Mahaska

by

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You who listen to my thoughts-- I hear you, I hear you behind me! I do not know you, it is true.

Praise God.

I am an old coot, older than soot, an old dead vulture confined by justice or accident to see the curses man brings to the earth. Praise the Lord. Used to be, when I lived, that distance opened up before me and there was never a place where the horizon ended. Now -- and for so long! -- only time. Do you follow me, Listener, to see how well I ponder this? There is nothing to be said beyond my knowledge.

Sons and begotten -- aaugh. Worthless. I lose track, it's quite true that I do. Indeed. I trudge this same soil in ceaseless deliberation of these loathsome times. When I care to notice, the soil has gone grimy under me. The sod which I first broke, at ten cents an acre. This is man's fruit. His electricity, his wretched neon, his fornicating images.

Towers spotting the land. Pavement. Lord be. Buzzing around. Much talking into the void. I have lost interest, even in my kin.

I choose, according to my limitation, to go about the old, hard way, because the new ways are abominable to me. Years are long when you are of the vapor. The consternation's of the living are trivial to me; their triviality offends me. Is this the vengeance of God -- only his exasperation? Ugh: Their strenuous facial expressions, the Living. They are cursed, and they curse their own busyness. Yet: they nearly realize their situation, and I am ready to burst in to confirm what they only surmise. Here and there, especially come to my descendants, it is realized: we are conjoined; I attempt to say my peace. I play tricks, I have my days of amusement. I make doorways whistle, I fart like an old goat so that the upstarts can smell. I shout, I rap, I bang, I make stones move, I have been known to combust. Even in death, I have tried a suicide or two. Once was when I saw the last of the farmers suffering, the last of my true kind. This was during the days of Roosevelt. Even then, I had been dead for years, my name somewhat gone.

Something infernal, but holy, makes me transfigure; I point to the damn-ed earth. I weep, for them and me. I carved and plowed this land, myself
and some few others whose names I could recite. The wind howled down upon us. The sense of cold is impossible for me to tell. It is no colder now. All is mere whining, or wind and vanity, as the book said.

You know this, Listener!

Show yourself! You know I am alone. That not even the damned deserve aloneness.

We hauled our houses about by mules, these some-hundred years ago. Even so, there is need to stop and calculate. Now...the living dare to ignore me, ignore their very notion of me. I am offended. I am the most cursed -- the Lord has made witness to my own progeny. Aaaah!

There is one who sees me constantly now. The dead are masters of discernment. The rascal. My great-great grandson, to be correct. He is a cur, out of one of my wenchy granddaughters, down from John S., who as cursed as Cain. He must be tormented to be saved, this modern little blood-let of mine. There is bad blood in our clan, and it has flushed down to him entire.

Aaagh. But there is so little to be done with these people. These are the End times.

I say again:

I was born on the 19th of March, 1834, far away from where I now wrench and moan and linger about. There, the soil was rocky -- Farmington, Hartford County, Connecticut. My mother was Mary Whittlesey Holbrook, she was daughter of Deacon David Whittlesley, and an actual granddaughter of Reverend John Smalley. Our family farm was large, about three miles north of New Britain, about four east of Farmington. The township line passed through the farm. Mmmmm. -- the house sat on a little hill, and commanded a view of the country. Only six miles to the northeast was Hartford. From the east could be seen Nevington, and from the southeast, Wetherton. New Britain was where we attended church.

Father's side was all North's and Stanley's. I was named after the Reverend William Whittlesey, my mother's oldest brother. The Reverend's John S. and Eliphlet Whittlesey's were also her brothers. All were Congregational ministers. My mother had ten brothers and sisters. When the uncles and aunts and cousins gathered at Grandfather Whittlesey's on a
Thanksgiving and sat around the long log table in the big dining room, it were a happy gathering, I'd say of sixty.

I do not know where these souls have gone. And if they are here with me, I am a sorry work. I cry out. They were good souls, not like what has been spawned by the Devil. They do not deserve to be mocked. Oh, Lord, release me, and may I rejoin the older lines of my family!

The Holbrook family were not very numerous, then -- though my ghostly eyes have gone on to see us vast and diluted. Ugh....

My grandfather Matthew Holbrook had no brothers or sisters that grew to be married. My father was Daniel Holbrook, and he had only one brother, James, that lived to be married. He died, James, leaving one child, my cousin Mary Antoinette Holbrook, my only first cousin of a Holbrook.

These were my own brothers and sisters: James Stanley Holbrook, who died at about ten years old with the scarlet fever; Rebecca Smalley, married to James C. Peck, who died with pneumonia about the 1st of January, 1893, in New Britain, leaving two sons and one daughter: Francis Fedora, who died with scarlet fever, I think she was four; Elbert Cornelius, who married Ada Hitchcock, and lived in Iowa; Frances Fedora, again, named after our first dead sister, married to Frank Holbrook, who died, then she married Lewis Payne, and lived in Iowa. My little brother, James Eliphet, died at about two years old. His clothes caught fire in the fireplace, and he burned to death. My last brother was Matthew Henry Holbrook.

Somewhere, someone hears me, and not only Christ. I am aware that I am listened to. I have much time and I pray much. This here, now, this is all ghost talking, which has echo but no resonance. The living -- I watch them -- merely read of my folk, my days of light and warmth, and consider us only stern and pathetic. This is their notion of praise -- to think us pathetic, gray like phantoms, without brains, possibly vaguely courageous. Since death, my outrage has been constant, more constant than the sound of my own spirit-breath. Know that I remember my past life increasingly with every day of the living past, but when I am with the living -- when they call me, I am in great agitation. They trod my ground -- this was ground I broke. I ask only for what passed for proper respect, in my day, but these creatures of my flesh, and of Adam's, are full of nothing but themselves and their own silly fabrications; yet
though they live for their little instants, their souls are more vaporous than mine. This current crop -- they cannot remember an oath from night till the next sunrise. Soon, soon, I plan to figure a way to curl myself into their light screens and come back at them, like their other magical demon figures. They need a fear -- the fear of the Lord will do. First, I noticed they worshipped only what glittered. Now, only what gives a flash. They invent machinery only to blind and deafen themselves -- this is the pleasure of their insanity. So out of the bowels of the deathland, I intend -- or God intends, I will provide them something to blink and be amazed about. They desire to believing nothing, and they will be so rewarded. I expect their terror will be most acute of all races and times. But I have the scare also of myself. Little do they know that, yea, I myself still dream; oh God, not even the dead escape dreams. The dreaming goes on, everywhere, until the End. And they should hear the bewailings of my nightmares.

I confess: I have a need to either to see myself once more, or to be born again in the flesh, even in sin, as so many of my sons have come and passed. It was said, that when Lincoln was dug up in Illinois, to be reinterred, he was still pure and had not decayed. As for me, I can feel the crumbling of my own body. It does not stir, back in Washington, Arlington. Even the crunching of the bugs had ceased, while my own children were yet alive. No longer do I attend funerals. Uhg. They terrify me.

I do not remember waking from death, yet I recall all else, I am a litany of people and places and things that happened. Gradually, I rejoined my self, so that I could mumble, and recount.

If I cease my droning, surely I will perish entire.

Where do they go, the other dead? How long, oh Lord, will I cry alone? But I have detected others, passing in the fog. Oh, God.

I have been kept and put here only to be mocked, as I deserve. Though I was a pious soul, and came out from pious folk. It is not for me to know why. But Lord help those who have not even piety. These folks who think themselves new. They and their scuttling about, and their neon lights and their freeway blacktops.

I trudge, I trudge across the black earth. It is my penance and my joy. (Hah! It is my ‘exercise,’ as these curs say.)
Here are my sins, let me confess one more time; again, I will reveal to myself every possibility. But then, Lord, set me free!

I did indeed lust. My father, Daniel billy-goating the dairy-maids...but I say, this was as a child! Who taught me this...would I have taught myself? No. The lust was learned, my Father in Heaven.

But indeed, I was weak of will, never trusting in the Lord, but always in progress and connivance, mammon. Buying and selling. But I was only trying to make my way in the world. It was a hard, cold world, Lord. I crossed the very muddy Mississippi, on rope! You know this, You made it so, for our glory. There was only one way to live in it. But nevertheless, I confess.

I did not honor my father, because of his sins. When I was twenty, I was the man, and he followed me about like a boy.

I did not bear false witness, but there were many demons in the world even in my time, and I judged them harsh. I did not like weak men, nor lewd, nor drunken ones. The Lord forgives because he is stronger than Whittlesley Holbrook.

The living have their free will, and they go where they will and say what they want. I do not say this is not just, it was the same for me. I am dead, yet I think and see, and smell the waste of cattle and poisons of men, and somewhat, somewhat I feel tactile -- though not the warmth. I have neither too much cold or warmth, to free me to think, I suspect.

Every day of the living is the same as for me, every storm, every tick of the clock, every sway of a big tree. I am subject to the same months and years, though my suffering for provisions has abated. Praise God. He Himself has permitted man to measure time, perhaps from His own indifference to the subject. But the realm of death gets bigger as men try to shrink the world, for the sake of...ugh, familiarity! Behind the curtain, the terrible fog expands. Even now, I faintly hear other yammering voices like my own. We dead are full of questions

While the living sleep in their manner, I huddle to myself and moan. The wind is my good company; it passes for a voice. If God gives me my reward, I would prefer to be a light cloud, which drifts off ever and away, and hears less and less of either the living or the dead, until all is the pure silence of grace.
This will be great -- I have always wanted to do a journal.

And Dinah -- true to your fucking word now! NO PEEKING.

Grandma Elsie keeps one of these. It must be in the blood. Except all she keeps track of is, like, “Today: 35 degrees and a little windy. Took Dad for his checkup at Dr. Macintosh’s. Fern called right before lunch and said Beth is engaged. Dad watched ‘Price Is Right’ and then ‘As The World Turns’ while I sewed some. Had leftover potato salad and ham for dinner. Got colder after evening, both of us went to bed early.”

The ones I read go on like this year after year. She doesn’t miss a day from about 1944, when Uncle Ray was killed on Okinawa, right up till now. She’s got volumes up in the attic. She only does it so she can ‘prove her point.’ It’s the only time her arthritis doesn’t keep her from trotting up the stairs.

“See -- I told you, ’64 was a hot summer.” Licking their thumbs to shuffle through papers.

Ha. Look at me. Today was 74 but humid. Dinah and I went to bed early and fucked like rabbits. Finished off dog style. Dinah goes, “You like?” Which always gets me to a fast finish. I even thought I heard clapping in the room, like applause. The Gods of Fuck were pleased.

Still peeking here, hot mamma? Better not. I’ll know, because you’ll be pissed and won’t be able to hide it.

This is the only place on earth I can say what I want, exactly what I think. What a fucked up world when that’s the case.
Walter Brennon The Landlord comes out and bitches about broken window panes. He’s got his eternal father Gabby Hayes with him — how can you be that fucking old like Walter Brennon and still have a living father. I say, “Hey, it wasn’t us. You know those windows were cracked when we moved in. You commented on them yourself.”

He gets that farmer obstinance look and starts to digging his nose with his thumbnails and wiping on his over-alls, and then the fucker goes, “Na. Hmm-mm. Na, they weren’t. I woulda never let that go.”

These fucks, man. Got these big rumblin’ diesels, $60,000 John Deere’s, plowing down every living thing except soybeans and seedcorn.

I go, “You’re not gonna plow up that strawberry patch this fall, are you?” I’m thinking surely not.

“And have to,” he goes.

Gotta get two more rows of soybeans close to the north cribs. Can’t have anything joyous like strawberries. Gotta fucking have bushels-per-acre, so as to have vacations in Vegas in January.

Plowed up the black raspberry patch, too. Too “weedy.” God, these fuckers hate “weeds.” And get this. Wants to bring in a fucking crane, at $5,000 per diem, and pull up the east windrow trees. Like they’re rotten teeth or something. Goes, “Those trees are dirty anyway. You never pick up the loose sticks.”

Trees are fucking “dirty?”

Fucking moron. We’re about ready to move back into town.

Ronnie Reagan is out on his 700-acre ranch having a “vacation” from his vacuity, and I’m out here on this low-rent farmstead, 6 miles from Bumfuck, Iowa. I should have cast my lot with General Electric, just like Berdie says.
The band is seeming petty and asinine to me. Thirty is too fucking old to be in a band anyway. Axton’s started to get to where he’s playing on the accent beats, for some reason. It’s horrible. We go, “Hi-hat and snare, hi-hat and snare, you fucking idiot.” It’s his drinking. 2:30 A.M. equipment breakdown — he’s the dimwit surrounded on-stage by about 14 empty Bud bottles. His idea of desert is a whole reefer. I was the one that said “hire him” in the first place. I know damn well he was a good drummer at that time, the best of the three at audition, at least. Dinah goes, “No, he wasn’t. I told you should have gone with that Pederson kid.”

August 13

Dinah’s on the rag. The air controllers are still on strike and the Old Adman is threatening to fire their asses. Today was about 134 degrees with 99% humidity. The corn was hissing. The Morons of the Midwest were getting together to say, “Good for the corn, though.” What is? Why would the corn like it if the humanoids don’t? Who fucking cares?

There is this weird shit taking place in this old farmhouse. This rustling of paper bags and garbage sacks. Four or five times now. It is not the wind. Dinah wants to argue about this. She says its my overuse of reefer. So about the second time I mention it, she went out into the kitchen, not to check it out, but to get paper and pencil and start making a list of her grievances about me.
1. I don’t pick up after myself -- my mother was a fucking idiot to let her son grow up this way.
2. Quote: “Everybody has to have a job, nobody wants to but they do. I don’t want to typeset and paste-up idiotic car ads, but I do, forty hours a week. Now you need to get a job, like everyone else. No, selling pounds of pot is not a job. No, making $60 every other month playing bar gigs is not a job.”
3. I don’t understand her fucking “needs.”
4. My feet stink and I have a peculiar pothead body order which is even worse than 90% of the other men on earth.
5. I can’t fix anything, even a mailbox lid, or a kitchen faucet. Her father told her never to get involved with a man who couldn’t change his own oil, and now she sees that he was right.
This too will pass, post-Ragtime.

Band meeting earlier this afternoon: Eldon wants to go with some sort of REO Speedwagon or Styx fucking bullshit motif. I tell him I feel like killing him and cutting off his head when he talks like that. He asks me if I've ever heard of a band called The Fabulous Poodles, and plays me a cut. I tell him he's a moron. He thinks I'm joking.

Journal, Journal, tell me how to live in a swirl of idiots. They have been given rock 'n roll, and now know not what to do with it.

△ △ △

Skyler William Holbrook
aka Vesterium Celtar
1980-2047

Celtar<<< New Haven, ConnMASS
Cause:PrimeOration/CelebrityOne (1) • REPUB-PROCLAM 71.1
Olddate: 27Nov045 Commomdate: 06:04:56Greenwich:32
I SAY:
Good day. I am honored at the interest in my pontifications.
Thank you [213,330] postings of my birthday, worldwide.
Thanks to MicroMurdockias for New RECEIPT SYSTEM Ver.9.
I will just begin, then:
The very idea of autobiography is anathema to me, as I suspect I have made suitably clear on more than a few occasions. My various careers, as popular writer and cultural critic and historical contextualist, have provided me someone more fame than I either intended or desired; the indulgences of pretending to depict one's "life" -- and for whom, and for what purposes -- are beyond what Jung might have called the outer layers of my onion-like degrees of consciousness. I believe -- as does our Time -- completely in what Shaw said, that all autobiography is automatically a lie. And yet: here am I. Doing so. Let us say, under slight duress. Ha.

As I have stated ad tedium, I was nearly always amazed at having been ordained a social critic, "pundit," grand interpreter/debunker, cognescende -- any of the various determinors which have been applied to me (and I assure you, there
are a dozen more). I never started out to "be" anything, except perhaps very vaguely, during the days of what was left of the white middle class, in the midst of the latter doomed, heated, death palpitations of the 20th C. (or was it 18th, refusing to die?) notion of "America." But perhaps no task remains, here beside a broiling sea like some forgotten, brittle Roman philosopher, but to provide the so-called factuals of my life -- at least as I recall them, now, wired up to this Protojet III Series (complements of Microldea Generation II, of course). My dictum is antiquated. I apologize. People marvel at me, but I am a leaden word-machine in my own mind. Though I have always detested the past, I am also aware that I belong there.

I would request, by the way, that before DDR's -- or Direct Data Responses, as we old men still insist on calling them -- you permit me to collect my thoughts and establish something of a motif here.

Uhumm. So.

I did not know my father, who was named Marvin Lewis Holbrook - or rather, I think I have perhaps two freeze-framed memories of him. And my mother, Dinah Paul Underwood, died of the plague of cancer when I was twelve. At that time, then, before even the cures for acne and baldness, and at the very onset of The Video Age, I found myself ordained "the oldest son" in a cut-and-paste household, with my half-sister and half-brother, and my absentee step-father, a hetero who was in those days still known as a "businessman." There was a social war at that time between a large moralist sectarianism in America that insisted upon the "sanctity" of what they called The Family, and those who thought the very concept was inane or even counterproductive. (This is all very arcane -- hardly worth going into.) Perhaps the viewer knows this, but I will indulge those who do not. I will apply a theme I have drummed before: that America has always been a stage where "the past" is never permitted a humane burial, "the present" is a continual but phony nuisance, and "the future" is treated as a presence. Or at least, this is how I remember the childhood, and the family, and the household of this former time of The Collapse: the future was always arriving, the past was always muttered about as though was debris underfoot, and the present was somewhat like a hole in the world, which no one pretended to notice.

My step-father was enormously clever, somewhat brittle, and successful. His memory is fading from me, exactly because, I think, he so closely personified the
Adman Stereotype we so camp Nowtimes: the erectness, the gray-and-black thicket male-hair, the 20th-C 'suit.' He possessed what seems to me now the perfect clacky surname for those times: Kyle. Which was what I was permitted to call him, as though it was an act of benevolence. One syllable, signifying nothing except quick consonance, and certitude, and irrational action. The Times.

"If It Can Be Done -- It Should."

Do any of you remember those days? He was, my stepfather, as we said prepositionally in those times, "in" insurance. The tedium of explaining "insurance" to present viewers is matched only by the irritation that such a vital enterprise -- at least it was so considered in my younger days -- is so nearly impossible to explain now. The fundamental idea behind it was vastly associated with other basic or historical social theorems of the day, especially the workings of compound interest and inside-trader investment. But already I see audience eyes fog over. And perhaps this is just so. In any case, here is what my step-father's life was like: he would arise, and shower and shave (they thought fresh water was inexhaustible in those days)-- some sort of residue ritual in those days, and attire himself in a sort of.. mmmm, vacuum-dried, starched fabricity -- such as with long, flowery ties and what were called "suspenders," as you most have seen -- and then he would disappear off to one of those infamous, glassy porticos called the "office building," some of which still survive as historical sites, or shrines, particularly in the Western republics. My step-father was a believer in the power and creativity, not only of Technology, but more expressly -- and this is, what, I think, is most often forgotten in our Time -- of the old abstraction of money. He had not the dimmest foreboding that money as a foundational abstraction would ever be annulled, and I do not believed that he could have ever conceived of our Time's wanting to do such a thing. Um. But I could spend days on this facet of the discussion, other than, as I have said, the exercise thereof only leaves me feeling old. Or as though I lived my early life on a different planet.

Let us say, that time and distance were different in those days. People were continually leaving their abodes..and engaging themselves almost exclusively on-site. One went to school, for instance, almost continually on-site. One was always "driving," "going" somewhere, as we put it. One shopped on-site. One always had to "get" somewhere. Indeed, wars were still fought over territory. You find all this laughable, I know. I am an old man,
I see that this is futile. Or at least, the depiction surpasses my abilities. Many historians, I think, are finding this to be the case. Not to mention, the entire notion of personal history. Ah. Forgive me.

Please...In ConnMASS. You are intruding on my narrative here....Thank you.

Ah-Um. My mother -- my mother was a work -- perhaps you will find this amusing. She, also, was as you have seen depicted in the Genre of Ad. She was as erect as my stepfather, but more pallid. She was determined to embody which has lost usage now times, but the gist of which you me easily derived: she insisted on being ‘self-fulfilled.’ Never mind; I will expand. She wanted preside -- you know this word, ‘preside?’ -- over her life, in a state somewhere between exalted and conceited, well-nourished and yet fashionably thin, strict and yet sentimental-on-cure...the point I am making (and I see that you are all mostly lost) is that she wanted to tread the thin lines between contradictions, even absurdity, with the sort of bare effort and laconic exactitude. She like to claim that she was ‘Danish,’ as peopled applied ethnicity to themselves in those, for certain effects. She was actually quite healthy and full of verve until plagued; it takes effort for me to remind myself, however.

I remember -- she died when I was eight years old -- that arranged her mental life according to “believing” in things. Foundationals, in other words, by not quite in our meaning of the terms. She “believed,” for instance, and firmly, that she was not going to die, at least not until the moment when she did. She believed that a transcendent or superior force, “angels” sometimes she called the representatives, or sometimes the force itself, as some people still call “God,” was going to rescue her from her anguish and travails. She believed, nonetheless, that these pains and humiliations and physiological breakdowns, and what have you, were also...I don’t know whether I’m certain how to put this. That such visitations were also portentous and meaningful, in their own way. It was all very complicated for a young boy like me, somewhat silly and contradictory, somewhat nihilistic, somewhat asinine, and yet very painful to endure. When she ceased to be healthy and beautiful, she became...this is painful. Somewhat monstrous to me. Or at least, burdensome. I thought I was going to combust, because I was so anguished and raw, and because I myself was able to “believe” -- very little of anything. I had
no *desire* to believe anything, nor had I the acquaintance of anyone my own age
who did. Every day of further wasting away by my mother -- it was as though she
had become some sort of saggy, gray sack, the air and vitality of which had been
leaked out by some careless pricking, or turning out of the wrong valve. People
died with such inexcusable degradation in those times, I can't begin to tell. This
was, did I say? -- 1992. The coping, such as it was -- that is to say, for the familials
and loved ones -- was a sort of relentless, rigid cheeriness. I have been told this
was a vestige or remnant of earlier Culturalism, but with the various series of Re-
Interations, I have not been able to trace this. In any case, there were oaths to
propound, and obligations. You were obliged to say things like, "You'll get better,
Mom," and, "You look better today," and such. My step-father enforced such
traditional sayings, even though he himself, it was clear to me, did not believe in
any of the rhetorical "angles" and God's and whatnot in the least, since they were
not measurable by either Finance or Insurance. Umm. But let me state: he *did*
believe in the enforcement of the utterances. And that people who had more
money were likely to statistically live longer than people with little. Even though this
did not turn out to be the case. In this clear? Perhaps, think of the artifacts of Ad
Genre, in that age, which I'm sure some of you have studied in your early
Language Acquisition exercises.

