more shorter haired, harder boiled New York types.

And everyone milled aimlessly around.

I was hoping for everyone to be milling amiably as well. And it wasn't like there was a bad vibe or anything. Nor, if I had thought about it, should I have really expected for New Yorkers to exhibit joy (or any other vaguely similar emotion) all that well. Still, the crowd wasn't zinging with the buoyancy I had hoped for.

Although (and this was something that New Yorkers were very good at) it was starting to get to be a pretty big crowd. Packed, almost. At one end there was a stage of sorts, and various angry political people were getting up and once again telling everyone what we wanted. Uh, wasn't that the opposite of what the California Be-In had been about?

Fortunately, most everyone was ignoring them. Just milling around. And also kind of ignoring all their fellow humans who were also milling around. Not really looking anyone in the eye. But, uh, wasn't that also the opposite of the California Be-In?

Susan and I found a little hillock to sit on. She produced a knife of sorts from her purse, and we cut up our pineapple. But there was no one to share it with. Just a bunch of people milling around.

So we sat and ate it by ourselves.

April 1, 1967

I had this theory about how the mind worked.

First, you had those thoughts that were independent of any particular mind. Things like logic and reason and math. Plato's Ideal Forms. Descartes' Analytical Geometry.

Then you had the thoughts that were a function of ego and personality. Such as, 'Does he like me?' or 'Do I look fat?'

But if you got beyond ego and personality, if you were able to truly center yourself, then all you wouldn't have personal thoughts any more. You'd just be left with those universal thoughts.

And if a bunch of people centered themselves and got beyond ego and personality, then might they not all end up thinking the same thoughts?

Because where do all these universal thoughts come from? One could suppose that the phenomenon arose from the similar wiring in each person's brain. On the other hand, Jung and others had proposed the idea of the Collective Unconscious, a primordial mental sea that all of our personalities bubbled out of. Which was also kind of what the Indian philosophers said.

On top of that was all the anecdotal (and some laboratory) evidence for ESP, clairvoyance, etc. Sure, secular humanism (like the Marxists) only believed in Materialism, but secular humanism was also totally responsible for the Twentieth Century. So how right could it be?

Anyway, here was my point: For all practical purposes that bunch of centered people would also be telepathic.

Right now Susan and I were sitting up in bed in Peter Litwack's small dorm room. Peter was home for the weekend in Great Neck, it was the end of Columbia's Spring Break, and discipline was lax.

Although not so lax that Susan was supposed to be in the all male dorm.

Nor that we were supposed to be totally zonked on acid.

Totally. And this was her first time. But so far so good.

'What number am I thinking of?'

She laughed. 'Um, 17.'

'No. It's not like I pitch and you catch. We both have to be in the middle. Not here, not there. Just…' I tried to blank my mind. The number 23 formed in my head, formed like one of those colored dot numbers that they used in depth perception tests.

Susan's eyes were closed. '23?' she asked.

Whoa. I tried again. This time 37 appeared in my brain.

'37?' she said helpfully.

Whoa. Too much.

The spell was broken. But my theory had been proven.

A couple of hours later we were down from that place of unity, but not down enough to be able to deal with the world. And we were stuck in a tiny college dorm room. Peter had just gotten a small portable black and white TV with a seven inch screen. I turned it on. It was the Lawrence Welk show, and a guy was trying to sneak off from his suburban wife with his golf clubs. While singing a song. I turned it off.

And now I had to figure out a way to sneak Susan out to the hall. And then stand guard outside while she was using the men's room. With both of us totally zonked on acid.

But my theory had been proven.

April 6, 1967

Peter Litwack was shaking my shoulder. 'Mike, wake up. Didn't you have a bus you were supposed to catch this morning?'

I jumped up. Damn! Why didn't the alarm clock go off? Peter shrugged. 'Hey, it didn't go off.'

Let's see. It's 8:02. I still have twenty-eight minutes. I can still do this.

I pulled my pants on. I put my boots on. I threw a couple of things in the knapsack and went out the door. Ninety seconds later I was running down Broadway. Down the stairs, past the turnstile, up over the overpass, down the stairs. The subway train's doors closed.

Damn! Just missed it!

Now I had a couple of minutes to reflect. I never missed it. I always had a sixth sense, a sense of timing, luck, whatever. Just about every day in high school I didn't get there until a minute before the opening bell. But I always got there.

Okay, here's another train. Down past 96th. 72nd. Here it is, the Port Authority. Bound up the stairs. Great, no line for tickets. Let's see, Platform 39. Run, run, run.

The bus was just pulling out. I waved my arms. But he either didn't see me or didn't care.

And then it was gone.

Damn! Now there was no way I was going to get to Allentown.

I thought it over as I slowly walked back out of the Port Authority. Well, they no doubt would have turned me down anyway. But that's what you did when you dropped out of college. You requested a hearing with your draft board, and that delayed everything else for a couple of months. Anyway, the real purpose of the shrink letter was to present it to the doctor at the induction physical.

I made it back to Peter's room, but he had been making one final attempt to pass his classes and was gone. Kent was just waking up, though. Somehow he had slept through the earlier commotion.

We went outside. Spring was starting to seriously spring. It was like it was making up our minds for us.

Kent had shown up a couple of days earlier. This time he was dropping out for definite for sure for real. But at the same time we were both so frustrated because there was no loft, Peter Litwack had a very small floor, and without anything happening the interest of the rest of the group was starting to fatally fade.

If nothing else, we both just wanted to run away for a while.

So why not hitchhike out to California? Even before all this hubbub about Haight-Ashbury, the West Coast had always seemed fantastical and dreamlike, too good to be true. Here was our big chance. We surely had nothing better to do.

And as if to really make up our minds for us, the pleasantness of the spring day was now interrupted by the sounds of a political rally not far away.

So how much money did we have? It came to about $100. That wouldn't be enough. So how could we make more? Let's see, the only way that longhairs ever made any money was by buying drugs and selling them to other longhairs. Why don't we try that?

That evening we were back together with Peter. He had this friend in the Village. He called him. The guy said that he knew someone, the drummer on the Donovan song 'The Season of the Witch'. He might have some acid. Give the guy a couple of hours. He'd get back to us.

April 11, 1967

I was the world's worst possible drug dealer.

First, it was highly important—especially at the retail level—that a drug dealer be outgoing, affable, and have a wide circle of friends. Clearly, the more possible customers the better, since you couldn't just cold call, knock on a door, and close a sale. Moreover, the buyer needed to feel secure enough in you that they wouldn't be afraid that you'd cheat them.

Next, it was even more vital that the drug dealer be perpetually paranoid of those same people. What if they didn't pay up? How readily would they tell the cops on him? How stupidly would they tell friends who would tell friends who would then tell cops?

Nobody in my life had ever accused me of being outgoing. But at the same time I hated to think the worst of people. Perhaps the two were related to my lack of social antennae, since I neither drew a crowd nor cared much about sucking up to or differentiating it.

Which was too bad, since otherwise I was a pretty good salesman. In fact, in high school I had won a Junior Achievement scholarship. I certainly wasn't afraid to give any sales effort the old pre-college try. So I had volunteered to go to New Haven to try and sell our acid.

Oh, there was one other problem. After we had bought the batch we had realized that it was a lot weaker than advertised. That thing about not being paranoid enough about the rest of the drug dealers. I hated being put in the position of selling something that wasn't the bestest of the best, but now we were stuck with it. And if we wanted to go to California…

So I had taken advantage of a special two day fare and had come up on the train yesterday right after midnight. And I had spent two full days uncomfortably drug huckstering. And maybe some of the people had just bought it out of pity. But I finally got rid of it all. And now I was walking back to the train station so as to catch the 11:12 back to NYC.

Walking rather quickly because I only had six minutes left. Okay, now I was jogging. Three minutes. Okay, now I was flat out running the last three blocks. Less than a minute. I was in the station, under the tracks, back up to the tracks, and I could see the train slowly starting to pull away. One, two, three, four, get a foot on the bottom step, pull the body up.

Yup, I still had it.

April 14, 1967

It was past midnight. Kent and Chris Donald and I were tripping on some of our weak acid. In this instance it was good that it was weak, since we were also on the subway headed for Queens. Specifically, we were headed for the subway stop that was closest to LaGuardia. Which wasn't all that close. We got off at Roosevelt Ave/Jackson Heights and started walking.

This was Chris's first time on acid, and though a little confused he was enjoying it immensely. I felt a little bad that all we had for him to experience, besides the subway, were endless blocks of commercial New York real estate. But then, like I said, it was pretty weak acid, so how bummed out could somebody get?

As we got close to the airport, however, we happened upon an extensive and expansive construction site nearing completion. Ah, a playground! And a well lit one at that. We stashed our knapsacks in a trusty place, and for the next couple of hours we were able to wander and traipse around the unlocked and unguarded concrete and glass buildings surrounded by their modern sculptures and landscaping. Then it was time to say goodbye to Chris and watch him turn for home.

It was all right. He was sufficiently down by now. So were we. And as Kent and I kept walking along and across the various airport feeder roads I kept looking at the little map that I had with me to make sure that we were headed for the private terminal.

This was to be one of my best ideas yet. Over my hitchhiking career of the past year or so I had run into at least several people who had shared with me the concept of hitching by plane. Usually they had had some friend who had done that, who had hung out in the area where private planes took off from, and had talked themselves on to rides that took them across the country in style and comfort in no time flat. And once I had mentioned the idea to Kent and he had loved it, then it was easy to find out that in NYC most such planes left from LaGuardia.

Of course one had to be there early in the morning to catch these people taking off. Which is why we had been up all night. Not to mention that the leftover traces of LSD would keep us awake and alert enough to be able to interest the private pilots we would be meeting. Appropriately, the light was just dawning in the east as we entered the terminal.

It was rather large and rather empty. Kent and I stood around and talked and waited for the first customers to show up. Wait, over there was a group of people. No, it looked like they had just gotten off of a plane. But, weren't they longhairs? Neither Kent nor I had particularly wonderful eyesight, but… that must be some rock and roll group! Let's see, there's a really tall guy with shoulder length brown hair, a Jewish looking guy with frizzy hair, a guy with light brown hair and distinctive granny glasses… that must be the Lovin' Spoonful!

The Lovin' Spoonful had come out of nowhere with their song 'Do You Believe In Magic' back in the fall of freshman year. They had been the first major former folk musician group since the Byrds. It was hard to say that they truly rocked. It was more like they were an updated, electrified version of songsmiths. Still, Kent and I really liked them.

Right now we were about the only people in New York City who still did. Because the word was out that these guys had ratted on their dope connections. Sure, the particulars were that they had been busted for grass, that their lead guitarist—an integral part of the group—was a Canadian and was about to be deported as a result, and that giving up their dealer was the only way that they could keep the band together. But snitching was an unforgivable sin, and now they might as well have just given up the ghost for the amount of respect that they had left.

For about fifteen minutes they stood around at the far end of the hall. Then they and their entourage headed right towards us. As they walked past it was obvious how subdued and underdressed Kent and I were compared to their raccoon skin coats and flamboyant scarves. It was also painfully obvious that underneath all the clothing were four very normal and uncharismatic, indeed rather self-absorbed, longhairs. Even after the Jefferson Airplane a month ago, Kent and I had still been naïve enough to expect some pizzazz of some kind.

We were never going to give up on our naivete.

That lesson not learned, we now had the terminal to ourselves again. Just us in our raggedy coats and our still slightly dilated eyes and our packs and our sleeping bags. But not for long. At six thirty they started showing up.

And this was a real they. Not the private pilots or dashing entrepreneurs that I might have imagined, but businessmen. And they weren't the businessmen that I was used to seeing in Manhattan, pushy and shallow fellows in their thirties in deliberately stylish suits who either despised people like me or were far too busy to notice. These were men in their fifties who probably hadn't interacted with anything or anyone in the real outside world for the past twenty years. Their hair was cut so short that it looked like it had been precisely painted on their heads. They were wearing actual grey flannel suits.

And in their milieu it was obvious that Kent and I seemed to be both an effrontery and highly dangerous. They certainly reacted to us as though we might be a physical threat, glaring at us with contemptuous stares yet giving us a wide berth. When I tried to engage them in conversation the berth got wider and their pace got faster. One man asked us if we were part of some demonstration. Another came up and peremptorily asked me what I thought about Castro. Castro??? I hadn't really thought about him since the ninth grade, about two hundred years ago.

The Junior Achievement salesman in me didn't want to give up. After all, if I could pull this off we could be in Chicago by noon. But the situation was getting more and more ridiculous. If we had been from Mars we would be upsetting these people less. Anyway, it was getting to be late morning now, the flights were winding down, and nobody had even come close to biting. It was time to call it quits.

We walked outside of the terminal and into the bright sunlight. As we stood there blinking and confused all of a sudden we realized how incredibly exhausted we were from all this. Now how were we going to get all the way back to the nearest subway station? As if in answer a nearby cabbie called out, 'Hey, boys, I'm heading back to Manhattan. You want a free ride?'

Totally overwhelmed by this act of actual human kindness, we profusely thanked him and got into his cab. As we headed out he asked us how two guys like us happened to be there at the private terminal. I explained to him my idea about air hitchhiking. 'You think these jerks would ever give somebody a ride?' he snorted in disbelief. 'These guys wouldn't even give anyone the time of day!'

He dropped us off at Midtown, and we took the IRT up to Columbia. We were starting to crash as we were still making our way to Peter Litwack's dorm. He wasn't there, but I still had a key. We both fell on the floor and fell asleep.

April 15-16, 1967

It was ten-thirty, not quite so close to dawn as yesterday. Kent and I were standing there once again with our packed knapsacks. Only this time we were at the entrance to the George Washington Bridge, the only tried and true method of getting westward out of New York City.

We didn't have to wait long, because in a few minutes a friendly, educated middle class black guy in a suit and tie stopped and told us he was going all the way into Pennsylvania.

So I settled into the back seat and watched the grey northern New Jersey industrial landscape slowly morph into the grey central New Jersey industrial landscape, feeling the weight of New York City slowly lift. When he stopped to get some coffee at a Turnpike rest area, and we all got out, all of a sudden I noticed that his car looked rather strange. I had to ask him what kind it was.

'It's called a Datsun,' he said. 'They're made in Japan. I know it looks funny, but they're really cheap.'

I looked over its exterior, and he was certainly right. It was clunky and boxy. But: Japan? Making something this complicated? It was only two years ago that the Honda motor scooter had appeared, and people had been astounded that the Japanese had reached that level of technological sophistication. Now cars? Would wonders never cease?

Coffee drunk, we were on the road again. And soon we were at the Pennsylvania Turnpike cutoff, and soon we were dropped off at an exit. The same one in fact that I had stood at just over three and a half months ago. Then I was dropping out of Yale. Now I was dropping out of running around New York City and accomplishing nothing. Then it was sunny. Now it was cloudy. But it was also warm and spring like, and all around me everything was intent on turning green. So now freedom was calling out even louder than it had back in December.

Strangely enough, my destination now was the same as back then. Saint Paul, Minnesota. And Mary. Although now she was just a friend, it also so happened that she was the only person that either of us knew in the entire middle of the country. She was a reference point for us to fix upon as we headed out into the unknown.

We bumped along in fits and starts across Pennsylvania that afternoon and evening. The steep, dark ridges of the central part of the state were just as foreboding as before, the tunnels just as long and straight and true. But by night we were within fifty miles of Pittsburgh. We found a little hidden area near the exit, laid out our sleeping bags, and called it a day.

We weren't standing around long the next morning when something rare happened. A semi stopped for us. People who didn't hitchhike always assumed that big rigs would be some of your best customers, but the reality was that trucking companies (claiming insurance regulations) absolutely forbid their drivers to carry passengers. And the few independents out there generally didn't cotton to the anti-American, er, hippies that everyone now knew us to be by our label.

But we were about to find out that John, our new ride, could care less about how long anybody's hair was. Not that he himself had anything other than a flat top from the Fifties. Or that he was from anywhere more sophisticated than Fargo, North Dakota. Or that he had anything except rock solid conservative political opinions. But, as he explained to us, he figured that a true disciple of Barry Goldwater had to also respect everyone else's personal freedom to do as they pleased.

There. See. Kent and I were right wingers.

We were certainly pleased to know that he was heading back to Fargo, and that he would thus be able to take us all the way to Saint Paul. I was also astounded to find out that he was only twenty four, and yet he already had gotten together a wife and two kids, a house, this brand new truck, and a sixteen hour a day work attitude. As Kent continued to talk with him, I enjoyed riding along up there in the cab and staring out the window down at the tiny little cars as the world went by.

Western Pennsylvania became low pale green grassy hills, which flattened out into the flatness of Ohio. Once again I was awed by the how wonderfully alien this non-Northeast landscape looked. Once again I felt almost like I had entered a foreign country.

Sunday stretched slowly along, as we crept forward across the Ohio Turnpike, the Indiana Toll Road, around Chicago, out towards Rockford, and up past Madison. Spring hadn't quite hit yet, but it all looked a lot friendlier than that blizzard the last time through. The rounded Wisconsin hills and dales were downright picturesque.

We reached the Minneapolis area around nine at night. John dropped us off at his favorite truck stop. Kent and I went inside and I found a phone and called Mary. Then we sat at the counter to have a cup of coffee and wait.

Not a good idea. Because we had just traveled a thousand miles to the middle of America, we weren't wearing hats to cover our hair, and if we thought that the common man didn't appreciate our kind back in the Northeast, then here… Especially at a truck stop. All eyes were upon us. And they weren't admiring eyes neither.

We paid for our coffees, picked up our gear, and went outside to stand in the cold dark waiting. Then the truck stop's PA came on, and a disembodied voice said, 'Hey fellas, let's welcome the girls that have come to visit us this evening. But I think they need to buy some new dresses. What say we take up a collection?' All we could do was just stand there.

But not for too long. Mary came momentarily. And we were soon whisked away back to her haunted Victorian house.

April 21-24, 1967

We were standing in the middle of a muddy spring day in Iowa. Interstate 35 still hadn't been completed here, so we were on the side of U.S. Highway 69. The number of the year of our college graduation class that we weren't going to part of. The number of the year of our college graduation class that we had all realized back in the fifth grade was going to be so dirty and so funny.

But it was a sunny, muddy spring day, and buds were on the trees and grassy shoots were in the fields. It was breezy but pleasant. Clouds dotted the blue sky. It wasn't totally flat here, kind of very gently rolling. We were miles and miles from anywhere, waiting for a ride.

I thought back over the last little while. We had spent Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday mostly goofing off by ourselves, since Mary had a permanent teaching job now. On Tuesday night we had all gone over to the University of Minnesota to hear a talk from the Zen Buddhism popularizer and clever writer Alan

Watts. But the place was packed and we had to stand with hundreds of other in an overflow room As I listened to his disembodied voice making witty remarks I was reminded of the disembodied truck stop voice of a couple of days earlier. I was under no illusion that there were as many of us as there were of them, but here in this crowd it made me feel a bit more comfortable.

Us and them. That was just being descriptive. But us versus them? That still didn't feel right. Although I did have to admit that brotherly love had been hard to come by back at that truck stop. But, then again, we were them a couple of years ago. And there was no reason why they couldn't be us in the near future. I had just run away from the confrontational attitude of the SDS and the rabble rousers at Columbia. It really bothered me when longhairs called policemen 'pigs'. I mean, what was the point of the psychedelic experience if you were just going to create more phony identities and labels?

Which is why I got a lot more disturbed the next evening when I walked past the newscast on the TV at Mary's house. They were doing a story on a putative new 'movement' that was headed by this really ugly, unhappy, angry lady. The lady's name was Betty Friedan, and the movement was 'feminism'.

Talk about us versus them. It reminded me of Marxism and the way it simplified all of human history into the black and white of class warfare. But to do this with men and women? That was just too creepy. Especially when you considered that, long predating acid, our entire generation's upbringing had been about getting rid of differences and prejudice. About hosting foreign exchange students. About forming Model U.N. clubs. People were supposed to get along with each other and erase barriers.

And you couldn't do that by being getting men and women angry at each other, now could you?

Well, it wouldn't be right to get angry about the network news trying to publicize this kind of thing, either. They were just trying to raise a ruckus and sell soap. And what viewers in the end would buy into the Orwellian doublespeak that it was 'feminist' to act so distinctly un-feminine?

Not any female I knew. And certainly not Mary. The next morning she on her way to work she dropped us off at the best I-35 exit heading south. She and I had one last embrace for old times' sake, and Kent and I were on the road.

To Albert Lea. A town of about 10,000 near the Iowa border which had a small college. Where Kent's oldest brother was teaching. Except that he wasn't there right now. But his wife Linda was. And that was where we spent Thursday afternoon and evening.

Now we were about fifty miles into Iowa. Nothing to do but enjoy the day. Stick out your thumb at that pickup, and… Hey, it's stopping! Run up, throw your gear in the back and yourselves in the front.

The entire day was a succession of short rides. A completed I-35 appeared again. We made it down to Des Moines, turned right on I-80, and were now heading due west. It was past dark when our last ride dropped us off a little east of Omaha. We walked down the embankment and over to a field and slept for the night.

Next morning it was back up the embankment, stand on the Interstate, and hope that we get a ride before a state trooper comes by and makes us retreat to an on ramp. We succeeded. And by ten-thirty we had made it around to the far side of Omaha, with the flat land getting flatter, the blue sky getting slightly paler, and the horizon getting further. A '60 Chevy station wagon barreled by, couldn't stop until it was way up ahead, then raced back in reverse until it reached us. The window was open, and we could immediately tell that the driver was a shaggy guy like us.

Which was an extremely rare occurrence out here on the open road. Nor was James alone. There were also his girlfriend Jessie, his sister Pam, and a whole station wagon full of belongings. It turned out that they had all decided to leave Providence, Rhode Island, behind and head for California sight unseen. Kent and I somehow managed to wedge our packs in with all their stuff and wedge ourselves in the back seat with Pam.

And off we went.

Nebraska stretched out wide and open on every side. Only a cloud or two in the sky and spring was in the air. After two hours or so we got to the Grand Island area, and from then on I-80 followed the North Platte. This meant that off to our north there were always that row of cottonwoods that flanked the river.

Around Lexington we stopped for gas and all got out to stretch our legs. The beady, angry stares of the other people at the station let us know that we weren't quite fitting in. In particular the kid pumping the gas acted downright hostile, and pointedly told us that if we didn't like America then we should just get out.

Well, we were certainly glad to get out of Nebraska a few hours later, and not just because of the bad vibes. For Colorado was synonymous with the American West, and although the eastern part of the state was even browner than western Nebraska had gotten, we could all look forward to those lofty mountains that we had seen so often in pictures.

A hundred and eighty miles later we were in the Denver suburbs, where James and Pam had an uncle who they were going to spend the night with. Soon we were standing in a driveway surrounded by dozens of the kind of tract houses that usually housed people who were, shall we say, inimical to our kind. But the uncle turned out to be a big, loose, hale-fellow-well-met kind of guy. Of course Kent and I could sleep in the den.

Sunday morning they fed us breakfast, and then Kent and I went for a walk so that James and Jessie and Pam could visit with their uncle. It was a quiet, pleasant place for a suburb, and, yes, over there to the west was the unbroken row of what they called the Front Range.

Then there was the air that we breathed. It may not have been clean and clear mountain air, but at least it was clean and clear almost-to-the-mountains air. And it felt like it was purifying our bodies and minds. The spirit of me that had felt so confined and cramped and confused in New Haven, and then again (for other reasons) in New York, was starting to unwind and stretch out.

We arrived back at the house and James and company were ready to roll. Our spirits might be stretching out, but it was time to squash our bodies back into that station wagon. And soon we were driving through Denver's city center. Kent had picked up a copy of 'On The Road' that they had and had been browsing through it. He had just gotten to the part where Jack Kerouac was on Larimer Street, and… we were on Larimer Street.

Sightseeing done, we got on I-25 south to Colorado Springs, all the while with the clear peaks of the Front Range constantly teasing us off to the west. Then we turned southwest on State 115, with the dead brown hills of Fort Carson Army Base on our left. At US 60 we turned right and headed west once again. But about twenty miles into it we came to the turnoff for the Royal Gorge. And its suspension bridge! The highest in the world! As a kid I had read about it so many times, had read about what a shining example it was of American grit and determination in the face of nature's obstacles. Of course we had to see it.

James agreed, and we drove the six miles or so up to there. But as we got to it and saw the parking lots and souvenir stands and how small and dinky the bridge actually was, I suddenly realized that there was no real road to anywhere that the bridge connected the two sides of. No, it had just been built so that some promoter could then claim it as the world's highest bridge and sucker all of us tourists into coming. A shining example perhaps of another kind of American grit and determination.

It was a pretty impressive gorge. That is, until these guys had mucked it up. If we had wanted to give them a bunch of money we could have walked out over the bridge. Instead we looked over the edge of the abyss some more, then retreated back to US 60, and started west once again.

It had been starting to cloud over all day, and now the sun was setting and the grey sky was darkening. By the time we made it to Salida, elevation 8400, it was pitch dark, getting pretty cold pretty fast, and

snowflakes were starting to fall. A few miles past Salida the snow started getting really heavy, and since we were now heading for Monarch Pass, elevation 11,400—without chains—we started thinking about turning back. A minute later we came upon a phalanx of state troopers who told us that we had to turn back. The road ahead was closed.

We turned back.

Soon we were all huddled in a booth in a coffee shop in Salida. Looking over his maps, James pointed at something and said that he had always wanted to see the Grand Canyon. Let's head south to New Mexico and then over.

Sure, why not?

A half an hour later we were on an arrow straight road south to Alamosa. The snow had ceased and the sky had cleared. I had never seen stars so bright. What was even stranger was that incredibly bright light up ahead. It never wavered, only seemed to get brighter and brighter. After ten minutes the mystery finally revealed itself, as the one light became two, and the car passed us. Since we were doing sixty that meant that we had seen the other vehicle twenty arrow straight miles ahead. Pretty darn clear atmosphere out here.

We made it past Alamosa and by one am were well into the relative wilderness of northern New Mexico. At the 'town' of Ojo Caliente there was finally a gas station which was open, so James pulled in to fill up. Actually, it wasn't so much a gas station as it was two pumps in front of the most rundown shack I'd ever seen. When I went in to use the bathroom I had to step over the poorest looking Mexican/Indian looking family I could have imagined sleeping on the floor. The bathroom itself looked like it had been last cleaned in 1945.

When we pulled out on the road again the rest of us all slumped over and fell asleep. But James kept driving. Down to Santa Fe, then Albuquerque, then west on Interstate 40. Old Route 66. I would wake up briefly every hour or so, kind of look as to where we were, then go back to snoozeville. But James kept on driving.

Around Grants he did pull over and sleep for less than an hour. When it was time for the eastern sky to get light again we were all awake and in Gallup and eating a breakfast of sorts.

From here State Route 264 branched off in a more direct line towards the Grand Canyon. The fact that it also went right through the middle of the Navajo Reservation didn't hurt, either. The sky was hazy and the sun was just about to rise as we crossed the border into Arizona.

It had been about thirty six hours since we had first spotted the Colorado Rockies on the horizon. Now we were traveling through one of the driest, emptiest, most isolated parts of the West, if not of the Earth. Striated light brown cliffs and mesas and buttes were everywhere. Occasionally there would be the round hogan houses of the Navajo. Even less frequently there'd be a Navajo on a horse seeming to be riding from nowhere to nowhere. There were no fences and virtually no signs that man had ever passed through. We might as well have been driving through the first early morning ever.

But then it was late morning and we were out of the reservation and following the signs for the eastern approach to the Grand Canyon. We stopped for a short while at the canyon of the Little Colorado River, and that was kind of impressive. Then we entered the park and got to the first viewpoint, and…

What could you say? It looked just like the pictures, except that now it wasn't a picture any more. And James didn't have the time, so that we wouldn't be doing any hiking here. So we tried to take in as much as we could, then went to the next viewpoint, then the next. I realized that in a sense we were being like shallow tourists everywhere. But in another sense a couple of hours with it were better than nothing.

Anyway, Kent had already had another hiking scheme in mind, so now we needed to go to a market to get some supplies. Fortunately, by now we had made it to the Grand Canyon Village, and there was a fair sized grocery store there. We went inside, grabbed a shopping cart, and started walking.

After an aisle or so it was hard not to notice that an eighteen year old clerk was very obviously always ten feet behind us. After a few more aisles I asked him what it was he was doing. Very deliberately he said, 'We're just making sure that you hippies don't steal anything.'

I said, 'Why in the world would you think that we were going to steal something?' And he said, 'I'm just making sure, that's all.' We went to the checkout and paid for the grub that we had already accumulated. As we left I noted that whatever benefit we had gained by seeing the Grand Canyon had now totally dissipated.

James now headed down towards Flagstaff, the trip made more interesting by the fact that his gas gauge needle was below empty. But it was downhill all the way, and he was a fellow who liked taking chances, and we were able to limp into a station on the outskirts of town and fill up. Then it was along US 89A, through the ponderosa pine forest that surrounded Flagstaff, and suddenly we were on the lip of another cliff.

This was Oak Creek Canyon, a white gash in the rock that descended from the 7000 foot elevation of Northern Arizona to the 4000 foot elevation of Central Arizona. As a very young child Kent had lived in Phoenix, so he had already been here once. This was now to be our current final destination.

We slowly descended the endless switchbacks of the cliff face. Once we hit the canyon floor there was a nearly empty National Forest campground. James pulled in. His all night driving stint had caught up with him, and he and the girls were going to pitch their tent and stay the night. Kent and I removed all of our stuff from the car and carried it over to a picnic table that we claimed. Blue jays and chipmunks were flitting about in the twilight.

