1987

Street level

Charles S. Faris
Iowa State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd

Part of the Fiction Commons

Recommended Citation

https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd/155

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Iowa State University Capstones, Theses and Dissertations at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Retrospective Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.
Street Level

by

Charles Stout Paris

A Thesis Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

Department:  English
Major:  English

Approved:
Signature redacted for privacy

In Charge of Major Work
Signature redacted for privacy

For the Major Department
Signature redacted for privacy

For the Graduate College

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
1987

Copyright © Charles Stout Paris, 1987. All rights reserved.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Farthest Point North 1
The Dead 6
Shadows 8
Dream (Mantis Religiosa) 29
The Knot 42
Symposium on the Use of Subhuman Primates in Drug Evaluation, Berkeley, 1987 45
Street Level 90
For my father
James Richard Lowery Faris
1920 to 1984
Living is easy with eyes closed
Misunderstanding all you see
It's getting hard to be someone
But it all works out
It doesn't matter much to me

John Lennon
A boy and his dog are heading north along a dirt road. It is late fall and the ground is covered with leaves. Occasionally they come upon a pile of leaves and the dog will run into it at full speed, digging through until she reaches dirt, then running in circles until the leaves are spread out, as if they had never been any other way.

At first the boy had found this entertaining, laughing and joining in the redistribution of leaves. But that was hours ago, when he was fresh out of bed, when the air was still cold enough to freeze his breath. Now he watches impatiently.

He calls to the dog. It is a German shepherd, almost as large as the boy himself. The boy is four and a half years old, the dog is five. Brian and Rega. Brian's father named Rega when she was a day old, although he didn't bring her home for six more weeks. She was the third in a litter of eight, born to Sirius, Uncle Max's dog, on the night that the star Rega reached its farthest point north. Brian's father was an astronomer.

It is nine in the morning and Brian is beginning to wish that he had eaten breakfast. He could have fixed a bowl of
Frosted Flakes or Raisin Bran, but he was afraid that he would wake his mother. Soon, though, he would be where he wanted to be. There is a circle of large stones farther up the road in the woods. Brian likes to lie in the middle of the circle and look at the sky through the leaves and branches of the tall trees.

The road has turned to rock and up ahead there is a pond. It used to be a stone quarry and Brian's mother tells him daily not to swim in it. He searches the ground for stones. This is difficult. There are many rocks, rough and sharp, but few stones. As he reaches the water Brian finds a smooth black stone, perhaps too small to be called a stone, perhaps a pebble. He calls Rega and sits down.

He has four stones. And one pebble. The first stone, brown and flat, the size of a half dollar but thicker, like an oreo, is tossed into the water. Brian watches the ripples move in a circle across the water. As the last circle reaches the shore near his feet he throws the second stone, large and oval, almost egg shaped, toward the same spot that he had thrown the first. He imagines the change in its color, from dry grey to wet black.

He doesn't wait for the ripples this time, but jumps to his feet and skips the last two stones, flat, smooth, and black, across the water. The first skips three times, but
when the second hits the water it sinks.

Brian watches the ripples on the water. The changing shape as they move into each other. He fingers the small black pebble, places it in his mouth. He picks up a stick and throws it in the pond, watches Rega jump in to retrieve it. The ground at the edge of the pond is soft, and Brian can see hoof prints, like from deer, leading up to the water and then back to the road. Lots of prints.

Brian stares at the tracks for a while, and then looks around himself at the shoreline and the woods. He has lived near this pond all his life and he has never seen any deer. He wonders where they play, and why they are always hiding from him.

His father told him once that if you really wanted to see the deer, if you were quiet and calm and loving and you really wanted to see them, they would come to you. And sometimes at night he would do that to see his father, but when he woke in the morning it went away. It was always dreams.

When Rega drops the stick at his feet he uses it to dig a hole in the dirt. Then he spits the pebble into the hole. Making a cross out of twigs and part of a shoelace, he marks the grave.

Brian tires of the pond and begins to walk further up the
road, one shoe loose, Rega once again playing with leaves.

It is almost ten when Brian reaches the clearing of the stones. He walks into the circle and stares up at the sky through the tall trees. He spins himself around and around while he stares up at the sky and the empty branches, and when he is dizzy he lays down in the circle and closes his eyes. As he lays there, eyes closed, quiet and still, he can still see the trees and the sky going around and around. And then he can see something else.

There is a deer prancing around the circle of stones. It is a large deer, with antlers branching out in five forks. Although Brian's eyes are closed, he sees this more clearly than in any dream. The hooves digging into the ground, large brown eyes as smooth as glass, and antlers branching out like the limbs of the trees. Around and around it goes, head held high, and Brian keeps watching it dance through the pictures in his mind.

Brian opens his eyes when Rega begins to bark. It is her friendly bark, her way of saying "Come play with me." He sees the sky and the trees again, brown lines on a blue background, and thin rays of sunlight are filtering through and hurting his eyes.

He brings his gaze back to the ground, sits up and looks around. He sees tracks like the ones he had seen before at
the pond, and dirt kicked up around the stones. Rega is barking and staring at a trail of tracks leading into the woods. He reaches out and touches the tracks, feels the earth in his hands, cool and damp. It was the deer this time, like his father said.

Brian follows the path back to the road. He pulls on the laces of his loose shoe, but there is not enough to tie a bow. Down the road the late morning sun is reflecting off the pond.

He is feeling hungry now. His mother made bread pudding the night before and if he is late for lunch he won't get any. Calling Rega, he begins walking south.
The Dead

Julie and I rode our bikes out to the cemetery on the twenty-third. It's this ritual type thing for her. Every May since she was a kid she says. To beat the crowds. I'd never been there with her before.

The sign said no bicycles and I almost told her that the adjacent Masonic cemetery didn't have any rules like that, and that we could go over there. I caught myself though, and simply chained our bikes together beneath the sign.

We walked up a hill, past the massive slabs of the small Jewish section. From there you could see the rest of it—a pond with ducks and geese, rolling hills of uneven stones, and beyond that the neat white military markers.

"Over there," she said, pointing to a group of stones a few hundred yards from the water. They were covered with flowers and I wondered as we walked if all of Julie's relatives made it a point to visit the week before Memorial Day.

"Do you know all these people?" I asked. She was running her fingers along the stone of a grave covered with pink and white impatiens.

"Martin Jones," she said. "Born 1851." She sat back and
looked up at me. "How old do I look?"

I laughed. "No. I mean, are they like relatives or something?"

"My relatives," she said, stretching out full length on the ground, with her hands above her head, "are from another place entirely. Like yours."

"Yes," I said, although I had forgotten. "That's right."

"So I come and be with other people's relatives. It's all the same anyway, don't you think? I mean, once you're dead you aren't very likely to be all that interested in the things that you thought made you special and different when you were alive, are you?"

I sat down in front of her. "Then why come at all?"

A gust of wind blew some of last fall's leaves past and they caught in the flowers. I could hear the cars in the distance, rolling down the street like waves.

She lay there, eyes closed, hands at her sides, surrounded by grass and stone and flowers. I watched her for a few minutes and then lay back touching my heels to hers.
When Rene suggested that we go to Hawaii for our first anniversary, the first thing I thought about was the blowhole at Hanauma Bay. A blowhole is created when waves rush through a cavern which has its roof between wave levels. Water and air are compressed inside the cavern and strewn out of a hole or crack in the roof. There are quite a few of these blowholes on the island of Oahu, although most of them are rather small and unspectacular, unlike the one just past Halona point which has garnered the title of The Blowhole. While that blowhole is undeniably spectacular, and an amateur photographer's wet dream, there's not much you can do with it but watch. But the blowhole at Hanauma Bay, about three miles back the road from Halona point, you can really get into, literally. It connects with a round pool about fifteen feet in diameter and eight to ten feet deep; everyone calls it Pele's Bath. Pele is the volcano goddess, and I guess it belongs to her because she pretty much created the islands, and because the water level rises and lowers with the rhythm of the waves, so it can play about as rough as she does.

I had spent a lot of my high school weekends there,
waiting for the tide to come in, bringing with it the kind of monster waves that would suck the water out to a depth of less than a foot and then push it, and everything in it, up and over the top of the pool in about two seconds.

As my friends bobbed up and down, I would sit on the rocks surrounding the pool and look out to sea judging the size of incoming waves.

"Hey Alex," someone would invariably ask, "you afraid or what?"

My best friend Kevin would always answer for me.

"He's not afraid. He's just waiting for the deepest wave."

Eventually bobbing up and down in Pele's Bath began to seem less and less thrilling, and the day came when I discovered a more exciting way to wait on the big waves. A local kid stood about thirty feet away, at the beginning of the cavern that the water rushed through, putting on a mask and fins. Then he dove onto the channel that fed the pool. He treaded water until just before the next incoming wave reached him and then swam below the surface. When the water entered the pool he came in with it.

"How did you do that?" I asked.

"Easy brah. Go unda when da wave come in and kick like hell tru da tunnel."
I thought about that for a second.

"What if you're too slow and the wave comes back out before you get through?"

"Easy brah, you die. Nah nah, joke."

Smiling eyes and white teeth, and he continued.

"Get one hole about ten feet before Pele's Bat you can climb up. Or you can hold your breath. No problem."

"Okay," I said. "Can you show me where this tunnel starts?"

"Sure."

I grabbed Kevin's mask and flippers and headed toward the channel. We jumped in and exchanged names. When Vincent swam down I followed.

I wasn't too enthusiastic about what I saw. The tunnel was just large enough to accommodate a body, with no room to turn around if I had second thoughts. I could see that my claustrophobia would act up if I let it, but that it would be quite a rush if I swam through. And afraid or not, I didn't want to cop out in front of my friends. I had fashioned a veritable career out of taking stupid risks and I didn't want anybody to think I was smaller than my fear.

We surfaced and waited for the next wave. Vincent went down. I kicked my legs and arms and waited. From where I was I wouldn't be able to tell if Vincent made it until he
got out of the pool. I pissed to get rid of the anxiousness. Another wave went through, then a second. Jesus Christ, I thought, where the hell is he.

Then I saw him rise up out of the pool. He looked my way and grinned.

"Fooled you, eh brah."

"Hey, fuck you!" I replied.

A wave was coming in and I went under. The tunnel hadn't changed any in the past few minutes. I grabbed the rim and pulled myself in, keeping my arms in front of me. I kicked, felt the wave pushing me through, buffeting me against rocks and coral slimy with sea moss.

Everything was happening at normal speed, but it seemed to be lasting forever. My senses were totally jazzed. I had never seen so clearly. My skin was alive and the water rushing over it was like nothing I'd ever felt before. I passed through a small splash of light, the hole Vincent had told me about, and was back in the shadow of the tunnel. Then I was streaming into the pool, feeling as if I had just started.

Shooting the tunnel will do that to your sense of time. Just like the water that goes through the tunnel and speeds up with the increase in pressure. And as I sat thinking about it I felt as if I'd only been away for weeks, rather
than years, as if I'd spent the time since I left going through some other sort of tunnel.

