

The Young Mathematicians

Part II: Among the Magi

Jackson

First Light

The New York Times headline on Monday morning should have been “World Waits!” Instead, the Grey Lady chose an Onionesque, faux climate change analysis (“Heat’s Up! Pants Down!”), in which they purported that the increasing temperatures in the city were connected to a sex scandal in Albany. They never did print a word about the Forever After Revelation. They were not alone among the media. No press release was issued. No one made the media calls.

The NYT reporter, Jackson Martel, who wrote the headline article, would soon know better. Nonetheless, everyone who saw the headline realized the two ‘!’s made Martel a trailblazer in NYT’s journalistic history.

The beginning of something new is often missed.

Martel had not missed the deep change in human life that had started about 50,000 days ago. The heat was a clue. Complaining about the weather was a human right, or so many thought, but they enjoyed it to their detriment, according to some few others. People complaining about the heat was not news.

The Forever After Revelation came from a world Jackson knew little about. For the first 24 hours after the real-time visualization, the 20 million Edenists from the Global Prophetic Group and Garden Clubs, who were logged on that Saturday and Sunday to the First Covenant Prophecy blog, waited, knowing that a new revelation, the Forever After Revelation, would soon be delivered to the inhabitants of the Wild.

Prophecy Today!

Twitter feeds

Janus Welsh: Hello. This is Janus Welsh with Prophecy Today! Since Sunday night, shortly after the global visioning session, the hashtag #foreverafter has been spiking on twitter. As can be seen on your screen, the messages resemble farewells, and have been retweeted often enough to exert an enormous influence on world opinion. Erik Weber, the designer of the system (called 'the Networks'), is here with us this afternoon.

As an introduction, here are a few of the tweets our staff flagged as typical of the...how many were there?

The screen began a crawl. The crawl doubled and doubled, until sixteen lines flowed across the visual of two Skype screens, one with Janus and the other with Erik.

Erik Weber: A multiple of 20 million has been added every hour since the virtual meeting occurred. It works out to 1 Billion new tweets a day. We expect that the exponential growth will continue until in the course of the day – approximately three hours from now – it will stop entirely.

The crawl said:

20 million prophets speak. We enter Eden.

Goodbye to the Wild. Hello Homeland, Eden.

I do not fear. My body, beautiful. My self now me.

Yesterday I saw the world anew. An orphan found a mother.

Tears crisp like blades slide across my harness, cut, now free

Adore Vine holds god within taught me too now I'm like him

Awaken! Into what? Poverty of spirit ends in wealth. Enjoy!

Mother, can this be the end of yearning? Come out and see.

Ecstasy appears. Poets heal blind eyes, deaf ears.

For the history book: today the multi-universe became infinite in size and number.

As the words flowed across the big screen the two faces reflected what they were reading. Erik began to weep. He reached toward his eyes, then began to laugh as his best friend Reggie leapt into his lap to wash the salt away in a flurry of dog tonguing.

Both men laughed. The Yorky jumped down. The crawl ended. Both men were still laughing.

Erik: That was beautiful. Life is not limited by our imaginations, but by our fears.

Janus: Where did this all come from? Who are these people?

Erik: How did you find me?

Janus: John Vine was too busy, said you would talk my ears off.

Erik: Did you talk to Jesus yet?

Janus: What?

Erik: If you are talking to John, you will eventually talk to Jesus. Call me back after that and I can help sort out the details.

Janus

First Light

Janus was among the 100 million or more who heard second-hand about the Forever After Revelation. The 100 million knew about it even before it had that name. It was something friends of his last girlfriend had been texting him about.

On Sunday, his Facebook page had melted with a set of live interviews by contributors to a website called Prophecy Today! The interviews with Prophet John D. Vine and some of his following from around the country had recorded the astounding change overtaking the Christian world-view.

Janus interviewed Grace Billingsley, a cousin from California, whose Facebook entries identified her as a Prophet Vine follower. The PT! carried the interview as one of the first journalist entries to their site. Janus knew something was going on.

Grace had said, “There was one new thing that came through to us that day. It started: the vision itself. First one, then many, then almost all heard the words repeated, until it became the meaning of the dream: We are Home. Enjoy it. Enjoy it!”

A year out of high school, Janus dreamed of a career as an investigative journalist. Because of the Grace interview, he was on his own in Flagstaff with permission to report for PT! about the latest from Prophet John D. Vine’s First Covenant Church in nearby Merced, Arizona. Packed for a week away, his cameras and recording equipment loaded, he left his apartment at first light on Monday after he had called his ex-girlfriend. He figured the drive from Flag to Merced took less than 40 minutes on a good day. Not today.

On Monday at 24 minutes past noon GMT, the 20 million people who had been part of the visioning received the verbatim Forever After Revelation. By sunrise ‘Flag time’ the revelation was delivered by email, Facebook, a

finite power of ten other direct social networks and the potentially infinite net clusters associated with the Garden Clubs, which were part of Vine's network. Once Janus picked up Gillian, the aforementioned one-time girlfriend but still 'cameraman,' they headed out for Merced.

The traffic became obvious as Hwy 89 left town. 25 miles north the winding snake of cars had slowed to 50 mph, then to 25 just before all but a few vehicles turned west off of the highway towards Merced. Janus gripped the wheel tightly, following the flow. The traffic, heading towards the church, soon slowed to a crawl, restricted by the number of cars parked along the roadway. Increasing numbers of people walking towards the 'town' also narrowed the available space, eventually forcing the cars to drive at a slower pace than the foot traffic. All around them people were pulling to a stop, electing to hike the last few miles.

By the middle of the afternoon, Quepos, Costa Rica local time, 500 million knew. At 2 PM Flagstaff local time Janus and his crew reached the front doors of the church, after being forced to abandon their car easily four miles away. Nine hours later, Tuesday at 12:24 PM GMT, everyone knew.

Shalla

Shalla remained invisible. *Invisibility has its advantages.* Her family's farm was on the edge of the old jungle as it reached the Pacific Ocean near Quepos, Costa Rica.

Like every morning, this morning Shalla rose to greet the sun. One of 'the boys' had already made tea before going to the barn. She sat with tea in hand, faced the first light and meditated on the beauty of all beings.

Juan O'Leary, her older brother, and Dominic O'Leary, her twenty-year-old son, were out doing the never-ending chores all farmers do to facilitate the processes that produce food.

Dominic had returned home from his long stay in Hawaii. He'd flown into the capitol and taken a bus over the mountains. He'd returned with secrets.

"Mother, I am in love," he announced. "Rusty is a beautiful person." Dominic did love her, as was obvious to his mother. "Can you imagine having someone to talk to, someone who knows what Boolean algebra is?"

Dominic mentioned her every day as if he spoke to her every day. Then, almost a week after he returned, he re-entered the gate. He returned again after a brief sojourn, and two days later his beloved friend emerged from the jungle for a visit.

The way things are changing leaves everyone on edge.

Weather was transforming much of the world, reducing the livable areas and destroying crop lands. In their sheltered valley, the effects of heat and drought had severely reduced yields. In the region – as in most regions – there was hunger.

Every season had seen a new extreme in weather: big storms of all kinds, or no kind at all. There were still advantages to living so near the equator.

The weather here is stable by comparison.

Now in her mid-forties, Shalla easily remembered her 30's spent as a single parent of a 'little professor' motivated by a mathematics problem his distant father, Robert, had asked him to solve. Shalla had raised Dominic with Juan's help. Robert had left Costa Rica two years after Dominic's birth, vanishing into the gate to re-emerge years later as John D. Vine.

At age six, a noticeable change overtook her son. His interest in mathematics expanded exponentially. By ten, he was learning on his own beyond the experience of local teachers. His only contact with other minds like his was through his online tutor, a Dr. Laplace, who Shalla suspected was all that remained of Robert. She missed him, but she had also helped him on his journey, as she knew was needed.

Robert had disappeared twice in the three years they had been together.

Shalla did not search for him the second time, two weeks after his previous three-day disappearance. She did not want to find him, having discovered what had become of him the first time.

An artist has access to 'other worlds,' some wholly within the imagination. She saw him there in one of those other worlds.

She painted his portrait from memory, painting him into a menagerie of plants and animals she dreamed accompanied him in his life before she met him. She had never visited Northern California, where Robert was from. She was certain her choices of flora and fauna were more fanciful than real. No other of her paintings were allowed in the house. As a sign of distinction, she placed his portrait next to the door that exited onto a path that led up the hill to the ocean overlook, and Robert's cabin.

She missed him.

The Historian

(1996)

Jasmine DuBois met Robert Devine in a pool hall in the city of Fortuna, Humboldt County, California; it was called The Playroom. She barely managed to introduce herself before he suddenly darted from the room after promising her breakfast.

When they met again in Austin at ex-Governor of Texas John Connally's funeral, Jasmine decided to follow Robert back to Humboldt County, California. In-between the meetings, Vera Greene and Isaac Winwood had been injured in a bombing, the blame for which was placed on an unknown 'religious fanatic.' The "Lord's Avenger" signed the letter to the media, taking responsibility for the bombing (convincingly so, according to the FBI).

Robert's life began to fall apart, and Jasmine took him into the mountains to a stream – the Trinity River. They began writing a book, an explanation for the bomb that had left Vera crippled. Robert began to exhibit symptoms of PTSD; he eventually left for Costa Rica, leaving the book unfinished.

Jasmine had graduated 30 years before from Harvard, and more recently earned a PhD in History. Unconvinced that the collective efforts at recording and rediscovering history were delivering any truth, she considered her surroundings in a new way, one she had never before imagined.

Jasmine was good with her imagination. It showed in everything she did, said and wore: her hair was its own bewitching environment. Robert said her hair was the sweetest-smelling place he had ever been. Jasmine was a gardener – not a planter and harvester, but a woman who would go into the garden to bleed, to taste the soil to determine what amendments to provide, who would rub her hands and arms through the leaves and run her fingers through her hair. Robert said sometimes that her attendant aroma of mint, basil and tomatoes was so confusingly wonderful it made him feel like a bee flitting from flower to flower.

About a year before she met Robert, she was looking at her PhD in a manner similar to how Robert considered his degrees in mathematics: *not much use if the forests die*. But for Jasmine the rub wasn't logging. She was following John Connally, observing him, in what would prove to be the last days of his life. She said it was personal, and it may just have been an obsession, but she found that hunting Connally caused her to research his connections and his history. Through studying his life, she discovered what she perceived as the force distorting the narratives of the past. Through her time with Robert she gained focus and purpose, even as Robert was losing his ability to follow even simple routines. By then Jasmine had discovered that Robert was right – Eden is here. She carried it in her heart. One did not really carry Eden in one's body. It was more like Eden carried one's body: labor and abundance for all your days.

Time

Dominic and Rusty with the other young mathematicians gave online presentations about issues affecting how people considered the Forever After revelation.

The scene was a stage with a large screen behind the speaker's podium.

As Dominic prepared himself at the microphone the screen showed a table:

T1 the fundamental time of physics; it is not real – or perhaps it should just be said that T1 is eternity.

T2 would be the less-fundamental time of the world of entropy. Real within its sphere.

T3 time as experienced by an individual.

T4 culturally-coded time: time publicly and authoritatively interpreted as cyclic repetition, progress, degeneration from an ideal, the approach to apocalypse, etc., etc. Culturally-coded time affects personally-experience time, but is distinguishable from it, since members of a culture appropriate the public cultural codes in widely varying ways.

As Dominic stood at the podium. He could feel the pressure as the audience's expectant gaze shifted from the slide to him. "What you see on the screen is intended to solve a confusion or two," he stated in his crisp, youthful voice.

"One potential outcome is to note that there is scant evidence that time began. Individual and cultural time had a beginning, and logically have an end. The other outcome is that the Big Bang theory is just that: a theory. Ideological science is not science, but politics, so we can safely assume that theologically-limited science is not science, but religion. The Big Bang belongs in the conceptual dustbin with hell and Satan and all the rest of the Abrahamic idea of creation.

“Mathematics is as natural as Eden. But Pythagoras was correct in saying that Dominionism is biased to break from nature. In demanding that mathematics support Dominionism, the mystical aspect of numbers was forcibly stripped away, leaving base corruption.”

Dominic held up a tablet in front of him. “I want to read a post I found several years ago that speaks to the other issue confronting us.” As he spoke the screen began to pan the text so the attendees could both read and hear the words. He cleared his throat, tapped the screen to awareness, and read:

“The origins of the word 'god' are not based in historical writings, but in the oral and cultural traditions of our long-forgotten past. This past was allegorical, but the primary driver of mythology was the use of entheogens. The use of entheogens, and likely other forgotten ecstatic ceremonial techniques, resulted in states of egolessness which further brought the individual into contact with a state of transcendent oneness: the source of consciousness. A state of non-mind cannot be described by those in the ego. This is the initial understanding of god. God was a word to describe this state, which was further anthropomorphized into various demiurges, both pantheistic and monotheistic. Contemplative and mystical traditions maintain a more direct path to this state than some other religions which focus on charity or group mythology.

This is exemplified by millennia of Abrahamic theologians who described the conceptualization and personalization of god as being a false understanding. E.g., consider the word creator: the concept of a creator, properly understood and conceived, only applies to human beings and cannot really be used to describe god. There were those who considered the mind as only being able to describe what god is not, or concepts god could only exceed. This is why the Buddha refused to talk about this state. He literally couldn't do it. It is also

why the first line in the Tao is *The way that can be named is not the eternal way.*

Discussions of faith, fact, proof, perception, conceptualization, personalization and observation are not appropriate ways to understand what god is, and only indicate that the subject is misunderstood.

This is of course only my understanding, and I mean no disrespect to anyone's beliefs.”

Dominic looked up from his reading, allowing a brief moment of silence before he spoke again. “The notions of time and god are related. If there is a god, that is to say a supreme being, then it would have to be superlative in every way known to humans. The biggest. The most powerful. The eternal being that rules the Universe of his creation.

“Our correspondent would say Dominionists have been describing a king or a despot, but not a god. He would say they misunderstand the subject.”

Quepos

Foreword

Taken from Robert Devine's unpublished works

The Environmentalists were defeated in 1990. Their grand vision for an Earth-centered, religious form of government was destroyed by the Lord's Avenger.

That is how the story was told in the early days after the car bombing that injured Vera Greene and Isaac Winwood. Leaders in the Earth First! movement, popular at the time, they were declared to be terrorists by the real Terrorists.

The world is a place of many languages – 7,000 counting just dictionaries. If you count how many different meanings are given to the word Freedom or Liberty, and how many different definitions there are of other powerful words, then we have to multiply that 7,000 by an exceedingly large number to calculate the actual multitude of different interpretations that exist. This is the Babel Complex.

Eventually, we might want to admit that we each have a language of our own, and maybe that's a good reason to promote storytelling.

I suppose some writers want to create a bit of confusion with a purpose. Confusion is a teacher. It teaches you where you are not ready to go. It can teach you how to find a new perspective. To create confusion, I make the Lord's Avenger speak first.

This is a story about a process of learning languages and creating perspectives. This is also a story of a transformation, about a revival which I unabashedly hope includes yours.

