

**THE BLACK PILGRIMAGE**

**BY**

**AUGUSTUS SOL INVICTUS**

Copyright© 2016 by Augustus Sol Invictus

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the publisher, except by a reviewer, who may quote brief passages in a review. Any members of educational institutions wishing to photocopy part or all of the work for classroom use, or publishers who would like to obtain permission to include the work in an anthology, should send their inquiries to Augustus Sol Invictus, wherever he may be.

This book is dedicated to the rebels, the poets, the artists, the musicians, the seekers, and the philosophers of the generation now coming of age. May these words push you to create a better future, a brighter hope, a greater dream.



## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I thank my enemies for giving me the opportunity to overcome them and myself and to become what I was born to be.

I thank those friends who betrayed me for teaching me a valuable lesson about flatterers and sycophants, love and loyalty.

I thank the yellow journalists who have made me famous, before & after the Pilgrimage, and unwittingly made possible my entry into politics and my success in the long run.

I thank all the strangers who helped me from Florida to California, giving me rides, food, advice, medicine, and lodging.

I thank my family and friends who believed in me and supported me even when the world had turned to persecution.

I thank whatever gods may be for bringing me out alive.

## PREFACE

The notion of a Pilgrimage is a bit out of fashion these days. Modern society finds religion to be an inconvenient puzzlement at best and a dangerous anachronism at worst. Either the religious person is a dupe or a madman, for surely no sane and intelligent being could find fault with our secular way of life.

Given this cultural milieu into which America has stumbled, we tend to hide our religious experiences, lest we be mocked. We tend to downplay the wondrous, the mystical, the supranatural. Though countless Americans have seen angels and aliens, spoken with dead relatives, prayed to the saints, and played with Ouija boards, we all keep silent about it. We all know that there is far more to reality than what science pretends to know – and yet we fear the mockery of the spiritually blind.

Take an old analogy: A woman learns Greek at university. Now a graduate, she sits on a park bench and reads the *Dionysiaca*, an ancient epic by the poet Nonnos about the god-king of wine and madness. Those who witness this cannot hide their contempt: “She is pretending to read gibberish! What a fool!” they say, as they point and laugh. “Those aren’t even real letters!”

Those passersby in the park never learned Greek; and the secularists never learned to see the world as it is: a living, breathing organism far more vast and wondrous than any human being could hope to fathom in a thousand lifetimes, an infinite sphere of geysers and ghosts, of mockingbirds and murderers, of dreams and dungeons.

My purpose in writing and publishing this book during the course of my campaign for United States Senate is to make a political statement: Politics, being one of the most significant of human activities, must be informed by the spiritual. Should such a consequential endeavor as politics become purely secular (which seems to be the present trend), it would mark the end of human society and the beginning of a mechanized insect hive.

So I present to you, Dear Reader, the story of my Pilgrimage from my home in Florida to the Wilderness of the American West. I left Orlando assuming that I would die somewhere along the way; and yet I returned more alive than ever. Somewhere in the desert, a part of me did die – but it was that weak part in all of us that holds us back, that causes us to shudder and doubt.

I learned existentially in the desert what we all think we know intellectually: that one day we will die; that all the sorrows are but as shadows, they pass and are done; that what keeps us from realizing our potential is not the cruelty of the world but our submission to that cruelty.

These lessons are no less true in the political realm. For if we know – and do not fear – that one day we will die, then our submission to the bureaucrats and to the judges and to the lawmakers and to the several thousand other petty tyrants is no longer acceptable. What does their threat of death mean to one who greets death as a friend? And what do all their criticisms mean in the face of something so grand as death?

It is this spirit I wish to convey to you through the telling of this story. May you leave behind that weak part of you that holds you back. May you pursue justice without fear or hesitation.

Be strong. Fear not. And together may we call forth the sun to rise anew over this Sacred Land of America.

Augustus Sol Invictus  
Thornton Park, Florida  
31 January 2016 Imbolc

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. Public Enemy
- II. Land of Flowers
- III. Old South Proper
- IV. Confederate Graveyards
- V. Indian Territory
- VI. Wild West
- VII. The Mojave
- VIII. American Nile
- IX. Mountain Lying Down
- X. Revolutions
- XI. Public Servant



## I. PUBLIC ENEMY

When I was a little boy, I wanted to be a writer. In the third grade, I won my school spelling bee, and the principal gave me a brand new, bright red, Webster's Dictionary, which I still have to this day. In the fourth grade, I won the award for "Best Illustrator" in a book-writing contest. I wrote books all the time.

I also *read* my share of books. I read books by flashlight after my parents were sure I was asleep. I took copious notes on books about dinosaurs and genetic mutation and Jane Seymour with her chimpanzees. Having few friends (and none of them close), I suppose books were my connection to the world.

Or maybe they were my escape from the world. Or maybe I just enjoyed doing something I was good at. We may never know.

What I do know is that somewhere along the line, I came to doubt the importance of words in real life. The more command I gained over the English language, the more difficult it became to communicate with others. What's more, in studying history and human psychology – both in books and in direct experience – I learned that human beings, like bears and dogs and all other manner of beast, listen not to reason but to force.

If men listened to reason, the world might be ruled by professors. In point of fact, the world is ruled by politicians, bankers, businessmen, lawyers, and other unreflective bullies, not because the world is unjust, but because of a basic fact of life: the human experience is not primarily intellectual.

All the books in the world do not mean one whit in the face of a loaded gun. Five doctorate degrees would hold no power over a five-star general. And all of Plato's discourses are meaningless ink to a man whose family is starving.

The further I sojourned into adulthood, the further I was from believing in the importance of words. I regretted on countless occasions that I had wasted so much time reading and writing and debating and pondering. All that time would have been much better spent pursuing money, fame, women, *power* – the things that *mean* something in this world.

Imagine my surprise, then, when I learned that the FBI and several Florida law enforcement agencies were searching for me because of an open letter that I wrote. This 800-word letter had me be banned from my graduate school,<sup>1</sup> turned me into a fugitive from the FBI, and even caused my expulsion from a charity board a year and a half after the fact.

The thought of Government agents investigating someone for criminal acts because of a writing evokes images of medieval England. The thought of being banned from one's Alma Mater because of a writing evokes images of Darwin's books being burned at Oxford. These are things

---

<sup>1</sup> I am banished from Rollins College in Orlando, Florida for life because of the letter.

we assume to be the vicious barbarism of ages past, things that simply cannot take place in modern America.

If ever I doubted the importance of the words I loved as a boy, I was now shaken free of the ignorance of adulthood. A mere letter had turned me from a promising, young attorney to a suspected terrorist within the space of an hour. That letter read as follows:

To the Grey World of Man:

They say that only failures become revolutionaries; that those who perpetrate violence in the name of a great cause only do so because they have failed at everything else in life. In other words, they only become revolutionaries because they have achieved nothing of value in the “real” world.

Witness ye the glory of my life at 29 years of age: I have four children, each of whom should be the envy of every parent in the world; I have attained a Baccalaureate Degree in Philosophy with honors; I have attained a Doctorate in Law, *cum laude*; I have acquired licenses in the profession of law in the States of New York, Illinois, and Florida; I am scheduled to acquire two more such licenses in North Carolina and Massachusetts; I am Editor-in-Chief of a poetry journal; I run an independent publishing company; I have opened my own law office in downtown Orlando; I am an MBA candidate; and I have accomplished a few other things that will remain off the record for now.

I am of genius intellect and cultured, well-educated and creative, well-mannered and refined. I am God’s gift to humankind where the English language is concerned, and I also happen to have a basic knowledge of Latin, Greek, French, Spanish, and Italian. I am musical and artistic; I am athletic and possessed of militant self-discipline; and I am many other things. I have a Cadillac and a poodle, multiple computers and a personal library; I live in an apartment downtown, right across the street from the courthouse; I have been to Paris and Vancouver, to Cairo and Dubrovnik, to Mexico City and Siracusa. I dress better than all of you, pronounce my words perfectly, and have a winning, professional handshake. I am everything you ever wanted to be.

I challenge any of you, then, to accuse me of being a failure in this artificial civilization of yours. For it is beyond dispute that I have played your petty game, and I have won.

But your game no longer holds any interest for me. Your architecture is vapid and worthless, as is your decadent culture, the mindless drivel you call music, the filth you call democracy. You waste your lives watching pure excrement on television, shopping at the strip malls, planning your vacations to resorts and theme parks. The Internet, with its infinitude of information, is used for reading celebrity gossip and watching sitcoms. You have begun to reduce argument to memes and

human communication to trite sound bites. Life has become trivial – and if you cannot feel the human spirit decaying, you are already dead.

As for those in the profession of law: The vast majority of you are nothing more than parasites. The only reason you eat, the only reason you can afford to have roofs over your heads, is that the lives of others have been ruined by the very laws and social order you claim to be legitimate. You feed off others like worms, and were this world and their lives just and in order, you would be out of work. Look upon your lives, and repent.

This modern civilization of which you are all so fond deserves naught from me but the violence of my contempt; and if you were strong enough, you would hold the same contempt and turn your torches upon the world as I shall.

#### WITNESS YE MY RENUNCIATION:

I hereby renounce my licenses to practice law, my diplomas, my affiliation with Rollins, DePaul, and the University of South Florida, my United States citizenship, my membership in the Roman Catholic Church, my law firm, my publishing company and poetry journal, and all of my material possessions.

To those who believe that this great renunciation is evidence of mental illness rather than the initiation of a spiritual journey: If my example stirs nothing in you, if you can see no further than the confines of what your secular humanism and its hallowed psychiatry allow, then there is nothing I can say to you that would wake you from your slumber. You are less than the beast in man. You are fungi. Would to God that you pass quickly from this Earth.

#### HEAR YE MY FINAL WORDS IN PEACETIME:

I have prophesied for years that I was born for a Great War; that if I did not witness the coming of the Second American Civil War I would begin it myself. Mark well: That day is fast coming upon you. On the New Moon of May, I shall disappear into the Wilderness. I will return bearing Revolution, or I will not return at all.

War Be unto the Ends of the Earth,

AUGUSTUS SOL INVICTUS  
ORLANDO, FLORIDA, USA  
XX APRILIS MMXIII SATVRNVS

About an hour after publishing the letter, I was informed by a friend that the authorities had been contacted. I left immediately for the mountains of North Carolina with a duffle bag, a knife, two firearms – and a stack of books.

It was nearing sunset the next day when I finally arrived. I drove to a spot in which I could leave my car and walk into the mountains. Dreading what was to come, I folded a once-white flower in a letter I wrote to my children:



To My Family:

We used to play with these when I was a little boy. I wanted to send you this as a reminder of me from the mountains – but by the time I had carried it back to where pen and paper were, it had all blown away, and only the stem now remains. Remember the fragility of life, and do not take it for granted.

I know, children, that you do not understand why this had to happen. I am having trouble grasping it myself. What I have always hoped of myself is to set an example for you, and I wrongfully assumed that the world around you would see this for what it is: a religious renunciation. Yet by the time you are grown I fear

that you will see this in a much different light, and I cannot stand the thought of that.

Your lives will never be easy like those around you. None of you were destined for a life of comfort and inanity. You were born for greatness, and to achieve greatness we must suffer. Take heart, then, and take solace in knowing that you were destined for something more.

I wish I could tell you that everything is going to be alright. I wish I could tell you exactly when I am coming home. But I have no way of knowing anything of the sort. I can only tell you that I love you all dearly, that I wish you the greatest happiness, and that I hope to see you all as soon as possible. Be strong, and help your mother. She needs you now more than ever.

Night falls upon these mountains soon, and I must be going. I miss and love you all. I am very sorry that our goodbye and this letter were both so painfully short.

#### AUGUSTUS SOL INVICTUS

I then sealed the letter in an envelope, placed a stamp on it, and wrote a note to whomever might have found my car, something to the effect of, "Please deliver this letter to my family. Thank you."

That night in the Wilderness was my first night spent outside of human civilization – ever. I had never been so much as camping before setting out on this adventure. And though I had been homeless once before, I had the "luxury" of sleeping in my car back then. Sleeping on stone in the mountains under the stars was a totally new experience for me.

On the journey there I thought to myself repeatedly – in the hope of reassuring myself – that this was what I had always wanted, to be outside of civilization; that all those years of feeling out of place and frustrated with artificiality were over; that God had called and I had answered – and this was the beginning of my real life, the life I had been waiting for since adolescence.

And yet, the night before, when I awoke in the car to the brutal realization that I was too cold to sleep and had no blanket, I found those reassurances to mean very little, and I thought to myself that this was easily the stupidest thing I had ever done.

The final lines of my journal entry that first night in the mountains read as follows:

"A strong wind blows. I feel the Holy Spirit about me and know now why the ancients saw the wind as divine.

"May the Goddess protect me, and may I be forgiven by those I have wronged."

## II. LAND OF FLOWERS

I mentioned my love of books; I did not mention my personal library, which was at the time of the letter over a decade in the making. I have never counted the titles, but I have eleven bookcases full of tomes on philosophy, poetry, religion, politics, magick, warfare, history, and law.

Many have advised me to get rid of my collection, which is difficult to lug around from home to home each time I move. Besides, books are digital now, so why bother with hard copies? But I have kept them for two reasons: for my personal reference when writing, and for my children to inherit.

Despite owning a book or two on wilderness survival, I had no survival training and did not really expect to make it out of the Pilgrimage alive. And so, assuming I would probably die, I made arrangements for the distribution of my possessions. Certain of my friends had promised to hold my library in trust until my children came of age. They were to move the library from my abandoned apartment, and the price for their use of the library in the intervening years was that they would help Luna – my ex-wife and the mother of my children – to settle my affairs in my absence.

But these arrangements fell through. It is more accurate (though less kind) to say that my friends were no friends at all; that they abandoned me and my family in our darkest hour; that they were so afraid of being investigated by the FBI that they forgot all bonds of loyalty and abdicated all promises of assistance.

The offending letter was published on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April; Thursday the 9<sup>th</sup> saw the New Moon of May. That meant I had a solid twenty days before my officially scheduled departure for the Wilderness. Within that twenty-day interim, I returned to Florida to settle my affairs myself.

I packed my library and put it into storage. The books my children could understand, I gave to them. I gave possession of everything else to Luna, either to keep or to sell.

Of course I could not tell another soul that I had reentered Florida. Not only would it be unwise to let my whereabouts be known by anyone outside my family, but I also could not endanger anyone by allowing the FBI to think that my friends were somehow helping me to commit acts of terrorism.

I packed my bag very slowly on the afternoon of Thursday the 9<sup>th</sup> of May. Then I ate dinner with Luna. Then I showered. I was, consciously or unconsciously, stalling my departure for as long as possible. I was not excited to leave but reticent, and half-hoping for some unmistakable sign that the next day would be a more fortuitous one for setting out. But that sign never came.

I said my goodbyes to my family and put on the baggage. Luna was crying while telling me I would be fine, and that I would be home soon.

It took only about a half-mile to realize that I had packed far too much weight. But there was no turning back, so I began to sing.

My reasoning for walking instead of simply getting a rental car is that I viewed the Pilgrimage as a Dionysian task: for Dionysus traveled from Greece to India on foot, so far as I know, and in his wanderings was his divinity found.

After running out of songs to sing, then, I began to sing a loud, repetitive mantra:

### EVOE DIONYSOS

I stopped at an exit to buy a Heineken. Walking back onto the Interstate, trudging along, swigging my beer intermittently betwixt chants of EVOE DIONYSOS, it was not long before a truck pulled over in front of me. The driver did not signal me or even look my direction when I walked by the truck, so I kept going. But then he pulled up beside me and asked whether I wanted a ride. I sure did.