But I didn't tell Rene about Pele's Bath. Instead I told her that I really didn't think we could afford it and that I didn't have enough vacation time built up and that it wasn't really all that great a place to visit.

"Bullshit," she said. "We can stay with your parents so all we need is air fare and spending money. And we can afford for you take a week without pay and I don't know what you're trying to pull telling me it's not such a great place to visit. I want to go."

"Okay," I said, "We'll go. Just don't expect me to get too excited about it."

"Oh fuck you," she said. "Can't you ever think of anyone but yourself?"

It always surprised me when she got angry at me that way because the thing I noticed first about her was that she never got angry at people, no matter what they did.

I remember when we met in Dr. Robert's class on twentieth century Continental fiction, on one of those days when the sun reflects off freshly fallen snow.

"I know what it's like to be dead," she said.

Right, I thought. At least this class won't be boring.

"Tell me about it," I said. She couldn't, of course. It
was beyond words.

"But I can take you there."

"No thanks."

Instead we went for coffee at Jerry Benelli's and talked about how people seemed to be robots or sleepwalkers. I raved but she seemed simply matter of fact about the whole topic.

"That's just the way it is," she said. "And the only thing for a sane human being to do is to resist all of the negativity and live life the way you think it should be lived."

I marveled at her nonchalance as we walked back to campus.

"But what do you do when someone keeps giving you negative energy?" I asked.

"Come back with all the positive energy you have."

And as she stood on the steps of Old Main, I looked up into her eyes--blue blue electric blue, I thought--and fell in love.

And she was right about my selfishness, of course; I rarely did think of anyone but myself, or at least I rarely thought of anyone else until after I had thought of myself. And so my natural response was to tell her that she was full of shit and drag the argument down to the lowest level
possible until what had begun as a disagreement about a vacation became a full scale war using parents, money, sex, and responsibility as weapons.

On the third day, when I yelled at her for making the coffee too strong, she stopped talking to me, which wouldn't have been so bad if she hadn't continued talking to our animals. So I made the airline reservations and apologized, and kept my thoughts about going home to myself.

And of course, once we got there she fell in love with it. The fresh cool tradewind blowing over us as we waited for a bus to my parents' apartment brought back ancient racial memories, she said. Standing on the pavement at the bus stop, she stared at a trio of palm trees just becoming visible in the first light of the morning. "I've lived here before. I just know it."

And maybe she had. Who the hell knows. But at least she hadn't lived there as recently as I had. Her lungs weren't shaped by the ocean air that the tradewinds blow in fresh each day except when there are Kona winds and the air is absolutely stultifyingly still. She didn't have friends and parents and memories here. For her this could be some kind of long-lost Garden of Eden, beautiful amorphous paradise kind of home. For me it was just the place where I grew up.

As we rode the bus into Honolulu, Rene said she was
nervous about meeting my father.

"No big deal," I said. "Just agree with everything he says and he'll love you."

"Do I detect a note of bitterness?" Rene asked with a smile.

"Yeah. I guess so. It's just that my father was never one to let love get in the way of a good argument. And a good argument was one that he could win."

"Huh."

"What do you mean, huh."

The bus reached our stop and we got out and began walking toward my parents' apartment building.

"Nothing."

"Oh I know. You think I'm holding on to something that happened years ago and that I just should drop it and forget it ever happened."

"No," she said. "I was actually thinking that he sounds a lot like you."

I smiled. "Well, that's no excuse."

"And," she added, "that you are probably holding on to a lot of things that happened a long time ago. And you don't need to forget about them, you just need to put them in their proper place, behind you."

I thought about that as we took the elevator up to the
23rd floor. I wondered what I got out of not getting along with my dad. I couldn't figure it out. I'm not sure I wanted to.

When my mother opened the door she gave me one of her embarrassingly affectionate hugs. Then she did the same for Rene. My father, who had been living with emphysema for four years, sat in his recliner in the corner of the small living room. I hadn't seen him in three and a half years and I was surprised to see that he had puffy cheeks. He had always been so thin.

"How are you doing?" I asked him as I walked over to his chair. He looked good, and I was happy to see that.

He smiled a big broad beaming smile, something I hadn't seen him do since I was a kid. "Oh, I can't complain too much. How 'bout yourself?"

"Great, great." My hands were in my pants pockets and I was feeling pretty nervous. I stepped back and grabbed Rene's left hand, pulled her forward.

"Dad, this is Rene. And," a little nervous laughter, "Rene, this is my Dad."

"Well, Rene, I'm glad to meet you. Edith was very impressed with you when she met you last year, and I can see why."

I looked out the window which ran the length of the
living room---buildings, trees, mountains, water---and the exhaustion from the trip over caught up with me.

"I'm going to lay down," I said.

"Me too," said Rene.

Then my mother and I got into a brief argument over whether or not Rene and I would take her bedroom for the next two weeks.

"Look," she finally said, "I can't discuss this any more right now because I have to go to work, but I am going to sleep on the futon in the living room. You are welcome to sleep anywhere you want."

And that was that. I took my bags back into her room, lay back on her bed and fell asleep.

When I woke up it was past noon and Rene was still asleep so I wandered into the living room where my father was watching game shows.

"Hello," I said.

His face snapped toward me. "Hiya Alex. Have a seat."

He pointed to the couch which sat next to his chair.

I sat down and looked outside.

"I'm glad you could make it," he said. "I wanted to meet Rene before it was too late."

"Well, I don't think there was any rush on that." I hated it when he brought up his "impending doom." Like he
wanted sympathy from me. Like he was giving up. I kept on looking out the window, staring at the thin line joining the sea to the sky.

"She's a fine young woman at any rate, I can tell that."

He was looking at me and it was starting to get on my nerves. I wasn't willing to give him what he seemed to want. Couldn't he see that he didn't need it?

"And you've turned out to be a fine young man. I'm proud of you, and I want you to know that."

And then I was completely furious inside. I just kept staring out the window thinking about how unfair it was that he should never be satisfied with anything I did and then, when he knows he's only got a few years left to live, turn around and suddenly want to be the great loving father.

My mind was flooded with memories. My father boasting about what a great softball player he was, lamenting that none of his kids ever turned out to be good athletes, and then telling me that I couldn't go out for football because it was too dangerous, or track because the shoes were too expensive. Me rushing to my room after school in the fourth grade to hide my report card so that I wouldn't get a spanking for slacking off and getting a "C" in arithmetic.

And as quick as that I felt ashamed of myself. Those memories were ancient. I hadn't even seen my dad for three
years. But there was still something in his manner of being with me that pushed all my buttons and put me on red alert. I had "turned out" okay. No possibility that I had been okay all along. Just like there was no possibility that he had been okay all along. And not too much possibility that he was okay right then.

My anger and my shame resolved themselves in discomfort, so I just sat there until Rene woke up, thinking of things we could do for the next two weeks that would keep us out of the apartment as much as possible.

The next day we did a lot of driving. Up to the north shore and Mokuleia, where I'd gone to summer camp, then around to the east side of the island. We stopped at Hauula beach park and walked south along the shore.

"This is really nice," Rene said. "So deserted and tranquil and beautiful. I can't believe you tried to tell me that this wasn't a nice place to visit."

"I guess I forgot about how nice it was" I said, although I'm sure that what it really was is that there was no place for her in my memories. Because my memories of these places were filled up with the ghosts of other people, other times.

I remembered a night seven years earlier, right there on the sand we were walking past, a night that women are supposed to remember, but that men are supposed to forget,
and I wonder if it is really true. Am I really so bizarre to remember the evening of my first kiss in such perfect detail? Because it is there to the last detail. The smell of the water and her hair. The way her hand felt in mine. The awkward discomfort of sitting halfway up in the sand. The coy conversation that led to that first kiss. And then the feeling in my arms and legs and my face, the rushing sensation of whatever the hell it is that rushes through your body when after five years of desperate need you finally find someone to love you too.

Somehow in the face of all that memory my relationship with Rene seemed puny and passionless. And staying away from Hawaii seemed to be the best way to stay away from the memory. At any rate it allowed me to deal with my memories in a purely cerebral way. And suddenly with the smell of the ocean and the feel of sand beneath my feet the past became real, and the ghosts were people once again.

A few mornings later we went to Hanauma Bay where we lay in the sun, swam in the shallows of the coral bottomed bay chasing psychedelic fish, and ate a shave ice as we dried in the heat. It all seemed so rote. Everything was perfect, the water, the sand, the breeze, but none of it seemed to matter.

Then we walked around the rim of the bay, over the rough
a'a lava rock which lines the base of the cliffside, until we stood at the ocean's edge. The waves were deep and blue, not yet cushioned by the reef that lined the floor of the bay. The a'a path curved left until we were walking away from the ocean, walking with the waves that were creating an increasingly rough and tumble game in Pele's Bath. I couldn't help but smile.

In the pool everything was pure sensation—the wet salty warmth of Rene's body pressing against mine as we tumbled back and up over the rim, the momentary grip of sand in my toes when the water washed back out. It seemed that I could feel all of the muscles in my legs and arms, my back, chest, and belly.

I sat on a rock a few feet away from the pool and watched Rene swim. She was wearing a new bathing suit, an emerald green two piece. The long straps from the bikini top were slid through the legs and back up out at the waist, pulling the elastic band up over her hips, and tied just below her navel. The sun shone on the water as it rolled down her shoulders and back. I put suntan lotion on my face as I watched her bob up and down.

* 

Whenever I smell my sunscreen I forget where I am. I think about sex and I think about Rene and I realize that
the picture that I usually have of her, the frame I see her through-- all the cold, hard, insecure, isolated times that I hold as being *her*--is my own creation. That scent conjures forth a different woman, warm, soft, sexual and open. And I wonder why I am so intent on placing a Botticelli in a worm-eaten frame.

*

Then from way deep in my belly, all the way back to my spine, something began to swell. The momentary satisfaction of watching Rene's movements on the water left me and I began to feel a black hollow desire. I kept watching Rene, thought to myself how beautiful she was, and how satisfied I should be sitting there in the sun and the breeze, but it didn't help. In my mind I saw an image of the tunnel that led into the pool, and sat back for a few minutes staring out to sea.

The tide was nearly full. In a few hours the Pele's Bath would be fit for tourists and their children. Now it was reaching its peak. A large wave crashed over the rocks and tried to pull me back in. I stood up.

"Rene."

She looked up at me and smiled.

"I'll be right back."

Swimming the tunnel without a mask and fins was something
I'd never done, but the waves were running pretty big so I wasn't worried. Treading water waiting for the optimal wave was something I didn't have the patience for. I was worried that Rene would wonder where I had gone off to and get worried. I didn't want her to know what I was doing until I was done. I guess I didn't trust her to let me run my own life. I'd certainly been guilty of that in our relationship. But I was also worried that if she told me she was afraid then I would be too. The waves seemed to be running in series, each larger than the last. The eighth wave looked like a peak, so I took a breath and swam down in front of it.