And over there sitting cross-legged on a rock in the middle of the creek was this very thin guy with very long unkempt sandy brown hair and beard. Really? We waited for him to come back on shore, where he noticed us and came over to say hello. He said that his name was Forest Meadow, and that he came from the Bay Area.

An actual California hippie!

As we all sat around the picnic table in the gathering darkness it was obvious that this guy was in a different head space than I, Kent, or anyone else we had known back East. He talked slowly. He talked softly. He was… mellow.

April 25-29, 1967

I opened my eyes and looked up through the interspersed pine branches and newly leafed oak trees. On top of them was the starkest blue sky I had ever seen. We had done it. We had made it out West.

I unzipped my sleeping bag and sat up. Around me were the steep high white walls of the canyon. A large blue jay hopped around on the picnic table picking at our crumbs from last night. Ah, if all of life could just be like a National Forest campground.

Everybody else was already up and about. I got up and joined Kent over at James' site. They had already repacked the station wagon, already eaten, and they were eager to make it to the coast. Kent and I thanked them profusely for the really long ride. They said it was nothing. And then they were gone.

Oak Creek was about thirty feet wide, and at least here in springtime it had a lot of water gurgling by. On its bank sat Forest Meadow carefully reading a book. He looked up as we approached and gently said hello. The book looked like it was about Chinese philosophy.

We sat on the rocks next to him and had a quiet conversation. He appeared to be some years older than us. Other than right now being from San Francisco the rest of his past—including hometown, schooling, and original name—was irrelevant to him. He had felt called to make a pilgrimage to the Grand Canyon, and now that he had done that he was just sitting here waiting for the next step to be revealed. We mentioned how unpleasant it had been at the Grand Canyon market, and he said that he hadn't had a problem. In fact, he had been able to lift a lot of food.

Hmmm.

We left Forest Meadow sitting by the water and went back to our site. The plan was to walk all the way along Oak Creek until it joined up to the Verde River. The fact that there was no trail made the project that much more interesting. We rolled up our surplus Army sleeping bags, tied them to our rucksacks, and headed on south.

The riverbanks got steeper and Highway 89A wandered far enough away from the creek rather quickly, so that we soon felt like we were walking through a wilderness. Usually there were ways to be found along the waterside or through the trees, but we often found ourselves hopping from rock to rock or fording the stream from one side to the other and back again. It was warm and sunny during the day, and at night we would find a place to hunker down. By the morning we would be cold in our sleeping bags, and then we would rustle up a little food and continue on our little journey.

Time successfully disappeared.

Partially we were being those twelve year old boys again without a care in the world. Only now really living the adventure. Partially we were of our certain age, able to appreciate the depth and breadth of nature. As when we saw mountain goats scampering around two thirds of the way up the perpendicular canyon walls. As when we lay there at night looking at the crystal clear stars and contemplating the size of a parsec.

And partially we were these deadly serious philosophy students, almost old before our time. How come so few people cared to dwell on what may lie behind their mortality? Why did they spend their nights staring at drive-in movies instead of the sky? For that matter, did Forest Meadow really think that he was beyond Good and Evil when he was shoplifting groceries?

Around noon on the third day we emerged from the mouth of the canyon and the landscape changed dramatically. For one thing the vegetation changed to small desert bushes. For another all the rocks, all the outcroppings, all the dirt beneath us, was all of a sudden brilliant bright red. It was stunning. We were at the town of Sedona.

Not that there was that much of a town. Just a few houses and a Chevron gas station/market. But it looked like someone was starting to build a subdivision or two in the environs. Which seemed like the obvious thing that people did when they were confronted with the beauty of nature. I mean, you'd want to be able to sit in your back yard and look at beautiful red rocks. Wouldn't you? Inside the market there was a brochure about how someone had just built a snazzy non-denominational church out amongst the red rocks.

We bought a few items and headed south out of town. Again, not that there was that much of a town to walk out of. The red rocks went away, and soon we were out on a pretty deserted desert highway in the hot sun. And soon, up ahead, halted on the side of the road, was an old white bearded prospector, with his Conestoga wagon being pulled by his trusty mule team.

Whaaat????

No, it wasn't a mirage. When we reached him I couldn't believe that a beard could be that bushy. He made Gabby Hayes seem like a sissy tenderfoot. 'Howdy, boys,' he said, mopping his brow. 'Hot day, isn't it?'

We couldn't believe that he was for real. But he swore, dagnabbit, that he was. There was a lot of gold that still hadn't been found, he said. And these mules could get him up places where there weren't any roads. You never knew, son, he still could strike it rich.

Although he also admitted that he did bring in a few dollars by posing for pictures.

This was a little too Alice In Wonderland meets Death Valley Days for us. Anyway the county road we were looking for was just ahead. So we wished him well, hung a left, and after a while reached Oak Creek once again.

It wasn't nearly as enchanted as it had been in the canyon. Still, although there were ranches all around, when we got down the steep banks and were at the water level we were back in our isolated Boy's Life adventure. Only now we could look for arrowheads and pottery shards.

Late Friday we made it to the Verde River. That night we camped on a scenic ledge. The next morning we found a dirt road which we figured would join up with 89A. It was a long hot climb uphill. When we crossed the cattle guard at the end we both simultaneously said, '127'. Turns out that we had both independently started to count our strides at the same point.

That telepathic thing again.

April 30, 1967

We had just spent the night in the Ash Fork, Arizona, jail.

We had arrived in the small town late yesterday afternoon. Interstate 40 had yet to arrive, so the main drag was also Route 66 heading out to California. We walked to the west end, out by the Tastee Freeze, threw down our bags, poked out our thumbs, and waited for that ride.

And waited. And waited. After a couple of hours we were starting to get concerned about how far we were going to make it that night. We also noticed that we were seeing the exact same cars again and again. Teenage boys were driving past us, turning around, driving to the other end of town, turning around, and coming back to do it once more. We weren't even the attraction. This was Saturday night in Ash Fork.

The town's police car had gone past us several times, too. This time he had pulled over and rolled down his window. In a really friendly manner he said, 'If you boys don't get a ride tonight we can always put you up at the jail. It's empty, and the bunks are a lot more comfortable than the hard ground.'

An hour and a half later it had grown dark. We walked the two blocks over to the police station. He let us take our bags into the jail cell. Then he closed the door and locked it. 'Gotta do this,' he said. 'I'm going home and there's not going to be anyone here. But don't worry,' he laughed. 'Somebody will probably let you out in the morning.'

Eight am and he was good for his word. He even had some coffee and a couple of doughnuts for us. And now we were back at the west end of town waiting for our carstopping luck to improve.

It did. Almost immediately a beat up old Ford Fairlane pulled over. Inside it was a guy around thirty who looked like he had been through a lot himself. He had already picked up one hitchhiker. He was going all the way to Bakersfield. Kent and I were welcome to get into the back.

The day was heating up real fast and all our windows were down as we drove the lonely two lanes of Route 66 through Seligman, Peach Springs, Kingman. We crossed the Colorado River and into California around high noon, and a little while later stopped in Needles for gas. It was 110 degrees.

All we could do was pant like dogs and wait for the car to start up and get the wind going through the windows again.

I was trying not to let the temperature interfere with my scenery appreciation. I had been steadily agog at everything ever since Colorado. The wide open spaces of the West were so infinitely more interesting than anything back East. The jagged reddish brown mountains of western Arizona were now giving way to the darker, more distant, somehow more foreboding mountains of the Mohave Desert. The yuccas, the creosote bushes, now the Joshua trees, these were all the strange pictures I had seen in all those books now coming alive.

When we got dropped off in Bakersfield around four in the afternoon I was astounded even more. Real honest to goodness palm trees! Just standing around like they belonged there! And the air. It smelled so different. Soft and warm and gentle. Shadows starting to form in the muted, exotic California light.

And palm trees!

We made really good time up Highway 99, and at nine-thirty we were at a truck stop west of Sacramento near Davis. Exactly two weeks since we were at the one in Saint Paul. But there was no hostility here. In fact, nobody was paying the slightest bit of attention to us. This was really strange. On the road, even when people ended up being neutral or even friendly, it had been a long, long year since there hadn't been stares and double-takes.

But here we appeared to be normal.

A well-dressed, snazzy looking guy was drinking some coffee by himself. Why, yes, he was heading into the City. Sure, he'd be glad to give us a lift.

He had a sports car. Kent bent himself in behind the two front seats. Away we zoomed on the eight lane freeway, the cool night wind blowing around and through us.

The guy was a graphic designer who worked for a corporation downtown. But he had this friend in the Haight who was glad to use his apartment as a crash pad. We reached the Bay Area with its endless expanse of yellowish lights twinkling all over. Then the Bay Bridge and the dark expanse of the water beneath and around us. Then into San Francisco, what he was calling the City. Cool, languid air and fascinating white row houses. Everything deathly quiet on a Sunday midnight except for us. Up a slightly sloping hill, and…

'This is it, guys,' he said. 'Ashbury Street. Just past the intersection with Haight. There's the apartment, second floor. My friend's name is Barry. Tell him Jim Knight sent you.' He paused. 'I'm sure he'd let you stay there anyway.'

We climbed the stairs and rang the bell. The door opened. Barry was still up. He led us past several sleeping people to an empty room.

'See you tomorrow,' he said.

May 1-3, 1967

Kent was up before me, and he took it upon himself to go find a laundromat early in the morning. Which he did, a couple of blocks away. While his back was turned for a few seconds somebody stole some of our clothing. Welcome to the Haight.

On his way back with what was left he bumped into Chuck Apel coming out the door of our apartment.

We had vaguely heard that Chuck had dropped out in late March or early April, but nobody had had any idea of where he might have gone. Well, here he was. Not only that, but he was staying in the exact same apartment in the next room over.

Part of my mind insisted on working out the odds on how a chance meeting at a truck stop near Sacramento would deposit us in the same place as Chuck Apel had been deposited. But at this point nothing surprised anyone any more. We caught up on what each had been doing.

Then it was time for me to get outside and see what all the fuss was about. Down the stairs Kent and I went, down the half block to Haight Street, and…

In one sense it was easy to describe. In both directions, on both sides of the street, there were hundreds of long haired hippie freaks moving to and fro. In the street itself traffic crawled forward fitfully.

But it was also immediately apparent that nothing remotely like this had probably ever happened in the history of humanity. There were no straight people here. There was no commerce being transacted. There was no political or any other kind of rally about to happen. There were no leaders and no organization. Kent and I were among the most sedately dressed persons there.

And there wasn't even a party going on.

We could see that it was true what everyone, from the psychedelic underground to the network news anchors, was saying. Something indeed was happening here. And the fact that they were saying it made it happen all the more. Thousands of people, hardly any of them older than twenty-two, had picked up and come to San Francisco, if for no other reason than not to be the only long haired hippie freak in Wichita or Amarillo or wherever.

We started walking west along Haight, our eyes and minds slowly adjusting to it all. We had seen most of the types before—spaced out guys with the long scraggly hair and beards, hippie chicks in jeans or smock dresses and frizzy hair out to here—although never so many. Was the vibe any different from, say, Cambridge or New York City? Yes, it was. If not exactly the 'love' that was so broadly reported, it did at least seem somewhat positive and almost deliberately innocent.

Haight Street dead ended at Stanyan, where there was an urban Safeway where we could buy some yogurts and pears. This is also where Golden Gate Park began, and we crossed the street and entered it, looking for Hippie Hill.

It wasn't hard to find, just over a hundred yards in. And it wasn't much of a hill, either; just a slight grassy rise of a meadow. But it did have hundreds of hippies sitting on it in the perpetual spring that was San Francisco. We went over and found a place to sit, too.

Fittingly, it was May Day.

There was nothing going on. Nothing to watch. Just people sitting there. And you wouldn't mistake it for a mystical experience. But then again it was weirdly positive. People did look you in the eyes. You could be friendly to the girls and neither they nor you had the slightest intention of being even ever so slightly on

the make. It would be silly to say that everyone—even anyone—there was being downright loving. But nobody was being up tight either. The worst it got was an approximation of peaceful.

After a while we got up to explore the Golden Gate Park some more. It had all the usual park accoutrements such as tennis courts and parking spaces. But it mostly had hidden grassy areas and copses of exotic trees and giant blooming rhododendron bushes. And the remarkably fragrant, bark peeling eucalyptus. Not to mention the climate that San Francisco possessed: Fresh, clean, almost too pleasant. I wasn't one to believe in 'magical', but it was easy to see why this place was drawing everyone to it.

We looked at the Timex watch that we shared and it said four o'clock. Magic, schmagic, it was time to be tourists! We exited the park and found our way over to Geary Street, where we boarded a bus for downtown. Soon enough we were on a cable car.

Up Powell Street. Through Chinatown. Steep hills, office towers, classy nineteenth century buildings all around us. The brakeman was both intense and blasé, and he gave the impression that this was the style for Bay Area blue collar workers. Businessmen, tourists, hippies; these guys had seen it all. They continued to get their hands greasy, and they judged nothing.

We got off at the wharf area at the end of the line and walked over to where some older men were standing, idly fishing in the late afternoon twilight. In front of us was Alcatraz Island. Off to the left was the Golden Gate Bridge. Beyond that was the Pacific Ocean. We had made it to the far side of the continent.

Night had already fallen when we made it back to the action on Haight Street. The crowd now was larger and not quite so innocent. I was disturbingly reminded once again that speed freaks were almost as common as acid heads in our little underworld. My only consolation was the sardonic observation that they'd probably be killing themselves off soon enough, and then we wouldn't have to deal with them. And I noticed that the businesses here in this formerly working/middle class neighborhood were slowly aligning themselves with the new inhabitants.

But one door that I passed seemed to have darkness and bad vibes exuding from it. I looked in, and it was an old neighborhood bar. Now with only a forlorn bartender and a long, empty row of barstools. I almost felt sorry for him, standing there all alone in that bar smell. But it reminded me that—whether speed, acid, grass, or whatever—the one drug that would not be present at this new beginning was alcohol.

And good riddance to it. We wouldn't be missing anything.

When we got back to the apartment Barry was sitting in the kitchen. We went over and thanked him for letting us stay there; he seemed surprised and grateful that we had even noticed. It turned out that he was twenty-six, had a steady job at the airport, and considered this apartment to be his contribution to whatever this was that was going on. I was astounded that someone who was even tangentially connected to hippiedom could be so old and could also hold down a steady job.

By the next day we were part enough of the scene that when this hippie girl in peasant blouse and long skirt approached with wide eyes and a big grin we both smiled and said 'hi'. Okay, Kent was always much better at smiling than I was. Anyway, she stopped and asked us if we wanted some acid. We looked at each other and shrugged our shoulders. She had us stick out our tongues and dropped a little pill on each of them. Then she was on her way up the street and we were on ours over to Golden Gate Park.

We had both found by now that if you didn't treat acid as something at least quasi-sacred, then you were asking for trouble. So we retreated into the park beyond the hippie hubbub. We spent some time hanging out at the Japanese Tea Gardens, hoping not to disturb the upscale San Francisco fantasy of the well dressed tourists there. We spaced out among those giant rhododendrons. We wandered around the corridors of the empty aquarium at closing time.

At some point we stumbled out of the park and onto the city streets. Yes, San Francisco did 'urban' so much better than anywhere back East. But it was still urban, and we were living, breathing creatures stuck now in the cement. As we tried to find our way back to Haight-Ashbury we were also trying to precisely figure out what exactly was going on here. Yes, it was bizarre and amazing. No, there wasn't anything crass or craven that was drawing people here. As opposed to the music of the Jefferson Airplane, this was that intangible Something that I had felt at the beginning of all this.

But that was the point. For better or for worse, Kent and I were no longer at the beginning. We had blasted our minds often enough now to know the score. More important, we had come down often enough. By now we both had reached the strong sense that unless somebody somewhere started living the better life, started making a holy world, then all this would be useless.

Haight Street and Hippie Hill and Golden Gate Park at their best were a beautiful moment. Moments didn't last, though.

And what mattered was what you did after that moment.

May 3-6, 1967

We had come all this way to check out Haight-Ashbury. And now we had.

It was clear to us that Chuck Apel had found his promised land. So had hundreds and hundreds of other people. He and they wouldn't be leaving any time soon. And, as the song said, something was happening here. But it was also clear to us that what was already starting to be billed as the Summer of Love was both efflorescent and evanescent. Peppermint and paisley and young innocent girls holding flowers were all suitably wonderful and trippy. But they weren't sacred. Come to think of it, California didn't seem to do sacred all that well.

And last night it had been so crystal clear that we needed to be involved in something real.

So 22 hours later we were at the other end of Haight Street, standing at the on ramp for the Bay Bridge, heading back for Colorado. Yes, the dream of music was still in our heads. And somewhere in the back of those heads we imagined that Boulder and Denver were hip enough and isolated enough so that we could grow our music and maybe even succeed.

But right now we were focusing on just trying to get some kind of anything together.

Within a couple of minutes a girl who looked like a grad student stopped in her VW bug and said that she was going over to Berkeley. We got to admire the bay in the daylight for a few minutes, and then we were off the bridge, at an I-80 exit, and on our way.

Our next ride took us up towards Vallejo. As we were going around the corner and away from the Bay, this brand new release was played on the radio. In a clear, warbly over the top folkie voice some guy was singing, 'If you're going to San Francisco, be sure to wear some flowers in your hair.' It was so absurd that Kent and I spontaneously cracked up. I mean, even if you granted that the song was sincere, why was it that people equated Love with wispy wimpiness?

At dusk we were near Vacaville, standing dangerously on the side of the freeway itself as cars whizzed past. All of a sudden an older car three lanes over braked dangerously over to the shoulder, then slammed into reverse and backed up dangerously towards us. We got in.

The car started up and all of a sudden we were in the furthest left lane and doing ninety. The guy driving was in his thirties, wound up and restless, and had been unshaven for several days. There was a shifty,

haunted look in his eyes, and from my back seat I could see him continually dart them towards Kent in the front. Other than opening the doors and falling out on the freeway, we were in for the ride.

As we sped through Sacramento he kept up a running patter. About the chunk of metal that was in his head from 'Nam. About how much he hated gooks. And chinks. But mostly those slimy, goddamn gooks. How he used to shoot them fucking dead just for looking at him. How pushing a bayonet through warm human flesh felt better than pussy. Better than anything.

All of a sudden he was down to thirty miles an hour, and cars were almost slamming into us from behind in the gathering darkness. Five minutes later he was back up to ninety and careening from lane to lane. Needless to say, it was a hairy eighty-five mile ride until he got off the Interstate at Colfax.

Now it was pitch dark and we were at an isolated exit. But, hey, at least we were alive.

At two in the morning we were over the line into Nevada and coming down the east side of the Sierras into Reno. Our ride was a sleazy, scummy dude who kept saying that he was going to keep going on to Winnemucca tonight. But first he had to stop and see his brother's wife about something. He dropped us off in the bad, cheesy casino part of town, right next to the train tracks that went right through Reno, and told us to just wait for fifteen minutes.

We weren't expecting his return, but we went into a dirty little all night diner and had a cup of coffee in the off chance that he did. And we pondered our options. The interstate didn't start up again for another six or seven miles, so it looked like we were going to walk.

We started to walk.

It was getting cold. Two blocks into it we came upon this huge security guy of some kind just beating the living crap out of some old drunk. Just hitting him again and again with a wooden baton and the poor guy was just moaning and crying. We kept walking.

We were past Sparks, it was below freezing, and the sky was just lightening when we made it to a new, totally deserted I-80. Ten minutes later a lone pickup pulled up. It was a rancher going back to Fallon. He had no room up front, but we were welcome to ride in the back with the dog.

As he drove at the perfectly legal hundred miles per hour.

Thirty really frigid miles later the sun was ever so slightly up and we were deposited at the Fernley exit. The two empty parallel strips of interstate highway stretched off to the desolate horizon.

But we weren't quite alone. Up ahead was what looked like a grizzled old man who was also hitching. Fair enough, he was here first. We put our gear down.

As we stood there in the cold middle of nowhere, though, Kent decided to be friendly. So he walked up to the guy to say hello. Next thing I know the guy wass causing a commotion. I went over to see what was happening.

'I'm going to Kansas City and you ain't gonna take my spot!' he was spitting out. 'Damn you! I got a knife!' Indeed he did. And his eyes were suitably gleaming with rage. But it was a one inch long pen knife that wouldn't have made it halfway through our coats. We told him as best we could that he could have his spot, and we went back to ours.

Four hours later we got a ride sixty miles to Lovelock, another place that the interstate hadn't bypassed yet. So we had a couple of burgers, walked along US 40 to the east end of town, and waited for a ride. And waited. And waited.

The whole day passed. I counted 565 cars that went past. The entire east bound traffic for a giant chunk of the USA. And absolutely nobody stopped for us. Except some hippies in a VW van. And that they were heading west.

The night didn't come soon enough. Especially since we hadn't slept since San Francisco. We bivouacked behind a billboard.

And the next morning we got lucky once again. A guy was going all the way past Salt Lake City. We could relax for a while—all day in fact—and enjoy the view.

After we made it into Wyoming, though, our ride finally needed some sleep, and dropped us off at around nine pm while he went to spend the night at the giant Little America motel/truck stop past Evanston. The place was named after a base in Antarctica, and it really lived up to its name: dark and windy and friggin' cold. But we didn't have to wait long. A traveling salesman picked us up on his way to Fort Collins, Colorado. And he didn't mind it one bit that we slept while he drove the whole night through scattered May flurries.

On Saturday morning it was relatively easy to get the rest of the distance to Boulder. And so there we were standing at a gas station in a light rain when a good friend of Kent's from prep school named Erik just happened to be driving by. Needless to say, his jaw sort of dropped.

And that's how Kent and I found accommodations for the next few days.

May 11-13

Limon, Colorado was the first town of any size you came to coming east on I-70 from Denver. Not that it was any size. Or that I could even judge its true size, since it was off somewhere down that exit ramp. It had been more like a destination sign for the past hundred miles of hot, dry, lifeless wasteland. And now I had arrived, gotten out of the rancher's pickup truck, and was standing here, alone in the bright sun, with my thumb stretched out once again.

Although I wouldn't be staying this way for long. Because I had just been admiring this Chevy Ranchero going by real slow and stately, pulling a trailer with some classy car from the Twenties perched on top of it, when it pulled over and stopped on the shoulder up ahead. I ran up and the young guy driving said to throw my stuff in back and get in. He was going all the way to Terre Haute, Indiana.

Jim had just gotten out of the Air Force yesterday, and now he was going home with the 1928 Chevrolet that had been his off base hobby for the last three years. He still had a military haircut, but that didn't stop him from digging the music. So one of my jobs for the next thousand miles would be to keep twiddling the dial trying to find new stations as the old ones faded away.

That wouldn't take too much effort. And we were only going forty five miles an hour because of the precious load. So I had plenty of time to enjoy the scenery as we made our way towards Kansas. Everyone had always told me that the western Great Plains was the most boring place on Earth, but I found the endless nothingness endlessly fascinating. Besides, I had lots to think about, and Sandy was happy listening to 'Groovin', 'Respect', and 'Creeque Alley'.

Kent and I had just spent several days in Boulder, bouncing from a dorm room to an apartment, to a small, laid back, flowers in the front yard hippie house on a dirt road just outside of town. The first half decent 'San Francisco' album had come out by a group called Country Joe & The Fish, and everyone was playing it, especially a song called 'Sweet Lorraine'. Our theory seemed correct. Colorado could well be an ideal place for us to make our little stand.

So here was the plan: Kent had a lot of contacts here from all of his old preppie friends (although, except for Erik, they didn't much like him now that he was a hippie). He would stay and see about getting something together. I would go back East, primarily to see Susan, but also to take care of some piddly personal affairs. Then Susan and I would find our way back to the Denver area.

As we entered Kansas the land got greener and the state highway signs were made out of happy sunflowers. I started to miss the female companionship I hadn't been having for several weeks. I couldn't call collect to Susan's dorm, and I didn't have the money to spare that it would have taken to call across the continent. Even getting it together to send a postcard while constantly moving had been a challenge. Should I be starting to feel a little guilty about not having put some more effort into maintaining contact? Maybe. But on the other hand, soon we would be back together again.

Within forty-eight hours at the outside.

We slowly made our way across the Kansas farmscape. Trees started to appear. The sun was going down as we neared Topeka. At some point in the night Jim pulled over at a rest area in Missouri and we slept for a few hours sitting up. Mid morning we were in Illinois. Around two he dropped me off in Terre Haute.

The Interstate ended for a while, and at four-thirty I was only ten miles further on tired old U.S. 40, walking my way through Brazil, Indiana. But then the action picked up a little, and by dark I had made it up to and exactly the Ohio state line. I was awake at the crack of dawn, was in Columbus by eleven, and then got another one of those really long rides. By nine that night I was back in Manhattan.

But where was Susan? She wasn't at her dorm, although they did give me a number for her. When I called it up she answered. And she was all excited.

It turned out that she was babysitting. Barnard had a little agency where they provided undergraduates to baby sit for actors and other transient professionals. Tonight she was doing it for some new Broadway star/heartthrob named Robert Redford. I hadn't heard of 'Barefoot In The Park'? Nope, sorry. I was kind of upset that now I'd have to wait until tomorrow to see her.

She said that she had been really upset by my absence. That she had been afraid that I'd never return. But that Jon Rubin had told her that if I said I was going to do something, that I would.

Gee, it had never occurred to me not to come back for her.

May 18, 1967

Sunday and Monday Susan and I had our glorious reunion. But we were still faced with the problem of having no place private to have it. What's more, Susan had to study for her freshman year finals.

Kent had been sure that we could talk the other members of our 'band' into moving out to Colorado. But Chris was already into about three other projects. Peter was dealing with the fact that he was flunking out of Columbia and totally destroying his family's vision for him. Woody was a New York City boy through and through, and he had always been kind of tangential anyway.

I had kind of called it right in March. I could hope and fantasize all I wanted, but without a place to be, nobody was going to put any energy into my little band. We would be back to square one in Denver, with only our hope and fantasy to presently sustain us.

And having just spent a month out in the wide open spaces, it was almost painful to have to physically be in New York. So yesterday I had gotten back on the road and headed for—where else?—New Haven.

Now I was here, and once again I realized that the place was a lot hotter/humider, and also a lot greener/growing than one would expect in the spring/summer. And there was something else. All the classic Yale upperclassmen, the ones who would look smashing at the club or on the cover of any men's magazine, were now sporting… sideburns. Not big bushy ones, to be sure. But there nonetheless. And wasn't their hair length creeping down to touch the tops of their sport coats?

It was astonishing. The very people who a few short months ago basically drummed me out of the place were now (if ever so slightly) starting to emulate me and my kind.

Did this mean that I had won?

If ever so slightly?

Well, whatever the case, they were all consumed right now with studying for their exams. And as for me, to a large extent I had just shown up on campus for the free food.

You see, all you had to do was borrow a coat and tie, and then go to any dining hall with any of your old friends. Then they would go through the line and get you whatever you wanted. As much as you wanted. All of the benefits of going to Yale without any of the costs or hard work.

Right now I was enjoying lunch with a friend from Silliman. And I was trying to explain to him my current ideas about food. Because ever since meeting Chuck Apel's weird macrobiotic friends in March I had been thinking about what it really meant to eat. After all, I was saying matter of factly, the real purpose of eating was not to enjoy eating but to nourish the body.

My friend stopped in mid bite and looked at me strangely. 'You know, Mike,' he finally said, 'I honestly have never stopped to think about why I actually ate.'

Honestly, I hadn't either until a couple of months ago. But I looked around me at all the fine looking young men in their coats and ties in the sun dappled dining hall. And I realized once again that nothing in any of our curricula had ever prepared us for such basic, basic thoughts.

May 24, 1967

Bob Withers and I had made up months ago. He had also married Janis months ago. Now the two of them were living in a little walkup apartment a few blocks from campus.

I should have said the three of them, since the baby was born yesterday. But Janis and he were still recovering over at the Yale-New Haven Hospital, a few blocks in the other direction. She had named her child Donovan. Donovan? You're kidding me, right? Why hadn't she just gone with Ruby Tuesday?

But Bob was buzzed over his prospects as a new dad. Positively psyched. I knew that because I was staying in his spare back room.

I should have said we were staying, because Susan—her exams over—had come up yesterday. Because today was her birthday. Her 18th birthday. And since I had lost my virginity on my 18th birthday we had deemed it appropriate and symmetrical that she do the same.

Although of course apricot brandy would be out of the question. Which is why we had each done a little acid.

But now that we were lying here in bed together I was trying to figure out what the big deal with sex was anyway. I could see the idea of love residing in the heart. I could see love residing in the Third Eye. But I

really couldn't see it residing in the groin. In fact, from my currently somewhat heightened state of consciousness that seemed to be going in the completely opposite direction.

I remembered back to Oneida and its practice of Male Continence, in which the men never had or tried to have orgasms. Their thinking was that all the good stuff about love—the courtship, the gentleness, the sharing—came at the beginning. And that this also applied to the good stuff about physical love. It was only when people started getting huff-a puff-a about it that sex degenerated into selfish pleasure.

So that if you wanted to keep love in the realm of unselfishness, then you had to do away with the huff-a puff-a.

Of course, easier said than done. And I also knew that it had taken the Oneidans years of religion and self-discipline to get themselves to that level. Indeed, the whole matter was so sensitive that if a member had to spend any time in the outside world, he was then put on sexual quarantine for several months until he had been sufficiently purified of those worldly influences.

And that was in comparatively almost asexual 1850. How could anybody possibly escape the oversexed pollution of 1967?