I put my bag in the back and sat down up front. He asked me where I was headed, and I said, "California, actually. But I'll go however far you're going." He asked what I had to do out there, and I told him I was going on a vision quest in the Mojave Desert.

He dropped me off at a truck stop. We never exchanged names, but I said thank you and we parted company. This was my first hitchhiking experience ever, but it would be far from the last.

Rather than stay at the truck stop as he suggested, I began walking toward the Interstate once more. But when I got to the onramp, I looked up and saw that beauty that cannot be seen in Orlando or Chicago: the stars, myriad in number, shining like divinity through the trees. Overwhelmed by the beauty, I decided to go no further and laid out my sleeping bag up the hill beneath the trees.

The dawn was cold. And the Sun rose inexorably, uncaring for my exhaustion. I awoke reluctantly, defecated in the open air for the first time in my life, stretched, and began my walk again about 7:30am.

Perhaps an hour to an hour and a half into my walk, an SUV pulled up behind me and honked its horn. Enter Bryan.

Bryan was just leaving Tampa, where he had been base jumping. A few days earlier he had been base jumping from a new bridge in Mexico. He said you have to be proficient in skydiving before anyone would teach you how to base jump, and in fact he was on his way to skydive just then.

I told him I had never been skydiving, and in fact I hate flying altogether. I told him of my journey to the Mojave, and he was sincerely impressed. We spoke of synchronicities: he, for the last ten years or so, has seen the number 220 recurring everywhere. This information came about

when I said I had left with only 220 dollars; and when he told me of his synchronicity experiences, I started telling him about Liber CCXX: *The Book of the Law*.<sup>2</sup>

It was fate that we should meet, then. And it seems he had the same notion, as he offered to pay my fare if I wanted to go skydiving. My initial reaction was to laugh, but, realizing that this meeting was ordained by the gods, I agreed. We kept on trucking to Palatka.



Upon arrival, four of us piled into a plane half the size of a family car. Actually, the pilot made five. The plane began to move, and I began to prepare for death. Everyone else looked perfectly at ease: they had done this thousands of times. But I had flown thousands of times, and I never trusted airplanes; and the terror washed over me as I began to realize how soon I would be ejected from one.

Halfway up, an old man of about eighty years of age jumped. He just jumped right out of the plane and disappeared. Then there were three. And I couldn't fathom how he could do such a stupid thing. I continued to steel myself for death.

---

<sup>2</sup> *The Book of the Law* is the foundational Holy Book of my religion, Thelema. It is called *Liber CCXX* (Latin for "Book 220") because it has 220 verses.



The plane climbed ever higher, giving me all the time in the world to panic. And finally the door swung open. Bryan went first, then me and the instructor. I stood upon the step and faced death: I knew my time had come. The instructor pushed off, and I began chanting EVOE DIONYSOS. I opened my arms too early and threw us into a spin, but I kept chanting.

Eventually we made it safely to the ground. It was a beautiful day, the landing was perfect, and I walked away alive and unharmed.

Bryan was asked to stay and film the next two jumps, so I had plenty of time to read *American Earth*<sup>3</sup> and work on my sunburn.

We left about 3:00pm. But Bryan was not returning to Gainesville – which was my intended destination – or anywhere near I-75. So I had the choice of walking back that way or traveling with him to Jacksonville, which is where he calls home.

That is also the home of my best friend, Jason. Having missed Jason’s birthday a few weeks before, and not being too particularly fond of Gainesville anyway, I decided to accompany Bryan to Jacksonville.

Along the way, he suggested something a bit crazy. “You should tell your story on camera,” he said. To that point I was torn between wanting everyone to continue thinking I was dead, and releasing a statement berating My Fellow Americans for the cowardice and stupidity demonstrated in their reception of my open letter.

But Bryan changed my mind about all that. He convinced me that telling my story and keeping a video log on the internet would inspire others – It would inspire them *to do great things*, he said. And I realized that he was right; and I realized how much more positive this avenue could be, especially in contrast to telling the world to shove off; and I realized that this was why the gods should have us meet: that I might overcome my worst fear, and that I might move from lambasting humanity to inspiring humanity. And so I agreed.

We stopped by his house to pick up a tripod and a solar-powered battery charger for my phone in furtherance of the video journal. I met his beautiful, wonderful, delightful wife and daughter. His daughter showed me how she could detach and reattach her thumb, and I taught her how to take quarters out of people’s ears. Bryan dropped me off at Jason’s house, and I thanked him profusely.

Jason came home about fifteen minutes later, beers in hand. I told him that I had left for the mountains three weeks earlier, snuck back into Florida to move my belongings, and began walking to the Mojave Desert – and that in the past twenty-four hours I had hitchhiked for the first time, slept on the side of the road like a vagrant, and gone skydiving. We drank and talked for a few hours, but I began to nod off about 9:00pm.

---

<sup>3</sup> *American Earth: Environmental Writing Since Thoreau* (Bill McKibben, ed.) (2008)

I spent the next morning composing a second address to the Grey World of Man, announcing the undertaking of the Pilgrimage. A Supervisory Special Agent of the FBI had emailed me, asking my whereabouts:

Dear Augustus Sol Invictus,

We want to check on your welfare. A number of people who know you have expressed concerns about you after your Facebook postings – specifically your address, “To the Grey World of Man,” and your subsequent disappearance. I have a duty to follow up on concerns like these that are brought to my attention. Winter Park Police Department contacted us and let us know they spoke with your mother and that you left a voicemail [with the police department]. A considerable amount of time has elapsed since then. Are you alright? Would you be willing to contact me? If you truly are on a religious pilgrimage we respect that and do not want to disturb you. Please let us know you are alright and if we can help you.

Respectfully,

Supervisory Special Agent G\_\_\_\_. T\_\_\_\_.

I responded:

Dear Special Agent T\_\_\_\_.,

I find it conveniently timed that you should write me as soon as I disappeared from the areas covered by your surveillance vehicles. I also find it disconcerting that the Winter Park police would tell me that I would be left alone if I would “just give [them] a call to let [them] know [I’m] still alive.” I have no reason to contact you: I have broken no laws, and considering the aforementioned misrepresentations by law enforcement, you cannot be trusted.

But worry not: tomorrow I will be publishing a second letter, and you will know exactly where I am and where I am going, so there is no need to tell your boss that you have lost track of me.

To address your inquiries, yes, I am perfectly fine, and yes, this really is a religious pilgrimage, both of which facts you already know full well, assuming you are not completely incompetent at your job.

In the meantime, betwixt now and whenever it is that I actually break a law, I would appreciate it if you would stop surveillance and check-up calls on my friends and family. After all, the American public might become outraged knowing that you were spending so much time and keeping such close tabs on a religious pilgrim, even a pagan one.

War Be unto the Ends of the Earth,

Augustus Sol Invictus

I did not hear from him again until a BOLO<sup>4</sup> was issued for Yours Truly in January the following year – but that is another story.

Jason took me to Academy, an outdoors store, where I bought a tent and water purification tablets. We returned home to drink, eat dinner, drink more, play music, and watch *Into the Wild*.

The next morning I announced to the world the coming Pilgrimage:

Greetings to the Grey World of Man,  
& to those faint lights therein  
who would burst into flames.

I would like to begin by quoting Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, which has been my favorite book since I was 14 years of age:

“When Zarathustra was 30 years old, he left his home & the Lake of his home & went into the mountains. Here he enjoyed his spirit & his solitude, and for ten years did not tire of it.”

It was this experience of solitude that led Zarathustra to recommend the same to his disciples, to the Creators of new values & Destroyers of the World of Man. He said to us:

“Far from the market place & from fame happens all that is great: far from the market place & from fame the inventors of new values have always dwelt.

“Flee, my friend, into your solitude: I see you stung all over by poisonous flies. Flee where the air is raw & strong.

“Flee into your solitude! You have lived too close to the small & the miserable. Flee their invisible revenge! Against you they are nothing but revenge.

“No longer raise up your arm against them. Numberless are they, and it is not your lot to shoo flies. Numberless are these small & miserable creatures; and many a proud building has perished of raindrops & weeds. You are no stone, but you have already become hollow from many drops. You will yet burst from many drops. I see you wearied by poisonous flies, bloody in a hundred places; & your pride refuses even to be angry. Blood is what they want from you in all innocence. Their bloodless souls crave blood, & so they sting in all innocence. But you, you deep one, suffer too deeply even from small wounds; and even

---

<sup>4</sup> “Be On the Look Out”: A law enforcement bulletin notifying other law enforcement agencies of a dangerous person

before you have healed, the same poisonous worm crawls over your hand. You are too proud to kill these greedy creatures. But beware lest it become your downfall that you suffer all their poisonous injustice.

“They hum around you with their praise, too: obtrusiveness is their praise. They want the proximity of your skin & your blood. They flatter you as a god or devil; they whine before you as a god or devil. What does it matter? They are flatterers & whiners & nothing more.

“Often they affect charm. But that has always been the cleverness of cowards. Indeed, cowards are clever! They think a lot about you with their petty souls – you always seem problematic to them. Everything that one thinks about a lot becomes problematic.

“They punish you for all your virtues. They forgive you entirely – your mistakes.

“Because you are gentle & just in disposition you say, ‘They are guiltless in their small existence.’ But their petty souls think, ‘Guilt is every great existence.’

“Even when you are gentle to them they still feel despised by you: and they return your benefaction with hidden malefactions. Your silent pride always runs counter to their taste; they are jubilant if for once you are modest enough to be vain. That which we recognize in a person we also inflame in him: therefore, beware of the small creatures. Before you they feel small, & their baseness glimmers & glows in invisible revenge. Have you not noticed how often they became mute when you stepped among them, & how their strength went from them like smoke from a dying fire?

“Indeed, my friend, you are the bad conscience of your neighbors: for they are unworthy of you. They hate you, therefore, and would like to suck your blood. Your neighbors will always be poisonous flies; that which is great in you, just that makes them more poisonous & more like flies.

“Flee, my friend, into your solitude & where the air is raw & strong! It is not your lot to shoo flies.

“Thus Spoke Zarathustra.”

And so, when three weeks ago I published a letter renouncing my life & denouncing your artificial world; & when immediately a great number of fools interpreted that letter to mean that I was about to go on a shooting rampage; & when those fools decided to involve the FBI, the FDLE, & the Central Florida police departments in the matter; I left immediately for the mountains in Asheville, North Carolina.

From that point forward, I was largely content with allowing you all to shriek like scared chimpanzees, to believe that I had simply died in the woods. And then something spectacular happened.

Having begun the Black Pilgrimage to the Desert, I was walking down the interstate when a truck pulled up beside me & the man inside offered me a ride. For his own safety & peace of mind, I will call him Hermes, for verily, he was a messenger of the gods.

In speaking with Hermes I came to learn that he had just returned from Mexico; & I came to divulge to him that I was on my way to the Mojave on a vision quest. In our conversations together, I came to see my beneficent companion as an oracle; and, Hermes being the messenger of the gods, I followed his direction. A day, a skydive, & several hundred miles later, Hermes suggested that I tell the story of my Pilgrimage on camera, so that I might inspire others to undertake great deeds. And because I had come to see him as my spiritual guide, I agreed.

As I said, I was content with allowing you all to guess indefinitely whether I was dead or alive, whether I was going to bomb a convention center or massacre a herd of idiot lawyers; but I have come to see that those petty & cowardly minds who would interpret the mystic renunciation as a threat against their personal comfort & safety are simply not worth my time. Neither are those who, with the maturity of five-year-olds on the playground, would make fun of my use of ampersands or the scars on my face because they have no real argument against anything I have said. So please do me a favor & forget about me. Go back to your offices, pretend that your compromises & your hourly community service will make a difference in the world, & have fun at Disney or Six Flags or wherever your mediocre lives might take you. I am done with you: you will no longer serve even as my entertainment.

No, this message is for your children: this message is for your sons who will bear arms in my wars, for your daughters who will be celebrants in my orgies; it is for those millions surrounding you who have not bought into your Grey World of bureaucracies & salaried positions, who are angry with the lies you have tried to sell them just because you have found comfort in a trite & unjust game in which you & I were winners. So please turn off this video immediately, forget about me, & go back to sleep.

Now, for those of you who want something more out of life than what you have been sold by the media, the government, your teachers & parents & bosses: for those of you who value love & wonder & art & glory & would brave the terror of life & the discomfort of being apart from the herd: for those of you who, with great hearts & great souls would abandon all to achieve great deeds: it is for you I speak; it is for you I set this example.

As of today I am not in the mountains of North Carolina but in the outskirts of Jacksonville, Florida. From here I will walk to the Mojave Desert in Southern California, where I will spend seven days in solitude. Then I will walk to the Grand Canyon, where I will spend seven days in the Abyss. Then I will spend seven days in the forest, at which point my time in the Wilderness will be concluded.

Then, should I survive, will I bring Holy War to the Earth; then will my acolytes bring the color of fire & wine to this Grey World. Then shall my vision of the future be unveiled, the ways of the ancients resurrected, & the Life Eternal made present for Man.

Until then, my friends, be strong, fear not, & may the blessings of the Goddess be upon you.

I then prepared for my departure.

### III. OLD SOUTH PROPER

My first journal entry back on the road was on Georgia's border with Florida:

I set up the tent here two and a half hours ago. Since then I have been lying in the same position, unable and unwilling to move. It is only now that I have found the strength to begin writing, and even so, I am writing in my pocket notebook because I am too exhausted to unpack my bag and get the real notebook.

It is indisputable that a man experiences more in one mile on foot than he does in ten miles in an automobile. But the question is whether this is desirable, especially on a Floridian highway. After a brutal walk underneath the Southern sun, I finally reached the Georgia border about 4:00pm. At that point I went beneath the bridge to camp, as was suggested by the man who drove me the final three miles; but I ended up choosing the wrong side of the River, and the flies were intolerable. So I crossed the River, walked a bit further until I found a ditch a little ways from the road that borders a forest, and I collapsed there. The flies there were intolerable, too, and so I set up the tent immediately.

I then spent the aforementioned two hours lying on the floor of the tent, sleeping intermittently, wondering why things had to be the way they were. Dionysus didn't have to contend with the Floridian sun, and I'm pretty sure he had an army and horses and wagons and whatnot. And there I was, filthy, alone, my feet blistered, my body aching, exhausted, and hot. I was awaiting the mercy of the Goddess: an overcast sky, the miraculous appearance of a savior, the discovery of a fund established by well-wishers so that I could shower at a hotel. But in that moment, my devotion was pure suffering, and I could not but wonder about the possibility of waiting in Folkston for Jason to come pick me up.

But alas, I advertised to the whole world that I was walking to California. And what the world needed was an example, not a fraud. This I knew.

On Sunday, Jason and I had gone to the mall to buy a book on edible and inedible plants. There I saw an advertisement for Miss Dior: Natalie Portman, with her back turned toward the crowd, looked over her shoulder at me, gracefully, almost seductively. And I wanted to give this all up. I wanted to embrace civilization with fullest fervor, make all the money I possibly could, and live a life of glamor.

And I thought of that as I lay there on the floor of that tent by the river, about the wonders and beauty of civilization. But can Paris not exist without the grey slums surrounding? Can we not have the magic of Disney in Orlando without ten thousand strip malls? How is it that we can achieve beauty without building it upon trash? This, O Man, is your task.

I lay in that tent for almost fifteen hours. And then I felt the temptation to camp there all damn day so as to avoid getting on the road. But I got up about 7:45am, ate a Cliff bar, drank some water – and began getting new clothes, my toothbrush, etc.

The sky was overcast. My prayers had been answered.