The water was full of sediment, but I didn't have any trouble making out the entrance to the tunnel, the pale shadow surrounded by rock. I pulled myself in just as the force of the wave reached me. Without a mask I had to strain to see. Maybe that's why I got carried away looking at the walls surrounding me. They hadn't changed in the years I'd been away, but they looked as alien as could be, twisted and bulging and full of small holes, smooth from centuries of waves, and slimy with sea moss.

I touched the wall to my left, felt the coolness, the rarely-disturbedness. How many had been there before me? Who was the first? Was he like me, just out having fun? Or
had it been stumbled upon by someone diving in the channel for black coral or octopus? That was when I noticed that the feeling in my veins was gone. I also noticed that the water had stopped moving. I began pulling myself out of the shadows toward a hole a few feet ahead of me, smooth stone framing sunlight and blue sky, when the next wave began to pull the water through the tunnel into the sea. The current pounded me back into a jutting rock and I held on as tightly as I could. I felt the cool smooth surface and wondered how long I could hold my breath.

I began counting the seconds---one, two, three,---and then I noticed that they were coinciding with my heart beat which was pounding in my ears. Four, five, six times around the parking lot in the middle of our block in Naval Housing Area 3. Seven of us on our tricycles, riding around in circles, singing, celebrating the return of our fathers after six months at sea.

"We all live in a yellow submarine."

And then I am riding my bike to school, early in the morning, hours before classes, to clean the five classrooms in the foreign language building I say. It's my job. But the rooms never take more than thirty minutes because I've got the keys to the whole building and its just me and Terry there every morning for an hour before anybody else. And it
usually takes about fifteen minutes to convince her that it's safe. Or sixteen or seventeen.

Until it's the weekend and I'm at the beach, trying to decide if it's too rough to shoot the tunnel at Pele's Bath. Because I'm not eighteen anymore, or nineteen or twenty. And I can feel my heart pounding in my ears as I stop thinking and relax, go with the flow of the current through the tunnel toward the pool, twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three, into the sunlight and then the air.

Rene was amazed to see me. "How did you do that?" she asked.

"It's nothing," I said, panting, starved for air. I pulled her up out of the pool with me on the next wave. "You are beautiful." And I thought, I almost know what it's like to be dead.

We kissed then, as the sunshine dried our skin and the waves came in and out, keeping time in Pele's Bath.

"Let's go on up the shore," I said. "Maybe we'll find something."

We walked to the sand and then followed it as it curved along toward the left, a deserted stretch of beach.

"What do you think we'll find?" Rene asked.

I saw something glitter green where the sun reflected off the sand and stopped to pick it up.
"Something like this," I said as I rubbed the sand off of the object. "Seaglass."

"What's that?"

I took her left hand and placed the glass on her palm. We began walking again.

I noticed how nice the warm sand felt beneath my feet, a perfect fit with each step, thought how special the smooth glass had felt between my fingers. And as I smelled the ocean air and felt it blow salty against my skin, I saw just how beautiful my wife was.

"Seaglass," I said, "is glass that is broken on the shore and gets rubbed smooth by the wind and the sand and the water. When I was a kid we used to really comb the shoreline for this stuff. You know my dad used to keep a box of it in his top drawer, right next to a coin that showed two sides of a naked woman and said 'Heads I win/Tails you lose'.

"I was always on his case about playing with it and he always said no. Christ I could hate him with a passion those days. And then one day he went to work with all those smooth bits of colored glass and put them in a tube with some pieces of mirror, in just the right combination of greens, which were easy to find, and reds, yellows, and blues, and made me a kaleidescope."
Rene rubbed the glass between her thumb and forefinger. "We used to put them in our mouth and suck on them," I said, and she did.

We walked along silently until we came upon an old World War II pillbox. It was beautiful, all red and blue and green and yellow. ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE it said, and blue and yellow pansies waved at us in the background.

"Not a bad find," I said. "Do you know the password?"

Rene traced the words with her hands and said them out loud.

"All you need is love," she said.

"Hmmm. That must be it." I turned toward the water.

"In a thousand years," I said, "the waves will claim this pillbox, and it will settle on the ocean floor. And between now and then, who will ever know that Alex and Rene spent an afternoon here."

"Let's go inside," said Rene, "and leave our mark."

We walked inside and looked around. The sand was clean and white, and the walls matched those outside, but reversed, as if they were transparent and we were seeing the outside walls from behind. "A lot of work," she said. "Our kind of people," I replied. When we make love, I am there, transparent and pure. It is springtime in August and we smell the pansies on the pillbox walls.
We spent the afternoon on that stretch of beach, sleeping and swimming and dressing in the long strands of seaweed that covered the shore, and when evening came we sat on top of the pillbox and watched the ocean rise up to meet the sun, which cast our shadows far behind us.
Dream (Mantis Religiosa)

It is a large roomless building, an architectural interpretation of the infinity between molecules, and you can feel the space around you. True to its intention you can see nothing of the walls, if there are any. Shifting your weight as you look through the diamond pattern of the wrought iron floor, you look down at the real floor, hundreds of feet below. Much activity, small figures walking back and forth, hooking up the frames for the horizontal lines that will rise to your level, wait for a minute, and then rise further, one after the other. Like metal girders a hundred feet long. You are one of the Mario brothers in someone else's video game, filling in the frames with the metal parts you pull from one of the twenty-three trolley cars located on your level, like in a coal mine.

Time is running out, you know that, and you wrestle with the metal pieces, placing them in position, hoping that the patterns are correct and that they will work as they are. Across this two hundred foot atmosphere you see someone else, a woman, building lines of her own. You don't have time to watch as you struggle to complete this line before it moves out of your reach.
The first to be designed was the major arch. Two lights, one small and faint from near lower right, one large and bright from far left. The pillar of the arch would block enough light to allow sleep. The arch itself would provide a stone frame for the subject below, a complete arched canopy to the rear, and above that--black night and stars.

Outside, beyond the white light-proof shutters, out on the streetcorner with the red brown and golds, they are gathering. Rock and roll midgets playing soft brush strokes on paisley purple snare drums. Blue and white majorettes twirling batons and doing back flips. Tough young boys, greased teddys with white t-shirts and leather jackets, playing soft sweet saxophone, loaning cigarettes to the frilled-up Spanish mariachi guitarists, strumming in the light of a solid half-moon.

Black tuxedoed rasta-men, teeth gleaming starlight, push standup basses on silent silver wheels, leading the way with a gentle reggae rhythm, joined by eleven rag-tag female street children brandishing trumpets trombones and french horns.

As the procession snakes up the street five young black women, a swirl of gypsy skirts and scarves, create a flank
of low soft vocals. Lalala, la la la, la la la la la, they sing. Lalala, la la la, la la la la la.

She emerges from the midst of the sax boys. Still young and beautiful, and that voice!

---There is a rose in Spanish Harlem, she sings.
---Ooh-ooh, sing the black gypsies.
---A rose as black as Spanish Harlem. Aretha turns the corner, swaying with the rasta-men. Moving into the coal-black moonlit night.

---Lalala, la la la, la la la la la.

*  

Singing softly to himself, Jesus walks along the highway.
---E'lo-i, E'lo-i, La'ma Sa-bach-tha'ni.

Just like a pop tune, he thinks. Vibrant and bold, with just a hint of menace. And isn't it true that irony is rock and roll's principal mode of expression, more necessary to a good song than a four four beat and a catchy chorus?

He pulls an orange from his backpack, drops the pieces of peel among the rocks on the side of the road as he walks along. California navel, he thinks. Seedless.

*  

The floor is heavy stone, each block a foot and a half square, with seven ridges running side to side. The large light from the left illuminates the top of the stones,
leaves the space between ridges in shadow. The arc to the rear is complete, as well as the mostly obscured building and doorway it is connected to. In the foreground, the bed is simple. Long, and wide enough for a tall man's shoulders. Mattress covered by a simple corduroy blanket and matching corner-tasseled pillows. Half of the bed is pulled back out of view.

* 

---What we are going to talk about today is problem reduction. How to simplify a problem by dividing it up into several problems. Now that may not make any sense to you, so let me give you an example. Say you want to find out the number of marbles that will fill up a classroom. For simplification, we will remove all of the desks, chairs, and so on. Now, how would you solve this problem in only one step?

Silence.

---Yes, well you would have to fill the room with marbles, wouldn't you, counting them as you fill. And you would have to hope that there was a window that went clear up to the ceiling, and that you could open and close it from outside. And of course, you'd have to go down to every grade school in the city and steal all of the kids' marbles. Ha ha.
Silence.

---Now, with problem reduction, you simply reduce this problem into several discrete parts. You could measure the three dimensions of the room, h, l, and w, to discover its volume in cubic feet, hlw. You could then construct a box with a volume of one cubic foot, fill it with marbles, counting as you fill, small m. And then hlw times m, hlwm, would be equal to capital M, your solution. So, hlwm = M. Now, can anyone tell me a potential flaw in problem reduction? Yes, Bobby.

---You could lose all your marbles?

* The metal parts are large and heavy, varying from six inches to a foot-and-a-half wide, two to two-and-a-half feet tall, and two to five pounds, although you occasionally run into a piece that is much smaller and lighter than the rest. They come in a variety of shapes, but you don't have time to worry about that. Your line is beginning to move and you've got two pieces left to put in place.

As you run the hundred feet to the start of the next line, something nags at your memory. You are here for a reason, aren't you? People don't just do things for no reason, do they? And if there is a reason, is it in the doing or the completing? And if the meaning lies in the
completing, does that mean that the doing is worthless, simply something that needs to be gotten done? It is all too mysterious, but you keep plugging away at it, filling the lines and grateful that you are not Atlas, with the entire world on your shoulders. Atlas who one day called it quits and went to tell Zeus that he'd had enough.

---But who will hold up the earth? Zeus asked.
---Don't worry. I've put my mother Gaia on the back of a giant turtle.
---But who will hold up the turtle? His shell may be hard, but he hasn't the strength of a titan.
---Not to worry! I've got this turtle sitting on one of his brothers.
---But what of this brother?
---Zeus, the situation is under control. It's turtles turtles turtles, all the way.

* 

On the bed is our sleeper, visible only from the waist up. He wears a tunic with large heavy sleeves from which one hand emerges, concealing another, resting on his abdomen. The collar of the tunic lies in waves upon his neck. He is wearing a tall headdress, conical at the top with a ravine only visible from the sides, like a bishop's mitre, but without ornamentation. His face is in repose,
peaceful but with a hint of sternness.

* 

Jesus is carrying a Walkman, listening to a 30 minute tape of a meditation he has found to be especially useful.
---You can be anything you want to be, this time around, he hears his voice calmly repeat.

But what do I want to be this time around? Do I want appropriate followers by walking on water and then wow the masses by feeding a gathering of thousands with forty fishburgers? Or should I sit for hours in public parks telling children stories, until their mothers accuse me of being a child snatcher and demand the release of Johnny Gosch?

Should I hobnob with heads of state and appear on Worldwide television demanding peace and repentance? Or should I hang out on the lower east side with welfare mothers, pimps, and whores?