Well, it wouldn't hurt to try. And when you got high enough you realized that sex was just the nickel and dime stuff. In the meantime, it was Susan's 18th birthday, we had made out commitment, and we were together and alone and at least for the moment without boundaries.

May 31, 1967

Susan had gone back home to San Diego. The mission was for her to not only convince her parents to let her drop out of college, but that they should also allow her to come join me in Denver.

Actually, neither one of us cared if they approved. By now it was common for even fourteen or fifteen year olds to be dropping out of school, leaving home, and hitting the road. So how exactly could her parents stop her? And Susan may have just turned eighteen, but especially among the non-leisured classes it had always been common for girls to go off and get married when they were eighteen. At least she wasn't pregnant.

Although we both knew it would be a lot better if she left on good terms.

Anyway, whatever the reason, she was now on the west coast and I was here on the east one. So why was I still here? One word: Money. About a week ago I had had the bright idea of seeing if I could get a little typing work from my old employer at Physical Plant & Housekeeping. And I found out that they still had sympathy for me, so that I could. So I did.

Dean Singleton at Pierson had also been accommodating about accommodations by letting me stay in my old room for a week or so. Since we were about the only two people left at the college any more we also started hanging out a bit. And I got to know the wife and hyperactive kid besides.

Other than that there wasn't much happening. The Beatles' new album, 'Seargent Pepper's, had just come out, and everyone was playing it. So much for Country Joe. I did get to know an interesting Freshman named Mark Zanger. An intense intellectual who was also shy and almost self-consciously schlubby, he had been psychedelically turned out by Chuck Apel a few months earlier, and was still hurt that Chuck could have so totally blown him off the moment he dropped out.

I wasn't much of a role model myself. But it would be pretty hard not to beat out Chuck Apel.

June 8, 1967

Okay. This was way too much time for the east coast. Not to mention New Haven and the Yale campus. It was time to get out of here.

Seeing as there was a new war going on in Israel, I had spent the last couple of evenings over at Dean Singleton's place watching the news on the television. Around eleven I went over to say goodbye. He was busily reading more about the war in the New York Times, so he barely looked up. His wife Debbie was gracious as always. Their little boy ran around as intensely as usual.

Then it was the mile or so walk across campus and over to the entrance ramp for I-91. I had decided that I would get to Colorado by going across Canada. That meant heading due north through Vermont and up to Quebec, then all the way out to British Columbia before curving back through Montana and Wyoming. Not the most direct route, to be sure. But how could somebody not go across Canada?

By three in the early summer afternoon I was once again in West Springfield, Massachusetts, the site of the humiliation of Bob Withers and myself just over a year earlier. The people around here hadn't changed much, but by now I was used to it. Anyway, it only took less than an hour for my next ride.

There was another big Interstate gap north of White River Junction, Vermont, in the middle of the state. The twilight was getting deep and I was standing on U.S. 5 when a carload of freaks squealed on its brakes and pulled over. Somebody got out of the back and into the front, and I got into the back to replace him.

As we started up again it was clear that they were all really stoned. And if I hadn't picked up on that then the joint being passed around would have alerted me. It was also apparent that they had been on the road for a long time. The driver was saying how tonight wasn't nearly as bad as one other time when he was so wasted that he was hallucinating Disney characters along the side of the road. But he didn't seem to be driving all that dangerously or fast as we were twisting and turning up towards the north, so I just relaxed as much as I could considering that there were four of us in the back seat.

Indeed, all of them seemed pretty friendly and harmless. And then the guy next to the driver turned around to me and said, 'Hey, man, it's no big deal if you come with us and crash tonight. The place we're going to is near Franconia College, and it's huge.'

Hmmm. Kent had talked about Franconia, another one of those experimental New England colleges. It was only two years old, it inhabited a giant old summer resort hotel in northern New Hampshire, and it had a massive reputation for long hair and drugs. My schedule was already loose. What's more, I'd at least have a roof over my head for one more night.

Sure, why not?

June 9-10, 1967

There had been one guy in the car last night who wasn't nearly as much of a stoned freak as the others. The next morning we started to talk. His name was Greg Erwin, he was from Connecticut, he had gone to college in the Chicago area, and just like me he had dropped out of his sophomore year this past January. A tall guy, he had thin black hair past his shoulders, and he always seemed to be slouching a little.

One subject led to another, and soon I found myself starting to hold forth on my ideas about utopia. Why did I do this? Nobody ever seemed to understand what I was saying. Either that or they would want to go out of their way to affirm their cynicism and make the same tired old objections. Even in the occasional instance when they would follow along with me, they would invariably end up saying, 'Sounds great! If you ever get it up and going, let me know, since I wouldn't mind living like that.'

But I did continue, when the occasion arose, to give my long, involved spiel. Because I so totally believed that this was the obvious next step for humanity. Because this was the only next step for humanity. I might well have been bumbling across the planet in my strange, imperfect ways. But I still had that memory of the experience of Perfection from two Octobers ago. And Kent understood. Susan said she understood. Surely at some point I would run across all the others who had independently reached the same conclusions as I and, like me, were just waiting to come across the others.

And this Greg fellow was certainly asking all the right questions. He had also read a lot and thought a lot. Since the town of Franconia was rather tiny, pretty soon we had walked and talked all around it. We made it up to the college, which felt more like a summer camp for hippies, and sat on the patio of that former resort, looking out at the green northern New Hampshire mountains and continuing to talk.

This was one serious dude. Saturday morning he asked me if I minded him maybe joining me on my trip across Canada. After all, he had been hoping to start on a journey to San Francisco pretty soon himself. I said I'd be glad to have him, but I was leaving tomorrow. He asked me to give him a few hours to think it over and make sure.

He came up to me later that afternoon, gave a mock salute, and said, 'Reporting for duty.'

That night there was a party at the big old white Victorian house where we had been staying. I still wasn't smoking grass, but at the center of this shindig was a very large tank of nitrous oxide. And I did have to try everything at least once…

So I breathed in deeply.

My brain immediately felt like it had been placed in a deep freeze. Plus it was about forty feet above the ground. Whoa. I staggered out the screen door to the front porch. Then after about a minute I went back in and had another hit.

Now I was really gone. I had to sit down on the porch step. After a suitable interval I got up and wandered off into the woods, unable to communicate with anyone else even if I had wanted to.

The conifers were so fine and in focus. So were the stars up above. Sergeant Pepper kept wafting out over the cool, sweet air.

June 11-12, 1967

It was hard for me to turn down a World's Fair.

The existence of Expo 67 had certainly come in handy late yesterday afternoon when we had entered Canada from northern Vermont. The balding middle-aged immigration guy wasn't about to stop even two grungy hippies from taking part in the Dominion's big Centennial celebration.

Anyway, I really did want to go see it. I just conveniently left out the part about how we were continuing on to British Columbia.

The Eastern Townships area of Quebec turned out to be a quiet, smooth, pleasant surprise, with lumpy hills and lush greenery. A brand new freeway with signs in French traversed it. We deliberately stopped short of Montreal and slept in some woods by the side of the road.

Crepes for breakfast this morning, and now here we were on the fairyland island in the middle of the St. Lawrence. There was an area for us to leave our packs. It was only $2.50 Canadian (plus a place to change our money!) for our entrance 'passport'.

Now, let's gawk!

I had no illusions that we would be able to see anything more than a tiny fraction of the pavilions in the one afternoon we had. This meant skipping the ones with long lines, such as the U.S. and the Soviet Union. But Madagascar and Barbados weren't very crowded. And they were all staffed by people in colorful national dress. It was kind of like that Model U.N. from high school writ very large.

The one country which wasn't playing along was Cuba. The only colors in their exhibit hall were black and white and red all over. Everything was about the same tired old us versus them. Exploitation. Martyrs for the Cause. All the self-justified killing to avenge the martyrs. Jeez, would somebody pass these guys a joint?

That helped me to crystallize a thought that had been inchoately forming. It was great fun to see that Sierra Leone had been represented. But why had the nice lady there been so adamantly proud to have been from that country? Especially when everyone knew that all the African boundaries had been so arbitrarily drawn? Why couldn't she just be proud to be from the planet Earth?

I was still thinking about that when we went to retrieve our gear. Since the girls handing it to us were really friendly, I took a chance, let them know that I was an ignorant American, and asked them what the big deal was with Quebec and separation and all. They acted shocked. 'But of course we are proud to be from Quebec,' they said almost in unison in their sweet Quebec accents.

Then one asked, 'What state are you from?'

'Pennsylvania,' I said.

'Well, aren't you proud to be from Pennsylvania? Aren't you attached to eet?'

Proud to be from Pennsylvania? Now that was funny. I laughed and said, 'I don't think anyone has ever been proud to be from that state.'

The looks on their faces showed me that I was about as good at international diplomacy as I was in all my other interpersonal affairs. Greg and I picked up our packs and backed out of there.

It wasn't that hard to get through Montreal. Then it wasn't that hard to get on the road to Ottawa. As night was falling we snagged a ride with someone who was going just past that city. As I had found out last summer, these Canadians were real friendly, eh? This guy was so concerned that we'd be spending the night outside that he insisted on taking us home and putting us up. He was sure his wife and kids would just love it.

We pulled up in the driveway of his small suburban home. There was a small element of shock when the wife and kids saw the freaky longhairs. But the wife immediately set about getting the guest room ready. And the kids were eager to find out if we knew any Monkees songs.

At least these people weren't into us versus them.

June 13-20, 1967

The next morning mom made breakfast for us. The kids hung around shyly. Dad dropped us off at the Trans Canada on his way to work.

Renfrew. Pembroke. Petawawa. A pleasant, warm pre-summer morning through the northern forest, small towns, and grassy dairy farms of the Ottawa Valley. By around one we had made it about 250 miles

to the small city of North Bay. Then around four we got a ride about 25 miles to the small town of Sturgeon Falls.

And there we stayed. Standing there stupidly with our thumbs out as car after car, both local and long distance, blithely passed us by.

And this was pretty far north. And it was near the summer solstice. So this meant that we couldn't just give up and go to sleep at seven or eight or nine. No, it was way after ten before we could crawl off somewhere and rest. At least there were no mosquitoes.

Wednesday morning we were up bright and early. And we stood and stood and stood there. Plenty of time to get to know Greg better and better. As the afternoon progressed I started concentrating on whether or not I would beat the Lovelock, Nevada, record of 565 cars. And then at around six thirty, just at 547, somebody stopped.

And he was a long distance guy. Winnipeg, Manitoba, to be exact. Finally!

It got dark somewhere between Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie. Then we mostly slept while he kept driving and driving and driving. At seven the next morning there was a mist and we were at the head of Lake Superior in the two small twin cities of Port Arthur and Fort William, each with its own kind of decrepit downtown. Our ride was desperately trying to find some place that was open so that we could get some breakfast. He finally found one.

Now the sun was up and we were headed west once again. This was the Canadian Shield that I had often read about: Grey Pre-Cambrian granite dug out into innumerable lakes, with soil so thin and climate so cold that only spruce and birch would grow.

On a blue sky day like today, though, it was mighty purty. And it stretched on forever.

About thirty miles this side of Winnipeg, though, it changed dramatically. All of a sudden it was flat farmland. Rich farmland. And flat. When he dropped us off on the Winnipeg Ring Road, I remembered that this was supposedly the flattest place on Earth. Seven inches per mile flat. Ten miles away the small skyline stood clear against the flat sky.

The next twenty four hours were a blur of short waits and high speeds. There was wall to wall green prairie farmland until we got to western Saskatchewan. Then it was dry, brown, ever so slightly rolling ranchland all the way to Calgary. From there, as in Denver, you could see an inexorable line of mountains on the horizon.

Seven pm and we were walking through Banff, Alberta. My neck was already getting stiff from straining. Now here were mountains that were built the way mountains were supposed to be built. Giant gray glaciated almost perpendicular slabs with ice and snow hanging all over them. Drop dead beautiful opal green water lakes at their bases. Giant spruce and fir spaced well enough apart, and elk grazing amongst the meadows alongside the lakes.

The town itself was very Heidi-esque. And dominating it were the spires and turrets of the giant turn of the century Banff Hotel. As we stood waiting for a ride, about 150 feet away a bear showed up and started going through some trash cans.

Our next lift dropped us off at Lake Louise, which was even more absurdly Alpine in the summertime. And as nighttime was descending once again, we got another semi-long distance ride.

He was an off duty Mountie who was in the midst of changing his posting to central British Columbia. He had spent the winter being stationed in far northern Manitoba, and he was telling us about how it got so bitterly cold that when they finally had a day above zero everyone was walking around in shirt sleeves.

When we stopped to take a whiz, he helpfully pointed out to not go too far, since they did have grizzlies around here. He was a cop, but he exuded absolutely no sense that we were anything other than adventurous young guys out to see the world. Certainly not that we were anything remotely like dangerous hippies.

This was Canada, eh?

He dropped us off outside of Vernon, BC, at around four in the morning. We slept for a while and then got up and starting hitching due south. We were in the Okanagan, a region of dry hills, long, beautiful lakes, and abundant fruit orchards. By noon we had made it to the southern end. But we had also made the mistake of letting somebody take us off the main road.

So now we were stuck in the tiny town of Karemeos, vainly awaiting somebody to drive us over the hill to Osoyoos. Every so often a car would take the proper turnoff, but our thumbs would be consistently ignored. It was a hot day here by the fruit stand.

Finally at around five thirty we got that ride. Then a mile walk to the border. No problems getting back into the States. Then a six mile ride into Oroville, Washington, a small, dusty, forgotten outpost at the American end of the line. Which was kind of shock, considering how vibrant everything had been over on the Canadian side.

Through more orchards on down to Omak. At that point State Route 155 went southeast through an Indian reservation. Appropriately enough, we were now picked up by an Indian. A drunken Indian on a Saturday evening. Weaving back and forth along a dangerously curving road.

He kept going on and on about the Korean War. About how he had killed his best friend. Sometimes he made it sound like an accident. Sometimes he was sobbing with guilt because it had been deliberate. Then he would pop open another beer and start guzzling.

We drove past the rundown shacks and houses of the Nez Perce town of Nespelem, and he pointed out where he lived, where his niece lived, etc. Then I guess that he was feeling sociable, since he continued on another twenty miles to the Grand Coulee Dam. As he dropped us off I felt so sorry for his pathetic soul, but also so grateful that we were no longer in the car with him.

The Grand Coulee Dam. Another schoolboy wish come true. Yup, it sure was big. Greg and I stood gazing at the almost as amazing gorge, and shared oohs and ahs with the guy next to us. Turned out he was going back to Spokane, so we rode in the back of his pickup across flat eastern Washington for an hour and a half. That night we slept at the side of the Interstate in the non-town of State Line.

Sunday noon found us on a very isolated part of brand spanking new I-90 in extreme western Montana. Thickly forested National Forest mountains were on either side and a rushing mountain stream lay at the bottom of the embankment. We were passing the time throwing stones at a can we had set up about thirty feet away.

Monday noon found us in Billings, Montana. The mountains were gone, and we were back to dry, brown rolling western Great Plains. Cowboy country. A car stopped for us.

In it were two giggly ladies on their lunch hour who were so excited that they had picked up a couple of hippies. 'You don't know how upset our husbands would be if they knew we were giving you boys a ride,' one said. 'They're deputy sheriffs.' And they both burst out laughing again.

They took us all the way to the Little Big Horn, where the Interstate came within a mile of Custer's Last Stand. We stood there in the vacant brown windswept wilderness for a couple of hours, contemplating how unlike a western movie it looked, and then made it to Sheridan. From there a nice pharmacist took us all the way to Casper.

It was now night time and we did what we always did. Sleep by the side of the road. And the next morning we also did what we always did. Stand on the side of the road with our thumbs out. Only this time, before we could get a ride, a state trooper going the other way stopped. And over his loudspeaker we heard, in an angry tone, 'It is illegal to hitchhike on an Interstate in Wyoming. Move yourselves to an exit.'

Fair enough. That's the way it worked. You stood on the road because that had all the traffic. Then if a trooper chased you off you went and stood at the nearest exit.

But as we were trooping over there somebody stopped for us. We got in, and the guy said, 'I'm only going twenty miles to Glenrock.' Then he waited a beat. 'But that beats a punch in the nose, now don't it?'

Yes, indeed it did. And as he dropped us off I was thinking to myself what a great bunch of people Wyoming had.

We stuck our thumbs out again. About ten minutes later another state trooper car came by. Oh shit, it was the same one. It pulled to a stop right in front of us, and over the loudspeaker came a voice that was even angrier: 'Put down your packs and place your hands on the front of the police car.'

A few minutes later we were in the car, me in the front and Greg in the back. And this guy was getting angrier and angrier. 'I gave you one fair warning, boys. But you don't respect the law, do you? Now I'm taking you down to see the judge in Douglas. It's going to be $25 each or twenty-five days in jail.'

That would have been kind of funny if we had had $25 each. But we didn't. And that wasn't the half of it, because this guy really, really hated longhairs.

'You look like a couple of girls,' he kept saying. 'A couple of fucking little sissy girls. You should be ashamed of yourselves. Well, Judge Parker, there's no way he's going to let you appear in his courtroom like that. I'm going to have to take you over to the barbershop and get your heads shaved before I can even take you over there.'

He wasn't kidding, either. He went on and on about disgusted he was with our personal appearance. He just couldn't stand it. Where was our self-respect? Here in Wyoming, men were men. They were real men. Sure, down at the University in Laramie there were a few queers, but that was it for the state. Everyone else was a real man. And if we wanted to be in Wyoming then we'd have to be men just like him and all the rest. Not pathetic guys who looked like queers and who wore their hair like girls.

Not only that, but after he shaved our heads we were going to have to have showers, too. Judge Parker, he wasn't about to let some dirty hippies make a joke of the law. $25 or twenty-five days.

This was some serious trouble. He had taken our presence personally, and he was not leaving open any room for compromise. I tried little innocuous statements like, 'Boy, Wyoming sure is green this time of year!' But he wasn't having any of it.

It was thirty miles to Douglas, and when we were only a couple of miles short I tried my last gambit. 'You know, we're really sorry that we hitched on the Interstate like that. We've been on the road for over a month now. And we were hitching on the Interstate because we were just real anxious to get down to Denver. There's construction jobs waiting for us there, and if we don't show up they're going to give them to somebody else. We're going to have to be cutting our hair then anyway. Tell you what. We've got just enough money left for a bus ticket. If you let us off the hook we'll take the bus. And we'll be out of Wyoming by tonight.'

Against the odds it worked. 'Well, I wouldn't want to waste the judge's time and the county's money with you two sissies anyway. There's a bus heading to Denver at four in the afternoon. But I'm going to get on the radio and alert every trooper in Wyoming about you boys. So you'd better not be lying.'

He pulled up to the tiny little bus station and let us out. Whew.

We went into the little attached lunch counter to have a coffee. Next to us was sitting a whippet lean cowboy complete with cowboy hat. There was something about him that suggested that he wasn't from around here. So it didn't hurt to ask him if he just happened to be heading towards Cheyenne.

He was.

Thus followed a strange three hour drive. He was taciturn, except for the times that he was saying something like, 'I've heard that certain guys, when they're out on the range, they castrate the sheep by putting the testicles in their mouth and just biting them off. I could never do that.' And the drive was interrupted by a hailstorm that was so vicious that we had to pull off the road and just pray that the windshield wasn't smashed by the ice rocks.

And then we were in Cheyenne. Only five miles from Colorado. So near… But that trooper had put the fear of something in me. I went into a restaurant by the exit and called Kent collect. He said that he actually had a prior commitment. But he'd get a hold of a friend of a friend, and that within a couple of hours I would be saved from Wyoming.

June 22, 1967

While I had been back East for a month, Kent had gotten a girlfriend.

The University of Denver was not one of those schools that high achieving high school seniors fought each other to get into. In fact, I had never even heard of it. And once its existence was brought to my attention I assumed that it must be some public sort of place, sort of like the University of Colorado.

But not only was the University of Denver a private concern, it was also extremely well known amongst certain circles. For this was the college you went to if you were rich. Really rich. Not really rich and also smart enough to get into Harvard or Yale. Just really rich.

Although I knew from long experience by now that rich wasn't nearly as rich as it was made out to be. Maybe it never really was. But there was something about the way that most all of us had grown up in the Fifties and such. For instance, back in high school the richest guy in Allentown owned a trucking company and a famous department store. But he was also an art collector, and they literally had a Picasso in their bathroom. I knew this because his daughter went to the same local public high school that I did. And their bathroom was part of the perfectly modest house that they inhabited. And when I went over there the parents were perfectly modest people.

Likewise at Yale the economic background of the group I was in ranged from full scholarship to absurdly wealthy. Yet strange to say, even though Society was stupid and corrupt and failing, still we had all been so imbued with the ideal of Democracy that nobody thought in those terms at all.

And to the small extent that the snotty preppie vision still existed at the beginning of my freshman year, for the past two years I had been witnessing its disintegration right in front of my eyes. And now, as I had just seen last month, the straightest most Joe-College Seniors at Yale were now wearing sideburns.

So that we were at the point that rich was something that no one, including rich kids, was really into any more. On top of that if you were rich you were still stuck with all the guilt and/or neurosis that having grown up rich entailed. Besides which, if you were a rich kid drugs were always available. All of this meant that it was more than usually difficult for a young man or woman to cut themself free from all that.

Back in the 1930s Karen Hawkinson's grandfather had invented (among other things) the first practical process for retreading tires. Her parents had already had four children and were in their forties when she

was conceived, so she was their precious baby. She had grown up in Minneapolis amongst the daughters of Norway and Sweden.

Not that she was University of Denver rich. Just University of Denver affluent. And I didn't suppose that there had ever been any economic level where there weren't certain young women who felt like they just didn't fit in, and who spent long minutes staring out of windows hoping for someone to come and take them away.

As soon as I saw Kent and her together it was obvious that the two of them did fit. He was a little smaller than the norm. So was she, in perfect proportion. He was good looking without being ridiculously so; so was she. Her ever so slightly blonde hair was very straight and very long. She was absolutely committed to never ever again being a little rich (or even affluent) girl, but other than that there had no particular intensity she wanted to experience or axe she wanted to grind. Right now the situation was simply that she had fallen head over heels in love with Kent.

It was so cute and touching. In fact, I had to immediately start calling them Karen and Cubby, after the disturbingly precious youngest Mouseketeers of our youth.

They had gotten together just a few days after I had departed Denver, so they had now been a couple for over a month. And less than a week earlier they had rented (for $70) this small house here on Logan Street. It was a strange area of town: The Governor's Mansion was a block away, and a derelict named Leo the Cat Man kept sleeping in the tiny back yard.

But the place was ours. Now it was nighttime and we were sitting around a small empty living room trying to figure out that next stage. Greg was all eager to continue on to California tomorrow. But he was still more than half-psyched by my dreams of utopia. And he was planning on heading back in a month or so.

I guessed that after we took him to the highway tomorrow we'd be cruising the Goodwill shops on Larimer Street looking for mattresses and such.

June 23, 1967

Now I had gotten a girlfriend, too.

We had all just gone out to the airport in Karen's Buick Skylark and picked up Susan and her three blue suitcases. Her parents had yelled and screamed, but in the end, like a good English professor and wife, had caved. They had even paid for her plane ticket.

Now we were heading over to where Kent was going to buy his new truck.

New to him, that is. Somehow he had gotten his parents to front him the $150 needed to purchase a dark green '50 Ford pickup.

Now we'd have something to haul those mattresses around in.

June 30, 1967

It had been a busy week.

License plates for the truck. Cheap and minimal furniture for the house. Then I noticed that Susan had taken up smoking again. C'mon, if we can't come up with enough self-discipline not to do that, why are we even bothering? She looked at the cigarette she was holding, stubbed it out, and threw away the pack.

There, that's going back to Nature. And her slightly blondish hair (whoa, that's right, she's Scandinavian, too) was contributing, too, growing quickly and thickly from the extreme shortness it had been when we had met.

Kent and Karen had discovered that if you climbed up a certain tree and then shimmied out its branch you could drop yourself down into the Denver Zoo after hours. So one night at two am, suitably chemically adjusted, we did just that. Just us and the animals staring back at us. And the loudly squawking peacocks.

Another night we went out to an empty Red Rocks Amphitheater and imagined ourselves playing there. Yet another night we snuck into a luxury apartment building a few blocks away and used their swimming pool. Today Kent and I had started a little engineering project. There was this giant empty lot across the street that had a giant mound of dirt upon it. So we had spent hours constructing a marble bobsled run down the whole thing.

Oh yeah. And yesterday Kent and Karen had gone for a drive in her Skylark way up into the mountains. And there they had found a house for us to rent. We would be moving there next week.

PART 6

July 4, 1967

Just because I had been thinking about the existence of nutrition for the past several months didn't mean I was necessarily doing anything about it. What with cadging meals from everybody and everyone. And then trying to find any food at all whilst hitchhiking through Saskatchewan and the like.

Now Kent was so jazzed because he had found this meat market way out on Colfax that had Flank Steak @ 59 cents a pound! Ground Chuck @ 29 cents a pound! Hot Dogs @ 23 cents a pound! And, hey!, it was the Fourth of July.

So the two of us were out in the almost non-existent back yard of the little house on Logan Street, getting the charcoal all fired up on the 75 cent grill we had gotten at the Goodwill, and turning the hamburger patties around. Inside the girls were working on some token vegetables. To really get in the spirit, we had even bought a six-pack of the 3.2 beer that under-21s could buy in Colorado. Not to mention that it was Coor's beer, that oh so with-it brand name that you couldn't purchase east of the Rockies.

And why wouldn't we be in a festive mood? Our long, hard two weeks in the big city were coming to an end. In a couple of days we would be moving to that little dream house up by the Continental Divide.

We busily consumed our little picnic. Then we all got in Karen's Skylark and went to a drive-in where we could see tonight's fireworks display. Except that a block away from it we pulled over and Kent and Karen squeezed themselves into the car's not very large trunk. Then Susan and I drove in alone. When we got to a good spot in the back, Kent and Karen got out and we all sat on the hood and watched the fireworks. Then we saw two terrible movies.

Independence Day in the Summer of Love.

July 7, 1967

Silver Plume sat at 9,120 feet above sea level. It had been one of Colorado's very many important silver mining towns in the 1890's, with any number of mines honeycombing the area. There hadn't been much happening in the years since, with only about a hundred or so residents now. A small grid of dirt streets connected small fenced yards containing small Victorian houses in various states of repair.

It would have been much more isolated and ghost town-ish if U.S. 6 didn't skirt its southern edge. Ten miles to the west said highway climbed up over 11,990 foot Loveland Pass. Fifty miles due east was Denver.

And U.S. 6 wouldn't have been so bad if they weren't in the middle of replacing it with Interstate 70. The road had been completed from Silver Plume up to where the switchbacks started up towards Loveland. That was where they had just started work on the giant Eisenhower Tunnel. Heading east they were in the process of finishing up blasting away the side of an entire mountain so as to get the two miles and a thousand feet down in elevation to Georgetown in one straight line.

But it really wasn't that bad once you got more than a block away from the construction. Then you were walking around in the nineteenth century. Many of the small front yards of the well kept Victorian homes were awash in flowers. Many of the wrought iron fences were the originals of seventy years ago. Through the middle of town ran burbling Clear Creek, the water of which, forty miles downstream, was turned into that Coors beer. If you walked one way on the old main street you would go past a giant brick schoolhouse originally built when the town had hundreds of students. If you walked the other way about a block or so there was an old 'downtown' of mostly empty former stores and offices and such with their more than authentic Old West false fronts.

Smack dab in the middle of the former main street, right where the shorter street from U.S. 6 came into it, was the little white with green trim Victorian house, complete with copulas and turrets and green wrought iron fence, that we had just rented. It had no back yard, but rested against the side of the mountain that went up 3,000 or so feet above us. From the front yard Clear Creek was less than half a stone's throw away. Across the 'valley' a long, tree covered dark green ridge that rose several thousand feet up filled most of the line of sight.

Having just seen the Canadian Rockies, the Colorado version seemed tame in comparison. From where we stood there were no distinct peaks, no glaciated cwms, just that long granite ridge. Then again, we weren't missing out on clear, crisp high altitude air. Or the green grass and bright flowers of an alpine summer that was always spring. Or the mighty darn cute dirt street passing on by.

It beat the hell out of Logan Street. Plus for that matter anywhere else that I'd ever lived.

Oh, and one other thing. So far there had been exactly one rock band from Denver that had ever had any kind of national mention, even if it had been very minor. This was Lothar & The Hand People, and their claim to obscure fame was that their signature instrument was a theramin, an 'electronic' musical invention from the 1920s that had been responsible for all those woo-oo-eee scary sounds in old horror movies. And, coincidentally, last summer they had lived in this exact same house.

Woo-oo-eee.

July 10, 1967

In the short term everything was fine. Karen had some money in her account (courtesy of her parents) so the rent was covered. We would start having to generate some funds of our own soon, but Karen and Susan were already researching waitressing jobs down in Georgetown.

For the medium term Kent and I were fine tuning our dreams of musical glory. We didn't even have a guitar with us, so clearly we had to come up with a way to secure equipment. We also obviously had to figure out how to find other musicians.

The long term had to do with eastern British Columbia.

That location had been determined by me last fall, when I had decided that somewhere in that area was about as isolated a place as it was possible to get to in North America. And the reason I had been looking for isolation was that it had been very clear to me that if a new society were ever going to be created, certainly at the beginning it would have to shut itself off from the rest of the world.

After all, the only reason for creating a new world would be if the old giant one that surrounded you wasn't working. If it were corrupt and dying. And if this were the case, then why would any sane person want to be influenced by that?