– Robert Devine

May 24, 1990

The Letter

I built with these Hands the bomb that I placed in the car of Vera Greene. I come forward now emboldened by the Spirit of the Lord to spread the Message spoken by the bomb, so that All will hear it and take it into their hearts. This woman was possessed of the Devil. No natural Woman created of our Lord spews Forth the Lies, Calumnies and Poisons that she does with such Evil Power. The Lord cleared my Vision and revealed this unto me outside the Baby-Killing Clinic, when Vera Greene smote with Satan's words the humble and faithful servants of the Lord who had come there to make witness against Abortion. I saw Satan's flames shoot forth from her mouth, her eyes and her ears, proving forever that this was no Godly Woman, no Ruth full of obedience to procreate and multiply the children of Adam throughout the world, as is God's Divine Will.

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

Timothy 2:11

She and her blasphemous host try to abort the children of Adam and erase us from the Face of the Earth, which was Created by God to be our Home so that we could fill it with our Numbers in His Name. She spoke Satan's Words, yet the Lord did not strike her Down. Darkness fell upon my Spirit. In my prayers I sought guidance so I would know if the Lord was calling me to Wield His Sword. I could hear no Answer, but Satan marched on and caused great Uproar over the land. This Woman Possessed of the Devil set herself on the Honest men of toil, who do God's work to bring forth the bounty that He has given us to Take. All the forests that grow and all the

wild creatures within them are a gift to Man that he shall use freely with God's Blessing to build the Kingdom of God on Earth. They shall be never-ending because God will provide.

It is all God's Gift for us to take and use, so that we can build our Civilization in the Image of the Creator. The devil is sorely displeased by our Godly Dominion, and he sends his demons to sow Confusion and Doubt in our numbers. This possessed demon Vera Greene spread her Poison to the Multitude, telling them that trees were not God's Gift to Man but were themselves gods, and as such it was a Sin to cut them down. My Spirit ached as her Paganism festered before mine Eyes. I felt the Power of the Lord stir within my Heart, and I knew I had been Chosen to strike down this Demon.

I was His Avenger. The demon must be struck down. The Light filled me and my Faith was impregnable. Great joy Filled me as I set to work.

The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.

Psalms 58:10

I put the bomb in her car. And the Bomb was Hidden and the hour hand Moved, and the bomb was Armed and administered Divine Justice. But it did not kill! I had wanted that she should be cut Down quickly, like a diseased horse, but the Lord Willed that she should Live on in Pain

suffering the vengeance of eternal fire

Jude 7

So that others would Cringe with Fear and Horror at the Terrible Scourge of the Lord. Now all who would come to the forests and worship trees like gilded Idols have been Warned. They have seen the Fate that awaits them.

To me belongeth vengeance.

Deuteronomy 32:35

To those who share the demon's pagan faith I warn you to Return to the Lord.

But if you Heed not this Warning and go into the forests to do Satan's Bidding, surely you will Suffer the same Punishment as the demon Vera Greene.

I HAVE SPOKEN. I AM THE LORD'S AVENGER.

Two Weeks After the Bombing

(1990)

Sometime during the 1980s

“1 Evolution
2 Revelation
3 Revolution”

was scratched into a table top in the kitchen of the Woodrose Café in Garberville, California. Robert Devine noticed it for the first time in June 1990, shortly after the bombing.

Robert and his attorney Harris Collins often met at this kitchen table, the roar of noisy food preparation making it unlikely that anyone would overhear them.

In his late 40s, Robert had been a community organizer, private investigator and publisher for more than half his life. A little older than half Robert’s age, Harris looked seriously hung over and closer to Robert’s age than he was.

“Are we looking at something old, or something new?” Harris managed.

“Both.” Robert grinned with realization and cleverness.

Harris was not amused. “You hired me – or should I say enlisted me – in your army of eyes, and I must say that I don’t mind going unpaid. Hell, I work as hard as if you did pay me. I know you work for free, in modern terms, but I noticed you had a beer yesterday, and generally if you have the money to pay your bartender you have the money to pay your lawyer.”

Whatever has gotten to him has a strong hold on him. Robert sat in silence, waiting for Harris to finish his rant. Robert must have lost his poker face. Harris was taken aback.

“Robert, I am sorry. I had to vent a little. Lawyers measure themselves with their bank accounts. My office rent is due, and this Lord’s Avenger letter has me so absorbed I haven't seen a paying client in two weeks.”

“Harris, you are a funny guy. Over the last ten years you've been in the center of the action – just where you wanted to be. We have both gotten what we bargained for. I got a lawyer. You caught a buzz, or the buzz caught you.”

“I know, and you know I appreciate what you're saying. It’s just that to be even a little-known fixture of this movement means I am included in the ‘and others’ in every threat we’ve received. Now with Vera in the hospital, Isaac shunned and the election all but lost, we are rewarded with this letter that abuses all of us, and especially those who know and admire Vera.” Harris sounded more than defeated; his lightly graying hair seemed to hang down with an uncanny weight, compressing his head into his chest.

“My friend, whoever sent that letter knew things at a time that only one person or group of people acting as one could know. The revelation is wrapped in the ideology of an offshoot of the Pentecostals – an unpleasant amalgam of fear and hatred for their fellow humans and the very creation they claim was given to them as a gift. They call themselves Dominionists. That we are sharing life on Earth with such people is frightening to many. To have to face this threat is first to know that such a threat exists, and then with little fanfare attempt to confront it.”

Robert was on a roll. “Let’s put this threat firmly in the hands of the CIA, timber industry public relations firms, Republican campaign organizations and whatever black bag groups thrive on protecting their masters with violence, whether in the US or in defense of bloodthirsty dictators such as General Rios Montt, who lives not far from here waiting for an indictment on crimes against humanity while he attends services in a Pentecostal Dominionist church known to be controlled by the CIA. Maybe we are facing more than a threat; we may be facing the equivalent of the CIA’s death squads right here in Humboldt County.”

Harris seemed enlivened by Robert's rant. Pushing his fingers through his hair so he could look into Robert's eyes, he sat still, then with a sigh said, "And there you have it. Is that it? Did we know we were arousing these people? I don't know about you, but I, acting as a citizen attorney general as provided for in law, was using the courts to enforce laws passed through the state and federal legislative systems and signed by the chief executives as provided for in our constitution. For this I get the Lord's Avenger?"

"Yes." Robert had thought about saying something flippant but felt the weight of the moment and quickly changed track. "No help here, Harris. There is no way to go back. However, we do have a choice of how to go forward.

"Over the last two weeks the vacuum created around us has been impressive. The county campaigns crumbled after the bomb. People removed our lawn signs. Volunteers left. In Garberville, Isaac was treated to a total blackout. People crossed the street to avoid him. Waitresses refused to serve him. It was so bad that I saw him crossing the street one day as I was walking away from the office. He looked so forlorn. I stopped in the middle of the street and hugged him in an unmistakable offer of support. 'If you are doing this to this man, you are doing it to me.'"

Harris sat in silence, slowly shaking his head from side to side. "It hardly matters any more. I guess we know who did this, then. I guess we chose this enemy..."

"Not enemy. Wrong word. It's more like we are forced to dance. It's the nature of life, and right now we have a very poor dance partner. It's like we are trying to learn the steps, but we can't hear the music."

"Okay. We chose that partner. Now what?"

"Good question. The Dominionists and people like the Lord's Avenger, who follow their path of 'Engaging the Enemy,' premise their behavior on a belief that Satan and his demons are in the world – literally, and that Christians are to engage in spiritual warfare with them. That is who the

Lord's Avenger may well be...if that person or persons are fairly characterizing themselves."

"So we attack them?"

"No."

"Okay. Then we make fun of them and isolate them?"

"No."

"Surely we don't want to start a religious war?"

"Too late. I was thinking about starting a religious peace, and how we might use this moment to bring it about."

Harris sat shaking his head from side to side. "Wasn't that what Jesus tried? And look what they did to him."

"Not funny, Harris."

Seven years later, 1997: Quepos

The trip from the Trinity Mountains of Northern California to the Central Pacific coastal region of Costa Rica is a journey from the wilderness through the metropoli of San Francisco and L.A., through the second and third world of Mexico and El Slavador, to the turmoil of San Jose, and finally a two-and-a-half hour bus ride up and over two mountain ridges, until at last the familiar expanse of the Pacific Ocean lies along the coast.

Jasmine made this transition from solitude in the western United States to 'solitude in Latin America' in the space of one day. As the taxi driver – *what was his name?* – had promised her in the San Jose airport, the road took her along the ocean's edge. From its first sighting she stared out at the blue waters rushing in silver-white gashes onto the shore. As the car moved slowly forward to Quepos, she sat with the window down trying to hear the voices her river – the Trinity River – spoke with, trying to catch some news of Robert.

Jasmine herself was wild. She had lived a magic life of service to her passion. She and Robert loved each other at a distance in miles and time so powerfully that she was drawn to this journey to keep him in her life. She found him missing his writing commitments, unresponsive to email for the last few months. She worried about him, and after being apart for three years she sought news of him in his adopted country.

The miles of travel affected her. Her comfort was left behind her, burned from her in the crush of humanity and the intense disorientation of a new language and culture.

"Do you know a man, a writer named Robert, who moved here three years ago?" she had asked the driver.

"Pardoname, Señora, my English es muye malo."

She took out her book of Spanish phrases, but the traveling had tired her, and she felt a swiftly-rising panic. *I'll never find him without some help*, she thought. *This place is so strange. Small in size, but big enough to swallow a man whole and never let him be seen again.*

"Señor, yo quiero una persona quien hablar englis. Por favor, señor, assista me," was the best she could do.

"Momento, Señora, esta persona existe en Quepos." The cab drove on into the small port town, through its crowded streets to the bus station in the center of Quepos. The driver parked, and with a gesture asking her to wait he left his car to speak to another older driver in the taxi parked ahead of hers. In a minute the two men walked back to her, talking softly to each other in a language she felt was keeping secrets from her. Today she swam in a sea of her own emotions: fatigued and anxious, hungry, thirsty, wanting nothing but to hear of a place where she might find him.

"Señora, I am Juan," said the older man. "My English is good. How can I help you?" His worn face spoke of kindness, and of knowing many things. He smiled as he talked, his joy evident in the wrinkles around his eyes and mouth.

"My name is Jasmine DuBois. I have just arrived in Costa Rica this morning. I seek a man who came to this area about three years ago; his name is Robert Devine. He was a writer, and he came to Costa Rica to live. He did not own a car. He liked to take taxis or walk. He would be in his late-fifties now. Do you know who he is? Could you help me find him?"

Juan's smile deepened mysteriously. "Perhaps. There are many Robertos. There are many writers. I do not know them all, or where they live, Señora. But I know a man, a poet, who just might know your Robert. I can take you to him, perhaps."

Jasmine paid the young driver for her trip from San Jose. The men struggled her luggage from one cab to the other, and the older driver motioned her into the back seat of his vehicle. He drove her back along the road north,

then turned inland to the east up a wide valley with a river like a snake coursing through it.

"We are going to Londres," the driver said, then fell silent. Jasmine waited wordlessly, not knowing what to say.

The road followed a path through the date and coconut palm plantations, the trees so tall they blocked the view to left and right, leaving only intermittent narrow corridors through which the mountains of the Cordillera de Talamanca were visible to the eye. As the miles passed, she grew even more sedate. The last poem she knew Robert had published echoed in her; seeking to remember his words, she opened the book of his poetry that she always carried with her.

*Practically nothing grew there – "Barren to the heart," they said,
"Polluted by some poison brew." – a land without seeds for any life.*

*Sorrow, not rows of furrows, covered the cracked, dry soil. Growing a
crop of fruited plants was beyond its bed of stones.*

*Miraculous it was, then, the day the tree first burst through clay.
More than surprise forsaken caught hold of all who saw it.*

*An "amazing" blossomed forth some new creation: "blessed be!"
Hope raised above their heads, angels sang as all bliss danced.*

*New chance for anything again began to rising Sun's first rays.
Branches stretched to its leaves, Spring breaking some old curse.*

As the road emerged from the groves into the fields and gardens around a small settlement in the foothills, Juan turned off the main track into a square, the morning market now deserted as the afternoon rains grew nearer.

"Does it always rain in the afternoon, Juan?" Jasmine asked the driver.

"Si, Señora. It is the rainy season...but seldom in the morning. We are in Londres now. I will stop at the school and inquire about the poet." Juan

pulled the car up to a brick building, sandy brown, hidden beneath a thatched roof. It looked as ancient as the land around it, and as full of memories. Juan left her in the shade of a low tree near the entrance to the school; there, limp from her exertions, she sank onto a wooden bench, a plank precariously balanced on two large stones.

Minutes passed. She sat up, entranced by the newness of her surroundings. Nothing moved except the rain. In the distance she saw a rainbow, the sunlight refracted in the rain now falling in the canyons above her. More time passed...*was it endless?* she wondered. The rain falling from above Londres became a roar in the treetops. She moved with slow precision to the shelter of the school porch. She sank into a chair where countless others had rested, waiting for the rain to cease or the burning sun to cool.

She felt the clouds thicken as the rain fell in near-solid sheets, turning the light brown soil to liquid chocolate and the gray-green foliage to a glistening emerald, which faded from green back to gray as the darkness of the new afternoon gathered, foretelling further torrents. As Jasmine struggled to adjust her eyes to the diminishing light, Juan and another man walked towards her, shielded from the downpour by a single broad umbrella. She did not rise.

The two drew close to her. Juan left the umbrella for the cover of the porch, walking past Jasmine and out of her sight while saying, "Señora Jasmine, here is the man I hoped to find."

The man stood carefully in the rain, appearing to prefer the darkness of his umbrella to the freedom of the porch's roof. In a voice so low it was barely audible over the roar of the rain Jasmine asked, "Do you know Robert?"

"That may be," the man said. He spoke without an accent, perfectly formed words said as if sung. *A cello*, she thought. "He was here, living over the ocean." He paused, then continued, "Three or four years. He has lived in silence for a while now, so no one can really know who he has become."

"Can you help me find him?"

"Very difficult. He lived on the coast. No one has seen him since before the rains. Compermiso, Señora. Juan vamos alle." The man and Juan walked back the way they had come, their conversation hidden in the language, washed clean of meaning by the rain that hammered around her ears.

She had not seen his face, but she knew he was educated in English; the beauty of his voice enthralled her. *That was a poet*, she thought. She closed her eyes against the clamor of the rain, which quickly became a lullaby. She lost track of time and slept.

Juan's soft touch on her shoulder brought her back to consciousness.

"Come, Señora. We will go to your Robert's house."

"Okay. I feel so weak. Am I getting sick? My eyes are blurry, I am faint." She balanced herself with a hand on Juan's shoulder as they moved towards the taxi a few feet away.

"I will give you water. Drink it slowly but drink it all. You must drink plenty of water every day, or you will lose a little of your mind to thirst here in the tropics."

Juan aimed the car down the road towards Quepos once again. And once again Robert's last poem passed through her thoughts:

The field in bloom was madness. Its utter death had been so sure. The people rose and walked to it. "What can be our purpose here?"

The ground was still just clay. The branch, its leaves and shade were still just barely life anew. A garden was the dream to meet.

A man, silently, spoke to the earth. He rose each day. His arms full, he made the journey to the tree to till and tend, to break and sow.

The joy he felt in his work fed him. "What would life be without green?" Thoughts passed between them. He was sure he heard her melodies.