It seems to me now that there was a great deal of disputation about *whose*
mother had died. (The funeral, in my mind, is just a ghastly cascade of silver, and
the steely anguish that silver portends for me. Silver casket, silver hearse. Silver
horned rimmed glasses, for some reason.) That is...where was I? whether it was my
mother, or my step-father's wife and my step-brother's and little sister's, who had
'been taken,' 'passed on.' The euphemisms, I realize, are obscure. Before this, it
seems in my memory at least, we operated conceptually as a 20th-C "family" of
five, but then after the death of my mother, they were a family of three, and I was the
son of a lost, dead biological father, whose faults, now residing in me, everyone
suddenly was on the lookout for. It was during this period, until I left for Yale (this
was a prestigious on-site learning institution, though I won't pause to expositate)
that I was permitted to retire to the total solitude of my room, so that I embarked on
my life-long tendency to prolific reading. I became somewhat of a brain in a jar, I
suppose. At a peculiar joint in history, precisely when the rest of the human race
committed to the salvation of Imagery, I embarked on a prolific career reading...
Yes. Mmmhmmmm. Indeed. You laugh, and rightly so.
When I was about fifteen, my erstwhile maternal grandmother visited me in my Underwood home. Out of the blue, in hand with a wierd packet containing the artifacts and paraphernalia of my ‘real’ father’s life. She was entirely old and frail, and my stepfather, who was completely unequipped for such personal matters, and probably the last person who should have been thrust into the host role for such a circumstance, stood there in the entryway, gesturing with thin lines of explanation, flacid hand gestures. “This is, uh, um, your grandmother. One of them.” And then left the two of us alone, to go back to Financing something in his private office. Actually, I should tell you, that being a Financier in those days obliged him to have the most gleaming personality during that portion of his life which was also called his ‘business hours’ -- the flashing of hard grins, and the demeanor of stern caring, and the hard gripping of hands and other people’s elbows -- and yet this grandmother situation was one with which he would not even minimally qualified to grapple. He was also visibly offended about the whole thing -- now that I recollect, it was certainly the only time he ‘let his guard’ down in this way.

I think that my grandmother said something to the effect of, ‘You don’t have your father’s eyes’...something like that. I immediately found her tedious or presumptuous, though I admit I was at the very height of my adolescence. I did not want to have my father’s ‘eyes,’ and I did not not want to ‘have’ my father’s eyes. And it was my policy that I did ‘have’ a father anyway, except perhaps at some initial, spermidical phase of existence.

I began, not so much to usher her into the house -- my stepfather was very successful, and we dwelled in what was deemed a ‘New Englandish,’ so-called ‘cod’ home (New England did not refer to today’s Republic, it was, rather a cultural/historical metaphor...never mind), which was held together by genuine Californian redwood. The trappings were all ‘eclectic affluence’: walnut , Asian wicker and heavy ash-oak. After several paces, I realized that the old woman was not following me, partly due to genuine gawking at the premises, but mostly because she was indeed quite frail. I was too young and arrogant and unempathic then to wonder, in the first place, by what means she had arrived, though I do now, come to think of it. “You’re going to have to help me with this stuff outside,” she then said. I went back out to the doorstep, still in a puerile state somewhat between glum, defiant, and deeply humiliated, and stached up a suitcase-sized, black satchel with rattly contents. There was some thudding and rattling from within, as
perhaps from heavy books, or photo albums, but also clattering cases of plastic. I don't know how I guessed all this, but it turned out that I was correct.

This withered, old-new grandmother grabbed my free elbow and began smiling and acting, as she shuffled, as thought we were now officially reacquainted. I steered her to what had been my mother’s 'sewing chair' -- I suspect simply because she was female. I remember that it was becoming clear that I was alone with this ghostly relative, 'in charge' as it were. I had no social graces, and was an entirely self-indulged, 'amused' upper-middle class youth, which in those days meant indulged indeed. I spent almost all of my days playing sexualized video games, snacking on food, and not being 'interrupted' or put upon in any way. My sulkiness was considered part of my character. My friends were exactly like me, and we all thought justifiably so, and adults were considered aliens -- quite literally. It seems strange, now, looking back. And this was likely the first time in my life I had ever been obliged to act as a host, or even slightly graciously. I think that I noted it at the time, although only for reasons of my own self-esteem.

I said to this new grandmother, “What’s in this stupid case, anyway?”, but she was as delighted at my voice as much as if a statue had spoken.

“But you do have his voice,” she said, nodding, I thought, somewhat idiotically, and as though she had scored her first point.

She informed me -- I don’t know how to describe her voice, I keep using ‘frail’ -- that these were the 'records' of my father. But I think it was the preposition more than the term which I found annoyingly obscure. Or perhaps I was suprised by the whole business of artifacts; as I have stated, though it may seem redundant to us now: I believed only in the visibility of mind, and space, and the passing data in-between. People who thought their live’s were contained or revealed or explained from 'things' were beyond ridiculous to me -- they were ciphers. I mean to imply, here, both my doddering pixie of a grandmother, and the supposed ‘contents’ of the life of a father I had long sense erased from my reckonings -- or no, I have even mis-stated that. I had never been aware of my father, I do not think, up to that day. Ever. No. I do not think my mother had spoken of him, perhaps...hmm. Two, three times. Very peripherally. She was always very insistent that Kyle ‘was’ my father, and there was nothing more to be said of the matter.

I popped open the suitcase, and it seems to me now that smells came forth, dusky ones, a hodgipodge of them. And perhaps other diablocal entities as well...though perhaps my mind is just sprinkling flavor to this narration. I might even
allude to it as a Pandora’s Box, except that the allusion would be futile, and incorrect to boot.

I kept having to prop the floppy lid open with my toe, or thought that I did, wobbly and undignified while doing so -- I did not quite have the sense to plop down and relaxedly examine the contents. My hot adolescentness began to flush, and I started to blame the old woman -- for having provided a floppy container, for being old, for having arrived unannounced, for having saggy skin, for existing, for interrupting my game of EXPONENTIAL UNIVERSE II (or Version III, please do not quibble with my memory). For not being my primary grandmother, who was of course my Grandmother Paul. But gradually, after seeing that I was not capable of the proper methods of appreciation (she was still kind, and mummering, and grinning, however), this new, intrusive grandmother managed to sooth and sit me down, where I wound up cross-legged-meditative style on the plush carpet.

The most rattly of the contents turned out to be antiquated magnetic tapes -- quarter-inch, somewhat like Pure Sensory Tapes such as we plop in today -- and with her knarly fingers she brought up a good bunch of them. Probably fifteen or twenty of them, there were, with bizzare, elapsed tradenames such as “Maxell” and even the Infamous “Sony.” I was more interested at how acutely she had to bend her hoary self over to accomplish any such thing. I had not been around ‘old’ people much, since I did not qualify my other grandmother that way. This woman was a wheezing machine, especially on the intake, and I denied any genealogical relationship to her.

“Your father plays on all these tapes. And sings on some of them,” she said, rather behind her respirations, I noticed.

“I know that,” I said, though of course I did not. It was something I always said, as defensive response. I remember that I often used to say the same line when people first explained quasars to me, or spirality, or curved Time -- anything theoretical or new, but also Antiquated as well: the Newtonian, free market economics, rock music, physical logistics, frequency modulation. I thought I somehow already knew everything as part of my youthful virility itself, and to an eerily unlikely degree, I often did.

There were some wan, curled-corned, so-called 4-color posters at the seat of this mess, a stack of them in fact, some of them faded to oblivion but more than a few plastic-coated and preserved. The 20th-C faces peered out at me with an amazing degree of pomp of circumstance. Everyone depicted seemed to want to
be either Lord Byron or some close caricature to that, no longer remembered --
 everyone, no matter what their stance in the photograph, detects a far horizon as
 only an embittered poet would. There was a large, well, hair motif, but not
 androgany. My first impression was of a cultural-wide hair contest, all the same.
 There were handlebar mustaches, somewhat as now, but which disappeared as
 the old woman shuffled the stack for me, apparently by fad sequence -- not Camp,
 now mind you. The cotton-denimed -- they were indeed called 'jeans' -- trousers
 would come and go, patches and tears would be nonchalant, then flagrant, then
 become passe...something like this. I don't pretend to know.

 It was the rhetoric, and the implementation of mammoth, bolded print, and
 the unabashed but carnavalesque pronouncements, which grabbed my eye. This,
 indeed, may have been my baptism day in social theory. THE BARKING
 SPIDERS, with Special Guest, Mister Fixer. (Here, I improvise the names.)
 ONE SHOW ONLY, say, October 4, Diamond Lil’s Ballroom, and blah-
 blah-blah and so forth. And then the next startling announcement, which would be
 the same thing, with similar portraits but different personnel and names, and again
 ONE SHOW ONLY, perhaps one week or one month later, at the same venue.
 People certainly traveled in those days. But of course the roads were still
 undestroyed.

 My grandmother, wheezing ever worse, began, with a jaundiced fingernail
 for marker, to point out my father for me in his various poses. At first, I made it a
 point of not following her cues, or to drag my gaze away from something or
 someone which was duly much more interesting to me than my vague
 associationish with my father. But after awhile, a good long while, he did become
 mildly interesting to me, if only because she was supplying a context to him, a
 raspy admiration, while the other faces were just dead, 20th-C ghosts to me -- self-
 absored, pseudo-poetic, pompous, narcissistic -- the people who had indulged a
 civilization into the ground, in my view even then, probably.

 Mostly, he was a very dark and brooding-looking gent, but there was
 something chameleon-ish to him as well, though not in a flattering way. In some
 shots, he looked healthier than his mates, even freshly scrubbed, even verging on
 chubby; in others, he looked positively, demonically emaciated. The chronology,
 although I certainly did not pay that much attention, was no key to solving this -- in
 other words, he was not a young man who seemed to go, say, on a decline, or
 even simply to get 'older.' In an announcement for May, 1981, he might look stolid,
a leader-of-the-band. In a subsequent band photo, he would look like every portrait
of a 20th-C addict. Then, another year later would find him -- perhaps a noveau
wave of hair-styling had transpired, who knows? -- difficult to even pick out among
the other four or five strangers. There was even a period where his hair was almost
certainly blonde. I recall that I mentioned all this, or a great deal of it, in my
mumbling way.

"They used to think a lot about that."

I was surprised she had detected my interrogation of the evidence.

"Oh yes," she said. "They used to think a lot about that."

"About what?" I wanted to make sure we were wondering about the same
phenomenon.

"Oh," she said, "they used to think and think. All of 'em. They were thinking
boys. This is Eddie Petrone here, and he was in most of Marv's bands. He could
play piano in church, if he had to. And he did, too. And this is Joy Lebo. Did you
ever figure a girl could play drums like that? Well, nobody did. Til they heard her.
And these two fellows here died in a car wreck, outside Perry, in 1979, and Marv
just happened not be with them. And it broke his heart, and he said to me, 'Not
cause I liked them, but because that was the best band I ever hand.' Mike - Uh, this
one was a Mike, and this was...no, this one, this one was the one killed with the
Mike.

"Now Frances -- your grandfather -- he never thought they were thinking at
all. He thought they were just makin' noise. And they used to practice in our
basement, till Frances got older and crankier, and they got too loud. But that was
one thing I disagreed with him about, was their thinking. With your grandfather. I
always thought they were good kids, tryin' to do something. Course -- we didn't
always know what." She croaked-laughed rather pleasingly, until the wheeze
cought her again.

In a way, I was somewhat relieved -- not by the quaintness of my
grandmother, nor even by the earlier generation's paraphernalia, but rather to
discover that there was nothing -- or little, let's say -- that reminded me of myself in
my father's portraits. He seemed to be worried about something that he could not
grasp, or let's say, rectify, something not obtained, and this kind of angst, this kind
of ontological straining -- yes, this "blues" as it was vaguely called then, neither was
nor is part of my make-up. I have never been an anguished or apprehensive type, I
don't think, although I admit this could have different, had my mother, say, stayed
with my father. I have never had a grievance with the human condition, I suppose is
the way to assert it. Although, yes, at the same time, I have never been an admirer
of the past, particularly of the preceding generation or two. And, of course... Ha: It
was none other than I myself who authored and issued, "The Indulgers: Music and
Culture, 1950-2000," to entire, vast PrimaWeb, not ten years ago.

I will pause here for Fi Interruptions and Info-Inquires. But only because I
grow hoarse and huffy -- somewhat like my old grandmother.

Δ Δ Δ

August 31, 1981

Dinah is fucking some guy named Kyle Underwood. I don’t know how this has
happened.
Should I write about this? Won’t I remember anyway? I don’t feel much. A little
kicked, maybe. I don’t want to write about how I found out. I wonder what I’m
learning in this life.

She’s moving out tomorrow. I go, “why not today?” She says she has one more day
of rent. As time went on, she got more and more trivial. I’m thinking, “is this what
I’m arguing about -- you’re one more fucking day of rent.”
I’m watching her pack. She says, “Get out, this is my private room.” I’m watching
her wad panties into a K-Mart with string handles. Thinking about the red ones.
I go, “Where you headed, then’”
She goes, “I don’t think that’s any of your concern.”

There’s something devious and sick about me.
I go, “What about we could still get together, just once in awhile?” I don’t know why
I even asked. Sometimes The Fucker in me just rules, no matter how anguishng
the situation.
She doesn’t even act offended.
I can’t write about this anymore.
September 11, whatever

Listing things about Dinah to remember for my old age.
Ash hair with brown eyes. Fits the bill of Farah and Linda Purl. Hated Jethro Tull.
Called me “Sweets” the first three weeks, never after that. Father named Verle with heart trouble, mother with stupid name of Panny who looked nothing like Dinah.
Sister’s name, Doris, because of phonetic baby naming imperative taking place at that time. Liked alcohol better than drugs. Wanted me to grow up. Went off to grow up herself by moving in with divorced insurance salesman.
Didn’t like to talk during sex. Detested Fuck and Pussy as word choices.
Me + Her: September, 1979, August-what, 1981.

September 17, 1981

Have got to get some money.
Walter Brennon aka Verle Denclau gearing up for the harvest of God’s fucking bounty. Him-hawing around about Dinah’s absence. You know, this farmer candor, this fucking folksy farmer candor.
“Just wonderin’ bout the rent, you know,” chuckle.
Felt like saying, “You fuck, what’re your worried about -- the payment on your $60,000 tractor?”

September 19

It is 2:22 a.m. Today I spent twelve hours contemplating the world.
I was thinking about Reagan’s beloved neutron bomb. I was annoyed with myself, that I never anticipated these Cretons Who Run The World would invent a bomb that would kill people but not harm buildings. I am not annoyed about the bomb, per se, but only that they were up to this shit while the rest of us slept or ate burgers or listened to rock and roll.
I increasingly hate my own stupidity. I increasingly hate people who are fucking up to something, while the rest of us just trying to get laid, or get something to eat.
But I also thought this: why couldn’t the rest of us get ahold of some of the Cretons’ scientists and bribe them to come over to our side, and invent a reverse neutron bomb, which would only harm concrete and steel, but not anything organic?
Death of my father. MORE on this later.

Sept. 23, 1981

Jesus Fuck. What a horrible ordeal, the seven days of Protestant Penance Hell. Pies, white cakes, cucumber sandwiches, tisking of puckered lips. Shaking of hands. What does this shaking of hands signify -- I thought it was kind of an accountant or salesman thing. But now you have to do it endlessly whenever a white man dies.;

Bad coffee from boiler-sized pots. Sitting on chairs wearing your wingtips from 1971. Pinned in by the World War II gang. Having to listen to them, once and for all. A generation of fucking welders. Telling me about the old man from the days when he was who he was, before mother and me. How he used to grab electric fences to impress is cronies. His days in The Fleet -- The Fleet this, The Fleet that -- when he almost Saw Action. The old man's dead now, and people sit around his living room crowing about how he almost Saw Action.

Little pipsqueek fucking Methodist minister, about 19 with cross-octave, whiny voice, corrals (sp.?) me. Wants to know what fucking "passage" the old man was most partial to. Little thick gold-trimmed on his weasly lap. I haven't slept for about three days. I've been crying, I've been guilty, I've been pissed off, I've had to deal with my fucking idiot mother, and this fuck wants to sit tisking and sniffling on those hideous folding chairs, talking about "passages." I didn't say a word, he gets more and more uncomfortable. Grandma comes over and pats him on the shoulder, reverentially, like this little fucking blackhead is some representative of The Divine. Because he knows "verses." Like she's been watching me, too. In sad concern. Wants to remind me of his pipsqueeking relevance.

So I start to feel ornery, deep down in my toes and at the end of my dick, at how uncomfortable I make him. I felt exalted and fallen like Satan. I wanted to blow bad breath on him like a dragon. He was sidelonging at me, like he feared I just might. I just strung every moment to its last oozy drip. If it hadn't been in my mother's house and on her carpet, I would have spit between my teeth and scratched myself. This is the kind of little fuck we used to beat up on the playground. Is this who God chooses to represent him at cucumber funeral luncheons? Fuck me.
$4,800 for the pickling of the old man and the fancy walnut worm prevention box.

Finally, I go, “My old man didn’t to church in 27 years.” Real fucking loud, too. The aunts and the neighbor women start crashing dishes and silverware on purpose.

Little fucking man of God, black tie and pit-stained short-sleeved white shirt -- the whole caboose -- he goes, “Yes, but we know that. But your mother says...”

I go, “I’m not getting your point, my man.” I go, “We’re not even having the service in a church.”

He says lots of people have their services in chapels nowadays, doesn’t matter.

I go, “So..what? You’re worried we atheists ain’t gonna keep a place for you in the whole charade? You’re worried about your fucking $25 in the discrete white envelope?” People getting real uncomfortable in the old Holbrook living room, with the pouchy cushions and ugly lavender Midwestern motif. The old WW II males start readjusting their fake ties or leaving the room.

The little minister guy goes, “Your mother said you were partial to The Book of John, and you might suggest some verse out of there.”

I looked at my mother, and she was pretending the whole thing was not happening. Just like the old man’s death. In general.

I just got up and went outside, and noticed they’d taken down the bankboard off the garage. I thought, ‘Now, when the fuck did they do that -- the day after I left, or just last week?’ I went inside the garage and smoked a reef, and pondered and pondered that. 8,123 hours of shooting basketballs against a garage, in between Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy assassinations. I was staring at the old man’s tools, and they continued to have no meaning for me. Except for his ugly green thermos -- that, for some reason, attached Human to me, and I cried for another 15, 20 minutes, as long as nobody was around.

I’m tired. I may need to pull up and head for Colorado.

△△△

Dinah Faye Paul
1956-1992
July 1, ’81

Kendra,

Oh, Ken, I miss you so much! This has been a rugged year for us both. I just haven’t been there for you, I know. Denver is such a long ways when you don’t get much vacation. Even a long weekend, I could have gotten out there for you for the worst of it. But you sound in your letter so back grounded now. I’ve been reading some things in Redbook about divorce and it sounds to me like you’re getting into the ‘movable mode’ now where you realize you had a life before that and you can get reacquainted with it.

Boy, does that sound like buzztalk! But Kenny, I believe it. You are my dear, dear sister. And I know I am just a c---- sometimes. I take after Dad, you said it yourself.

Ken, there is someone new in my life. At least, I think there is. His name is Kyle (Keni-Kyle my life tends to K-people!). We met at the company sales celebration, for the last quarter. Usually we in operations don’t even get invited to those things. Isn’t it bizarre how these things work? He’s insurance rep for the company, and does only corporate insurance. It was a wine thing in the main lobby. He was so sleek. Not a wrinkle, baby. I thought maybe he was just upper management and I had never met him. He said, “Na” (not No but “Na”!). He just came around whenever the ownership upgraded office facilities and operations and parking and stuff, to make sure they were taken care of. That’s what he said, “taken care of.” I ’bout you know what.

We had just been to lunch about three times, but Saturday he caught me on the sidewalk by Walgreens, going by in his car, and he yelled out the window, “Why don’t we just go out, tonight, then?” That’s just how he said it: go out....tonight.....then. I thought I was gonna you know what.

I just said Yeah, like sure, like, it’s the most obvious thing in the world, certainly we should. We went to The Roman Inn and drank lambrusco, and I just got heady. I haven’t been this heady since Duane Galeway. Don’t you laugh!

Oh, where is Marv in all this, you are asking? (And why did you ask, ha, I don’t even want to go back to that subject?) Playing some pointless band gig - er, no, practicing for some pointless band gig. Or something. God, it is just worn out, Ken, it is just, that is just the only way to put it. Here I am talking to you. I told you last Christmas and you didn’t take me seriously. I understand though, you had your own problems.

I’ve out of paper, dear sissy. Please write back, and hope for the best for me, and I’m gonna write you in about another week, cause I want to tell you more about Mr. Sleek.
I had the childhood of a New England farmer, in my pleasant early days. The district school was about a mile north of us. Well I remember the old schoolhouse, red, with plank seats around three sides for the scholars, with desks up front to write upon. In the front row, low seats for the little ones. A big box stove in the center of the room to burn wood, and heavy iron tongs underneath with which to fix the fire. Sometimes, they were put on a child's neck for punishment. Many was the time I was yoked. Now I remember the one teacher who had placed holes in the backs of the seats where the small children sat, to tie them to. Sometimes, we little fellows would be tied to the table leg for punishment. It does a person good to look back on those old school days.

I wonder if you can see the old farm of my youth, listener, just by my sayings?

There was a large orchard where would grow three or four hundred bushels, of some forty different kinds of apples. Then the large yard with the fine cherries, gooseberries, pears, plums, and the current grapes. Quince and strawberries. There was any amount of wild strawberries, any amount, and blackberries and delicious dewberries, and quantities of whole berries. In the fall, what a fine time we children had gathering hickory nuts, walnuts, butternuts, chestnuts, and in the spring the tender wintergreen, the tender bark of the black birch. An old farm in old Connecticut is certainly a grand place, and how we children did enjoy it. As I think it over now and remember what a nice time we had, how I wonder that we are not always children. No cares, and everything we wanted.