For instance, when Oneida had been founded central New York was the middle of nowhere. And one could argue that their much greater interaction with the rest of the world thirty years later contributed to their dissolution. So getting away from everybody else would be critical.

But I knew that isolation alone wasn't sufficient. The people of Oneida weren't just rejecting the world. They also had a specific, agreed upon vision both of what spirituality entailed and how to go about achieving it. And that was the larger point. John Humphrey Noyes hadn't started out intending to create a utopia. Their community had naturally grown out of the group's trying to sort out the most harmonious way to reach their shared, specific vision.

Not that I believed the same specific beliefs that they had had, nor gave the primacy that they gave to the New Testament. Although I did find it amazing that many of the conclusions that they reached were remarkably similar to many of the ones I had reached from a totally different perspective. And it was most instructive, especially if you were a non-Christian, that the first verses of the Book of Acts had Jesus' disciples pooling everything they had in common.

It was also instructive that the only other examples I had found of utopian communities succeeding for at least ten or twenty years with a modicum of harmony and sanity were ones that had not only evolved organically and unintentionally, but whose entire focus of being was religious in nature.

For instance, the Shakers had been far more numerous and more far-flung than Oneida, with at one point having over twenty distinct communities. They had also been longer lasting, having started in the 1780s, and with there still being a couple of elderly members alive in 1967. They were famous for the utter simplicity of their furniture and dress, which had been a result of their extremely intense monasticism.

Right now—courtesy of the Denver Public Library—I was reading about the Rappites, several hundred German peasants who had followed the spiritual teachings of one Jakob Rapp. They had all emigrated to western Pennsylvania around 1790 (when that was the western frontier) and built up a prosperous communal settlement. Then they picked up stakes, moved to the empty Indiana territory, and created a town called Harmony.

(In 1814, after they decided to move back to Pennsylvania, they sold the property to Robert Owen, the Scottish industrialist and 'modern' (ie anti-religious) thinker. His intentional community of New Harmony was a quick and utter failure, and had always been presented as a prime example of why 'utopias' didn't work.)

The specifics of the Rappites' story were fascinating, but what really interested me was the fact that, outside of procreation, all of the married couples were supposed to live celibate lives. And of course the most distinguishing aspect of the Shakers had been their total celibacy. So it was more than intriguing to ponder that the only way you could have a successful Community was through the repression of sexuality.

Of course, that was the beauty of Oneida. Because it certainly appeared that they had figured out the way of separating love from lust. Or sublimating the lust. Or finding its higher octave. Or doing whatever it was that they had succeeded in doing..

I knew that, except for glimpses, I wasn't at that level of self-control or ascendancy yet. But I also knew that the people of Oneida had been human beings, too. But they had nonetheless achieved their moment of Heaven on Earth.

And in the long term, there wasn't anything else worth doing that was remotely close.

July 12, 1967

Our landlord was 76-year-old Dave Collins.

Down in Denver we had felt the sense of a city on the proverbial grow. But in the midst of all the new freeways and subdivisions, you could still feel a tiny little something of the sense of Western isolation and the frontier and Buffalo Bill's grave that had always characterized the place.

Up here in the mountains this was true in spades. Because even though the Rockies were already famous for their skiing (a major reason why all those rich kids went to the University of Denver), the ski areas were in only a few little pockets, and to get there you had to get over any number of near 12,000 foot high passes in the winter.

The real Colorado had to do with any number of small-to-large mining towns from the nineteenth century, many in highly improbable locations. And although most of the mines involved had been shut down long ago, the people who remained were of that old culture: Not only highly independent, but also highly tolerant of the independence of others.

Dave Collins had lived in Silver Plume his entire life. Which meant that he had been a kid back in the 1890s. Back when there were those hundreds of other children to go to that big red brick schoolhouse. It was almost awesome to be able to talk to someone who had actually lived through the Old West.

He was easy to talk to, too. And what he had to say was always consistently cheerful and optimistic. He and his wife would often be sitting on rocking chairs on the porch of their house about a block or so away. Just hanging out and happy to talk.

He had a number of properties for sale in town. Down the street toward the schoolhouse there was a big, white two-story Victorian that he wanted $10,000 for. Our place he would let go for $7.500. These were sums far beyond what I could imagine coming up with. Not to mention that I couldn't conceive of being tied down to a property.

Kent, on the other hand, and even though he came from only a slightly less modest background than I, envisioned himself owning one of them. Settling down. So he thought about how maybe his parents could help with the down payment. Or perhaps Karen's parents, once he got to know them…

I had to keep reminding him about eastern British Columbia and all that.

July 14, 1967

It was another beautiful summer day.

And Susan was pregnant.

The suspicions had been there for more than a week, but now it was confirmed. Although I supposed that it was fitting—given her youthful health and exuberance—that she had been knocked up the first time that she had had intercourse.

I had been walking along pondering our situation and had just made it to the far end of Silver Plume. Actually, when you thought about it, everything wasn't all that bad. I mean, this was life, wasn't it? What else did we expect to happen other than procreation if we went ahead and had sex? It wasn't like I wasn't already committed to being with her. And it wasn't like she was some creepy neurotic female with claws like Bob Withers' Janis. Susan would make a fine mother.

I did have to admit that all of this was at least a small monkey wrench thrown into the works. But, again, this was life. We would just have to deal with it.

There was even a small chance that I might be a good father.

And maybe I should be looking into buying one of those houses that Dave Collins had for sale.

July 18, 1967

It's good that Kent and I didn't have any work that was supposed to be done. Because we probably wouldn't have been doing it. Silver Plume was proving to be just too damn conducive to lazing around.

It started with the house. Susan's and my bedroom was in the back, six inches from the mountain. We had an old wrought iron bed with a saggy mattress, and you could lie on it and read while a fresh breeze came in through the screen window. Kent and Karen had a similar arrangement in their bedroom in the front of the house.

There was an eighty year old cast iron stove in the kitchen, plus an assortment of pots and pans and dishes. Susan especially was showing a great knack for cooking. Usually sitting in a windowsill was Karen's kitten from college, who went by the name of Monster. Usually sitting in the other windowsill was an orange kitty that we had found after we had moved here. His name was Orange Kitty, and he was especially adept at trapping flies against the window with his paw and then eating them.

Kent and I were often out playing in the street. Over the past two years I had mastered the Frisbee, and now I was as good with it as if I had gone to Philips Exeter or Saint Paul's. Kent of course had always been a preppie. We therefore had always carried at least one of them with us wherever we went, whether it was the halls of Columbia or Oak Creek Canyon in Arizona. Here in the mountains it was especially entertaining to climb up a ways, tiptoe out to the edge of a clifflet, and then let 'er rip.

But there were many more adventures for two overgrown boys on summer vacation. For instance, yesterday we had taken some odd shaped pieces of two by four, had banged them together, and thus had two 'boats'. I christened mine The Argonaut Centipede; he named his Bombastic. We then took them to the west end of town, placed them in that small, gurgling, swift moving Clear Creek, and let gravity do the rest. It was okay to free your vessel from the rocks if you could reach it, but otherwise our situation was totally passive, and we were simply running stupidly along for a mile or so as Clear Creek twisted and turned.

Then today we had scaled the (not overly difficult) rock face behind our house. When we had made it up a couple of hundred feet we were inspired to continue straight up as far as we could go. It never did get dangerous, so we kept going. At some point we passed the timber line. By then we were in total grassy, mossy wilderness, surrounded by shades of dull green and by grey granite outcroppings. We were absolutely alone on the trackless mountainside, still going up.

It wasn't exactly a wilderness, though, since signs of man were everywhere. After all, in the 1890s a couple thousand people lived in Silver Plume. And they had all traipsed around up here, leaving behind old horseshoes, rusty nails, and bullet casings for us to find now.

Our ascent was nearing its end. Up there looked like the final top to the ridge. Another couple of hundred yards and there we were. Must be way past 12,000 feet. Looking down to an uninhabited valley. And over there to ridge after countless ridge. It was hard to believe that we were just fifty miles from a major metropolitan area, let alone less than a mile from that new interstate that was busily slicing its way through those hundreds of millions of years of rock.

Too bad we had neglected to bring along a Frisbee. Maybe with a good throw we could have reached it.

July 20, 1967

Susan wasn't pregnant any more.

Yesterday afternoon she had started having cramps. By ten at night her miscarriage was over and she was resting comfortably. It hadn't yet fully sunk into either of us that she was really actually pregnant anyway, so now we weren't feeling much relief or sadness or anything else.

Well, maybe a big bunch of relief.

Dave Collins' wife had the best line, though. Yesterday at around six I was walking by their house and she was sitting, silver haired and perky, on the front porch. I filled her in on the situation, and then wondered aloud, given our limited financial resources, as to at what point we should consider taking Susan to the hospital.

'Well,' she drawled perfectly in her nineteenth century voice, 'A doctor is a lot cheaper than an undertaker.'

July 22, 1967

It would have been nice if everyone here in the mountains had the Collinses' old-timer virtues of openness and live and let live. Unfortunately most of them had the old-timer vices of clannishness and suspicion of strangers. Especially strangers with long hair.

There was one small market in Silver Plume, up a few blocks where US 6 skirted the town. And the Buckleys who ran it weren't shy about communicating their sight unseen dislike for us. Which made it kind of uncomfortable when they did see us coming in to buy a newspaper, a quart of milk, or an ice cream cone.

Earlier in the week we had taken the truck for an evening drive up to the 11,992 foot high top of Loveland Pass where we had engaged in some mid summer snowball fights. From there we had continued down the mountain to the thoroughly undeveloped back side of the Front Range, Kent and I riding in the open back while the girls drove.

We had ended up in the former mining town of Frisco, which now consisted of one old broken down gas station and corner store. As we had sat there in the twilight just gazing around waiting for somebody to come out and pump the gas for us, these three guys had approached and had then tried their damndest to pick a fight with Kent and me.

Kind of had blown the vibe, as it were.

However, this Saturday morning was a new day. The sun was shining once again in a Colorado blue sky, and we were determined to have a good time. And what could be better than going to that country estate auction that we had seen advertised on small flyers for the past week or so? We piled into the Ford and headed down the road towards Idaho Springs.

The property we were looking for was on a gravel road about ten miles up a side canyon. There was a big main house, a barn, and several out buildings. Just about everything the deceased man in question had accumulated over his long life was for sale. Giant piles of every conceivable kind of item for rural living. Bear traps. Farm equipment. A nearly new Jeep. Household furniture. A freezer.

A large crowd of his friends and neighbors had already gathered. We appeared to be the only outsiders. We stood near the back as the bidding started.

It soon became obvious that everything was selling at a ridiculously cheap price. New top of the line shovels and rakes went for 25 cents each. At least a hundred dollars worth of glass windows for $2. A functioning tractor for $130.

So even though we had no use for, say, a giant pile of windows, we did start bidding on those things that did serve some conceivable purpose. We got a pressure cooker for 50 cents. A fine rocking chair for $2.75. A complete set of Wedgewood china for $4.50.

By the end, when the Jeep had sold for $200, and Kent was cursing his fate that he didn't have that kind of money, we had accumulated quite a chunk of goods ourselves. We started carrying it all over and loading it in the truck.

But when Karen went up to the house to retrieve her newly purchased dinnerware this older lady just totally freaked out. She started screaming at Karen, pulled her hair, and slapped her. It turned out that this was the man's widow. She had been watching all afternoon as all of her life's precious and meaningful possessions were being sold for a pittance. To people who could care less. And now this hippie was walking off with her Sunday best china.

As we drove away once again hurt and angry, we couldn't help but also sympathize. The real bad guys, of course, had been all those friends and neighbors, people who no doubt had known her their entire lives. They had felt no compunction in offering the grieving widow bottom dollar for everything she had.

On the other hand, we were the strange looking strangers. That she could understand.

July 25, 1967

I was sitting there in our living room, enjoyably rocking on my new rocking chair, when this large, angry looking, red faced man started peering in our window. A few seconds later he was loudly knocking on our door. I opened it and was now face to face with Karen's father.

Besides having inherited a small fortune, Dr. Hawkinson was also a medical practitioner. This gave him more than twice the normal amount of privileged middle aged arrogance. Karen had been sending her parents letters describing how she was spending the summer up in the mountains rooming with girlfriends and working as a waitress. But Dad could smell a lie. Especially since her original summer plans had involved an all expenses paid trip to Europe aboard the Queen Mary.

What would motivate her to give that up? Certainly not waitressing with girlfriends.

So the Hawkinsons had hopped a flight to Denver with one of her brothers tagging along. Then they had rented a car, driven up to Silver Plume, and then gone up and down every street until they had seen her white Buick Skylark parked outside. And now they had found her. In flagrante something or other.

It quickly transpired that Mom was even angrier than Dad. Especially once she had stormed into Karen's bedroom and seen some male clothing there. Junior, overweight, pale faced, and so seething with anger that he couldn't even speak, stood off to the side. It was easy to see why cute little Karen was their favorite.

It was not so easy to see how they could be so outrageously possessive over a nineteen year old who was legally free to get married or in any other way be independent of them. So I tried to engage them in intelligent conversation and to calmly prove to them that what Karen was doing heading off to utopia was far superior to their chosen life for her as a spoiled rich kid.

(I did not, however, use the line that they should at least be happy that their daughter was dating a Yalie…)

But I was clearly having problems communicating. For example, I told them that we were into being honest with each other, that we weren't into playing games. 'Playing games?' Mrs. Hawkinson snorted in her perfectly coifed upper class grey hair. 'Playing games? Like Parchesi or Monopoly? We don't have time to waste on that.'

But the effect of having them direct all their anger at me did achieve one purpose. Under the pretext of going into her room to get her clothes together, Karen quickly wrote Kent a check for the balance of her checking account. She also wrote down the telephone number of a trusted friend in Minneapolis. In return he gave her his treasured copy of Rilke's 'Letters To A Young Poet' with his own hastily scribbled love poem written in the margins.

Then she, her suitcases, and the Hawkinsons were out the door. The plan was for her and mom to fly back to the Twin Cities. Dad and Junior would drive the Skylark back. There was already no way she was going back to the University of Denver. This fall she would enroll at the University of Minnesota. She would never, ever see Kent again. Never. Ever. And that would be that.

The whole interaction, the entire visit, had taken about forty-five minutes.

In another minute a sort of a semblance of peace and quiet had re-descended. I sat in my rocking chair as it squeaked back and forth. Susan busied herself with cleaning some dishes in the kitchen. Kent in shock had wandered off out the door.

Over by the kitchen window Orange Kitty was busily catching flies.

July 29, 1967

It would be safe to say that Kent was none too pleased with the turn of events.

Not that I could blame him. I wouldn't have been all that happy if someone had come and taken my girlfriend away from me, either.

Well, what could he do? Karen had seemed so right. But now the rich and the powerful had come out of nowhere and were messing with his life.

What could he do?

Over the last few days an idea had slowly crystallized in his brain. If he went back to New Hampshire then he'd be in a much better position to somehow get her back. His parents might have only been hard working middle class school teachers, but they could provide him with financial and psychological support. If Karen's parents realized that he was no longer with his crazy, drug addled hippie friends, then they might see him in a better light.

If he could just get her to New Hampshire with him. Then they might… Then we could all… Then…

Well, that would all work itself out in time. Right now he just had to get the hell out of here. He just had to get the hell back over there.

He had to get going.

August 2, 1967

But first there was the small matter of our pre-induction physical.

My local draft board was in Allentown. Kent's was in New Hampshire. He had dropped out of college a few months after me. But we had both received notices to go to Idaho Springs today.

I had my letter from the Connecticut shrink. While Kent was in Denver by himself in May he had gone to a clinical psychologist there who had written a strong letter for him. We both felt semi-confident as we drove the fifteen early morning miles down the mountain.

Silver Plume was about as Victorian quaint and cute and empty as a place could be. Georgetown was even more Victorian quaint, better populated, and somewhat of a tourist draw. Idaho Springs somehow had the vibe of a depressed industrial town in the middle of the Rockies. The people there tended to make the folks in Frisco or at that auction we attended seem downright down home and friendly.

Then you added in the hostility of the military mindset in the midst of all that on a bright Wednesday morning...

Welcome to the Army! First there was the dehumanizing step of having to remove all your clothes except for your Jockey shorts and stand around all pale and awkward with the forty or so other 18-20 year olds who were glaring with unconcealed disgust at the two longhairs among them.

Then forming lines and slowly waiting to be measured, weighed, poked, and prodded. Endless forms and questionnaires to fill out. (You mean I can't get out for having flat feet any more?) Finally the thirty second interview with the doctor as to any conceivable reason why they shouldn't take you.

Kent and I had kept our letters in our grubby little hands the whole while. Each of us in turn handed our document over to the doc. Each time he read it superficially and dismissively, then called over the sergeant or whoever and they each did their best to mock the 'poor little nutty boys' who were trying to get out of serving their country.

Kent was burning up with humiliation. After all, he had spent his life liking people and trying to be nice to them, and was almost always totally unprepared for such nastiness. Me, I was from Allentown. That would get anyone used to not expecting to receive anything but that.

At any rate, who cared? The letters would now go in our files. And it was the local boards back in Allentown and New Hampshire that would be making the real decisions anyway.

August 6, 1967

Yesterday Kent and I had taken his beloved old green Ford pickup truck up for one last spin in the high backcountry. Snaking steeply up from the south side of Georgetown was a dirt road that the sign said headed towards 11,669 foot Guanella Pass. It was time to follow it to its destination.

It hadn't taken long for us to be up in the middle of windswept tundra. Dirt tracks kept branching off and beckoning to nowhere, and we were soon following them. Sometimes they led to the remnants of old cabins or even tiny towns. Often they just petered out.

We had been pretty impressed. And it would have been even more otherworldly if it hadn't been Saturday and there hadn't been any number of other people from Denver out in their Jeeps and trucks and whatever. On the other hand, this had kind of given it all the flavor of a giant picnic outing that we all were sharing.

So how to top that today? How about going spelunking after a fashion?

There must have been at least a dozen old mines within a mile or so of downtown Silver Plume. One in particular stood at the west end of our dirt street less than a quarter mile away, and it seemed to be constantly inviting us to enter. So late this afternoon we got out our trusty flashlight, checked to make sure that the batteries still worked, and headed on over there.

There was wooden bracing right at the entrance, just like in the old westerns. There was also an upside down, rusted out old ore cart. Twenty feet in and we were in pitch and total blackness. When we switched on the flashlight there still wasn't much to see besides a set of rails that those mine carts would have rolled along. We started walking.

Every so often there was more wood bracing. Along the walls we could see streaks in the rock that we assumed were silver. In one way it was kind of boring, since there weren't any shafts sinking down on side tunnels branching off. But in another it was pretty exciting to be in an actual part of the Old West. When we got to the end we turned around and retraced our steps back to the entrance.

It was almost dark when we got out. We walked slowly along on our way back to the house. I understood that Kent had nobody to go home to here. I understood that he now had to do what he had to do. Still it was kind of sad that he wouldn't be here to share adventures for a while.

It wasn't nearly as much fun walking around in the total darkness by oneself.

August 8, 1967

It was six-thirty in the morning. We had all been up for over an hour. Susan had made a big pot of oatmeal. Kent's pack was packed. He had his large piece of cardboard with 'NYC' printed neatly on it. He was ready to go.

I walked with him the three short blocks to US 6. He crossed to the far side and stuck out his thumb as the first car went past. I turned and went back to the house.

Susan and I were still pretty sleepy. We retired to our bedroom and lay there together.

August 14, 1967

There wasn't much to do these days. Karen had left behind a one volume edition of all of Shakespeare's plays, and I had made it a project to read all of his really bad ones. I had already made it through Cymbeline and was just about finished with Timon of Athens. Next on the list was Coriolanus.

Susan wasn't much into playing Frisbee. Nor into scrambling up hillsides. Nor into intentionally pointless competitions. We did occasionally walk over to Buckley's store to get an ice cream cone. More often she volunteered to go get me one, since it was too depressing for me to deal with the Buckleys' stares.

It was better to focus on the rest of Silver Plume being so darn nice. The sun shone every morning. Then the sky clouded up and there was a brief thunderstorm every afternoon. Then the clouds would be mostly gone by nightfall. And the next day would repeat itself.

The rest of the town was so uninhabited that it sometimes felt like a Technicolor nineteenth century film set. As summer wore on the grass in the mostly uncut lawns grew longer. New wildflowers appeared daily. Only very occasionally would a solitary car venture off US 6 and by our house, always trailing a small cloud of dust behind it.

If nothing was ever going to happen, at least this was a really great place for it not to do so.

August 17, 1967

For someone who had started out representing Upper Volta at the Lehigh Valley Model U.N, and then had made it all the way up to the Soviet Union, these days I wasn't paying all that much attention to current events.

We had absolutely no use for television. We never listened to the radio. My only exposure to the outside world was when I would pass the Denver Posts for sale in front of Buckley's store. And unless the headline was in very large point type I probably wouldn't notice.

This summer, though, there had been a lot of such headlines. And most of them had to do with race riots. First, in June the Negroes (for that is what the newspapers still called them) had risen up in Boston, Tampa, and Buffalo. Then in July it was Newark. Then Plainfield, New Jersey (eep, I used to live there!). Then Memphis. Every couple of days it was a new city, new banner headlines, new black and white photos of, well, blacks and whites. Not to mention burning cars, burning buildings, and crunching heads.

Finally, at the end of July came the climax: Detroit. Block after block of the entire city. I had surreptitiously picked up a copy and read the front page when it had been Plainfield. Now I actually broke down and bought a paper.

Not that I had any sympathy for violence of any kind. And I had had enough experience with those kinds of areas to know that they bred a viciousness that hadn't any direct relationship to 'repression' or 'exploitation'. Nor did I feel remotely guilty for what some white southerners may have felt today, let alone what they may have done 150 years ago. When I was growing up in the late Fifties the South and its attitudes were rightly regarded as basically being a foreign country. It might have seemed trivial that as little boys we were eager to pretend that we were Willie Mays or Hank Aaron at the plate, but this was in a lower working class area of town where every other word out of a teenager's mouth was a four letter one. And in the middle of a lily white city.

On the other hand, as with the Vietnam war, that didn't mean that I could identify with the 'white' side, either. The police and whoever else made up whatever made up the Establishment weren't exactly preaching (let alone practicing) Peace and Love. From my vantage point Society was way too revved up and it had to change gears right now. And if it chose not to do that, and ended up just grinding itself to bits, or blowing a rod, or whatever the right mechanical analogy was, then why was I obliged to keep paying attention?

But although I consciously chose to ignore the News of the World, I was still sending letters back and forth to the people I knew. Just yesterday I had received one from my new friend Mark Zanger. His parents had sent him to Israel for the summer, no doubt so that he could get inspired working in a kibbutz. But in the wake of that Six Day War he was outraged at how arrogantly and unfairly the Jews were treating the Arab citizens of that country.

Today, as I was walking down the dusty street from the tiny post office, I was reading a letter from Saul Hopper. I hadn't seen him when I had been back in New Haven in May, but sometime in the beginning of June he had finally decided to take acid. By himself. In New York City. Then he proceeded to get on the subway and become completely lost. And have a psychotic break.

He finally ended up wandering around Brooklyn at the break of dawn. He saw this woman walking down the street, decided that she was Lovely Rita the meter maid, and kept following her. The police were called. He jumped at the officer and wrestled him to the ground, pulling the guy's gun from his holster.

He ended up in Bellevue. Now he was back home in Saint Louis. There wasn't a chance of him going back to Yale in the fall.

Wow. I didn't know quite what to think. How could minds be so different, so that under the influence of LSD mine went towards Indian philosophy and dreams of utopia, whereas his went towards totally blippo?

I was just glad that Kent and I had refused to share any with him.

August 22, 1967

Last evening Susan and I threw our sleeping bags and a pile of blankets in the back of the ol' Ford and drove down to Idaho Springs. Then south past the area where the auction had been. We made a turn at the appropriate sign and started going slowly uphill. For mile after mile.

At the end of the road we were two hundred feet below the summit of 14,264 foot high Mount Evans, one of the three monadnocks (outlying peaks) of the Front Range. Not surprisingly, we were the only people there in the little parking lot as night fell. We put down the tailgate, got in the back, and arranged the blankets around and above us. Then we lay there looking up through the thin atmosphere at the incredibly starry sky.

In due course we fell asleep. Though we kept waking up because of the cold. At some point there was just enough light in the sky to see and my eyes were moving around. Less than twenty feet away from us was a big bighorn sheep with really big horns. Amazing. I looked at him for about thirty seconds. Then I must have made a move because he took off with bighorn bounds.

I rustled around and found the thermometer that we had brought along. Ten degrees. Susan was still sleeping so as quietly as I could I got up and got out. I was already wearing my coat; I somehow got my boots on. Then I walked up the little rock trail to the true summit of the mountain.

The Colorado Rockies are not mountains so much as the results of a really high plateau having been eroded away. This is why there are so many peaks above 14,000 feet, but none above 14,500. I already knew that fact. What I didn't know was how it displayed itself. Especially when the sun was high enough only to light up the tippy tops of each of those pinnacles for over a hundred miles to the west of me.

Up here there was nothing trite about the fact that a new day was dawning.

August 24, 1967

I heard from Kent today. He had gotten to Connecticut on the 10th, stayed there for a few days, and then had made it back home to New Hampshire on the 15th. Meanwhile Karen had gotten a job at a car rental place shortly after her return to Minneapolis. About a week ago a friend of hers had suggested that she go see Legal Aid. They had confirmed that indeed she was of age and that indeed her parents could no longer control her life. So two days ago she had bicycled to work, gotten and cashed her paycheck, got a ride to the airport and bought a one way plane ticket to Boston. From there she had taken a bus to central New Hampshire along with a paper bag full of worldly goods.

Karen and Cubby were now very seriously considering getting married. In the meantime, Kent had this idea:

Why didn't we regroup back in New Haven? It should be relatively easy for us to get some kind of flunky jobs at Yale. We might also be able to get one of those off season beach rentals. If we were seriously going to do music, then it should be much easier to find musicians back where we already knew a bunch of people.

I had to agree that he was making some good points. What's more, here in Silver Plume Susan and I had next to no money and next to no prospects for getting any. The idyllic high mountain summer was coming to an end. Soon it would be cold. It was time to leave.

And there was something else neat about the plan. Because now that we had our own vehicle I could plan a winding journey through many obscure parts of the country that I had always wanted to see.

The future once again had a focus.

August 27, 1967

Today Greg showed up from his summer long Summer of Love out in San Francisco.

He had stories to tell. Although he did have to admit that they all kind of drifted together in a fog. As did the names and personalities of most of the people he had met. It had gotten so crowded and overwhelming that the city had ended up closing Haight Street to traffic. (Back in the spring one of the favorite stories had been about the guy who would put a nickel in a parking meter and then spend the next couple of hours stretched out sleeping in the parking space he had just rented.)

Greg's father was a building contractor, so Greg had grown up with a work ethic. He also had half a brain. On both counts he had ended up feeling somewhat alone out there. Although he was glad to have been part of something that everybody already assumed would be remembered as a historical occasion, he was also glad to be out of there.

Since Susan and I had been so alone for the past three weeks, we were glad that he was out of there, too. And after he had rested up for a few hours I was excited to be able to show him the wonders of our little inhabited ghost town. Up past the false front buildings. Down the little dirt side streets. Back along meandering and rushing Clear Creek.

When we got back to the house I had an even better idea. I got out our flashlight and then led him past the old brick schoolhouse to the west edge of town and that old abandoned mine shaft that Kent and I had traversed just three weeks earlier.

For the next hour or so we traversed the pitch black, narrow, horizontal tunnel as it twisted its way under the mountain. Finally, we got to the same end that Kent and I had reached. Then we turned around and retraced our steps.

It was twilight as we emerged blinking in the daylight. As our eyes readjusted I realized that besides that upside down rusted ore cart, we were also facing an old geezer with straggly white hair and a straggly white beard. And in his hands was a shotgun pointed right at me.

'Don't you try nothin',' he croaked in a perfect Walter Brennan voice. 'She's loaded and I ain't scared to pull the trigger. I finally caught you boys for trespassin'! And I called the sheriff, and he's gonna come and take you off to jail.'

Trespassing??? There wasn't anything of any value in that old mine shaft. Just empty blackness. As if in answer to my question the geezer pointed way over to where an old tattered 25 cent hardware store 'No Trespassing' sign dangled by one corner. I rolled my eyes. This guy had to be kidding.

But he wasn't. In fact, he was so excited that he was almost jumping from one foot to the other. The whole situation was so absurd that it was hard not to laugh. Except that if I had this idiot might well have shot me.

So we just stood there until the sheriff drove up about fifteen minutes later. And then he had us sit in the back of his patrol car and he drove us down to the little town jail in Georgetown.

There he sat us down in front of his desk and he proceeded to lecture us about our crime. But I kept reasonably pointing out to him that even if there had been a sign, it had not been posted in any kind of clear way. Moreover, there wasn't anything there that we could have stolen, defaced, or destroyed. We were just a couple of young guys out for some innocent enjoyment.

Although he was somewhat of a hard ass, it soon became obvious that he was also well aware of how essentially stupid this case was. So after starting out with some vague threats of locking us up for the night, he ended up saying he'd let us go on the condition that we never trespassed in that mine shaft again. This seemed like a reasonable condition to agree to.

Oh, and one other thing. We were free to return to Silver Plume. But we had to walk there. If he caught us hitchhiking he definitely would bring the hammer down.