Should I travel around the world proclaiming my triumphant return, demanding a reconciliation of all the christian churches and declaring all other religions void and obsolete? Or should I storm the Vatican and send the Pope's prize porn collection flying out the balconies into the wide streets below, walk to Jerusalem attempting to clear the Holy City of bureaucrats and soldiers and get my
ass shot as a terrorist in the process?

---You can be anything you want to be, this time around.

--Of course, he says. But what do I want to be?

*

Outside on the streetcorner they are still gathering, gathering faster than they move on. Celebrities arrive in long black limousines. Jelly Roll, Jimmy Rodgers, Coltrane, and Mingus, each with a band and cheerleading squad. Each ready to join the procession as it snakes through the streets, preparing the city for tonight's guest of honor, the man they all admire the best.

Bob Marley has joined King Sunny Ade's seventy-three man band for a two hour six-and-a-half mile rendition of "Lively Up Yourself." The steel guitarist is having some trouble keeping his strings in tune, but Bob just smiles between verses and spliffs.

As the fog rolls in, the sweet pungent odor of Bob's herb spreads throughout the city. Reds and golds and blues and purples flash through the mist as the streets fill with laughter and music and the rock and roll midgets march on toward the start of the parade, the snake twisting to grasp its tail firmly with its teeth, and Moebius drops scarves in a never ending strip-tease.

*
Onto this scene we place our final addition. Rear legs resting on the wide cuffs of our sleeper's sleeves, front legs upon his shoulders, arms bent in contrition, our praying mantis. Abdomen and pincers curved upward, wings wrapped tightly about its thorax, head twisted slightly upward and to the left. The maxillary palpi are caught in mid-quiver as the antennae probe upward into the space beneath the major arch. Dream (Mantis Religiosa).

*---Yes Bobby, in this particular case that is a distinct possibility, but I am more interested in a type of general problem that problem reduction can pose.

Silence.

---Yes, well, this is 1985 and high school seniors cannot be expected to be familiar with Zeno of Elea, who is mentioned in every edition of the Encyclopedia Brittanica and any introductory philosophy class which you might choose to sleep through.

---Zeno, who lived in ancient Greece, which some of you may have heard of, created a paradox with problem reduction. He created a race between Achilles, the greatest of the Greek warriors, and a tortoise. Now in this race, Achilles gave the tortoise a ten rod head start. The question is, does Achilles win the race, which is, say, a hundred rods
long? And if not, why? Joan?

---No, because he is over-confident and falls asleep halfway through.

---Ah, not quite. This is Zeno, not Aesop. To discover who will win the race Zeno begins with the problem of Achilles running the first ten rods. At this point of course, the tortoise has moved a mere one rod further, a distance which Achilles quickly covers.

---Now of course it looks as if Achilles will soon pass the tortoise and reach the finish line and victory. But in the moment that Achilles covered that last rod, the tortoise once again managed to move, albeit a very small distance. A small distance which Achilles quickly covers. But again, as Achilles is covering this small distance, the tortoise inches ahead, leaving Achilles ever so close behind. Now in this way Achilles will have to try an infinite number of times to catch up with the tortoise, and therefore he never will.

---Now, can anyone tell me the problems that would be associated with using problem reduction in contemporary physics?

*  
The dreamer dreams as you put your lines together, one after another, in a rhythm that you recognize as your own.
From far beyond, outside of this building, you hear music, and you build.

The dreamer is dreaming as they are moving now through all the streets of the city. Past the grocers and the hair stylists and the auto parts shops, as the dreamer dreams of a day in his youth, when the sun was high in the sky, shining down golden on himself and his friend. And they are holding hands and singing, breathing in the fresh spring air as they run down a grassy hill, past the children's playgrounds and the all night diner. And throughout this winding snake, the word is spreading. And the dreamer feels a sadness, because he cannot remember his friend's name, and wonders where his friend could be. Then he is here. In blue jeans and tennis shoes with a hot pink sweatshirt, brown hair flowing long and natural down to his shoulders, ratty running shoes and twelve-string Rickenbacker. The man they've all been waiting for.

It's like the ringing of a thousand bells, all harmonizing on the same note, the Pipes of Pan pulling them along, whatever street they are on, whatever building or lot or park they are walking past. In the simple light of the full moon he begins.

---I don't want to spoil this moment, he chants--and they all listen.
---The way you die is more important than the way you live your life.

The snake explodes. Everything is motion and color and clothes and bodies, dancing on rooftops, climbing trees and flying like young birds pushed from the nest. All the telephones in the city ring at once.

And then he simply plays, lyrical and plaintive, then holy and ecstatic. No questions and no answers. Simply this man playing, and everyone else playing, and the whole city joining in the game, now.

---The grass is green, he sings, and the children are beautiful. Running beneath the tall sky and laughing.

And the dreamer begins to remember. He begins to remember why he came to be where he is as the Royal Drummers of Burundi and the Highland Scots Guard Pipes march down the halls of the high school, past the office and the journalism room, past the physics room where Mr. Strickland has hung himself from the flagpole in front of the blackboard, where he has written What Is My Potential Energy?.

---Surely you know of a similar moment, when things were as you wanted. Go back there now. If you close your eyes you can go there now.

You hear music and you build, piece after piece. [And when you open your eyes] The rhythm is your own and you feel
the resolution building. [and you will open your eyes] He is down there now, a flash of color and a shining guitar, surrounded by thousands of people, [you will remember that the way you die] interchangeable specks of color hundreds of feet below you, looking like quarks and neutrinos flashing back and forth, on and off, [is more important than the way you live your life] as the dreamer remembers a name and a song of his youth, before the insect taught him to pray, [and the way you live your life] and you complete you final line and look at what you have built [is all a preparation for the way you die] and see that it is good.
The first thing I thought was how I wished I hadn't asked Tom to speed up my application for the Mars mission. The second or third flight would have been fine. But I've always wanted to be first in whatever I do, so my character pretty much made this morning inevitable. For an eighth of a second I actually wished I was booked for the second mission, sitting on the beach in Florida watching the Earth turn into the sun, painting the sky red and pink, impatiently waiting out the two months between flights. Then I thought of a thousand things at once, predominant thought being all the people who told me they'd be watching me on television. I felt petty there for a second, wishing I was in Florida lying on the beach when everyone I knew was watching me get blown to hell.

But what the hell, it was me who was getting blown to hell, and I hadn't even done that yet, and they wouldn't even know it until it was too late for me to think about it any longer. But my thinking was certainly lasting longer.

We knew something was wrong when the pressure eased off. I never listened when they said how many G's we would have
smashing us back in our seats during lift-off, and it wouldn’t have prepared me for what it felt like if I had. Just the opposite of the afternoon they let us float for a few seconds. I remember that so well. It was like, so this is heaven. I mean, what could be better than that, except being where I am now with nothing going wrong. But everything is going wrong so I guess that was it, the best it ever got. Damn.

Now it's hot in here, and we're spinning like a top, and I swear we're accelerating. But I know we're not heading up anymore. Everyone is amazingly calm. There's nothing we can do, and really, there's no time to do it if we could. So we're just sitting tight and thinking. Trying to remember what it's like to be alive. At least that's what I'm doing. I figure, it's certainly going to be a shock when this thing hits Earth, and when it registers with me that we've hit; and when I get to the other side, I want to remember how I got there, who I was before, who I am now. So I'm remembering lots of things now. Lots of people and lots of times, and I wish that just once when I was down there I could have worked time the way I am working it now. Like, it won't go until I say so, because there are a lot of things I've got to get handled before I can let it go.

And it's funny, it's not like a movie. It's not like
Dasa Winston Seacliffe, born--grew up--invented the eighty percent efficient solar cell--became an astronaut---died. It's not like that at all. It's like different bits leading to other different bits, only I'm really there, actively involved. Like a puzzle, trying to figure it all out. What was it all, anyway? It's like, this big knot of string, and I'm loosening it up, piece by piece. I keep passing by certain places over and over as I loosen it up, spread it out, get down into that knot. What's at the core?

And like a dream or a prayer, what could another person's life mean to you? But it's mine, and it means something to me, and I hope to God this doesn't set back the Mars program; and there, at the very center, a final knot tying two strings together, and I can't untie that knot, but I can lay the two strings down parallel and twist them together and stretch them out until I come to the end. The end of the strings and the end of my time. And in that final brutal second will I remember who I am?
FOREWORD

This book is a mirror. If a monkey looks in, no philosopher looks out.

--Lichtenberg

My interest in animal behavior began five years ago when I acquired a small farm house in upper Mendocino county. After a few months of scraping by selling my garden vegetables to several Bay Area health food stores and picking wine grapes at the nearby vineyards, I decided that I would have to expand my farming to include animals. My hope was that this would keep me out of the grape business and provide cash during the winter when the garden wouldn't be as productive. There was a large pond near my house and I decided that the first addition I would make would be ducks. It seemed an easy way to make some cash. Simply clip their wings and let them swim around all summer until they were nice and fat and then sell them in Chinatown for a
nice profit.

Everything went well the first year. I sold a hundred and twenty-three ducks and used the money to buy chickens and build a coop. They were great chickens. They came from Nicaragua via Honduras and they laid green eggs. These went over extremely well at the health food stores where I sold my vegetables. They were a novelty item at first—who hasn't read Doctor Seuss?—and people were pretty much addicted once they'd tasted them. People who'd never touched a fertilized egg in their lives were buying a carton a week.

I knew I had a good thing going there, so I built a second chicken coop three times as large as the first and bought a small incubator so that I could keep the hens laying and build up my stock at the same time. I would never have guessed at the time that the incubator would change my life in the way that it did.

I was out on a ramble through the woods early in the April of my second year on the farm when I decided to check out the pond and see how the ducks were doing. I got there just in time to see my neighbor's Irish setter make a mid-morning snack out of one of my birds. As Cimmaron high-tailed it through the woods I ran up to shore to see how much damage he had done. The duck had obviously come upon
Cimmaron raiding her nest because it was torn apart and there were two eggs sucked dry. I put the three that were left in my pocket and headed back to the house.

Well, to make a long story short I put the eggs in the incubator and before long they hatched, three puffed-up little ducklings. Now, my first thought when I saw them was that here was some more money in the bank. Leave them alone for a year, let them lay some eggs, increase the stock, and fatten themselves up for another summer, and trade them for cash in Chinatown.

The ducks had a mind of their own, though. As any animal ethologist could have told me, without a mama duck in the immediate vicinity, a duckling will imprint on the nearest appropriate object, which in this case happened to be me. So Huey, Dewey, and Louie, as I now call them, began to follow me around everywhere. I took them to the pond and they followed me back home. I got in the car to drive down to the City and they followed the car until I got out and locked them in the old chicken coop. I had to build a small pool next to the house so that they could live a somewhat normal duck existence.

Well, when summer ended I discovered that I just couldn't bear to make my yearly duck run down to Chinatown. And before the first rains of winter I was eating strange things
like tofu and miso to make sure I got enough protein, and foaming at the mouth like a vegetarian Moses whenever I saw my urban friends.