Our parents were of old Puritan stock, and with us and the entire settlement, Sunday commenced at sundown on Saturday night. On Saturday evenings, all playthings had to be laid away and the Sunday School lesson studied. After that, Sunday School papers could be read, or The Bible. On every Sunday, rain or shine, the family carriage was hitched up with two horses, and all or part of the family went to church, carrying their lunch, for there was service in the morning eight to eleven, Sunday School from twelve to one, and
preaching in the afternoon. Children in those days were taught to reverence The Sabbath. Also, our family had worship every morning, with much instruction at home and church. At the age of 17 years, I was united with the First Congregational Church at New Britain, and was also a teacher of Sunday School.....

Lord, you are not mocked...but why am I? If it is your will that remain fettered here, is it only to see what has come to pass? In what matter do I benefit? Am I the cause of what has come down, and down? How, this vileness, year after year, now, Lord?

I beg forgiveness. How could these generations of swine come from out of us? Yet, you knew, Lord. You knew from the beginning of time.

All is now tomfoolery! What is written, by God, will not pass away, just as I myself have not. If need be, I will have the Lord's revenge on these smuttons. Their vanity and their wind, their mockery, their fornications and their mirth. We will see, say I. The Lord does not act without purpose. And here am I, stamping and raging, like an old bum on the road, and yet those who offend me ignore me. I will not have it.

Mine eyes have seen not glory, but only what has come to pass. It is not good, and this is a generation that mocks even what they have laid waste. The abomination of my own blood is the last that I will bear.

Death was nothing. I was not there to notice. You know this. I was taken to bed, January 7th, 1894. I was only slightly unwell -- I was old, who knew? Death was always coming, be it day after next, or during the next sweltering summer. My lungs were heaving. I no longer took stairs, or could harness a horse. Mother was gone. I ate only mashed potatoes.

I say, then, that I was awake; I drifted to sleep, I felt myself going. And then I flew, I floated like a pigeon. High, very high. There was not much of the dream to it. I was not frightened, but there were my own pastures below. Trees. My own stock. Dogs running fast down the river hill. I found that I could swoop. I saw folks gathered below. I knew them. I saw my son, John S. I had the notion that I was dead, but I was busy. I shouted downward, or thought that I did. My voice did sound the same to me, and this made me swoon. I fell, but somewhat like a feather. A great new, young breath seemed to have returned to me, greatly
like the breath of my youth. The great breath of God, I reckoned. Even then, I began to move with thoughts.

I had never been a laughing man. I had the 'suches,' as they say, of a hard life -- but fair. But now I chuckled. For days I chuckled. Northern lights, sundogs, blizzards, the senseless moon. All was unveiled to me, so I thought. I was great amused. So I thought.

For years, I thought in the sky, lying aside clouds, only going groundward for church and festivals, and such to see my kin. My family were good folk, in the main, even then. My daughters were good and righteous women. John S. was the bad seed. It's clear.

The Lord's mercy is endless as time.

This is what I said. 'The Lord's mercy is endless as time.' I was seeing what I saw; the fornication with animals. This was more....this was the death even of my new heart. If I had been an angel till then, now I was dead for the second time. Now I trod, now my new breath was the sighing of an old man once more. Now my back was bent, now I doddered, now I muttered and beseeched, now I was decrepit in the state of eternity, now I was a monologue. I ruminate for the Lord's sake. And so until now. Wars. Death. Silliness. Parades. Screamings below of juvenile joy, mayhem, drunkenness. The conceptions of mutts.

The living have their own sleep, much deeper than the dead's. Their lives are endless sleep. I am an eavesdropper to their conversations, which are endless exchanges of malice and sleeptalk. I visit their homes and stand in corners. I rustle their papers and pass my goatly deadman breath across their blankets and nightstands. They wonder only whether the cat has farted, or the furnace filter has gone foul.

I tell you, listener. I am worked up. This last cur, this last of my seed of mine, he is going to have my wrath. I do not know where my sons and grandsons have gone. It is certain they are not with the Lord. But the Lord has put me here, and I will pass my own judgment. I have held my peace, or shouted in vain, for long enough. This generation of vipers will be the last.
July 9, ’81

Keni,

Well, let’s see. Yes, Yes, Yes, No, No, NOOOOO, and Yes. Does that answer your litany of questions?

Ha.

No, Keni, don’t think that this is “painful” to me, it really isn’t, and I don’t think it’s like your situation. At least, this was never a marriage, never in Marv’s mind or mine. You see?

This may seem stupid, but I realize now that I never really liked Marv. I think -- now listen to me, I’m serious -- that maybe even some of my friends, or even you, liked Marv better than I did. Maybe, it’s true, I loved him --for about two weeks! But he’s not an easy guy to like. He always wants life to be something, and to be something himself, or to make himself be something. Be-be-be-be. And he wants other people to be things, too. And then he’s enraged when they won’t, or when they can’t.

You said something like this yourself, a long time ago -- Oh, it was when the four of us went to Elton John, and Marv was ranting about how he thought Elton John was a “hoax.” And you said, “You know, he just can’t enjoy anything for what it is.” Remember? Boy, I do. And it was raining and bleak and the streets were so slick in Des Moines, and I whispered to you, God, he goes so well with this weather, and we must’ve laughed for the next five miles?

Why am I talking about this? I think because I’m pissed. At myself. Kyle and I just sneaking around, even still, and we’ve even admitted to ourselves we’re tired of it, we have nothing to ashamed of, goddamnit. But Kyle wants us to be civil about this, and considerate of Marv. So we have coffee and make love and go for a drive or meet his friends, and we talk about civil and considerate, and then he or I says, “Well, let’s tell him tomorrow,” and then the other says, “Or, maybe, day after tomorrow, cause tomorrow we’re goin’ out for lobster, and we don’t want to ruin a Saturday.” And then we laugh and put it off.

I don’t know. Marv is the kind of guy you have to say the correct words to. It has to be the correct words, everything has to make “sense” to him.

Oh. Mom called today and said she’s been taken off one blood-pressure medicine and put another, and it’s been rising, and they want to check her kidneys. She said she’s tired but not to worry, and for me to tell you, cause she wants to hold her phone bill down this month. She said, “not to worry, I’m just getting old!” She laughed.
So... You’re turn to write, single woman. Things always work-out in their own way. I believe God watches over us, and I’m regaining my faith, babe!

P.S. I’m so glad about your job. Head’s Up! At least you’re back in the job market.

Endless Love,
D.

November 20, 1981

I apologize to you, my beloved Journal, and to all my other previous selves for pissing around on this, and failing on my resolutions as I have been wont to do for the past 30 years. It is incumbent on me to fill in white spaces in my pointless past, before all disappears into the void.

Let us see.

Hey, though. I miss this writing. I vow to keep on top of this.


Roomates: The svelte weasel, Arnelstadt, biggest hash hacker in Region 12, and McHenry, who claims he went to community college with me. Losing his hair! 70$ rent apiece, a month.

I am on a contract for taking inventory at Weber Electronics Warehouse -- $7 an hour. Achievable Lower Middle Class Midwestern.

November 21.

No matter where I live, the garbage sacks russle in the night! It’s almost funny now. (Roomates not amused, especially when smashed!)

Arnelstadt has turned me on to Nietzsche and Gurdjieff. I’ve been reading 12 hours a day.

Must develop brave new ideas. Comatose death. Death. The death of unconscioussss living. ZZZZZZZZZ. FUCK. Life with music is a mistake.

Nov. 22

TRUE TO MY JOURNAL

I’ve been thinking about the essentials of my life.
Here is what I owe:
$400 to Scargill. $1,500 to my mother.
1/2 gram of hash to Elmer Knutson, who doesn’t even remember and is drinking himself to death anyway.
A favor for John Sturgis, who fixed my carburetor last Jan. for gratis.
The assassination of Kyle Underwood, 780 Foral Ave., commodity trader dipstick capitalist weeny fuck extraordinaire, who was fucking my hypocritical woman even before she began finding fault with me.

Here is what people owe me:
Visitation Rights.
Some goddamn respect for my musicianship.
$7 million commission for having to grow up in Bumfuck, Iowa
2 cents worth of honesty once in awhile, maybe even once a year.

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-- undecipherable

Nov. 27, 1981

Thanksgiving with my weepy mother. She wants to know why “God” has done this to her, but yet she doesn’t. She heard about my criminal misdemeanors, which are almost AAAS BAAAAAD as my Lifelong Bad ATTTTTITTED PROBLEMO. Now she thinks I’m Charles Manson. I told her I found her generation tedious. That I shuddered to think of a world without rock and roll. Weep and weep. She says she’s gonna lose the house.
I think suicide is a great thing to think about, almost nothing gives me as much pleasure except thinking about ball vicing Kyle Underwood.
I see Her...she goes to different bars now. Now She dresses high and preens. For me it was jeans and moccasins. I’ve have now written about 17 songs about it. I force myself to go to their non-rock and roll bars. They never once look at me, not even when I walk in. I sit within two, three tables of them. Their fucking respectability. I make them endure me for at least a half hour. But it never seems to bother either of them. Never. It’s like neither of them ever knew me. They’re even amazed at their own indifference, it seems like to me.
I will resolve this. I will not have this unfinished business.
How can you """"LUVE"" someone one day, and """"LUUUUUV"" someone else the next week?
Enough of this fucking female notion of LOVE.

Weep.

Nov. 27

Hey, Sack Rustler. Fuck You. This is what you do with a higher knowledge of Timespace?? Why don't you go do something cool, like visit Saturn, or skim the grooves at the edge of the Milky Way? If you're a ghost, you're a tedious fuck.

Nov. 30

It does you no good to know that there is no single "I," because there is no single "I" which will accept this proposition. Or the ones that, you don't want to be anyway.

Dec. 2-3

Got drunk. Called Dinah at around 4 a.m. Hubby answers at 4 a.m. and says, "Yes, just a minute please." And goes and gets her to the phone! Insurance salesman behavior. Americanism. These are the virtuous folks who would've pleased Ben Franklin. Absolutely unfathomable denseness of stupidity and bland cordiality. This is the dick she prefers to mine.
She condescends to me from 4 a.m. until 5:30. I ask Her to explain love to me, just for further reference, so as to avoid another cunt like her in me. She condescends to delineate my faults, but of course, on the basis of her benign concern for my well-being.
This is why men beat and kill women.

Dec. 4, 1981

In the shuffling madness
Of the locomotive breath
Runs the All-time Loser
Headlong to his death. Me.
Some days, I have the calm of my old soul. Quite nearly the same bliss I remember of my living days. There are white, thin threads of clouds across God's dome, and the sky stretches out and around the world with the soft blue radiance of a wild hen's egg. The prairie grass is soft and warm. The soil is warm. It is just as we used to say of a day: "There is a breeze," meaning a good thing, no matter what time of year.

A breeze.

For an afternoon, it is for me the same as for the living. My sins are of no matter. In these moments of reprieve, they were committed by someone else. There is only the sigh of all the Lord's existence. I am not William Whittlesley Holbrook. I never was. These are the moments when a fellow could nearly break free and float upwards to God. This was my feeling on first dying, when I should have known what I know now.

You know me, listener. You know even the cursed remnants of mind such as I have these moments.

But soon the sun sets and the ground cools and a darkening wall comes rising up on the horizon, and this too is from God. This was a melancholy, but a sweet time when I was a man. The gentle rounding up of the stock, the gentle talking to the beasts. Mother, back at hearth with fried potatoes and a fire.

But now, the darkness leaves me a wheezing, cantankerous spirit and a vagrant. The living leave their infernal neon lights ablaze. Those who awake and stumble upon my being -- as happens, you know, think to route me off. Even this generation of swine would question my doings and my lingerings, if they saw me. And me, who used to be so upright, who founded this place.

Do you remember my coming to the prairies, my Listener? In the flesh? Were you here, awaiting me, knowing how I would live out my life? Were you already haunting these flat fields, as my spirit does now?

It was about the middle of March, 1856, we came west, in company with John S. Whittlesley, my uncle, and his son, David, and my sister, Rebecca, and her husband, Peck, and their infant son, Charles. I was engaged, but not yet married to fine Mary Stoddard.
We slogged west -- even Ohio was nothing but a mire and a bog, then. This was when I hurt my back, if I remember, rolling away debris. Let me remember better. We stopped for a week at Ottawa, Illinois, at Uncle Ebersoll's and Aunt Calista, the sister of Mother. About the last of March, we arrived at Durant, Farmington Township, Cedar County, Iowa, the destination of Uncle John as a home missionary. It was a new town on the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad, 20 miles west of Davenport. The county about was a beautiful rolling prairie, with not a rock or stone as large as a pea. About a dozen families was all there was, scattered, mostly people from New England. The Episcopal held service once in two weeks, in the depot. Uncle John organized a Congregational Church, so as to meet in the depot every alternate Sunday, besides Sunday school every Sabbath. That summer we built a church of our own, the biggest outside of Muscatine. I was twenty-two, and one of the Trustees of the church, and Superintendent of the Sunday School. At that time there were only 55 miles of railroad in Iowa, and when we had first arrived in Rock Island, the ice was just breaking up. Our party with most of the passengers on the train crossed on a bridge more than half the distance. The ties were not yet laid, and we had to walk on planks 14 inches wide, laid on the cross-timbers 16 or 18 feet apart, which were used by the workmen. Where the draw came to be later, there was a rope bridge, or ropes hung with cross pieces and board laid on, with a hand rope. It was a shaky thing, this rope bridge. Many a man paid some workman $1 to guide him over. My sister Rebecca was the only woman ever that crossed the river that way.

Hmm. My mind jumps, as it tended to in life. There was a man, P.M. Crist, who had a farm of 200 acres, a mile from Durant. He was an old man and wanted to get back to Illinois. My Uncle John advised me to buy this man's farm. There was a house on it, four rooms, the first floor plastered and finished off. Upstairs was drafty and unfinished. A well, stable, corn crib, 16 acres already broke, and no fence. I bought the place for $5,000 and paid a thousand for the stock, tools, house furniture, three horses, two cows, five hogs I believe. Two plows and 5-tooth cultivator, a corn plow and shovel plow, forks, shovels, and other small tools...I forgot, one dog and two cats. I paid out the first thousand and gave notes for the balance.

Here was my first mistake, and a big one.
My uncle John...even on the advice of my father, as well...he was too much taken by what other people said. It would have been better for me to have taken the land warrant for 160 acres I had in my pocket, but I had traded wood for it before I left the east. At that time, I could have located it... I mean the land warrant, not any farther west than the Des Moines River, but after purchasing the land, I sold the warrant for $200. But you see, I found that most men going from the stony hills of New England to the beautiful prairies of the west see a fortune rise up before them, and are apt to rush headlong into debt, to seek their desired ends.

Hmm. At first, the old stage to Iowa City passed by the door, in those first days. In October, I was engaged to Carrie Comp of the prairies, though she was young. I wonder what I thought I was about -- she was too young and pretty, which is not good. But her parents broke it off, Carrie's did. I was the better off with Mary Stoddard. She was an only daughter with two brothers -- John G. and H. Hudson. He afterwards edited The Poultry World, back east. John G. was in the Connecticut legislature. He was an upright fellow. The whole family, Mary's family, was upright, members of The Congregational Church of Newington. Mary was an excellent lady -- you know this, Listener! Mild of temper, Christian of temper. She came west partly on rail, and we were married. I wish that I could say I remember well. But the only youth for me now is my death-youth, the first days and years after I passed to this infernal realm.

Now! Now I have the arthritis of four lifetimes, I do, and probably even cataracts. Now I can barely float over treetops, and sometimes I manifest unknown to my own intentions, out in the middle of streets. For years and years, the living and I passed each with neither winks nor nods, but now I am more and more with them. Probably, it is my aggravation and my own offense. If they see me because they first heard by grumping and my warnings, then all the better. Let them see me and take great fright, for that matter, and the more so if the Lord has rendered me thus.

Without doubt this is why the cur sees me. I will connect him to some form of proper torment, since he has no respect for his life. I will acquaint him about what we intended for this great land and what we suffered and how God led us here. And we will have a pow-wow about my opinions of the Lord and how the Lord is not mocked.
Patient as noted in preliminary is 51-yr. old married, Cauc. woman, one grown son. Demeanor has been consistent; that is, distracted nervousness, bursts of random commentary, wringing of hands (hands consistently in lap), unease with gaps of room silence, full eye contact but in bursts of short duration (searching for purse on floor, or noticing something outside in parking lot and commenting on trivial events, such as stranger dropping envelope, or young mother not having baby ‘bundled up enough’).

As with Dr. Lee, I concur that short sessions may or may not provide the most acute method of diagnosis, but with short attention span of patient, this may be [strike] this may provide [strike] considering short attention span of patient this may provide the most direct accumulation of data [strike] possible disorder. As noted, patient is self-referral and believes ‘not that I need help, ‘but that well all do once in awhile.’
Session began with my asking about marriage: response: 'better than most.'

R.S.: And what would 'most' be?
Patient: Well we’ve been married for 31 years, and we’ve had friends - couples, who have not made it that long.
R.S.: Is important to 'make it,' and for 'long?'
Patient: Oh, I don’t know.
R.S.: In other words, is there a prize at the end of it?

Or are you-

Patient: Well, I’m no expert, nobody is.
R.S.: Or what I’m asking is - is your marriage supposed to last.’

Patient: Well, of course. I don’t know, though. Ours has. I’m not saying...(sighs).

Patient: Sure. Mmm-hmm.
R.S.: Now, your husband - um-
Patient: Frances.
R.S.: Uh-huh. Now he’s a [first extended silence]
Patient: Oh. You’re asking. He’s a sales rep.
R.S.: Sales rep. Uh-
Patient: For Monitor submersible pumps. You know.
R.S.: O.K. Oh, you mean, submergible pumps, that go under-
Patient: Yeah, under the ground. To farmers, or people on acreage’s. Or people who don’t have their own city water.
R.S.: Ah. I get it. Submergible pumps. So he’s goes around, is it door-to-door?”
Patient: No. He’s wholesale. It’s submersible though. I don’t know why.
R.S.: Would you say Frances was a happy or an unhappy man?
Patient: Well, I would say he gets happier and sadder, both, as he gets older.
R.S.: Mm. Mmmm. That’s very interesting, I really mean it, I’m not trying to be Sigmund Freud [laughs - Patient does not]. But tell me what you meant.

Patient: Well, you just feel things more, as you get older. Or when you see tragedy coming, in the young.

R.S.: Now, who’re we talking about...um, just in general, or you, or are we still on Frances? [Patient fixated on outside-window happenings]

Patient: Oh, I’m sorry. I wasn’t meaning anything. I ’spose you’re worried about wasted time here.

R.S.: No. Now listen, Dorothy. This is your time, not mine, or anybody else’s. And we’re not wasting it, no matter what we’re talking about.

Patient: Well, sure.

R.S.: Um. Oh. What do you and Frances do for enjoyment or entertainment? Let’s talk about that.

Patient: Well, Frances belongs to the SkyZoomers. Though he’s not as involved as he was when he was younger. And so we - I go along with that. And we wear the jackets and the whole bit. And it gets us out, you know.

R.S.: Oh, now wait. I think I know what you’re talking about. You mean, out there on the east blacktop, in those pastures, where they fly those -

Patient: Yeah. The remote airplanes. It’s a hobby club.

R.S.: The Zoomers. How did I know that?

Patient: Probably saw the jackets, around. With the little plane, going through the hole in the sky.

R.S.: Yes [laughs highly]. How did I know that?
[laughter from both, very cheerfully]

R.S.: That little plane, with the propeller - you know, grin. The propeller grin.[laugher renews]

You started that?

Patient: No. I just sewed the decals on. Helped design it though.
R.S.: And they guide those little airplanes, with those little boxes on the ground. Or those little controls they hold — or now, how does that work?

Patient: Well, Frances designs the electronic control boxes. The transmitters. They used to be real big. But now they're smaller.

R.S.: And those little planes, they really buzz around, don't they? God. You know, when I first some one of those, buzzing over my car, I thought it was a real plane, crashing in the distance.” [R.S.’s laughter, unaccompanied]

Patient: Mmm-hmm. Yeah.


Patient: No..well. Yes. And no. We were out there, I think a month ago. Everyone happy to see us, of course. Cloudy day, though. And the wind. You know the wind, in April.

R.S.: Oh, yeah. Mmm.

Patient: But that was the first time we'd been out, you know, in probably a year, year -and-a-half.

R.S.: Why so long? Not enjoying it so much. anymore?

Patient: Well...well. See, there was a crash, with one of France’s bigger biplanes. And it lost control of itself, and swooped right down into the crowd...and you know, it was very, very...sad.

R.S.: Oh, my God, that’s right. And that one, that one fellow -- who was that? I’ve forgotten. I read-

Patient: Ray Ayala. That was Ray Ayala.


Patient: And of course, Frances and Ray were good friends. And here Ray -- and Ray understood, you know, that those things happen. Even on the way, in the ambulance, he was telling Frances, ‘you know, this could’ve been me, or you, it just happened, is all.’

R.S.: Is he, uh-

Patient: Ray.
R.S.: Is he, Ray, fully recovered now? What was it, mainly facial lacerations, wasn’t it? And they have-
Patient: Well.
R.S.: They have wonderful restorative techniques now. You know.
Patient: Oh, yeah. They do. I saw on Phil Donahue or something about that.
R.S.: But Ray, did he have to have much of that. Or was he all right after awhile.
Patient: Well, they weren’t able to do much. They did what they could. But he’s been slow, working back. You know, there was, there was some-
R.S.: But he didn’t have restoration, or grafts? Or he didn’t need it?
Patient: Well, he didn’t have insurance, see. Is the thing.
R.S.: Oh, boy.
Patient: Cause they won’t insure something like that. You know.
[silence: 1.5 minutes. Patient appears distraught, tears appear in eyes. But smiles at R.S.]
R.S.: Um, Dorothy.
Patient: Yes.
R.S.: Now, I’m not going to ask you about guilt, O.K.
Patient: O.K. Good. [brief chuckle]
R.S.: Because I’m not of that school of, of a, therapy, let’s say. That is to say, I don’t believe guilt is the driver that drives the horse and buggy. O.K.?
Patient: Yeah. You’re right. But sometimes I feel like the horse. [both laugh heartily]
R.S.: We all do.
Patient: And all I want to be is riding in the buggy.
R.S. Yeah. So, but. How has this affected France’s...oh, let’s say his enjoyment of life? Or his, you know, attitude? Or whatever you want to say about it.
Patient: Well [great emotion/sobbing manifest]... he stopped talking for about three months.

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May 16, 1982

THE TWIST & SHOUT

May 16, 1982

The view
from
Deadeye Dan

I’ve been chomping on the info is this week’s column for about six months, but now the line-up for this summer’s festival local festivals has started to fill out, the much-awaited Dixon Brother’s reunion hits local venues, and some new hot acts have started to tear up the local scene. Tell me north central Iowa ain’t cool music—from country to hot pop, with great rock ‘n roll and even blues in-between. And did I mention the main, main Minneapolis and regional bands rolling thru such places as Webster City’s Enterprise Lounge and our own Bel Aire Ballroom.