That also seemed like a reasonable punishment. And it was a beautiful warm night, too. So Greg and I ended up walking in the moonlight up that straight unfinished shaft of Interstate 70, looking down on the traffic making its way up the corkscrews of old US 6, and breathing that clear mountain air.

August 31, 1967

Sometime back around the fifth grade my mother had saved up enough money for me to go to summer camp. I didn't know anyone there. Nor did I have the most competent of social skills. Plus I was relatively small and skinny and I wore glasses. Therefore it no doubt surprised no one except me when I kept being picked near the last whenever the fifty or so boys divided up into two teams for the nightly game of Capture The Flag.

This started at dusk on a large open field. Each side had a flag which was surrounded by a set number of boys. The rest would try to somehow sneak by this defense, grab the opposing side's flag, and then carry it all the way back to their side without being tagged. Since the two sides were 'shirts' and 'skins' it was pretty easy to tell who was on what team, so this was very hard to do. Many nights ended without a winner.

Unlike many skinny, geeky boys, I was determined to prove to them that I was far better than they had taken me for. So one night, after carefully studying all the patterns, I made my dash. Approach from the back and through their perimeter. Then back through the back, over to the edge, and straight down the sideline. I had captured the flag.

The next evening I was really excited, since I was so sure that now they would recognize my talent. Uh-uh. I was picked in the exact same position.

Incidents like this growing up had drummed into me the melancholy understanding that, whatever it took to be a 'leader', I didn't have it. Nobody ever said that they looked to me for inspiration. Nobody ever suggested that I run for student council.

Thus when my vision of utopia first presented itself I had realized that for it ever to happen required the existence of a charismatic leader. And that although there was a good chance that I had the charisma part down, this alone probably wouldn't be sufficient. But in my mind at least I had gotten around that by presuming that my only job was to present the Truth. And that if I did that then other right thinking people would see it and accept it, and that then right living would naturally follow. After all, how could anyone

hear the real, actual history of Oneida and not want to drop everything they were doing and live the life of spiritual love?

When Greg had arrived from San Francisco a few days ago he had been wearing this weird serape-type piece of useless clothing. And he had continued to wear it every day. But whereas a little over a year ago I had been tripping out on which weird tie to wear to the dining hall, by now I had come to the conclusion that everything everyone wore should be simple and practical. Not only that, but there was enough trouble with the straight world merely by us being hippies. Why should we give them further ammunition by being intentionally outrageous?

So this morning I had made these theoretical points to Greg. And he didn't argue or discuss or complain. But an hour later I just happened to notice that he had thrown the serape-thing out in the trash.

What? I hadn't suggested that he do anything like that. And he had obviously been really attached to his serape-thing. Had he done this merely because he had perceived that those were my wishes and because he perceived that I was the leader?

This was very disturbing.

If this is how it went down, then I had absolutely no desire to be a leader.

September 3, 1967

We were all loaded up. Everything from Susan's blue suitcases to much of the loot that we had bought at that auction. Including my rocking chair, the top of which was sticking up out of it all. We even had some rope and a canvas tarp to cover it all.

Except, of course, for the hole that I deliberately left empty so that on good days I could ride in the back.

But today it looked like rain. Let's face it, every day it rained in the afternoon in the mountains. And our goal on this one was to take the back roads behind the Front Range and end up in Rocky Mountain National Park. So into the front seat went Susan, Greg, and I. Which was kind of cramped, especially with the truck gearshift in the middle of the floor. And also with the two little kitties which were fast becoming cats crawling around.

It was hard to say goodbye to our cute little house and our cute Silver Plume. Then a silent thanks to Dave Collins for taking all our constant changes of plan in his 76-year-old stride. And away we went.

Down the hill to Georgetown. Pick up the new I-70 past Idaho Springs. Take the left at 119 past Central City and on up to…

'Damn!' Greg was driving. But all of a sudden he was furiously pumping his right foot to no effect. There was no gas going to the engine. He swerved over and into a convenient gas station just as it sputtered and died.

We got out and each in turn stuck our head down to where the gas pedal was. It was pretty clear that what had happened was that whatever it was that the accelerator pressed down on had lost all its rigidity. What also should have been clear was that maybe it wasn't such a great idea to have three people with no knowledge of vehicles attempt to drive a '50 Ford pickup along really isolated roads across the entire country.

But we really didn't stop to consider that.

Instead fifteen minutes later Greg and I had gotten some four inch nails from the gas station owner and had used masking tape to stiffen up the old drive line again. And we were back on the road.

Until we got a little past Nederland. There the afternoon rains had let loose a solid chunk of the side of a new road cut, filling the roadway with a giant mass of muddy rock. So then we had to wait two hours until bulldozers arrived and a pathway was cut through it.

We finally reached Estes Park, the tourist town at the entrance to the park, just before dark. Even with the gray rain clouds crowding the valley, even with all the souvenir stores, it was a beautiful setting. We stopped and I made a collect call back to Kent in New Hampshire.

He and Karen were going to be married tomorrow on Labor Day.

We paid our entrance fee, drove into the park, found a campsite, and set about setting up our olive green canvas army surplus tent with its wooden supports and all.

September 8, 1967

It was Friday, and Greg and I were poling our raft across the shallow pond.

Monday and Tuesday we had all gone for hikes up into the high mountains near our campsite in the national park, being careful to take into account the fact of the daily afternoon thunderstorm. Wednesday we drove up the Trail Ridge Road to its summit, walked around at 13,000 feet amongst the lichen and mosses and marmots and such, and then continued on to the western slope, where we waited until the thunderstorm was over to pitch our tent.

Yesterday, after a morning hike, we had driven out of the national park, past Lake Granby, and then north along a narrow road through a much drier, less majestic, ranching area. In the small town of Walden we stopped at the local supermarket, which amazed us with its giant 'ranch size' cans of Campbell's soup and Libby peaches. We bought a five pound can of fruit cocktail just because we could.

We crossed the line into Wyoming, by now on a really narrow road, and passed the tiny hamlet of Riverside just as its few children were walking home from their first day of school. Then we turned right on Wyoming 130, climbed up into the Medicine Bow National Forest, and pulled into a campground.

One of the great things about traveling after Labor Day was that all the families were back home to wherever. This meant that we had this campground all to ourselves. Including the tiny little lake that it fronted upon. And it was a beautiful warm early September day. What better place to drop some acid?

I hadn't taken any all summer. Nor had I missed it. But Greg still had a couple of mild hits left over from his summer in San Francisco. And although Susan didn't care to ingest, she was also quite happy to putter around the campsite and read. So Greg and I washed ours down and then waited to see what happened.

Not all that much. Just enough so that I was thinking that if it was much more then I'd have to concentrate on not letting my mind wander off to where it shouldn't. Meanwhile our bodies were wandering around. That's when we discovered this little wooden raft hidden in a half acre of reeds. It was woebegone and torn up. Clearly some campers had lashed it together as a lark and then left it for posterity.

Suitable poles were lying all around. So within no time we had waded out to it, cleared it of the reeds, and were taking it out for a spin on the 'lake'. Which turned out to be less than four feet deep.

So here we were, buzzed, in the middle of the water in the middle of the afternoon, with a couple of lacy little clouds in a brilliant blue sky, and semi-snow covered, semi-majestic peaks all around. Greg was a suitably philosophic person to hang out with. And we weren't so zonked that we couldn't have a lucid

conversation. He was mentioning again about how disturbed he was about how spaced out all the hippies had been back there at the Summer of Love. We were agreeing about the need for us (and everyone else, for that matter) to stop talking and to start doing the work of getting a new world together.

Although we were implicitly giving ourselves a pass for this afternoon.

I mean, who would want to have to work on such a wonderful day?

September 9-11, 1967

This morning we had pitched camp bright and early and headed east. Before we had reached the summit of Snowy Range Pass, however, we had run out of gas.

Speaking of spaced out hippies...

To our credit it turned out that the gas gauge wasn't reading correctly. Also to our credit we did have an empty gas can. So Susan, being much more winsome than a couple of long haired freaks, volunteered to hitchhike to the nearest gas station and return. And—it being Saturday—there was a lot of traffic going by and she immediately got a ride.

Greg and I waited around for two hours until an approaching car pulled over and Susan got out with her filled gas can. We poured it into the pickup, cranked her up, and made it to the top of the hill. Now it was downhill all the way.

Except that after a few miles there were some more 'up' portions. And the Ford only got about nine miles to the gallon. So that we ran out of gas again before we ever made it to that station.

Now this was really stupid.

But there was still a relatively lot of traffic. And Susan was still young and friendly and blonde. So she was soon on her way again. But this time not only was the distance a lot shorter, but she was lucky enough to get this elderly couple who insisted on driving her back to us with that extra gallon.

And this time we did make it to the gas station. So that by one in the afternoon we were driving through the university town of Laramie. From there we took a side road up to join I-25 near Wheatland. Then north to just short of Douglas, the site of Greg and my close call with a close shave of shaved heads. Then east through one of the most desolate areas of the country.

At ten that night we were at a boarded up, closed down gas station at the non-existent town of Mule Creek Junction. It was darker than dark and the wind was gusting furiously. Our little accelerator pedal fix had come undone, and we were shaking a worn out flashlight trying to shed some light on the problem.

But somehow we fixed it. And around midnight we pulled into a campsite in Wind Cave National Park in South Dakota.

Sunday morning we slept in, which was a little tricky considering that we hadn't bothered to set up the tent the night before. It was after one before we made it to the entrance of the cave for the guided tour.

I was kind of excited, since I had never been inside a cave before. But it turned out that they had made Wind Cave a national park not because of any spectacular stalactites, but because of its rare calcite deposits. So that was kind of a letdown. Tour over and afternoon getting on, we drove north through the charming wild burro herd of Custer State Park. Then along the one way, one lane, and appropriately scenic Needles Highway until we got to our campground for the night.

The next morning we packed up and headed over to Mount Rushmore. For some reason I wasn't prepared for the giant parking lot that stood between me and the carved heads. The patriotic commercial razzmatazz before the entrance, not to mention the dancing Indians in giant fake headdresses, hadn't helped all the much, either. And I couldn't quite get the point as to why someone would take a perfectly good mountain and then try to make it look like people.

I did have to admit that, were it not for all the souvenir stands, the Black Hills were a fine set of hills. Not black really, just dark green with dark pines. And a pleasant respite from the bleakness of Saturday's eastern Wyoming. We drove north through the old mining town of Deadwood, whose four story brick downtown buildings (like the centers of Colorado's larger mining towns) looked like they had been last spruced up in 1906.

Then we were in Spearfish, and whoa!, what had happened to those Black Hills? We were back on the dusty brown plains of nowhere. After a quick stop at the Safeway, we continued north on U.S. 85.

Now this was bleak. And hot. It made me long for the lushness of eastern Wyoming. At least there had been a few scrubby weeds there. Finally in the middle of the empty wilderness there was a lonely notice for a historical marker. All right! I was a sucker for these. We pulled over.

But the marker wasn't historical. It was more geographical. In fact, it declared that a few miles to the east was the geographical center of the United States. Really? Wouldn't that be in Kansas? No, the sign continued, when you added in the late additions of Hawaii and Alaska… But then wouldn't the 'center' be somewhere in the Pacific Ocean? No, if you weighted those two states properly, and then balanced everything on an imaginary…

No matter. Somehow it seemed appropriate on this hot, hot, empty, empty day that we should be standing at the center of something.

And somehow it seemed appropriate about a hundred miles later, a little after we had entered North Dakota, that we should get a flat tire. After all, nothing had gone wrong for almost thirty-six hours. Greg and I got the almost bald spare out from under everything else and set about changing it.

It was around six in the evening when we made it to a gas station at the small town of Belfield, right at the intersection with I-94. Great, the garage part was still open. We got some gas and I asked one of the kids on duty if they could fix the flat.

He looked me up and down with about as much hostility as anyone ever had. Finally he said, 'Yeah, I suppose so.'

Greg and I tried to ignore the bad vibes and set about getting the flat tire out and taking it into the shop area. But as the guy put it on the machine a friend of his joined him. And the hostility got a lot more overt.

'You know, my older brother's fighting in Vietnam right now so that filthy cowards like you can drive around this country getting flat tires and then depending on real Americans like us to fix them for you.'

His friend chimed in. 'Yeah, assholes, I'm joining up in three months. Why aren't you there, you lousy chickenshit hippies? Or are you just fucking queers? Is that your problem?'

And in no time it had escalated to 'C'mon assholes. I dare you to throw a punch. Just try it, you fucking chickenshits.'

Greg and I had been shooting each other looks. But my eyes were also darting around looking for something to defend myself with. Okay, a tire iron less than ten feet away. I could probably reach it before he reached me. I tensed myself in preparation.

But part of me was also noting that, so long as Greg and I didn't rise to the bait, all they were continuing to do was to try and bait us some more. And all the while they were continuing to work on the tire.

Finally, after about ten minutes of seemingly out of control cursing at us, they started to calm down. And then, while still muttering under their breath, they took off the spare and replaced it with the fixed tire.

We paid them their money and headed on down the road.

September 12, 1967

Theodore Roosevelt National Historical Park was the only 'national historical park' in the system. It stemmed from the fact that in 1884, at the ripe age of 24, Theodore Roosevelt, in grief over the death of his young wife, had decided to 'retire' and move to the badlands of North Dakota to make a fortune raising cattle.

The badlands were the real reason for the park. Because 'badlands' are a relatively rare geological phenomenon where easily eroded rock in a very dry area (if it were a wet area it would be eroded away too fast) is shaped into fantastical forms. And this bunching was the best group of them outside of the more famous ones in South Dakota.

We awoke under the cottonwood trees that graced the campground along the banks of the Little Missouri River. Yesterday had been hot, and today was supposed to be a lot hotter still. It was a little known fact that, outside of the southwestern states of Nevada, Arizona, and (southern) California, North Dakota had reported the highest American temperature ever.

Over our breakfast we went over the day's plans. We would hike the park's only major trail into the dry stony interior, and hopefully see some of the wild bison who roamed the area.

In the late morning, with a full canteen, we started out. The Little Missouri was pretty easy to ford, given that it was about two hundred feet wide but only about six inches deep. We climbed an old utility road up to the top of the hill, and then followed the trail signs off into the wilderness.

Man, it was hot. But after a couple of miles our efforts were rewarded, and not too far away were a bunch of large, undisturbed buffalos. We very quietly worked our way towards them, then sat and gawked until they decided to leave.

I got up and looked around. Um, what had happened to the trail? Susan thought that it was over here. No, I said, it's definitely over there. This is the way to get back, she said. No, that is the way, I countered.

Susan and I had never had a real argument before. But this one soon got out of control. Pretty soon we were yelling at each other. Finally she said, 'Well, I'm going off this way.' And I said, 'You do that. Because Greg and I are going off that way.' And then she was gone. With the canteen. Fine, it's only a couple of miles back. We didn't need her and we didn't need her stinkin' water.

So Greg and I started walking in my direction, all the while me fulminating about how dumb and argumentative Susan had been. Greg knew better than to get involved. We traveled on for well over a mile before I realized that I had no idea where we were.

I stopped and looked at the trackless waste surrounding me. Okay, I was lost in the badlands and it was close to a hundred degrees. What to do now? I started walking again. After a while we happened to cross a dry creek bed. Aha! We could just follow it downhill until it joined up with the Little Missouri.

Problem solved, and off we went.

As we twisted and turned along its course, with its twenty foot high banks keeping everything else hidden, somewhere in the back of my mind it occurred to me that, given how hard it was to tell slope in these parts, and given that there was no water to be flowing one way or another, it was always possible that instead of going down to the Little Missouri, we might actually be going up away from it. Nah, that was impossible. We were obviously heading downhill.

We kept walking. As we turned one corner I was all of a sudden face to face with a giant buffalo. But she turned out to be the more scared of the two of us, and she turned and hightailed it off. Another time I stepped into an isolated puddle of muddy water and was immediately up to my thighs in quicksand. Greg had to help pull me out.

And still we kept walking. The hot sun was starting to sink, and that nasty doubt in the back of my head kept trying to work itself forward. But what was I to do? Turn around and go back all the way we came when any minute now we could turn the corner and be at the river?

We turned a final corner. And across the creek bed was a barbed wire fence and a sign saying that this was the park's boundary.

Oh super crap. We scrambled up the crumbly banks and looked around us. Endless bone dry wilderness. But what was that over there? We walked along the boundary fence until we got to it. Yes, a utility road. Maybe it was the same utility road that led to the campground. At the very least it had to lead somewhere, didn't it?

We turned away from the fence and started walking. The terrain was gently rolling, in that about a mile away there was a rise that we couldn't see beyond. Maybe when we got there we'd be in familiar territory. But when we did get to it there was just another undulation and another rise about a mile beyond that.

Even though the red orb of the sun was just sinking in the west, and the temperature was starting to cool off, neither of us had drunk any water for the past seven hours and maybe fifteen miles. We were both severely dehydrated by now. Still, what was there to do except keep walking?

Another slow walk up to a ridge. Another ridge in the distance. By now I had lost count. The twilight was deepening. My tongue had swollen up so much that I could hardly talk. Greg was stumbling. 'Mike,' he said, 'I gotta quit. I can't go on.'

As if in a bad movie I found myself mumbling, 'No, Greg. You can't give up. One foot in front of another. We can do it.'

And then, as also in a bad movie, we got to a ridge and… Wait a minute, I recognize that next ridge! It's the last one before the river. We hurried our pace a little.

It was about ten at night when we splashed back across the Little Missouri. Susan of course was totally freaked out. Other campers were already planning for a rescue mission in the morning. Some guy brought some water over and told me to be careful, not to drink too much too fast.

That wasn't any problem. By now my mouth was so dry and swollen that I could barely get a trickle down.

September 13-16, 1967

The next morning we took off and headed back north on US 85 at our top cruising speed of 50 mph. My tongue was still like a giant dry cotton ball in the middle of my mouth. Western North Dakota was still pretty damn hot and empty.

At Watford City we turned right on State Hwy 23. After an hour or so we crossed a lake that used to be the Missouri River before they dammed it. On the other side of it was the aptly named Newtown, since it consisted of hastily arranged mobile homes for all the displaced people who used to live on the river. On its outskirts was a large billboard proudly proclaiming that this was the home of the runner up to Miss North Dakota for 1965. I supposed that you had to find pride where you could.

A half hour later, as the sun reached the peak of its intensity, our truck sputtered and stopped while trying to crest a small hill. There was a farmhouse conveniently right next to where we pulled over, so I walked up its driveway. The nice farm lady there explained to me the wonders of vapor lock, and then gave me a jug of cold water to pour on the engine.

We soon reached US Hwy 2 and resumed our eastward roll. Dry ranchland was giving way to not so dry farmland. Around seven we made it to Minot, northern North Dakota's metropolis of 30,000 people. Ah, a McDonald's. We parked and went over to enjoy our first other-prepared food of the journey.

Remember the two half grown cats we were taking with us? So far they hadn't been too much of a problem. When we camped we made long string leashes to tie them to trees with. They weren't delighted with the arrangement, but I figured that they weren't paying for any of the gas, so they should be grateful for anything they got. While we were driving they were free to sleep on the floor or crawl around on our laps.

One of them, however, Monster, was always trying to get out whenever we opened the door. When we came back from McDonald's he finally succeeded. And immediately disappeared into a giant used car lot next door. So the next forty five minutes were consumed with each of us crawling around under each and every car going, 'Here, kitty, kitty', until we found the bugger.

Back on US 2, and it was soon incumbent on us to find a place to spend the night, given that there weren't many national forests around these wheatfields. But most towns did have a block square 'city park' in their middles. And most of these had signs proclaiming that it was free to camp there overnight. I figured that some of the motivation for this had to do with good ol' Midwestern hospitality extending out a hand of friendship. And the rest had to do with the hope that maybe you'd also be spending some money with them in the morning.

Thus Rugby, North Dakota beckoned. And there was more to the town than just free camping. These guys claimed to be in the geographical center of the North American continent. Now that I could understand and visualize.

In fact, I could actually feel it all rotating around me.

The next day I was recovered sufficiently from my badlands desiccation to once again start riding in the back of the pickup along with all the boxes of clothing and books and such. It may have looked a little strange, but you couldn't beat it for the fresh air and the views on this late, late summer's day. And here in northeastern North Dakota there weren't that many other people to notice anyway.

We went through Grand Forks and then crossed over into Minnesota. About twenty-five miles later there was a tattered billboard which said, 'Welcome to Crookston. Where the Prairies Meet the Pines!' Indeed it was just like in Manitoba three months earlier, only in reverse. All of a sudden the flat, fertile farmland we had been passing through changed to the billion year old topsoil-less Canadian Shield. A little sandier than up north, with fewer granite outcroppings and fewer 'Moose Crossing' signs. But it was nonetheless the genuine North Woods.

Less than two hours later we went past Bemidji with its famous giant statue of Paul Bunyan. By now the woods and lakes and spruce and birch seemed endless. A little more than an hour later we were in Grand Rapids. Now, even though it was past four, it was time to take an important detour.

Who could pass within thirty miles of Hibbing, Bob Dylan's hometown, without going to check it out? I couldn't. By the time we got there all the businesses were closed, so we were never able to find his dad's mythical appliance store. But outside of town we did come upon something amazing.

The reason for Hibbing's existence in the middle of absolute nowhere was that it was in the middle of the Iron Range, the (in actuality non-mountainous) region that until about twenty years ago had been the major American supply depot for all the iron ore consumed by those steel mills in Gary, Indiana, and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Now it was pretty much played out.

But there still was a big hole in the ground from which they had gotten all that iron ore. A truly gargantuan hole dwarfing my previous experience in Barre, Vermont. We stopped and gawked and gawked for a while.

Then a hurried drive down to Lake Superior and a drive along the docks of Duluth and Superior, this time in the (waning) daylight and not the middle of winter. What with endless grain elevators and giant piles of iron ore it made for a lot of big rusty ships.

We were now in far northern Wisconsin. Still a lot of Precambrian rock and lakes and trees. And lots of national forests and state forests. It wasn't hard finding a campsite.

Early the next morning we took a walk through the woods for an hour or two. And then a continuation east along US 2. On into the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and then a Saturday afternoon drive from Ironwood to Iron Mountain. The leaves were in full turncolor, the air was crisp and clean, and college football was in the air. Even though there were no colleges anywhere near where we were.

We poked along until we were past Escanaba and driving through Hiawatha National Forest. A left turn at a campground sign, north a couple of miles, and we had our own private lakefront retreat for the night.

September 17-18, 1967

Sunday morning broke clear, bracing, and cool. We heated up some vittles on our Coleman stove, then sat and ate and watched a loon on the lake. We loaded everything up and I got in the front, since it had gotten too cold to ride out in the open air.

Yesterday I had been singing, 'Let's Michigan like we did last summer'. As we neared the junction with US 2 the directional sign said that the next town to the east was Manistique. So I started singing, 'Manistique a'tique a'tique' to the tune of 'Dominique', a corny popular song from 1963. We got to the stop sign, looked both ways, and Greg the driver pulled out to make the left turn.

CRASH!!!!

There was a huge, violent jerk as the rear of our pickup was slammed into by something. We spun around on the highway as metal crunched and glass shattered. When the truck came to a stop we all looked at each other in shock. We were all okay.

But what the hell had just happened???

I opened the door and got out. In the middle of the road was a light blue giant boat of a car, the kind that Midwesterners seemed to love to drive. And getting slowly out of that was a very elderly couple.

They weren't injured. Just one side of the front of their car had been bashed. I went to look at our truck. Just a busted taillight and a slightly twisted rear fender. I guessed that that's what happened when two tanks collided. Our tarp had even been tightened so well that not too much of our stuff in the back had ended up on the road.

Of course, if I had been riding in the back as I generally did, then the destruction probably wouldn't have been so minor. I didn't want to dwell on that.

But how was it possible that all three of us could have not seen a large speeding car driving down the road? I walked over to where we had been at the stop sign. And I discovered that if you stood at one exact spot, then a combination of direction signs blocking a slight dip in the main road meant that if an approaching car were just exactly at one position, then you wouldn't see it. If we had stopped a foot in front or behind that spot, then the optical delusion wouldn't have existed.

Not that that didn't mean that we weren't responsible. By now the state trooper had arrived and was taking down information. Uh, nope, no insurance. We hadn't gotten that far. Well, at least they had Greg's address in Connecticut for where they could send the bill.

Susan and I finished picking up what we could. We tightened the tarp down once again. Greg turned the key and the engine started up. We started slowly rolling down the road. Everything seemed to be working. We picked up the pace a bit, and soon we were back to an early fall Sunday morning in the U.P.

Another ninety miles and we were at the Straits of Mackinac and the brand new suspension bridge. As we traveled its elevated skyway we were crossing over from the rocky Precambrian rock of the past seven hundred miles to the flattish landscapes of the Midwest. We were also crossing over from early autumn back to late summer. And as we maneuvered along the coast of Lake Huron towards Alpena and points south, the pastel green fields of the rural, almost empty countryside stood against the pastel blue of the sky, and marched right up to the darker blue of the lake. Except for a slight clicking from somewhere in the back of the truck, it was easy to forget our accident of the morning in the warm peacefulness of the afternoon.

And if we ignored the clicking, maybe it would go away.

It got dark long before we got to Saginaw. It was after midnight when we were cruising along the deserted streets of greater Detroit, home of those riots just six weeks earlier, looking for an open gas station. After we found one I started to doze off.

We must have stopped somewhere for a few hours. But when I awoke we were about two-thirds of the way through Ohio. Just southwest of Cleveland, entering a town called Medina. It was about seven-thirty in the morning, and we were on a two lane road in a semi-urban, almost industrial, area. All around us people were heading for Monday morning's work. Greg was still driving, Susan was in the middle, already feeling perky, and I was still kind of scrunched down in my waking up mode.

All of a sudden there was a horrible grinding noise back where that clicking had been. 'Maybe if we ignore it it'll go away,' I said, not for a moment believing that. About fifteen seconds later I was kind of looking out the side at the pickup's big side view mirror and I saw our right rear tire, along with the wheel it was attached to and half of our rear axle, bouncing down the street. The rest of the rear of the truck hit the roadway and started screeching along. We pulled over as best we could.

Greg and I went back and tried to wrestle the wheel-and-half-an-axle over to the shoulder. It was awkward. Then we stood there figuratively scratching our heads. Okay…

Wait, wasn't that a garage over there? Not only that, wasn't that an industrial sized truck garage over there? We walked over to check it out.

The manager was nice enough to tow us over there gratis. But he soon let us know that it would cost $90 to weld everything back together. Did we have the kind of money?

No, we sure didn't. But the guy let Greg call his dad in Connecticut, and his dad talked to the manager. And as soon as the banks opened at ten the money had been wired.

It took them most of the day to finish the work. But by four the truck, if not as good as new, was at least ready to roll on four wheels.

We headed east towards Akron, Warren, and western Pennsylvania. If we could make it past Oil City tonight we would be back in the land of National Forest campgrounds.

September 23, 1967

We were sitting on a front porch overlooking the beach in East Haven, Connecticut. Kent and Karen had come down from New Hampshire a few days earlier. Greg, Susan and I had arrived yesterday.

Greg was already back at his family's place in Stamford getting ready to do tile work for his father's contracting business. Having had his dad pay for the repair job, he felt especially responsible for paying for it. He was also the only one of us who could

immediately get a well paying job.

Some friends of Mark Zanger from the Class of '70 had been part of the mini-flood that had followed Kent and Jon Rubin's successful petitioning for the right to live off-campus from the previous semester. We were staying very temporarily with them at the off season rental that they had snagged. They were lazily tossing a football back and forth on the sand. Up and down the beach were little groups of people trying to get one last pull out of summer.

Our hosts also had their record player cranked up to full volume. We had already been picking up on the tunes that we hadn't heard as a result of being in the mountains for July and August. The Doors and 'Light My Fire' had broken back in late June when we were still in Denver. But 'A Whiter Shade of Pale' was new to us. And so was the Beatles' 'All You Need Is Love', which to me at least finally captured the psychedelic in music. Even the Stones had contributed their part with 'Dandelion'.

What was playing now though struck me in the completely opposite way. As being really dark and negative. It was Jimi Hendrix, the black guitarist who had apparently exploded into everyone's awareness at the Monterey Festival in June. Though everyone else was going gaga over him, to me his music sounded like it came out of the left field of a five dimensional baseball stadium.

And if these jarring rhythms and nerve-scraping tones were supposed to be somehow related to acid, then that seemed extra disturbing. Or maybe I was the odd one out here. Maybe I was still sitting up in those mountain meadows in my own private little Summer of Love. And the rest of the world had gone on to something else.

September 26, 1967

The last three days had been spent trying to find a house to rent.

What had seemed easy in theory was turning out not to be so easy in practice. Yes, there were at least a mile's worth of houses along this stretch of beach. Yes, only students could be possibly interested in renting them in the off season. But it turned out that only a few of the house owners actually cared about renting them out in the winter. And the students who took those few generally had friends who they could pass them on to the next year.

On top of that there didn't seem to be any real estate agents who specifically handled such things.

What made it all especially annoying was that Kent and Karen had already interviewed at the Sterling Library, and there was an excellent chance that they could both get jobs there. Those jobs wouldn't pay much, but at least it would cover our minimum living expenses.

If only we had a place to live. There were four of us, and tonight was about the last night we could stretch out of staying with these people who we didn't even know. Now it was about five in the afternoon, Kent was in town, and I was sitting on the sand being disgusted with myself. In fact I was being such a downer that Karen and Susan had decided to go take a walk down the beach.