Times have changed. I now live in the Berkeley Hills and the ducks have my farm to themselves, although Huey, Dewey, and Louie still follow me everywhere, much to the amazement of new customers at Conrad's Serf Shop. I sell used clothing and grow just enough vegetables for myself. And I am honored to be the founder of the Berkeley Animal Liberation Front.

I hope that the following accounts of the events at the UC Berkeley Animal Lab in the spring of 1986, and the unique testimony of Owsley, Tim, Rosemary, and Aldous, can do for you what HD&L did for me; offer a change in perspective, a new way of thinking and feeling. As our patron saint Felix was wont to say,

Life is a bag of tricks!
Animals are people too!
Meow?

--Conrad Parrish
Berkeley Hills,
23 August 1987
This lab is a transformational apparatus. If NDEE goes in, no monkey comes out.

--Parrish

The animal lab at UC Berkeley had a long history of abuse and misuse and was by far the principal target of the Berkeley Animal Liberation Front. When it became apparent after three years that reasoned appeals to the Chancellors, petitions to the legislature, lawsuits, and public protest had only the most superficial effect on the treatment of animals in the lab, ALF founder Conrad Parrish decided that the only possible solution to the problem would lie in the use of guerrilla tactics. Appropriately, he chose the Subhuman Primates Drug Evaluation Program as his first target. Since he was the head of ALF's Liberated Simian's Division this gave him maximum flexibility in a program designed to work in the most secretive, underhanded manner possible. Conrad had already read the CIA Advanced Handbook five times.

When he read the master files of the lab's Monkey
Project, graduate student slang for an experiment involving the injection of chimpanzees with warfarin, a blood thinning agent that is also used as rat poison, and diethylmandaline, which was being tested as a potential anti-arthritis drug, Conrad knew that the typical operation of infiltrating the lab with an agent would take too much time. Of seventeen chimpanzees that had started the project, only seven were left. Conrad opted for the riskier, but faster, method of finding a sympathetic graduate student already within the lab, and, if possible, the chimpanzee program itself.

Tapping into the university's computer banks, Conrad obtained access to the names of the four students working on the Monkey Project, as well as their complete college records. He then ran a psychological profile based on each student's home address, local address, credit card purchases, course work, and grades. According to Quark Incorporated's Psych-Out program, the only one of the four who stood a remote chance of being sympathetic was me.

One Thursday afternoon as I sat in the Three C's coffeeshouse drinking a mocha con panne and eating blueberry crepes, Conrad walked up to my table and asked if he could sit down.

"Do I know you?" I asked.

"No," he said. "But you should. My name is Conrad
Parrish and I'm the head of the Liberated Simian's Division of the Animal Liberation Front. I know you work with some chimps in the lab, and I have a feeling that you aren't too happy with the treatment they've been receiving."

He was right. I'd only been on the project for a month, one of the original crew had decided that animal research wasn't lucrative enough and transferred into the medical program at UC San Francisco. And I'd gone to the lab twice a day for the last three weeks to make up for the neglect the chimps were receiving from my colleagues. I was afraid that I was too late for the two female chimps, they had become rockers and just sat in opposite corners of their cage and slowly moved back and forth. In fact I was at the point where I was almost upset enough to go along with his plan, which would probably end up getting me kicked out of school.

"I need time to think," I said after he filled me in.
"Give me your number and I'll call you by Monday."

"I'll call you tonight," he said. "There isn't any time to waste."

When I got back to the lab that afternoon, the two rockers were dead.

"Pretty bizarre, huh," said one of my lab partners. "I just stepped out of the room for fifteen minutes to go to
the bathroom and get a Pepsi, and when I came back they were both croaked. I wonder if they were twins. I hear that happens a lot, twins biting the dust at the same time."

"Shut up," I said.

My mind was made up by the time Conrad called me that night.

"I just have one question, Conrad."

"Shoot."

"How did you know I'd go along with you?"

"Just a hunch," he said. "Anyone who eats bluberry crepes at the Three C's every Thursday afternoon at one twenty-five has to be on the right track."

A week and a half later, after I had managed to take control of the injections of the five remaining male chimps we began operation Prometheus. Each morning, instead of injecting the chimps with warfarin and diethylmandaline, I gave them a dose of NDEE, a new psychedelic invented by underground chemistry whiz Alice Voltaire.

Alice was an interesting character. In the early seventies she had made a fortune with a sex club somewhere in the Midwest. Then she moved out to the coast and became an investment banker and self-proclaimed "psychic revolutionary". NDEE was the first chemical that she had actually invented, and she was quite proud of it.
"It's a bona fide brain-change agent," she said. "Guaranteed to raise the intelligence of anyone who uses it on a weekly basis for five months. There's no side effects, no visual or somatic distortion, just an increase in overall intelligence. And that includes more than just intellectualism."

"Can you use it every day?" I asked.

"You can," she said, "but it won't do the trick. The human brain produces a sort of anti-body whenever it is exposed to the stuff. It's like that with all psychedelics. It takes a week to get this anti-NDEE stuff out of your body."

"What about with apes?"

"I don't know. It's never been tried."

"Oh."

"You planning on trying this stuff out on some monkeys?" she asked.

"Chimps," I said. "Yeah."

"That should be interesting," she said. "Might turn out to be a regular Genesis three:five."

"What?"

"You know. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

After a week I began to notice a change in the chimps. Their eyes seemed brighter, and they stared a lot less.
They also made eye contact with me more often, as if they had something to communicate. They began talking to each other more often, but in a less frantic manner than usual. I was fairly sure that the daily doses were working, and that the chimps were much smarter than they had been. I decided not to insult them with the standard intelligence tests, but rather gain their trust by trying to communicate warmth and love whenever I was in the lab.

My first sure sign came at the end of the second week. On Saturday morning they lined up for their injections. Obviously, they were now intelligent enough to know that they were getting smarter, and that the injections were somehow responsible. A week later I called Conrad with the exciting news that the chimps now understood English.

I was in the lab late Friday afternoon studying (I had decided that it would be good to be around as much as possible while I was giving them the NDEE, just in case) when I noticed a mistake in the experiment log. I looked for a pen but couldn't find one.

"Damn," I said. "Why the hell can't you find a pen when you need one?"

I heard a tapping on the cage and looked over to see one of the chimps looking at me and banging the pen on his door. When I walked over and reached for the pen he pulled it back
and pointed at the lock.

"Can I have the pen, please?"

He pointed again at the lock, and then made a motion like he was pushing the door open.

"I can't let you out right now," I said. "It's too dangerous. Someone would see you and lock you back up."

He shook the door.

"Look," I said, "I'll talk to Conrad and...."

He cocked his head sideways.

"Conrad. The guy who set this whole thing up. I'll talk to him and he'll figure out a way to get you guys out."

Looking me straight in the eyes, he pointed at the lock once more, shook the door and handed me the pen.

I called Conrad that night and on Sunday morning declared the experiment a success and gave them their final injection.
Parrish was like Rambo. Once he got in, the chimps were coming out.

--Hayashida

Three weeks and a day after I first contacted Kalani Hayashida concerning the Monkey Project she called me and said that she was sure that the chimps could now understand English. Early Saturday morning I slipped into the Animal Sciences building under the guise of a janitor and met Kalani in her lab room. I was immediately aware of an incredible intelligence emanating from the monkey cage. It wasn't just a raw IQ type of intelligence either. I had the feeling that the chimps understood things on a very deep level. There was no anger or rage at their imprisonment and past treatment, merely a desire to get out. I knew then that I would have to take a bigger chance than I had ever taken in the past. I was going to have to break into the lab and sneak the guys out.

The plan was fairly simple. When Kalani came in to give the chimps their final dose Sunday morning she would unlock
the window of the women's bathroom in the first floor. I would slip in about two-thirty in the morning, take the stairway up to the third floor, pick the lock to her lab and the chimps' cage and then head back down and out the women's bathroom. If nothing went wrong it would work, but then that's how it usually is.

The other thing I had to worry about was an alibi. As head of the ALF's Liberated Simians Division I was an obvious suspect. I needed to find a way to convincingly seem to be out of town.

That afternoon I drove up to my farm in Mendocino county. I parked my car and then hiked through the woods past the pond and the ducks all the way to Lance McKenna's place. His Irish setter Cimmarron greeted me at the edge of the fence Lance and I had put up to keep my ducks safe. She led me up to the front door.

Lance, who earns a modest income brokering Mendocino sensimilla, was immediately receptive to my plan. I would borrow his car and drive back down to Berkeley late Sunday night, park at the edge of some woods a mile from the Animal Sciences building, drive back up to Lance's place, and then hide the chimps in his basement before I drove back to Berkeley in my car late Monday afternoon. If worse came to worse Lance would say that we had spent Sunday and Monday
putting in the garden that he was putting in that weekend.

As it turned out, an alibi was the least of my worries. Everything went fine until I made it up to Kalani's lab room. The streets were pretty deserted when I got into town and parked the car, and I didn't pass anyone as I tromped through the woods. The bathroom window was unlocked and left open a half an inch, the building seemed empty and the locks were easy to pick. Unfortunately, I didn't know that the janitor cleaned up the building every morning from three to six.

From what I can gather, he became suspicious when he saw that the window in the women's room was unlocked. In Berkeley there is enough paranoia about rapists that those windows are just never left unlocked. So that was my mistake.

His mistake was wearing his key ring on a belt loop. When I heard the jingling of a hundred keys outside of the door I knew where he was, but he didn't know where I was. I also knew that he was looking for me, but he didn't know that I was looking out for him.

After he passed the door, walking away from the stairway, thank Felix, I clued the chimps in on what we were going to do to get outside, and what they were going to do once we were.
The janitor must have sensed that we were somewhere on the third floor, because his keys quit jingling about fifteen footsteps past our room. I could tell that he wasn't going to move soon, and I had no desire to sweat him out.

I pulled a bunch of pictures from magazines out of my pocket and spread them out on the floor. A stairwell, a door with one of those triangular bodies, circular heads and stick figure arms and legs, and a red T-bird convertible. The chimps gathered around.

"When I open the door, head for the stairway and run down to the first floor," I said. "The women's bathroom is the seventh room on your left. If the door is locked wait for me. If not scoot out the window and hightail it for about ten minutes due north. That's straight ahead if you are looking out the window. There's a red car parked on the road at the edge of the woods. When you find it just climb a tree and wait for me."

One of the chimps, the same one who bargained with Kalani's pen it turned out, held out his hand and made a jiggling motion. Then he touched my pocket. I emptied it out and he grabbed my pick set. I guess he wanted a fighting chance.

I cleaned out the corner of their cage that they reserved
for crap and put it on some lab papers that were lying around. Then I filled a wide mouth beaker with water and opened the door. The chimps ran, if you can call it running, as fast as they could, and I waited until I heard the jingling of keys before I ran out and pelted the janitor with monkey shit. While he cursed and rubbed his eyes I dropped the beaker, spraying the hallway with water and broken glass, and sprinted to the stairway.