Woooh! Let me catch up to myself.

The Dixon’s legend speaks for itself. I will not risk redundancy, but do we all remember our first -- and only -- Columbia Recording Artists, the incarnation down from the even more legendary Cromwell’s, both Billboard Top One Hundred Album’s? That’s right, as if you needed to hear it here first -- Mssr.’s Windberg, Axtron, Mortinson, Sleek Pete Dixon, with new member Micky Elroy, have returned as if they were never gone....No, better than we even remember. As you see from the Nightfile section, you can catch them at The Twilight Special Reunion Night ($7.50 advance, $10 at the door) this Saturday. The Sleek one informs me that further gigs are in the negotiation for Des Moines, C.R., and Ames.
My favorite Cromwell’s/Dixon’s memory — in case you asked? ‘68; I think it was the fall or early winter. Opening for Clapton and Cream, Vet’s Auditorium. The first realization that we had a Generation, and you belong to it, even in Iowa. First sighting of bell-bottoms, first smelling of pot. Man. Couldn’t hear Clapton’s or Bruce’s vocals — days of smucky P.A.’s. But the Crom’s, man: they ruled that night anyway, at least for those of us from around here.

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Speaking of Major Things. Don’t ...do not ...misssss Minneapolis’ Horned Frogs May 28 at The Enterprise. Racin’ “avante rock,” heavily grooved with sophisticated pop entendres. Talk to someone who’s seen ‘em before.

Out of Omaha, and thru The Twilight on May 30, is Kirkaguard, kissin cousins to REO, from what I hear.

The Flesh comes to The Val Aire in Des Moines --- date to be announced, as does Paragons of Virtue, jazz-blues out of Chicago.

Again, locally, the scene stays hot; every band I see is “tighter than last year,” or last week for that matter.

Southbound River is at Murphy’s, Boone, both Fri. and Sat.; cover $2.

The Outriders, featuring great country-rock, is at The Rainforest, Fort Dodge, Fri., $2 at the door, and The Sportsman’s Lounge, Stratford, Sat., $2 cover.

Mister Fixer, featuring ex-Starbleep’s Marv Holbrook and Henny Henderson, is at The Dugout, Boone, Sat. only. No cover.

Jetstream, formerly Edwin’s Bad Cover Band, is at Earnie’s in Eagle Grove, Fri., Sat. No cover.

Holy Riff, Full Metal, is at Farley’s Lounge, Britt, Friday-Saturday.

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Speaking of Sleek Pete Dixon, let me share with you a mini-interview with your’s truly:
D.D.: Did you ever think you guys would ever play together again? I mean, or did you even think about it, after you went separate ways, was it '79?
Pete: Ah. Um. Yeah, '79. Actually, you know, I personally didn't, but I can't speak for Kirk or Ray or Gilly. And I have no idea what my brother thought, and we'll never know. But I know he was, like, the most adamant that we move onto other things. Which was absolutely, you know, he was right.
D.D.: Right, right-
Pete: Yeah, but now, it's right that we get back together. I just really think, you know, that things happen at particular times for particular reasons.
D.D.: Absolutely. Don't we all know.
Pete: Yeah. And there's no doubt that now is right. I can't believe that people are this hepped up to see us.
D.D.: Hepped is the word, yeah.
Pete: And that, you know, they wanna hear certain album cuts, you know, not just The End of The Day or Gettysburg.
D.D.: Well, I never thought Columbia pushed some of those other songs as much as they should, or the one's they did push- Pete: Yeah, right. We never got to select the singles, we had nothing to say about it. We were the last ones to know. And yet, Gettysburg sells, like, 60,000 I think, and The End whatever-
D.D.: 100,000 is what I heard.
Pete: Yeah, so.
D.D.: What's it like, trying to replace Mark. Was it like, for you, trying to replace Duane Allman, or something?
Pete: Well...I met Greg, by the way, at Muscle Shoals. It was way cool. He loved our tape, and I'm not just sayin' that. But yeah...and you know, he feels the same way about his brother as I do. So, you're not gonna replace Duane Allman, but nor are you gonna replace Mark Dixon. You know.
Pete: No way. But we auditioned seven guitarists, or eight maybe it was.
D.D.: And came up with a great guitarist, in Micky Elroy.
Pete: Absolutely. We looked at some other guys from Minneapolis, and one up from Des Moines. But Jeez, this guy's, like Scotty Moore, and Dickey Betts, and I don't know, all rolled into one, and then Hendrix or whatever you want.
D.D.: Did you look at any local guys?
Pete: Yeah. Yeah, we did. There's some good players, even here. But local guys don't know the business, no way they can. And when I say 'the business,' I don't mean road woes, and contracts, and all that shit, mean shit as it is. I mean they don't know the music at the hot level, they're not close to the major studios, and they're not on the edge of things, the front edge. I have always felt -- and my brother thought this, too -- if you don't under The Business, then don't play in it. It takes too much effort to do it wrong. The city is where the music is produced, you see. The locals just listen to records and the radio and try to cop -- which they do good, don't get me wrong, but you gotta come from the front edge, not one of the waves behind. Know what I mean?
Pete: Oh, he's so real, he's almost Memphis.

△ △ △

I do not take offense that the living do not oblige the dead, nor even at their slurs concerning us being, such as said, ignorant. It would good for them to see such as the years 1856 or '58, when wheat only brought 35c a bushel, and nothing could be sold except down South, and not even then did it pay enough to ship down the river. We had 1500 bushels and never sold a one. Nor onions or corn, neither. We filled the cellar and piled up lots, covered with hay. In the spring, we had to throw it out for manure. Potatoes were 15 cents, where they had been $2.50 the years before. We lost over $500 that year, and that was my fortune. I had the fever and the ague. I did not care whether 'school kept,' or not, as they used to say. The day when Mary Francis was born, I swam mud creeks with two horses and a buggy, going after a certain Mrs. Hitchcock who I didn't know. Then I did so again for the doctor. Everyone had the ague.
Sometimes you would have the shakes, then not. Sometimes my wife would cook, and sometimes me -- whichever one of us did not have the chills. And after selling wheat for 35c a bushel, I had to give 25% back to the bank, to send back east.

And '58 was worse. The wheat blighted. 40 acres I had in, but only cut half, and after the thresher worked half a day, I had only five bushel. I concluded it was time to quit Duran. Corn was next to nothing. We used to furrow out in those days, drop by hand and cover with a five-tooth cultivator which the front tooth cut. All the corn I had that year was what I dropped one afternoon when I had the chills. I did not stop to count the grains. Their were failures all over the country. Previous I could have sold my farm for $6,000 in the spring of '57, a profit of a thousand for all my breaking and fencing. If we could see ahead, what things we would do.

In the fall of '59, if you don't know, Listener, we had begun life again, as I put it then. Father had come west, and let me have the use of a yoke of oxen he had, and a heavy wagon. With my steers and the old horse on the lead, I used to draw coal from the coal banks, nine and twelve miles to the south. Many a morning I left home at three o'clock in the leaden cold, winding my way to the coal banks, and even at that, sometimes I would have to wait until near night before I could get up a load, as the rush was great. Some persons came for 30 miles up on the prairie for coal, as the only coal was on the Mississippi River. Other times, I would get jobs around town, either with the team or without -- I was ready for any job.

That spring, I bought another yoke of oxen and three-year steers, and an old breaking plow on credit, and I broke prairie at $2.50 an acre. I also put in six acres of potatoes, and paid $2.50 for seed. But though the potatoes didn't fail, the prices did, and I was into another failure. I took two loads of 100 bushel to Wilton, six miles distant, and only got 10c. I bought a cheap overcoat and had $1 left. The rest of the potatoes I fed to my cattle through the winter and spring, for you could not give them away, they were so plentiful. Later that summer, August Hudson was born, and all the next winter I drew coal and did odd jobs, and made it pay somewhat well. That fall, come to think of it, I was elected constable. By '61, I had fitted out two breeding teams of five yoke each, and I built a small house, a 6x10, and with timbers under it, I would chain it under the axle tree and move it from place to place. It had two
bunks in it and a stove to do the cooking. Mother said it was better than starving and dying. About this time, I hired two men and broke more prairie at $2 an acre.

Ah. Mmm. The prairie in Cedar County was very smooth, and all it wanted was a driver, for the lever could be fastened, and the plow never would cut less than 12 inches or more than 32. Now the living whine about the dirt blowing away or silting down the river, but how were we to know that? It was the last thing on my mind, or not even that. Probably, backwards in time, they would like to punish us their forebears the same way they punish themselves in their own minds. This riles me up, when I let it.

In the fall of '61, mother and I and the two little ones moved over the Loomis Store in Durant, into two rooms, working some in the store, and handling corn and grain. Everything was musty and stifled with seed-dust. The corn all had to be shelled with a hand sheller, wheat and corn all run through the farming mill. But I hauled coal whenever there was a job. A fellow did not dare be idle in those days.

My motto was, a person could find something to do, even if it was not to their liking, and even small pay is better than nothing at all. About then, I sold my horse and bought a fine two-year old stallion. One day in winter, in company with father, we hitched him with one of father's horses and went to the timber, about twelve miles distant, and watered at a spring along the way, and then he foundered, the stallion did, and we had to throw the wood onto the other horses' loads, and fetch him home. This was another setback, for he was ever-after stiff from it. The summer of '62, I ran one breaking team, I think....

As constable, I had some lively cases to attend. Several arrests, which I enjoyed. I arrested two men for stabbing one another, one bleeding near to death. After the trial, I went about 8 miles up on the prairie up to get bail bond with them, when part of the way one jumped out of the back of the buggy. I jutted across a field about 3/4 mile, to where some men were planting corn. I left the one who was most injured in charge of these men, unhitched my horse, and went out after the fugitive. I ran him about three miles and into a grove of 40 acres out on the prairie, no nearer than four miles to any other timber, but there were some three farms near, and I summoned 15 or 20 men and made a posse. We surrounded the grove, and made a drive through it and we got him,
thing his hands behind him. I put him under guard, and the next day took him alone to Tipton, he and other who was more wounded. I was a big man when living, and I made big footprints, and there were not many who liked to trifle with me. I turned them both over to the sheriff. When the court was convened, the worst one was sent to the prison.

I remember about this time the Legislature passed the Dog Law, such that every owner of a dog in the territory should pay into the Township Clerk's office one dollar, and three dollars for a bitch. Loomis, who owned the store where we lived, was a member of the Legislature and voted for it, saying he was going to see it carried out. The law made it the duty of constables and marshals to kill every dog that had no collar. I stated to mother that I was going to resign, for I had lots of work to do, and did not like the idea of killing, and some threatened to thrash or shoot me if I killed their dog. I did abide threats. So one morning I got myself a young man named Kimble, and armed him with a shotgun, and with my rifle we went to see the town clerk, for get written orders from him, so that any person could pay me the tax if they wished. Thus armed with authority, we started out. The first thing I did upon entering a farmstead and finding dog without collar was to ask folks if they wanted to pay. I so, I gave them a receipt and moved on. If not, pop went the gun and down went the dog, and then we would pull him off to some hole and bury him. Just as the shades of night were appearing, we stopped at some Perkins, a tenant farmer. Dog with no collar. I went up to the door and inquired, and received no answer except from Charles Perkins, son of the old man, a big, tall fellow, nearly as big as me. He jumped out and caught up a big corn hoe, the one used to cut stalks, and he came at Kimble and me both. Then out came the old man, and they both pitched into us. I collared the old man and told Kimble to go up to the stable to get a strap or rope, and we'd tie them both up. But the young man was too much for Kimble and they went down sprawling, Charlie on top. I then collared him myself, holding them both. While Kimble went to the stable, the old woman came out, and she'd been cooking cakes, and had a sheet-iron cake turner. With this she struck me several times over the shoulders, until I told her I would arrest her, too, if she did not desist. When Kimble came back we tied the rest of the old man to the younger's, and we were just starting out the gate when the old woman asked me to let them at least have their suppers, which I did. Then we marched them
three miles to town. The old man wanted to see Loomis himself, so I called on him. He had gone to bed, but he got up to give me advice on how to get out of the situation, somehow. He said, 'The law is right and just, and they violated it by resisting.' The old man wanted to know how I might let him off. I told him if he paid me the tax, I should not bother him about resisting arrest, and I did not.

The law put a fine of $10 on any marshal or constable, for every dog they were supposed to kill that they did not. It was a mean law. I was at Tipton when the court sat, and there was strong talk among a class of folks to make up a purse and try the law, and have me arrested, but there was a lawyer in Tipton, named Rothrock, afterwards a judge -- he was also a member of the Legislature, and had voted for the law. He said if folks came after me, he would defend me for nothing; he was the best lawyer in these parts. And the mob heard what he said and dropped the matter. I remember that there was only one other constable in the state of Iowa who executed the law. We killed over 40 dogs in one day. Kimble shot one big yellow dog in town and we drug him off to a pond, and dug a hole, and covered him. Next morning, someone came to inform me that he was home again, and it was some time before I heard the last of it, but I went over and put another bullet through his heart and he did not dig out of his grave again.

But I tell you, Listener, there is something evil about the law when it comes from man instead of God. And you can't get away from it, or even get an angle on it, unless you're like Loomis or Rothrock, and wrote it and understand it.

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Physicians Office Building
Psychological/Psychiatric Services
Ruth Sally, M.D.
O.S. Lee, M.D.
Danial Berrington, M.S.W.
Physicians Office Bldg. • Fort Dodge, Iowa 50501
(515) 955-1100 • 955-1102
Date: 2/22/82

Patient Referral: None
Patient Interview (sequence/date): Marvin Lewis Holbrook initial interview

R.S. Notes (transcription r.s. - please initial)

Patient as noted in attached is 31-yr. old male whose partic. was grossly "involuntary," that is, at the bequest of his mother, Dorothy Holbrook (C.N. #38111/81). Patient declined to sit during the bulk of interview, persisted/demanded certain accommodations be made to both his notion of "common sense" and "unnecessary or invasive bullshit," and was generally uncooperative, even to the point of animosity. The duration of the interview was less than seven minutes. The patient insisted that no tape be made of the session. Patient insisted that there are no 'credentials' for comprehending the human condition, and that he suspects all social and psychological science of practicing the most devious quackery. Patient, as noted from D.C. recomm., is a Vietnam veteran who sustained both physical wounds and cause for psychological discharge from the armed services. Patient appeared pallid and hypertensive, and insisted upon chain smoking, contra to several requests by Dr.'s Sally and Lee. His tone ranged from softly belligerent to exponentially confrontational, according to the insistence of either Doctor.

Patient seemed vaguely willing to discuss personal life history and attitudes, but also distracted, sometimes amused, sometimes condescending toward r.s. The character of his narration or responses to questions was often punctuated by profane or idiomatic phraseologies, such as:

"There it is" -- for, i.e., "you have apparently finally figured it things out."

"Eat shit" -- for, i.e., "none of your concern," "none of your business," etc.
And so on.

Patient related -- vaguely -- that he has been employed in manual or "meaningless" labor since his discharge, although he attended community college for one semester to study electronic technology -- a pursuit which he also found "meaningless." He revealed that in the past 9-10 years, he has been employed tarring roofs, summer construction sign-work, working as a welder’s assistant at a farm implement factory, as an assistant manager at Kentucky Fried Chicken (a job which he professed to enjoy because of access to young women), as a water filter salesman, and in several other disconnected and transitory jobs. He expressed the notion three times that he considered American society to be chaotic or random, and perhaps even absurd, by the expression "bullshit American civilization." When questioning tended toward a more focused approach, he admitted that the bits of shrapnel still lodged in his left side was both bothersome at times and depressing. On the subject of drug use, the patient’s depiction was that his use was merely "light," which upon further conversation was revealed to include an almost daily regimen of whiskey/beer, marijuana, amphetamines, cocaine, barbiturates, and hallucinogens, the nightly combination of which depended, according to him, on "cast and setting."

It is difficult the access the "candor" of such a patient, who simultaneously can appear to at one time magnanimously or unashamedly forthright, at another to be dark, evasive, hostile and alienated. It is, furthermore, difficult to say the least, to conduct therapeutic or exploratory interviews with patients who are counter-accusatory, and who employ the devices of questioning or counter-questioning to the therapist herself -- e.g., "What’re you gonna do, Mizzy Credentials, if this entire society is insane?", and other rhetorical accusations.

Pending further discussion with patient’s mother/referral, it is not deemed likely that this patient himself is conducive to counseling.
The Holbrook House In Farmington
(Artist sketch, 1700, pulled down 1878)
Built by John Holbrook, about 1698.

The Silver Lining
(author unknown)
in family archives

There's never a day so sunny
But a little cloud appears;
There's never a life so happy
But has its time of tears;
Yet the sun shines out the brighter
When the stormy tempest clears.

There's never a garden growing
With roses in every plot;
There's never a heart so hardened
But it has one tender spot;
We have only to prune the border
To find the forget-me-not.

There's never a cup so pleasant
But has bitter with the sweet;
There's never a path so rugged
That bears not the print of feet;
And we have a Helper promised
For the trails we may meet.
There's never a dream that's happy
But the waking makes us sad;
There's never a dream of sorrow
But the waking makes us glad;
We shall look some day with wonder
At the troubles we have had.

But there's never a heart so haughty
But will some day bow and kneel;
There's never a heart so wounded,
That the Savior cannot heal;
There is many a lowly forehead
That is bearing the hidden seal.

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SCREEN/PREC. #1.
SOUTH-enworst. Tap: By: Elronda Clavindish.<><><> PrimaWeb.: COMMENT:
PATRIARCHY IS BACK SOMEWHAT B-I-G. THERE IS A GENO-BANK OF 7-LEVEL DATA ABOUT THIS. I FOR EXAMPLE HAVE TRACED MY GRANDFATHER'S GRANDFATHER. MY FRIEND PERRENDA FROM SAO PAULO HAS EVEN TRACED GRANDMOTHERS FROM PREVIOUS WARS LIKE THE SAME WAY, ONLY OF COURSE AT 5-LEVEL DATA. IT IS FUN AND WE WOULD RECOMMEND IT.. [AWAIT]

<><><> Vest. Cellar [RETURN]
Um. Well. Well, yes. But now, let me not mislead on this. (I haven't the faintest how I got onto this grandmother incident...HO-JOKer, will you be kind enough to check transcript for me?) My memory fails. I ramble, you see. You must -- all of you -- make amends for the dreadful psychotropic restorative drugs of the so-called Roaring Twenties. You have before you the emanations and evidence of their drawbacks.
HO-JOKer?
Never mind, SOUTH-enworst. I am not evading your inquiry.
No. Patriarchy. It is peculiar to me, as a hobbliest etymologist, that this word has crept back into usage. Or paradoxical. I wish that I had more insight on the matter. I do not believe that the cataloging of names, or even the vastitude of mathematical DNA probabilities, is as self-satisfying as some people make it to be.
But 'each to hisser own.' This business used to be called in my youth 'geneology,' and was quite popular among the Fore's.

However, I myself found nothing discerning among my father's debris -- and here I was, with a boxful of access, so much that most of you InfoGeno's would have gotten lathered over. The old Photo-techno, and as I said, the magno tapes of 1st generation music. Sundry letters in the old, Genu-diction. What was called a diary or journal. All hard copy -- written by hand, did I mention? Containing the thoughts and emotions of genuine rumination, probably in its ideal form. Handwriting. I constantly meet people nowtimes, who say to me, glibly, 'I can handwrite.' These are absurd claims, and quite humorous, to an old man like me. Three-fourths of the humanoids I grew up with could hand-write.

But, yes. A father, and his father, or mothers and mothers thereof and mothers, ad perpetuum -- this is called Latin, by the way. Or something close to it. It is another of my ridiculous word hobbies. This InFo is not unavailable, by any means. I have said it before: if you want to Access ancient Sumeria -- never mind -- or ancient Egypt, the data and dates are there. I am withering, I am in a state of confusion when I address you. You confound me. I lead you to water, and you merely sip and dink around. I say: are you not thirsty? Are you not thirsty? Here is Egypt, here is Babylon, here are civilizations that flourished in the Gobi desert. And you grin like idiots --

SCREEN/PREC. #1.
ConnMass. Tap: From: REALLY RAY.<>><>>< PrimaWeb.: 

COMMENT: 
WE HAVE AN EGYPT CLUB OF THE 23RD DYNASTY. I AM CLUB LEADER, ELDON CONSTERNATION II, AND I AM KNOWN AS A LIVING DATA MACHINE, IN JOKING OF COURSE. I CAN TELL YOU THE SEXUAL PROCLIVITIES OF NEARLY EVERY PHAROAH-KING IN THE PERIOD. INTERESTED?/ [AWAIT. 

<>><><><>< Vest. Celtar [RETURN]
Well, yes. Very good. I believe it must be as truly amazing as you say.
But...HO-JOKer. I am somewhat unsatisfied with the NET this evening. I have embarked on a story of my life, albeit somewhat reluctantly, but I am now insistent upon it. Please grant me my old man's mood.
Yes?  Yes?  Good.

Ahum.

The thread is a loose one. When my Grandmother Holbrook died -- let us say, near turn-century, I think -- she bequeathed me -- in large boxes and crates, delivered to our house like misdirected coffins -- more slags of memorabilia. But this time, there were piles upon pile, somewhat like fossilia, concerning the other lines of my human ancestry, and yet not so much revelatory concerning my father. This was, as we said even then, 'older stuff.' It is somewhat a shame that few if any of my NET can likely conceive of this cult of relic-ism -- much less, shall I say, of the mentality from which it derives. Again, the Photo-chromes of which I spoke earlier -- the so-called 'color' ones are the most macabre. Strangers, posing, knowing, out at me, their undiscerning viewer, from strange 20th-C events, bizarre rituals and societal passages, weddings and official pronouncement out of the old Conservo-Capitalist model, smiling strange 20th-C smiles. Vehicles, vehicles, vehicles -- each person, from little children to the oldest, in mandatory posing beside their vehicles -- little toddler vehicles, or garagantuan relics of the so-called 'steel and rubber' epic. Ha. Hmmm. Pictures of roadsigns, taken from vehicles, to support evidence of having 'been' somewhere.

My step-father was extremely unhappy about the bestowal of this paraphernalia, and gave me to know that he had opposed its delivery, and was all the more exasperated that the entire mess of it had still managed to arrive at our door -- as though the late old woman's willpower were prevailing over his. Things were 'sent' in those days; the movement of material things was really quite efficient and astounding, even though we deem it clumsy and pointless, now from our own Cypercivil.