*No one knows the source of love. Few experience the hand of god.
This man, this woman lived it. The tree of life grew from them.*

*Paradise is made of love renewed. In her soil, heart of the land, he
toiled. She offered all of her. They were the many things of life.*

His words, as she had not so long ago read them for the first time, lived in her mind.

"Where are you taking me, Juan?"

"To Robert's cabin above the ocean. You need to rest. I will show you where. My sister, Shalla, will help you live in his house while you wait."

"I need so much, Juan. Thank you for helping me. Who was that man who spoke to me in Londres? What did he tell you?"

"The Poet. He has no other name. He is a piece of Costa Rica, like the old jungle. He said Robert would want you to wait in peace, and to learn from his silence."

"Learn from his silence?"

"Si Señora. From his silence."

Time and the miles passed, and the pavement gave way to a dirt road. Juan stopped his taxi a few feet from a small wooden structure hidden in the trees. They carried her luggage up a path through a piece of the old jungle. Juan took her to Robert's door, which stood closed but unlocked.

"Señora Jasmine, it will be dark soon. Shalla has kept Robert's house clean, so you will find no problem tonight. The bed is made, and I will send some food up for you. The water here is good. Drink, and tomorrow you will be rested and strong."

"How do I thank you? In one day I have traveled three thousand miles, only to find myself again at home. My gratitude is complete."

"The Poet says Robert will welcome you here and show you how to wait, until you find what you have come seeking. He is a man who knows many things, the Poet; you were lucky to find him so soon."

Juan left, returning shortly with the promised food. Then he left again. Jasmine began to wait in her own silence. *I must learn from Robert's silence. I am here to find him, so what does his silence matter?* She rose from the only chair in the small house to stand at the window, looking west at the sunset. The clouds, piled in wispy layers above the Pacific, shone with a rosy fire. They occluded the sun's descent, now hidden, now free. The rains came and went, in torrents or nothing; the sunshine and then the rain. The clouds parting, the rain stopping, then the sun again, until the sky burst into yellow, soon orange, then red, until violet. Darkness followed. The immensity of the sudden darkness caught her unawares.

Jasmine slept without dreams, woke to find a breakfast laid out on the small table near the only window. She sat to eat the fruit and rolls, and to drink the strong coffee. As her head cleared, she began to examine her surroundings, trying to notice anything unusual, a search for clues. But the interior of Robert's cabin was especially uninteresting, except for the books and papers he had collected – and the view of the ocean through the window.

On the table in front of her lay a thin manila envelope, addressed to his publisher but never mailed. *This may be the last thing he wrote here*, she thought, as she slid the sheets of paper free of the envelope.

I waited an hour – my lips sealed

Against uttering my small prayer.

In this silence I lingered wanting

To hear the lost voice of God

In the murmuring of the sea and air.

*Words raged inside my mind
Mere ripples reflected again and
Again from the encircling barriers
I had for so long left to firmly block
Any escape into the outer world.*

*"Help me. Let these visions free."
Betrayed by my desires, exhausted
In the quiet, bursting all resolve
To mute myself until I knew the words
To say – I sadly spoke too soon.*

*Shutting my eyes to start anew
To regain the silence with which
To hear if only there were words
Spoken, I sat. Still the surf remained
Inarticulate, the mountains speechless.*

In the midst of her reading, Jasmine was drawn back to the world by a knocking and a voice. A woman less than half Jasmine's age – a Tica – stood in the open doorway. She took Jasmine in with a study of her so intense yet

benign that Jasmine could only lower her own gaze in respect for the unshielded power of the woman.

"Señora Jasmine. I am Juan's sister, Shalla. I came to see how you are, and hopefully not to disturb you." Her English danced as she spoke; it reminded Jasmine of the Poet's.

"Thank you, Señora Shalla. It is good to meet you. Was it your coffee and food I've been eating?"

"Si, Señora."

"Then thank you again for feeding me."

"De nada. Excuse me, but I notice you are reading Robert's last poem."

"Have you read it?"

"Yes. I sat with him on the beach and dreamt it with him. I watched him standing naked in this spot, struggling with his decisions. I went to town to shop for food, and when I returned that poem was on the desk. He was gone. I thought to mail it off, but never have. It's a piece of him at the edge of his old way. Maybe I wanted to keep it a secret from the rest of the world. No one may understand it anyway."

Jasmine wrestled with her emotions as she realized who Shalla must have been to Robert and may yet be again. Shalla was a startling beauty, the color of rich earth, with a demeanor speaking of a quiet pride.

"Have you seen Robert since?"

Something unspoken flashed in Shalla's onyx-dark eyes; it was akin to pain, but far more complex. "Señora Jasmine, please forgive me, but I must go to work for a few hours. When I return, we can talk – or perhaps tomorrow morning. You should rest. Drink water – two quarts over the day. All of Robert's writings are here, his journals and letters, novels and poetry. I know you have read much of it over the years from what Robert told me of

you, but please spend your time here catching up on the life of your old friend. We will speak more later. Hasta mañana."

Shalla turned and exited abruptly, leaving Jasmine staring after her with a sense of amazement that slowly became the desire to do as Shalla suggested. She sat down in the desk chair and once more turned her attention to Robert's work.

In silence the lessons began

The trees the voices named

And clear paths amongst them

Were marked from east to west.

"Travel these to find the River.

Travel the River to find the sea.

Sit at the sea to find a peace.

Travel in peace to find love.

Live in love to recover your soul.

Then lay in wait for others to come."

I could not move for hours.

Night fell, the Sun rose high.

The afternoon rains began.

I walked the sand, up the bluffs

To my door all in my silence.

*Around me on the shelves, in drawers,
Cabinets and counters lay the past.
My past? I wondered. The words
Lay dead, a sad shroud
Covering a warrior's corpse.*

*I took out my pack for a journey
Along paths and down a river.
Searching for necessities, I touched
Each thing, but found nothing fit
Into my hand, the pack lay empty.*

*Time ceased, things shrank away –
Until in certainty, my hands free
At my side, my back bare of weight,
Of any burden, my feet shoeless,
The first step into Eden was taken.*

Jasmine in Quepos

(2000)

Jasmine sat in the sand facing the Pacific Ocean, staring up at the moonless sky as if memorizing the qualities of the stars, one by one. Her thoughts drifted without concern to her. She had grown comfortable with the randomness of her mind, with the ever-changing emotions as her thoughts grew from a glimmer to a raging inferno, just to flee into oblivion again. Turmoil and calm, turmoil and calm, like the ebb and flow of the sea before her; wave upon wave crashing in front of her to recede into the great Everything, nearly indistinguishable from the last and the next.

The ocean mesmerized her. The river, her home, taught her. At home she would have listened to her occasional ideas. Here, she was in the eye of a hurricane, unmoved by what circled, often mortally, about her. Where did such peace and self-assurance come from?

The ocean rolled endlessly, in and away. She heard his voice from her memory, a phantom like the waves, but evoking words of love spoken at a time when nothing, but their minds, remained unexplored. His body shared, his soul laying before her, his love an emotion alone, his head near hers, they had talked for days and for nights, until nothing either knew was unknown to the other. She heard above the roar of the surf his words of forever and always, and she rose from her quiet. "I love you, too," she said reverently, a whisper into the nearly-continuous rumble of the sea.

She had come to the shore, far from her river, on a quest. She sought the man whose thoughts had just invaded hers. She waited for him to come to her from wherever he was hidden. "So much time has passed, so many things have happened, and now I want to see you again. Hear my voice and act with all the faith of your love for me. Come, Dear One, fulfill the promise you made."

This place was far from home, away from the comforts of a friendly hearth and the wilderness that was her spiritual strength. She had been living now

for two months in 'my new home,' as he had called it. She had arrived in the rainy season, and he had been gone. Few knew him well enough to say where he was, but then no one who truly knew him would ever tell a stranger anything about his whereabouts, even such a one as she, who knew so much about him.

Juan and Shalla had given her Robert's history and Robert's home, but not Robert himself. Jasmine knew that Robert and Shalla had spent three years as lovers. They had a child, a beautiful, precocious boy.

Jasmine was made to feel welcome in Quepos, and she said she would stay until Robert returned. Of this she was certain, even if it was only to receive news of where he might be buried. Now, a month into the temperate season, she had established her routine.

Today she sat all evening in the place his poems had spoken about, "where the jungle meets the sea." Tears ran down her face. The night sky was darkened by rain clouds coming from the east. "Does he travel in the dark and rain? Is he coming at all, ever?" No one could hear her, but she heard the answer in the wind, "*Soon.*"

Jasmine moved now as he had done, her feet barely touching the beach or the trail up the bluffs, or the walkway to his door. Visions of him filled her mind. *These steps he took, this door he opened, each day for days on end. His spirit lives here as if he were immortal.* Her thoughts grew quiet. All the words had been said. His spirit let her pass within to feed herself, to wash and to sleep until another morning, and another day waiting for his delivery, dawned.

Her dreams no longer upset her. Memories held no fears. The future was hers, and nothing awaited her that she had not long since made into a friend, to greet with open and accepting arms. The last vision was always the one she trusted most, the one that aroused her from her sleep. This dawn brought a timeless image.

Slow to waken, she lay in dreams, and then in dreams and thoughts, until finally only thoughts remained. Sighing, her eyes opened on the unwelcome light of another day. Her spirit had surrendered to the night, her mind so deep in imagination that as she awoke she smelled coffee laced with cream, commingled with the unmistakable scent of him. She shut her eyes again, believing the dreaming was not done, but her ears caught another rhythm of life nearby. So patient, so hopeful, no reaction jolted through her. She often wished to revisit long-ago mornings, when the pleasure of waking in his arms to coffee, talk and intimacy was as certain as the risen sun.

Then she felt his touch, so light upon her shoulder. "You are quite a surprise," she heard him say, softly humming the words that had begun their love affair. Without turning, trusting to this last vision, she moved backwards, as she had so often done, to find his naked hips nestling up against her legs. His hand came down upon her left breast, gently.

"I am here at last," she sighed. "At last."

She woke again with a start to discover she was alone. Was he only a vision from her dreams? Her nose was filled with the memory of his smell, her flesh still held the touch of him, but he was not there. Furthermore, there were no signs that he had been there. *What madness*, she thought. Then she heard the now-familiar tread of Shalla on the path. Hastily, Jasmine shook off her unease and rose to greet her.

Jasmine and Shalla sat sharing coffee, as they had grown accustomed to doing over the past two months. Jasmine thought of these mornings as a wedding of two women who had experienced a man changing from a warrior to a poet, and now to whatever Robert had transmuted into. They had spoken little of him, but instead talked of their own souls' journeys through life, finding a striking similarity in the time they had spent as women on the planet, though in most places their experiences were so different that overt comparisons were few. This morning was unusual.

"Shalla, I felt Robert with me last night, but he was not here."

"Do you remember the day you arrived? You asked if I had seen him since he left here. I did not answer. Today I want to tell you his story, and mine also, so you might understand why there is so much silence surrounding him."

"Do you know what I experienced today? Has it happened to you?"

"Jasmine, mi amiga, Robert lives in this house in a way so powerful that after he left I left too. We lived together physically and spiritually. Every night I slept here after his departure he filled my dreams, until the sorrow of not finding him in the morning was so great I had to leave, too."

"We are both widows, aren't we?"

"No, Jasmine. Robert still lives. He would not want us to make so much of him, but we cherish his memory. This house holds his spirit as a writer and a lover, but his body is elsewhere. He is transformed, separated from his past and from the old form his soul had taken. In the few years I knew him and experienced him, I watched him struggle to become a new thing. Those last days on the beach we were together, yet I knew he sought another form. I felt him plead with the universe to end his torment, to finally allow him to become a Brujo's true warrior – a man without a past.

"His last poem spoke about a journey to a river, and then to the sea to wait for a new being. My friends and I watched the river mouths for him, and three days after he disappeared he was found standing in the sand at the entrance of the El Rio Recuerda into the Pacific. He had become ancient; 'timeless' is a better word.

"I went to him as soon as I heard he was there. I found him easily. I want to tell you about what became of him, but I cannot yet. I sat next to him under an awning a local family had pitched to protect him from the sun and rain. He sat in silence, in a stillness I did not disturb. My heart was racing, and my mind overflowed with questions and with all the words of longing I had

spoken to myself while we waited for him to emerge. I did not speak. I sat there waiting in silence, feeling his stillness.

"I remembered his last poem and waited as we had waited that day on the beach. Juan came the next day and gently took me away. "To rest," he said, but Juan knows many things I can only guess at. He was worried about how I would feel seeing Robert who was no longer Robert.

"He told me that Robert had not spoken to anyone since he had arrived at the sea, but that sitting next to him had left people with visions. Juan took me to the house of the family who had first found him. We ate with the others, a half dozen in all. Something had happened to Robert and sitting with him had made things happen to us too. I felt I knew what they meant even though it was not described. I remembered the change I saw Robert go through before he left, and now I know we had all changed in that way. None of us could describe it, so we simply assured each other that it had happened to us too."

Jasmine had been in tears from the moment Shalla first told her that Robert was still alive. Shalla had reached for her hand and held it, to comfort her. They peered into each other's eyes, looking like two grieving women offering tears to fill the void that death inevitably created.

Lovers

Rusty had many favorite Dominic stories. She especially loved hearing recountings of his strange relationship with his father, who she imagined as a larger older version of his son.

Today she waited in Hawaii, paradise on the edge of hell. *Two days without Dominic.* She sighed. "How long can I stay here?"

Skype carried her loneliness.

"No problem," Dominic smiled at her across cyberspace. "I have room on my credit card. So it's ours for another six months if need be. The storms are not abating. We can still move our data in large chunks, but it may be impossible to move your computers themselves."

Rusty looked fondly at her monitor, enchanted by the light she saw flashing behind Dominic's virtual eyes. "I'll miss it."

"Your computer?"

"The view. Or at least, the one we had when we first set up camp here."

"That was just 20 days ago. The storms hit 9 days ago. I left 3 days ago."

"The winds have blown the Trades away. The drought has continued into the rainy season. No planes were able to take off yesterday, or today so far. The surf is being blown into Waikiki, flooding the hotels. I have not ventured out since you left."

"If I could get to you I would be there in half an hour. Walking naked through the forest down the Waahila Ridge from the gate is too hard in the wind, however."

She thought he was kidding. When Dominic showed up two days later wrapped in a scavenged beach towel, Rusty could not believe her eyes. She stood frozen, stunned to see him near-naked and shoeless.

“How?”

Dominic waited and counted *one elephant, two elephant, three elephant...*

“The Garden? But how?”

“Not bad. Three seconds.” He looked around for clothes, but he had left none there.

“If I do this very often I will need to plan ahead. I showed up at the gate like it was an airport. I had carry-on, and a lunch. It was a quick trip, but this is how I arrived. If you know where the gates are and you want to go there, you are there. Just you. Nothing more.”

“I have a good idea.” *One thousand, two thousand, three...*

“The Garden can take us both to Quepos,” he said.

Solaria Arrives

When your son and his love arrive at your door, naked, possessing nothing, questions come to mind. Solaria and Shalla saw past what others would be shocked by. Dominic and Solaria, naked in the wilderness came to Shalla's mind. Her son hugged her and turned to Rusty.

"Solaria Corona, this is my mother Shalla O'Leary."

Shalla offered her hands to the younger woman. Rusty was less than half Shalla's age. Both had been raised as Edenists. Their manner of greeting as old friends, as equals in each other's eyes, was free and fearless.