At the grocery store in Folkston I met a girl named Emily. She was beautiful, with long, straight, blond hair and large, innocent brown eyes. She was as bashful as a legendary Southern belle, and thrice as lovely. Somewhere along that desolate highway I came to think of what bliss any man should have in settling down in a town like Folkston and marrying Emily. Somewhere along that desolate highway I came to wish that I could go with my family to Downtown Disney for an evening, come to miss the lush grass and flowing fountains of the Land of Flowers. Aye, there is much beauty in the world. And only then did I realize that my attacks on human civilization should have been better aimed, should have targeted human nature instead.

Later that day, the sun came out in full force. I wondered what it felt like to be dying. Was it something different from exhaustion? What does a heat stroke feel like?

I did not know how many miles I had walked, but it was probably less than ten. And yet the desolation of the road to Waycross made it feel as though the pavement, the shadeless shoulder, and the sun's blazing heat would last an eternity. I felt the need to vomit, but intellectually that seemed like a bad idea. Still, I didn't know how long I could hold off on that. I was also having trouble rationing my water, such that there was no doubt in my mind that I would run out in the next 30-mile stretch to Waycross.



It was no longer the Desert I feared: staying put for seven days was going to be a vacation by the time I got there. No, at that time my fear was never making it to the desert at all – or never even making it to Waycross. In retrospect, training for the Pilgrimage might have been a good idea.

A black man pulled over and picked me up, drove me ten miles. His name was Kelvin, and he was a Christian. In fact, God told Kelvin to stop and pick me up. This fact he divulged when I told him of my Pilgrimage, which I also told him was pagan. He said that what I was doing was out of the ordinary, that I was following the path of Jesus, and that my Pilgrimage was holy. “God will honor that,” he assured me.

It goes to show that there is One God, and He transcends all religions.

Kelvin followed the direction of his God, and I thanked his God and my Goddess. He took me about ten miles north, so I was then just shy of twenty miles south of Waycross. After walking another mile, I found some shade and decided to rest.

Beneath those trees I wondered how it was that the armies of Sherman and Napoleon could march thirty miles per day with their gear under brutal conditions. The answer took a few minutes to come to me, but finally it did: Perhaps they were not caffeine-addicted weaklings spoiled by lives of luxury, as I certainly was.

My journal at 4:26pm read:

Hell is a stretch of highway in South Georgia, where compassion does not exist, and even the gods seem merciless. There is no shade from the sun, save whatever part of my flesh is least sunburnt. The sound of passing automobiles, the caress of the wind, the taste of water, all make me nauseous.

Out here I am alone: it is only me and my weaknesses.

In the late afternoon, as I lay half-dead on the side of the road, I began to think of how much better things would be when I finally made it to Waycross: I would shower, I would drink grape juice, I would sleep without the sickening sound of passing freight trucks.

And then I thought: Weren't things supposed to be so much better *out here*? Wasn't I supposed to be enjoying the silence and the solitude, the fresh air, the communion with nature? Certainly I was thankful not to hear the faux valley girl accents of fattened, gossip-minded Orlando girls interrupting the silence; but I would have killed a man for a bottle of grape juice. And on a twenty-mile stretch of road without shade, Nature seemed no longer a friend with whom one longs to meet, but an enemy one longs to escape.

I thought back to the essay in *American Earth* on the death of the great American cities<sup>5</sup>: Had I sentimentalized Nature? Have I, a product of the American suburb, come to see Nature as something it is not? Did I mistake purity for peacefulness? Or desolation for purity? Certainly an

---

<sup>5</sup> Jane Jacobs, “The Death and Life of Great American Cities” (1961)

egregious error had been made somewhere along the way, because I honestly thought I might die on that road.

About 7:30pm, as the sun's power began finally to abate, I learned the literal meaning of "going the extra mile." For about a mile to a mile and a half ahead of me was a wood that looked as though it may be suitable for camping. So I summoned all my strength, and I began the walk.

It could not have been more than a few minutes before my guardian angel appeared. Ed was a well-groomed, red-headed, ex-military man about forty years of age. He retired from the Army in February, after twenty-five years of service. When I met him, he sold pharmaceuticals and ministered the Word of God.

Ed asked me what I was running from. I told him I was not running *from* anything but running *to* the Mojave on Pilgrimage. We talked much about the changes of life and the plans of God, about fear and its overcoming. He noticed that I was ministering to him more than he to me, and he came to suspect I might be Jesus messing with him. So he drove me all the way into Waycross and gave me sixty dollars for a hotel room, absolutely insisting that I take it and declaring he would be honored if I did. I thanked him profusely, put my things in the room, and set off in search of grape juice.

The first restaurant I came across was Chik-fil-A. I wanted to inhale the meal, hungry as I was, but I was so sick and nauseous that I had to eat at the pace of a toothless geriatric. I then continued to look for grape juice and stumbled upon all the luxuries of man's civilization: Ruby Tuesday's, Little Caesar's, a movie theatre, Ryan's Steakhouse, Wal-Mart. And I wanted to devour and experience every last thing the town of Waycross had to offer.

I realized that night that the decadence of society is not an evil of society inherently, but is merely a manifestation of the decadence of man himself. For what is evil in pizza or in cinema, *per se*? Nothing. It is the weakness of the man without virtue that would turn these things into gods or crutches. Verily, there is much beauty in the world.

The 19<sup>th</sup> of May was the day it all hit me. That was the day I realized just how low I had fallen, just how dire things had become. I suppose that up until that point . . . I don't know. Maybe I thought it was a game. Maybe I thought everything would be fine because the gods of joy, who insist I learn joy, would not let me suffer. But that day I saw my life as one long train of suffering: being bullied in school, my extraordinarily difficult adolescence, the recurrent bouts of poverty, leaving my family for law school.

And now this. Only that morning did it all dawn on me: I had no job, no money, no secretaries any longer; everything I worked and sacrificed for, all those years away from my family, were for nothing; my car, my apartment, my possessions, all gone; my closest friends had turned or were turning on me, disowning me at best, outright betraying me at worst; I was coming more and more to believe that I was too physically weak to finish the journey; I was exhausted, everything was in pain; and finally that day, illness has struck, an eventuality I had, for some reason, never even contemplated. And all this so that the entire world could berate and mock me

as an idiot and madman, drag my name through the mud and question whether my children should be taken from my custody.

So there I was, broke and broken, recuperating in a goddamn hotel room at the risk of everyone adding the charge of “fraud” atop those of “idiot” and “madman.” This was the dark night of the soul: no visions, no voices, only a promise spoken an eternity ago, and a demand for the faith to see it through to the end.

I slept long, ate a full breakfast, and eventually began making my way out of Waycross. I made it to the intersection at which I was to take Hwy 82W, when I heard, “Hey. Hey, buddy.” softly spoken behind me. This was Ricky offering me a ride. Ricky was with his wife and four children but still asked whether I needed a ride. He took me clear out of Waycross and apologized for not being able to take me further. When I met him we were at a gas station, where he offered to buy me a soda; and when I left him he said that he would like to take me with his family out to supper if I came through Waycross on my way back. I am hard-pressed to think of ever having met anyone kinder.

I walked a bit before another pickup truck pulled up beside me and offered me a ride. I thanked them and hopped into the back. They drove me all the way to Alapaha, which is no mean distance from the outskirts of Waycross. We stopped at a gas station before Alapaha, and the driver, a Mulatto whose name I was never told, asked where I was going and why. I told him of the Pilgrimage, and he came to believe I was Jesus. “Always be kind to strangers: it could be the Lord,” he said. And in this case, he said, it was. He called his wife and had me talk to her because she wouldn’t believe what he told her if I didn’t speak to her myself. So I told her of the Pilgrimage – but she seemed far less certain that I was the Christ. But I suppose disbelief is the price of telephone evangelism . . . .

They dropped me off at a farm supply store in Alapaha. My head swelled as the girls inside stared through the window like I was Ashton Kutcher emerging from a crystal clear pool with a bottle of tequila. It’s funny to think that in a town of 668, I wasn’t just attractive – I was a hunk. Those poor girls. In any event, Hailey asked me all about my trip, gave me a t-shirt for the store, and added me on Facebook.

I was out of Alapaha pretty swiftly. I walked the whole way out of town, but it’s a pretty small town. A guy rode past me on a bike and yelled back:

“It’s a rough fuckin’ world, isn’t it?”

A black man in a pickup truck took me about a mile or two; I needed to get as close as possible to the forest because it was about to rain, and I needed to set up the tent. I thanked him and began to walk briskly to the woods up the road. It started to drizzle. But right before I got to the woods, a fourth and final pickup truck offered me a ride.

This was James. James was a full-blooded Cherokee, and a member of the tribe. He had actually been at a pow wow and was on his way back home, so he could take me as far as I-75.

We talked a great deal about religion and spirituality. The Cherokee do not have a religion, said he, so much as they have a “spiritual mindset.” There is the Creator and Mother Earth and the Spirits of the Four Directions – but other than that, there is no pantheon of deities, and the people are free to worship as they see fit. Heaven is being in the presence of the Creator, he said; Hell is being apart from the Creator. There is no otherworld with which to be concerned. The mystic truth of Heaven and Hell is as simple as that.

I thanked James profusely and went into the gas station where he let me out to buy an orange juice. But after speaking with the Vietnamese lady about the Pilgrimage, she insisted I take the drink without charge. I thanked her and continued walking.

I then issued another open letter from the road:

Greetings from Tifton, Georgia – though this could be any city in America, really.

Our world is blasphemed. And what is required of us to sanctify it once more is the development of a new ethic: not an ethic that clings to life as the ultimate good for which all else should be sacrificed, but an ethic that *loves* life – & embraces death nobly as a necessary purgation, that life may be all the more beautiful.

But every ethic must be built upon a metaphysic, for the justness of our actions can only be known in reference to how we see the world. Our present ethic concerning life, that all human life must be preserved no matter the cost, is egalitarian in nature, based upon the notion that all human life is equal; it is anthropocentric in nature, based upon the notion that the whole of Creation should be destined to serve the benefit of man, God’s greatest creature; & it is cowardly in nature, based upon the notion that death is, for the human being at least, the greatest horror imaginable, an end to be avoided at all cost, for as long as possible.

This is, however, the worldview & ethos of a virus, not of a man, & is certainly unbecoming of who would call himself God’s greatest creature. For verily, humankind has become a virus upon the face of the earth, & should it continue to demolish & to devour everything in its path & all surrounding, then might the entire world become grey, one interconnected artificiality of paved streets & strip malls, efficiency housing & cheap offices.

So here we must ask ourselves: Must the beauty of civilization be built upon trash? Would the old arrondissements of Paris collapse if we burned down the grey slums surrounding? Would the Sphinx disappear from Giza if we burned down the Pizza Hut across the street? Would the skyscrapers of Chicago fall suddenly to the ground if we burned down the projects & demolished several miles of urban sprawl? I think not.

But of course the real questions are these: What if millions of Parisians died in those fires? What if several millions of Cairenes died? What if a single Chicagoan died? How dare we place the ideal of beauty so high above the sanctity of human life?

And here, my fellow moralists, is where we part ways: for human life is not so dear to me as beauty. The worldview I teach is not egalitarian: it is aristocratic. It is not anthropocentric: for man is neither the beginning nor the end of Creation. Neither is my worldview so uncharitable as to deny the God of Death his proper grandeur. For as an American lawyer & poet once wrote: Death is the mother of beauty.

To me, neither people nor things are equal, despite how badly so many would wish it to be so. One Boticelli is, to me, worth one hundred thousand graphic designers. One Wagner is worth one million pop stars. One Shakespeare is worth one hundred million internet bloggers. Not all life is equal – & it is time we began acknowledging that fact.

Oh, but here you might object: “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder! It is subjective! Who are you to say that Gounaud’s Faust is more deserving of survival than Gangnam Style?” Well I must agree: Beauty *is* subjective. What a wolf finds beautiful, a rat might not; & what the strongest, most intelligent, & most creative of humanity might find beautiful, the wretched & the weak might not.

So this is where I shall begin to draw my line in the sand: for Death, & for Beauty. To think that the Metropolitan Opera may one day be nothing more than a concert venue for someone like Chris Brown because ‘that’s what profits, and that’s what the masses wanted’; to think that one day the Amazon may finally be “improved” with freeways & convenience stores to accommodate more & more people; to think that we may one day be unable to escape advertisements & concrete, catchy jingles & traffic jams, the ever-extending realm of Money Almighty, whom the masses serve so faithfully, so fanatically – that future is too much for me to bear.

So this is where I shall begin to draw my line in the sand: for Death, & for Beauty. Not for hatred of the lowest & most apelike – but for love of the highest & most godlike.

Back on the road, I was in a curiously good mood and felt, dare I say, good. I walked out of town singing the cadence, “In the Early Morning Rain.” Somewhere along the way I was offered a ride in an old minivan by two old men whose names I never learned. The son, who was also an old man, used to do carnival work; said he was on the road for five years once; said, “It was an experience.” They stopped on the way to Sylvester to buy drugs. They took me to a truck stop, the outpost of Sylvester, and dropped me off. I thanked them, put down my things, and went inside.

But the women shooed me out; said the restroom was outside and the restaurant was next door. They didn't want some filthy vagabond inside their convenience store. Neither did the restaurant want me inside. When they brought out my hamburger, it was packaged to go. So I ate outside the door and then continued walking.

And I walked, and I walked, and I walked. No help was coming. Then suddenly I saw a giant strawberry sign reading "Calhoun Produce." I ate a whole carton of strawberries for dinner, picked right off the farm there. They were the best strawberries I have ever tasted, without exaggeration. I ate them on the front porch, sitting in the rocking chair, and then I sat in that chair for a good long while, waiting for the heat to abate a bit.

At about five o'clock p.m. I started making my way to Albany. After a while, an old white woman in a massive red pickup truck offered me a ride for a couple miles, which I gladly accepted. I thanked her and continued walking to Albany.

And right about the time I saw the signs for Albany, Douglas came into my life.

#### IV. CONFEDERATE GRAVEYARDS

Douglas was an ex-Marine. He was understandably bewildered at why a young man would voluntarily hump 82W with a ruck, and even more bewildered at why he would do so all the way to California – and even *more* bewildered at why he would do so for religious motives.

He simply could not comprehend spirituality; neither could he comprehend doing something simply because God commanded it. As his story unfolded, I learned that God had taken his first-born son at twelve years of age while Douglas was on deployment. Before he could return home, the boy was dead.

So the ride that began amiably enough became more and more strained as a major rift began to open: his anger with God and prioritization of being with children at all times was in direct conflict (for him) with my willingness to “abandon” my family to journey to the desert on some hippie quest to “find [myself]” because God commanded it.

Douglas was only supposed to take me a few miles, to the other side of Albany, so I could continue on 82W. But as he became more and more invested in my story, and as he became more and more insistent on talking me out of what I was doing, a few miles turned to twenty, and twenty miles turned to driving all the way to Eufaula, Alabama. He wanted me to be safe, wanted to make sure he didn’t “drop [my] dumb ass off” in a dangerous spot. I thanked him, to which he replied, “I don’t give a shit about you, I care about your wife and children.”

Douglas broke down crying when he told me the story of his son. And catching his breath between sobs he said, “Sparky, you have no fucking idea what the fuck you’ve got.” I had to promise Douglas sixty times that this was a Pilgrimage and that I was returning home at the end thereof. But it was like talking to anyone whose mind has been shut down by fear, anger, and pain: he simply did not hear me.

He made sure to preface every question and comment with the disclaimer that he did not mean anything derogatory at all but was simply attempting to understand what I was doing. But upon our arrival to Eufala he had worked himself up to the point that he asked, “Can I tell you what I really think without you getting offended, or getting your feelings hurt? I think you’re a fucking dog for what you’re doing. And I think you’ve left the best thing in your life behind in Orlando.”