Thinking...hmm. If I were to describe to you the contents of those unwarranted, unwanted depositories....you will suspect me of what used to be called 'melodrama.' (I wonder if you know that term.) But please, do not INVEY. I will infer that either you do not, or only slightly and at variance to its former meaning.

These contents were in nailed, somewhat mumified-looking crates, as I say, but even after they were drug to the basement 'fruit room,' as it was known (I assume by my fulminating step-father, who else?), and deposited there in lieu of a decision, I myself remained in a state of complete disinterest... I believe there were at least four or five of them, the heaviest probably weighing over a hundred
pounds. It took my younger brother's curiosity to invoke my own -- that, beside the fact that I was, as I have said, at Yale by this time, coming and going between the old CONN and home. I believe that it was a return over one Christmas that I went to the basement, probably in a state of aimless nervousness, where I happened to notice the contents had been ransacked quite thoroughly.

My sister, Melissa, my step-sister as I say, was not much younger than I -- she died during the second wave of upheavals, which actually were the worst of all, in what we all called 'the Midwest' then. I think that it was actually she who became effusive when I broached the subject of my so-called 'Holbrook stuff.' She informed something to the effect of, 'There is all manner of amazing stuff.' I was not so much dubious as reluctant to even get into the matter. Or possibly -- and I really believe this is true -- I had planned to postpone any great examination of my family past until I could be of a mind to do so. It is quite likely I told her to mind her own business, even though she was vastly more interested in the matter than I.

And so she would not let the matter drop, informing me, with tremendous enthusiasm, that the contents included Civil War swords, and hand carvings of horses, and stagecoaches, and hand-crafted miniature leather harnasses, and that there was even a twenty mule-team, pulling a water wagon, with each mule possessing individual characteristics, such as crooked ears, or wilder eyes. Even my step-father -- for whom this was new news, apparently, as well -- became interested, at least in the identity of said artisan. I believe that he openly wondered why I myself had not 'inherited' any of this suddenly uncovered artistic ability. Soon, Melissa, was leading Kyle and me back down to the fruitroom, just as though she were a sort main guide in our own household. I do not recall how long the crates had lain dormant before this unexpectedly official grand opening -- possibly a year or more. At this point-

SCREEN/PREC. #1.
VIRGINLAND WEST/SOUTHWEST. Tap: By: HARNESS-CLUB. <><><><>
PrimaWeb.:  
COMMENT:  
WE WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS INTEREST IN THE HARNESSES SPECIFICALLY. DO YOU HAPPEN TO KNOW WHETHER THEY WERE OF GENUINE [WAIT]
HO-JOKer, I am going to oppress at this point. As I threatened at the outset. And you will realize and agree with me that these were the conditions of my appearance. NET-people, this is now a TRANSmision. I apologize, but in some cases the old ways are indeed best.

HO-JOKer?? Yes?  Good.

Yes. Now my train of thought, so often derailed, is entirely askew for the moment. I am only thinking, now, of the business of of physicality. Of our DEscripted, DEclared past. Of things. Old images on paper. Certifications, with embossed seals and signatures. Books. Abstracts. Summaries. Carvings. Fingerpaintings. Oaths and weddings and birth certificates. Snapshots, of strangers, and cousins of strangers and neighbors of strangers, intended to depict or 'capture' joy, or induce sentiment. The abominable narrations of 19th and 20th-C 'news.' The Age of Ad, of which I have spoken myself hoarse.

Hmm. Old clothing -- footwear and caps, and musty jackets, and molded dress shirts. Top to bottom. Matter that touched flesh, now long decomposed...as moldering as the narrations themselves! Ha.

The old, when they decide to intrude on your youth and life, are usually only determined to deposit their debris, to 'hand it down' to you as they would have it, and then leave -- because the old do not tolerate interrogation. They say, 'This was your great-aunt,' or, 'this was your great-great-great grandfather, who did thus-and-such,' and then they depart. And then when you yourself have become somewhat antiquated, and have reached the moment when you require them and their lore, they themselves are dirt, they are clay, they rot. They are gone. The old from each epoch...this is the great tragedy, can never get together to converse. Or to laugh.

I ramble. I lose NET-partners worldwide. Deservedly.

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The Boone News-Republican
Serving Central Iowa for
over 50 years.
Local Man Turns Up Dead
Two-Day Search Located Victim in Hogshed

by Merton Hatch

Local authorities and members of volunteer search
gangs located on Tuesday past the body of John Stoddard Holbrook,
who had been missing according to his family for
some two or three days, causing great anguish and
concern. Mr. Holbrook was found by Boone County
Sheriff Arthur Turnbuckle and his deputies after
a local youth, sent to do feed chores, told of a body lying
under stock in the feed shed. There were reports the
body was partially consumed, which is not surprising
given the nature of hogs. But Sheriff Turnbuckle
would not comment on the report.

It has been estimated as of press time that Mr. Holbrook
may have fallen and been trampled by the stock, as
there were over 70 head of hog being farrowed and fed, including
sows. Previous to the finding, it was not conjectured by
Mrs. Holbrook or the family, whether Mr. Holbrook may
have left the county in a sense of despair, or fallen victim
to foul play, or simply have fallen and lain injured at some
depth place out on the farmstead.

Funeral arrangements are pending at Lofferswaller Home
and First Congregational Church. He is survived by his
wife Mary Robinson Holbrook, and two sons well known
in the county, John Lewis, and Matthew Whittlesley, and a
daughter, Virginia Holbrook, who resides at the County Home.

△△△
"Anyone who unveiled to us the nature of the world would produce for all of us the most unpleasant disappointment."

This from a friend of mine from the past.

Keeping track of dreams. I must not forget my dreams.

Two nights ago, The Hole In The World Dream. I was in my old man’s garage, except his tools were all gone. His Oldsmobile was there, though. Though it didn’t have any rust. No one was around. I don’t know why I was even there. I was aware that I was dreaming, for some fucking reason.

There was the motion of sucking or blowing, and all the loose debris was shifting to the north side of the garage, towards the house. I looked over and there was a hole in existence. (How to write down this feeling of terror? Will I remember, when I’m old? Is it what I’ll see the moment before I die?) Loose newspapers and old shoes and galoshes...and oh yes, there were tools in the garage ...old greasy wrenches and oil pipe filters and rags, all that shut, sucked into the hole like INTAKE FOR ANTI-MATTER. The Horror, The Horros. The calico cat we used to have when I was a little boy was sucked into the hole -- what was her fucking name? I reached for her, it was too late...it was too late. Poor creature, poor creature, sucked into the realm of absolute un-naturalness. Oh, God.

I was screaming, I could not stop the dream, I knew I was dreaming, still I could not stop the dream. Castaneda. Dreaming and awake at the same fucking time. It needs better men than me. Better men than me.

The poor little kitty cat was long gone. It was stupid to even reach for her, into such a diabolical hole. Oh, fuck. My whole arm burned.

A Voice said, NO! And finally, I was allowed to wake up.

January 31
I’ve learned some absolutely brilliant open tunings which nobody in the history of music has even stumbled upon. A dirgy A-minor which I will transcribe on separate sheets and put in the old green lockbox belonging to my grandmother. Anyone finds this journal, fuck you. You don’t need to know anyway. Suffice is to say the intervals are gargantuan.

When I play chords in this Lovecraftian tuning, the fucking windows shake and the curtains stream out, it’s exactly like a William Blakely propaganda mind-horror flick, except it’s perfectly real. I can shatter glass, I can make wood vibrate...no, tremelate, tremolo, like an amp. I can see the dead-living molecules of the wood, I can see and hear the quantum constituents of life cry for mercy. They say in their little freaky subatomic voices, “What the fuck are you doing?”

I can play the strangest B-minor arpeggio, it’ll kill all spiders and grease ants and leftover June flies within 80 feet. I find dead critters all over the house, dead mice in the fruit cellar room, dead rats on the porch where they died right in the middle of pilfering dogfood sacks, big ugly dead fucking yellow-tailed, green-teethed motherfuckers, killed by the horrific B-Minor of Marvin L. Holbrook. Killed in the midst of their rat thievery, in the act of their nature. It is a moral and just universe. And this house was as slick and clean as June Cleaver’s when I moved in.

By the way, Journal: do you need for me to keep track of these various senseless abodes wherein I drop my weary bags and weary muscles and tight tendons? Does a soul need an address, in the finger-snap of an interim between when it goes back to the 6.2 gazzillion eons of murmuring, drifting, pointlessness? I have moved into another distant farmhouse, where I can play loudly enough on my stolen Marshall 800 Series amp...oops. I don’t mean stolen. I mean of unknown origin. I have gone back to Fenders from Gibsons. I have found my place. Otherwise, I am temporarily between jobs.

I did not get out of here in time. Other people made it to Denver and Seattle. I did not. One must be a man, and accept the condemnation to the midwest.

Feb. 2, 1982
Scargill's pharmaceutical beans have made a new man out of me. I have a positive attitude about 20 hours a day now. I have rediscovered Freddie King and Hound Dog Taylor.

On speed, if properly tuned with Mexican reefer -- nothing stronger, but nothing weaker -- one can fundamentally detect the teeny teeny teeny teeny teeny teeny teeny teeny tonal distinctions between bullshit Bach notions of "notes," the arbitrary stupidity of which of course the Hindus have been annoying giggling about for over 2100 years. There is no such fucking thing as a B-flat, really, and if we could only all understand that, there would be no more war. If you could see and hear every little grain of the universe...I've lost my track. There are not fucking big bumps, big black lines in the murmur of existence, which are called "Middel C." There is no middle to the universe.

I demonstrated this at Diamond Lil's in Algona last Saturday night. Since Blakley insisted on playing "Hearbreaker" in C, to suit his little fucking girly voice, I therefore insisted on playing the solo in a quasi-pentatonic variable modality which I had invented just for that occasion, and as a matter of fact, conceived only five seconds before the execution. This is how all musicians used to play, before the advent of anality, the printing press, and the (attempted) obliteration of Celtic passion by the inane forces of Christianity.

The next thing I knew, I was being removed from my own stage by my own band, still connected to the tautological circle of my own mind, the guitar chord, and the German-produced EL34 power tubes. The entire left side P.A. stack careened over, all 740 pounds of it, the radial horn tumbling all the way down onto the head of a rather hefty woman who had been dancing fairly well, and yet didn't have the sense to move. Her skinny partner dove and fled from the monolith, but she stood watched it crash into herself, watching it right "in," as my old Little League coach used to tell us to do with the ball. She was severely lacerated and probably had a "concussion," as they say. I was blamed for it all, and there was no one to tape the precious guitar solo. The jerky masturbations of Alvin Lee and Joe Walsh and Steve Miller and Leslie West and Rick Derringer and Peter Frampton...these are religiously captured by adoring engineer groupies, so that lucky-ducks in the year 3221, somewhere out near the furtherst ring of the Milky Way, can still imbibe the inanity and supply the sense it still requires, just like mixing up Ovaltene. Be me, my licks, my power. No. Of course not. Fuck no.
February whatever, 1982

Morning. Memory. This is true.

Before I forget.

Last night, Keno. No, scratch that. This morning, 3:32, Keno woke me up. Just unglued. Just unglued. At the west window. I remember saying, "The west. What the fuck is in the west?" I didn't know why I was asking. I wasn't awake. I may have been dreaming. But I banged my knee on the bay window, and I can't hardly fucking walk today. So, I was there all right.

I was straight, Journal. This is my testimony. I was straight. I had two beers, I went to bed at about midnight. I was groggy but I was straight.

I looked out, and I saw something-someone almost straight out, right under the middle wire of the clothesline. But for some reason, I had to glance at the thermometer outside that west window. Even in weirdness, even if there was some dude out there wearing a red outer skin and clopping on cloven hooves, I gotta look at that thermometer on that west window. It read: 21 fucking below.

The dog jerked it up to another level of berserk, so I knew I had to look at what was out there, be it coon, woodchuck, Abbadon, or even if was Cognsini or Henderson or Scargill, fucking around in my yard.

So I took my look. I hereby describe for my own posterity, Journal.

There was a little girl out there. About eight. Naked. Fucking naked. She had dark hair.

I said to myself, naturally, "Flashback, bad acid, comin' round the bend. Payback time."

But I don't think I ever gave acid to Keno.

I can hear her crunching on the snow. It's minus-21, it's so fucking cold your fingernails will freeze and break off, your fucking skin takes on the texture of a spoiled frozen peach. You can't be out in that shit. She's not shivering, she just kind of moving, on her own journey, shuffling, straight down the clothes lines. OH YES, there's a full fucking moon. It's all scripted. The dog finally gets just like me, just shuts up and starts panting, like, this is too weird. She won't look at it any more. 90 pound German shepherd. Kills coons and tears into skunks. Will fight a badger. Won't fuck with this image in the moonlight. Won't deal with it. Barked at it for awhile, but won't deal with it, the more she looks at it.
The hair on my neck and head is up like electrolysisized. My brain just starts to shut down, like it did when I saw that abominable old man on the road in the rain. My brain is like the dog. “Can’t take this, doesn’t compute, shutting down now.”

The little girl feels me looking at her. She feels me looking at her. This is what was so fucking terrifying, oh fucking god. So terrifying. She felt me looking at her. What a horrible connection. Not like eavesdropping. Not like telepathy. NO fucking telepathy. Just unwanted connection. Just looking at what you were supposed to know about or see. Ever. See SPINS ON ME. She fucking spins on me. She looks at me. There is no contempt that great anywhere else, but between me and her, in that moonlight, at that accidental crossing where I was supposed to be asleep, and she was supposed to be left alone, for at least another 500 years.

Did I kill her in Vietnam? Goddamn? Goddamn. Goddamn. Dear Fucking God, did I kill somebody I didn’t know about? Did I shoot into that fucking darkness on time and kill somebody I didn’t know about? Did I send somebody into fucking blackness, the black hole? You Lousy Fucking Shithead of a God, did I do that? Did you trick me into those fucking circumstances, you cosmically dirty motherfucker? Did I shoot into that blackness and kill a little person, and then spit and scratch my ass, and then go back to base camp and drink fucking rec-department Hamms beer and tell dirty jokes and smoke o-jays and talk macho and eat sponge cake and Red Cross donuts? Did I get fucking tricked into doing that?

No-no. I don’t think so. The dog didn’t think so, I don’t think either. I could have, but I didn’t. Or if I did, that nightmare awaits elsewhere. Because, Journal, I didn’t kill this little girl. She had on beads. And I thought for an instant they were like little rose pedals or some shit on her chest, when she swung around on me. But then, right before I went fucking insane, I saw that it was a necklace. There was a magic ghost necklace twirling around her neck, like angles used to have around their heads, before conceptions changed. And she was an Indian. There was no fucking doubt about it, she was an Indian. I was meant to at least know that, before my brain turned to chowder.

God, I couldn’t fucking look anymore. I couldn’t look her in the eye. I couldn’t look her in the eye. I can’t even tell myself what her eyes looked like. I can’t even tell myself.
I needed to sleep. I needed to sleep forever. My feet took me back to bed. I remember, I said to the dog, and the dog was dragging ass and hang-tailing too, I said, “Sleep. Just sleep. Only sleep.” There was nothing to think about.

O.K. Now. There. It’s written.

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Republican Obituaries
Week of Sept. 25

Eldra May Cross, 81, died at Mercy Hospital Tuesday after a long bout with cancer. She was preceded in death by her husband, Gene, in 1971, and is survived by two daughters, Fern McKenzie of Cayce, South Carolina, and Ruth MacAnnee, of Portland, Oregon; and one childchild, Sun Ray MacAnnee. Services will be Friday at 10:30 a.m. at Holy Rosary Church in Willford. Burial will be at Glendale Cemetery near Willford.

Eldra May Stewart was born March 3, 1900, in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, and married Gene Cross in 1926, in Ankeny, Iowa.

She was a homemaker and mother, and was a lifelong member of the First Methodist Church. She was a member of the

Frances Matthew Holbrook, 51, of Fort Dodge, died suddenly after admittance to Mercy on Friday; cause of death was determined as coronary thrombosis.

He is survived by his wife, Dorothy, and one son, Marvin, of rural Vincent, Iowa; two sisters, Elizabeth Holbrook, of Denver, Colorado, and Catharine Holbrook Hale, of Iowa City. Services will be in Bruce’s Funeral Home in Fort Dodge on Tues., with burial at Memorial Park.

Frances Holbrook was a veteran of World War II, where he served in the Army Air Corp; he was for a time special jeep driver for Colonel Harvey Sindlinger. He married Dorothy Chapman in 1948, and farmed for many years before owning and operating Holbrook Trenching and Septic. For the past five years, was also employed as a lathe foreman at Standard Engineering in Fort Dodge. He was an usher of the First Congregational Church, and a member of the Sky Zoomers Model Airplane Club.

Buck Granger, 89, of Otho, died at Mercy Hospital on Wednesday from injuries sustained in an auto accident August 31. Services will be at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday at Collins Methodist Church in Maxwell. Burial will be at Evergreen Cemetery.

Buck Granger was born in Weldon and had lived in Rhodes before moving to Collins in 1942. He was a retired farmer and member of Fervent Masonic Lodge, Collins Lion Club, Za-Ga-Zig Shrine and Scottish Rite Consistory.
Surviving are his wife, Goldie; two sons, Dixon of Cedar Falls and Morton of Collins; two stepdaughters, Carol Hein of Madison, Wisconsin and May Lein of Minneapolis; a stepson, William Atwood of Collins; 21 grandchildren and 32 great-grandchildren. Fredgrief Funeral Home of Collins is handling arrangements.

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One day -- I don't recollect you were there, for some reason. Listener -- after I had been for the better part of a summer watching the paving of the old Lenn's trail for the sake of the automobiles, and on the other side of the pasture, the cutting and stacking of hay by means of the new diesel engine, with three men doing the work formerly of twenty, I sat my spiritual fatigue down upon a stump and began calculating the number of my great-grandchildren, to my best estimation. I believe I came up with thirty-six for the total, but it have been thirty-two, or thirty-eight, and so, Listener -- or as I should say, you already know -- a ghost, or any other man, can become indifferent as time becomes the same as the wind. And has the same sort of sound and feel to it. This is the source of the fatigue of age, the weariness of keeping track of things. I thought that I had known about this business while I was still old and alive, but that sense of decrepitude seems trivial to me now. Now even a dead tree stump is fresher than I. I am coming to the age of a craggy rock, and the Lord may not release me until I have reached the constitution of silt.

I am here. I have seen much. I assume I am somewhat older than those rumored about in The Old Testament.

Where was I? Oh yes, old Lenn's trail.

It used to be, that I was a prized storyteller, because of my service in the Indian Wars. People, in my life, pestered me for stories of my past and my youth, and many never got tired of hearing the same episodes, no matter many different ways I conspired in the telling.

Now I tell my stories and observations to the void, or to myself. There is this great danger of forgetting, so that my damnation, if it comes, will not
even be understandable to me. I do not fear that forgetfulness will be the end of me, but I preciously fear it will condemn me to the never-ending end. So, I tell myself, once more.....or, is this true? The longer I subsist, the more I become like the yammer-brained living souls. It is becoming less distinct between me and them, as my purgatory proceeds.

My enlistment was on the 26th of September, 1862, in Company A, Sixth Iowa Cavalry. The Colonels of the Regiment were David Wilson, of Dubuque, and S.M. Pollack, though I don't know where he was from. Our Captain was John Calligan of Davenport, and 1st Lieutenant, J.M. Gates, 2nd Lieutenant, S.J. Toll, who was a monstrous man, and a drunk. We were rostered at Camp Hendershott.

I had been to Davenport, to the State Fair, where they had been recruiting for the Sixth. I enlisted, went home, and in two weeks had sold everything but my horse and one yoke of oxen, one cow -- which I left with Father, and some household things, as I recall. My wife and children went back to Connecticut, and I to Hendershott. Stock was very low then; I sold cows as low as $10, large oxen $40, one yoke I sold for $35, for which I had to pay $140 on returning from the army. At first, Mary was very much put out by my enlistment, but being a true patriotic woman, finally said, 'Go, William, and serve your country.'

I remember this fondly, considering how chilly we got for each other over the last years before her surgery and death. And how, later, she used to dispute that she had ever said such as thing as encouraging me to go. But women are not plainer from hindsight. I hardly visit my wife's grave -- I think the last time was '06, or so. I was afraid of her, even in death.

Where was I?

We were mustered because of a collusion between the governor's of Iowa and Minnesota. The fella up north had a tremendous hatred of vagabond Sioux, and the Sioux began to develop a high rate of reciprocation. There had been massacre's up there, back and forth, since about '62. Lots of the younger hotheads were already off in Lincoln's war, and they began to muster up us farmers and settlers. The Sixth Iowa was right there out of Davenport. We drilled and paraded on horseback from October all through to march. We were all wild to go and kill Indians, as men used to be.
There was another massacre then, and we got marching orders for Sioux City on March 16, '63. Imagine, on foot and horseback, diagonal across the territory, in March. We left out on horseback with wagon train following. Handkerchiefs were waving from every window as we were passing out, and many a cheer for the brave soldiers. We were a proud Regiment, and the citizens were proud of us. The first night we camped near Blue Grass, 8 or 9 miles from Durant. My father and brother accompanied me to our camping, then said good-bye. That night -- Oh, colder than anything. Chills me now, even in spirit. Cold, rain, frozen ground. The horses got loose, and were walking all about the tents. The next two or three days, the frost commenced and there appeared to be no bottom. We didn't make three miles, I don't reckon. When we got to Iowa City, we just camped for two weeks, to try to wait the spring. During this time, many of us wished we were home, but we were in for it. I contracted the rheumatism, and nearly all summer I could not get my feet into the stirrup without raising my leg with my hand. Many of the boys got sick, but I rode my horse every step of the march. At this time, the terminus of the C&R.I.R.R. was at a little town, Brooklyn, west of Des Moines. Here we loaded our train, and also about forty wagons which belonged to a freighter. This freighter had ordinary two-horse wagons, and took the thong out of every other one, and put in a short one, coupling one half behind the other half, having four yoke of oxen pull them. This was done to save drivers. Also, when they came to mud, they took one wagon through the mud or slough at a time. Company A was detailed to escort this supply train and our Captain went ahead with Jack Anderson and myself. We would start as soon as the troops, ride fast until we had gone far enough for a day's march, and find someone who had hay, corn, and beef, purchase them to be put on the ground, ready for the troops when they arrived. Sometimes we had to scatter and ride about where we were to camp, to find out what we wanted. Then we would get dinner at some farmhouse and have our horses fed, resting until the troops came. This we did all the way from Brooklyn to Council Bluffs, then to Sioux City, 8 miles above which we camped, on the Missouri River, with the Big Sioux on our east -- it was not over a mile across there, at the fork of the two.
We used to drill every day. It was here that Lt. Toll formed a dislike for Jack and myself. Toll was a drunken, worthless fellow, and I respected his straps [Lt. bars], but not him. We were then under General Cook, but in a few weeks he was relieved and Gen. Alf. Sully put in command. He was well acquainted with Indian ways and manner of warfare, for he was a Captain in the regular army and stationed on the frontier. Now came the preparations for our expedition into the Indian Country. The train was loaded with provisions -- ammunition and everything except food for the horses. For this we had to depend upon the grass, and as we got farther up the country, this was all buffalo grass. We made our way up the river and passed through Vermilion; Yankton, you recall, was then only about a dozen houses. Then we passed above Bon Homme. We arrived after crossing the river to Fort Randall. The military reservation was on the west, or Nebraska side of the river. It was an old fort and had been built about 15 years previous. There were four companies of the 7th Cavalry present, formerly having belonged to the 14th Infantry. They were the ones, later, at Wounded Knee, that the living all piss and whine about nowadays.