I ran up to the fifth floor and out the fire escape, waiting until I heard him in the third floor stairwell before I slammed down the escape door. I didn't want him to go after the chimps. Out on the roof I saw them heading to the woods due north. Obviously the janitor hadn't locked up the restroom.

I went down the fire escape on the south side of the building and then ran east for a half mile before I angled my way back into the woods and headed for the car. When I got there the chimps climbed down from their tree and began patting me on the rump. I felt like a tight end who just made the winning reception in a playoff game. We drove to Mendocino.

"You guys are lucky the janitor didn't lock the women's room," I told them after we were out of the city and heading up Highway 29.
The chimp who was sitting next to me dropped my pick set on the seat next to me and shook his head.

"You mean it was locked?" I asked.

He nodded.

"Well," I said, "it certainly didn't take you very long to pick it."

Again he shook his head, and then wriggled his fingers at me.

"Well if you couldn't pick it," I said, "How did you get out?"

He pointed at me, and then at my crotch. And to make his point as clear as possible, he grabbed his penis and shook it at me.

"The men's room?" I asked, and then Lance's car resounded with the bizarre sound of chimpanzee laughter.
Intelligence is the ultimate aphrodisiac. You can't improve man and leave sex out.

--Voltaire

The first thing we began to notice after the initial excitement died down; after we had spent a week in various basements living on a wild variety of exotic fruits that Conrad picked up after hours from a friend at the Berkeley Bowl; after we had been christened Tim, Bob, Aldous, Albert, and yours truly Owsley; after we were finally esconced safely in the Telegraph Avenue basement of Conrad's Serf Shop; after all of that, the first thing we noticed was that we were dreadfully lonely.

None of us could figure this out at first. If anything, we had more company than we'd had in the lab; and we were all together, free to roam about an entire basement instead of a cramped cage in a sterile lab. And we had everything we could possibly expect. Conrad's office was loaded with books, had a television with cable and a VCR, a ping pong table, a bathroom and a small kitchen. And Conrad, Alice,
and Kalani were always dropping by to say hello, help us learn more words, or, Alice's pet project, teach us sign language.

Nevertheless, we were all confronted with a feeling as alien as our newfound intelligence. We all reacted in different ways, of course. Albert, reading about physics in an elementary school science text, suddenly stood up and walked around the basement picking things up until he found a frying pan and a Frisbee, then climbed up on the kitchen counter and dropped them to see if they would really hit the ground at the same time. Then he put his hand around his mouth and walked back to his book mumbling to himself. Tim sat watching a movie on the VCR, playing the same scene over and over while Bob and Aldous played table tennis for hours at a time.

It was a strange feeling, like there wasn't anything inside our chests but a vacuum that just kept sucking and sucking, desperately trying to pull something inside to fill up the hollowness. Our inability to speak made the feelings that much worse. A whole world full of new concepts and desires and we were denied even the solace of voices whispering together quiet and meaningless in our clean dry basement. The distance between us seemed so huge and unbearable that I wanted to stand in the middle of the room
and shout my paraphrase of T. S. Eliot: We are the hollow chimps!

Instead I read on quietly, as Albert continued to test the laws of physics, Bob and Aldous growled through another match of table tennis, and Tim sat entranced before Conrad's VCR. We had probably been lonely before, I reasoned, but now we knew it, and that made it feel bad. And what was worse, the curse of reason, we didn't know why.

It was Tim who figured it out, of course. Tim is always coming up with new ways of looking at things, ways that provide obvious solutions to what were seemingly insoluble problems. He wasn't a miracle man, he couldn't pick the lock for us that first night, but he knew when to give up on one door and try another. Which was how he solved this particular problem.

He was standing at the bathroom door with Conrad's pick set trying patiently to learn how to unlock the door when he suddenly screamed and ran into the next room where we were watching MTV. Bob growled at him because it was noon and our favorite show was starting but Tim kept right on jabbering and then began to draw something on a piece of paper. Bob finally walked over to see what the excitement was and then he began to jump up and down and act as if he was still in the jungle.
Well, after three miserable days this was enough to pique our interest, so we all wandered over to see what Tim had drawn. There on the paper was a picture of a door with that strange symbol Conrad had shown us the night we escaped, the triangle with the circle and the straight lines. Above the symbol Tim had written the magic word we had been searching for the last three days: WOMEN. Tim shook his penis at us again and even respectable old Aldous and Albert broke out in hysterics.

So the mystery was solved, but the problem remained: how to find women. Bob and Tim came up with a plan and then we waited until Conrad closed the Serf Shop and said goodbye for the night. When we were sure he was gone we slipped up into the store and grabbed five sets of clothes and hats in the smallest sizes he had. Then we raided the cash register, left him a note telling him to meet us at the Dutch Windmill at Golden Gate Park, and slipped back down into the basement and out of a window into the alley.

Five chimpanzees dressed in clothes and walking down the middle of the street at nine o'clock at night, even on a Wednesday in Berkeley, are bound to cause a commotion, so we climbed the building and headed toward Bancroft Ave. At that point we were across the street from the campus of UC Berkeley, which offered us plenty of tree cover. The only
problem was that we were also at the busiest pedestrian corner in the city. Aldous, our map reader since he had the best night eyes, led us South along Bancroft, jumping from building to building until we came to a dead end.

We climbed down and hid in the dark corners of a church parking lot waiting for foot traffic to clear, and then made a mad dash across Bancroft and a bicycle parking area into the safety of the campus trees. Soon we were downtown where we once again took to the roofs until we came to our biggest test, four lanes and a median strip at Shattuck Ave., not to mention the buses, the walkers, and our objective, the Bart train that would take us under the Bay to San Francisco.

Some punks came our way: purple and red mohawks, ripped shirts, leather jackets, engineer's boots, skateboards; our best bet to seem normal, Albert reasoned, so we crossed the street next to them, grabbed copies of the East Bay Express from the free newstand, and bolted down the stairway of the Bart station. Lucky for us we had just enough time to buy our tickets from the machines, move through the gates and find the right track. Waiting around under the bright lights of the station would have been pretty exposing. But as it was, this was one of the last trains of the night and there were only nine other passengers getting on.

We chose an empty car and sat in the back reading our
papers very intently. When we got to the city we hopped a subway that was supposed to connect us with a line that would take us to the San Francisco Zoo and once again sat together in the back of a car trying to be as invisible as possible. Unfortunately a steady procession of straggly types began to fill the car, which proceeded to surprise us by leaving the underground for street level. To add insult to injury, we then discovered that we were on the L train instead of the M, and that we would now have to walk four long blocks to meet our connection.

Our luck returned with the discovery that for the last three blocks we could cut through the deserted grass and trees of Larsen Park, which took us right up to our connection. Too bad for us, after fifteen minutes of waiting in the shadows, it turned out to be a bus. It just didn't seem possible that we could walk past the driver without being seen, so Aldous pulled out his map again and we walked the last two miles, being careful not to break into a rendition of "Hi ho, hi ho, it's too the zoo we go" (it's amazing how much you can learn about human culture with a VCR). Once we finally got there, Tim sprang into action as the chimp with a million ideas, which didn't bother the rest of us since someone had to do it and none of us wanted to.
It was easy to find our way around the zoo, we simply used our noses. The first thing we did was slip into the zookeeper's office. Tim's lock-picking practice was finally paying off. We got the keys for the cages from his desk and then made a beeline to the primate section. Luckily for us there were more than five female chimps, and none of them looked pregnant or had any babies. We rousted five of them out of their cage and, being the submissive primitives that they were, they came along without a fight.

As we headed back out, Tim randomly opened up more cages: spider monkeys, orangutans, bears, lots of different birds, zebras, giraffes. He unlocked the front gate and put the keys back in the zookeeper's desk, stole a marker and then locked the office back up. He drew a large circle with a capital A in it and wrote "Contra-Containment" on the front steps, and then we pushed the gates open and headed into the night.

On the street Tim started checking for cars with unlocked doors and when he found a blue Mustang he motioned us in, slid under the steering wheel and started banging away until he had cracked the plastic casing. The he pulled out a mess of wires and soon the car was cruising up the coast. As I learned later, Tim had learned that trick from a movie called Repo Man, the one he had been watching on Conrad's
VCR. He had repeated the key scene seventeen times in slow motion. "Sociological research" he told me with his hands. I also learned later that the colors of the wires in the Mustang were different from the ones in the movie so it had been pure luck that he managed to connect the battery with the starter. According to Tim, however, it wasn't luck. "Instinct," he signed, then pointed to his forehead.

A short ride up the coast and we were at the Dutch Windmill at Golden Gate Park, where Tim let us off before he drove a mile up the road to a restaurant where he ditched the car and made a phone call to Conrad. When he got back we waited patiently under the trees, sure that Conrad would head over to the Serf Shop to see why Tim had called and then see our note asking for a ride back to Berkeley.

When Conrad finally arrived he wasn't too happy that we'd snuck off and put his neck on the line, but when he heard about how well Tim had covered our tracks, using the San Francisco Animal Activists' slogan "Contra-Containment" as well as their trademark anarchist A, he mellowed out.

"No harm done," he said, "as long as you guys, and girls, stay on the floor and under the blankets until we reach the Serf Shop."

The next three weeks were even more exciting than the initial weeks of our release. We dosed the females every
morning and within a week they were picking up words from listening to Conrad, Kalani Hayashida, and Alice Voltaire. Soon we were teaching them using television and by the time the three weeks were up they could read, write, and listen as well as we could.

Of course, the original motivation for the zoobreak had been companionship and that was working well too. Although I thought at first that she had a thing for Tim, Rosemary settled in with me, and Tim settled in with Barbara. Bob and Arlen seemed to have known each other for years, as did Laura and Aldous, and if Albert and Anais seemed at first an odd couple, he the spaced-out thinker with his muzzle always buried in a scientific journal and she the sassy and randy life of the party, it was soon apparent that they complemented each other perfectly.

In short, we were all extremely happy and we had everything we could possibly want in a civilized country.
April was the coolest month. These jailers went in and St. Francis came out.

--Tim

My introduction to Operation Prometheus, at least to my active participation in it, came about early in the morning on the first day of April in 1987. My phone rang just as I was getting out of the shower and I rushed into the living room to answer it. As I stood there soaking the rug someone began doing a splendid imitation of Jane Goodall. At least that's what I thought at first; after all it was April Fool's Day and I did have a lot of weird friends. I was not amused, however.

While I was making breakfast, though, I remembered my conversation with Kalani Hayashida a month earlier, and I also remembered that she'd bought enough NDEE to dose five chimps twenty-one times each. I gave her a call. She connected me with Conrad, whom I should have thought of in the first place, and that afternoon I was standing in the basement of his Serf Shop watching what appeared to be five
pretty intelligent chimpanzees and five pretty average ones.

One of the smart ones, an enthusiastic guy named Tim, handed me a note scrawled in barely legible crayon on a piece of scrap computer paper.