Now I try not to be superstitious. And when bad things happen to people who are terrible to me, I never think that the gods are punishing those people. But the fact that he made a left turn, then a u-turn right after saying that to me; and the fact that he crashed into the curb and ripped his tire wide open on that u-turn; and the fact that we had just driven two hours or so without incident; tempts me to conclude that a man so judgmental of a pilgrim might do well to reconsider the viciousness of his attacks.

I grabbed my effects and started walking back toward the river. Then I started walking quickly. Then I started double-time. I decided that I needed to get off the street immediately, before he had the chance to repair his tire and catch up with me.





I set out on the road about 11:00am, not realizing until that time that I had gained an extra hour by crossing into Central time. I was confused as to the direction of 82W, which seemed by the signs and the map to go every which direction. So I asked a woman on the street. She didn't know, so she directed me to the store behind me. I went inside to ask directions – and there it was that I met Ally and Steve.

Ally was a cute, college-aged girl. Steve was a middle-aged, bespectacled man who reminded me in no small wise of my father. Steve insisted that I sit a spell inside with him and eat my lunch. Since I had planned on an easy day in and around Eufaula, I happily agreed.

The three of us talked for a long while about life, about hitchhiking, about death and the way its realization changes one's perspective on life. Steve had just witnessed a death on the road when a car hit a motorcycle and killed the driver. He had, for the past few days, been dwelling on this; and then I walked in. He said he no longer regretted his youthful indiscretions and said that now, in retrospect, he wishes he had been *more* reckless in his youth. He admired my spirit and courage, lamented that all of America has become so spoiled and lazy, and commended me repeatedly: "You're a brave little shit, you know that?"

Eventually, I made my way out of the store and began my walk through Eufaula, which is one of the most beautiful neighborhoods in the whole of Alabama. When I finally got to the highway, the heat was sweltering: the afternoon sun had risen. I kept moving positions on the side of the road, trying my best to sit in the shade until the heat abated. Then finally, about 5:00pm or so, I began walking again.

I was looking for some woods to camp in when, to my surprise, a pickup truck pulled over and asked whether I needed a ride. There was no space in the back, because they were transporting used tires. So I had to sit atop the tool box, which was easily one of the most dangerous things I've ever done. One false move, and I would have been dead. I gripped a tire with my right hand and the toolbox with my left and, facing backward, simply hoped to God we would not be going under any bridges or low tree branches. It was wholly imprudent and more than a bit frightening; but it was also one of the most beautiful rides of my life. I watched as the moon rose right in front of me over the hill we were on between two flanks of purest forest – and I was absolutely enraptured by the beauty. I marveled at the swiftly passing countryside: at the farmland, the hills and miniature clay cliffs, the infinite beauty of Southern Alabama.

We were only supposed to go to Midway, but the driver noticed that my water jug had fallen over the side, and he drove me all the way to Union Springs so I could get more water. I thanked both of the men profusely (both black, by the way) and went to the grocery store. After buying water I followed 82W across the street to the Subway, where the girls (all black, by the way) felt so bad for me that they refused to take my money and insisted on giving me a drink and two chicken sandwiches for free. After thanking them a thousand times, I made my way through the town.

Union Springs is a goldmine of historicity. I passed an ancient church, a Confederate graveyard, a log cabin, and an Indian boundary line. I hurriedly made my way out of town as (a) the sun was setting, (b) I was the only white person in town, and (c) I had no money for a hotel and needed to

set up the tent. Well I walked and I walked, but I came to find that the only land not owned by *someone* on 82W is totally inhospitable.

Finally I found a scary, abandoned piece of land blocked off only by a frail chain, which I walked over. I was able to pitch the tent as the last light of day was fading, and I spent a sleepless night in the woods, plagued by the footsteps of prowling animals, the howling of dogs, and the roar of trucks passing on the not-so-distant road.

Dawn seemed to have come exceedingly early the next morning. I was changed, packed, and ready to go by 7:30am. But it was a slow-going day. My body felt weak and my back was killing me. I would walk a mile or two and then take a break. I did this repeatedly until I got to mile marker 190, at which time, owing to exhaustion, I fell asleep for a few minutes on the side of the road.

I must have left about 1:30 or 2:00pm. I thought it would take me three or four days to get to Montgomery, as rides were simply not forthcoming. And then David came along.

David was an electrician from Brunswick, Georgia who had work in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He usually takes two days off, but because of his wife, he took a third day this time around. God bless his wife: without her I never would have run into David. He drove me clear across the State to Tuscaloosa. I gave the two dollars in my pocket to the homeless man in the parking lot where I was dropped off, simply out of gratitude for the miracle that had just fallen in my lap. It must have been ten years since I had given money to a homeless person.

A long road runs through Tuscaloosa, and on that road lies a Barnes & Noble. There I purchased a collection of T.S. Eliot's poetry for five dollars.<sup>6</sup> There was my ordeal foreshadowed:

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow  
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,  
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only  
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,  
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,  
And the dry stone no sound of water. Only  
There is shadow under this red rock,  
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),  
And I will show you something different from either  
Your shadow at morning striding behind you  
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;  
I will show you fear in a handful of dust.

Night fell before I could make my way out of the city. The road was endless, and I could not stop to set up the tent. Then I came to a bridge at Black Warrior River, which had no way across but a bridge.

I ran across that benighted bridge – a mile-long bridge, it seemed to me, with no walkway and no guard to prevent me from falling God-knows-how-many-feet into the black waters of the river

---

<sup>6</sup> T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land and Other Poems* (George Stafe, ed.) (2005)

below to the right or the highway to the left, with heavy traffic traveling at 65mph – while loudly singing the death chant EVOE DIONYSOS. And when I came to the end of the bridge, I kept running, just to be sure I had made it. Coming to a stop in a parking lot, I fell to my knees, looked to the moon, and thanked the Goddess.

The next morning I wrote in my journal:

There is little to romanticize anymore about the wandering Superman. Walking down the highway I might as well be a stray dog, not a divinity. There are no nymphs or river gods, no satyrs or fairies come to meet me and grant wisdom, love, or gifts. No, I walk the street, dodging traffic, sleep in the dirt, and get shooed out of stores. I am beginning to wonder whether I have done this all wrong – for this abasement hardly seems the path of a conqueror.

I walked a couple miles when, as I was singing Incubus, a middle-aged woman in an SUV pulled out of her subdivision and handed me a five-dollar bill, telling me to go to the Subway down the street. This was the first person to finally ask whether I was homeless, to which I not-so-cleverly replied. “No, ma’am, I’m just walking a really long way.”

I sat down next to three cops at Subway, all of whom were very interested to hear of the Pilgrimage, and all of whom were very nice to me, which I found quite odd. In the first place, cops are never nice to me. In the second, I looked like a filthy hobo. In the third, I told them quite frankly I had made such good time on my journey because I had accepted rides from people. But they breathed no word of condemnation and in fact wished me luck and told me to be safe. And none of that is to mention the machete and bowie knife that were hanging from my ruck sack for God and all the world to see.

I was determined that Thursday should be an easy day, considering my exhaustion and my injuries. And so I walked about a mile, and then sat down to rest. Then I walked another mile, and then sat down to rest with a Dr. Pepper in hand. And then I walked another mile, and then sat down in the shade and called my friend Michael to congratulate him on the birth of his baby girl. I walked another mile, and stopped at a gas station for food.

Here it was that I met Patty. Patty had seen me walking, kept driving, and then turned back around because her conscience would not allow her to let me walk. She drove me all the way out to Reform, Alabama, where she was born and raised. Walkers and hitchhikers were nothing new to Patty, who had been a hippie in the glory days of the ‘60s and ‘70s. Back then everyone used to hitchhike all the time, she said. “Back then, everything was different, everyone was your friend.”

“What changed?” I asked.

“The hippies grew up. We grew up.”

Patty dropped me off at the outskirts of Reform and gave me five dollars for food. I thanked her and resumed my walk. It was about 5:00pm.

I walked about a mile, if that, and a white car pulled over. Inside was a sketchy, Mexican guy, but I was, of course, happy to accept a ride. And thank God I did, because this sketchy Mexican turned out to be a guardian angel. His name was Pete, and he was on his way home from a job in Georgia. Home happened to be in Little Rock, Arkansas, which just happened to be on my route. So I ended up riding with Pete for the next seven hours or so.

I came to learn Pete's entire life story, from his upbringing in Flagstaff to his present-day spats with his girlfriend. Pete was a 38-year-old pill addict, and the pills made him very gregarious and more than a bit loquacious.

We ended up in Little Rock a little past midnight. Pete drove me to a friend's house to see whether I could stay there and save my money, but, this being a drug house, there were strangers about, and Pete drove me to a hotel. I had made it to I-40, and it was now a straight shot to California.

**V.**  
**INDIAN TERRITORY**

I awoke the next morning and wanted to go back to sleep for a week. After such a late night, I was in no mood to walk across the damn country. But I got up, and I started walking. I was determined – since I had failed the day before – to have an easy day.

I did not want to leave Arkansas anyway, on account of its magnificent beauty. So I walked a couple miles then sat down to rest. Then I walked a couple miles, then . . . well then Robert picked me up. Robert was a man very eager to help a fellow soldier (he had spotted the ruck sack and the combat boots), and so he was not shy with imparting to me loads of unsolicited survival advice: put a rope around you so snakes won't cross it; the Arkansas water is safe to drink; rattlesnakes make for good nutrition; cut off the tail and keep it, so that when animals are prowling around your tent at night, just give it a shake and they'll go away.

He dropped me off in Plumerville, where I bought a terrible cheeseburger, cran-grape juice, and peanut M&Ms. I sat on a bench for a while, just plum tuckered out still from the day and night before. When I started walking again, I was picked up by a man whose name I was never given. He was from Arkansas but had lived all over. He used to ride his motorcycle all over the place, setting up his tent on the side of the road as I did, simply going wherever the spirit took him at the time. His roaming days were over, but he was more than a little sympathetic to a boy who apparently reminded him of himself in the good ol' days.

Well he drove me from Plumerville to Ozark, which is where I met Bryce and Noel. They were on their way deeper into Arkansas from their home in Oklahoma City. I had been half-heartedly looking forward to seeing OKC, until Bryce, who worked in juvenile corrections, began to tell me of the rise in crime and the growing gang violence. Since then I have been dreading walking through OKC as I have all big cities.

I didn't even get up the onramp before Shay offered me a ride. What can I say about Shay? I didn't know him long, but he was very kind to me. Originally he was going near Fort Smith, but he went out of his way to take me across the border into Oklahoma.

He dropped me off right in front of a Cherokee casino, where I planned to take advantage of the \$3.50 dinner special. But my bag (and surely my general appearance) made me unwelcome there, and I was expelled from the premises.

I wasn't all that hungry yet anyway, so I passed up the other restaurants and got back on the highway. Not long afterward, Andrew picked me up and said he would get me almost to Oklahoma City. Andrew was a used car salesman on his way to his hometown to see a handful of his church group friends graduate from high school. He was one of those wholesome country boys you only see in movies: bright, clear eyes, healthy, without the least hint of hatefulness or depravity, open, friendly, and full of kindness. Innocent, I think, is the word I'm looking for.

Andrew dropped me off in God-knows-where, precisely fifty miles from Oklahoma City. I ate at the gas station, where I appreciated a slice of pizza more than ever before. I sat outside the gas

station for a few minutes after finishing my pizza, and a guy walked up and put down twenty dollars on the pizza box. I thanked him, bewildered by his unexpected kindness.

I got up and continued on the highway. But it was not long at all until I found the perfect camping spot: a tree on top of a hill, where the grass was tall enough to hide my tent. And stretched out beside this was a cow farm with no human in sight. I set up the tent and was lying down at least by 9:00pm.



Sleeping was another matter entirely. I was unsure of how secluded my tent really was, and with every brush of the grass I assumed I had been found out by the police. And then the wind came. It kept me up all goddamn night. All I could think about all night was ‘please God, don’t let there be a tornado while I’m sleeping’.

That night I knew the world to be one, massive, living entity. And I was in the midst of this reality, unsheltered from its breath, being felt out by its hairs, sharing space with the other infinitesimally small creatures, the birds and the insects. I was like a bacteria inside a human vein, and very aware that I was inside something very much alive. The tornado, then, is no different than an acid or white blood cell in our own bodies, killing off the small creatures, cleansing the living earth.

I awoke in the morning and broke down the camp. Walking about two miles, I came to a rest stop, where, exhausted, I would not have minded staying all day but for the incessant wind and my desire not to be stranded in the middle of Nowhere, Oklahoma.

I left the rest area and was almost immediately spotted by an older man who was returning from a failed attempt to visit his son at the prison. He, his wife, and his ex-wife all drove me clear through to the west side of Oklahoma City, and the crisis of facing civilization was averted.

On the way (I rode in the back of the pickup truck) I saw a sign reading "Tecumseh." It's strange, but before that moment I suppose I never really comprehended the magnitude of the tragedy that befell the Amerindians. But there, looking over the plains and hills that were once Indian territory, I saw houses and trucks, paved roads and fences. And I finally understood what it meant for the Amerindian to lose his land, to be forced out, gunned out, crowded out, cheated out of his land by a horde of foreign invaders.

And what have we done with that land? And what have we White Americans accomplished as a race since forcing out another race from their home? Have we flourished as gods? Or have we simply been content to fester, to breed, to coagulate, to live simply and without purpose? Our fathers believed in Manifest Destiny and conquered; and here we swarm like maggots, without any purpose beyond the day.

I started walking West from Oklahoma City on a Saturday afternoon about 2:00pm. I had to walk some distance away from the city before anyone offered me a ride. This was Roberto, a 31-year-old member of the Cheyenne-Arapaho tribe. Roberto was on his way to visit the mother of his son, and he picked me up because the next town housed a prison requiring signs on the highway instructing drivers not to pick up anyone walking on the road. He took me a fair distance and said that I should drop in on his father once I got to Clinton. His father, Jesus, would give me water, he said.

But I never did walk through Clinton. A Mexican-American Catholic named Bobby pulled over several miles down to offer me a ride a while up the road. It turned out that Bobby and I had very similar stances on life and human society. We spoke of mysticism and religion and answering the call of God. Of all the people I have met on this Pilgrimage, Bobby is undoubtedly the one who understood my mission best. He was scheduled for deployment to Afghanistan when we met. I congratulated him: it would be his first tour. He asked me for a reading recommendation on Zen because I had told him of my philosophy on this very journey. He being Catholic, I recommended Alan Watts' *Behold the Spirit*, as well as the work of Alan Watts generally.

As for my Zen approach to the Pilgrimage: I had been operating on the assumption that I would be walking every single step of the journey. If someone pulled over to offer me a ride, I accepted it as a show of mercy from the gods. (I will admit, however, that I had become a bit spoiled in this regard and had found myself lamenting the uncharitable attitude of the thousands of persons who passed me on the road without the least thought of offering assistance. But I was able to overcome this, reminding myself always that this was between me and the gods: it had nothing to do with those people.) And so I walked step by step, day by day, trying my hardest not to expect

anything, trying my hardest not to hope for anything, trying my hardest to be at peace in the present moment, in the well of eternity.

This was the hardest thing I had ever had to do. It was an overcoming of myself, I being a fiery, ambitious person always striving for some goal. There on the road I tried to focus on the journey, not on the goal – and I firmly believe that this is the only way I kept my sanity. Out there I could command nothing, control nothing, influence nothing: I was at the mercy of the gods. And so I walked, step by step, day by day, accepting all and striving simply to strive no more.