We ourselves camped in the timber along the river bottom until June, for the boats had yet to come with provisions. Then we loaded the train and took up our line of march up the river, after crossing to the east side. Here we met the 2nd Nebraska Regiment of Cavalry, Colonel Furnice in command. I recollect these were the 'nine-months men,' having enlisted for the expedition against the Indians. They were old frontier men, furnishing their own horses and entire equipment, and from the way they stole our lariats and holsters, sometimes even a bridle or saddle, some must have left home bareback. The orders were, if a horse were found loose in camp at night, that the soldier whose it was must walk the entire next day, leading his own horse. So if they took from us, we figured we must take from another, for a cavalryman dislikes to walk. Many is the lariat I myself have taken, generally keeping one or two on hand in case of need. Jack had a chest with some extra quartermaster store, and we could keep our ropes inside.

Our line of march was near or along the river. We halted a few days opposite Ft. Pierre, and while in camp, we were taken out on a sandbar to shoot at a target. Were you there, Listener?
Do you recall the kind of guns we were armed with? A shelter tent, 6x6, was staked on poles driven in the ground, a circle block about two feet in diameter, with bull's eye in the center. This was not 200 yds. distant; two large stakes were driven into the ground, crossing one another and tied, and a sack partly full of sand, breast high, was our test. Every one who shot inside the 2-foot circle was to be excused from guard. When his turn came, each man had three shots. Now, I was expecting, out of 1200 men, many having lived on the frontier for years and being used to handling their rifles, any one would have cut the target all to pieces, but it was not to be. Only one shot from our company got inside the circle, and not over a dozen hit the 6-foot square. I set my sights at 200 yds, shooting way over to the bluffs on the other side. Then I lowered my sight, and plowed the sand before it got halfway up. I was surprised at this; for years I had used a rifle to shoot prairie chickens, and could be sure to hit three out of every five, offhand. But I had no reason to complain, for there was not over ten shots in the whole Regiment that hit the mark. Such guns were not fit to hunt Indians, for they scatter, and we should have had a good target rifle.

Nothing happened between here and the Little S. Cheyenne River, where we encamped for over two weeks, waiting for the boats to come up and reload our train. The river was low, and it was slow work for them. The South Cheyenne, so called, was only a river when it rained. It had banks eight or ten feet high, and the bottom was as dry as a floor, and as there was some brush on the banks, our men cooked down in the bed of the stream. The night before we broke camp, thunder clouds roiled up and it thundered fearsomely (such as I can occasionally make due myself now, in spirit). We were on the lookout for a stampede of our horses. Jack and I got bridled and stood by our horses, ready to mount, for where the company was situated, the whole of horses and mules would have run right over us. But the rain did not come until the next day, just as we were in line, and the bugle sounded the forward. But the column did not move, for the rain then came in torrents, and holes as large as crabapples began to appear. In a short time there was not a dozen men or horses in line. They all broke for shelter in the timber along the Missouri River, for we were at the mouth of the Cheyenne. Mule teams ran away; two got stuck in the crossing. We had moved across the South Cheyenne, but the water rose to our knees in a
minute, and the teams and wagons were in danger of being swept away into the Missouri. Colonel Wilson began ranting at the boys, to get those in danger out, cursing God and the rain and everyone, but would not endanger the lives of those up the banks, and he turned to Lt. Col. Pollack, giving the command up to him. Then he rode off. No sooner had he done this than Pollack jumped off his horse, pulled off his coat, and started in. In less than no time, other soldiers did the same. They followed him, and by holding each other's hands, made a chain to the wagons and unloaded them, and got everything out. I saw that soldiers would follow, but could not be drove. Ever after that, the troops would have followed Pollack to hell, and Wilson not across the street. In less than an hour the water was four feet deep on the very ground we had been camping on. The country surrounding was big hills, and the water came down in streams. I had never seen such rain in all my life, and only once in my death-times since.

I get suspicious of what was behind it all, though I have not personally seen other ghosts.

The Nebraska Regiment was camped on the other side of the South Cheyenne, and their horses were picketed out. They broke loose and there was a regular stampeded. Over a hundred plunged into the Missouri River and swam across. We ourselves camped on the hills until morning. The next day, we camped a few miles out; that night, our bed was the naked ground and our covering was the Heavens. The Nebraska troops came up in the morning and we resumed our march. We traveled as far north as Longo Lake, the largest we had seen, being about four miles long and in places a mile wide. But it was like all the others, Alkali water, not fit for strong coffee or to drink. We dug for water, but it was the same, and had some flour-made cakes which were as light as if made with soda. About these ponds or lakes the water had dried away as if flour had been scattered about. Right the next day, we came to a little stream about two feet wide and nearly as deep, the water nearly ice. We filled our canteens. We followed up and found a large spring of cold water; it was delicious, but the next day when it began to get warm in our canteens, the old bay would not have drunk it, for it smelt awful and tasted as nasty. It was mineral of the strongest kind.
On the first day of September, the General sent out the 1st Battalion, Major House in command, to look for the Indian camp, as from every sign they were near. That night, just as we got in camp, here came four or five of the guides with horses on the run, and reported to the General that the troops had surrounded the Indians about ten miles off. Boots-and-saddles were sounded, and in a short time all in command were in their saddles, in line. Now came the disappointment, for all wanted to go, so far we had not seen a fight, and all were anxious for one. But Companies A and B were the train guard that day, and the train was ordered to coral. Wagons were run close together, stock inside, and we were ordered to guard the train. Off went the rest of the troops on a gallop, and our Commander, Lt. Gates, had to threaten to shoot some of the boys to keep them from going. Now, had the whole body of Indians had come our way, we would have had a lively time -- only two companies of us!

About 2 o’clock, orders came to move up with the train. In this we had a little excitement - some Indians ran our rear guard, and we were ordered back. Pel-mel for about two miles, then we wheeled back to the train. When we reached the battleground we found the troops scattered all about, for in the night during the dark the Indians got away, and our men got lost from one another, settling down where they were. We lost in all 29 men; some were cut and hacked with arrows through them. It is very difficult to tell in an Indian fight how many they lose, for they take all their dead and wounded with them if possible.

We followed the Indian trail for over two miles, picking up robes, trinkets, children, old squaws and old Indians. In all we got about 200 children, a hundred or more Indians and squaws. These we kept for about four weeks, then got orders to let them go.

I will never forget one little girl I found, about seven years old. Not a stitch on her more than the day she was born, except a string of red and blue beads. These I took off and sent home. That look she gave me I will never forget as long as I live. She thought as much of those beads as a High Lady does her diamonds

Some children were fastened to the dogs. We also had about one hundred warriors. We remained on this camp, where there had been about 3,500 Indians, for three or four days, and we came to regret it, for we
became covered with body lice. Sometimes in the night, it seemed they would draw us off, they were so thick. We boiled our clothes, picking them off; it was amusing to see the boys when they got in camp with shorts and pants, picking them off out of the seams. But in a few more days, the nits would hatch, and we were as bad off as ever. I threw away shirts, drawers, and when I reached Ft. Randall, wore a buckskin shirt and drawers. We were a ragged set anyway, for we had received no clothes for over eight months, and crawling in our shelter tents, we wore the knees out, and the saddles wore out the rest of our pants.

Our tents were the shelter tents. Each man had a piece of cotton cloth, 6x6, with buttons on the side. Two buttoned their tents together, then each had a pole about three feet long, a tin socket in the center so it could be taken apart, rolled up with blankets and tent, and strapped onto a horse. Our horses looked like pack animals when we were mounted, a carbine, saber, revolver, cartridge, boxes, haversack, canteen, two army blankets, tent, overcoat, rubber blanket, lariat 33 feet long, and an iron pin, 15 inches. Nose bag with curry comb and brush, and saddle bags.

The Indians had been encamped here for weeks, killing and drying buffalo meat. There were hundreds of tons of this buffalo jerky. They sliced it, and spread it on the ground. Children and dogs ran all over it, so you know it was nice and sweet. When dry, they packed out 75 pounds each in rawhide. We never could find a pack but what the innards tallow mixed with the meat. We loaded about twenty wagons with it, for we were nearly out of rations, and this was our fare for two weeks. The Indians dry their venison in strips, and when dry it is like fingers, for it was first sliced, then cut in strips, but hinged together on one edge. We found some that was like this, and thinking it was venison, put it in our saddlebags for a choice bite. Many a day as we would ride along I would eat this and thought it good, until one day one of our guides, an old trapper, said it was *dried dog*. That the Indians would not kill a deer that time of the year, as venison still good, but now it was *dog*. I could not get it, and threw it all away. Some things are good if we do not know what they are.

Now, the living talk the same way about beef and hog.

On our march down every night, the Indian prisoners would kill a dog, roast him. This, like all other work, was done by the squaws. They put two
rawhide ropes around his neck, one squaw standing each side so he couldn't bite anyone, then the others pounded him with clubs until was a regular jelly before they killed him. Then the others, having built a big fire and got a good bed of coals, threw him on, hair, insides and all, and roasted him; when he was all cooked, they all cut off a piece and called it delicious.

Before leaving, we dug a big, square grave, and laid 28 of our men in it. On of the Adjutants was put in a box made of one of the wagon boxes and buried beside the road the next day.

I forget why I started this story, Listener. I am slightly troubled by the thought of that naked Indian girl.

ΔΔΔ

Finetune Music and Publishing
BMI/ASCAP
(A Division of Whiplash Productions)
Escondido, CA 92481

Mr. Marvin Holbrook/
“Slash-and-Burn Blues Band”
aka/et al
R.R. 5
Boone, IA 50302

May 16, 1983

Dear Marv,
Thank you so much for submitting your 4-song demo, and for having the courtesy of not submitting unsolicited. As you said in your previous introduction, the music is of the highest production values.
However, as you can see, enclosed, we are returning your tape (which we normally do not bother, as you know); we will have to take a "pass" on this material at this time.

Our feeling is that the future of pop music, as the most celebrated generation of Rockers/Bluesrockers end their careers, will lie in further sonic explorations, expansion or crossing of styles, the merging of further techno-pop forms, etc. etc. etc. In short, that the era of the backbeat, bass-drum rhythm section, and "song at the service of the lead guitar" is long gone. But...In no sense is your band, from what we can tell, anything but "very good." Nevertheless, we market and make money by understanding the hyper-trends of music, which are more and more fleeting every year, and with every new influence. I, personally, would suggest that if you have access to a good studio - which it seems you do - that you use your sound expertise (and remixing) as devices-in-themselves, ala George Martin if you like, to explore your own creative possibilities, both in individual projects and as a band. My own feeling is that the era of so-called "live music" is entirely at an end; be that as it may, it is absolutely certain that the end of "rock and roll" or "blues band" has undoubtedly passed and become passé.

Again: I do not normally respond which such elaboration to each of the mountain of demo tapes which pass into our office -- all of them of course with "great" credentials and testimonials. I would say this, but only as a caveat: if this were the time-frame of 1973, or even 1979, I would happy to publish and promote your stuff; you are as "good" as, say, The Allman Brothers. Perhaps you are “better” - in some senses. But at the same time, you are not The Allman Brothers, precisely because this is 1983. And having either arrived at, or missed, the proper time-frame is quite ordinarily what determines fame and success. I hope you understand what I mean, and that I inform you of these things from a desire to only wish you the best.

Sincerely,

Mort Petracca

Vice-President, A&R, Whiplash, Inc.
My aggravation is deserved, as you know Listener. If I had not broken this soil with my own plow, if I had not hauled timber up from this river valley which now wants to confine me, if I had not waded this very muddy Des Moines River when it was twice as deep as today, if I had not frozen my face and felt the blood prepare to burst from my living veins in the daily effort of being alive, probably I could be a rollicking sort of a spirit. Either way, the Lord knows that I have come very near to losing track of my sons and grandson entirely, as they have become diluted, and as the living have come to enjoy being insane and sinful. If I did not recognize every nook and cranny, if the ground underneath and the texture of the western air were not what I knew to be the realm of my life, then I would say that I what I see is a fixture of demons and concocted by the Devil for my benefit.

In my living days, I would have called these imps of the type of squatters. For some reason, most want to be like gypsies. I have listened to two or three generations of them, bewailing the loss of their farms and properties. Whereas -- as I predicted when I was alive -- they are of the type that pack up their chairs and head offwards at the first bad whiff of matters. Now, sons and granddaughters of slackers, they are aware of where the somewhere's of their lives are. Many imagine themselves to be prosperous, and have not an acre of land for their own. This is a stupidity that is amazing to me. There is much coming and going, like chickens, but the roost gets swarmier every month and year, and no one believes he can be lowered to the task of simple cleaning the floor -- this is my best example.

To visit their little towns is to abide much resentment; I whiff it so that it is indistinguishable from their sweat. I go often to Ogden, Boone, Huxley, Madrid. This was a place Mary Stoddard chose for ourselves, as our Promised Land, after my service. I figured it was green, and pure, and provided by the Lord. Now, it it called by the curs 'Boredom.'

I have time to consider, and reconsider, like all old men, even the living. I go on foot, and spend much time in the fields, though I would prefer the woods, they are shrunk to nothing. I talk to myself, just as now. I say
again: Explain to me this talk about 'loving trees,' on everyone's part, when they so rapidly disappear. This, I have overheard them have the gaul to blame on me and my kindred. They situate the source of their sins in me and my brethren. I have been known to get angry.

There is hardly a soul I pass who does not emanate a cranky desire to fill his life with a din. Tripping them up is fool's play. I used to do more of it. But now their incoherence has become difficult for me, in the bargain. I can hardly terrorize the bulk of them, even for fun. To amuse myself, I seek out the powerful persons in any place, so as to confirm what I believe are their natures. They are more suspicious and venomous than in my day; they have tremendous craft and wickedness to them. But fortunes come and go in a month's time. It seems I recall, that stealing even in my day was best done by paperwork -- Lord, remember The Des Moines River Company, which provoked itself to win the entire river valley all to Minnesota. THIEVES! THIEVES! And liars, in fancy wool vests.

Boone was a fine, new town, one of the first what they called railroad towns, when I first came to it. The depot, even today, bespeaks men who knew what they were about. But surrounding, the town decays like a dead tooth. I have watching astounded for ninety years, nigh thirty years longer than I even lived. Their are these gypsies and coons and Mexican, and people from Asia, they aspire to live in aluminum shacks, or dwellings that look like cracker tins. They prefer it. No one builds his own house, no one empties his own stool. South of town, where was the Grainger's had their family spread in my day -- right there, now, the most abominable bullroar in creation, a car-pen with aluminum bleachers for folks to watch, where some of the tomfools go round and round in their playcars, spewing diesel and foam, the brainless din of the gypsies in the stands. There is something of the festival hanging about it, but it seems the noise is what is most liked now.

I was not acquainted with the automobile, I don't think, before I died, but I was much amused at first, when during my son's life, I went for countless rides, unnoticed. I laughed and laughed like the crazy ghost I am, and I hung my dead body out the side like a dog. I would even forget that I was dead.

But...hmmm.
Let me remind you, Listener:
I have long figured that if you haven’t ghosts around, you have no one who remembers quite correctly.

For the first years after my death, as I have reminded myself, I was somewhat more cheerful about the prospects of the country. I would say that my kindred were improving upon the travails and hardships we had known as life, when first we settled these towns and dug these ditches. In my day, most men were similar to mules. Say: a fellow doesn’t forget the sweat and agony of digging his own water well, I cite for example. I rounded up Peck and Harrison and a hired man, and we labored like fools for three weeks to get down sixty feet, to the first water line. The water was fresh, but their was a faint stank to it; it was what it was, and we had enough of digging and rigging and hauling mud. And there were many killed in such necessity, in those days, when the mud fell in upon them. I became suspicious of this water, even as a ghost. I have trepidation that it killed or diseased many of my folks.

But then, as I say, came augers, better log chains and pulleys, better spokes and levers. Even before the first of gasoline motors, there were waves of inventions and cleverness. There was always somebody inventing something, and not five years before everybody to California was using it. I remember that the pistons and rods and casings of a hand well were news to me, and I watched my son pumping gallons for his stock, which would have taken me and my man half a day of hauling buckets. Or the buckled tractor wheel. And if people only knew what was the quality of our wagon axles, or what little we knew about drywalling houses, sealing basements, warming without coal, keeping cream and milk. We lived alongside our stock, is what it amounted to, and when you labored from predawn....ah, to whom do I speak? I am worse than an old man, I am petrified.

These infernal times. Ugh. Blast it. I’d send them all back to my living days, and see how many of them lasted a week.

Δ Δ Δ

Marvin Holbrook
R.R. 5  
Boone, IA 50302

Simeon Green Ashtar  
100 West Coffepot Circle Drive  
Sedona, AZ 86325  

November 5, 1983

Dear Mr. Simeon,
I am writing to you as a great admirer of your recent book, *Ancient Rhymes and Lost Knowledge*, but also in the hopes that some recent phenomena in my life will be of interest to you. Let me assure you that I am no crackpot, nor am I estranged personality who has nothing better to do than share fabricated stories with other lost souls.

Some of the things you write about in your book, such as especially the idea that vibrations or emanations can move matter by sympathetic processes, although it may surprise you, is not new to me. I am a musician by trade -- such as it is, and have known for some time that this is the case. And in fact, this “magic” was something I began to guess at even while I was first learning to play. It was the sound that most seductive to me, and not only, as you know, merely the breaking of glass or even of eardrums. I am interested in what you said about subtonals and esoteric frequencies which exist not outside human hearing ranges but rather in-between, in harmonics and overtones, and such. I have lost the exact quote but you know what I mean.

I have been engaged, apparently, in conjuring up matters, or rather entities, as the result of my music, although I do not claim to be Hendrix or John Coltrane. Mostly this was by accident, although as I say, I was onto this tract for some years. I am trying to get to the point.
The short of it is that I am now somewhat plagued by visitations of weird presences and sounds (not my own), and the appearances of strange entities who make to sense to either my senses or my intellect, is the best way I can put it. I am not asking for help, as such, but only your opinion of this type of thing, and of perhaps other people is happening to. Documentation's and so forth.

I assure you I am somewhat in anguish. And of course there are not swarms of sympathetic people to these esoteric matters here where I live.

I wonder if you would be so kind as to write back to me. I apologize if this was not quite your correct address, but this is what your publisher (secretary?) would only give me over the phone.

Very Sincerely Yours,

Marv Holbrook

Simean Ashtar
c/o Ste. 008/Meridian Vortexual Center
Sedona, Arizona 86325

Jan. 5, 1984

Mr. Marvin Holbrook
R.R. 5
Boone, Iowa 50503

Dear Mr. Holbrook,
I apologize profusely for the delay in answering your kind letter. It is almost more than a mere privilege to respond to such urgent and heartfelt requests concerning our rightful Divine
Knowledge. And indeed -- let me be frank, I am of the nature of soul-entity who just enjoys chatting with sympathetic soul mates for the sake of it!
And of course, further, thank you for your kind remarks about my latest book.

Marvin, please permit me to begin with a small analogy.
Recall if you would the latest time you took yourself perhaps shopping, to the place worldwide now commonly called The Shopping Center. Now recall further, how your mind was occupied with sentient things, such as perhaps buying a present for someone, or a canister of talc for your toiletry needs, or groceries, or what have you. And perhaps, all the while, you were thinking not only of your impending purchase, but of other matters, which even you yourself would call trivial, although admittedly pleasurable -- such as having dinner with a friend or loved one later that day, or the need to run another errand, or perhaps, as we say, 'not much of anything at all.'
Now, stop at this point in recollection.
We are discussing the types of things you are thinking about, but not especially the people and things you are not thinking about. Swarms of other people, running their own errands and thinking their own thoughts, are passing you by, to and fro, and yet...are they not largely 'invisible' to you?
That is...ha!...unless one passes by as an unusually pretty girl!
(I beg your pardon if I have offended.)

Perhaps you already apprehend what I am saying. You are certainly in a crowd -- much bigger than you realized before!, but you are also certainly alone, with the will of your mind, thinking whatever pleases you, or even whatever pleases you to not please you! This is called in my system Indulgence, and of course it is perfectly 'natural.' Or at least, has become so, in the past few millennia.
But the point is, these people (that is what they are), their comings-and-goings are only bothersome to you when you determine for yourself that they 'exist.' Otherwise, as before, your oblivion is your own, and they, although you still 'see' them, are largely automotonic.
I would urge you to ponder what I have said, and I think you will quickly come to agree with me, that the case you have related to me, though dire, is not dissimilar.
These 'things' and entities and their bothersome noises -- they are all around us, at all times. They, as we, are of energy, and the universe does not waste its energy, but merely transforms and plays with it. These matters are weird to you, yes, but they have been there 'all along,' as have you, and I, and the squirrels by three, and even the ancestors of the tree which the
squirrel scrambles upon! Yes, it is true. There is no Space or Time, only what is not happening Now. Souls become Stars, at the very least!
You are a musician, my friend. There is a reason why a B-flat is a B-flat. All emanates from a Reason and Mind and a Center. But this Mind is bigger than yours or mind, and there are many thousands of tones in-between what you can presently hear.

I am sorry that I must close now. My new book, Fakir, Monk, Yogi, will undoubtedly be of interest to you. Be assured, the universe makes sense, my friend!