"Alice," it said. "We need your help. We can't live with dumb women. It's too bizarre. We need companions who are our intellectual equals, women who are interested in more than climbing trees and preening for lice. And we're also hoping that this serum of yours will free them from the tyranny of their estrous cycles (we know it's already made us oblivious to it). Our lives are already in your hands because you invented the chemical that has increased our intelligence so manifoldly. Please grant us this one last request."

Naturally I complied and the chimps started on NDEE the next morning. After all, what underground chemist worth her alcohol lamp could turn down a request from an intelligent ape to give his girl a few more brains. Hell, I probably would have dosed them even if the guys had wanted them to stay dumb.

That question, who to dose and when, came up again a few days later and drew me even further into the project. I was down in the basement talking to Conrad when he mentioned that he wanted to use NDEE as the principal weapon of the
"We'll start with the lab," he said, "and then we'll hit the zoo and spread out to the local farms. In a few months half the animals in the area will be as intelligent as us, and then they'll just break out through sheer force of numbers. We'll put animal liberation into the hands, paws, and hooves of the animals!"

At that point Tim wandered over with a crayon and some paper. "Sounds violent," he wrote.

"What do you mean?" Conrad asked.

I leaned back in my chair a bit to watch the interaction between the two.

Tim began scrawling away. "Do you think that people are going to give up without a fight?"

"No," Conrad said, "but they'll be outnumbered before long."

"So you want a war?" Tim wrote.

"No," Conrad began to look uncomfortable.

"What about," Tim wrote, "the animals that you dose who get slaughtered? And what are they going to eat if they break free? Contrary to popular opinion, it's not a jungle out there."

"Look," Conrad said, "every plan has problems that need to be ironed out. We just need to look at these points that
you've brought up and put out heads together. The major 
thing is that the animals need to get smarter so they can 
protect themselves just like you and...."

Tim waved his hand and Conrad stopped talking. In big 
letters, as neatly as he could, he settled the argument once 
and for all: "The animals' intelligence isn't the problem. 
It's human's intelligence."

Conrad sat stunned, and I was feeling a little astonished 
myself. Tim was right of course, and Conrad of all people 
should have known that. He had known that until he became 
intoxicated by the power of the NDEE.

"And besides," Tim concluded, "it just wouldn't do for 
all of the animals on the planet to be at the same level of 
intelligence. It would upset the balance of nature. It 
would be catastrophic. If you want to dose someone dose the 
lab workers, the zookeepers, and the farmers. Once you 
raise their consciousness, they will voluntarily set the 
animals free. No mess."

He was right of course. Tim had a habit of always being 
right, even though he was always telling us not to believe 
anything he wrote, that it was only true for him and only at 
the moment he wrote it.

After only three weeks it was obvious that something was 
going on with the lab workers. Kalani, who was in charge of
making sure that everyone in the animal lab received an oral
dose at least once a week, reported that even the most
callous and insensitive students and professors were
complaining about conditions in the lab and even refusing to
carry on experiments in some cases, citing unnecessary
duplication of data. The head of the lab was even beginning
to question the traditional cat dissection for freshman
biology students.

By mid-summer there was utter confusion in the Bay Area.
The head of the animal lab was funneling all of his new
research money into alternatives to animal research, the
head of the San Francisco Zoo was proposing a complete re-
landscaping of the zoo including tearing out all of the
cages, and the principal owner of Berkeley Farms was
considering closing down his dairy operation and putting all
of his cows out to pasture.

Operation Prometheus was, for all intents and purposes, a
success.
Conrad's Enlightenment

by

Tim

Seeing Tim was like doing acid. I was always eager to go in, relieved to come out.

--Hayashida

It wasn't long after we were rescued from the lab by that very capable human being Conrad that I began to notice a certain difference between our intelligences. While Conrad was certainly no idiot, he seemed to lack a deep insight into himself and other people. One good example is his lack of any sort of plan to find companionship for the five of us when we were first freed from the lab. And then there was his bizarre notion to indiscriminantly go about raising the intelligence of all the animals in the immediate area. Actually his attitude was more like "Today California, Tomorrow The World."

He also seemed to be agitated a lot, eating foods when he wasn't hungry, talking to himself about projects that he never seemed to carry out, becoming angry, mean, or spiteful at very inappropriate moments. Of course, these qualities were not limited to Conrad. I began to notice them in all
of the humans that I came across, except Alice Voltaire. That, it turns out, was the key, since she was the only human who seemed to be as intelligent as the five of us (the females were still halfway between worlds).

It was Alice herself who confirmed my feeling in this matter. I overheard her and Conrad speaking one afternoon in the basement of the Serf Shop.

"Conrad," she asked, "have you tried any of the NDEE?"

"I dropped a bit of it a few weeks ago," he said, "but it didn't seem to have any effect. I guess I'm at my intellectual peak already. So I've been sticking to MDA, MDE, and MDMA. Why?"

"Just wondering. It is pretty subtle, you know. I mean, it's not as much fun as the methoxylated amphetamines, but there is more to life than sex, and besides, it's not cross-tolerant, so you use one on Friday night and the other on Saturday without any problem. You ought to give it another try. Guaranteed to make you smarter in more ways than one."

"Maybe," he said. "I've been pretty busy lately though. I don't know if I could spare another evening each week."

That was the end of the matter for Alice, but I knew that Conrad owed it to himself to give it another shot, and if he didn't do it voluntarily, well, he certainly hadn't been above dosing without consent.
Having picked up from Alice that NDEE worked best when the subject was actually using the types of intelligence he or she wanted to increase I gave Conrad his first surreptitious dose in a glass of water an hour before one of his twice-weekly tai chi classes. I figured that might increase his agility and body awareness and kick him of his potato chip habit.

A week later I dosed him for his Berkeley ALF meeting. He was always complaining that the meetings were too political and that not a one went by that he didn't get into a yelling match with someone. An increase in interpersonal relations intelligence seemed called for.

The next weekend he was going to see The Grateful Dead, and once I was sure that NDEE would mix well with anything else I slipped him a double dose. His rhythmic intelligence was definitely retarded.

Week after week I targeted his activities: Berkeley Anarchist Shopkeepers meeting, a visit home to see his parents, a date with Kalani, preparation of a four-course meal for twenty-three to celebrate the news that the heads of both the Berkeley Animal Lab and the San Francisco Zoo were dropping all charges against chimpanzee liberators (a double dose—Conrad's idea of gourmet was a lettuce and tomato sandwich, and Alice had agreed to show up early to
teach him sign language before the rest of the guests arrived), and even the monthly meeting of his Finnegan's Wake group.

He came back down to the basement that last night singing out loud in a joyous voice: "With a beak, with a spring, all her rillringlets shaking, rock drops in her tachie, tramtokens in her hair, all waived to a point and then all inuendation, little oldfashioned mummy, little wonderful mummy, ducking under bridges, as happy as the day is wet, babbling, bubbling, chattering to herself, deloothering the fields...."

I may have gone a little far with that one. But it did prove to be the night that he finally noticed the effects.

"Timboy," he said after he had finished singing, "you've been playing around with my brain chemistry haven't you. Don't bother denying it. I've been singing these Wake songs all the way home, and I do have a pretty good idea of what my normal ability to do that is."

He walked over and patted me on the head. "Good show, Timbo. Dose the doser, pull a fast one on the king. Good job. How many more weeks do I have to go before I hit Alice's hypothetical threshold?"

"Thirteen," I signed. "And it's not hypothetical."

"How so?"
"We've been trying it on ourselves. Albert volunteered to abstain so we would have a control. No effect whatsoever. We'll just have to wait until Alice comes up with something new."

And so Conrad joined us on the cutting edge of intelligence, and between the two of us we worked out a few plans that involved the destinies of both our species.

The Return of the Liberated Simians to Their Homeland

by

Rosemary

The Congo Basin was home. Once we managed to get in, we were never coming out.

--Arlen

By the summer of 1986, when the heads of both the UC Berkeley Animal Lab and the San Francisco Zoo had announced that they were dropping charges against the chimpanzee liberators and allowing the Liberated Simians, as we were now calling ourselves, to remain free, we were all developing a strong desire to charge into the jungles of the home that we had never seen and begin a new life among our
own kind.

We became a common sight on the streets of Berkeley that summer, walking up and down Telegraph Avenue past the shops and the street vendors as we made our daily trip up to the library or down to People's Park (which was re-named Primate's Park at the end of August). We were heroes in a way, like Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin, and when Conrad started a fund to finance our return to the Congo River Basin in Zaire it was only a matter of weeks before he had raised over twenty-three thousand dollars, more than enough for he and Kalani to escort us into the jungle and fly back to Berkeley.

They were busy weeks. The ten of us had decided to store up as much knowledge in our heads as possible so we spent eight to ten hours a day reading. We covered quite a range of material. Tim studied the psychology of consciousness from William James to Jean Houston and the Transpersonals, while Bob read everything he could find on magick and ethnomethodology. Albert and Owsley both studied chemistry (although Owsley would slip off periodically to the Western Philosophy section of the library) while Arlen studied sociology and Laura mastered the ins and outs of the human potential movement. Barbara divided her time between books and the electronic media as she built up a basic
understanding of popular human culture, and Anais spent all of her time reading science fiction (the new human myth, she said). Aldous and I, meanwhile, divided up eastern philosophy and religion and learned kanji, the character system used by the Japanese and the Chinese, from Kalani. We figured that a non-linguistic writing system would be easier to teach in the jungle, since the ten of us would be the only ones that understood a spoken language.

The day of our departure finally arrived. After we had said goodbye to Alice (such a strange feeling, leaving someone, and unexpected--Owsley said that it was like the feelings the men had felt before they rescued us from the zoo) we boarded the plane in Oakland (another strange feeling--popping ears and the ground so far below) and began the long series of flights necessary to take us halfway across the world.

We could smell the difference in the air when we landed in Kinshasa early in the morning of August 17th. We started to become agitated despite ourselves. We rode to the edge of the jungle by bus and took a land cruiser the rest of the way.

The trip to the river basin brought up thousands of memories. Where they came from Jung only knows, because we women had all been born in American zoos and most of the
guys had been "specially bred" in captivity at the University of California at Davis (rumor has it that Aldous and Owsley were from the University of Washington). But from somewhere deep inside recognition burst forth. Plants and animals I didn't know I knew. Foods I had never eaten. Sights and sounds and smells that most people wouldn't even notice.

The last few miles of the trip I spotted hundreds of places where I would swear that I had played, fed, slept. Trees I could easily have climbed and called home for a night. Streams perfect for washing food and drinking.

When we reached the river we climbed out of the truck and danced around Conrad and Kalani and our guide. It was an old dance, and it amazed us at the same time that it seemed perfectly natural that we all knew it, we ten who had only met by chance, we ten who had never danced together before.

We danced and danced and then Bob made up a song loosely based on an old song that his mother taught him, about the rescue of a child from the teeth of a crocodile.

And then we prepared to enter the trees.