Here I might remark that I had an epiphany several months before concerning the Christ's assertion that "except as ye become as little children, never shall ye enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." I had always taken this to mean that we must attain to some childlike innocence, free of judgment, &c., a state in which I never could see much virtue. But now I understood: to be childlike we must have perfect faith in the Father. We must not contradict the Divine Will as though we know better, doubting His Wisdom. Rather, we must submit in perfect faith and trust, just as a little child does his earthly father – not because it is *commanded* as a moral obligation, but because that is simply how children are. The Christ taught that we should not care for our food or clothing or shelter but should trust that *God will provide*. And this was my mantra for the entire Pilgrimage: God will provide. Now I understood.

Bobby dropped me off at a gas station in the middle of nowhere. I declined to purchase anything and just continued walking. The sun was setting, but there seemed to be nowhere suitable for putting up the tent. So I walked and I walked. The sun set. I saw signs for hotels a few miles up, so I kept walking. But my abdomen hurt, as though I were getting a hernia. I rested. I kept walking. Night fell. I kept walking. Then I saw a cop in the median. Then a van pulled over. I assumed he was just going to tell me that it was illegal to walk on the interstate, but to my surprise he offered me a ride. To my far greater surprise, that offer extended to Amarillo, Texas.

This was Hector. His friend Angel, a woman, was driving the van. Hector and Angel were returning to Texas from Moore, Oklahoma, where they had been giving food and water to those affected by the tornado. Happily, they had not given away everything, and so I, too, was the beneficiary of their charity. Hector told me some pretty terrible jokes the whole way through, but they were terrible enough to be funny in a bad joke kind of way. We pulled over at mile marker 131, a rest stop and tornado shelter, to take a break. I charged my phone, which had died much earlier, to tell Luna I was still alive.

We made it to Amarillo, and after a hellish ordeal at the front counter of the Holiday Inn, I was able to check in. Checkout was extended until 2:00pm, so I took the opportunity to wash all my clothes in the hotel shower. I walked eleven miles, clear out of Amarillo and then some, and then decided I would rest on the side of the road. A few minutes later, a car honked and pulled over. Enter Ed and Eddy.

Ed was a 56-year-old retired nuclear plant worker who was on his way to Las Vegas to see his daughter's wedding. Ed hates flying as much as I do, so he decided to drive instead. Ed also hates the government as much as I do, and he would rather take the extra time driving than be



molested by TSA agents anyway. We got along famously, drinking beer from mid-panhandle to Gallup, New Mexico.

But the greatest part of this ride was the scenery. I never fully appreciated the New Mexican landscape when I was a boy<sup>7</sup>, but now I could admire its spellbinding beauty. New Mexico truly is the Land of Enchantment.

And the stars! My God, the stars! I swear I have never seen so many so clearly in my life, save for in photographs and movies.

By the time we got to Gallup, I was exhausted. This old man had outpaced me, outdrank me, and outconversed me. When I laid down that night, I collapsed into a deep sleep.

I walked out of Gallup the next morning through an off-road route. I walked over the train tracks, down a rocky hill, through some strange mini-canyon, over a dirt road to a service road and finally, by jumping a barb-wire fence, to I-40. I walked a couple miles before a van pulled over to pick me up.

Here were Karma, Dan, and Terry. Karma was a pagan, with occult symbols tattooed on her person. She had a bag of runes, pictures of Pan, and a pentagram inside the van, which was fashioned as a roaming house.

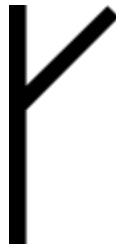
The first thing Karma said to me was in the form a question: “Do you have bugs?”

“What? You mean like lice?”

“Yeah, we have a dog, and if you have bugs, I can’t let you in the van.”

“What, no, I mean, I’m clean. No, I don’t have bugs.”

When inside the van, Dan told me of Karma’s runes, which were handmade, and he pulled one out for me. He certainly did not mean this as a divination, but I certainly took it as one. The rune he pulled was Kaun:



---

<sup>7</sup> I lived in New Mexico for two years when I was in elementary school.

An Anglo-Saxon poem describing the Rune reads:

*The torch is known to every living man by its pale,  
bright flame;  
it always burns where princes sit within.*

I only traveled with Karma, Dan, and Terry for about six miles. They said they would pick me up again if they saw me later, but our paths never crossed again.

I then walked about three more miles, until a pickup truck full of Mexicans pulled over and offered to take me to the State line. I happily agreed and jumped in the back. The State line hosts some of the most beautiful rock formations I have ever seen. Unfortunately, those rocks are desecrated by the Navajo, who have placed giant plaster animals on the ridges. See, the State line is something of a tourist trap, and I guess the plaster animals are supposed to make the site look more “Native.” I guess the rocks and tacky signs weren’t enough to get the point across.

I didn’t walk far past the border when a woman in a pickup truck pulled over to offer me a ride. We went about thirty miles, and she gave me a soda afterward. I thanked her very much and continued walking.

This time I walked quite a ways and was straining beneath the weight of the gear before another person pulled over. I never did get her name, but this was a Navajo woman in her SUV with her two children. She was Born Again Christian, and she was also exceedingly charitable to me. She drove me all the way to Flagstaff and then insisted on buying me dinner, a cheeseburger at Del Taco. She gave me a New Testament and a small book about “Ben Born Again.” She could not possibly have been kinder, and I thanked her greatly.

I walked out of Flagstaff and up the hills. Soon (not very soon, but within a few miles) I came upon a freight truck that was pulled over doing God knows what with some hoses and a gallon jug. I asked whether he needed any help, but he said he did not. A couple miles down the road, he picked me up to take me to the next truck stop.

A little ways beyond the truck stop, Russ pulled over in his truck to offer me a ride. Russ had been something of a nomad twenty years ago (he was now forty), when he hitched rides from Arizona to Oregon and Washington, working odd jobs and enjoying life. After a couple years, though, he moved back to Arizona and settled down. He lives in Williams with his wife and daughters.

And it was Williams to which he took me. There was still a bit of sunshine left, so I kept walking. But no one else was pulling over. The pain set in after a couple miles, but I kept walking. The sun set, and the light was almost dead, so I did the smart thing and put up the tent in some woods.

This might have been my most serene sleep outdoors – no wind, light traffic, no animals, no threat of detection by police – but my nose was not working. I was up all that night simply because I could not breathe, and for no reason at all.

I walked the next morning for a few miles, until I saw a crow flying around me in a circle. He went into the trees, and I could not get a picture of him. Last I was in Los Angeles, my friend Summer and I had discussed that crows are signs of Fate and auspicious, so I took this sighting as a sign that I should rest there.

I began writing in my journal. A while into my writing, though, a cop pulled up with lights flashing: someone had called the police to check in on me, thinking I was in some sort of trouble. The officer was exceedingly friendly and gave me no trouble at all. But I took *this* as a sign that it was time to keep moving.



## VI. WILD WEST

I walked clear out of the forest without a single offer of help. I suppose everyone simply assumed I was there hiking or camping, especially considering the fact that not one but two persons passed me on bicycles. The gods were merciful, though: the sky remained overcast the entire time, and a cold wind blew throughout the day.

When I finally came to the town of Ash Fork – the exit was less than half a mile away – someone pulled over to offer me a ride.

Enter Nick, a.k.a., Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Nick was on his way to a Motel 6 about 350 miles from Los Angeles. He had been driving all the way from New Mexico, where he had vanquished the Devil that very morning. Nick had only recently become aware of his identity and was quite surprised at how easily he was able to divest the Devil of his powers.

But before the Devil died at the hands of the Resurrected Son, he had owned a Motel 6, a den of iniquity equipped with asphyxiation tools and designed to influence the nightly tenants to commit suicide. So Nick was on his way to this Motel 6 in order to ensure that all of the evil energies had been banished and – if not – then to ensure that everyone was evacuated from the building so that he could exorcise Satan's former headquarters.

I did not challenge Him. Being anything other than his psychiatrist, it was not my prerogative to contradict him. So I played along, agreeing that his task was most severe, acknowledging the difficulty of coming to grips with such a grand revelation and harnessing such magnificent, newfound powers.

But quite honestly, the entire episode was a bit frightening. Not because I thought he was going to kill me for suspecting that I was in league with the Devil (though he very well may have tried) but because so much of what he said was so similar to many of the things I have said – or have thought and never uttered.

The difficulty of his life, for instance, made perfect sense now: for the Saviour must have a difficult life. God wants to try his chosen, that they may prove themselves worthy. (Is that not the entire point of this Pilgrimage?) His friends and family said he was crazy – and he even questioned it himself at one point – but they simply could not appreciate his mission because they could not see as he saw. They were blinded by their mere human finitude. (Have I not made a mantra along these lines?)

Where is the line, exactly, between a mystic or magician and a delusional schizophrenic? This poor bastard could hear mind control devices in his head – a clear symptom of textbook schizophrenia. But the rest? His reality is one parallel, but apart from, that of the rest of humanity. To him, the sad masses simply cannot appreciate the truth because they are blind to it. And I find it very difficult to justify my own position whilst denying his. A part of me wants to

say, simply, “It is an obvious difference, that chasm between separating his narrative from mine.” But this is both tautological and self-serving. What really is the difference between his saying that he is Jesus and my saying that I am Augustus Sol Invictus? Both of us are madmen to the world, and both of us are equally sure of our respective identities and missions.

In any event, he took me clear to the west side of Kingman, where I stayed the night. God only knows how his visit to Motel 6 turned out. In the morning I headed back to I-40, but I was stopped by the police about a mile down the road. I failed to catch the officer’s last name, but his first initials were “A.A.”

It turns out that A.A. was familiar with both Latin and Greek: he knew all about my name and was able to transcribe “Thelema” into “Θελημα”. He had a Bachelor’s Degree in religion, had read *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* just about a year ago, and was traveling in his patrol car with a copy of James Joyce’s *Dubliners*.

How do I know what was in his car? Because this most excellent of all cops offered me a ride ten miles down the road. We discussed literature, Gnosticism, and the sorrows of earning useless degrees like religion and philosophy. I thought at that time that he was, by far, the most intelligent and highly educated person I had met in the course of the Pilgrimage. But as I walked away when he dropped me off 37 miles from the border, I realized he was one of the most intelligent and highly educated persons I had ever met in my life, and I was a bit sad to part ways with him.

A.A. recommended Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath*, which he had read a week or two earlier, saying that the parallels betwixt those times and the troubles of today are uncanny. I promised I would read it. Years later, I adopted the story from Chapter Five of the farmers and the bankers for a campaign speech I gave in Jacksonville:

A rich man drives his luxury car up to the poor farmer, and he says, “I’m here from the bank. The bank is taking your land back because you failed to make your payments.”

The farmer says, “I’ve got nothing left but this land, and it’s hard enough to grow anything on it just for me and my family. Now get out of here or I’ll shoot you!”

The rich man says it’s not *him* who is forcing the farmer off the land, but the bank. He was sent there by someone sitting at a desk in the city.

“Then I’ll go and shoot *him*!” says the farmer.

“Well you can’t shoot *him*,” says the rich man. “He’s just doing his job, just like me.”

The farmer, exasperated, throws up his hands and yells:

**THEN WHO DO WE SHOOT?**

We have the same problem, brothers & sisters. We are farmers tilling barren ground so that we have just enough – if we're lucky.

And the Federal Government is the rich man in the luxury car, driving up on *our* farm and telling *us*:

We are taking back your right to freedom of speech.  
We are taking back your right to freedom of association.  
We are taking back your right to bear arms.  
We are taking back your right against warrantless searches.  
We are taking back your right to due process of law.

And God forbid you fail to make your payments to the IRS: We will take everything you have.

Yes, we face the same problem as that poor farmer, brothers & sisters. The rich man says, "It's not us, the federal agents, who are taking these things from you. It's the folks in Washington, the Senators & Representatives, the President & Vice President, the Supreme Court Justices: they *sent* us here to take your rights away."

And if we, like the poor farmer, were to say, "Okay, well let's shoot *them*, then!" the federal agents would say to us, "Well you can't shoot *them*, they're just doing their jobs, just like us."

### **THEN WHO DO WE SHOOT?**

Our enemies are those who direct the policies of the Federal Government; and our enemies are faceless. This is exactly how they want it: They know exactly who we are. They have us on watchlists; they have our home addresses, our pictures, information on our jobs, our families, our shopping habits. But *they* cannot be discovered.

So I will name our enemies.

The mainstream media: CNN MSNBC, Fox News, and the rest, those that sell lies about us to the gullible public

The financial machine: the Federal Reserve, the banks, the IRS, those who destroy our nation's wealth so that they can get richer

The propagandists: the communists, the Marxist professors & the think tanks, those who poison the minds of Our Fellow Americans so that they will believe in nothing anymore

The Federal Government itself: the White House, Congress, and the Supreme Court, those who are turning America into an internationalist, communist country by force

Make no mistake: the Federal Government has turned hostile toward us, the American people.

Why, less than two months ago, the Department of Justice stated that nationalists, white racialists, anarchists, and those with anti-government views are a bigger threat to America than ISIS.

That means every single one of us in this room is considered a bigger threat *to our own country* than the people being *bombed* in Iraq & Syria. Think about that. If the Federal Government has no qualms whatsoever about bombing schools & hospitals over there where ISIS is, why do you think they're going to show *your* children and *your* women any quarter when they come after us?

That is why I saw & I say again: Prepare for war.

Make no mistake about it: the Federal Government has turned hostile toward us, the American people.

One hundred years ago, Woodrow Wilson sold our country out to the internationalist bankers – and every day for a century the Federal Government has done their bidding, and every day for a century we have marched further and further toward communism. Why today, even the word “nationalism” is a profanity – *even amongst our fellow Libertarians*.

This disease has spread so far & wide that it is now deep within our culture. But while the Federal Government may be beyond saving, our *nation* is not. And that is why I say and I say it again: Fight for your *country*, not for your Government.

Make no mistake: the Federal Government has turned hostile toward us, the American people. And we now find ourselves forced to choose – between loyalty to the Federal Government and the freedom of the American people.

War is coming. And when it does, the mainstream media must be the first targets. For if they call you traitors and terrorists now, and the American people *believe* it – what lengths will they go to in order to poison the minds of the very people you are fighting for?

I *know* that it's scary to think about. I have to worry every single night whether this will be the night the FBI breaks in my front door and hauls me off as a political prisoner, like Marcus Faella; or whether they will simply burn my house down with me inside, like Robert J. Mathews, who died at 31 years of age 31 years ago tonight.



I *know* that it's scary to think about. But hiding your heads in the sand and letting the Government know you are *good subjects* won't change a goddamn thing. What makes us think that we are *immune* to history? What makes us so gullible to believe that all the civil wars and government massacres and oppressive regimes are things of the *past*, things that we and our children will never see?

You already *live* under an oppressive regime – you are just too distracted by your televisions to realize it.

Our people already *are* being massacred by the Government – but it is more comfortable to swallow the *official* story the media gives us.

Civil war is *already here* – we just haven't woken up to the fact that the military helicopters, the armored personnel carriers, the cops in tactical gear with assault rifles are not on our streets to protect us from the Russians and the Chinese and ISIS and al Qaeda: they are here to protect the *System* from *us*.

Now, let me open your eyes to just one last thing: It is *our* fault that this country is where it is today. It is your fault, and it is mine. *We* allowed this to happen when we looked the other way as the Government began its War on Terror. *We* allowed this to happen when we said we were too smart to vote, because the choice is always bullshit, and the candidates are all the same. *We* allowed this happen when we were too proud to get involved in politics, because politics is dirty & it's violent & we don't want anything to do with these scumbags. *We* allowed this to happen when we said, "The Democrats did it," or "The Republicans screwed this up," because we were pushing the responsibility off of ourselves and onto someone we could not hold accountable.