I am your servant and teacher,
S. Ashtar

Δ Δ Δ

July 7, '84

Keni,

I thought since it's been awhile since we spoke, that I'd let you know some news back here. Marv Holbrook took his own life this past week. I only heard about it through the newspaper, which is kind of weird, since we still have so many mutual acquaintances. They actually used the phrase 'took his own life' in the obit., which they don't usually do, at least Kyle says. So it must be pretty certain. I thought about calling his mother, but she's such a... you know, there's almost no sense talking to her. I run into her at Hy-Vee sometimes -- hope I don't for awhile yet. Needless to say, I'm not surprised about Marv. Although it's a terrible thing to say. Kyle goes, "Well, don't you feel anything?" I go, "Kyle, truthfully, no, I don't." Maybe that's a bad thing to say. But hey.

Skyler says full sentences now, but it's ridiculous to imagine that he could understand anything about this. Kyle says we should wait until he's at least 8 or 10, and even then, to broach it gradually.
He’s so funny, now though. “Mommy, let’s go park.” Etc. Or, oh yes, he’ll talk about Sissy, “Sissy spills her food.” The little squealer. Hope you enjoy these photos. They were only taken just before the 4th -- so this is what the darlings look like!

Mom was with us over the 4th and to the fireworks at Otho. Everyone’s fine. Kyle -- another promotion, to district sales v.p. Which of course means weekdays sometimes in Kansas City. Needless to say, I tell him to get the Denver district, whatever that is, so we have an excuse to come out and see you guys.

And needless to say, congrats-congrats-congrats on your new career. Call me sometime, and let’s talk about this Seattle thing. I’m selfish -- Denver at least seems like you’re halfway near Endless Love,

D.

ΔΔΔ

The Lord’s will is His own, but otherwise I would suspect there is a diabolical way to how my blood beckons me, as if I have left my pulse and corpuscles behind in other bodies. I am not infatuated with my kin, and I do not seek them out for amusement. In at the inner detection of a rage, or worse, when I sense some incitement carried by the ether, or whatever you know it to be, Listener, do they draw me toward their nasty or silly doings. Otherwise, I pass a grandnephew in a courthouse hall, or a worthless grandchild more from Mary’s side, or even the downward clan of second cousins, who congregate and around Ankeny and Elkhart -- I say nothing, I hardly snort. There are very few of them worth a tinker’s damn -- they have chosen to become clerks, lawyers, hucksters, peddlers, people who pursue leisure before anything, certainly in place of service to the Lord. I would not bother to torment them, because I reckon their demeanors would torment me to equal amount.

I have learned, even as a dead, passing witness, that there is no greater abomination to the Lord than those who do nothing but talk and read, talk and read and conspire and connive. The Book says in the beginning was the Word, which these fooligans have interpreted to mean, the more the better. I have read over their shoulders, into their blue lights, while they sit through the daylight -- tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, tap. UGhhhh. Usually, they fuss for an hour, to commit one sentence, which
must later be retracted or equivocated. And so they sit, in little plasterboard huts, upon ground which folks like me first broke and plowed. They race to Des Moines, now, mainly, and then they race home, to hurry up and argue, and whine about the day. Whereas I recall lugging my weariness home, after dark, to perhaps hope for some of Mary's good potato soup. We did not know insomnia, if I remember right.

Mmmm. I do not miss sleep, particularly, for some reason. Perhaps because I can dream awake, simultaneous to the trivialities of keeping watch on the living. I shall ponder this soon. Or later. There is time, even before the end of this clownshow.

But as I was saying -- you are still here, Listener? yes, I think you are..I was saying about this rage and unhappiness which attracts me to my foggy posterity. Yes, indeed foggy. Perhaps this is even beyond the patience of the Lord.

The cur has imagined to himself -- for some reason, his thoughts are too understandable to me.. Uhg -- that he communicates with the dead. Which of course, he does. I do not recall how he came to my attention. I was drifting, on a road north of Dayton one day. I had been pleasantly so wandering for days and months, maybe years and years, through the nights, lingering, lying down like a youth in the wild grass, smelling the wafting lilac air, gazing at cloud faces and imagining myself to have company, wondering occasionally why I can now only barely fly. I was avoiding the field -- the fields of these idiots who now pretend to farm are not interesting -- dry, crusty, the work of potters, they spray sour mists on the earth, and then they leave off two hours before dusk, in their big trucks. But the woods, now the riverbeds which I have always loved, there I can still love the earth. I had been somewhat content.

I do not deny that I have partial to the mischief. I think by now the Lord gives me sanction. Sometimes a whiff of bad breath or the bang of a door does more work than a week of sermons. But in the open, where I mostly meander, there is great fun for me...do you enjoy this, Listener? For some reason, quite some few of the living will spot me in their fast vehicles, especially when they are jerking their heads and their eyes from one sight to another. They see me, and I can feel that they have seen me. And I can feel their fear, even across a ditch, even behind their glass, even as they zoom
on and away. I myself wager, that there is something about the fast movement of their faces inside their little coaches, which matches up with the vibration of my existence, which otherwise they would not see.

But as I say, there is much to this, if there is connection between me and the other. This is how I first came across one of my great-great grandsons, sensing him far down the road. It was raining, outside of Dayton. I had posted myself at a crossroads, to mock and frighten the motorists. Yet I detected him...him, coming, as though announced. He was distracted and angry about some silliness, but it was bothersome to me. For awhile, his wretched blasphemes and self-indulgence took over my thoughts. I could barely tell who was thinking, at the echo of all this modern malarkey inside my mind. Except that, of course, a Puritan would never speak any such way.

As I was getting back my wits, he and his vehicle was screeching up to the stop -- there was a train of automobiles, but his lit up for me, so to say. I stepped right to the gravel shoulder, right to the pavement -- he would have sideswiped and gravely injured me, had I a body. It began to rain in sheets on the instant, too, which I think surprised both me and the living. He spotted me. As if I was nothing but an old coot, deranged, with a walking stick, wandering into dangerous traffic. I made myself coincide with what he thought he saw -- slammed the pavement in anger, I did, with my walking stick, and grimaced, quite ugly, I expect. I swear, he looked like he had seen the Devil. fishtailing, as they say, and squealing off. There was that one instant where he saw his true past, and the true respect for those who deserve it. He nearly stopped on command, as you might recollect, Listener. Did he not? I say he did, as though he had some respect for me, after all. I would have jumped in and made myself at home in his car, I would. Then we could have seen what was what, I'll wager, between what I know and what he thinks he does. Ha. Hum.

I took a good leap at him, too. It's good for him he didn't take a gander back in his mirror, to see his old spry grampa straddling his cartruck, just a rolling down the pavement. I would've given him another dark grimace, as you know.

△△△
SCREEN/PREC.: OVER-RIDE ACCEPTED
SOUTH-enworst/MISSI/ALABAM REBELIA. Tap: By: Elronda Clavindish.><><>
PrimaWeb.:

COMMENT:
   I HAVE FOLLOWED YOUR CAREER WITH ABATEMENT, AND HAVE CAPTURED YOUR EVERY TRANS. EVEN OPEN WEB. EVEN EARLY WEB-MOVIES, WHICH I HAVE ARCHIVED ON 14 mm db, AND SORTED..cx/STORED .ON ACTUAL REAL ICE, FOR WHICH I HAVE A SEPARATE GENERATOR. I HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT YOUR GENIUS SINCE EVEN I WAS YOUNG. I THINK ABOUT WHAT YOUR KEEN SAYINGS EVEN BEFORE I GO TO SLEEP. I WORRY MORE ABOUT YOUR SAYINGS THAN EVEN ABOUT BANDS & MERC'S, WHO ARE QUITE BAD IN THIS REGION, LET ME SAY. IT HAS AMAZED ME, THAT YOU SEEM TO KNOW [BLD] EVERYTHING. I WOULD ASK: WERE PEOPLE SMARTER BEFORE THE COLLAPSE? WHERE DID YOU LEARN EVERYTHING THAT YOU KNOW, SINCE YOU EVEN COMPLAIN ABOUT YOUR TECHNABLE'S, AND I HAVE HEARD YOU WORRY ABOUT SHUT-DOWNS AND SIEGES EVEN YOURSELF, IN NEW HAVEN. WHERE IS NEW HAVEN, IN REAL SPACE? I AM NERVOUS. PLEASE. I CANNOT BELIEVE I AM TRANSING WITH YOU. ALSO, PLEASE, PLEASE, IF NOTHING ELSE. PLEASE TELL ME HOW YOU KNEW SO MUCH TO CREATE THE MASTERPIECE [ITAL] SIOUX FALLS?
   [AWAIT]

><><><> Vest. Celtar [RETURN]
   HO-JOKer, you discourage me. What qualifies as an interruption for you?
   Eh?
   You have no notion of interruption, do you? Words, instructions are pointless. I thought that I had learned to laugh, so many years ago. This is a conceit of middle age, which the old no longer pretend.

   All right then. And in any case, the questions are good, Elronda Clavindish, of the winds of Cyber-obscurity. But you labor under faulty assumptions. And it is assumptions, or the explaining thereof, which oppress old men even more than on-hire technoids such as my neighbor HO-JOKer.
All right then. Let me squint at your encapsulated Trans; you see how short my memory.

Let me say first, though technicalities and inductivites are the very last points of interest to you, all my young fellow earthlings, that *Sioux Falls* was not my creation. I was merely techno adviser for this creation, and while the project, especially for the time -- Olldendate 2013 -- was magnificently innovative, I myself had nothing to do with the graphics or effects. I do not even know that I was infatuated by its being the first Psycholnteractive Project. I wrote very little of the script...well, perhaps dialogue, and some characterization and backdrop. I was -- and you will not understand this term, but I will employ it -- so-called technical advisor. But this was back when words feigned to have more 'meaning' than now.

Even then, I was the oldest on the project, and all about me was the buzzing and conferring of young cyber innovators, and philosophers of time-and-space, and actors, and set models, and period artists, and technicians...one for nearly every square foot of space in the somewhat quansit hut where we produced. The project took fully eleven olden months. And while all about us, the world burned, America burned and raged its last tantrum, windows crashed, rocks were hurled, incoherents wobbled drunkenly outside the compound, lambasting capitalism, god, television, the police, bad criminals as opposed to good ones...all about us, this conflagration of idiocy, baboons broken out of their cages, ...and we, we hobbliest artists, the self-ordained protectors of what was piously called 'Art' or even 'Expression,' so passionate in our quest for one last/first -- we thought -- great Trans of Art. We felt -- this is quite insane -- that we must get it done, and Transmit -- to no audience, before ruin enveloped us all. Here, Clavindish, [bld] **Ponder This:** That we thought we must 'capture' a portenteous mental beast. 'The telling of the story of America.' This is how we spoke, and presumed, in those days. That [ital] the telling would prove something tragic about man.

Ahhh. I am frustrated. Nearly everything I relate leads me into the tunnel of my own frustration.

But you see -- this is what you are not seeing, my friend Clavindish -- the plot of *Sioux falls*, which is now exalted by a billion fawning, mole-like Users, in every isolated pocket of bliss and satellite bin from Timbuktu to Alahandria, and the silly characterizations, which were entirely off-the-cuff from out of my memory ...this was merely, to use an old phrase, 'off-the-cuff'...all of this, my friend, was improvisation at best, and roughshod malarky at worst. For instance, I -- [bld] I -- was considered
the resident expert on all sundry material, from derived historical exactitude, to the psychology of man, to the interaction of geopolitical and economical social forces, to the history of cinema. I was supposed to know what 'Indians' looked and acted like, and 19th-C settlers, and soldier-cavalry folk. If you knew, if you could remember the 20th-C as I, and realized how preposterous this was...

This was cyber, [ital] as it invented itself, and even then, cyber esteemed only the shiny, the catchy, the puerile, the instantaneously marvelous. Twinkliness. The meteoric. Perhaps it was the duress which defined cyber.

It is astounding to me, that you are Transing me, Clavindish, at this moment of time-space, and speaking to me as a hoary sage, and Transing in awe about my previous work, as though I were John Ford or Goethe or Takamari, or at least Bergman.

Do you know these referents, by the way? Do you know what a referent is. No, no, no, no. I jest. Do not override. Do not take my challenge.

But you have got me back to something, my new friend. Yes, you have got me back to something. Do you recall where I was at, in the reems of my Celebration Trans, before you so successfully and rudely over-rode? Do you?

You ask me: Were people smarter then?
HAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA.
HAAAAAAAA.
I cough til I phlem. You must not ask such hilarious questions.
I seem to know [bld] Everything?
I know nothing. I know not a single wretched thing.

I was speaking of dusky trunks, mail-served to my house while I was still a young man, the last testimony and bequeathal of my erswhile family. I was going to tell you a treasure story about the contents of these crates, but now you have cut me off, you have pinned me at the end of the alley, and my fabrications swirl about me like dust devils. And now I must confess to you that I remember very little about the actual paraphernalia within these trunks. The was a hodgepodge. It had lacked a librarian, and been passed down, crate added to crate of the mess, about every three generations. It completely lacked sorting and filing. If the corpses themselves, whose life debris this all constituted, had themselves been piled so carelessly,
strewn about with such presumption, the police would have been called, arrests made, long before in, the last of the so-called line, had been made receptor of the mess.

You, Clavindish, might like to know about, let me presume, old uniforms, perhaps firearms, perhaps dangerous and illicit love letters, perhaps shocks of hair, perhaps secret envelopes containing deeds to lost gold mines, perhaps war stories in a fine calligraphy, perhaps cavalry hats with gold braids...Perhaps, the little gems of what used to be deemed stories, and perhaps still are. And perhaps there were, my new friend, perhaps there were.

Let me say this. The necklace, in *Sioux Falls*, which served as my infamous contribution to WebFilmery, the inanely deemed 'Symbolic Center' (certain to glitter in 8-color, to excess nowadays), this -- my great contribution to cyberart, was, for once, based on my life. There was indeed a curious and en captivating necklace lying in wait, like a coral snake, at the bottom of one of my grandmother's crates. And actually, yes: My sister and I were transfixed by it because of its peculiar color scheme. Greens, and dying, rustic brown-reds, turquoises, and ability to be opaque and shimmer at the same time. My sister layed immediate claim to it, and even routinely wore it around her neck for the short remainder of her life. This was, you may already be inferring, at a time nearly on the very brink of the revival of Superstonism. And of course, this may also my explain my own life-long affinity for Superstonism itself.
Vest. Celtar [RE-OVER]

Well, then, let me be so rude as to break in, and congratulate you, in in the least, on living in Nova Scotia. Is there indeed still a Nova Scotia -- that is, sociopolitically? Or is this a stupid question, directed to an irony-laden NOSTALGIC? I assure you, I am not being coy. I have never understood NOSTALGISM, and yet it grows and grows and grows, at least in our privileged mental sphere.

But yes, your interrogations are well-taken; I am not nearly so offended as you may think. Not nearly. In fact -- and somewhere on The Net, this is archived -- I have protested humbly, albeit loudly, dozens of times, yea hundreds, that I was not the 'author' of this or that. On some emissions, I was no more vital than the Transtech's -- less so. But at some point - woe, woe -- it was determined that I possessed a little 'to say,' about a great number of things, and this was a great rarity for the time, and made me a supposed Sage. I assure you that other epochs and generations would have scoffed at this, and not only at me, but at the idiocy of my Users.

I lay claim, personally, only to [ital] The Commentaries, which I calculate at a twelve-volume emission, voice, nine mega-volumes CompData. I have collaborated on many other emissions, but only as an old, fat man, who sits sideways on a chair with hemorrhoids and grumpy opinions. I assert that I am an 'expert' only on such broad disciplines as the old Age of Television/Ad, somewhat of OldTime literature and communication, and the same with cultural music as a pre-Collapse phenomenon. Otherwise, I neither confess nor crow with attribution to any other works. I have made suggestions as to what music 'meant' when Mediasts have asked me; I have shrugged and depicted 19th and 20th-C events and characteristics to Producers who have been void of such knowledge (I have taught INterMediasts to be 'cowboys,' and 'gangsters,' and 'astronauts,' and such, as you know). And I have been vastly overpaid for these slight efforts and nebulous services, although usually in technology which does not amuse me, or else in such contraband or esotericisms as Columbian coffee, cigars, young women, Protection Services, and heaps of other enticements which, unfortunately, do not coincide with my vices.
Would you care to contest anything specific, Nova Scotia? I enjoy a good argument, and can tell you are certainly up to it.

[Await]

TENAFLY, JOISEY. Tap: By: WALLY.<><><> PrimaWeb:

COMMENT:

<><><><> Vest. Celtar [RE-OVER]

ΔΔΔ

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE
OF BEST WISHES and CHEER
for all of you in '92
from
Kyle, Dinah, Skyler, Melissa, and Kassandra

We’ll needless to say, another hyper-busy year for the Underwoods! Pictured - yes - is our new home on Rodeo -- and yes, it sure is "further upkeep!" Those of you coming to visit soon: just head north up Woodland from our old digs, and Rodeo is the new lane heading east (only five homes on it so far), across from
the Old Trelor's Restaurant. (Remember when it was root beer and rollerskated servers? Ha. "Mony-Mony" is still Kyle and my favorite song. Are we dated, or what?)

Here's the obligatory update on our progeny:

Sky is now grousing his way through 7th Grade. ("Aw, Mom," this, and "Aw, Mom," that -- he has the soul of a skeptic, according to Kyle). Sissy is ever the one-year behind, Middle Child they always warned us about -- the class-clown, too! Kassandra now three. Boy. Is "handful" the proper word? We have been blessed, needless to say.

It's been a wonderful year for us. Kyle, as most of you know, is now in Operations Management, responsible for all regional actuarial and re-insurance in Region IV. It seems impossible that its been four years already since he went over to Fidelity from Principle.

Your present author is still unwilling to be the fulltime oldstyle housewife. Three three darlings are more than enough, but I just can't give up the need to "out there," too. I'm now out doing "part-time" (30 hours!) as a public rel. assistant for Marge Calloway at the local college. She is just a first-rate personality, and I just can't bring myself to say "No" to her!

Please: just a word of thanks, one more time, for those of you who have supported and fretted over me this past 18 months. I am fine, and there is no sign of recurrence. The doctors say there is less than 20% chance that my other breast will ever be affected. So yes, we are blessed, will be blessed, but mostly, we were blessed. And the most blessed thing is to have a lover-husband who always keeps you "moving on" to the next challenge in life!

We hope that you, too, are as blessed as we, and that you sincerly accept our best wishes for a magnificent new year!

The Underwoods

Δ Δ Δ
Republican Obituaries

Week of August 25

Henrietta May Glasser, 88, died at Mercy Hospital Tuesday after a long bout with cancer. She was preceded in death by her husband, Gene, in 1976 and is survived by two sons: Merle Glasser of Eagle Grove, and Ray Glasser, of San Diego, CA; and seven grandchildren. Services will be Friday at 10:30 a.m. at Holy Rosary Church in Fort Dodge. Burial will be at Staffords Cemetery near Gliddon.

Eldra May Stewart was born March 3, 1900, in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, and married Gene Cross in 1926, in Gliddon Iowa.

She was a homemaker and mother, and was a lifelong member of the First Methodist Church.

Dinah Faye Underwood, 36, of Fort Dodge, died at her home Friday after a long bout with cancer. She is survived by her husband, Kyle, and three children, Skyler Holbrook, Melissa Underwood, and Hayes Underwood, and by a sister, Kendra Paul-Petracca of Seattle, and by her mother, Adrelle Paul.

Dinah Faye Paul was born in Mitchell, South Dakota and moved with her family to Marshalltown in 1962. She graduated from Marshalltown High School in 1983, and from the Buena Vista Institute of Business. She was a realtor and worked in public relations, and was a member of Women in Business.

Services will be held at the First Presbyterian Church, in Marshalltown on Wed.; visitation will be on Tuesday after 5:30 p.m. Donations are suggested for The National Cancer Institute.

Burial will be at Memorial Park Cemetery there.

Eldron McCray, 80, of Otho, died at Mercy Hospital on Wednesday from heart failure. Services will be at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday at Earley Cemetery, Earley. Burial will be at Monmouth Cemetery.

Buck Granger was born in Hamilton and had lived there until moving to Stafford in 1949. He was a welder and auto mechanic for several years before retirement, and was a member of First Baptist Church, Stafford.

△△△

In my day we respected women, just as we kept the Commandments of the Lord. When I left to drive off the Indians, I sent Mary Stoddard, as was proper to not leaving a woman on the plains, back to Connecticut. I sold my
goods and horse and oxen so that she would be provided. There was no question of the respect for women in those days. Now this cur, this abominable flesh of my flesh, is no better than a billy goat. He lives his life like a billy goat. Like my own wretched begotten first son, he wants something to mount. But I am suspecting he is even worse than John Stoddard, or John Lewis, who was almost a god-fearer, compared to the other two. Lord. This is my condemnation, to see men behave like hot breeding stock.

Since this cur has driven me to him, I have watched his behavior. He arrives to his homeplace well after the darkest of midnight. There is no telling where he has been, but there is no curiosity to it. He stinks of drink, and drinks with comrade demons and imps, but he has found new diabolical imbibes. I do not bother to consider what these things might be. In general, I am proud to have successfully ignored these moderns, provided they have left me alone. Of course, there have been those few instances -- perhaps a dozen in a century. If there are other ghost, I wager that most have less patience than what is remains of William Whittlesley's.

But since he has drawn me, I have taken to waiting for him, inside his house or out. What are the walls to me? I sit on a bale of straw, watching stars and clouds, listening to owls. I hear the crunch of his machine on his long drive? What appeals to him to leave out here, in the country, as they now call it? He doesn't work with his hands. He doesn't drive mules. He's not pulled a weed nor driven a post. He hardly knows a steer from a heifer. Ugh.

If he arrives back with a giggling woman in tow, he mood is all a-cheer. He stagers and coughs and behaves like of which we used to say, 'He desires only to scratch his own back.' The woman, or girls is what they seem to me, little girls the better he likes it, they stumble and giggle with him. I march alongside, sternly. Although he seldom hears his old ancestor, I pray and beseech and complain all the same. I do not, as you know, Listener, any longer pray for his soul, but only for mine. This is not my doing, no matter my other sins.

I enjoyed immensely the one time, when I put out his lights, and he, frantic, was running about without even his yard light, looking for fuse boxes apparently, though he knows less than a fool about the magic of
electricity, climbing the main pole he was. Drunk. I nearly rose up with him, and knocked him ajar and down to the earth, to the death he deserves -- I say opening that I nearly killed him for the satisfaction of it, and I would have knocked him straight down onto his giggling wench.