Within a few hours, flowing in Costa Rica time, Rusty had found a computer with satellite access and had read both her and Dominic's emails and texts. The Wild continued as the Wild will.

"Dominic, someone named Janus Welch is trying to Skype you. Are you open?" Rusty sat on the porch of the old ranch house in a chair she thought she had seen before, a nagging memory released by oblivion. Rusty saw Eden as a humorist, willing to tease the relatively helpless inmates in the Wild.

"Janus Welch? Hmm."

"Not responsive. He is an interviewer with a site called PT!. Prophecy Today Online, his show is called. He is in Merced and asks if you can be there for an interview. If not, he'll settle for Skype."

"Skype will have to do." Dominic dismounted his hammock and moved to sit with her in the chair he remembered always being where it was, with a huge bluebottle plant shielding it from the sun's heat. The chair was the one he'd learned to read in, sitting quietly next to Juan or Shalla, practicing until he could read as well as them.

"Where did you get this chair, Dominic?"

"Been here since before me. My grandmother loved it. Why?"

“Reminds me of home. Oops, incoming Skype request. It’s Janus Welch.”

“Janus Welch? Dominic O’Leary. How can I help?”

“I will ask questions. If you would be so kind as to respond to them, it will make a good vid. I have the Prophet, and a lot more. But you can help us tie the pieces together, and maybe add a little romance to a very philosophical group portrait. At least I am hoping.”

“And Rusty?”

“Off camera please, if you could.”

Rusty swept past the camera’s view of Dominic and took his recent place on the hammock.

“Here we go.”

***Janus:** Welcome to PT! Live Online. My name is Janus Welch. With me via Skype is Doctor Dominic O’Leary. Welcome Doctor.*

***Dominic:** Thank you.*

***Janus:** We are located at your father’s church in Merced, Arizona. The First Covenant Church. We have spoken with your father, the Prophet John D. Vine. He recommended that, since he is terribly busy at the moment, perhaps you would help to fill in some of the territory for us.*

So, let's get started. What are your parents like?

***Dominic:** I live at home with my mother Shalla O’Leary. My father is a hard person to know. It doesn’t help that he was born Robert Devine and became John D. Vine; an atheist, community organizer and mathematician who became an Assembly of God Pastor and formed the largest mega-church in history. Go figure.*

Shalla is my mother. She is even harder to know, having lived in a rural third world country for most of her life.

Janus: John told me they parted ways 17 years ago. Have they met again since the Revelation?

Dominic: Robert calls it the After. There was the Before, and now this. In the After, just days ago, depending on the story you have heard, either Shalla walked through the gate in search of Robert or he came searching for her. In any case, they met again: the poet and the painter.

I smile when I think of them together. He had never taken a vow to be true, but he was. She was never moved to seek another man. She had a dream about how to use the gate to find him, and either she went in or he came out: doesn't matter to me. Both or neither. I came upon them holding hands behind Robert's cabin near the Eden gate the first night I returned home. My office is nearby, and as I was just passing the gate they popped out. I watched those moments. The joy on their faces defines beatific for me. Someday I hope to feel what I saw in them.

Janus: What can you tell us about him?

Dominic: My father. My teacher. I suppose he is mostly unknown to me. Shalla knows him intuitively. I have never met John per se; Robert was my online tutor since the age of five. He called himself Doctor Laplace. We began to meet in person when I was 13. By then he was in Merced, and he was ready to start work on the algorithm. We met whenever he thought it necessary, usually just for a few minutes. Now that I can move through Eden I see how he was always able to find me.

Janus: And what about this whole 'Edenist' concept? Did your father think it up himself, or did he learn it from someone else?

Dominic: He told me a story once about his early days traveling around California 'organizing resistance to corporate rule,' as he described it. He traveled on buses mostly, sometimes in cars if he could find a companion. His story was that he spent an afternoon and evening waiting for a bus in downtown SF. He was headed north, and buses going into redwood country were few and far between.

He told me he walked around the city dressed as he always was, in clothes someone had given him. He wasn't homeless. He looked like it. He had too many homes, was how he put it. He did too. He would tell me about lilies of the field or some such that gave him the courage to act the way he did, without fear of hunger or homelessness. He and his friends built a powerful network that kept everyone in it healthy and happy.

Anyways, his story was that as he walked around he looked into other people's eyes. He said he learned not to be obvious and challenging, but to offer his eyes to others as an invitation to see someone who knew there were others 'in disguise,' as he thought of himself.

'One in twenty' was his guess at the time of the possible number of Edenists. That he found any at all was amazing. He was right as to kind, but low as to number.

Janus: *Until this week I had never heard of Edenists. Eden yes, as a myth, but...*

Dominic: *Robert came up with the term to mean those of us who are searching for a return to the Garden. He says every story is about this desire. It has grown since then. His definition now includes every single person, but it is not where we are from that matters so much as who we realize we are, what we are. This is called the Eden Identity.*

Doctor Jasmine DuBois is the historian who led a project called Honest History. Its goal was to recover the narrative of Edenist communities destroyed by the Adamites, also a Robert term.

Janus: *Adamites?*

Dominic: *Adam and Eve left the Garden for the Wild. They called themselves Cursed, and apparently forgot who and what the Edenists were. Somehow Edenists became nearly invisible to them; sometimes we were mistaken as manifestations of 'Angels' or 'the Devil,' depending.*

As you probably realize, there is a big difference between the visions of Edenists and Adamites. Adamites build pyramids of human organization and wealth. Edenists are more horizontal. We remain the gardeners of the planet.

Remember Matthew 25:41. "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

Janus: *Fascinating, doctor. Can I talk to Shalla?*

Shalla

Shalla was not a magician or a witch. She was a listener to *“the Universe: the one that talks like the river and sings like the wind.”* She claimed to always know what to do next, as if she could see into the future. She said, “No, the future will take care of itself. The present is a mess.” She did as she was told. She had never gone wrong. She loved history, found the history of art, and became an artist “who knows where she came from.” This was her explanation of herself.

Shalla was busy hovering around them. Pretending not to listen. Every plant was petted as her hands milled about them.

Dominic called her over to sit in front of his computer. He pointed at a small circle on the upper edge of his monitor. “Mother, this is a camera. It sees you, and the computer sends your image in a live stream to whoever is on the other end of our connection. It’s like being together, but you can’t touch.”

Shalla looked at the screen just as the image of Janus popped up.

“Mother, this is Janus Welch. He is interviewing Edenists for a website. He is hoping you will kindly sit here and answer a few of his questions.”

“Okay. Hello Janus.”

“Good morning, Ms. O’Leary. I have enjoyed talking to your son. Should we begin?”

“Very good. But please, call me Shalla.”

“Of course, Shalla. Here we go.”

Janus: This is Janus Welch. Thank you for joining PT! Online. Today we are broadcasting from Merced, Arizona while we are interviewing Shalla O’Leary in Quepos, Costa Rica.

Good Morning Shalla. Thank you for joining us. Is your life magical?

Shalla: Every child dreams of performing miracles and acts of magic. It was not hard for me, my mother being a keeper of the gate, to learn the practical arts of living in the Wild on the edge of the jungle, on the edge of the ocean with a gateway to Eden in my backyard. Is my life magical? A difficult, subjective question. I certainly think many outsiders would see it as such. Life is magical if it is truly lived, and I do truly live.

Janus: Thank you. Now, rushing to the big question: where did Robert go?

Shalla: When Robert transformed and left Costa Rica, he left through the Garden, passing through Eden's gate.

The Garden is one's imagination. If you imagine Paris, you will be in Paris. If you imagine Jesus or anyone else in the Garden, they will materialize, standing right in front of you.

Janus: Shalla, before we go any further, I have to ask why you do not live in the Garden already? Why have you not given up on the Adamites and forsaken their company?

Shalla: Good question. The Adamites, or as Robert called them 'the people of the Curse with a capital c,' are caught in a paradigm fewer and fewer people share. Their curse was expulsion from Eden. We do not share that curse. Others, Robert called us Edenists: We were, in the Adamite sense, not expelled. The Adamites look for the gates of Eden and cannot see them. We adopted certain aspects of their language in an attempt to help them.

Janus: Garden gates, keepers?

Shalla: The reality is that the gates have keepers. My mother was one, and I am one now. Keepers do not keep gates closed against intruders. They keep the gates marked so they can be found, and they keep them open for all who know Eden. I spend much of my time in the Garden now. If you have no business outside in the Wild, then you stay. If you imagine what you will

do outside while you are inside, then you appear at a gate and you pass through it with a purpose.

Janus: Two questions from your previous answer. First, Jesus is in the Garden? That's question one, and two: Robert entered the Garden, but what happened to him next?

Shalla: Robert was 'transformed,' in his words. He was stripped down to bare meat. He became an empty vessel, leaving his past behind in the cabin he lived in. Robert's personality was fractured. The part that we knew and loved retreated in pain, and another part assumed control. His body was 'taken over' by John, who imagined seeding a garden in Merced; the rest you know or will find out from him yourself.

Janus: And Jesus?

Shalla: John will help with that part of your question too.

Janus: It feels strange to experience this new reality, without Satan or hell. We are facing the plagues, but not apocalyptically. It's still confusing. Do you know what I mean?

Shalla: I remember my own journey. The time spent in the Wild outside the Garden is challenging in that way.

Robert

(1996)

In 1996 Robert found the gate behind his cabin on the ridgetop above Shalla's family home. The cabin had been Shalla's mother's vivienda; she had finally moved down to the main house when she grew too ill to walk up and down the hill by herself. When Robert arrived in town, Shalla took him into her life because she knew he needed her help "for his journey," as she put it. The cabin became his. For almost three years he lived there with her, unaware of the gate.

He had been sitting still for a month or more, *meditating* he called it. He was composing poems, or rather the poems were informing him. What he wrote was beatific and mystical, as if a voice not his own moved his fingers across the keyboard.

"It's as if I am against the poet in me. The more I try, the less I can write. One day I let myself out to play. I had a journal and a pen, so I began to write. I was attending a lot of organizing meetings, and I carried a journal through my first labor walkout. My notes were my first words on paper. Then I let the pen move itself, and I began to see I was someone I had not suspected existed.

"That is how the gate appeared. Something I wrote about life without material goods, without needs or desires, ended with the poet taking his first step into Eden. I turned to look outside my door, and amazingly enough there it was – the Gate. I rose without thought and was there.

"Three days later I returned to the Wild and my meditation spot. I intended to tell Shalla and Juan about the gate, but as soon as we re-met I knew they already knew."

That was when he disappeared for a long while. After several days in silence he decided he would go into Eden and stay there, to let another

hidden part of himself rise and manifest. In 2013 he emerged again, back to Shalla and Costa Rica's jungle and the ocean.

The jungle within the gate and the jungle outside the gate were the same jungle in 1996. Since then, droughts had stunted the growth of the outside. Within the gate, the jungle was perfected, as was the weather.

When Robert stepped into the Wild behind his cabin in 2013, he returned to a much warmer world. From 1996 to 2013 the average temperature had risen almost 1.5 degrees C. Since the beginning of the 1980s temps had risen over 3 degrees C.

Everything smelled different, including the ocean, which was also a different color as the temperature rise favored different organisms.

In the Wild again, his desires rose within him to match the longing Shalla never lost.

The Young Mathematicians

Dominic O’Leary, Rusty Corona, Erik Webber and Cyprian Foret each sat in front of their laptop computers: Dominic and Rusty at Shalla’s farm in Quepos, Erik in Merced, and Cyprian at a Swiss resort with his grandfather.

They had spent almost a year meeting like this, for hours every day. The results included a very passive, friendly feeling amongst them. They knew each other as Edenists do. They talked as if they were one person talking to one’s self. Between each statement, time was given. No one spoke over another. Time was needed to find the words that wanted to be said.

“Now that we have abandoned the Algorithm as an indicator of a path to save humanity, some of us have had second thoughts.”

“I suggest we have another look at what happened. Anyone want to begin?”

“I will. We put approximately 20 collective years into building a theoretical machine that would bring about the survival of humanity by guiding our choices of action, so that we could effectively remove blocks in government to the remedial action needed to preserve (at minimum) 50% of the human population.”

“The problem was called the Nightmare Problem.”

“Because of past events, all of which we have discussed before, we and others began a sequence of projects involving history, language, and social organization of a virtual and physical network. This process is collectively called Honest History, The Networks, The Garden Club, and the Final Revelation, now called The Forever After Revelation.

“The last one, the Revelation, was intended to awaken the Eden Identity in as many as possible simultaneously, so that the power of the Revelation would be heard by everyone almost at once after it was ready to share.

“That awakening was intended to be a stirring of the mass moral imagination. But something else happened too, something much larger than any of us foresaw.”

“The Algorithm was correct in a way we did not anticipate.”

“We encountered a force we did not know.”

“We did not anticipate the Great Departure.”

Silence settled for a long, brooding moment before Cyprian spoke up. “The Algorithm was seemingly predicting over an 85% chance of survival, but it wasn’t really. The human world as we know it in the Wild has only a 15% chance of survival, and that might be the rub.”

“We aimed for a 50% survival rate because less would doom the institutions human survival depends upon. Nowhere in the Algorithm is a parameter created representing the survival of the institutions, just whether enough would survive to ensure the institutions’ survival. This imperfection was not included consciously but as a bias, an assumption that we understood unclearly.”

“I would like to attempt a summary. When analyzing a systematic change it is not always possible to make the correct assumptions about possible outcomes. We knew that and made adjustments as we encountered difficulties. Many analysts have used this process, yet many have failed using it.”

“The outcome we see now was not one we anticipated before the Revelation. We realized that it was more than words. It was what we were looking for: an awakening.”

“The awakening quite literally opened Eden’s gates to everyone who participated. We did not understand, as we do now, that this would also result in a loss of connection to the Wild. The result is that nearly everyone who could left the Wild within a few days. The specific number doesn’t matter; it is certainly more than 50% of the previous population.”

“Are these people, Edenists all, survivors? The Algorithm would seem to be indicating that they are. Therefore, two conclusions:

“One. The way mathematics has been used is corrupt, but that doesn’t mean what it sounds like. The Algorithm is just an algorithm. It was not god or the devil. Our interpretation of it is biased, even though we didn’t intend it to be.

“Two. The outcome we see changes everything that we thought we were trying to accomplish. Institutions will not survive.”

The silence returned, lasting longer than was usual. Shalla, who was sitting next to Rusty, whispered into her ear:

“There is more work to do. Then, we all can go home.”

After their virtual meeting they determined to meet in person, all of them, for the first time. The storms continued unabated over the Pacific, but ‘Air Eden’ (as they called their ability to imagine themselves together and make it so) made it so.

The import of their conclusions brought them together an hour later in person. Dominic, Rusty, Erik and Cyprian were, each for their own reasons, stunned by the words they had agreed represented the truth about their lives’ work.

The words were heard by no one else.

The trees around them in the Parisian public park provided all the sound barrier they needed to confuse the ‘listeners,’ be they drones or bugs or lurkers.

“Pythagoras, Plato, the Phoenicians and the Persian Magi knew the secret numbers used in the creation of the Infiniverse.” Erik Weber spoke from experience. “The networks we used to speed communication worked because we designed them using gematria as a guide. We launched the Final Revelation at 1224 GMT. 500 million knew inside of 12 hours, and 7

Billion knew in 24 hours. This design was done with pencil and paper, with no computer interface except at launch.”