But less than an hour later they came back all laughing and excited. Only about ten houses up they had come across these two nice old Italian grandmothers sitting on their front steps. They had started talking with them about our situation and how frustrating it was that we couldn't find a house to rent. And they were such nice young women that one of the grandmothers said that maybe she would let them rent this one. So now they had just come back to get me.

I quickly went in and changed into my neatest, cleanest set of clothes. Then I returned with them to get a tour of the house. Wow, it was huge. Big living room, dining room, and kitchen. Five bedrooms upstairs. A giant front porch and a giant flight of wooden stairs from there about fifteen feet down to the beach. Plus it was almost completely furnished. The grandmother was so sweet that she wasn't even put off by my long hair.

None of us thought that Kent needed to be consulted on this. Yes, we would take it. Immediately. Name your price.

September 30, 1967

The price had been only $90 a month. We had moved into the house on Wednesday. Thursday Kent and Karen found out they had gotten the library jobs. Yesterday was their first day of work. Yesterday afternoon Susan had also found a part-time job cleaning out cages and such for an East Haven veterinarian. That's where she was now on this sunny Saturday afternoon.

Kent and I had been thoroughly throwing a Frisbee on the beach for a while. Now we were sitting on the front porch looking out at the ocean stretching out to where Long Island sat somewhere over the horizon. What a great house and what a great day.

So far so good.

A few hours later the sun was going down, Susan was back, and we had all eaten. Now it was time for (after a fashion) dessert. Kent got out the small stash of acid he had scored and we each took one. Now that at least some of us had work jobs Saturday night would be the only one available for pursuits such as this.

For 1967 being the Year of the Hippie, we really hadn't been doing very many psychedelics. Kent and I had taken that trip in Golden Gate Park in the beginning of May. But other than very light doses in June at the Denver Zoo and for me with Greg three weeks ago in Wyoming, that had been about it for the last six months. Nor had any grass been smoked or any other drugs ingested.

So tonight we were back to being semi-virgins. Here right by the ocean it would be interesting to see where such a state would take us.

Within a couple of hours we had found out. The four of us were walking along the beach, two couples hand in hand. The yellow lights of our house and the few other houses still inhabited had that distinctive orange-ish halo surrounding them. Waves kept coming in and then lapping up against the shore, the sound of which was somewhat disembodied from the action. Out at sea were a couple of blinking fishing boat lights. All the way at the horizon was a vague reflection of the slightly lit up Long Island night.

Here was about the most that a person could hope for from the psychedelic experience. Clarity. An almost crystalline lattice-work of thought and mental structure. A sense that somehow we were all sharing the same life.

A little later the girls were off drawing shapes in the sand. Kent and I were discussing the seriousness of laughter. That is to say, it was pretty obvious that any situation in life—actually every situation in life—could be seen as either tragedy or comedy. And that the only difference between the two was whether you were able to laugh about it or not. In fact, laughter itself was the very process with which we broke down the structure of the seriousness and 'reality' that we had ascribed to whatever we were in the middle of at any given time. It was one of the very real ways that we could break out attachments to this world, this physical plane.

This physical plane. What did I mean by that? For if I was agreeing with the Hindus and the Buddhists that there were other realms of existence that were 'higher' than this one, then wasn't it my obligation to be up there in them and not down here in this? And how exactly was I proposing to do that?

Meanwhile it was three am and I was sitting on the porch. Down below me the tide was out. Kent was tossing a football with Karen and Susan. We were all watching the by now familiar psychedelic visual trick of multi-footballs replacing one another as it spiraled through the air.

It was curiously timeless and peaceful. And no one was anxious to return to the normal world of anxiety.

October 3, 1967

I was sitting and rocking on the front porch in the afternoon sun. Everybody was off at work except me. But nobody felt bad about that except me. They all assumed that I was unemployable. And they were no doubt right. But that didn't stop me from feeling frustrated and impotent about it all.

Although I supposed that their attitude also meant that we had already become utopian socialists. From each according to his abilities and all that. And it made me as the chief theoretician want to be twice as sure that what we were doing was the right thing. And that how we were getting there was the right way.

After all, the next to minimum wage that Kent and Karen and Susan were earning wasn't going to get us to eastern British Columbia. It couldn't even get us to eastern Connecticut. All that we were doing right now was just a breather, a stop gap until we found the right people and figured out a way to do the music. Kent still had the looks and moves to be a lead singer. I knew I still had the ability to write a hit song.

It all would follow. Slowly gather equipment. Keep asking around and around for musicians. So many people out there had the dream. But Kent and I could supply the vision to wrap the dream around.

In the meantime we were really fortunate to have this situation. The days were still warm, but the season was over. So we basically had the beach and the ocean to ourselves. Once we started playing music we could practice as loudly as we wanted, since we had no neighbors. And even if we did, the sound of the ocean drowned everything else out.

I picked up the book I was in the midst of voraciously reading, 'Lord of the Rings'. Kind of dumb of me not to have read it when it first burst forth about a year and a half ago. Come to think of it, though, I hadn't read any fiction since then. Come to think of it, I hadn't ready any unassigned fiction since I had left for college.

Although I also supposed that you could make the case that what we were going through was a lot stranger than hobbits and ents and Mordor.

October 7, 1967

Our first full week had been lived on the beach. The green Ford pickup that we had nursed across the country was sitting in the driveway with a blown alternator that we didn't have the money to replace. So each morning Kent would put on a coat and tie and Karen would wear a cute little outfit. Then they would take the bus into New Haven and spend the day either wandering around the stacks finding books to check out or wandering around with a book cart re-integrating other books back into the stacks. Susan had been taking long healthy walks to the vet's, where she was learning the intricacies of properly brushing poodles and dealing with their fleabites. As for me, I had at least scrounged up a Farfisa organ that someone had hanging around and that they were willing to let us borrow.

Kent had been right about how useful it would be for us to be in a place where we at least already knew a few people. Besides getting the Farfisa I also had a line on an amp and at least one mike that we could soon rent from someone for $10 a month. Already a couple of friends of friends had come out to noodle around with us a bit. Susan had somehow made friends with Dean Singleton's wife at Pierson, so now we even had a place where we could do our laundry for free.

So there wasn't that much available to complain about. Especially when you threw in the balmy ocean front weather for our $90 a month rent. In effect our idyll had picked up from Silver Plume where it had been so rudely interrupted by the arrival of Karen's parents in July. And now that it was Saturday what better way to celebrate that than by dropping a little acid? Especially when you threw in that it was still mid afternoon and we could enjoy the sunshine and the sunset?

The cirrus clouds became strangely backlit as the day grew slowly shorter. The waves on the ocean started oscillating in different directions. The occasional beachgoers walking by became objects in an impressionistic painting.

Mostly, though, I was overcome with an aching love.

Kent could feel it, too. Nor did the girls have anything other than that to say. As the red sun disappeared behind the watery horizon we went back into the house to try and get some food together. The kittens we had started with in Colorado, Monster and Orange Kitty, were now fully grown. Under the influence they looked for all the world like two self-absorbed dishrags. For a moment I reflected upon the reality that, unlike in a Disney movie, life for almost all animals was nothing but constant fear of death. How incredibly rare and precious that people didn't have to be that way.

After confusedly fumbling around and then coming up with some warm food that we could ingest, we retired to the living room. There we got out some of our favorite albums and played some of our favorite cuts. 'She Smiled Sweetly' by the Stones. 'Visions of Johanna' and 'Sad Eyed Lady' by Dylan. The poorly named 'Epistle To Dippy' by Donovan. And others. What they all had in common was the image of an ethereal lady/muse/saint who was the repository of an endless amount of love that was ours only if we could lay ourselves at her feet.

What they also all had in common was an organ background. Even though I had only taught myself a few chords by now, I dared to turn on the Farfisa and softly play along. No wonder they used this in church music. Each note could just float you away.

Some hours later it was after midnight, the others were all asleep, and I was sitting by myself on the front porch looking at the moon and thinking about sex. It was a subject I had been teasing out over the past year, and now I had to face the conclusion that was now presenting itself: Was it possible that Sex was the exact opposite of Love?

And I didn't mean that just metaphorically. For tonight when Susan and I had made out I had been acutely aware of and sensitive to every part of my nervous system and spinal column. And then when we had had

sex and I had an orgasm I could feel this splat! Like my spirit had just jumped off a high diving board into an empty pool. And there was this point in the small of my back that was now actually in pain.

All of a sudden it flashed on me why every religion in the world had always preached chastity, even celibacy. It didn't have anything to do with them being prudish and uptight. It was because sex was another, cruder manifestation of this same energy that we had been feeling tonight as spiritual love. And if you used this energy for one thing, then you couldn't use it for the other.

Whoa, that was heavy. Could it be true?

And then I also finally figured out the real reason the men at Oneida had practiced Male Continence. It wasn't just for birth control. It was actually for spirit control.

Whoa, that was heavy. Could we actually do that? Well, I supposed that we would have to if that's where it led. I sat for a minute to let it sink in.

Then a strange sort of peace ascended and I was ready to retire. But as I was walking up the stairs to the bed another thought hit me:

Great! Good luck explaining this to the rest of the world!

October 11, 1967

In my readings a few days earlier I had come across the story of a real, living, actual to goodness intentional community here in Connecticut. It was called the Bruderhof, apparently it had been in existence for quite some time, and I had felt that I just had to check it out. Then I happened to be talking to Victor Kyrnicki, and it turned out that he now had a car. Which he would be willing to lend to Susan and me. So now it was another one of those beautiful, warm October mornings, and the two of us were winding along towards the extreme northwestern part of the state and the township of East Canaan.

We found their location easily enough, and when we parked in their small parking lot the first impression was that, with the various sized and shaped buildings plopped around grassy areas, with a dining hall over here and a soccer field over there, this was some kind of camp or school campus. When we entered their small business office and said that we were hoping for a short visit, the secretary made a call and soon an older gentleman arrived to greet us.

Ben seemed to be one of their informal 'elders'. He also seemed to be a decent chap, kind of like an older but earnest minister from one of those liberal Protestant sects. He politely asked why we had come, and I told him about my longstanding interest in intentional communities. He then proceeded to start us out on what I took to be the standard tour.

Pretty soon we were saying 'hi' to the ladies in the laundry room, poking our heads into a classroom, and taking a quick peek at a typical member's room. All along Ben was giving us a history of the Bruderhof. How it had been started in the 1920s in Germany by a pacifist minister named Eberhard Arnold. How they had been prosecuted and then kicked out of Nazi Germany in the 1930s. How they had found refuge in England, only to be turned out when World War II started. How they had ended up in the wilderness region of Paraguay for fifteen years before making their way to the United States, where now they had two other 'colonies' besides the one Susan and I were visiting.

That was the short version. It turned out that very, very few of the current members went all the way back to Germany. Actually, most of them seemed to have been aggregated from the remains of any number of other intentional communities that hadn't made it from the various continents where they had lived. In a sense the Bruderhof was the last utopia standing.

Ben explained that Eberhard Arnold had originally been trying to recreate the spirit of the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century. I already knew their story: After Luther's 'reformation' other groups had quickly grown up in Germany. And they were careful to follow his advice to get their inspiration directly from the Bible. Since the Bible was quite explicit that the early Christians shared all things in common, the Anabaptists had become full fledged utopian socialists in 1526. Prior day hippies, as it were. Naturally Luther had them all rounded up and burned at the stake.

The strictness of the Bruderhof's beliefs seemed to have gone back and forth over the decades, including a period about ten years earlier when they had flirted with a union with the Hutterites, an extremely conservative extant German sect similar to the Amish, but different in that they lived on gigantic communal farms mostly out in the Canadian prairies. In the present day, though, they seemed to hold a vaguely amorphous liberal Christian faith, with a strong longing for social justice and a strict adherence to non-compliance with the draft.

I was kind of surprised by this, since everything I had picked up from my studies was that it was distinctive beliefs and strict practices that had distinguished the successful nineteenth century communities. In fact, as I was thinking this, Ben went out of his way to downplay their spiritual convictions. By far the most important element in whatever success the Bruderhof might have had, he said, was the simplest one of just having people be able to live together in harmony.

By now we were reaching the end of the tour. This was the large, strictly utilitarian steel building that was their factory. Because it turned out that one of the bits and pieces of former communities that had joined them had already started a business making durable, simple wooden toys for kindergartens and church daycare centers. The resulting company, Community Playthings, had become pretty successful. It was in fact the reason why the Bruderhof was now centered in the United States, and it was responsible for whatever modicum of prosperity they currently enjoyed.

It had been an intriguing field trip. Ben led us back to the parking lot in the late afternoon and thanked us for coming to visit. The missionary in him couldn't help but suggest that maybe in the future we might want to come back and stay longer.

October 13, 1967

The Bruderhof had indeed been interesting. But it weren't no Oneida.

Our little journey had served to remind me why I had originally been so consumed by utopia. It had always been about nothing more or less than getting in touch with the Transcendent and staying in touch with the Transcendent. I had never seen the point of going to all that trouble if this wasn't the goal. And from all that I had read about Oneida this had also always been their overwhelming focus.

And this had also been the raison d'etre for the Shakers, the Rappites, even the Anabaptists. And, yes, in practice they had discovered how necessary it was and also how difficult it was for humans to live with each other directly and honestly and without the artificiality of artifice. But that hadn't been their primary purpose.

So it was kind of dissonant to me that simply existing together in a modicum of communal peace seemed to be the only reason the Bruderhof people got up every morning. Again, given how few instances of this ever happening there were in modern human history, what they had achieved was nothing to sneer at.

But it wasn't whatever it was that I had been chasing. It wasn't even close to that. Love, whether it was of a girlfriend, a wife, or of God, was so much more. Maybe the word 'love' didn't even describe it any more.

But it was what we were meant for.

And what was stopping us?

October 14-15, 1967

This hadn't started out to be any kind of weekly ritual. But experiencing the timelessness of being beside the ocean every day in combination with both the ease we were feeling with each other and the lingering glow of the previous week's dose meant that we were always ready for another booster shot.

So it was Saturday night and we were here in the moment again. My mind briefly flashed back to when I was coming down from that first real trip during Harvard Weekend and I was semi-freaked out about how I was going to fill up all those minutes for the rest of my life. Right now the answer was easy. Just stay in this moment. Because the past is past and the future will never arrive. For it will always be only this moment again.

Yes, yes, I knew that I was on acid, and that to anyone not on acid this would just sound like crazy acid talk. But it was also true. And, what's more, being right here right now was also an equivalent way of describing what I really meant by that word 'love'. Or, for that matter, consciousness.

But how to maintain this high? By now I had been around the acid block often enough to fully know the cycle. And the more sensitive my spirit was becoming, the more sensitive my body had gotten to the effects of the acid itself. Witness my experience with the orgasm last week. And one could argue whether or not what we took to be a spiritual experience while under the influence was 'real' or not. But you couldn't argue that this wasn't a chemical acting upon the brain, so that even under the best of circumstances it would still be somewhat suspect.

Back to how to maintain the high. In the space I was in now I could think clearly. It would even be possible to do many everyday jobs. But dealing with all the posing and phoniness of what passed for as everyday life? Ah, there was the rub. No one could stay in the moment in a world that seemed constructed precisely so as to keep people out of the moment.

Which brought me back around to the necessity of that community. But not one where the personal ego subjected itself to the will of the group. No, one where every member of the group had vowed to do away with their personal ego. Like at Oneida. Like we could do right here, right now. If we wanted to.

By now the conversation had migrated out of my head, and I was talking everything through with Kent. Although it was hard to tell how much was being communicated through sound and how much through thought. Either way it was kind of superfluous, since we had already discussed all these ideas so many times before.

But now that the thought—right here, right now—had been stated so explicitly it seemed to hang out there in midair. By definition we could never be more here in the ever-present present than we were now. So what was stopping us?

This was too intense. We decided that we should go off by ourselves for a while. And also talk it over with the womenfolk.

A couple of hours later we were sitting in a circle on the floor, holding hands. I had always been a bit dismissive of such gestures, since they always seemed obvious and superficial. But this was serious. This was for real. This meant that we were determined to be throwing everything in altogether.

This was the consummation of a marriage.

I had never felt remotely so humble. It was a strange hybrid feeling of total freedom yet at the same time total subservience. Like they had described it in Oneida, what I wanted to do and what I ought to be doing were one and the same thing.

That might be putting it a little strong, because right now I really didn't want to be doing anything. This reborn innocence, this sloughing off of the ego in the company of more than one person, this was just too much.

At four thirty in the morning we were all still up. I was sitting by myself on the beach about a hundred yards away from the house. I thought back to when Bob Withers and I had been standing on that tiny outcropping of the Art and Architecture building. It had taken a level of trust that Saul Hopper hadn't believed possible to do that for just thirty seconds. Now we would need to maintain a much higher level of trust for our entire lifetimes. And without the 'benefit' of always being zonked out on really good acid.

Could humans do that? In this day and age?

Well, once again, we would have to. There was no other choice given the state of the world. If nothing else, we owed it to the people of Oneida. They had proven that this could work, even if in the end they had been totally ignored. Well, they had just been ahead of their time. But now was the time. And it was up to us to prove that to the rest of the modern world. If we could make this little union work, then it was inevitable that it would grow.

The sky was just getting light when Kent found me. We spent the next hour or so walking down and then back up the beach, talking. When we got back to the house the sun was all the way up, it was around seven, and we were both worse than dog tired. All of a sudden I remembered what day it now was.

'Wow,' I said. 'It's my birthday! I'm twenty years old today. I'm no longer a teenager.' I paused for a second to consider the absurdity of all of that. And then I added in mock dejection, 'But nobody got me any presents.'

Kent looked at me in mock disbelief. 'But Michael,' he said so sweetly, 'I gave you Me!'

October 17, 1967

Part of the culture of alcohol consumption that the rest of the world was into had to do with people doing crazy things when drunk that they horribly regretted the next morning. For me the light of day had almost the opposite effect. Here on Tuesday I was almost higher than I had been on Saturday night.

Ever since my week or two of semi-transcendence two years ago I had seemed to have a different definition of 'love' than did everyone else. To me it was gross and disgusting to use the term 'making love' to describe the bumping and grinding of sex. But even the idea of 'loving someone' implied an attachment to something physical and/or emotional that the pure state of love shouldn't have. Worse, it implied that love was a function of some other person and not something that your soul was obliged to reach independently of everything else.

That didn't mean that I considered Susan superfluous or incidental in my quest to be in that state of love. Nor was I trying to pretend away the reality that men and women, especially young ones, experienced a powerful mutual physical attraction. But the theory that had developed in my brain was that in the end we could sublimate that and integrate that and use it to help be, as it were, brother and sister upon the way.

As I said, that was the theory.

In practice, though, a couple would end up like two stars revolving around each other. Implicit deals would be struck wherein one party would ignore the other party's failings in exchange for that party's ignoring the

first's. And what happened all too often was that sooner or later these deals would become unstuck, and in the end each person would become so offended by the other's failings while conveniently ignoring their own.

But as soon as you got beyond a group of more than two people then those implicit deals were impossible. The only way that such a system could be stable was if each and every person was right there in the center, stripped of their failings, and in that telepathic space. Thus a marriage consisting of more than two people by definition would have to be one of true love.

So how was it in practice?

I supposed you could say that there was a heightened sensitivity. And not just to other people, but to sight, to sound, to the whole rest of the world. Because you were constantly aware that you were all in this together. And 'this' became synonymous with the here and now.

But there was something else. Something maybe subtler, but also stronger and far more important. Personal dreams and visions, that sense of individual identity that had sort of enveloped me my whole life, had just evaporated. And the 'we' that remained wasn't the 'we' of any particular group or team. It was the 'we' of… Well, it was really hard to describe.

Although that didn't make it any less beautiful.

Okay, but today was only three days into this. Did I really think that we could pull a complex marriage off? Yes, I did. First, because from before Jesus people had been talking about the transformative power of love. Unless they were all lying, then the state of love had to have more oomph in it than the state of un-love. That meant—assuming the love that we felt was true love—that to a large extent this state of love would feed upon itself and be self-replicating.

More importantly, we had the example of Oneida before us and the access to whatever wisdom they had learned. We knew that the way to stay in the center was through simple, straightforward honesty. No make believe. No social constructs. No games. No excuses.

We also knew that, countering the natural ascendancy of love, the tendency of the individual spirit was to fall back down again. That the tendency of the ego, of the self, was to re-assert itself again. That we would have to be faithfully trying to implement Oneida's system of Mutual Criticism to keep each other in check and in balance. Not in the sense of, 'You're doing something wrong,' but rather as in, 'This is how we need to be right.'

Ah, there would be the rub. In remembrance. Remembering that there is a Center. Remembering that there is a simple, straightforward honesty that exists outside the ego. Never forgetting that there is a place to be where what you want to do and what you ought to do are one and the same thing.

October 19, 1967

It was a warm night. And the Long Island Sound was still warm enough for wading. So we were all standing in a couple of feet of water trying to throw stones with our left hands.

I had recently had the idea that a balanced mind and body should be ambidextrous, and now we were testing the hypothesis. So far it wasn't working out all that well.

We had had a little better luck a little earlier. Kent had checked out a couple of books about yoga from his library job, and we had been reading them and discussing it. So tonight we had challenged ourselves to try and sit in meditation. We went to a darkened part of the beach and all plopped down more or less in a

cross-legged pose that we imagined that yogis would take. Then we tried to sit there and focus our attention on our Third Eyes.

It was a long ten or fifteen minutes. In the end only Karen reported seeing any kind of light or anything. For the rest of us there had been a lot of thoughts whirling around and a quick tiring of the body for trying to sit like that. But it was a start.

This all was a start. And each day was stretching out to almost like a week. An awakening in slow motion. Kind of like we were pioneers busting sod on a frontier spiritual prairie.

Kind of beyond exhilarating, really.

October 20-21, 1967

Hard to believe it, but it was just over two years ago I had been head over heels in love with Bonnie walking through New York City. Today I was happily by myself and even more head over heels in love. Even walking in the East Village, which was dirty and ugly enough in normal circumstances. But which today truly felt like some old, old, worn out world that I was visiting from afar.

I had an address that I was looking for. Ah, there it was. Now I needed to find apartment 5-J. Not a chance for an elevator in this part of town, so up the stairs I went, two at a time, to the fifth floor.

This was about as low a rent a building as I had ever been in. A couple of junkies staggering around. Puerto Rican mothers screaming at their kids in Spanish. And, phew, what's that smell? I looked out the window at the small inner cement courtyard. There was a giant pile of garbage about forty feet in diameter and at least twenty feet high. Now this was living with the people. I knocked on door 'J'.

It was opened by a tall thin guy with wild wiry hair and rimless glasses. This must be Keith Lambertson, just about the first hippie dropout from the Class of '70. He had been an art major and friend of Mark Zanger and the guys from down the beach who we had stayed with. But he had barely made it through freshman year. Now he was doing something or other here in New York.

I introduced myself and mentioned our mutual connections. They had already gotten in touch with him and he had been expecting me. He asked me how much money I had. I told him a couple of hundred dollars. He said that that should be more than enough. In the meantime, did I want to go out and get something to eat? Sure, why not.

We got to talking as we walked the several blocks to the nearest hole in the wall restaurant in this decidedly non-commercial district. He seemed like a pretty smart and pretty nice guy. Besides, his friends had all spoken up for him. This should go down about as easily as these things ever went.

Back in East Haven we had been faced with a medium term problem. First, I hadn't been contributing financially, and I wasn't feeling any less guilty about that. Second, the very close to minimum wage that the rest were making was barely covering the bare expenses. We didn't have enough to invest in what we needed to do in order to get anything done with music. Not only that but if we were to be a family we needed to become independent and self-sufficient.

Therefore, we had to come up with some way to come up with a lot more money. And, since in my younger days I had actually enjoyed selling things, I had concluded that we needed to buy a bunch of something and then turn around and sell it.

Unfortunately, there still really wasn't anything that longhairs would buy other than drugs. And LSD was the only drug that wouldn't make us feel totally corrupt in dealing. So we had waited until Kent and Karen

had been paid for their first two weeks work, put together every last penny we had, and then bought me a train ticket down to meet Keith.

We ate and then went back to his lodgings, where he suggested that I hang out and listen to some music while he went to see his guy. He left, but then came back a minute later and said that on second thought he might be gone for a while, since he might want to check the batch out. If it was really late, never mind, feel free to sleep on the couch. Oh, and did I want a joint to smoke? Nope, I was fine.

I was awakened at around two in the morning by the sound of the door opening and Keith slipping in. When I got up at around eight he was already wide eyed and bushy tailed. He motioned for me to sit at his little formica table and with a flourish produced a brown paper bag. Inside were several hundred little wads of tinfoil.

'Canada Mints,' he said. 'They will surely refresh.'

I unwrapped one. Sure enough it was a normal round white Canada Mint lozenge. Only streaked with a little pink. 'You're in luck,' Keith said. 'This is really primo prime stuff.' Then he added with a flourish, 'Only the presentation is… strange.'

It sure was. These days acid either came in innocuous, not likely to raise an eyebrow pills, or more commonly on little pieces of paper called blotter. Maybe the drug culture had advanced so far now that somebody was paying a tribute to those sugar cubes from way, way back in the primitive early days of two years ago.

I had to admit that it was kind of a creative touch. I thanked Keith for his efforts, made sure that he had taken his cut, carefully hid the bag in the bottom of the pack I had brought along, and set about making my way back to Grand Central Station.

October 23, 1967

Victor Kyrnicki and Mark Zanger had come out to the beach to visit. And since we hadn't really tried out our batch of acid yet, they had been invited along for the ride. What the hell, Kent and Karen would figure out a way to go into work a little late tomorrow.

The tide was way out and Mark and Victor were playing Kent and me in a game of touch football. It wasn't supposed to be competitive, and it would have been totally unfair if it had been, since the two of them hardly knew each other and since they were both much less familiar with LSD's effects. Still it was instructive for me. For they were exhibiting all the confused behavior of people who were 'stoned', whereas Kent and I felt so crystal clear and logical. It was almost like I could think the ball into his hands.

I had never been anything even closely resembling a jock, and to me such people had always seemed like self-absorbed bulls and bullies. But now I realized that what they were living for—even if they were never quite conscious of it—was that moment when everything clicked. When time stopped. When that ball just ended up in their hands. When they were no longer them.

And that's probably what motivated the skier to ski. The ballerina to dance. The philosopher to think. Nobody really wanted to be themselves.

They all wanted to be outside themselves.

And if you were going to be outside yourself, who else could you be but the Other?

October 26, 1967

Another night at the old homestead.

The girls were off doing something or other in the kitchen. Kent and I had just finished another one of our overlong discussions. Now he was inside reading one of those books on yoga while I was out on the porch on this windy night with a sweater on rocking away and vibrating along with the ocean.

So how were we doing? Well, as each day went by I was more and more convinced that it was the Right Thing. Further, I was more and more convinced that we were just the first seed that was sprouting. It all just felt so expansive. No one who ever experienced it would not want to stay here. No matter how wide-eyed or corny it might seem, this really was the dawn of that Something.

Of course, just as the Oneidans had discovered, realizing that you were perfectible didn't mean that you were therefore perfect. We would all have to continue to really take the Mutual Criticism thing seriously. For instance, Kent and Karen were still too much of a distinct unit. In fact, we referred to it as the Karen and Cubby Syndrome. (Did the Mouseketeers have the same problem when they had started their intentional community?) But they were aware of it. We would work it out.

Susan still had too much of the puppy in her. All that happy enthusiasm, but maybe not enough focus yet. No matter how many grades she had skipped, though, she had still just turned eighteen. And there could be no reason to doubt her loyalty to me and her loyalty to us.

As for me… Boy, it was so hard to analyze yourself, since you always saw yourself in the best light, whereas everyone else always saw you as you actually were. I supposed that's why in Mutual Criticism you had those others who you had entrusted to analyze you.

But let me try anyway. Thinking about it, I supposed a good analogy would be music. I thought of myself as having the soul of a singer. And I could write meaningful songs and sing them with what to me felt like passion. But at the same time everyone told me quite convincingly that I sounded terrible. In like manner, I knew that I had clear and beautiful thoughts. But somehow it was so hard for me to communicate them to the rest of the world.

On the other hand, Kent wasn't nearly as good as I at formulating songs or ideas. But he was able to sing the songs really well. And he seemed to have the opposite effect on people that I had. They all loved him.

So as long as I could be kept towards the center and he could be kept towards the center, maybe the two of us together could really accomplish something. Maybe. Or maybe not. I supposed that in the end being a big deal wasn't all that big a deal. I supposed that in the end we weren't in control of all that.

But it sure was incredible and humbling to know that we could definitely be in control of continuing to stay at this center.

October 28, 1967

It was around two in the afternoon on a beautiful fall Friday, the kind of a brisk yet still quiet day that made even New Haven seem like part of New England. After having just completed my sales rounds, I was strolling across the large, grassy inner courtyard of Silliman College. This being the beginning of Parents' Weekend, there was a semi-holiday, loose and lazy feel about the place.

'Loose and lazy' would probably best describe those sales rounds, too. All it had involved was dropping off a few hits to a couple of people and then calling on others to let them know that we had the goods if anybody wanted them. And since I knew that our goods were really good, and that word would get around,

I also knew that there was an excellent chance that we could actually end up making some real money off of this project.

And that would be good.

There was a park bench in a sunny area and I went over to sit on it for a few moments. I didn't think anyone would mind. After all, once a Yalie… I thought back to a year ago, when the hatred of my kind was so virulent. Now at least some of those very same people were dropping acid themselves. What would tomorrow bring?