Conrad gave Tim a present from Alice--five thousand sheets of blotter permeated with NDEE. Kalani gave Aldous and I several bottles of ink and brushes for writing kanji, as well as a box of ball point pens and three reams of
paper. "Remember the Conservation Office three miles back the road," she said. "Let us know what's on your mind."
And then in a flurry of hugs and kisses we were off, and I looked back one last time to see them staring vainly into the trees, waving, as we moved off in a different direction.

Conrad and Tim's Plans for Their Species
by
Aldous

You've got to trust evolution. No matter what goes in, something better comes out.

--Conrad & Tim

Conrad and Tim spent most of the flight across the Atlantic tossing across the ideas they hadn't had time to share during the final hectic weeks in Berkeley. In particular they were concerned with sharing strategies for how to best approach their fellow primates.

"What do I say to people who claim that animal liberation is a waste of time, that we should spend our time attending to human problems rather than worrying about animals?"
Conrad asked.
"That one's easy," Tim answered. "First off you point out that people are animals too. Then you mention that it is the very tendency of humans to think that they are better, their family, their country, their species, that has brought about most of the prevailing human problems--war, hunger, and so on. And finally you hit them on the head and ask them why they continue to think so damned Aristotelean. Either/Or went out years ago. This is the Eighties, we can have it all. And if they don't buy that then hit them on the head again and ask them if we can't end hunger 'cos we've got to end war, or we can't be scientific 'cos we like art, or some other stupidity that will help them see just how narrow minded they really are. If that doesn't work hit them on the head again and say that you can't stop hitting them on the head 'cos then you would have to hit them on the arm. That should make them think for a few seconds."

"That's good," said Conrad. "Then I'll say that sometimes a species is so tunnel visioned that they have to go out of their way to help out a bunch of other species before they realize that they can solve their own problems."

"Good point," said Tim. "But how are you going to solve your problems?"

Conrad looked over Tim's head at the broad blue sky and the horizon far below. "I've been thinking about that a lot
lately," he said. "And I really think that this whole episode with you guys and the NDEE and the actual brain-change we've done on human beings is going to be the shock we've needed to wake people up on a large scale.

"I'm thinking in particular of intelligent people who have slowly closed their minds to anything other than the ordinary junky-cynical-materialistic world view that is so prevalent today. These people are reeling right now. Their entire reality is crumbling around them. I mean, if a chimpanzee can think, can think better than the average human, well then--anything is possible.

"People are going to be open to a lot of different realities. Simple stuff like the world monetary system causes poverty, or massive ranging of cattle for beef production is destroying the South American rain forests. Or mind blowing stuff like the fact that we have the technology to build space cities capable of taking a hundred thousand people off of this overcrowded planet and sending back enough solar-generated energy to pay for the whole thing ten times over.

"You know, as of today I am willing to bet that the number of people open to space migration has doubled, simply because people are suddenly realizing that it is possible to move into the impossible. All we need to do is put out the
information, let people know just how many alternative realities there are. The only barrier to progress and evolution is the narrowness of our paradigms. Charles Fort once said that "it steam engines when it comes steam engine time." I'd like to modify that: It steam engines when people are open to it being steam engine time. My chief project for the foreseeable future is to create the conditions that will allow people to be open to it being space migration time. Galactic center here I come."

"Well," said Tim, scratching his muzzle, "it sounds a lot better than dosing all the animals in America with NDEE."

Conrad laughed. "Did I say that? I guess I've had my own little paradigm shift in the past few months."

They sat quietly for a little while, and then Conrad asked Tim what his plans were.

"Well," signed Tim, "I think we're going to set up a new order dedicated to the slow and steady evolution of the subhuman primates into humanity. We need to take it slow and steady so that we are thorough, we don't want any nasty tendencies surfacing, and because there really isn't enough room on the planet for two different sets of humans.

Hopefully genetics will be on our side and our children will be born with our abilities. That's the Lamarckian heresy, I know, but we're all open to it. And if evolution
will cooperate we plan on losing most of our body hair about five or ten years after the last of you humans enter interplanetary space on your flight back to galactic center. Of course, we'll probably join you after a few hundred years, but in the meantime it would be fun to run a planet for a while. Besides, I think acquiring proper vocal chords will be a little more difficult than losing hair, and I don't think we could operate a very advanced technology without the convenience of a spoken language."

"Don't get your hopes for a speedy take-over up too high," said Conrad. "There's a lot of people out there. I'm hoping to take off in twenty or thirty years, as soon as Alice or one of her buddies comes up with an immortality pill, but then I'm an optimist. We might be slogging around this ten thousand mile gravity well for centuries before everybody gets the message that man's home lies in the stars."

"In that case," said Tim, "don't be surprised if we get involved in a little guerrilla warfare--purely chemical of course. We might be patient, but we've got our limits."

The plane was touching down. A few days later our sojourn in human society had ending, and as I watched Conrad get back into the land cruiser to drive away, I remembered what he said to Tim as the plane hit the runway. "Hold on
tight. From this point on, it's out of our hands." And so it is.
It was chilly out, and the neon Miller sign shone red and blue through the steamy plate glass windows. Fifteen or twenty sets of Greek letters lined the walls, and lots of college boys crowded the bar, dressed in blue jeans and striped button downs, with short hair combed just so and held in place with something wet. The jukebox was playing a song by Madonna.

A group of girls in the back corner, seemingly penned in by the mass of chattering bodies, laughed staccato, piercing through the rest of the noise. No one seemed to notice and soon a group of boys at the bar burst forth over a joke of their own.

The crowd sucked the newcomers in. "Like an amoeba," the young man thought. Though he was wearing jeans, they weren't faded quite so perfectly, and his hot pink sweatshirt and ratty green jacket helped him feel out of sorts. He hung back by the jukebox while his wife walked to the bar for beer.

His wife's friend looked more out of place than he did. The green army fatigues, flannel shirt, and black tic
overcoat could have passed if she'd been a make-up conscious blonde, but the burnt orange hair bowl-cut just above her ears, ears arrayed with numerous gold hoops and oddities like a tiny plastic baby with a pistol and an eye patch, declared her an obvious outsider. Still, she seemed perfectly comfortable. If anything, she was looking smug.

He scanned the jukebox, looking for songs that would play soon after the current selection, dropped two quarters and punched three sets of numbers. He tapped on the glass case as number 192 ended and switched to number 204, smiled and turned away in time to take a plastic cup of beer from his wife. "When A Man Loves A Woman" by Percy Sledge. He touched her free hand and squeezed. "Three seats," she said, and they moved back toward the windows and sat down.

They were more like church pews than seats, and he sat down next to his wife and opposite her friend, drank some beer and looked around. Excess merriment, he thought. What the hell do they all have to be so happy about? And the chattering laughter continued.

This was Sherries, and he'd only been inside once before, seven years earlier cutting his one o'clock sociology class to have a beer with a friend. Sociology of a sort, he'd thought that afternoon, because his attitude toward Sherries was that he wouldn't be caught dead there. Fraternities and
sororities and they are obviously from Chicago driving mom and dad's car. Preppies. Muffy and Buffy and pink and green and whatever other stereotypes came to mind when he saw someone in that particular uniform.

The uniform hadn't changed much since then, sockless topsiders had been replaced by running shoes never run in, but he wasn't fond of wall building anymore. The privilege of the very young, he thought, and then he remembered that his wife's friend was only twenty-three, still within the privileged years, when wall building was necessary for identity.

And after all, she hadn't built all the walls herself. Most she merely recognized and acknowledged, and agreed not to walk through. And she was more gracious about it than he had been at her age. For though she was probably thinking the same things about the crowd that he would have, she was willing to call a truce of action, and rub shoulders with them while pretending that their shoulders weren't there.

The jukebox had switched to a song he didn't know, and his wife and her friend had been talking about something drowned out by the noise of the crowd, but now his second selection clicked in. The Zombies. He couldn't help it, the only songs he ever played in bars were those he'd first heard before he was twelve years old. "It's the time of the
season for loving."

As if on cue, the boy standing a little in front and to the left of him, leaning against the wall that separated the door from the steamed-up windows, grabbed his girlfriend's ass. "I told you not to do that," she yelled, and this time the noise level dipped and a few heads turned. But only for a second. Then it was as if nothing had happened.

The boy, though, turned a bit red and looked at the floor. He smirked a bit. Not nastily. He was embarrassed it seemed, wondering perhaps what he would have to do to make up for this. Or perhaps this was fairly common, though not usually so public, and he was wondering what he could do to improve his timing. Suddenly the girl moved into the crowd, smiling and waving at a distant friend, and the boy followed her, still grinning sheepishly. Relax, the young man thought as he watched the boy. Relax. It's barely nine. It's the time of the season.

Then his wife and her friend stood up. "We're going to look for the bathroom." They moved through the crowd to the back, and he knew that when they returned they would be ready to leave. It was too noisy, and it wasn't their type of crowd, and it had been a joke to stop in first place. He drank some beer and hoped that the next song would be his last selection. He hated leaving with songs left unplayed.
Three girls moved into the empty spaces next to him, and the young man looked at the wall where the ass-grabbing boy had been standing and drank some more beer. It was almost gone. His song opened with merry-go-round flutes and he smiled and mouthed the words. "Let me take you down, 'cause I'm going to, Strawberry Fields."

The girl in front of him asked him if he was having a good time. He nodded and said yes. She was about twenty, and she was pretty, but not exceptionally so. She was smiling and he smiled too. It wasn't often that strangers spoke to him, let alone pretty girls, and he thought it odd that she would speak to him here, where he was so obviously out of place. It was a kindness, and it endeared her to him.

As he watched her talking to her friends he saw just how vast the gulf between them was. Eight years seemed an eternity, and even to cross that span would be simple compared to the barriers imposed by class and culture. Never in his wildest would he imagine himself fitting in at Sherries. Never would he want to. And yet.

At the far end of the pews, for he was now convinced that the seating had been salvaged from a remodeled church, a pale black-haired girl had temporarily dis-engaged herself from the group. Round face and red lips, she too was
silently singing along. "That is you can't, you know, tune in, but it's alright." And he looked back to the girl who had spoken to him. "That is I think it's not too bad."

He finished his beer and stared out the window, then at the girl who was singing, then at the girl who had spoken. Yes, he thought, I think I'll have another. And as he decided to ask the girl to save his seat, and would she like another beer because he was going to get one for himself, and play a few more songs and sit for twenty minutes, they came back, his wife and her friend, and he remembered who he was, and where he was, and he stood up, smiled at the girl who had talked to him, and said goodbye. She smiled as well, and then he stepped outside.

They were a few feet ahead of him, but their laughter punctured the night. "Did you see that last group that came in, waving their arms and shouting," said his wife. "And that disgusting bathroom," added her friend. And they laughed again, having absorbed the energy of the crowd.

And the young man stopped and looked through the steamed-up window, past the neon Miller sign, at the Greek letters on the walls, for his angle at street level prevented him from seeing the people inside. And he thought to himself if only, and he thought to himself but never, and he sang to himself "let me take you down."