Cyprian Foret had found his faithlessness surprisingly helpful at the right moment. The group of four mathematicians, all young, all maniacal about their life’s love and work, had brought together their brain power to try and solve the problem of mathematics’ apparent ideological bias, which had plagued Rusty Corona’s theoretical work and, later, the entire Aloha Index. They had failed.

“What we now know that we could not have known without the direct effect of the Eden gates is that the bias was directing us in the wrong direction.” Dominic was matter-of-fact. “Those of us who used mathematics as a tool for truth were at last misguided by virtue of our faith, where no faith would have been better. Cyprian was free to see this, and Erik found the ancient code to bring us around to the perspective we needed.”

“Gentlepeople, now that Eden has revealed the code to all who care to know, we might find a road that leads to home.” Rusty knew the next steps were leading away from function and back to form. “One consequence of action is inaction. As much as I love your company in the Wild, I tire of the Wild.”

Dominic turned towards her and shyly asked her to forebear a while on her departure.

“One more day or so, please. Then you can go and not return. Jasmine and Saman asked for a little more time.”

God's Mathematics – God, Heaven and Number

Excerpts from a speech delivered by Dr. Dominic O'Leary to the Plenary Session of the International Mathematical Society's 2013 virtual meeting.

There are the curious and the incurious – those who want to know it all, and others who don't know what the fuss is all about. Put me with the former. The questions for me are "What is God?" and "What is Mathematics?"

God is said to be a mathematician, which explains to me why the human eye appreciates the presence of harmony and proportion in architecture. It was a careful selection of dimension and ratio that made architecture a form of language, a demonstration that humanity knew the size of the solar system and its parts long before paper and pencils. God-as-mathematician explains the First Paradigm – Number – as a structure for understanding; ultimately, it explains nature as sequentially recursive. Everything happens, one after the other, this way and that. It's how it works.

Ancient builders like those who built Stonehenge used the Golden Ratio, incorporating nearly-exact solutions to Calculus and Probabilistic problems without computers or ink or much more than memory to record their results. Architecture became a memory system for physical quantities, such as the Earth's distance from the Sun or the diameter of the Moon's orbit.

If we follow a history of the development of mathematics from the invention of symbolic algebra we miss the First Paradigm, and therefore some astounding things. We miss the meaning of numerology and the inspiration of Namagiri.

Namagiri? Srinivasa Ramanujan intuited extraordinary numerical patterns. A devout Hindu mathematician, Ramanujan said that his findings were divine, revealed to him in dreams by the goddess Namagiri: startling equations, divine inspirations.

The Natural Numbers were assigned meanings in numerology. The natural numbers were probably the first signs made. Symbolism began with one, two, three: The birth of abstraction. Counting became symbols, and the symbols became abstracted in numerology to denote human characteristics, a tool for self-analysis and meditation – the First Paradigm.

Numbers, in a manner similar to pictographs and Chinese characters, are culturally imbedded with meanings not because of superstition, i.e. delusional thinking, but as a means to communicate. Numbers were the first words and represent the first use of symbol to record ideas.

The Numerological system was transformed into the Tarot. The Tarot is also a memory device, akin to a book; it contains our self-knowledge and provides a random way to encounter our inner selves. Little new about the human psyche has been discovered since the Tarot was created.

The verb *yashab*, when used to mean 'god,' is frequently complemented by 'the Heavens,' inasmuch as the heavens are most often perceived in a lifetime as without change or mutation; that is to say, they do not individually change, as the individual beings on Earth do, by transition from nothing to existence into non-existence.

The numbers that mattered were the numbers derived from 'the Heavens.' Immutable, eternal Natural Numbers used to count sheep emblemized the values nascent in the visible universe.

Once upon a time, Mathematicians described the visible universe and this description was used by generations to answer questions about the nature of life. Powers-that-be changed and the Paradigm of Number was lost as Mathematicians were made to build tools of power – weapons of war.

The next paradigm – however it is described – divorced the human mind from nature, producing the Edenist-Adamite dichotomy.

There was no problem in this dichotomy until Power became suicidal. The PTB have created entertaining mechanisms of storytelling to obscure and

silence the harsh truths about climate change. These truths, needless to say, point to our impending self-destruction.

The storytelling debases the reality and offers simple concepts in place of complex ideas that could form the basis for constructive action. People do not know the difference, and as they collectively seek simple answers while the complex truth is denied. The denial of climate change is the acceptance of mass death: 'Who is responsible? We did not know. It cannot be us.'

Oddly, the mathematicians of the new paradigm cannot explain and cure the denial whereas the Mathematicians of the First Paradigm would have pointed to the Nine of Swords or the combination of 44, 13 and 4 for advice about how to overcome denial that leads to self-destruction.

The new paradigm calls upon its God to come and to help the believers to vanquish foes and lead the faithful to a paradise and away from eternal punishment. This is the Adamite explanation of the nature of life.

The First Paradigm was and is still fearless and shame-free. Numbers and the Tarot guide a human with the wisdom of uncounted generations. There are no prayers. There is no 'other' controlling our fate. This is the Edenist explanation of the nature of life.

Prophet Vine

“Hello, my name is Janus Welch. Welcome to this streaming live discussion, presented by Prophecy Today! Online.

“For those of you who follow *PT! Online*, tonight’s show will be no surprise. We are hoping to pass through the gate into the Garden of Eden to interview a Magus. In our last interview, the Prophet John Vine spoke with us near his office in Merced, Arizona, where his congregation (joined by 20,000,000 members of other Pentecostal and Evangelical churches) formulated a new prophesy they call the Forever After Revelation.

“Here’s a clip from that show where I sit down with the Prophet in Arizona for a one-hour-long interview. The scene we see through the windows in his office is one of a lush garden and orchard that covers almost 600 acres behind Prophet Vine’s First Covenant Church.”

Prophet Vine: The confusion surrounding the divinity of Jesus can be settled. The most obvious means is to recognize the divinity of everything; thus, of course, Jesus is divine. The other means is to speak to him yourself, or to someone who knew him.

Janus: What? Look, much of what you say is shocking to me. The Forever After Revelation has changed many people's ideas, altered the very course of human history. Now you are telling us we should – literally – talk to Jesus. Okay. I’ll bite. How does that work?

Prophet Vine: Many years ago, when I was a different person, I spent months and years sitting and listening, and dreaming. I was a poet, and the inspiration I sought I found one night when I first walked through the Garden gate into Eden. I was alone there; in a pathless food-rich forest I had never seen before. My home was on the edge of the jungle, with full view of it all. Just behind the house is a special place, a gate one can go through if one can see it for what it is. The first time I entered I stayed for a few days, then went back to my house. The second time I met other people, including a Magus who'd traveled with Jesus.

Janus: But Jesus died. The Magi no longer exist. I am more than dubious.

Prophet Vine: Only accept as true that which you have seen with your own eyes and heard with your own ears.

The universe and time are vast. The Young Mathematicians can explain this better than I, but you know that measurements in the universe are expressed in light-years, or the distance light travels in a Terran year. When we see 2 billion light-years across the universe, we are seeing images that are 2 billion years old. The Garden is like the universe; once inside it, we can see into the past. The past can be in the present, a memory of a sort. Jesus is a memory that lives in the Garden.

Eden is not a gift. It is. And we are it as it is us.

Janus: All right. You say Jesus is in the Garden. Will you take us there?

Prophet Vine: Soon. There are still some details to work out.

The clip ended, and the image returned to the studio. Janus smiled, though his face was somewhat pale. He looked as if he hadn't been sleeping much lately.

“I wanted to stay there and meet with Jesus, but he was apparently not in the Garden that day. Vine did not explain how or why but gave us rooms in a dormitory outside the gate while we waited for word of his arrival. Eventually we were alerted to return to the gate, and in our next video you will see what we saw.”

Janus and Gillian

After the first night at the gate spent in a dorm, Janus and Gillian joined the tent city that had exploded into existence by noon on that first Monday of the Great Departure. He and Gillian had erected a shelter of sorts as close to the gate as they thought would allow quiet enough to sleep.

The days were long, and indistinguishable from one another. It wasn't boredom; it was the continuous flush of excitement that they both silently hoped would end with their own entrance into Eden. So far Eden was only an imaginary place to them, just a bit beyond sight.

Gillian was reviewing an interview she had conducted with Pythagoras, or at least a soul that disguised itself as the great numerist and mystic. "Wow, is all I can say. Py, as I call him, is such a trip. The way it works is that there are discarnate souls adopting the imprint of their previous human incarnations, which are individual segments of what no Edenist calls 'god,' since there is no 'other' and they profess to be a part of it even while physically incarnate."

Janus sipped on his water ration bottle, frowning. "We are talking to god and gods, to mystics and magicians out of the past. How does this really work? Sometimes, even though I get what I am hearing, I know I don't really see it."

Vine had made it abundantly clear that those who were working through their healing and revealing processes (called 'The Cure') must keep themselves healthy in the earthly sense. *Two quarts of water per day while in the desert.*

Janus knew Vine did not want to deal with thousands of dying patients in makeshift field hospitals. A public health crisis on a micro scale would move the 'authorities' far more rapidly than a macro or universal health problem, like the plagues global climate change was manifesting.

Janus had kept on the move to be alert for changes in the camps around the gate. He came to a camp built around a view of the sunrise, and another around a view of the sunset. People had erected totems made of the native rocks, piled in rows to imitate the course of the Sun and Moon.

In the sunrise camp people were teaching each other the Honest History. In the sunset camp classes in yoga, meditation and Chinese arts were ongoing.

Paths from the gate to each of the camps were freely traveled, as people moved into the camps and back through the gate to 'beyond.'

There were no rules for how this part of the revelation was to go. Janus and Gillian watched as the students became teachers, and the teachers joined the Departed.

"You saw the way people are getting better and better at teaching. It's as if the technique is working faster or something. I think that there are fewer people in the camps now than when we arrived." Gillian had been cool to Janus and his rush project, as she referred to an early morning road trip to near the edge of the Grand Canyon. Now, she was glad that she'd come, had in fact canceled all of her plans for the immediate future.

Janus walked and learned. As his steps multiplied, he became less divided, less fearful, less shamed. He saw people, tens then thousands, moving across the landscape of consciousness to become who they were, undisguised, freely aware of their own identity and without veils. *It's the Hopi and Navajo connection: the Hoop, the Four Directions and the Relations.*

Gillian sat still for a while, legs curled under her, reading through the Pythagoras interview for the umpteenth time. Yesterday, she had told Janus she loved him. As he sat there thinking about sex, she sat there thinking about a communion of spirits. She could see him through his disguise, beautiful in his natural being: *who would not love him?*

Everyone has traveled their own road. There are similarities, but every path follows its own topology. *If all paths were the same, why would historians be needed?*

As these thoughts, jumbled with innumerable others, passed through Janus' mind, he saw a glimmering down the small hill between their makeshift tent and the gate.

He returned to his equipment.

On the second day Janus said, "I want to go to the gate." He stood as he talked. "I want to see the gatekeeper. I want to know who is waiting for us to figure it out. I want to ask the gatekeeper if I can pass."

Gillian rose beside him. She gulped. *Courage.* "I'm all yours. Let's go."

Nothing unusual happened. The walk seemed short. The gatekeeper was a diminutive brown woman. The gatekeeper was a handsome athletic child of the jungle. The gatekeeper was an ancient warrior. The gatekeeper was naked, was standing with arms spread wide; one hand clutched a lustrous sword, or was it a blazing candle or a flaming torch? The gatekeeper was anything or everything, depending on what you needed to see to open your eyes and ears to your own version of the Eden Identity.

"Welcome back to the Garden." It was a voice one knew, because it was one's own voice coming from one's place in Eden, a hidden Eden-being speaking out loud for the first time.

That day Gillian saw this and heard this, but Janus did not.

First Light

On the third day, as the sun was rising, Janus went into the valley below the gate. The canyon, about a mile across, was a crater formed by a meteor impact.

He walked a path to a small orchard. A mid-aged man was sitting in the midst of the apple trees. He watched the man's stillness. Janus slowly sank into his own footsteps. The man said nothing.

Seconds passed: neither moved.

Wait. This is not a stranger. Janus' thoughts ran far ahead of logic, bounding along a path he had long ago imagined through the hard land of his memory and the windstorms of his imagination.

My plagues. My fears. My sorrows. This man is not just any man. Is he my father, my guide? Or is he me in a different form?

The man rose. "Follow me."

Janus rose and reached down for his backpack.

The man reached out toward him, as if to stop his hand from rising with the pack. "Bring nothing. Follow me."

Janus heard but hesitated, his attention drawn to a memory of Vine.

"Janus. We enter Eden as we enter birth and death: naked, with no cares for the Wild."

The man whispered, "Janus, turn and see."

How a person enters or leaves a dream depends upon many things. Janus had long been dreaming, and now he was awakening. That is how his inner voices expressed it to his consciousness: *The dream has ended. Waken into your true identity.* He turned to look in the direction the man was pointing. *Eden. Home. Enjoy.*

He moved in the direction of the gate, now clear and unambiguous before him. Naked, he left the Wild. The last words his memory saved were *Unbirthing. Returning. Regathering.*

No one was waiting for him. Gillian had already left. She'd known before he did who he was. As these ideas passed through his consciousness, she stood before him. They looked at each other, knowing the other's thoughts.

"Merry met," Janus said, grinning.

"Now we really love each other," she said in reply.

Janus accepted her offer, and then remembered he wanted to finish working on the Pythagoras interview he and Gillian had begun. She heard. They both materialized outside the gate. Clothes and gear in hand, they headed back to their tent and equipment.

Janus and John

The scene began in the 'studio,' as Janus and Gillian referred to the small office Vine had made available to them.

"This is Janus Welch. You are tuned to PT! Online. We are streaming live from the gates of Eden. Today, we will meet the Prophet John D. Vine's Magus from within Eden.

"When we last spoke to Vine, he told us there were still some details to work out.

"The details Vine spoke about concerned my perceptions and finding the Eden Identity within myself. This is a new way for me to talk. I do feel like a new person. Perhaps you can tell.

"This morning the Prophet led me into the Garden."

The scene switched to a location in a crowded parking lot, with row after row of dusty cars parked bumper to bumper, filling all the spaces and all the aisles.

"As we approached the town of Merced, the first things we noticed were the cars. Look at them, lining both sides of the road, spilling into the side roads and open fields! About five miles from Merced the road narrowed to one-car width. Four miles from the church the roads became impassable, blocked with cars."

The scene showed Janus and his 'camera crew,' Gillian, as they moved through the cars, Vine's church building visible in the distance.

"We finally arrived at the church after snaking our way through thousands of cars, all apparently abandoned by their owners. The doors of the church were wide open. The building was empty. Following the signs, we found Vine's office with his favorite motto emblazoned over the door: 'Don't get caught in their paradigm.'"

The camera showed the embossed brass sign, then panned into the office. The visual effect of looking out of Vine's window across the car-choked parking lot towards the garden beyond, reminiscent of airport vistas, was a wonder. Miles from anywhere, the scene was immensely emotional. The contrast of the barren waste of abandoned autos with the harmony and proportion of the garden was both startling and reassuring.