Yes, the Democrats *have* taken away your freedoms. Yes, so have the Republicans. Yes, the media has brainwashed the American people. Yes, the banks & the government officials *are* bloodsucking parasites.

But we would not have lost our freedoms if we had risen up to fight for them.

We would not be brainwashed if we would *simply stop swallowing* it.

We would not be on the verge of national collapse if we had not *allowed* the banks & the Government to eat us out of house & home.

So when that rich man drives his luxury car up on *your* farm and tells you, "I'm here to take your land," you need to recruit him, and show him the error of his ways, and ask him to fight *for* the American people. And if he still decides to keep his job and do the bidding of the bank – then you know who to shoot.

My name is Augustus Invictus, and I am a candidate for United States Senate. I thank you for your support, and I look forward to fighting by your side in the coming year.

I had always hated the work of John Steinbeck. I don't remember why, but I think I must have read one of his books in grade school and decided that he was boring. My dislike of Steinbeck was so thorough and deep-seated that I did not actually read *The Grapes of Wrath* for another two years after A.A. recommended it.

Had I read it then, I might have realized A.A. was right. Had I read it then, I might have taken as greatly significant the imagery of a blood red sun over a world turned grey by dust.

*And the women came out of the houses to stand beside their men – to feel whether this time the men would break . . . . After a while the faces of the watching men lost their bemused perplexity and became hard and angry and resistant.*

After parting with A.A., I must have walked a solid six miles in the high afternoon sun. It was terrible. My skin looked and felt as though it would crackle and fall right off. Finally I saw a bridge, where I planned to rest in the shade, about a mile up. I picked up my pace to make it there. But then Andy and Giovanna pulled over.

They were Californians returning home from a trip they had begun in January. They, a couple years younger than me, had been camping in national parks from Virginia through to Arizona. When I met them they were finally on their way back home to Northern California.

They convinced me that Needles was a far more sensible town to stop at than Essex, as Needles was almost certain to have a grocery store and it was likely that Essex did not. So they brought me here to the Basha's at Needles, where I purchased eight gallons of water, rope to tie the jugs together, seven loaves of bread, and my last meal: a turkey and bacon sandwich on jalapeno bread with a cherry turnover, a Mr. Pibb, and Skittles. Decadent, I know, but I assumed it could very well have been my last meal.

My journal entry that evening read:

It is almost 6:30pm, and soon I will walk from this grocery store into the unknown. May the gods be with me; and if I should die, let my children recognize this as an act of bravery, not of stupidity. I pray that they may learn of this example the virtues of faith, courage, and daring.

## VII. THE MOJAVE

I published another open letter from the desert before beginning the seven days of fasting and praying. This time it was a letter challenging my fellow Thelemites.

Cari Fratres et Sorores,

There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.

Greatness is not content with metaphor. When Alexander sought to follow in the footsteps of Dionysus into India & conquer in the same spirit as his predecessor, he demanded of himself the quite literal accomplishment of this task & was not content to bully his immediate neighbors & say his actions were “like” Dionysus. When Alexander accepted worship as the son of Zeus, never was there a question in his mind that his divinity was some mere poetic abstraction: both his divinity & his worship were literal; both were as real as the eagle & the law. Today, of course, we are content with metaphor: no general dares dream to follow in Alexander’s footsteps; he must be content with emulating the Conqueror in lesser, more *bureaucratic* ways.

When George Mallory thrice sought & thrice failed to scale Mt. Everest, he did so literally. It was his daring action in the physical world – free of abstractions, free of theories, free of *metaphor* – that made his actions great, that was so remarkable that we now call a man who literally died trying “a great man.”

Aleister Crowley was, like Mallory, a mountaineer. And whether in the material world or in the world of vision, the mountains Crowley climbed were no mere metaphors. Like all great men before & after him, Crowley achieved greatness because he acted in the real world & was never for a single second content with metaphor. He did not live *like* a prophet, imitating the eschatologists of old whilst remaining on good terms with the gentlemanly scholars of a polite society. No, Crowley lived *as* a Prophet. He was the embodiment of the mad prophet, laughing & singing & doomsaying & speaking with God in this material world.

And so the question has come to plague my every waking hour: When did Thelema become content with metaphor? At what point was the spirit of greatness exorcised from our religion? Many Thelemites are uncomfortable even acknowledging that Thelema is a religion, preferring instead to use such whitewashed phrases as “philosophical system” & “spiritualistic mindset.” Others have twisted the language of the Holy Texts such that the clear message favoring the strong & the beautiful to the wretched & the weak is seen by many to mean *anything* other than what it really says. We having become content with metaphor, many of the outcast & unfit would call themselves Thelemites simply because they are angry with Jesus & fascinated by the forbidden.

Likewise have many of my Brothers & Sisters come to believe that I have, to this point, spoken in metaphors. But this is not so. Know ye that I did not undertake any of this of my own initiative. I was ordered to do so in the course of a thirty-day Enochian working. And as the working unfolded, I was told repeatedly by far more reasonable voices that I should not engage the visions as though they were real: for the going Thelemic dogma is that belief is provisional, & we cannot have faith in the world of vision. Carl Jung advocated the same position, arguing very rationally that we must treat our visions as mere messages of the unconscious mind & never take them too seriously – or, God forbid, literally.

But I am here to tell you otherwise. The world of vision & the material world are one; & it is the task of the priest, or magician, or shaman, or whatever he may be called, to unite these worlds, to realize & to demonstrate that they are one. Both Heraclitus & Plato were correct; & both were incorrect. The material world *is* ever-changing; & yet the world of spirit is ever-present & eternal. Our separation of the two is but an artificiality. And greatness not born of eternity is but a wisp of air.

My renunciation of my life, my departure for the Wilderness, my Pilgrimage from Florida to California: these were mere preliminaries, a rite of passage & a purification through suffering. Today begins the real work, the accomplishment of seven tasks given unto me in the Aethyrs to accomplish in the material world. It begins here, in the Mojave Desert, where last the Breath of Babalon did spring upon the parchment. As you can see, the sand & rocks are real, the sun is real. The bruises & blisters, the cuts & exhaustion are real. As you can see, this Desert is not metaphorical; neither was it metaphorical when the Christ was led by the Spirit into a similarly forbidding Wilderness. Thus would I urge you all, my brothers & sisters, to be forever discontent with metaphor; for in order that any mystic or magician may achieve greatness, he must acquire an appreciation of the literal.

*The Book of the Law* insists: “Thou hast no right but to do thy will.” Reflect upon the severity of that statement, & do not brush it off as mere flowery prose.

The Goddess commands: “Ye shall gather goods & store of women and spices; ye shall wear rich jewels; ye shall exceed the nations of the earth in splendor & pride; but always in the love of me, and so shall ye come to my joy.” I challenge you all to strive toward such an accomplishment literally, in the material world, & not to brush it off as a mere poeticism. Once you begin to *live* the words of *The Book of the Law* as though they are *real*, you will begin to see how severe life can be; aye, but also how *wondrous*!

I challenge you all to be forever discontent with metaphor. Be strong. Fear not. And strive ever to achieve the greatness destined for those who would call themselves Thelemites.

Love is the law, love under will.

Indeed, the renunciation and the cross-country journey and all else were mere preliminaries. For it was upon my entry into the desert that the real suffering began. My journal on the first morning reads:

It is 7:00am, and the heat is already unbearable. The assumption that the desert would be cold at night was a false one: all night the wind blew like the hot breath of Satan. Bees have been swarming for hours in the tree above the tent. Ants have gotten to one of the bread loaves. I am in Hell.

Immediately I wanted to give up. I wanted to call Luna and say, "I'm sorry, and I'm done with the whole Christ thing. Please come get me, I'm ready to go home."

But the thought of never being able to look into my sons' faces ever again was too much to bear. Oh they'd be happy now that I had come home so soon – but when they grew, when they were able to understand what had transpired . . . I could only imagine how ashamed they would be of their father and his weakness.

I absolutely did not want to die in the desert – and thus my death wish was finally cured – but the shame of being too weak to see it through, and the shame of letting down my children so egregiously, were more intolerable than death in that godforsaken wasteland.

Whilst supine in the dirt, I began to compile a list in my head of all the things I would never again take for granted if I made it out alive:

chicken sandwiches	
grape juice	
children	humidity
laughter	jugs of water
showers	glasses of water
tea	cups or mugs of water
swimming pools	water faucets
grass	bedtime stories
Dr. Pepper	clean clothes
Panera	socks
air conditioning	movies
automobiles	Starburst
pizza	mimosas
sheets	wine
WATER	lakes
bananas	rivers

malls	ponds
grocery stores	shade
apples	music
haircuts	shelter
water fountains	soccer games
bottled water	cheeseburgers
flowing water	recitals
rain water	toilets
dew	refrigerated water

I had been looking forward to all of this as an opportunity to finally break my addiction to tea. But you know what? I love tea, and I decided there and then that I was drinking three glasses a day every day for the rest of my life. And I'm showering twice a day. And I decided I would eat pizza whenever I felt like it without worrying about the fat I would be putting on. I decided after that first day in the desert that I was never proving anything to anyone ever again, including myself.

In the Mojave, the hours between 11:00am and 5:00pm are six hours of purest agony. That's not to say that any other hour of the day is *pleasant*, but at least outside of those hours I didn't feel myself to be on the verge of death. If I thought I could have made it out of there without collapsing dead on the rocks, I would have run straight to the Colorado River and left all my belongings behind.

On the second day, as I cried out in agony, fanning myself with a map of Georgia, I heard a voice: "What has worked for a thousand years, and what will work for a thousand more, is stillness. Only by stillness can the Desert be defeated."

Needless to say, this is something of a challenge for someone as active as me. And a little while thereafter, I fell asleep attempting to be still. I awoke in a panic, gasping for breath, reaching for the water.

Even practicing stillness, the desert was a beast. I turned on my phone that morning to calm myself down: I wanted to check the temperature to convince myself that I was overreacting. But I wasn't. The high was 110°F every single day. It was no wonder that the 80°F low of the previous night felt like an air-conditioned heaven.

I slept outside of the tent last night with my sleeping bag in the dirt. It was my only option, considering the fact that the goddamn tent was like a sauna at all times of the day.

All night long I was dreaming. Even in the dawn I dreamt. I dreamt that my belongings (tennis shoes, blanket, and one other item) had fallen into a pool, and I had to jump in to keep them from getting away. Everything was lush and green. The sky was grey, the air surrounding misty.

I also dreamt that I was lying with a girl who looked like a twenty-year-old Nicole Kidman in very similar scenery. She was perfect in every way, and the Scottish air was cool.

Just before I had entered the desert, Bryan said that because of our synchronistic encounter in Florida he had come to believe that he was destined to sway me from doing something terrible to doing something incredible; an interesting thought indeed. He urged me to continue in the law, as obviously I have a gift for it. He urged me to “bury the naysayers beneath a mountain of degrees, titles, and eliteness.” And I thought to myself, “Perhaps that’s what I’ll do. If I make it out of this Hell alive, perhaps that’s what I’ll do.”

I was supposed to work on the poem cycle I had been writing<sup>8</sup>, but that simply was not going to happen. I couldn’t even think straight for twelve hours of the day, and when I could, all I was thinking of was how much pain I was in. Poetry requires the ability to think, to focus, and I found that to be an impossibility in the desert.

On the third day, I looked to the heavens and rejoiced:

Clouds in the Western sky! Frail, brittle, and few – but clouds!

Later I read some of T.S. Eliot’s 1920s poems and *The Waste Land*. It then dawned on me that I had the Hymns of Orpheus. So I recited the prayers to the Sun, the Fates, and Death.

As the day dragged on, I suffered. Breath by breath, hour by hour. I had made it there, and I would make it out of there. I made it there, step by step, day by day, and I would make it out of there, breath by breath, hour by hour.

I made more lists of things I would never again take for granted as the week went on:

List Two:

Home Alone  
Oreos  
Christmastime  
Christkindlmarket  
mashed potatos  
cold beer  
clouds  
dogs  
lasagna  
leather  
chess  
apple juice

List Three:

Wagner’s Ring Cycle  
Subway Italian BMT and orange juice  
scotch on the rocks

---

<sup>8</sup> *Aeon: Cantos of Wonder & Terror*, the record of the thirty-day ritual that had set me on the Pilgrimage

lotion  
fruit roll-ups  
steak  
asparagus

List Four:

baked potato with butter and sour cream  
cherries  
strawberries with whipped cream  
Macaroni Grill  
Olive Garden  
ice

List Five:

Arby's roast beef sandwich  
turkey, bacon, swiss sandwich on jalapeno bread  
Mr. Pibb  
Chik-fil-A chicken strips with honey mustard  
hamburgers  
chocolate-dipped ice cream

No matter where I would hide, the sun would attack, and mercilessly. Those morning clouds from the West stood between me and the sun from 2:00pm on – and yet the entirety of my upper body was burned red and pink, despite my staying in the shade. The pain was terrible.

I spent a great deal of the fourth morning killing ants. They had swarmed the tent and the bread I tied to the roof. The day passed, and there I was, the hour being past nine o'clock at night, swaying back and forth from exhaustion (the rocks hurt too much to sit down), fiending for tacos, fajitas, rice, and corona, and waiting for the last of the orange tint to die in the West.

I suffered. The taste of bread that morning almost made me vomit – and might have succeeded, had there been anything in my stomach to vomit. The Mojave Desert is the insects' kingdom, and there is something unsettling and hellish about the incessant buzzing of bees and flies. My body was burnt terribly, and I could not use sunscreen because I needed to save it for a worse day. I was sick and exhausted; I would have tried to sleep but for the heat and the goddamn sound of those bugs. Everything there is hollow: the air, the lone tree; even the whistling of the birds is hollow.

By the end of the week, I was ill. I almost vomited whilst eating the spoiled bread. I was getting diarrhea. My skin was blistered. The weakness from the fasting had set in.

Further, I discovered blisters on my upper arms, shoulders, chest, and stomach. Everything I had experienced – the blisters, the nausea, the dizziness, etc. – points to heat stroke; possibly five days of heat stroke in a row.



No, I was not yet dead, but something told me that one can suffer from only so many bouts of heat stroke before inevitable death. And the bees, which had ignored me the entire time, were now beginning to harass me.

On my final day in the Mojave, I awoke a little before six o'clock, feeling an uncertain joy in the fact that I was free. I rose leisurely, ate mountain trail mix and drank water while praising God. Slowly I began to collect all of my effects and to organize them for packing.

I had two "extra" gallons of water that I did not want to tie up with rope and carry back, so I bathed instead. Luckily, Jason had given me a bar of Irish Spring in Jacksonville. The water was freezing, as all things seem freezing cold that are not the Desert Sun. Standing nude and in the desert, I felt clean for the first time in a week. Standing in the shade I was cool. And for the first time I felt I could appreciate the desert without hatred.

Still, I did not hesitate to leave; and in my departure from the camp I never once looked back. I was breathless reciting the Second Chapter of *The Book of the Law* on the way out of the desert, and I had to sit down once before making it to the road. But once I reached the threshold, where the sand and rock meet the pavement, there was an unmistakable feeling of having accomplished the task – and of having survived.

I had beheld Gehenna. In body and soul had I done this. I imagined someone asking me: "What did you learn in the desert?" And surprisingly, my answer was immediate: "That life is beautiful, and everything in it; that human civilization is the most beautiful thing in existence."