Indeed. Because if I had changed so much in, what?, two years, then what would the world be like in another two years after all these people had gone through their changes, and then the people that they influenced also started out on the journey, and then…

At some point they would all be in the position I was in now. I couldn't help but sit there in quiet, almost embarrassing, joy. It was so hard not to feel goofily positive these days. After all, it was so special and so rare just to be in love with one other human being. But to be in love with more than another somehow changed the whole geometry of it. Or the calculus. Or the dimension. Well, I had no idea what the proper mathematical term was for what I was describing. I just knew that it wasn't simply 'additive'.

Time to get up and wend my way back to the beach. As I walked the couple of blocks to the bus stop it almost felt like little Disney bluebirds were flying around my head.

When I got back to East Haven the house was empty. I assumed that Susan was either out shopping or maybe by herself somewhere down the beach, and picked up my guitar. For the first time in a long time I actually felt like writing something.

After a few vague ideas I put it back down and picked up that book on yoga. After a while I put that down and went to sit out on the front porch in case Susan appeared.

By six-thirty it had become dark and she still hadn't shown up. Neither had Kent or Karen. Strange, but then maybe she had gone into town and was with them. I had gotten out the guitar again and even had a good idea that I was trying to wring out of the ether. All of a sudden somebody was knocking insistently on the kitchen door.

I got up, crossed the house, and looked out the window. What the…? Dean Singleton from Pierson??? Why in the world would he be out here? He didn't even know where I lived.

He was about to knock again when I opened the door. There was a wordless second as we looked at each other. His expression was that of concern and anger and confusion and more anger. He had always been wound up but friendly. Now he was just horribly wound up.

'Damn it,' he said to himself, 'I was able to find the place!' Then to me: 'Goddamn it, Mike! How could you do something so stupid and thoughtless and irresponsible as to…' He stopped himself as he saw that I hadn't a clue as to what he was talking about. 'You mean you haven't heard?' he said. 'You mean they haven't gotten back here yet?'

I stood there blankly in acknowledgement. He took a couple of deep breaths to calm himself down, and then started in again a lot more evenly. 'Mike, Susan came into town this afternoon to visit with my wife Marcy and to do some laundry. Apparently she also had a large bag of LSD in with the dirty clothes. My son got into it and ate three of them. Right now he's at the Yale-New Haven Hospital having his stomach pumped.'

What the…? I opened the door wide and stood aside so that he could enter. 'I, uh, er, I…' I stammered, and then collapsed into one of the wooden kitchen chairs. 'I, uh… Is there anything I can do?' I said lamely.

‘Actually, yes,’ he said. ‘That’s why I came out here.’ He took another deep breath. ‘I know that, however incredibly idiotic and boneheaded this was on your part, I know that you and Susan would never intend to do something like this. So I don’t want to have you arrested or prosecuted. But I would like a sample so that it can be analyzed. And I would like you to come back with me to New Haven in case the doctors have any questions for you.’

There were a couple of doses lying around. I numbly went to get them. Then I numbly put my coat on and went with him out to his car.

As we drove the twenty minutes or so into New Haven he filled me in on the details as he knew them. Susan had shown up around two in the afternoon with her bag of laundry. At some point Marcy had asked if Susan could babysit their hyperactive five year old while she went out on a couple of short errands. Susan was alone in the laundry room for five minutes or so, and when she came out the boy was sitting next to the bag of acid next to the bag of laundry with three empty tinfoil wrappers at his feet.

Susan had immediately freaked, but had to wait for a half hour for Marcy to return. As soon as Susan told her what had happened Marcy had freaked. Then she called her husband, who came running over from his office totally freaked. He had yelled at Susan to get the hell out of there, which she did, carrying the laundry and the acid.

After the ambulance had arrived, though, he realized that he needed to find us. Somehow he traced Susan’s steps to the Sterling library, where she had gone to hook up with Kent and Karen. Somehow he found out that the three of them then went to our friend Chuck Whitehead’s room in the hopes of him driving them back to East Haven.

Now the story got totally surreal, and even in his misery the dean was able to appreciate the humor. Because he had been totally unaware of Chuck being connected to his illustrious TV icon father, and when he knocked on Chuck’s dorm door who should open it but an impeccably dressed Commander Whitehead.

The Commander was there on Parents Weekend to take his son out to a play. Now he was waiting for his son to return from East Haven. And, wouldn’t you know it, but Chuck had left directions…

By now we had made it to the emergency entrance of Yale-New Haven. The dean asked me to wait in the car while he went in and gave the lab the samples.

It was a long hour as I sat there. What the…? Who the…? Why the…? None of this made any sense at all. The most horrible part of all this was that taking the kid to the emergency room and pumping his stomach and then observing him all night was the worst possible thing you could do to somebody who had taken too much LSD. You were supposed to give them Thorazine or some other downer, put them in a subdued, quiet place, and let them sleep it off.

Not that I was in any position to give anybody any advice at this point.

A little before nine he came back down with a doctor in a lab coat. I got out of the car and stood and answered his questions as best I could. After a couple of minutes he was satisfied and left.

Now I noticed that less than thirty feet away was a New Haven police car with its red light rotating. And leaning up against with his arms folded and looking right at us was a New Haven cop. Dean Singleton nudged his head a little in that direction and said, ‘Don’t worry, Mike. I’m keeping my word. They’re really after us to arrest you, but there’s no way the university is going to let them.’

A thought went through my mind: Once a Yalie… I guessed a little bit of privilege still attached itself to me. And I could tell from the tone of the dean’s voice that Mother Yale wasn’t about to give up one of her own.

Leastwise to anyone remotely connected to the city of New Haven.

Then we got back in the dean's car and he drove me back to East Haven. I went inside the house. The others had been back for hours. It turned out that on top of everything else Chuck's car had had a flat tire on the way. I sat there and they filled me in on all the other details of what they had done all day.

But at this point I wasn't really listening to anything any more.

October 29, 1967

The morning sun was shining over the left side of the ocean and its rays were entering the window of our front bedroom and hitting my eyelids. I woke up. And for a split second I was back to being innocent and alive.

Then I remembered the night before, and it all came crashing down on me. And wouldn't let go. The all consuming dread of reality.

Susan was already awake and about. I sat up and somehow forced my clothes on. I went downstairs and somehow ate something. Then I went out to the front porch and sat there at the top of the long flight of stairs that led down to the sand. It was a pleasant Saturday and a few people were walking up and down the beach.

But it didn't help. This was all just too unbelievable.

First of all, why in the conceivable world did Susan bring that giant bag of acid into town with her? On a public bus? Where she could have been super busted just for possessing that amount! All she had said was that she had had some vague idea of maybe selling some and surprising us. Okay, that part sort of worked. We certainly were surprised. But who was she going to sell it to? She hardly knew anyone. Nor had we had any plans to meet up. Whatever it was that was going through her head just made absolutely no sense. And what made even less sense was that she was way too smart to do something so incredibly stupid.

Next, what were the exact miniscule hundredth of percent odds that the acid would have been on friggin' Canada Mints? That a little kid would eat! It must have been the only batch like that in the entire country. Now what had seemed like a cute artistic statement when I got them loomed like some sort of awful pre-ordained curse.

Finally, it wasn't like the kid was only two. He was five. That's old enough to know that when Susan came in with that bag and put it on the floor that it wasn't his or his family's. He would have had to dig through a pile of smelly clothes, pull out the bag, then open it up, pull out each tinfoil wrapped mint, unwrap it, and eat it immediately without asking anyone. Again, he wasn't two. He was five.

Then again, if there was one thing that Susan had more than enough experience in, it was babysitting. So how could she space out so much as to leave the bag in the middle of the room with an unsupervised kid, no matter how ill- or well-behaved he was?

It all kept going back and forth in my head, around and around. But it was like that accident in Michigan a few weeks ago. We hadn't been acting irresponsibly. We had looked both ways. And 9,999 times out of 10,000 that would have been sufficient. But that one time it hadn't been. And in the eyes of the law we had been responsible. We had been irresponsible. Worst, in the eyes of the world we had been long haired hippies messing up some good honest citizens' lives.

Now I was responsible. Irresponsible. A crazy long haired hippie.

God, how did this stuff happen? How did this incredible high that I had been feeling for the past two weeks, this ethereal and seemingly eternal love, suddenly transmute into this horrible hell? Was this what happened whenever an Icarus got it into his head that he could fly? Was it possible that instead of pure love I had been somehow playing with forces that had been way beyond me? Or was even thinking that just a reflection of my self-importance, because everything that had just happened had really only been some random series of events?

Or maybe it was that this stuff was bound to happen when you're an amateur and you're pretending to yourself that you know how to deal in dangerous drugs.

That reminded me. In the confusion they had left the bag in Chuck's room last night. When he had brought it out here this morning he had related how his dean had already called him into his office, threateningly told him to take care who his friends were, and then suggested that maybe if he didn't watch out people might break in his room and beat the crap out of him. Right now Kent and Karen and Susan were trying to assuage their paranoia by putting the bag in a jar and burying the jar in the sand underneath the pilings of a vacant house a few doors down. From the little druggie knowledge I had of legal issues, supposedly if it wasn't on our property then they couldn't prove that it was legally ours.

I also assumed that in the light of day the dean would keep his Yale word that he had given last night that we wouldn't be prosecuted. One would hope that a major university still had some honor. It also now occurred to me that, besides standing by its own, Yale probably had no desire to have the kind of publicity that arresting me would bring. Especially in the context of Parents Weekend. So I supposed that we were safe.

Although with that kind of potential penalty hanging over our heads, it was hard to trust in probabilities. Best to just shove all thought of it out of my mind.

As the afternoon wore on little knots of people kept straggling by. Moderate waves kept rolling in. At some point I got myself up, went down the stairs, and then slowly walked along the beach as far away as I could. When the sun started sinking I turned around and walked back.

Needless to say, there wasn't any of our usual banter that evening. For once Susan had lost her chipper. Kent and Karen seemed strangely off to themselves. I went upstairs to the front bedroom and just lay there in the dark listening to the waves and staring at the ceiling. After a long while there was a light tap at the door.

It was Kent. 'Is Susan in there with you? Is it okay if I go get her? There's something Karen and I need to discuss with you.'

A couple of minutes later I was leaned up against the wall on the mattress. Susan was sitting next to me. Kent and Karen were sitting cross-legged on the floor. Susan had helpfully lit a candle.

'Uh,' Kent started uncomfortably, then stopped. A few seconds he tried again. 'Uh, this has nothing to do with the dean's kid. It really doesn't. It's something Karen and I have been talking about for a few days now.'

I still didn't know what was coming, but something in the tone of his voice had me guessing. 'Uh, we've sort of come to the conclusion that we'd probably be better off on our own.'

He started talking a little more quickly, whether because of increasing confidence or nervousness I couldn't tell. 'It's not that I still don't believe everything we've talked about. Obviously the people at Oneida were able to pull it off. Maybe I'm just not ready for it. All I know is that we're not feeling happier as this is going forward. We're just feeling unhappier.'

\I didn't know what to say. Part of me felt bad for the pain that my best friend was going through. More of me was incredibly frustrated and angry with him. Nobody had ever said that this was going to be easy! If we couldn't pull this off, then who ever could and who ever would? And if the world that remained kept on going like it was going, did anybody think that where it ended up would be anything but a nightmare?

But mostly I was drowning. This couldn't be happening.

But it was.

Kent was finishing up. Forcing a forced laugh, he said softly, 'Well, I guess this shows that the guys back at my prep school were right. In my yearbook I was voted 'Most likely to be a buddy fuck'.

October 31, 1967

When I had awoken Sunday morning they were gone. Not even a note. I supposed that they were back up in New Hampshire by now.

I hadn't done much since then except sit on the front porch and rock back and forth in my rocking chair. Until the sun went down and it got too cold. Which was happening earlier and earlier these days.

Through my gathering numbness I had come to at least a few conclusions. I was sure that Kent's departure didn't have anything to do with the dean's kid. He wasn't that much of a buddy fuck. Anyway, if Yale didn't prosecute then there was no axe to be escaping. And if they did decide to, they'd have no trouble finding him at his parents' house.

And if Kent and Karen were going to leave, then it was best that they left. Speaking of axes, it was best to just chop the head off and be done with it.

But I still couldn't figure out any of the rest of it. During those couple of weeks was I the only feeling what I was feeling? How could I be in this la-la-la rhapsody while everybody else was secretly ill at ease? Was everything that went on around me like Greg and his serape? Did they just do things that I said because of the force of my personality? Why the hell did I still have a personality?

I remembered from my reading on Oneida how, at the beginning of Noyes's 'ministry' of his doctrine of complex marriage, a man arose at one of the meetings and thundered that he would spear the tallest archangel that tried to come between him and his wife. I hadn't thought of Kent as a jealous guy, but maybe I had been interfering with something a lot more basic than I had thought.

The worst of it was that I had never had the slightest bit of carnal desire for Karen. I liked her, and I had assumed that she had liked me. But there had never been anything but zero attraction, zero chemistry. If there was one thing I was sure of in all of this it was that my motives had been pure. I really and truly had been trying to bring into reality that vision that I had had two years earlier. That vision that I had later found out the Oneidans had successfully realized over a hundred years ago.

That vision that I still knew to be true.

I remembered another incident from Oneida's early history. After they reached a certain age all the children were raised as one group. In the beginning the woman who cared for them was one of the saintliest in the community. Each of the little girls in her charge had her own personal doll, and at one point this woman determined that they were all filled with too much 'special love' for their dolls. So somehow she convinced them all to line up and voluntarily consign each doll to the furnace.

The scene seemed like it had too much pathos to bear. And in later life one of the girls who had participated admitted that it did. But she also said that once she had thrown her doll in the fire, once she had given up

her attachment to it, even her little five year old mind was filled with this overwhelming sense of cosmic love.

It was getting cold out here on the porch. And dark. Hey, wasn't tonight Halloween? The night when all the non-Oneida kids of the country get to dress up as witches and other evil beings? Then go around collecting big piles of sugary crap?

So good for the rest of the world that those crazy utopian communist ideas never worked out.

November 3, 1967

Time was marching on. Besides getting shorter, the days were also getting grayer. And of course colder. Back in September those kindly Italian grandmothers had hesitated to rent us the house because it had no insulation. How would we keep warm in the winter? I hadn't known from insulation. Now I was finding out. Susan and I were spending a lot of time in the kitchen keeping warm from the stove.

So it didn't take much for us to want to get out of the house. And a friend of a friend was offering a day trip over to Millbrook, New York, and back. Millbrook as in the famous fancy estate where Timothy Leary had retreated to after getting kicked out of Harvard. We weren't expecting much, but at least the car would have a heater.

The drive there was pretty much the same route that Yalies had always taken to go up to Vassar, although the town was about fifteen miles northeast of Poughkeepsie. In old money, upper class wooded hills. Our friend of a friend even had the proper directions, so that less than two hours after we had left New Haven we were at the stone front gate to Dr. Leary's house.

Once we entered, though, we found out that Dr. Leary, along with the millionaire friends who had set him up here, had long gone to somewhere in California. And that the people who remained were a motley collection of hangers on from the East Village or the North Woods or wherever. Bad drawings and random words were painted/scrawled all over the walls of a once fine house. Some dissonant rock album was being blared on some record player. A couple of unsupervised and screaming toddlers were running around.

This was the place that had been written up as a place of serious psychoactive research? As a working commune? I understood that most of the principals had departed, but something made me think that maybe now it wasn't being so different than how it had been two years ago. I tried not to let my recent turn of events cloud my view, but jeez! Tim had people willing to front him hundreds of thousands of dollars, had all the supposed insights of all those acid trips, and this here was the result?

Whoop de do.

I went outside to walk in the woods and clear my head. Appropriately there was a cold drizzle. In a short while the friend of a friend came looking for me. Susan had already found him and was waiting in the car. We were all ready to go.

November 8, 1967

Peter Litwack had indeed flunked out of Columbia last spring and had had find employment. But his aunt worked at a big music publishing company, and she had gotten him a job being their receptionist. Now he worked at the Brill Building. That's right, the eleven story office building on Broadway that had been synonymous with Tin Pan Alley ever since the Thirties. That's right, the same Tin Pan Alley that was now synonymous with music that was hopelessly outdated and filled with schlock and irrelevance.

But Peter had visited out in East Haven over the weekend, and it had been so good to see a friendly face. Or any face for that matter. And he had said that he was still convinced that I was a great songwriter. And that he could easily get me in to see the head honcho at his music publishing company. What was there to lose?

Indeed. So here I was on Wednesday getting off the train at Grand Central Station, guitar case in hand. I always felt foolish and pretentious walking around carrying a guitar, but what was I to do?

Exiting the colossal terminal I realized that I still had a couple of hours before my appointment. I decided to walk east a few blocks down to the area of the United Nations building. And as I neared the area there was a long row of schoolchildren across the street being led by their teacher. 'Look,' one of them shouted out, 'There's a hippie!'

But it wasn't said with any ugliness or negativity. Rather the kid was excited. Having seen a real live hippie was going to be a treasured memory of their trip to the big city. And I realized that somehow a corner had been turned. I was no longer one of society's outcasts. I was now a part of the culture, part of a recognized group. Kind of like a cowboy or an Indian. At least one layer of the paranoia that enveloped me whenever I was out in public melted away.

So I was feeling a little more upbeat as I headed back towards Broadway. And then I just happened to pass a building that said Elektra Records on it. Elektra Records! Along with Vanguard they had been the major folk label. They had recorded Judy Collins. Phil Ochs. Now they were famous for The Doors. Tim Buckley. The artsy-est of the artsy rock. If any record company encapsulated the counter-culture it was these guys.

Like a silly tourist I just had to go inside and at least stand in their lobby. I opened the door and entered.

But as soon as I walked in I could tell that this wasn't anything like the laid back atmosphere that I had imagined. It wasn't even a normal reception area. In fact it had the glitziest, most over the top façade I had ever seen. It was all thick carpet, glass, mirrors, and metal. I stood there for a moment feeling stupid. Then this impossibly good looking secretary in high heels, jewelry, and a tight fitting hundred dollar blouse got up, came over to me, and asked me if there was someone I was there to see.

'Uh, no,' I said, and backed out.

By now it was my appointment time, so I hurried over to 1619 Broadway. Then up to the sixth floor and out of the elevator. At the reception area was Peter Litwack looking pretty cool, if incongruous, in a suit. He called Mr. Big, a bald, middle-aged guy in a conservative suit. Mr. Big ushered me into his office.

I could immediately tell that this had all been a big mistake. This guy was looking for Frank Sinatra's next big hit. Nonetheless I dutifully got out my guitar and started going through some of my songs. Mercifully he cut me off shortly into each of them, telling me he didn't think he'd be interested in that one, either.

He wasn't being mean or dismissive. He actually had kind of a gentle demeanor. But it was obvious to both of us that we were wasting each other's time. So after a final couple of minutes of polite talk he ushered me back out to the front desk.

After he left I told Peter that it hadn't worked out. His aunt was nearby, though, and she overheard our conversation. 'You know,' she volunteered, 'I'm good friends with a guy who owns a small publishing company upstairs. He handles songs that might be more current. Do you want me to call him and see if he'd like to see you?'

I supposed so. What did I have to lose? So about ten minutes later I was one floor higher and in a one room office. On the wall was one gold record, for the song 'Pretty Little Angel Eyes' from the Fifties. Facing me was a man in his late forties who was straight out of music industry cliche central casting: half huckster,

half shyster, and all New York. Sharing the room was his 23 year old sidekick, a way overly energetic Brooklynite with not a trace of anything past 1961 about him.

The older guy didn‘t waste any time. ‘So whaddaya got, kid?’ I pulled out my guitar and started going down my list once again. This time there were no good manners from the other side. ‘No. Too boring.’ ‘I don’t hear a hook on that one.’ ‘What the hell are you trying to say there?’

As I stood there being put down and humiliated, though, I realized that he had a point. I hadn’t been even trying to write what he saw as hit songs. What the hell, I hadn’t been writing any songs at all for at least the past eight months. All I had been doing was going around talking about writing songs. Every single thing about me and any kind of connection between me and music was totally fraudulent.

Finally his sidekick piped up. ‘You have anything in the Bob Lind vein?’ Bob Lind was a nonentity who had recently had a semi-hit with an almost excruciatingly bad fake folkie psychedelic song called ‘The Elusive Butterfly of Love’.

No, I didn’t. In fact, I only had one song left. The first real song I had ever written, back before my eighteenth birthday. I started in on the first verse.

By the end of the second chorus, as I finished, ’Won’t be coming back, won’t be coming back, won’t be coming back here any more,’ the older guy excitedly stopped me. ‘Now there—that chorus—now that’s a hook!’ he said. ‘Play it for me again.’

I did. ‘You know,’ he said, ‘That could actually be a hit.’ Then he paused. ‘But all that other stuff in the stong, that won’t work. Do you think you can change the rest of it all around.’

‘Yeah,’ his sidekick butted in. ‘Make it about traveling around the country. You know, you’re going to Denver, you’re going to Nashville. Just like Bob Lind.’

I wanted to puke. Here I was sharing my poetry with these brazen people in this lousy office containing two beaten up wooden desks. But I tried to politely say that I’d think about it, and then went about putting my guitar away.

The older guy continued to tell me that I might have a decent song if I listened to his advice. Then he switched gears a little.

‘Hey, kid, I gotta admit. I just don’t get this hippie shit at all. All those songs seem to do nothing but meander around. There’s all this vague I-don’t-know-what. Nothing seems to go anywhere. A song isn’t supposed to be about expressing yourself. It’s supposed to be about entertaining others.’

He paused for breath. ‘You know, there is one longhair Greenwich Village kind of writer that you could really learn something from. John Sebastian of the Lovin’ Spoonful. I’m real good friends with their manager. Now that guy can take drugs and everything and he still writes songs that are catchy. They got hooks. Regular people can relate to them.’

Now there was something I could finally agree with him on. That John Sebastian was a good songwriter. I thanked him for his time, picked up my guitar case, and headed out the door.

I was feeling so depressed that instead of taking the elevator I decided to walk all the way done. When I reached the third floor landing there was a group of around six black musicians just sitting around with absolutely nothing to do. As I walked by them one of them said really loudly,

‘Fucking hippie. I hope you feel good stealing work from real musicians. Probably know a total of six chords, don’t you? Fucking hippie.’

The words and the hostility still echoed through the stairwell as I reached the ground floor. He was right, you know. I was sure that any of those men could play rings around just about any hippie. And they had no way of comprehending that that really wasn't the point any more. All they knew was that a few short years ago they had constant work laying down tracks for 'The Loco-Motion' and 'The Look of Love'.

Now they were unemployed.

November 15, 1967

It had gotten so cold that the house was essentially unlivable. Nor did we have the money for any future rent. Nor did we have anything useful to do here even if we had had the rent. We had to go somewhere.

So I had come up with a new idea. The Bruderhof. The intentional community that Susan and I had briefly visited back in October. I still knew that it wasn't even close to being Oneida. But on the other hand it was a lot closer to that any place else that I was aware of. They did hold all things in common. They did have a vision of a higher way of living. Maybe Susan and I could put shoulders to the wheel there. Maybe we could fit in.

The nice Italian grandmother was very understanding about us lighting out on her. She knew that young people didn't always have everything all figured out. A lady who lived in a small house near the back side of ours agreed to look after the cats until Kent and Karen came in a few days to get them and the other possessions they had left behind. They could also have the jar of acid still buried in the sand. Maybe they could sell it to some of those hippies up at Franconia College.

We had already called the Bruderhof and they said that they would have a room ready. Now all that was left was for us to finish up putting things in boxes and saying goodbye to the beach.

November 18, 1967

We had borrowed Victor Kyrnicki's car to drive up to the Bruderhof the first time. This morning we were borrowing both it and him. Down in New Haven they were getting ready for the Harvard-Yale game. Right now it was a fair to middling late autumn day. 'Daydream Believer' by the Monkees was playing on the radio, and we were on a new freeway barreling through the downtown area of the former industrial hub of Waterbury.

Connecticut was a strange state in that way. Half of it was composed of these smallish cities which used to make everything from hammers to six shooters, and which now exuded an air almost desperately tired decay. The other half consisted of orderly, genteel fields and (mostly) forests. The parts nearest New York had those leafy suburbs. A little further out were those artists and writers who didn't have to go into the city every day. Where we were headed now was isolated enough to feel more like northern New England.

We arrived around noon and were greeted by Ben, the older man who had given us the tour in October. He and a couple of others helped us unload our stuff and take it to our room. Then Susan and I thanked Victor and he took off on his return trip.

Our room was a simple one. It had a bathroom, but no cooking facilities, since all meals were eaten in common. The building it was in was clean and almost new, but also rather basic and unexciting. Other residents included a few single men, a straighter couple a few years older than us from Toronto who were also still in the 'checking it out' stage, and a young family who had moved here after growing up with the Hutterites. No one asked to see our marriage certificate, and nobody minded if we played our records (softly) on that little plastic portable record player that I still had.

It came time for us to go to our first dinner. We headed over to the dining hall, which was also clean and relatively new, but also very basic, with five rows of tables each about forty feet long. By now Victor would be back on campus and The Game would be over. Not that he was into it, but if he wanted to he could get just as drunk and out of control as all the pillar of society alumni who had descended on New Haven.

Not to mention all of his pillar-of-society-to-be classmates.

November 22, 1967

My 'job' was over at the 'factory'. This consisted of numerous work stations involving lathes, drills, and saws, and had the constant aromatic fragrance of freshly cut wood. Each step of each process was extremely simple, and it was explained to me that making the toys was an ideal business for them, because it meant that no one person had indispensable skills.

My task was about the simplest of all, helping the guy in shipping make cardboard boxes and fill them up. Lest that workload prove too onerous, besides a very long lunch hour every day, there were also half hour 'tea breaks' in the morning and afternoon. Probably a hangover from their stay in England, at ten-thirty and three all work would stop, a giant tea service replete with cookies and crumpets would appear, and everyone would amiably socialize.

The Bruderhof didn't believe in secular holidays such as Thanksgiving, which would have been tomorrow. On the other hand, coincidentally today was one of their holidays, the anniversary of Eberhard Arnold's death (from a badly healing leg) in 1935. This meant an extra hour for lunch. I went over to the laundry to pick up Susan from her 'job'. Then we wandered over to the dining hall.

Whatever inefficiencies that resulted from their laid back work ethic were more than made up for by the super efficiencies of holding everything in common. No need for individual insurance policies, one large kitchen or laundry instead of a hundred smaller ones, etc. But they also went out of their way to never show any hint of luxury. So today's 'big' meal would involve meat loaf and mashed potatoes. Instead of the usual Kool-Aid type drink there would be real apple juice. Dessert would be more than the usual token dash of ice cream.

It would have been more than absurd to ever think that utopia should align itself in any way with wealth. But I had always assumed that it would have at least a little bit of class.

November 28, 1967

This wasn't working out. Why had I ever thought that it would?

I supposed that I never had. I supposed that I had gotten down to the point where I was grasping at straws. So there shouldn't have been any surprise when any particular straw should snap.

It wasn't like any of these people were evil. Far from it. Most all of them were sincere and many were downright interesting. There was Edgar, a charming sixty-year-old socialist who had joined up in England before the war. There was Jim, who had arrived here through a failed Quaker community in, of all place, Alabama. There was that nice young former Hutterite family down the hall.

And the community members displayed a level of behavior that was far superior to the general population. There were no arguments, no voices raised in anger, no overt displays of status and no obvious ego games. If a light bulb needed to be changed or a door hinge fixed, somebody would immediately get up and do it. Nor were these mindless members of some cult. They were reasonably interested in the world around them. And you could sit down with most of them and have a reasonably intelligent conversation. In fact, five

years ago the level of harmony and communal integration that they had reached would have been remarkable. It would have been on the outer edge of what was possible.

But now they reminded me of the folk music that I had used to like. Their mentality and outlook seemed hopelessly hokey, dated, and incomplete. I might as well be a guy from a rock band forced to play 'Tom Dooley' or 'Eddystone Light'.

And it wasn't just a matter of different or old fashioned styles. Because now that I had been here for a while, the insight that I had had on the first visit seemed true in spades. The way that they achieved their harmony was partially the result of their each trying to rise to an ideal. But most of it had to do with each individual ego being submerged to that of the group. And it seemed to me that when the welfare of the group became more important than adherence to the Truth (however you beheld it), then sooner or later, even with the best of motives, you would be asking for trouble.

Yes, when all was said and done in a lot of ways the virtuous life that these people were living was superior to what I had accomplished. And, yes, this would be a warm and safe place for two people with absolutely no resources to spend the winter.

But I was kidding myself to think that I could do it.

December 1, 1967

Ben was driving one of the community's cars into Hartford on some business. Or at least that's what he said. I couldn't tell whether or not they just didn't want us to be stuck way up in the corner of northeastern Connecticut.

Winter had hit New England and it was a cold, grey day. We sat mostly in silence as we covered the forty miles on the two lane road. Ben asked us if we knew what we were going to be doing. I told him that I honestly had no idea.

Well, I knew where we were headed this evening. The Bruderhof had arranged that we could stay at a certain church's guest cottage in the Boston suburb of Waltham. After that…

As if in answer, when Ben pulled over to let us out at the road for the Mass Turnpike he took out a piece of paper from his pocket. 'If it doesn't work out at the church,' he said, 'This is the number of a family in Cambridge. George and Mary Gulick. They have problems with issues of faith right now, but they're good people. They might be able to help.' Then, as we opened the doors to get out, he pulled out a sealed envelope and handed it to me. 'Here,' he said. And he was gone, along with all the trucks that were roaring by.