The camera cut back to Janus. He smiled, hefting his microphone.

"One's mind demands, *Where did all these people go?* Beyond the parking lot lies the Garden; Vine assures us that we will find answers there.

"We snaked through more cars and down paths to the place outside the gate. Vine was waiting inside. We tested a camera and filmed a few scenes just outside the Garden. We then checked the camera to see if the images would be of a quality we could show to our viewers.

"Here are the first images at Eden's gate ever recorded, as far as we know."

The first scene was a close-up of Janus and Vine. Vine was explaining how the Garden works.

"The experiences I have had in here are, I am sure, fantastical to hear about, but five minutes in the Garden alone and reality takes on a very different shape.

"I want to warn your viewers not to be discouraged or offended by what they may see, or not see. To truly perceive Eden you must be free of ideologies and comfortable with your Eden identity. If you cannot see Eden, you simply have more work to do to free yourself from your Eden Complex." Janus had caught on pretty fast, but he had the advantage of interviewing at least a dozen Edenists before he had his revelation."

Remember: we are all born Edenists. Most of us are trained to fear and to feel shame, forced to work out our recovery as best we can over the course of our lives through personal growth and conventional Western therapy. Another option, infinitely preferable to psychiatry, is joining one of the

prophetic Garden Club groups we have established in communities all over the globe.”

The camera was hand-held, and the image tended to shake in that cinéma vérité way. The camera panned over the Garden. If you saw Eden, you saw the amazing scene that Janus saw, and if you did not see Eden you saw a vegetable garden: a beautiful vegetable garden, but no more. The camera drifted back to Vine.

“The plagues are growing more difficult to survive or adapt to. And it is going to get worse. From Fukushima alone, enough toxic material is entering the Pacific Ocean to end life across half the planet for hundreds of thousands of years. Many people have already been affected. The Japanese are only the first.

“We are told over 100,000,000 have already died from the effects of global climate change, with predictions of more to come. People have abandoned their cars and their lives to enter the Garden, freeing themselves from the burden of the plagues; more, no doubt, will do this as time passes.

“The garden you see will feed people. If you see rows of vegetables, when harvested these vegetables will feed many. The gardens are tended by local people for markets in Flagstaff. It will not feed everybody. If you see something more akin to a jungle scene, you are seeing Eden, and that Garden will feed everyone who enters.”

The video ended. Another began.

Saman

The video edits were not perfect. The shot quickly changed, and the next scene was Vine standing beside a woman somewhat older, maybe in her mid-seventies, dressed in a Hawaiian frock of blue flowers on a white background. Her hair was long and roped down her back behind her in thick braids. Like Vine, she was slender. The camera zoomed to her face, then expanded to hold Vine's face before panning further back to include Janus.

"We are outside the Garden gate. The Prophet has set up a small stage and chairs with an awning for the sun. We can begin now.

"Reverend Vine, could you please tell us about our guest?"

"This is Saman. She is a Persian, a Magus, who traveled the deserts and the silk trade routes a bit over 2000 years ago. Saman, please tell us your story."

Saman sat admiring John Vine as he spoke. He looked back at her with a fearless love, recognizable in an instant.

"I met Jesus and traveled with him from the China Sea to Galilee; we journeyed together for more than a decade before his passing. Most of that time we spent learning what is called the Way. Jesus spoke about a return to the original human condition, where the windows in our mind are open to the true nature of the Wilderness.

"On our last trip together, the caravan routes were blocked by Roman troops, so we were forced to stay in Galilee. He began to speak to crowds that gathered here and there. He spoke about a new perspective, a way to find internal peace and self-awareness, to the people who were waiting for a Messiah to lead a violent uprising against the Romans. When he preached, the crowds would gather; sometimes they were large, and drew the attention of the established institutions: The so-called PTB, Powers - That-Be.

“We were not revolutionaries in a political sense, but we fed the crowds and sat for days on end, listening to the stories they told of the oppressions being visited upon them. Jesus practiced the healing arts, opening people's minds and hearts to the message we were bringing to the region around Galilee.”

“Saman, I am Janus Welch. Thank you for joining us today. It was only a few weeks ago that we...wait, let me begin again. Saman, the folks watching this broadcast may know very little about Eden and be unaware of how it could exist and not be seen by so many. These people will also want to know if Jesus is divine, or if he indeed still lives on as you do. Can you say anything to clear up these admittedly-difficult questions?”

As Janus spoke, a noticeable change overtook him. Saman and Vine sat motionless as Janus' body language told a story of instant realization. He knew the answers to his questions almost before he fully asked them, and his confusion at this understanding was evident. Vine sat up as he saw the effect Saman was having on him.

“Janus, this may not make good TV. It is amusing to see you find the answer to your questions without a word being spoken. There are no secrets in Eden, and desires are instantly met. Saman knows everything; being a historian, her memory is her world.” John spoke in a hypnotic voice with an energy of demand, but in a comforting way.

“Let me help you, Janus.” John turned to the smiling Magus. “Saman, we have known each other forever. We met last in the Wild, twenty years ago, when we were both in disguise and yet to awaken to our Eden Identities.

“Saman, I would like to hear more about the new perspective you preached with Jesus. Is it the same now?”

“Now? 'Now' is not historical, and I cannot relate what does not exist. I can certify that everything happens, and yet nothing changes.

“In your language you speak about Eden and Edenists. We spoke about the Way, which is how Edenists travel to reach Eden. Eden is an awareness of the creation process.”

Janus frowned as he absorbed her statement. “We are all Edenists? We can all go back? We only need to be open to seeing things from a different perspective?”

“Something like that.”

“But not exactly that?”

“Exactly.”

“Saman, when you and Jesus traveled together what was your relationship like?”

“He was the male principle, and I the female. Together we were creation and creator. Our sole vision was to heal the most downtrodden parts of humanity outside the gates of Eden.”

“Were you lovers?”

“Janus, the Wild still lives in you. To have a real answer, we need to talk about two elements of history that we seldom consider. The first is ideology, and the second is time. If you had asked that question of Jesus, he would have wanted to talk about infinity, and mathematicians would want to talk about probability.

“Creation is infinite, boundless; anything less could not exist. Each of us is creation, and so we are boundless too. That is not how people in the Wild see themselves, however. This limitation on human awareness is a result of the special context of this universe we share, and it – this universe – is only one of many, an uncountably large many. Our default to self-blindness is the result of ideology, which as all ideologies do leads to self-destruction. We live to experience this self-destruction time and again, until we anticipate it and search for a work-around, a Way, any way to avoid this

end. Multiple lives in multiple universes, playing hide-and-go-seek with each other...it is into this darkness that the light enters. I have not nearly completed the interconnections, but the answer to your question is now possible.

“In this world, there is an answer. In another world from another universe, another pair – male and female – walked together, and were lovers. In yet another universe, they were not. If the questioner is stuck in an ideology, then the demand for an answer is loaded with the destruction one’s dependence on a non-existing certainty portends.”

Janus was well and truly frowning now. “Are you arguing with the question?”

Saman laughed, a tinkling sound like the vibration of many bells. “The question contains its own answer, and only the questioner knows what the acceptable answer is.”

“Creation, ideology, infinity, multiple universes...” Janus attempted to bring clarity to the conflicted idea of no idea. For a moment, he pondered what it meant to not be constricted by dogma. “I walked through this gate two days ago. Things I thought or said even days ago have a completely different meaning today,” he said. Then he stopped.

Honest History

Jasmine: Well Janus, I was studying for my PhD at a well-regarded East Coast university with a faculty of imminent historians, when I latched onto an idea. It is not a new idea: Honest History is hard to find. I finished my PhD. My thesis was that if there was an Honest History then there would be evidence of people changing it to be more inclusive. Finding no evidence, I concluded Honest History did not yet exist.

Honest History is not political or ideological. Robert told me a story about an historical site, a homestead overlooking the Pacific Ocean, built near huge shell mounds left by an unknown number of generations of the now-destroyed tribes of native people. There were massacre sites just to the north, cliffs where the whites drove the Indians to their deaths by the dozens and hundreds. When the little museum at the site was opened, it explained that the local natives had just ‘mysteriously disappeared.’

The history we are taught is the victor’s narrative, or in Edenists’ terms the Adamite narrative, which Adamites assert may not be challenged.

The relationship between Edenists and Christianity has always been difficult. The gods of the older religions were turned into the demons of the new ones, and Christian priests identified the Satan of the scriptures with the so-called Horned God of paganism.

As Christianity became the major religion of the European upper classes during the Middle Ages, the pyramidal feudal system viewed a horizontal system, such as paganism, as something less than desirable for a simple reason: if each person was responsible for their own life and actions, the entire feudal system (with its monarchical dominion over the land, life and body of the peasants) had no reason to exist. The peasants wouldn’t need it.

Documentation on Celtic pagan cultures reveals their observance of a series of rights, starting with the right of every inhabitant of the country to possess their own land. When Christian monarchs declared themselves at

war with what they called the 'devil worshipers,' based on de-contextualized and a-historical 'facts,' they turned what could have been a peaceful cohabitation into a battlefield.

We know now after decades of careful deliberation that the processes of this history have been leading us in the wrong direction, serving to maintain the status quo.

Janus: Is history wrong? Are we learning the wrong lessons from the wrong history?

Jasmine: Yes, but that is over.

Janus: How so?

Jasmine: The history that matters is Eden's history. Nothing of this world will be worth remembering. The paradigm is changed. The pyramids are collapsing because we have withdrawn too many from their human structures for the institutions to survive.

Besides, the history of these institutions and the people who built them was never honest enough to do more than immobilize, never intended to empower or to motivate. The pyramids won't be missed.

Powers That Be

Their reaction to the Edenist emergence had been slow but, from the moment the Powers That Be sensed something was awry, the reaction was certain. Drones were seen flying over Merced.

Who was gathering data or searching for whom was known to but a few. By the time a drone was first spotted the church had already begun to devolve in number of members. Every hour since the Revelation more cars arrived, until the surrounding fields and roadways for miles around were packed. Not many of these cars were going anywhere soon. Their owners were not to be found.

No one had been reported missing until a week after the Revelation. Then, the heretofore quiet area became a hive of activity as Homeland Security swept through the town, looking for church members and dispatching trackers into the garden. The reports were that the garden was overgrown. No paths in any direction. No tracks of any kind. Soon, no one cared about the church. No one noticed that as a drought threat stretched from border to border of the state and beyond, the little crater-shaped valley remained green.

Janus and the PTB

Fear, he thought, but he felt none.

Alone? He was one along with twenty-five Adamites. *No, really twenty-three*, he realized: two are *Edenists in disguise*. How he knew this was a mystery to him. He was still new at this life.

The 25 all dressed alike. *A uniform designed after a suit of armor.*

“Kneel down.”

He knelt. The disembodied voice reminded him of a man called the Apostle, who he had seen on a cable network. Janus could tell the two Edenists were there to rescue him, but the odds weren't great. Three vs. twenty-three – he couldn't see how they expected to help.

This is not a fight. The men had kidnapped him from his home. While he was being escorted to a waiting van he saw them enter his room *for my computer*. They took his things, put him and them in the van, drove for 15 minutes and turned into a church parking lot. Now, they were surrounding him in the community room of the church.

His hands were tied behind his back. The twenty-five surrounded him, loomed over him.

“You are Janus Welch. You are nineteen. We have questions for you. We are Ramiel's Army, and I am his Apostle. We are an ancient order, directed by the archangel to follow God's vision. You are the master of a website that posts vile untruths and blasphemous calumnies. Archangel Ramiel has ordered us to interrogate you.

“I am going to show you one of your video posts. We want to know how this was made, and who participated in it.”

“Dominionists” ran through Jason's mind.

The room darkened. A screen on the wall in front of Janus lit up with his image, and then switched to video of a man speaking as if answering a question.

“What can I say? I am who I am. How can that be misunderstood?”

“Look, the message was simple. You don’t have to suffer. The way into the Garden still exists. Look at your paradigm. Are you not god as much as I or anything is? Are you not able to hear your own god voice?”

“They say ‘I am afraid.’ I say ‘do not fear. The Garden will care for you as it cares for itself.’

“Then they say, ‘what Garden? I see no Garden.’”

Janus: *Until yesterday I saw no Garden either.*

Jesus: *Point taken. Remember, I cured blindness and raised the dead. Figuratively, of course.*

Janus: *How is that?*

Jesus: *A man comes to me and says ‘I cannot see the Garden.’ I open his eyes, and he can see it. Blindness cured. Other people can do this, but after ten years of practice I got really good at it – not miraculously. There is a trick.*

Janus: *And death?*

Jesus: *A man is brought to me frozen in fear, so shamed he cannot live as life is known. He cannot speak or open his eyes or walk. The men who brought him asked me if he should be buried, so his spirit could be free. I whispered in his ear, so he would listen to his voices. He knew as you do how to tell one from the other. People are all the same, all god-within; voices can come both from the Garden and from traumatic shock. I ask him to listen to the Garden. He does. He rises from the dead.*

Janus: *Am I blind and dead?*

Jesus: No longer. Let me ask you: why are we talking?

Janus: I am the on-air interviewer for Prophecy Today. After the Forever After Revelation appearance on the 700 Club, I interviewed Grace Billingsley from California. The segment went viral and my life changed.

The segment ended with the lights coming on again. As the men came back into view, hovering and authoritative, Janus grimaced.

The Apostle stood 10 feet in front of him, dressed impeccably, eyes glistening with a wrathful fury. “Do you want me to repeat the question?”

Janus knelt, shivering slightly, not dressed for the cold in the unheated church building.

“I will tell you everything. First, though, I wonder if you could please let me stand a bit. I have cramps in my back and feet. It’s very distracting.” Janus was telling the truth. He had been squirming slowly, trying to find some comfort. No one replied. “Look, twenty-five to one. I am skinny, and barely 5 feet tall. You have guns. I am in my underwear. I will show you how it all works.”

One of the disguised Edenists stepped forward and began to unlock the handcuffs. No one objected. The other Edenist joined him. One on each side of Janus. Only the three knew what might happen next. Janus spoke.

“I need to raise my arms and take a short step backwards and my pains will be over. Okay?”

Hearing no objections, he swung his arms out to his sides from behind his back, stepped backwards and disappeared from sight. *Easy as 1, 2, 3.*

There was not a sound from anyone. No one could offer an explanation. The Edenists even appeared surprised. *Great escape*, Peter Smith thought.

Jesus

Janus: Welcome to Prophecy Today! Online. This live stream is being generated from the First Covenant Church in Merced, Arizona. This is the second part of an interview with Jesus outside the gate.

Jesus: I am the part of this soul's memory that lived outside the Garden as Jesus, in the Wild. I was not created so much as dedicated to a task, like an experiment of Eden to 'redeem' the ones whose awareness was incomplete. I was sent to perfect people into full awareness of the meaning of life. 'Eden sent me' is one way of putting it.

Janus: Here is something said about this in an early version of the Nicene Creed. I quote:

But those who say: 'There was a time when he was not;' and 'He was not before he was made;' and 'He was made out of nothing,' or 'He is of another substance' or 'essence,' or 'The Son of God is created,' or 'changeable,' or 'alterable' – they are condemned by the holy catholic and apostolic Church.

End quote.

Jesus: Interesting, isn't it? Nothing in the Nicene Creed is real. There's one part that troubles me in particular: 'He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, died and was buried.' The 'for us' part is an oddity; who is this 'us?'