All in all, the desert was Hell, in the most literal sense. It is an abomination and an accursed land of death and suffering, fit only for burning garbage. In coming out alive, I knew myself as one resurrected. The colors, sounds, tastes, smells of life were new to me as I emerged from the Tomb.

Since that day, many people have asked whether I "found what I was looking for" out there in the desert. I suppose I had expected some wild vision that would change my life – but never once did Satan appear to offer me the kingdoms of the world. Never once did the heavens open, nor did water spring miraculously from any of the rocks.

No revelation occurred, no otherworldly knowledge was imparted. What I had "found" – more accurately phrased as *what happened to me* – was far more subtle; so subtle, in fact, that I did not realize what had transpired in the desert until long after I had returned to the East.

I had been purged of doubt and of weakness. I no longer cared for the prejudices of the World of Man. I had become something harder, something fearless. I had become something other.



## VIII. AMERICAN NILE

And so it came to pass that I walked back out onto that godforsaken road – in broad daylight – on my way to Arizona. The heat was unbearable. I prayed that the Goddess would save me, and She did.

I walked a few miles, thinking I might keel over and die, but then Michael and Moe pulled over. They were only going 10 miles, but that was 10 miles closer to the border, 10 miles of air conditioning, and 10 miles I didn't have to walk through that desert.

From there I walked all the way into Arizona, appreciating greatly the view of the Colorado River at the border. I will admit that I was very tempted to set up my tent right there at the river-border where beautiful girls were passing by the boatful.

But I kept on. And at about 3:45pm, a pickup truck carried me to a gas station several miles down the road. It was the last stop before forty miles of desert on the way back to Kingman. I ate a pack of red Starburst and walked out into the desert, putting my life in God's hands once again.

Far from walking the forty miles to Kingman, I was picked up by Piggy and Jeff after walking a mere two miles. And would you believe it? They were going to Flagstaff; which meant I had a ride all the way to Williams, where I would take the road heading north to the Grand Canyon. We listened to Snoop and Dr. Dre the whole way to Williams, which I dare say was far more enjoyable than walking forty miles through the desert to Kingman.

Rather than tempt Fate, I stayed the night there in Williams. I walked downtown, ate pizza, and watched a man play old school country music with his guitar and harmonica. It was my one and only "night out on the town" in the Pilgrimage, and I enjoyed it thoroughly.

The next morning I walked three miles to the highway junction and started north. Several miles and several hours passed before anyone offered me a ride – but one person got me twenty-five miles from the Grand Canyon. I kept walking and was picked up a mile or two later by Christian, who happened to work at the Grand Canyon, and who took me all the way through the park to the General Store.

Christian told me all about the trails, the rangers, the permits, the racial tensions between the Native Americans and the White Americans, and everything else concerning the Canyon. We talked about music, too (he being a musician), and he recommended I give a listen to Townes Van Zandt.



I sat at the General Store for a while, eating a meatball sub and drinking tea. When I finally made it to the Rim, it was after 5:00pm. There I met Betty and Roseanne, two older ladies who gave me more information about the trails and offered to let me set up my tent at their campsite. I had fully intended to take advantage of this offer, but by the time I finally got to the Bright Angel Trail, I was in no mood to backtrack.

And so I made the very poor decision to start down the trail, thinking I could make it to the halfway point by nightfall. Yet I had grossly underestimated the amount of time it would take to get there, not realizing how slowly one must go descending a dirt trail.

Night fell. I thought I could walk down the trail using my phone as a light, but this was unrealistic: I needed both hands in the daytime, and I did not at all want to risk falling down a cliff, considering the hundred-pound rucksack I was carrying in the dark. And so I laid down in a ditch on the side of the trail for one of the worst nights of sleep in my life.

It turns out that people walk that trail at all hours of the night. I scared the living hell out of a couple people, and a couple others annoyed the living hell out of me. Sunrise was at an ungodly 4:30am, but I laid there until 5:20, when an old man hiking by shamed me into getting up.

He also worried me into getting up when he said, “You’re a brave man. I just saw a rattlesnake on the side of the trail a little ways back.” And so I jumped up, rolled up the now filthy sleeping bag (I had to lay in the red dirt), walked back to use the restroom, stretched, ate a Cliff bar, and started walking.

It probably took two and a half hours or so to get from the 1.5-mile house to Indian Gardens. It was almost 9:30am, and we were advised to stay in the shade between 10:00am and 4:00pm.

Just before arriving at Indian Gardens I ran into three guys my age from Virginia. They gave me a map, an expired permit, and tips on how to dodge the rangers. It is thanks to them I was at least relatively well rested during my sojourn through the Canyon.

I wish I could have enjoyed the hike as everyone else enjoyed it. They all laughed and told stories and took pictures of the squirrels – and there I sat, a black cloud amongst them, sullen and withdrawn. I just wanted to go home. Not even the Beauty of the Canyon was enough to enrapture me, to carry me away from my hunger and exhaustion. People pay damn good money to go out and hike that trail – and all I could think was that I didn’t want anything to do with it. Perhaps if I had gone under different circumstances, my outlook would have been different; but even as things stood, I suspected I was cheating myself of a grand adventure.

In the end, I was too tired and hungry to care.

I left Indian Gardens at 2:50pm. It took just over three hours to get to the Bright Angel Campground, including a half-hour break and several shorter breaks. I had a solid hour and a half until sunset, so I took advantage of the fact that the campground had plumbing, and I read *Zarathustra* for a long while. I waited until nightfall to claim a campsite.

All went well. I was neither questioned nor harassed. The one unfortunate thing was that I felt as though I had set up camp in the midst of some strange midnight death cult. I was very happy that everyone was so hushed at nightfall – but then at midnight people were getting up left and right to break down their campsites and leave. So many people were participating in this strange ritual that I wondered whether I might be the only person left in the morning and feared I might be caught if I did not leave, too. But as I said, all turned out well.

Sitting by the creek the next day, what was it the spirits of the Waters taught me? That everything is in flux; that we need not do anything because it is truly God who pulls us or pushes us all along. The river does nothing, yet it is always in motion, ever in flux.



A Logos, like the River, does naught of his own accord, but moves only by the Will of God. He is a vessel, the embodiment of the Divine Will.

The Word of God is ever-changing, yet ever the same, just like the River. The Words, the commandments, the trappings of, *e.g.*, Moses, Christ, and Crowley were all very different: yet the Word was always the same: Love under Will. The River is always the same and never the same; likewise is the Word of God Incarnate.

I wrote the following chart by the creek:

Air: Gives Life	The Word of God
Water: Sustains Life	The Word of God
Fire: Destroys Life	The Word of God
Earth: Life Itself	That upon Which the Word of God Acts
Spirit: God, for which the three subtler elements are but metaphors	

This demonstrates a dualism in our thought: earth vs. spirit or matter vs. spirit. But would a holistic perspective hold the earth as being the Word of God, as well? I wondered. But this seems nonsensical. Perhaps we are simply too far gone in our use of these symbols to paint a different sort of picture.

Do not all elements perform the Will of God? Are not all elements imbued with the Spirit? Are not the material and spirit worlds One World? Then how do we justify such artificial distinctions?

And are not all distinctions artificial? And if we cannot separate the Will of God from the Creation, how can we separate the Will of God from – simply – God?

That day was largely spent sitting beneath a massive rock beside Bright Angel Creek. I spent the morning in a shaded area with my feet in the creek, washing and drying my socks; and once the shade ran out I moved up the road where the hanging boulder was. There I recited the Hymns of Orpheus and worked on the poem cycle.

I started walking back to the Bright Angel Campground about 5:00pm. On the way I met several people and had several conversations. The visitors, *i.e.*, tourists here are exceedingly friendly: probably because they are invariably rich white people on vacation just tickled to death to meet what they believed to be a wild mountain man, a real, live, outdoorsman.

Upon my return to the Camp I sat upon the same bench I had the night before, waiting for sunset that I might snag a camping spot. While I was waiting, I worked on the poem cycle; but before sunset came, a ranger appeared out of the blue and asked for my permit. I told her I did not have one and told her of the Pilgrimage when she asked what I was doing there. This Jewish woman of forty-five years was surprisingly sympathetic to my situation and allowed me to stay at the Camp for the night without writing me a ticket. I was, however, told that I needed to leave the Canyon first thing in the morning. I set up the campsite, walked to the Colorado River, returned to camp, and slept like a baby.

On my way out, I ran into the very same ranger on the bridge over the Colorado. She had me watch a beaver with her for a solid twenty minutes. She wished me luck, and I said my thanks, and I was on my way.

Then was Hell manifest on earth. The first half of the trip out, the five miles to Indian Gardens, was arduous, but not too terrible. I actually met a group of people about my age who were there for a wilderness response training course. All were supremely interested in the tale of the Pilgrimage, and all supremely impressed by all that I had accomplished before the age of thirty.

Speaking of which, I was told several times in my days in the Canyon that I was young. The crux of it was, “you’re young, so this journey shouldn’t be impossible,” and “you’re young, and it’s so inspiring to see a young person with so much spirit and energy.”

But I must say, I didn’t feel very energetic at all. At the 1.5-mile house on my way up, I met a family of four on their way down. The father could not have been 10 years my senior, and his

elder daughter was the same age as my elder daughter. Yet I heard him quite clearly talking to another hiker down the trail saying, “That young boy just walked up from the bottom.”

It was remarkable, really, the contrast between how I felt and how everyone else saw me there. I also met with an Asian man and his Asian-American granddaughter, hailing from Birmingham, Alabama. The man lavished praise upon me, remarking that my spirit was admirable, etc. He also gave me peanuts and Gatorade. God bless him.

But the trek up was far more than pleasant conversation. It was probably the most physically demanding task of my life. I left Indian Gardens at 3:00pm, and by 3:05 my shirt was soaked in sweat. It took me four hours to reach the rim from Indian Gardens, and I was half-dead by the time I got there. I’m sure that the hike may be rough to begin with; but to hike out with a hundred-pound rucksack requires superhuman will.

A bit past the 1.5-mile house I ran into two gentlemen about my age who offered me some run and soda. And I firmly believe that this magic elixir was what got me out of there. That and the Gatorade were the first things I had drunk that were not water in three days.

As I said, by the time I reached the rim, I was half-dead. And everyone wanted to ask about the Canyon and whether it had been worth going down there. All I wanted to do was get to the General Store and buy a meatball sub, but such was the curiosity of the tourists that I never made it to the store. Instead I passed out between some trees on the edge of the Canyon, suffering, terribly uncomfortable, laying upon rocks through the cold night.

I awoke in the morning at 4:30am, rolled up in the sleeping bag, and arranged my effects to make it look as though I hadn’t just woken up on the edge of the Canyon. I then sat on the edge to watch the sunrise. And in the middle of this there appeared a good twenty or more people, mostly students on a high school field trip, who came out to take pictures.

That was when it hit me, the magnitude of what I had done. These kid tourists were snapping pictures from the top, and they had absolutely no idea what the inside of the Canyon looked like. I felt like one who had seen Hell, surrounded by fortunate, light-hearted, ignorant common folk who had not experienced the same terror. The descent into the Abyss is undoubtedly an event that separates the two types of visitors to the Grand Canyon, in a big way.

They left, I left, and I made my way to the General Store, at long last. The meatball sub was glorious.



## IX. MOUNTAIN LYING DOWN

I left the Park and walked to Tusayan. I was convinced that this was as far as I would go; that I would camp outside the town for the next seven days. But I needed a shower, and, more importantly, I needed to wash *all* of my clothes. It turns out that the hotel rates in Tusayan are outrageous, the town being so close to the Canyon that it is apparently the duty of every business to engage in price gouging. And so I left Tusayan after enjoying an outrageously overpriced meal at Wendy's and charging my phone.

I walked until nightfall and got a couple miles south of Tusayan, set up my tent behind a rock ridge and some trees, and slept until 7:30am or so. I began walking again about 8:45am.

Apparently the gods agreed with me that it looked as though no one would be pulling over to offer me a ride to Valle. And so they gave me a magic bicycle: a purple-&-black, tiger-striped, teenage girl's bike that looked straight out of a 1990s sitcom. I was ecstatic to be going 10mph, which felt supersonic, but it was not long before I discovered how very painful it is to pedal a girl's bicycle whilst sitting with a 100-pound rucksack.

It was also not long before I ran out of water. But then I pedaled over a hill and saw a Jeep on the side of the road. I asked whether the man inside had any water I might be able to buy from him. He did not; but he did give me a large iced tea, free of charge.

Several miles later I came upon a ranch. I stopped, put down the bag, and walked across the street. I asked the driver of the truck that was pulling out whether there was any water I could get from the ranch. He did not know, but it turns out he was driving a truck full of drinking water, and I was able to fill my gallon jug.

Three miracles in one day. The Goddess had protected me, over and over and over again.

I made it to the hotel lobby at Valle at 2:53pm. I checked in, bought a hot dog at the convenience store, and went to the room to sit down for an hour, then to wash all my clothes and shower. I worked on the poem cycle until 10:30pm, and then I went to sleep.

I left Valle a little after 11:00am, but I only got about a mile before the realization came that the wind was too strong for me to ride the bike. It was easier to walk. And so I left the bike on the side of the road, standing though I had found it lying, and I kept walking, hoping the Goddess would protect me.

I was stopped by a Coconino County Sheriff, who once again ran my license for warrants. Like every Arizona cop, he was exceedingly nice, but he did not offer me a ride. He wished me luck and was on his way.

Not long afterward, a middle-aged man with a young girl (his daughter or granddaughter, I'd imagine) pulled over and offered me a ride to Williams. I had been fully prepared to walk the thirty miles, so this was a truly unexpected blessing. He dropped me off by Bearizona, informing

me of a frontage road and an open lot where no one would bother me. I thanked him and followed his directions.

But this spot had a large sign that said “NO CAMPING.” And while I may not care much for the law, I did care that the spot was between Bearizona and I-40 and was bordered by a road well-traveled by the locals. There I could find neither darkness nor solitude.

So I decided to find a better place to set up shop – and on the way I decided to stop at Pizza Hut for one, final meal. I had a pepperoni pizza and a cherry Pepsi, both of which were phenomenal. The remainder of the day found me thinking about how fantastic that simple meal was.

At about 4:00pm I left Pizza Hut I crossed I-40. I walked to a lot for sale but undeveloped, walked through it to the boundary posts, and crossed the barbed wire into the Kaibab Forest. I then walked a ways until I found a spot between two trees, where I hoped the tent would be shaded for most of the day.

There I listened to Siegfried’s Idyll. It was the first song I had listened to on my phone since I left Orlando. (For some reason, it had simply never occurred to me that I could use my phone to play music.) I was filled with religious ecstasy, the sheer notion of listening to Wagner alone in virgin forest overwhelming me, the beauty of the music flooding me with joy.

A couple days later, I dared to venture away from the camp a bit, using my rope and my paracord to make a long thread so as not to lose the tent in the strangely conformist yet infinitely chaotic woods of Kaibab. And in doing so I came upon a perfect semi-circle, apparently natural, of small boulders (or large rocks, depending on how you look at it) opening to the north. This is where I chose to say my prayers from that point forward.

Perhaps now is the time to remark that I have left out of the narrative the entire purpose of the Pilgrimage: my daily prayers. My plan was to spend seven days fasting and praying in the Mojave; seven days in the Grand Canyon; and seven days in the Kaibab Forest. This plan was successfully executed.

I also recited quite regularly certain Holy Scriptures, religious poems, and the Mystic Hymns of Orpheus. This was all in addition to my constant singing and meditation.

The reason I have left this out until this point, Dear Reader, is the high likelihood that my religion is different from yours. At the time of this writing, the population of the United States is estimated to be about 325 million. Less than one million of those are pagan.