They flop inside like animals; they fornicate themselves to sleep, or sometimes, as I pace, muttering, I hear them discussing little more than the nature of their own intoxications. It amazes me that such dunces can live in the world, and I have told myself that only a world calibrated for such idiots can sustain them. It is not only my great-great this-or-that, not only my clan. It is a dire civilization, a race which aspires to leisure, which was a quantity, in my day, held in great reserve.

Billygoating and grunting and squealing like pigs. Vile, vile smoking, of whatever grows in a ditch. Strange doings and philosophizings. I tell you, though. It was quite some time before I realized the curs feature themselves to be quite clever, 'inside' themselves, I think is how they put it. Inside themselves. I suspect their eyeballs have been mounted backwards, somehow or other, even though you can't tell a thing from the living pupils. They aspire to be orientals, I have figured. They are wordy, I will give them that.

If the rascal comes home without a woman, he proceeds directly to this infernal noise machine, the likes of which have not been seen on this earth during my life or a hundred years after. I have been acquainted with their airplanes and airports, and have toured the factories during such times as the machinery still interested me, but I have never heard such commotion, and when I first heard, it, I was assured that I would be reunited with folks from my time, who would resurrect out of nearby cemetaries and ask what the commotion was -- I certainly did. I cried out to you, Listener, that first time -- do you recall? I said, "Dear Lord, what in the world?" It was the most frightened I had been since I was first dead.

He uncorks this guitar from a case, as from a coffin. We stares at it with the closest thing to love. He turns the knobs, and waits for the connecting cords and glass tubes and such to heat up. Like a monster. The living dog and I, we move away. I do not understand what meaning he derives from this. He is like some sort of zulu or Indian, in a trance, calling to demons. Appealing to them. Squinting his face up, so that it no longer
even resembled a decent white man. He bangs and scratches on this thing, and wails, wails like a nigger. Wants to be a nigger, for a fact. I have sworn more than once, during these escapades, that this living ass scares me more than I him. And yet, other times, when he has seen me, and I have been certain that he sees me, I have been reassured, of the fear of the Lord.

Sometimes, I watch him sleep, through all the lifelong night, and far into the morning, after the sun has rose and good men would have been at good work. I try to tell myself that this is my son, or something of the sort. I search for signs in his eyebrows, or the curve under his lower eyelid, of Mary, or me, or my brothers and sisters in Connecticut, toiling rocking soil, or Father or Mother. And they are there, in the spirit of his flesh, within him, though he himself is dumb as a cow about such concerns, and the Lord's ways. He knows nothing of me, even if I told him, even if I stood up and said Boo! Of how we came back and settled here, in '64, or how I used to break prairie, or how Mother used to make a home out of logs and pots and dirt. He would not know if I told him. He knows nothing of my son, or his own grandfather, John Lewis, who was a fine man, the last of his line. He knows nothing of beginnings or ends or in-betweens. I watch him sleep, and I feel my lip begin to curl, and I hammer my thighs with my own fists. I look down at my own bony arms and my old man's veins, at my centuries past. It drives me to a fit. I throw the 'farmer fit,' as they used to call it.

ΔΔΔ

June 29, 1984

FROM: Marvin Holbrook (as I was known)
TO: Whoever

I apologize for this mess. Since I have worked clean-up jobs myself, I am not unaware that someone - someone - will have to take care of this. My only excuse, as to method, is that, like all people who do this, I wish to have final act of choice as to my exit. If you are interested, I did choose hanging or exphixiation (sp?)
because I deliberately wanted the Big Bang, and I did not want to out, just dozing off like an old man.

I wish this was a better letter.

I am not morose -- this is very strange, I assure you, as I write this. I have an amazing sense of euphoria and a lifting of weight. Here is what I can tell you -- even those of you who never thought I was sincere even though I always thought that I was (and who will forget about me three weeks from now anyway): I just got tired of being Mary Holbrook. Assuming that there are separate subjects and objects in that statement! Ha.

Do not grieve for me. Grieve for your own sorry fucking selves. Grieve that the bad rock 'n roll bands succeeded and the good ones disintegrated like Tolstoyean families. Grieve for the perpetration of television or the extinction of mirth. Grieve about your cravings for drugs and sex or the maya of existence, or grieve because your dad wasn’t Ward Cleaver. Whatever the fuck you want. Or yes, grieve because the dead are never around to accuse. I now join them at recess. I think that covers it.

Me, I'm grieving -- for a few seconds longer -- because I never achieved a personality. I was always trying to achieve a composite. It was a worthy composite, it was a snazzy one, but it was unobtainable. You should see the clarity I have achieved at this moment, even though I admit you can't tell from this letter. I think we have reached the end of language. I don't know why I say that, though.

But I ramble. Once again I violate my oath to myself. This was going to be 45 words.

Oh.

To Dinah.

There is love in the world. But it is obliterated by cheeriness, imitation, and romance. You were the only human I ever loved. I don't know why that was, obviously. There is not doubt it was a bad decision. But you see now, at least, that I had no reason to lie. When people love, and you do not love them reciprocally (sp?), it's ever so clear that their so-called loved is just some hedonism or masturbatory aid. I know this, I've been on both sides. But I would not be manipulative enough to tell you this in my suicide letter, just for the sake of a curse. I think I just want to win this argument, to get the last word. I admit this is
selfish. But then, you left me, and took my son away from me, and went off in the search of my diametric opposite. This was epic malice, in my opinion. I'm not going to tell you I forgive you, or even ask that you forgive me. There's a pretentiousness to everything people do now days. I'm not going to put myself on either side of it, in this letter, in my last words.

My last words. Hum. My last words, if you're interested, are:
THREE
TWO
ONE
WE HAVE LIFT-OFF.

Δ Δ Δ

This is a sad thing, vile and sad both. My own blood, is what it is. Spilled on concrete. The blood of lust. The blood of despair. This is the act of a long culmination, and I am the fool who sees the fruits of his sour tree. Perhaps I am Adam, or Noah and have forgotten. I have lingered and muttered through so many long days and dreary nights, calling myself damn-ed. I have endured fairly much, I still reckon, but yet -- this is merely my own estimation. I have worried the soil with my spirity footprints, and muttered much about virtue and toil. But I am not so important. Even God's beloved are damn-ed, for their own good, or for the sake of good entire. I myself have wandered in self-flattery, imagining that I was good enough to be damn-up. This is woe, indeed. I wish for little things in the stinging moments of such horror as this; little things, Lord. Teach me to speak to myself, again, like a human. Let me hear the voice of my boyhood, or one of my son's boyhoods. Please. I beseech.

I feel myself submerged as in water, as in the ocean. I thought that I would never sink so low as to see my grandson crushed like a bug under machinery, or the daughters of my grandsons abused. Or even, the belaboring of the land, the turning of the land into a slave for its own sake -- yea, this is slavery, the land itself in cultivation from fencerow to fencerow, in a state of pottery, for the sake of bankers. I have pretended to weep over these matters; I am a pretender to grief and indignation. But
these matters are too large for me, which yet I was old enough to should have known. Was...Is...Was. I have lost my tense.

A gun to the head. And a puff, and powder. And acrid stench. And the surprise of ghosts. No one to be surprised, but ghost.

*Other ghosts, will you not at least join me now. Cannot even the wretched grumblers and damned have company?*

This vast, dire surprise, that is we human animal and spirit. What we do to ourselves. I had not noticed it enough, even when I did nothing else.

Listener -- I have almost forgotten you for the past hour. What do you think of this kind of work? Of blowing oneself into Eternity, specifically? You know, as I did not quite, that this was another of my sons, whom I besmirched and harangued all his live-long life. A proper father was I.

Listener? I think this would be the proper time for me to behold you, whether you be angel or demon. If the latter -- or either way...this would be the good time for you to take me.

*I AM AGGRIEVED ABOUT THIS, do you hear? This was greatly awful, the more I consider it. I am not a queasy soul, would you say, would anyone accuse me? after all these years, being the sole audience to so much toil and chagrin and silliness and death? Could I be so accused? Of course not. But this was bad enough stuff, to have even heard about. This was better left to the Lord, to witness every little diabolical moment, the falling of every single wretched, dirty, unhappy sparrow. This has become too much.*

*Now I protest, is what I mean to say. Now I protest. I do indeed. I certainly do protest. my Lord and God. I take issue now. I take my stand. This is quite enough.*

For the purposes of it, I say that this was my son. And how many of my sons and daughters have I watched ground back into gristle and waste? I mean no disrespect, my dear Lord. But I do protest.

I...hmm. I. I fear that I am still anguishd beyond a soul's suitability. Here: I will hover here with this body, as seems proper. I will take over the vigil of the living, until replaced on my shift. Forgive me, Lord, I am still quite startled, I am still quite started. Possibly by the sharp sound. Possibly by the cur's resolve...no, the man's. This is not quite fair, how I have harassed him. He lies dead and confused, and I have been unfair. He trod the same rows as I. He did. He did. He did. I confess. I was not appreciative
of his anguish. And now his blood and scalp...and the underneaths...his scalp is peeled. I place my ghostly hand here, in respect and love...I am a hypocrite. There is a slope to his eyebrow which reminds me of my brother Matthew, whose grave I have visited every of 93 years. Listener, fear not: I will linger here with this dead boy. I realize he is mine. I can no longer fly him up, but I will cradle him.

I confess. I do confess. I hadn't the silliest idea, of spreading seed. I came here. I spread seed, Mary and me. We spread seed, without the slightest notion of posterity. We thought only of our will, and our creed. We did our best, I would like to insist.

These tender joints...what this used to be. So fiery, so short-fused. So proud. So aimless. I should have spoken to him, proper. Scolding has its limits. He flops, he flops! He smells warm, like a baby. These are somewhat like the shapes of my Uncle Eliphias' ears, for some reason.

I can raise him up. Listener -- take note. Flesh. My poor brother, my poor son, son of my flesh and bones. So ragged. Gone. Gone. Absent. Where lies the connection, and to what? I will follow, Listener. Let me follow my poor son, or let me share his damnation. I overstrained him thus. It was me, clearly. No one should oblige a ghost. I forgot to be distinct between fun and holy fire. No one should tolerate a ghost. Forgive this poor boy, forgive this poor boy. Do not forgive me: of course not. I would never accept it, in the first place. But forgive, forgive this poor progeny. Please forgive him. He knew not what he did. Listener, now, intercede. Intercede. Forgive. They are but boys and girls. Forgive, I say.

Oh, Jesus. Lord. Oh, Jesus, Lord. Yes. I will see. I will see you by my will alone. Take up this boy, my Lord. Please. Soon.

Forgive, forgive...

Δ Δ Δ

<><><><> Vest. Celtar [RE-OVER]

You are indeed a welcome guest, Tenafly Wally. Let me say that whenever my despair is near a certain, finally unbearable depth, I am always saved, uncannily, by the convergence with a clear-minded soul such as you, asking a dinosaur like me the veritable and pertinent questions. And secretly: this is all an
old man desires, even in Cyber: to pontificate to precisely the most delicious inquiries. You remind me, T. Wally, of the famous WEB-breaker I encountered some many megs ago, not only a soujourner from my own epoc, but a resident in three of the exact, pre-Collapse locales as I. She had trained her mind on the old media of books and print, as of course had I, and...perhaps you will understand, or not...was of a profession called 'geneeologist' in the days when people were compelled about such matters. In 'The Days of Oblivion and Hobbies,' is how I put it for one installment of Lives, though to very dim response, I believe. Now...I digress, the same way I breathe..this Breaker -- her transname, as everyone now knows, was Perpetua -- was possessed of a vast storehouse of analogue data about our dire ancestors, and particularly their lines of migration, from 17th-C to 20th. She had, this Perpetua, a vast and unbarterable storehouse of old, reliable Gist obtained from Retro digital search engines she had pilfered out of an old Calif.-Pac firm called MAGIC-SRCH...this is another story, which I am itching to tell. In any case, as respect for our similar pre-C lives, and new Netfriendship, she ran multiples for me on all my familiar Paul and Holbrook family codes. The patterns and subs of my Paul lineage, as they do for most people, proved indecipherable -- scattered, diasporic, to coin a word. But my male lineage was eerily, astounding traceable, and in fact, also startlingly.... circular. I have never been a good sleeper, but for three days after her initial Search, I did not sleep at all. But yet, it was not so much what Perpetua had obtained for me, as much as the heavy, leaden feeling which used to be widely employed -- or at least, I think, idiosyncratically in my youth -- by the term 'Fate.' Do you know this term, Tenafly?

<<<<<<<<<HOJOKER: Wally intersperces and requests that you not forget her other questions, which she transes are much more interesting to her.

<<<<<<<<< Celtar [Return]

Yes, and just so. But leave me sufficent rope for the tellings, and in return I avow not to yank on the tension...this is another old metaphor.

So. Yes. The mind, space, and the hand-wringing, 'goodness, what will happen to us without the satellites,' and blah-blah. I do not derogate...but, please. Conversation is a lost art. Storytelling is lost to us. I say: If the satellites fall, they fall. If the stars fall, they fall. The ancient, like me, are anxious about their eventual
obscurity, or the fallaciousness of past events, more than future apocolypse. You will understand this at my age. I am verbose, though it has done me well.

Now..according to the analogue and frayed archival material, Pepetua noted for me a traceable strain of what I shall call this 'Holbrook' identity, which engendered nearly 23 nit-megs of Peggonia's search, and which did not unravel...what is it called, now? -- Impeccible Sequencing -- until Oldtime origin point of 1623 -- [ital] near where I sit and grumble at this very instant, near Old New Haven. There was, at least according to these Old narrations, a Verified John Holbrook, an emigre from Old-Scotland. He left us, knowingly or not, Identia to the effect of being 'pious,' 'Congregational,' and, not surprisingly, a landowner. These terms are achieving obscurity, and I will not decipher them now,. But the data popped up sequence after sequence, in verifiable strands and probabalities, in a sort of propulsion -- this is how Perpetua described it to me -- after the initiation of these prime variables. So that , again perfectly Sequences, came hetero-male Holbrook after h-Holbrook, from New Haven to Middletown -- these are old site names in ConnMASS -- and then to New Britain, and then to Old, tragic Hartford. But then...my achivist still aghast as the PROB FACTOR box...recall those? ...continues to hover at 96, 97, 98%, never below, the path of data ancestry continues to flow and fill itself in, across the map of Old United States, like veins across a leaf, or a hand. John Holbrook's, and Matthew Holbrook's, and William Holbrook's...I forget them all. West they went, to Old-Ohio, Iowa, deriving a path paralleling in wonderous similarity to some of the premises of my own original Media conception for Sioux Falls. Did I know these factuals, at the writing of my first WEB-movie? Of course not...please, Tenafly Wally, do not start up some notion on any of the Consp. Nets. I am not congnicient, even though I am an avowed Superstitionist.

I will shorten this, though the telling never fails to excite me. Perpetua herself was so exited by such a tenacled, successful search, that she sent me hard copy, with much danger to the courier, all across what remains of Hartford. The packet arrived...I am always a recipient of something or other, am I not? Hmmm..the packet arrived in a plastic data-prop case, such as we used to store paper print-outs and Old 'office supplies.' And Peggonia had gone to the trouble, in greatly appreciated respect for me, to summate her own analysis and findings in the form of a SumPac, which I will post at the end of this NetCeremony.
YOU AND I ARE BECOMING OLD ADVERSARIES, AND THOUGH I HAVE
HEARD YOU ARE NOT WELL, I AM NOT ABOVE SUSPECTING EVEN THIS IS
MERELY ANOTHER OF YOUR NARRA-IMPLANTS AND STRATEGIES. AS ONE
OF THE LAST ORTHODOX HISTOR/PHIL'S, I HAVE MADE NO BONES ABOUT
MY VIEWS OF YOUR CHICANERIES. I HAVE SAID, I WILL SAY AGAIN: [BLD]
THAT THOUGH GOVERNMENTS, AND SYSTEMS, AND EVEN
WORLDS HAVE COLLAPSED, THIS DOES NOT ENTITLE THE REST
OF US TO REMAKE THE HUMAN MIND-STORY TO SUIT OUR
FANTASIES. AND THAT YOU ARE THE KIND OF MIND WHO KNOWS JUST
ENOUGH TO FABRICATE AND BE DANGEROUS.

YOU HAVE NOT PERSUASIVELY REFUTED THIS ACCUSATION,
THOUGH THIS IS MY 81ST OFFICIAL RECORDING THEREOF.

DO NOT OVERRIDE FOR A FEW NANOS YET.

I HAVE NOT COME TO REHASH THIS, BUT RATHER (AND PROBABLY IN
VAIN, MAY I SAY) TO INQUIRE IN A SPECIFIC MANNER, CONCERNING
MATTERS WHICH I BELIEVE ...,UIOkK, mk rble.

[restate] matters which I believe critical to human discourse, in what remains
of our tenure on this planet.

<><><> Steel [Return]

Have you previously found, Steel, that I am averse to questions?

<><><> Steel [Return]

NO. [cont.]

BUT INDEED, YOU ARE NEVER AVERSE TO TRANSING, AND FILLING
SPACE WITH CONVOLUTED WEBS. IT IS A SERIOUSNESS OF INTENT, AND A
TANGIBLE KNOWLEDGE, AND DEDICATION TO FACTUALITY, AND LUCIDITY
OF PURPOSE, WHICH HAVE PLAGUED YOU BY NOTABLE ABSENCE. (AS,
FOR INSTANCE WHEN YOU TRIED TO TELL SOME OF US THAT REASON IS A
MIRAGE, OR PLAYTHING OF MIND, WHEN IN FACT IT WAS THE VERY
DELIQUESCENCE THEREOF WHICH PRECIPITATED THE DIRE EVENTS BOTH YOU AND I HAVE BEEN WOE TO ENDURE.)

BUT STOP.

HERE ARE SOME EASY AND DIRECT QUESTIONS.

[1] SINCE YOU HAVE ASSERTED THAT WEB-CHARACTERS MUST 'BELONG' TO THEIR TRANSERS, WHILE YET MAKING NO PROVISIONS BETWEEN FACT AND FICTION, I THEREBY ASK THIS: HOW LONG WILL IT BE BEFORE A CHARACTER AND ITS TRANSER ARE INDISTINGUISHABLE TO THE REST OF US? -- I ASK THIS, OF COURSE, TO THE SO-CALLED 'FATHER' OF INTERACTIVE REALITY.

[2] WHICH CHARACTERS TO YOU ASSERT ART FACTUAL AND TYPICAL OF PRE-COLLAPSE ERA, AND WHICH ARE ARE YOUR FLIGHTLY FABRICATIONS OR POLEMICAL GRISTS?

[3] I ASK YOU ONCE MORE -- AS YOU HAVE EVADED THIS: WHAT IS YOUR JUSTIFICATION THAT HUMANS MUST 'ENTER' STORIES, AND AFFECT THEM, IN ORDER FOR THEM TO BE 'VALID,' THUS IN YOUR ARROGANCE SUPERCEDING 10,000 YEARS OF STORYTELLING AND AUTHORIAL AUTHORITY?

<><><><> Celtar [Return -- OVER-RIDE AFFIRM]

I do not believe, Steel, in my heart or old bones, that I have ever calculatated or connived, or preordained with any such motives as you impugn to me. Although I may be craftier than I confess to -- because we are all somewhat smarter than we think -- I am nevertheless much less ambitious than you nearly always presume.

But then..yes, it is true, I have never been an admirer of the supposed culture, or tradition, which preceded ours and then blew itself apart at the seems -- or was blown apart my Accident or Nature...I am indifferent to the cause-and-effect...but the loss of which [bld] you bemoan, and acribe to sabotage, or the indignation of the Old God. I did not believe in their so-called knowledge of my forebearer's geneation, and both you and I have lived to see the culmination of their technology and expertise. Even though, as I have confessed to the god of irony, we still employ it.

I recall -- and you recall that I have written about this -- being utterly unsurprised, and even vaguely unaffected by the conflagration of Old-Calif. Their fate was horror, indeed, but I think that we all discovered in our selves, as transy
and ghostly observers of the cosmos, also a sense of the theatrical, and perhaps the absurd, and perhaps mostly the *eventual*. Did 50 million people perish, or was it 75? And how many lakes and forests and fellow-creatures? I am not the statistician. But how many humans died before you or I were born?

<><><>< Steel [Return -- OVER-OVERRIDE AFFIRM]
I WONDER IF YOU WOULD BE SO KIND AS TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS AT HAND?

<><><>< Celtar [Return]
Yes. Well then, let me see. Perhaps I may at least respond according to the way my mind works.

<><><>< Steel [Return O-O-Oride]
YOU MAY NOT-

<><><>< Celtar [Return]
According to the way my mind works, yes.
The character of the foot soldier in *Sioux Falls*, whom so many Net’s have abhored, was based on archival’s to which, ironically, I have just alluded during this Celeb-Trans. He was fundamentaled upon an ancestor of mine whose name came up William Whittlesley Holbrook. It may indeed even have been his swords and boots and such paraphernalia which resided in my grandmother’s trunks, although of course we will never know. In collaboration with the now exalted Zu-Gu, I based his character appearance on my own, at a similar physical age -- i.e., about thirty. Of course, this is a cat-out-of-the-bag, since so many hundreds and thousands of Net’s have wondered about my own ‘real’ appearance. Many, many Interactors, by the way, have so despised this character, that they have entered the film with no other purpose than to kill him *En Scripto*, with no regard to the remainder of the possibilities of script after that. I have found this attitude distressing and tremendously confusing -- which is perhaps a reaction which you and I, Steel, may share, for once.

<><><>< Steel [Return O-O-Oride]
I, MYSELF, WOULD RATHER HAVE KILLED A FEW OF THE POMPOUS CHARACTERS IN YOUR [ital] LIVES FILM.

<<<<< Celtar [Return]
Yes, well. As you have said. Probably the character which was entirely based upon my father.

But you asked me for the 'justification' of Inter-Active, which seems to me a begged question.

Attention: Untitled Sequencation/Interruption/Motification
THIS MAY BE AN ERROR
Check all pre-08/08/12 softenwarren/software.
Check all slave/ware gen. or gen. currents.
You Have One Unauthorized Message.

<<<< Call Me: Mister Fixer
Boy: The killing is trivial, compared to the moments. That strut and fret. Shuffling madness.

You have been dreaming, I have noticed. I will not haunt you. Or not much.

I barely exist.
I would beware of the Indian girl. She is without humor.
Throw the necklace into the middle of the ocean. Or find a clear stream to do so.
Get thee to a Dakota. Or take it up to the moon, and deposit it deeply below a crater.

Rid of the necklace. Be rid of the necklace.