The facts are that I lived. I did things. Some Adamites were looking for a political tool, a religion that could be transformative and help to extend the hold Rome had over Asia Minor and the Middle East. They built an ideology, needed a name and bio to fill in the blanks, and there you have it."

Janus: Are you saying you are an invention of evil men?

Jesus: Not exactly. Think of it this way. There is a delusional history. The Nicene Creed is evidence. Then there is the Honest History, which we are telling you.

Janus: So, not evil necessarily, but delusional men?

Jesus: Janus, it would be simple to point to an Emperor who held a sword over the heads of thousands of power-hungry early Christian bishops, but that's not how it really went down. They did not know me or my history. They simply decided who they wanted me to be to meet their present needs. If anything was missing from the narrative, they added it, and have done so many times since.

Janus: I am looking for a word to describe them.

Jesus: That is the error they made. The lives we see around us in the Wild are all expressions of existence. Of prior existence. Of an existence prior to our own. There are other lives, ideologically invisible lives. For example: rocks. These expressions are called souls. Existence is an expression of life. Expression of life is soul. The sum of souls is infinite in the Infiniverse, and therefore god.

Janus: Are you the Son of God?

Jesus: I am not special.

Given that there are an infinite number of universes, each with its own unique history, its unique souls. The sum of all souls is the sum of all things, all beings, for all time, everywhere, in every universe is god. There is nothing else.

In this particular universe, in this galaxy, in this solar system, on this planet at this time, take a look around. What you see is unique among an infinity of moments anywhere, ever. In this particular universe some people left Eden. In others, no one has left. In this universe the narrative includes the Eden expulsion and its result, which we are about to witness.

Every soul in this universe, every Edenist, will live an uncountable number of lives. The soul is history. The history that is kept is of the experience of the soul on the paths to self-awareness, of which there are many, probably an infinite number.

At birth, we enter into the Wild with only faint memories of the paths we have taken. Time in the Wild heaps confusion and disbelief on the otherwise self-aware self. Our purpose, our challenge in the Wild is to re-awaken amidst the confusion and disbelief, to teach others and return to our origin.

Eden and the Infiniverse were created by the repetition of an Original Act. The universe, everything that exists, seen or unseen, is the material substance of the Infiniverse within our vision. We know we cannot see it all, or know it in every way it can be known. Our humility tells us this is true.

We cannot say 'when God created the Earth' and have the words mean anything resembling their common Adamite use. There can be no 'when.' There can be no time 'before.' There can be no time before the thought, since the first thought of creation is a change denoting time, and any 'god' is timeless.

God cannot have a history. God cannot change.

This means that creation always existed and is therefore timeless – another contradiction in meaning. Therefore, the original act and the repetitions thereof that constitute the Infiniverse had no beginning. Therefore, the Original Act is timeless. Always existing. Creator of All. Therefore, there will be no end: 'is, was, and ever shall be, world without end.'

Allah is said to create and destroy the world continuously, so that Allah is present and essential. Replication has this quality to it. In this present reality, Allah is the probability-driven process that replicates entire universes to accommodate the needs of chance. Yet even as our words say things are being created, in a way all things have already been created. Everything that could ever be is and always has been.

Janus: Then I can do anything I want without fear of consequences?

Jesus: There are consequences in some universes, and not in others. There are universes without a rule like Cause and Effect, and others with a mixture of random and ruled.

Janus: How does this idea relate to us?

Jesus: It's the First Paradigm. Contemplating the Infiniverse would help us to understand how we have fallen off a precipice in this universe, with each new crop of Adamites burning out their chance to discover Eden.

The First Paradigm is universal, multi-universal and infiniversal. It is The Only Paradigm.

Janus: Number is the only paradigm?

Jesus: The once unself-aware god, by becoming self-aware, creates two. Imagine everything is the same everywhere. There is no division of past and future. Nothing changes, nothing is expected to change. There is no Other. There is no knowing. There is no language.

Imagine this everything, yet nothing, becomes aware of itself. 'I' is born, and 'not I' is born in contrast; where there was one there are now two. And 'I' imagines 'not I' as a companion. And the 'I' and 'not I' forget where they came from. And the 'I' and 'not I' imagine a third 'I.' A nucleus and an electron. The repetition is of this original act of 1, 2, 3...and then there was matter and anti-matter, and the separation between them. And with each repetition, more moments in time.

Then, once we have 1 2 3, we have their sums and differences, giving us -1, -2, -3 and so on. Don't forget 0, which gives us our first view of infinity. But first we have products and dividends; the last gives us ratios and division by 0. Altogether we get what are called rational numbers, which were called natural numbers until we discovered the irrational numbers. And on and on, until we have the imaginary numbers which gave us the real numbers.

With each step we find a new infinity, a place to travel toward but never to reach.

The discrete succumbs to the continuous, and the finite becomes infinite.

Janus: Okay. I get that I think too small, that thinking may not help if I do not think big. What works?

Jesus: As we seek to understand we see understanding leave us. We pass each imagining and each paradigm as we get it or it gets us. Finding the Way in a life in time is the trick.

Erik and Janus

Janus: Erik Webber, thank you for your time. We are back with you after having spoken to Jesus and Vine, plus a few more of the Young Mathematicians. In our last conversation, you promised to bring things into focus for me.

Erik: I recall saying I would help *'sort out the details.'* Let me ask you what you are missing?

Janus: The question holds the answer. I cannot miss what I cannot see, so I guess I am asking what is it that I cannot see?

Erik: Nice. We know that by design the narratives of history are disempowering. We hoped that mathematics could be used purely as a universal language, uncorrupted by ideologies.

If we believe instead of know then we are ideologically disempowered. On the day the Forever After Revelation was recorded the present world was ideologically disempowered and had been for perhaps centuries.

It has been described as a cul-de-sac of the imagination.

Janus: Were you and all of the mathematicians Edenists?

Erik: No. Or at least, not completely conscious of our identity and its meaning. In any case, in the Wild things can be confusing.

Janus: Clarity is rare?

Erik: The only certainty is uncertainty. That is why mathematics as mysticism is apt. Mathematics as certainty is not. What is clear is that millennia of propaganda has engendered a cycle of endless fear, shame and warfare. No wonder people disguise themselves.

Janus: Indeed. So, how will it end? You guys have engineered everything up to this point...you must know what happens next, right?

Erik: Edenists sought to unmask as many other Edenists as were needed for the revelation to ensue. 20 Million, we calculated. It was just arithmetic at that point.

We evolved as we went. Eden set the stage for the new revelation. Now it is time for revolution. The wheel turns. What was up is down, and down up. The Edenists withdrew into the Garden to speed the balancing of the Earth's environment in favor of humanity.

Janus: One does not always get the Armageddon one wants.

Erik: In a real way the Adamites have chosen their own hell.

Janus: What becomes of them?

Erik: They are all Edenists in fact, but still imprisoned in fear and shame. Their earthly lives and deaths will be no part of the Eden memory. There is no sorrow in this. Probability revealed the likelihood of this result; in fact, I am using my personal calculations as a means of answering your questions.

Janus: Probability?

Erik: Yes.

Janus: Let me catch up. The undisguised Edenists walk through the gate back into Eden. The Adamites remain, and as they experience the Cure they join us. There is no last day to enter the Garden. The gatekeepers remain in the shadow of the gates with their 'flaming swords,' marking the path to Eden even in the midst of howling dust storms, like the ones afflicting us today.

Erik: Good summary. Eden is not heaven. Heaven is a propagandists' would-be-reward for either letting the system screw other people over or for letting it screw you, and hell is for those who complain. Eden is our home.

Saman and Janus

“Janus.”

“Yes, Saman.”

“I want to tell a story about Jesus for the people in the Wild.” Saman liked her Hawaiian manifestation. The Aloha way seemed the most modern and harmonious way to be outside of Eden, to treat each other well and openly without fear of any kind. There were other places Quepos, Quebec, others that were the same. She could only be in one place at a time. Accordingly, she had dressed in the style. Janus thought her dramatic for an Edenist, her humor no doubt fashioned from her memories of life in the Wild.

Janus interrupted. “First, I have a question. How is it that you have memories of so many lives led and I have memories of only one?”

“Most lives are not remembered. They exist in the universal memory as the life of everything exists, but not in the way a soul holds history.” Saman felt a tug in her consciousness.

Janus saw her expression change, her form flicker. “What was that?”

Saman focused again upon him. “I don’t know how to describe it. Since the Departure I have been ‘called,’ just like you called me, a fair number of times. I am able to put the call on hold, as I just did.

“My reason was to finish my answer to your question.

“To you I will say what you already know to be true: that souls are unique history books describing the path of the soul back from the Wild to Eden, from Adamite to Edenist. The lives that enter Eden came from Eden. The ones with history are the repeaters, who left Eden after drinking from the River of Oblivion. Depending on how much they drink, they start new lives with an inversely proportional amount of memory of a prior life well-led.”

Saman and Janus stood outside the Garden at Vine’s First Covenant Church in Merced, Arizona. Saman wore her powder-blue dress with hibiscus

flower patterns. She had pinned a small hummingbird brooch near her left breast, its beak angled towards a flower's trumpet as if to insinuate the gathering of nectar. Janus had on the same outfit he had come to Merced wearing 144 hours earlier. In contrast to Saman, his soiled beige and black looked rather dreary on camera.

Gillian, Janus' ex-girlfriend cameraman, circled the pair slowly as they moved from the gate to a picnic table nearby. Gillian had studied live video direction and was herself a camera by extension. *Art, she thought, is mind extended to the tip of whatever tool is used. The tool possessed becomes the tool possessing.* Her automatic movements were in favor of composition. As interesting as the acres of abandoned cars were at first, she felt enough had been done to explain those and the impressive piles of smaller personal transports, such as wheelchairs and canes, that were unneeded and inappropriate in the Garden. Her lens focused on the natural plane that Janus and Saman created, only requiring that she keep the plane perpendicular to the line of sight of the camera. She had planned well; the viewer saw the interview clearly, but with the background out-of-focus at strategic times that suited Gillian's sense of harmony.

Janus was a better friend than a boyfriend. Together, they fed each other's artist. The confusion of physical creation with artistic creation had been a pleasant diversion, but contrary to the meaning of both love and filmmaking. Janus no longer needed to consciously recall this; he'd known everything instinctively since his entry into Eden. As Saman had said, his little history book held those memories, and he was always aware of the who and the when of him.

They moved together, until Janus was seated on the picnic table top with Saman standing near him, both looking towards Gillian.

"The Wild without self-awareness can be a difficult place to live in. As a newborn we are aware, but as time moves us, our memories change to become the stuff of dreams. John D. Vine, like Jesus before him, realized in time who he was/could be through his dreams. Once reawakened, self-

perfection became the work of their lives.” Saman talked slowly, in a manner of dictation. A secret smile lingered perpetually about her lips.

“Jesus and I met in Persia and traveled together, until he left the Wild for Eden. Another John was in his following. Even as we met, Jesus and John were talking about how to teach that the invisible exists to people with eyes. ‘The blind can more clearly see the argument.’”

“John Vine said he convinced people to close their eyes so they could hear, and as they did they began to see.” Janus had overcome his awe for Saman, and Saman her impatience with this time she had awakened into. “Saman, people want to know what lies ahead for them. They are bathed in fear and wrapped in a cloak of shame. Where does the path forward lay?”

“The story that should guide us, that was at first written by the other John, was suppressed even in my lifetime.” Saman bowed her head a moment, raised it and recited:

I have come to teach you

About what is

And what was

And what will be

In order for you to understand

The invisible world

And the world that is visible

And the immovable race of perfect humanity.

“That was...?”

“That was John quoting Jesus, who is talking about Eden and those called Edenists. He saw his path as bringing Eden to our attention in the disguise of a messiah.”

There is drama in the truth. Not all imagined entertainment comes from pretending to be that which one isn't. Most comes from being the perfect whatever-you-are or could be. Saman was both truth and perfection, as was her Jesus.

“Saman, you mentioned the River of Oblivion. Where does that come from?”

She considered his question for a long time for her. “John has a few words about that,” she said at last.

I asked the Savior, “What is it to be ‘completely forgetful?’”

He replied, “It is not what Moses wrote in his first book:

‘He caused Adam to fall into deep sleep.’

Rather, Adam’s perceptions were veiled

And he became unconscious.

As he (Yaldabaoth) said through his prophet:

‘I will make their minds dull so that they do not see or understand.’

“Saman, you said you met Jesus in Persia.”

“Yes. I was seeking my family, who I had not seen for several years. I had traveled to North Africa with my tribal caravan and stayed behind to learn as much as I could about astronomy.

“Years later, as I was nearing my home, his small caravan met ours. His desire was for wisdom, and the trade route would take him to Indochina and the Way.

“I was younger by a few years. An independent woman, powerful enough to travel alone. The power came from my tribal connections to the wisdom of the east. I learned and taught.”

Janus rubbed his hands together, deeply considering all that she said. "Jesus was murdered?" he asked, staring at the place where his two palms met.

Saman nodded, her dark eyes flaring. "Yes."

"What happened to you?"

"Once the Romans crucified him, his mother, Joseph of Arimathea and I took him into Eden. We bore him to a tomb that is a Garden gate. He entered Eden, and returned without disguise, an Edenist. He was not the same. He could not be.

"He tried to tell the males, his so-called disciples, what had become of him, but they could not understand. I, of course, did.

"Once he was finished, he went through the gate to be seen no more. I traveled with his father, Joseph, to France. We parted. I stayed. He went on to Northern Britain.

"I followed later, accompanied by Celtic mystics to Iona, Scotland. The 'ancient' Gaelic name is Innis nan Druinich – the Isle of Druidic hermits. My last days were spent in a cave as a keeper of the gate."

Janus had listened intently his eyes staring at the space between them. Time passed. He raised his head to look at Saman directly. "Tell me about your home, and where you got the name Mary."

"Magadha was a region adjacent to the Tibetan Plateau on the Great Sea. It was the farthest east I had ever been, until Jesus and I went there and beyond. We traveled together because we sought the same thing. Ten years later we reached Galilee. We had devised a plan to organize a spiritual revolution. It was considered best to pick a local name, so I was called Mary Magadha, and then Magdala for easier pronunciation. It was an honor to take Mary as a name. Jesus' mother was a Mary. There were thousands of people named Jesus. There were thousands of people named Mary."

Peter and Andrew

“The hand of a vengeful God is upon you. You are possessed of Satan and the wrath of God is about to be visited upon you.

“Next you, Peter Smith...”

The Apostle felt the blood on his hands. *Sticky. Where is Ramiel?*

The Apostle had been shaken by Janus Welch’s escape and continued broadcasts. Thankfully, there were surveillance cameras set up to prevent theft from the church. The Apostle had watched the recordings from them several times each and wondered if Peter Smith’s ties with Vine were stronger than Ramiel’s grip on him.

He watched the expressions on Andrew and Peter’s faces. He watched Janus wave his arms as if pulling a cloak over his head; as he did so he disappeared.

Smith had been with him for 15 plus years. When he met Andrew Burnett and brought him to meet the Apostle, the Apostle had thought highly of him.

The day after Welch’s escape he’d found Andrew and Peter in Phoenix at the warehouse that Ramiel’s Army used as a staging area.