We only had to wait about ten minutes for our first ride. Once we were safe and warm inside it, out of curiosity I pulled out the envelope and opened it. Inside were two $20 bills. Which was really touching considering that from their point of view we could have just been two spaced out hippies. And considering that I well knew how the level of simple comfort that they had achieved was totally a function of their communal living. When it came down to it they probably made only about $1 an hour for their labor.

Now our total worldly wealth came to $110.

When we got to Waltham around early winter nightfall I called a number and someone from the church actually drove over and picked us up. That was rather Christian of them. Maybe we had found shelter for at least a short while.

December 2, 1967

It was a Dutch Reformed church. Since the Dutch people had a reputation for being liberal and tolerant, I was half expecting to find the atmosphere to be almost sickeningly so. I was very wrong.

It turned out that rural Holland, the area outside of Amsterdam and the other cities, was anything but liberal and tolerant. (If I had thought about it, I would have realized that the Afrikaans of South Africa, the ones who had invented apartheid, were also Dutch.) And rural Holland was ruled by the Dutch Reformed Church, one of the strictest, hell-and-brimstonest, us and them sects that the Protestant mind of man had ever devised.

Or, to use a more modern formulation, these were some of the up-tightest people on the face of the planet.

Although they were superficially trying to be hospitable, it was as clear as possible that in fact we were not welcome at all. What made it worse, from their point of view, was that there was a big wedding today. Indeed, they had come right out and asked us to please not leave our room. At all.

It was cold and rotten outside, so I wasn't itching to go on a long, contemplative walk anyway. Still, the two of us being stuck in a small, windowless room, knowing that nobody liked us, was not conducive to anything positive.

I pulled out the piece of paper with that other phone number, and around six, when a girl brought us a little tray of food, I asked her if she could have someone call it. When she came back to retrieve the tray, she said that the call had been successfully made, and that tomorrow evening someone was going into Cambridge and would take us.

Twenty-four more hours. And all there was to read were some Dutch Reformed religious tracts.

December 4-6, 1967

George and Mary Gulick were around forty years old. They had five children, ranging in age from Patrick, at fifteen, to the baby, who was still under a year old.

Their entire adult lives had been spent as devout utopian Catholics, a category that I hadn't known existed. And they had put all of their considerable idealistic energy into various attempts at voluntary community. But it had all come a cropper, and by now they didn't have enough faith left to even feel comfortable in the mildish religiosity of the Bruderhof.

In fact, by now they had become devout atheists. As only formerly devout utopian Catholics could be.

But they didn't begrudge Susan and me our take on all things spiritual. And they certainly hadn't given up on their belief in selflessness and sharing. Even if it meant somehow shoehorning Susan and me into their small apartment with the seven of them.

It was reassuring to have met people who, even though having never taken any drugs, and even though being far older than anyone else we knew, were still somehow in the best part of the hippie head space. We tried to stay out of their way as George went to his city job, the three oldest children went to school, came back and did their homework, and Mary busied herself with the two youngest and making meals for all.

This morning a new and delicious smell was coming out of her oven. When I asked her what it was, she opened the stove door and pulled out a tray of brown, crunchy looking nuts and grains. 'It's called granola,' she said. 'There's an underground recipe that people like me have been passing around. It's what we eat instead of breakfast cereal now.'

She reached over, lifted up a big glass jar, and poured out a couple of bowls for Susan and me. Wow, this stuff was pretty good. A hell of a lot better than the Sugar Frosted Pop junk that we didn't eat any more. Kind of warm and homey and completely different all at the same time.

Afterwards Mary wondered if maybe Susan and I could take something over to a friend who lived about a mile away. Sure, why not? It was good to get out, especially with the temperature above freezing. It gave us a chance to reflect upon the pause that we had been provided.

This was a different area of town than the one I had been familiar with when I had lived here fifteen months ago. Fifteen months ago??? By now that part of my life was as far away from me as Allentown had been back then. Back then I had just been a goofy stoned college kid making bongs out of empty toilet paper rolls.

And who was I now? For some reason Oak Creek Canyon popped into my head. About how we would jump from one rock to another to cross it. How our forward momentum would carry us into our next jump before we had any idea of where our next landing would be.

Yes, that's who I was now. Except that I had the added responsibility of making sure Susan landed each time, also.

December 7, 1967

Obviously we couldn't keep imposing on the Gulicks. And there was nothing for us to do in Cambridge even if we wanted to. So it was time for Susan and me to hit the road.

It was late morning on a crystal clear blue sky day in extreme western Massachusetts. It was so isolated out here near the New York border that we were taking our chances hitching on the actual Turnpike. Around us the Berkshires shone in their snow white mantle, looking about as majestic as mountains could here in the East.

We rocked from one foot to another, keeping ourselves warm.

December 9-10, 1967

Susan and I were riding along with Saul Hopper in his little green Volkswagen bug. The sky was half full of small clouds and rusty leaves still hung on the trees as we headed down I-44 into the heart of the Ozarks.

We had arrived at his apartment in St. Louis yesterday afternoon. He seemed to be his old cheerful, acerbic self in bright red hair and bright red beard. But he didn't want to talk about that acid trip last June. In fact, right now he was still so traumatized that he didn't think that he could ever go back to New Haven. Maybe in the spring he might transfer to Washington University, which was only a few blocks away. In the meantime he was holding down a job as best he could.

The ostensible reason for our visit to Missouri was that I had read this article in an underground paper back East about a voluntary community about forty miles from Springfield. It was called the Brothers of Zion, and it had gotten a pretty sympathetic write up from a reporter who clearly wasn't that religious. I hadn't been expecting perfection, but then Susan and I had absolutely nothing else to do, so why not check it out? And once we had gotten to Saul's he was clearly game for a road trip.

We got off the interstate at Rolla and headed south towards Mansfield. The Ozark Mountains weren't mountains at all, but actually lumpy, bumpy, rounded hills that rolled off in every direction. You could easily tell how poor the area was, but the interaction of fall foliage, southern pine, and green and brown

fields all marching up and down toward the horizon made it all seem quite beautiful on a Saturday afternoon.

We had called ahead, so they weren't surprised when we finally turned up the correct gravel back road and found their property. The men were all bearded and the women all wore long skirts. What with their many children there were about eighty of them housed in simple farm dwellings. We might well have been the first hippies that they had ever met, but they were gracious to us nonetheless.

Their founder and leader was a man in his early fifties named Merle Kilgore. His religious leanings were some kind of offshoot from the Mormon Church, and they had actually moved here from somewhere in Utah. Interestingly they had been ostracized not because they were polygamous (which they most definitely were not), but because of their belief in communal living.

Everything was simple and homespun. Life revolved around farm work and religious services. And rearing more children.

We were housed with Merle's oldest son. Arlen was big and burly and still only twenty-eight. But he had married when he was sixteen, and already had six children, the oldest of which seemed ready to start shaving himself. His wife and young girls squeezed out some extra room at the table so that the three visitors could join the eight of them for dinner.

In the morning we attended their early service. If it had been a weekday they would have expected a little help with the chores, but since it was Sunday they were happy for us just to visit and to walk around their rolling hills. What they had heard about hippies might have gone against everything they believed in, but they knew what it was like to be ostracized and misunderstood themselves, so they were not going to be doing that to us.

These people were a lot less financially secure than the Bruderhof. And they were much more likely to ascribe people's shortcomings to the Devil than to human nature. But there was the same sense of deliberately conscious peaceful behavior. There was the same understanding that putting the welfare of the group above the wants of the individual was a full time commitment.

Could I live here? No. Even more so than the Bruderhof, their underlying culture was from way too far in the past. More importantly, the 'salvation' that I was seeking was far more mystical and—to my mind, at least—more complete.

But I did have to admire them for having found their piece of land and for having taken their stand upon it.

December 13, 1967

It was eight in the morning, cold and clear, and Susan and I were walking through the ruins of the South Side of Chicago. Now these were some dead serious slums. We passed an entire block of rubble overlooked by a large billboard for Joe Louis milk. It was all kind of dangerous and scary, only made easy by the fact that virtually nobody was up and out on the empty streets so early in the day.

On Monday we had hitched up to Chicago from Saint Louis. Our last ride had dropped us off at around seven that night next to this nightclub called Second City. From there we had found our way to the El, which we took down to the University of Chicago campus. There we stayed with a friend from high school. The next day we hadn't done much of anything. Just walked to the lake. And then up all the way to the Loop. From which we took the El back.

Now we were headed out of town. A few blocks more and we had made it to the Interstate on ramp. I was slightly relieved that we had gotten out of there alive. I stuck out my thumb and soon we had a ride south

to the intersection with I-80. And then we were out to Joliet. And then we were out on the open prairie. Cold, harsh, but yet the essence of freedom, stretching flat and westward to the horizon.

Where were we going? Good question, but no good answer. And I had a lot more to think about as our new ride carried us inexorably towards Iowa. Like Susan. The two of us had been literally inseparable since late June. For better or worse she had thrown in her lot with me. Now we were both just barreling along, the only one that the other had. I was responsible for her, but was I really acting responsibly with her?

This was December and the shortest days of the year. It was only five-thirty when we found ourselves at the turnoff for I-35 S in Des Moines. It was already long past nightfall and a cold wind was blowing, but the mercury vapor highway lamps provided some light. Trucks roared by. Dirty snowy ice crept onto the shoulder.

It was there that I popped the question. We could keep on going to where she was from, San Diego. I had already considered that we were married. But why don't we go ahead and get legally married? Make a statement to each other and to ourselves. Go forward as an official husband and wife.

She was all eager. 'Sure,' she said.

December 15, 1967

In the fall of my senior year in high school Zia Nassry had shown up from nowhere.

Actually, to the good folks of Allentown 'nowhere' would have made a lot more sense than 'Afghanistan'. Indeed, I was somewhat of a world geography freak, and even I only knew about the country because it exemplified the most obscure of the obscure. Now somehow one of its citizens had found his way to the antipodal obscurity of the Lehigh Valley.

And it wasn't like he was an exchange student. No, Zia had decided that he needed an American education. So he had paid his way over here, gotten himself an apartment and a car, and paid tuition to attend our public high school.

He claimed to be eighteen, but he looked and acted like he was at least twenty-three. He already spoke excellent, though heavily accented, English (along with his native Pashtun and Farsi). When he came to see a class play he was sure to wear a suit and white gloves.

He was extremely handsome and he carried himself extremely aristocratically. This made sense because he indeed was an aristocrat, his family apparently being one of the most powerful in Afghanistan. This also made him somewhat of a comical character, because he was totally oblivious to American ways, and would always assume that local laws could be ignored and common people treated like servants.

For instance, he was one of the worst drivers imaginable, barely able to control his vehicle. But that didn't stop him from never even paying attention to what the speed limits were in town. Nor, when he made one of his constant wrong turns, from blithely slamming the car into reverse and driving backwards and out of control at thirty-five miles an hour.

As suddenly as he had appeared at high school, he had just as mysteriously vanished a couple of months later. After a while the word filtered down that he had been caught flagrantly cheating. And that then when he had been brought before our principal, kindly old Mr. Bartholomew, he had tried to bribe the man.

So he was out of Allentown. But somehow I had become his best friend while he had been there, and somehow we had maintained contact. Now here Susan and I were visiting him at his fine, large house in Kansas City.

It was a little hard to relate to where Zia was at these days. He had these pictures of himself up on all his walls: Him shaking hands with Harry Truman; Him shaking hands with Dwight Eisenhower; Him shaking hands with former Vice-President Nixon. And his musical taste hadn't gotten any hipper than the Montavani Strings.

He owned this business called Empire Cablevision. Apparently the latest new idea was to have people buy their television over cables which were laid to their houses. I couldn't see why people would pay for something that they already got for free from their antennas. But even if they would, it was hard to see how Zia, with his total lack of mathematical and technical skills, could be the one to sell it to them.

Nonetheless he drove a fancy car and wore fancy clothes. Which to Susan and me looked almost pathetically materialistic. And I was sure that our long hair and tattered clothes were just as disturbing to him. But by far the most important thing to him was that I was his friend, and to an Afghan that meant everything. As for me, I had always known that—once you stripped away all of his silliness—Zia was a really sincere, simple, and open hearted person.

I also appreciated his complete hospitality, even if it came with a constant background of that horrible Muzak music. Now we had a couple more days of rest from the pressure of reality crashing in on us.

Plus, we could start planning for that wedding.

December 17-18, 1967

Zia was the type of guy who would have driven us to San Diego if we had asked. But instead we had him take us to where I-35 headed southwest towards Wichita.

We almost immediately got a ride with a salesman who was going to Emporia. This part of Kansas was pleasantly hilly as we rolled along on a bright, sunny Sunday morning in December. After an hour or so he dropped us off at the entrance to the Kansas Turnpike.

A medium wait there, and then we were fortunate enough to get somebody who was going all the way out to Liberal, in the extreme southwestern corner of the state. At Wichita he switched to US 54, and from there on it was two narrow lanes stretching ever westward for the rest of the afternoon.

The destination of Liberal was suitably exotic for me, since I knew that Liberal was the site of the world's only helium mine. Not that I expected cheerful balloons to be floating about. And if I had expected that then I would have been out of luck, especially here in western Kansas in the wintertime. Everything was really brown, everything was really flat, and now the sun was starting to sink slowly in the west.

Our ride had been really talkative and friendly, though. And now he was nice enough to take us to the far side of town and to deposit us in a well lit location.

Which was good because soon it was not only really dark, but cold and getting colder. And not a hell of a lot of traffic heading southwest out of town and into the Oklahoma and Texas Panhandles on a lonely Sunday evening.

We stood there for over four hours, hopping up and down, walking around and around, and otherwise trying to stay warm. Finally, around ten a station wagon pulled over. In the front seat were a young husband and wife and baby. In the back seat were two other kids, about three and five years of age, asleep. Behind them was stuffed what looked like all of the family's worldly possessions. We somehow got both us and our pack into the back seat.

It was a dark and lonely drive as we made our way past Guymon, Oklahoma. As we went through the deserted downtown of Dalhart, Texas, at around one am it was in the midst of a ghostly snowfall. The bank's temperature sign said 16 degrees.

I fell asleep shortly thereafter. When I awoke we were in the middle of New Mexico. We were also in the middle of a full on raging blizzard. There was zero visibility, the snow was blowing sideways, and the young husband was poking along I-40 at around fifteen miles an hour. When we got to Santa Rosa he tried to continue southwest on 54. But the state troopers had it blocked off to Vaughan.

Never to mind. He simply went back east through town, and then took US 84 southeast to Fort Sumner. When he got there he took US 60 west until he got to Vaughan. With zero visibility in a vicious snowstorm in the vast dead emptiness of eastern New Mexico. At this point 54 was open again and he was free to head to Carrizozo.

Of course, by now it was late morning and all three kids had been up for several hours. And having been cooped up in the car for at least twenty-four hours they were kind of antsy and cranky. Unfortunately, the young mother's only method of discipline was to turn around and repeatedly smack them with a fly swatter. As Susan and I sat crammed into our half of the back seat.

About halfway to Carrizozo the snowfall started to let up. All of a sudden the young husband pulled over to the side of the road. He went to the back of the station wagon, opened the rear window, and pulled out a rifle. He then walked off into the snow. A couple of shots rang out.

He soon came back to the car holding a giant, bloody rabbit. He wrapped it in an old rag, then put it and the rifle in the back. Off we continued through the wasteland in a steadily decreasing cascade of white.

Late in the afternoon we had made it to Las Cruces, about forty miles north of El Paso. The sky was blue, the fading sun was warm, and we had made it to the land of palm trees. This was the family's destination. We still had 800 miles to go.

But we had also made it back to the land of interstates. This shouldn't be too difficult.

December 22, 1967

Susan's family lived in the San Diego suburb of La Mesa. The split level home they inhabited would have struck me as beyond luxurious back when I was growing up in Allentown. Now it seemed like a sad example of overdone cookie cutter mediocrity, sitting as it did amongst all of its neighbors as they marched up and down and around the formerly beautiful hills of southern California.

What I couldn't understand was how her father, a college professor (albeit one from San Diego State), could have so little taste as to want to live in such a boring development. Weren't college professors supposed to like classy houses from the Twenties or Thirties?

But her father didn't strike me like any other college professor I had run into. For one thing he was really young (Susan had been born while he was a graduate student). More important, even though he was obviously quite smart, he also very disturbingly seemed to lack the slightest vestige of any intellectual backbone. That is to say, trying to get him to take any stand on any issue of the day was like trying to put your thumb on mercury.

Susan's mother made no pretensions to intellectuality. She had been a girlfriend who had gotten pregnant (with Susan). If she had any passion now, it was to be as passionless and right down the middle of the middle class as she could be. Susan had already pointed out to me that until she went to college she had never had fresh vegetables in her entire life. They had all been frozen or canned.

Neither one of them liked me at all, nor made much of any attempt to treat me nicely. This was especially disappointing about her father, since at Yale most of the teachers who had gotten to know me had at least shown me some intellectual respect. On the other hand, I understood (if not appreciated) that her parents very rightly blamed me for leading their daughter away from the meaningless bourgeois path that they had looked so forward to her following.

They still did have three other children that they could pin their hopes on. There was a sister who was eighteen months younger than her. Although Nancy lacked Susan's brains, she did have the looks and personality of a southern California homecoming queen. Which in fact she was.

Then there were Jim and Dave, her younger brothers who were now out of diapers and who were six and three respectively. They each had the treacly, ruddy, healthy, lame glow of the Timmy character from the old TV series 'Lassie'.

Needless to say, Susan and I weren't fitting in with suburbia. That's why right now we were sitting with Paul Severtson under a highway bridge in what passed for the more settled part of San Diego. Below where we were perched was a mini-canyon. Night was falling, but there was still enough light that you could see a faint taste of the pastel multi-color streaked sundown clouds.

It was Christmas break for Paul; he was still at Yale. But even his equitable soul was starting to feel frustrated and alienated. We talked about the state of society. We talked about old times. We talked about how utterly boring it was in La Mesa. We talked about the fact that in three days Susan and I were to be married.

All around us insects clicked. We could smell the smell of growing things. Just another balmy late December evening in San Diego.

December 25, 1967

I had decided that Christmas Day would be an auspicious one on which to get married. By definition it would be a festive occasion. And at the very least that way we would never forget our anniversary.

Strangely, males in California had to be at least 21 before they could marry on their own. So my mother had had to send her permission. Females only had to be 18. Otherwise Susan would have had to do a lot of persuading.

The next problem was finding a place that would marry us on that date. Finally we latched onto The Wedding Bell Chapel. They already had somebody signed up for that afternoon. Any time in the morning would be fine.

Since I didn't happen to have one in our pack, Susan's father somehow borrowed a suit for me to wear. Susan wore one of her favorite smocks, which also had the effect of making her look pregnant.

Her mother was so upset with the whole thing that she refused to attend. Her father came, but that was only because he was too namby pamby not to. A few of Susan's high school friends also showed up.

We kind of took the whole ceremony as a joke. Which it kind of was. But that didn't mean that I had that sort of attitude towards marriage itself. No, I still considered it deep and meaningful and lifelong and all that other old fashioned stuff. I was deeply touched and impressed that Susan would voluntarily commit to spending the rest of her life with me.

I didn't even want to think of what it would have been like if she hadn't.

December 29, 1967

It was after midnight. Susan was sound asleep, but I was sound awake.

We were in two twin beds in a bedroom at the front of the house. At least we were married now, so that her mother couldn't be silently furious that we were sharing a room. I was staring out through the slats of the Venetian blind at the unearthly glow of the streetlights of suburbia. How in the world had I gotten here?

I knew how I had gotten to La Mesa. Susan had to have come from somewhere. And in truth her family wasn't any more or less plastic and artificial than most of the rest of the country. In fact, I could have done much worse. Her father's wimpiness meant that there wouldn't be any great future conflicts. Her mother had spent her whole life bottling up all her anger. So why should or would she stop now?

And in a few shot days we would be physically and spiritually free from this middle class purgatory on earth.

But how could I have gotten here? At the end of this dead end road? How could I have kept choosing the path of honesty and idealism—just like all those good people had been telling me to during my entire upbringing—and ended up at this impasse? If you did what you truly thought was the Right Thing, weren't things supposed to turn out right in the end?

Okay, I had never been quite that naïve. Nor had I ever really been headed for a career on Madison Avenue or Wall Street. Something in me had known that I could never do that. But ever since this decade of the Sixties had started that same Something had kept beckoning, had kept demanding that I pay attention.

And it would have been one thing if I had been nothing but an isolated fool wandering off to my own drummer. But there had been thousands of us. Maybe at this moment there were hundreds of thousands of us.

But where we were going? Where had that Something wanted us to end up?

I certainly had no idea where I was going. Just constantly in midair, constantly fighting the inexorable pull of gravity, constantly and desperately looking for that new rock to alight on. Me and Susan along on this never tethered, never-ending leap. And like women had perhaps always done, she was faithfully and hopefully following her man into the unknown.

Right now there was no present. No future. And of course no money. And, oh, one other thing. Something I had been steadfastly keeping out of my mind for the past three months. Remember that pre-induction physical from back in August? The results had come back a few weeks later. Kent's shrink letter had worked like a charm with his local board. He had been classified 1-Y, which was the modern army's practical equivalent of 4-F.

I was still 1-A.

A letter from my psychiatrist had just found its way to the address here. In it he expressed shock that the extremely strong letter he had written had been ignored. He also said how, all kidding aside, he really did think that I would suffer irreparable harm if I were drafted.

Thanks.

Now I was more wide awake than ever. Outside I could hear the steady light hum of those streetlamps.

December 31, 1967

It was early Sunday morning, but Susan's parents weren't believers. And somehow it would have seemed kind of profane going to church here in the soulless San Diego suburbs. No, instead they were preparing to head up to the Bay Area to visit relatives.

The family station wagon was packed. Mom and dad were perched in the front seat along with Dave. Jimmy was jumping up and down in the back seat. It hardly looked like a professor's family. The last to enter were Susan and I. In no time we were on I-8, and in little time after that we were heading north on I-5.

I had been driven around San Diego a bit during the last week and a half, but this was my first real exposure to southern California. To say that it was paradise paved over was achingly trite, but then there was something achingly trite in experiencing just how achingly trite it all was. The false front buildings in Silver Plume had seemed more real than the palm tree shaded fake Spanish colonial shopping centers here. The people all seemed to have false fronts, too.

Well, at least it was sunny and warm. We went through the still undeveloped stretches of northern San Diego county. Then the strange desolation of Camp Pendleton. Orange County started a little south of Santa Ana. Then endless, centerless, borderless cities and towns melded into one another for mile after mile. Crowded freeways, industrial factories, and more palm trees kept going all the way to thirty miles north of downtown Los Angeles. Then up and over the Grapevine and down to the Central Valley.

Interstate 5 hadn't been finished yet, so all the traffic ended up on US 99. First Bakersfield. Followed by Tulare, Fresno, Merced, Modesto. Endless fields alternating with endless rows of orchards. Still bright and sunny. Still a limitless supply of palm trees. All the while Susan's mother pretending that we all didn't see just how fake her mask of civility was.

We reached San Francisco after dark, drove around a bit, and finally found Chuck Apel's apartment. Mr. and Mrs. Sandstrom walked with us up the stairs to the second floor. Chuck let us in, and we all stood around awkwardly for a minute. Then Susan's mom broke down sobbing. Then Glenn said, 'Come on, Betty. The kids are in the car and we have to get to Bill's.' And they left.

Chuck made a funny comment to break the ice, and then Susan and I sat on an old couch and he sat in an overstuffed chair. I hadn't seen him since May, he had been right in the thick of the action all summer and fall, and there was a lot of catching up to do. He started regaling us with his stories of trips and encounters and with his dropping of famous names. His speech was laced with all kinds of new terms and phrases, like 'far out' and 'ripped off'.

This went on until after nine. Not once did he express any interest in what I might have been doing. Then all of a sudden this weird change came about him, as if he had just realized something.

'You're not planning to stay here, are you?'

Uh, I had thought that that was kind of obvious. 'Well, I, er…'

'No man.' Now he was nervous, almost hostile. 'Can't do it man. No way.'

I sat there looking at him blankly. After another thirty seconds of silence he said with enthusiasm, 'Hey man, here's what you can do. You've got sleeping bags. Why don't you camp out at Golden Gate Park? Everybody does it, man.' Then, as if I hadn't gotten the point, 'I just can't have you staying here, man. Sorry.'

Susan and I looked at each other, then got up and gathered our things. As we clumsily left the apartment, Chuck clumsily said, 'Hey, you can come back to visit tomorrow afternoon!'

We walked a couple of blocks up to Haight Street, then down the many, many blocks to the park. It was New Year's Eve, but hippies didn't believe in that, so the area was as dead as on any other Sunday night in December.

We entered the park in the dark. I kind of remembered a bit of the layout from last spring. I found what looked like a very isolated area of bushes, and we found an even more isolated area behind them to lay out our bags.

I later found out that the city of San Francisco had been conducting a very well publicized campaign to keep people from sleeping in the park. Anyone that they caught they were throwing in jail. And there was no way that Chuck wouldn't have known about it.

But right now we didn't know about it. All we knew was that we had a place to sleep. Around midnight in the distance we could hear a bunch of firecrackers and fireworks going off and car horns being honked.

The night wasn't that cold. Tomorrow we would figure out what to do next.

Epilogue

That was all over forty-five years ago. Here is how the various participants (in very approximate order of appearance) ended up spending the ensuing decades:

Diane (Fink) Ackerman became a relatively well known nature and science writer.

Bonnie married upon graduation, and became an upper middle class housewife in suburban Connecticut.

Saul Hopper went back to college in St Louis, ending up with a PhD. He is now a child psychologist.

David Katz stayed with Transcendental Meditation, rose high in their ranks, lived at their headquarters in Fairfield, Iowa, and ran various businesses.

In the Seventies Norm Zamcheck fronted a well-regarded cabaret act in the Northeast called 'Stormin' Norman and Suzie'. They got a major label deal, but it fizzled. For the next twenty-five years he taught high school in New York City. Now in retirement, he plays music as much as possible.

Bob Withers stayed with Janis for about two more years. He then moved to New York, where he has stayed put ever since. He works now as a technical writer.

I never had another encounter with Steve Schwarzman. But he became a multi-billionaire and private equity big shot.

My freshman roommate Steve Warner got a PhD in economics and spent his career working at the World Bank in Washington, DC. My other roommate Dan Brinsmade dropped off the face of the planet.

Paul Severtson lives in central California and raises funds for a public radio station. He also plays violin for various orchestras and ensembles.

Jon Rubin spent the summer of 1968 following around The Who on tour and taking movies of them. For his senior project he condensed it all into an artistic interpretation accompanied by their song 'Substitute'. It has been claimed that this effort turned out to be the first rock video ever. Since then he has taught film at various colleges in the New York area.

Eddie Grey graduated from Columbia in 1971. He is an award winning writer/producer of science documentaries.

Mary Gehan stayed in Minnesota, married, had a child, and spent a lifetime teaching.

Peter Litwack moved out to the Bay Area in 1968. For a while he had a high end stereo equipment store. He still lives in Marin County.

Chris Donald adopted the stage name Vinnie Taylor and became the guitarist and one of the front men for the group Sha Na Na in 1970. He died on tour of a heroin overdose in 1974.

Mark Zanger became politically active on campus, and as a result was immortalized after a fashion by becoming a character in the comic strip 'Doonesbury'. He is a writer and editor living in the Boston area.

Chuck Apel stayed in San Francisco for the duration. For a number of years he was the 'go to' guy if you wanted to score acid. He even did a little hard time. Then in the Nineties he decided to go back to school, and ended up earning a PhD in—believe it or not—astrobiology. He now teaches at a university in the Bay Area.

Things didn't work out that well for Peter Mueller. I ran into him on a side street in Berkeley in 1969. The next and last I heard of him was in 1982 when I was visiting a friend in Marin County and read a newspaper expose. It seems that Peter was operating under a number of aliases, running scams on people with oriental rugs, and ripping them off. Apparently he was constantly on speed and living in a storage locker in Petaluma. A present day google of him finds no traces.

In 1981, after the Iran hostages were released, it was reported that this left only one American in captivity in that country. His name was Zia Nassry, and the U.S. didn't secure his release for another year or so. A few years later he disappeared somewhere in the middle of Afghanistan and was presumed dead. If somehow connected to the CIA, he was either a hell of a lot smarter than he let on, or the CIA was a hell of a lot dumber than even I would imagine.

As I was hitchhiking around in the summer of '68 I heard this song on the radio a few times. It was by the Lovin' Spoonful, and it was about travelin' to Denver and such, and the chorus was, 'Won't be going back, won't be going back, won't be going back to Nashville any more.' At the time I took it as a sign that I was so uncreative that someone else had come up with my exact same riff. It was only about four years later that it occurred to me that maybe I had been ripped off. Sure enough, the 'writers' of the song turned out to be those two gentlemen from the Brill Building.

On the other hand, since the song only made it to Number 88, maybe I really wasn't that creative after all.

Though Kent and I ended up becoming initiates of the same guru in India, we didn't really have that much contact in the intervening years. He went back to Yale the next fall and graduated in 1970. He then moved to an ashram in New Hampshire about ten miles from where he had grown up. There he started a tiny school in his house, which he grew over the years into a non-denominational (though spiritually based) K-12 enterprise replete with buildings, an athletic field, a faculty of fifteen, and 150 students.

He and Karen are still together.

I went back to Yale in the fall of '71 and graduated in the spring of '73 with a couple of degrees. Over the years I have made my living through a number of small businesses. This has afforded me the ability to live in rural spaces and the opportunity to travel to over 150 countries.

Susan and I were married for seven years. We shared a couple of daughters. She is now the principal of an elementary school near Vancouver.