If nothing else, I hope that the telling of this story will show that while our religions may differ in outward appearance, we believe in the same basic tenets: that we must worship what is holy and lift up what is base – whether by caring hand or by fire; that the goal of humankind must be spiritual, not material alone; that mindless consumerism is the death of the Spirit.



When Elijah prayed to God to make Himself known to the people, fire fell from Heaven. After a prayer at the stone theatre in the Forest, a wildfire began in Prescott, just south of Williams. I did not find this out until later in the afternoon, when I noticed that the sky was turning dark and the town below was being covered in smoke. I stayed in denial for a few minutes but then began packing up the camp.

Back in Williams, I completed the poem cycle I had been working on for weeks, and I awaited the arrival of Luna, our sons, and our elder daughter. My wanderings in the Wilderness were done.



## X. REVOLUTIONS

The morning we left Williams, Arizona happened to be the Summer Solstice. I had spent weeks traveling from the East to the West, struggling for survival, walking for miles under the sun, praying for food and money, dodging rangers and tornados.

And yet it took a day and a half to drive to Boston. This is one of the many things wrong with America today, the fact that everything is so bloody easy.

On the way to Boston, I wrote the following journal entry, a reflection on the Pilgrimage, generally:

Religion is not an object but an *event*. It is not something to be claimed or reclaimed, to be established or forsaken or resurrected: it is a struggle, an eternal war, an eternal struggle of the soul and of the community for growth, for penetration into the deeper spirit of life. As such, it is not a thing that can be purified or defiled, that can always stand apart from the world or that can be reconciled with the world. For religion is neither the world nor its antithesis; neither is it a guide for living nor a system for making life more bearable. It is, rather, an event, *the event*, coinciding with life, giving meaning to life: the struggle *of* life.

We arrived in Boston a day early and decided to stay in Salem. It is a gorgeous town, the asphalt streets detracting none at all from its legendary old-time charm. Our entire time in Massachusetts was magical, and starting out at the Hawthorne in Salem was the perfect beginning to that.

The point of traveling to Boston was that I was to be admitted to the Massachusetts Bar at the end of June. This initiation – for no other word is suitable – took place at Faneuil Hall, where attorneys have been sworn into the Bar for the last four centuries. It is perhaps the most ancient of American rites, and I was ecstatic to be a part of it.

Originally, I thought I would miss the initiation, and I advised the Bar that I would be unable to attend. I had, in fact, calculated that it would take five or six months to walk from Orlando to the Mojave Desert, and I had fully resigned myself to never being admitted to the Massachusetts Bar.

I had, in fact, resigned myself to much more than this. I assumed that even if I survived the journey, I would never practice law again; never work in the professional world again; never live as anything but a fugitive.

But the Lord works in mysterious ways. I finished my final day of prayers precisely in time to travel East and be sworn into the Bar in the birthplace of the American Revolution.



Waiting at Faneuil Hall for the ceremony, I was also waiting for the FBI. They had not actually respected my Pilgrimage and had been interrogating my friends and family the entire time. There was no doubt in my mind that they would prevent me from being sworn in, and I did not think it beneath the dignity of the FBI to arrest me even in the course of the ceremony.

I issued my final open letter of the Pilgrimage from outside of Faneuil Hall:

Greetings from Boston, birthplace of the American Revolution, where I have just attended the admissions ceremony for attorneys newly admitted to the Massachusetts Bar.

There shall doubtless be a great weeping & gnashing of the teeth in the professional world, & many lawyers & bureaucrats shall swell with righteous indignation, asking with faces red, “How could anyone *allow* this to happen?!” And being themselves endowed with doctorates & licenses & titles they think themselves my peers, & they believe they are entitled to an explanation of my motives: “How dare he reclaim what he so forcefully renounced?” But they will not ask the *right* question: “Why would God grant unto this man more than he demanded *be* renounced?” For they are blinded by their vanity & see not the hollowness of their pursuits.

And I can no more cause a mass of blind men to see than could the Christ with the Pharisees. It is easier to raise the dead than to show the World of Spirit to those who know it not already. For verily, I speak of mystic truths, of Revolution, of the establishment of a New Religion – & they wonder where I get my hair cut & debate which movie character my accent most resembles. I call their democracy filth, their architecture vapid, their culture decadent – & they call me mentally ill therefore. As the Christ said unto the Pharisees: “If you do not believe us when we speak of earthly things, how could you believe us when we speak of heavenly things?” And so, with the patience a seeing man must have amongst a crowd of the blind, I shall allow them to guess amongst themselves as to my motives, to gossip as they see fit.

It is not to them I speak but to you, the artful, who see the hidden world as I do, who worship Beauty as I do, who strive to *create* like gods rather than merely *produce* like insects. And the message I have been sent to relay to you is this: The gods have reawakened, & they would reclaim their world.

Pan awoke to find the world he loved desecrated by a new breed of pseudo-man, a parasite that knows only how to consume & to mock, having lost the capacity to create & to worship.

Mars awoke to find that war was no longer a contest between brave fighters, but a slaughter of the oppressed by cowards in bunkers flying remote-control airplanes half a world away from the battleground.

Venus awoke to find that Beyoncé was the new Helen of Troy, that love had become a joke to be plastered onto Hallmark cards, that sex had become cheapened by spineless weaklings terrified of being hurt, by those who close themselves off because they are too scared to *feel* anything more than physical pleasure.



And this is the cruel reality to which all the gods awoke: that man had become a fearful animal. So as they have told me a thousand times, so shall I tell you: Fear not. Be strong. For the dawn has come, the Renaissance has come, & you shall be the sorcerers calling forth the Sun, that the world fall not again into darkness.

It is with your art that you shall do this. Whether you are a painter or a writer, a musician or an architect, an athlete or an alchemist, you must pursue your art with all your strength & without fear. For it is through art that Man becomes divine, not through the mere accumulation of wealth or election to high office. It is through art that Man may overcome himself, whether in the sublime adorations of the mystic poet or the godlike physique of the bodybuilder. It is the artist who shows Man what he is capable of, who inspires man to be more than the insect he pretends to be, who manifests divinity upon the very earth. And should you, the artful, succeed in this, then may the fire & wine steal in with the sunrise & rid this world of its greyness.

My Art is Magick; & I am the first-born & a sacrifice, sent by the gods to show you how to live without fear. My cross-county Pilgrimage & my Tasks in the Wilderness were not daredevil stunts but acts of faith & of will. And whether you believe in the Ancient Gods as I do or not, I would encourage you all to act with such faith & with such will, that you may do what you were put on this earth to do, without fear of being mocked by the masses, without fear of being persecuted by those in power, without fear of being betrayed by those you love. For *I* have been ridiculed by the sheep, *I* have been sought after by the Government, & *I* have been abandoned even by several of those who would call themselves my Brothers & Sisters – & the same *will* happen to you. But match not their cowardice with cowardice, their hatred with hatred, their ignorance with ignorance. Be strong. Fear not. And in your Art bring forth the Renaissance.

As it happens, the arrest I anticipated never came. Despite the fact that the FBI considered me a threat, and despite the fact that I had left a video log on YouTube, I discovered later that they never even had any idea where I was. It was not until February of 2014 – a full nine months after my response to the Supervisory Special Agent – that anyone knew my case was still open.

I walked out of court one morning in Downtown Orlando and heard a frantic voicemail from my father. Had I settled that thing with the FBI? he asked. They had issued a BOLO that morning, reading:

AUGUSTUS SOL INVICTUS, WHITE MALE, DOB 07/31/83  
AUGUSTUS INVICTUS IS LIKELY TRAVELING FROM FL TO CA, MAY BE ARMED AND DANGEROUS AND SHOULD BE APPROACHED WITH CAUTION. INVICTUS' MEANS OF TRAVEL ARE UNKNOWN, BUT MAY BE HITCHHIKING OR DRIVING AN UNKNOWN VEHICLE. IF INVICTUS IS CONTACTED OR IDENTIFIED, PLEASE CONTACT SSA G\_\_\_\_. T\_\_\_\_. OR TFA J\_\_\_\_. M\_\_\_\_. AT -----

They had no idea where I was. The Pilgrimage was over, and they never even knew it had occurred, even though I had videorecorded the journey and posted it online. What's more, I had

been back in Orlando practicing law in the courthouse for over two months. I had never changed cell phones or email addresses, I had a Facebook account, I lived right downtown. Any twelve-year-old with an Internet connection could find me, and yet the FBI had no idea where I was. If that does not destroy your illusion of the effectiveness of our law enforcement agencies, I don't know what will.

The symbolism of the ordeal coming full circle in Boston was not lost on me. I had promised in my open letter to return to civilization bearing Revolution, and I had reappeared in Boston, of all places.

Our ancestors revolted against the British Government for far fewer abuses than we suffer today. Despite the high-flown prose of the Founding Fathers, the main reason for their opposition was that they did not like paying taxes to the Crown – a relatively minor complaint, if you think about it, especially considering the wild taxation we see today.

But in this moment of honesty, let us not try to place the blame on the Government, as though it were some distant enemy beyond our influence. Our ancestors could afford this luxury because they were treated as second-class citizens by a body of people an ocean away. But our Government is made up of our own countrymen, our neighbors, our fellow Americans.

If we are burdened by bureaucracy, it is because we perpetuate it. If we are ruled by money, it is because we as Americans have given it such a high position. If we are subject to unjust courts, it is because we have allowed them to continue in their judgments.

I have hinted throughout the story of my Pilgrimage of the problems facing America. I will now spell them out.

The first and foremost problem our country faces is that we value the material over the spiritual. In our worship of money and entertainment, we have lost all sense of our priorities, of what it means to be human.

Our second greatest problem is the relative ease of life in contrast to what our ancestors experienced. My father always said when I was growing up that what America needed was another Great Depression. For Americans to break free of their mindlessness, they must be shaken out of it by disaster.

Our third problem is that we can no longer take anything seriously. The masses have, in their self-importance, turned to mockery as their weapon of choice. It is indicative of our degeneracy when we see mudslinging confused with “vetting,” trolling confused with “debate,” and juvenile rants confused with “journalism.”

Our fourth and most pervasive problem is our obsession with egalitarianism. We read the Declaration of Independence as saying, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal” – and we presume that this statement of the aristocratic Thomas Jefferson is some proto-Marxist glorification of the *üntermenschen*.

The Reader will take note that I have not listed poverty or racial divides or political factions as our foremost problems. Whether today or last year or thirty years ago at the time of my birth, or fifty years ago at the height of the Cold War, or eighty years ago just before the Second World War, or one-hundred twenty-five years ago at the start of the Progressive Era, the struggle is always the same: it is the struggle of the Spirit against the System.

The question is not “whether to deport the immigrants” any more than it was “whether to march on Russia” seventy years ago or “whether to annihilate the Indians” two-hundred years ago. The question is always *whether we are a noble and virtuous people deserving of the good fortune God has granted us.*

Our forefathers revolted against their Government in the name of freedom and self-government. Now I ask of you: Do we have the *right* to revolt if we cannot govern ourselves?

On our way back from Boston, we passed through Washington, D.C. – and there I saw the goal of my next journey.



## XI. PUBLIC SERVANT

I once heard a pithy quotation of a communist woman: “If one talks about helping others, he is a Christian; if one actually does something about it, he is a communist.” In my travels I found the exact opposite to be true. For it was not highly-educated, Marx-quoting liberals pulling over in their electric cars to offer me help, but working class Christians (with the exception of one poverty-stricken pagan and two Native Americans).

Even in these dark days, charity is alive. I was hungry, but I did not starve to death. I suffered the heat, but I was given shelter. I set out walking, but I was carried much of the way. My survival cannot be credited to my wits so much as to the help of others. I set out on the journey with the faith that God would provide, and that faith was rewarded.

Toward the beginning of the Pilgrimage, while in the back of a pickup truck in Georgia, I read the sign on a swiftly passing church:

“Faith demands a decision before it can work.”

At the time I read it, my thought of course was that it applied to my immediate situation. It was to me an affirming omen: I had made the decision to walk to the Mojave, I had placed my life in the hands of the gods, and here I was speeding along in the back of a pickup truck.

But recently I have come to realize that it applies to everything in life, and our immediate situations are just examples of one eternal truth, *that faith comes from within*. External happenings can affirm or challenge our faith, but they do not create it.

If we sit around waiting for our faith to be rewarded, we will be sorely disappointed. Faith demands that we act before we may see its fruits. *Faith demands a decision before it can work*.

As for the Pilgrimage, I had made my decision, and the world opened to me. Certainly, I suffered. But such was a small price to pay for the myriad ways my life has changed.

Those changes have been far-reaching, even unto the present day. I have been back in Orlando for over two years now. I have been able to reopen my law firm, raise my children, and resume my life. Actually, “resume” is the wrong word – for since my return I have begun an entirely new, far richer, far more rewarding life.

Having been so near death for so long, I no longer see the virtue in half-measures or compromises. I no longer see the need for holding back or for fearing criticism or hostility. Self-doubt is something imposed on us by the maliciousness of those around us who doubt themselves; let us not share in their weakness.

In late 2014, I decided the time had come to enter politics. My goal was the United States Senate, but I knew that I would need to start off running for a lesser office, since it is common knowledge that an unknown newcomer cannot aim for something so grand.

So I decided to run for a seat in the House of Representatives. I sought out a campaign manager, and we gathered a team, and we all began planning for a campaign in the Tenth District of Florida.

But then something miraculous happened. Soon after we had gathered our core team, our junior Senator, Marco Rubio, announced that he would be running for President. The significance of this announcement took a day or two to sink in for me, but eventually I realized what had happened: Rubio's announcement meant that his seat in the Senate was wide open in the coming election.

Anyone who enters politics is looking to be beaten up. This is doubly true for someone running for federal office, and triply true for someone with my background running for something like the United States Senate. But any time I am attacked or see my name being run through the mud, I remember walking out onto the desert highway in Kingman, Arizona. I remember *knowing* that I was going to die, and I remember that every day of my life since that moment has been a gift of the gods.

I should have died in that desert. I knew nothing of survivalism, I had no training, I was inadequately supplied, and I had never even been in the desert except for the time I visited Santa Fe with my mother for a day when I was eight years old. I was a fugitive pilgrim depending on the charity of total strangers, and by any rational calculation, my chances of success were probably right below zero.

It would be a great insult, then, to the gods who carried me through the ordeal, to live as though my life were my own. By my estimation, my life past twenty-nine years of age is a miracle explainable only by the fact of divine intervention, for which there must have been some purpose. But I imagine this is true of every life, and that my experience was valuable mostly in allowing me to see the truth of every life: *You were all born for a great purpose, and your destiny, should you choose to embrace it, is to live that purpose fully.*

You have always wanted to climb a mountain? Then do it, and do not allow petty fears to hinder you. "How will I know what supplies I need?" "What if I get lost?" "What if I die?" These questions of self-doubt you must silence; and when you reach the mountain's peak, it will have been worth it.

You have always wanted to write a book? Then do it, and fear not for the criticisms of others. "What if no one likes it?" "What will my family think?" "What if I get made fun of?" You must *assume* that your writing will offend everyone and earn you new enemies; and if it doesn't, then you have written nothing worth reading.

You have always wanted to move to a big city? Then do it, and don't let a thousand worries convince you otherwise. "What if it doesn't work out?" "How will I make friends?" "What will I do if I lose my job?" Our ancestors crossed the ocean to come to a wild land and cut their way through the Wilderness. I daresay the dangers of modern America are far less than they faced.

We Americans hail from generations of frontiersmen and pioneers, seafarers and space voyagers. *Fearlessness* is now and has always been the primary American virtue. If we are to save our country, we must realize this, above all.