The Apostle responded by having both of the disguised Edenists seized.

“Hold their arms out. Don’t let them escape.” The Apostle congratulated himself. *Nice catch.*

Andrew and Peter were both beaten into unconsciousness.

When Andrew awoke again, his chest was throbbing. He was blinded by swelling, but his imagination filled in the gaps as he felt rough hands upon him, dragging him up from the floor into a standing position. He could not stand. He felt his right leg, broken above the ankle, crumble under his weight. The hands prevented his falling.

The men said nothing as they pulled his limp body across the floor and down the hall to what must have been a larger room, since the echoes were noticeable. *A gymnasium? An auto repair shop?* It smelled of oil.

Down on the floor again, he felt his upper body lifted and a cold metal bar placed behind his shoulders. His arms were pulled outstretched, and rope used to tie his arms to the bar.

The sound of an electric motor came next, as they raised him bar and all back into a near-standing position. He heard the clank of metal on metal, the engine whining as he felt himself lifted off the floor.

“We’ll leave you here to die in the cold world of hard metal. Tomorrow, you will be tormented in the inferno of hellfire.”

Andrew sighed, relaxed his breathing, and listened for his Eden voice.

The next morning the Apostle looked up at Andrew’s limp mass, hung on the metal crossbeams suspended from the small crane. He wished Mary would come and take him down.

When Peter woke he first felt discomforted. As he tried to move he realized he was in pain. His body stiffened. His legs cramped. His back spasmed. A cry unintentionally escaped his mouth.

He could not tell the time of day, or even if it was dark or light. His eyes were swollen shut. His mind searched for his body’s pains, and for news of his overall condition; the events of the last few days came rushing back into his consciousness. A mild panic flowed through him, and his internal narrator began offering him advice.

“Beaten to within an inch of your life.” It had been his father’s favorite threat when Peter was young.

Freed from unconsciousness, his memory told him about Andrew’s death at the hands of the Apostle. Andrew was fearless. He understood what was

happening. The Apostle had killed him, then turned to Peter. "Ramiel will eat you for breakfast. I have something special in mind for you."

Peter focused on the Garden gate in Merced, on the trees he'd planted for his son. *"Here I put you, Tree of Life. My son you grow within the roots, your fruit an apple or a pear, I'll eat it and dream of you, your beauty blessed and grown to share."*

This was the end of cruelty. In a swift, noisy and inhumane process, climate and emotion burst the boundaries of experience and sanity. But bullets and bombs would not lower the temperature, and when no one dared to do what it took to keep the pyramids standing, they collapsed. With them went the systems that had temporarily supported the overabundance of human life.

If we call this evil, then evil ended when food became the issue, when water was needed, when cool air was needed. Murder and theft ended when there was no one to kill and nothing left worth stealing.

Those who knew the Way were unaffected.

"If one oversees all under heaven in accord with the Way, demons have no spirit. It is not that the demons have no spirit, but that their spirits do not harm people."

Janus and Rusty

Janus: Rusty, I like that name. Is that a red-head nickname?

Rusty: Nope. My family spoke Spanish, so the name is really a translation of Oxiada. This means my real name is Solaria 'Oxiada' Corona. Oops, I left out the Doctor part.

Janus: You are a mathematician, part of a group called the Young Mathematicians. I have heard you speak and enjoyed the way you described your journey to your Edenist Identity. We have some video from shortly after John Vine's appearance on the 700 Club. Before we get into it, can you describe your experience that night as the Prophet spoke?

Rusty: I did not know about it ahead of time. It was the next day that the Index rose dramatically, registering the significance of his speech. After it happened I was not invested in my own interpretation, so I was a good observer of the changes that came.

There is the language aspect. Vine used heavily-coded vocabulary to speak to the two different cultures. Few if any of the Edenists have a spiritual leader. Vine does not lead us any more than Jesus leads us. Robert and others talk about horizontal organization versus the Adamite pyramids. The 700 Club appearance was a clash of the deepest kind.

Janus: Thank you. Let's see the clip.

Rusty: There was a growing concern that the math, even as impeccably researched and peer reviewed as it was, nevertheless was leading us in the wrong direction. Just 35 hours, a day and a half before Vine's 700 Club appearance – a very pivotal moment in our plan – we figured it out. We found our error.

Janus: You made an error?

Rusty: Dominic's father called it a cultural error.

Janus: Dr. Dominic O'Leary?

Rusty: Yes. And his father, both mathematicians. His father's name is Robert Devine. I have yet to meet him, but soon, perhaps. A cultural error is Robert's term for the unintended consequences of ideology. The effects of ideology on the individual are obvious. What we have missed too often is the bias against truth built into ideologically-controlled societies. We scrutinized this aspect during that last day; what we saw was the immense span of time over which this condition has had a deleterious effect.

Janus: Are you saying ideology distorts decision-making? I always thought ideology guided decision-making. How do you pick a choice if you have no idea guiding you?

Rusty: Janus, freedom means free from ideological control. Free of domination by person or ideology. We as humans are subjected at the earliest ages to ideologically-designed propaganda. This is what distorts decision-making.

Mathematics-as-Arithmetic, or the Number Paradigm, was substituted with Mathematics, a weapon of war and greed, as ideology. We thought we could prove what we'd concluded, or at least give a demonstration of the probability of success without ideological distortion. Things changed.

Janus: Doctor, unless I describe what is happening here it will not come across on the written page. Why are you crying? As you spoke you slowly sank into your chair, as if you were defeated or feeling a deep sorrow.

Rusty: Janus, I was not crying. I was weeping...and my teeth were gnashing. Sorry, I always wanted to say that. And you, my dear friend...do you not weep as well? And isn't your sorrow so deep you could rip your clothes from your body and dissolve into a puddle of anxiety?

My mother texted me a few minutes ago remarking on the drought, telling me she laid amongst the dying plants and wept tears to water them. It is wrong for me not to feel sorrow, and wrong, too, to not let my water aid the weak and dying.

Janus: There is no truth we do not feel.

Rusty: Well-put. That is a way of stating the First Paradigm.

Janus: Those were an exciting few moments. I want to get down to the fine line that I imagine exists between the First Paradigm and where the Young Mathematicians found themselves. Can we go there?

Rusty: As I see it today, it was Pythagoras who noted the end of the First Paradigm's influence over what was considered moral or tolerable and what was not. My father wrote songs about the heroic minds that battled to explain the universe. My personal aim was to take up that battle as a way to identify myself, to know myself. Perspective is everything. I know myself as others tell me about me, and I know myself as I look into a mirror. When I met Dominic I had just realized I was an Edenist. He gave me the term, but I knew. My mathematics revealed this to me.

Janus: You described this once as seeing the invisible. You were seeing everything except that, which you could not see, and then...?

Rusty: And then, in giving up control over all the ideologically-forced perceptions, stripping out fear and shame in the process, a new view appeared. This is not guesswork. I loved the interviews with Pythagoras. This is where he lived: on this line described as between two worlds, perhaps two worlds of perception. One a propaganda-dominated perception, and the other free as in Freedom.

Janus: Free of domination. Free of ideology. So, what about math? Where is the ideology?

Rusty: Easy question to ask. Not so easy to answer with direct evidence. We faced a demonstration of bias in the mathematics we used. Once one of us

saw it, every one of us saw it. What was invisible one moment became obvious the next.

Janus: Let me catch up. Mathematics is known by most people as processes and formulas. The idea is to get The Answer. Are you saying math will not give The Answer?

Rusty: No, is the short answer. Yes, is the long answer.

Janus: Ah. I have heard this before.

Rusty: Good. Catch this. Pythagoras stood at the end of a long path he hoped would teach us how to live in harmony. He found no community willing to live his way. Neither did Jesus.

Number is not Mathematics any more than dawn is sunset. I can appeal to an honest history that demonstrates the last days of Py and Jesus, when versions or visions of freedom gave way once more to the Abrahamic Curse.

Dominic tells me his father told him about the nature of the repression of mathematicians, numerologists, and the Tarot.

I would never say that Robert is our 'guru,' or anything like that. He just has a way of putting things that makes his name come up frequently. Plus, I love his son.

There were many others like Py, whose names did not survive their repressions. The paradigm was lost in the creation of Adamite history. In Mathematics, we can find Number Paradigm and the mystical. The First Paradigm is still there. If we look carefully we can find it.

Cyprian

The Great Departure

The question/ ideological math

Janus: We are here in Merced, Arizona near the First Covenant Church, the home church of the Prophet John D. Vine. This is Janus Welch, with the online TV network Prophecy Today!

As we have seen and heard in the last few days, a great change has overtaken the Earth's human population. The Prophet Vine and his congregation have led their following into the Garden of Eden. Estimations of the number who were part of the Great Departure vary, with Vine's websites saying that more than half of us are gone from the planet – almost overnight.

An important part of Vine's inner core was a group of mathematicians who guided decision-making. In the process, the mathematicians re-discovered a startling fact about mathematics itself.

With us now is Cyprian Foret, one of the mathematicians who discovered, ah, um...actually, I think I'd better let Cyprian explain this part.

Welcome, how do you describe what you and your compatriot mathematicians discovered that led to the Great Departure?

Cyprian: Thank you for your welcome. Please, pardon my obstinacy: I argue with questions. It's a pleasure for a mathematician to find that a question, as asked, is hiding its own answer.

We did not discover what led to the Great Departure. We discovered that we were asking the wrong question, or if not the wrong question, we were asking the question at the wrong time. In our case, the question we were asking was posited too late. When we amended it, we did not understand

fully what the new question asked. This is where the question hid the answer.

Janus: How does that work?

Cyprian: Janus, how are you? Are you good?

The first question hides what the second reveals: the answer sought.

As we realized this, we discovered that the mathematics as applied to the Nightmare Problem was forecasting an outcome based upon an ideological error that has warped mathematics repeatedly throughout the last 2200 years, the result of which led to an error in our planning.

We discovered that the demand for empiricism created the error, driving us towards self-destruction, a mass suicide pact.

Janus: Empiricism?

Cyprian: We need facts to reach conclusions. Intuition is interesting, but it must yield to reasoning. Facts, rational argument, proof from definitions and assumptions are reliable. Feelings, intuition, magic, mythology are not reliable.

This is the position of science and applied mathematics. Mathematics, per se, is not a science. It is an art to some – a form of mysticism to some others. As mathematics became used as a tool of war, the paradigm shifted.

Janus: How does this relate to the Nightmare Problem?

Cyprian: We had a question called the Nightmare Problem; it was stated so that the outcome we desired was not part of any possible solution set. We wanted humanity to survive on the Earth given actual conditions, and that was no longer something that could happen. Continuing resource exploitation was the cause.

The obvious damage from increasing resource exploitation led to a broader question of 'how long can this go on?' 75, 50, even 25 years ago it was intuitively recognized as true that there had to be an end. An infinite, unbounded process in a finite field will change everything at increasing speed, until nothing but the process is stable. The sun is an example. Empiricism and the Nightmare Problem say, 'If the processes of excessive resource extraction cannot end, then we will.'

We asked, "What could save us?" and the answers we found were 'politically impossible.' We asked what changes in politics we could make, and how? It was this query that showed promise when we applied the math. We came to a trial solution that we determined using algorithms members of our group had developed, the Young Mathematicians as we're known. The solution we found called for us to end the so-called culture war by urging the soon to be self-identified Edenists among us to join visionary churches, in turn causing the articulation of the Final Revelation.

Janus: Vine's work was all part of your plan?

Cyprian: He and Dr. Dominic O'Leary worked closely together for a number of years before I joined. They worked on a network, a virtual and physical network, called the Garden Club. Initially they wanted to identify more Edenists using an Edenist commonality – gardening. Vine founded a church and taught Edenism using the Abrahamic, i.e. Jewish, Christian and Islamic principles and vocabulary. As the Garden Clubs spread, Edenists joined the churches. Vine's success as a Christian minister grew, and the number of churches, synagogues and mosques with a Garden Club increased exponentially.

Janus: Wait. You are saying that before you applied math, a minister had already begun to do what the math would later tell him to do?

Cyprian: That happened intuitively. O'Leary is the founder of the Young Mathematicians. As the plan began to unfold through the KoAlina Algorithm, also created by O'Leary with a huge assist from Rusty Corona, it

was modified to include the clubs. It was this addition to the KoAlina Algorithm that made the Aloha Index's prediction jump above a 50% chance for survival.

Janus: Okay. Then what was the trouble? You were succeeding.

Cyprian: We were 'probably' succeeding, but certainly not. It is well known that mathematics has an identity crisis: am I pure or am I applied? I jest, but in modern math the ancient math is buried so deeply that its influence is slight. Applied math is modern math. It has no care for its use. It does not calculate the eventual end: at best, it predicts the chance for success in a narrow range of outcomes. It is unable to help us ask the new question. Pure math, the ancient math, that describes not only Earth and the universe but Eden, is built into our Eden Identities. It is our common language.

Janus: I am still intrigued by the thought that the Garden Clubs preceded the Algorithm. What do you make of that?

Cyprian: The night after Vine appeared on the 700 Club cable TV show, the Young Mathematicians were working hard to measure changes to the Aloha Index from the broadcast. We wanted to see a political change. We saw a change, but not a political one. Politics move too slowly, but it hardly matters; the truth is, it was too late, empirically, for humanity to survive on the planet Earth.

That night the Young Mathematicians sat in our nightly virtual meeting, exploring what we had accomplished with the plan, and deduced the saddest fact: we would not, could not succeed in time.

In parallel, O'Leary and Corona had determined that more than half of humanity knew they were Edenists, but thought they individually were alone, not knowing a name for their true identity. The Garden Clubs brought these lone Edenists together, and they came out to themselves and to each other.

As we moved, the results of the History Project, a new narrative that friends of Vine's developed, showed that all of humanity were Edenists by design, and that most had become Adamites by conditioning. Vine had developed a method he called the Cure to bring Edenists out of disguise into the light of self-awareness, and the History Project helped bring about a new paradigm to confirm that an honest history describing Edenists as the children of the Garden was correct.

Most of this work preceded the Algorithm, but much of it was still the result of the intuition of the designers of the Algorithm.

Janus: Are we going around in circles?

Cyprian: Chicken and egg?

Janus: Yeah.

Cyprian: Part of the beauty mathematicians experience is recognizing the divine in the mundane.

Janus, the details mask the truth. The easiest and most truthful thing to say is that all great ideas birth ideologies, and mathematics has become ideological. If we had followed the Algorithm we would have missed Eden. Instead we are home at last.

Janus: Nice. But...how was your mathematical realization about its ideological bias helpful?

Cyprian: Let's return to the trial solution to the Nightmare Problem, and how we noticed in time that we had stated the problem incorrectly. We had intended to change the political reality, which as a matter of probability we would do in a proportion of the possible universes. Our statement of the Problem was "What is the probability that 50% of humanity would survive if we followed a given strategy?"

We saw the results from the Algorithm as an answer to our imagined need for the Earth to remain a friendly environment for humans.

We imagined a political solution, an ideological solution. We used math that supported one ideology over another.

As we drew closer to the day the Final Revelation was to be revealed, other events were taking place that had a profound effect on our imaginations.

Janus: Wow. Let me catch up to you. The Nightmare Problem was thought to require a political solution, and the Aloha Index was below 50% probability until you added in the effect of the Garden Clubs. Your calculations took into consideration the outing of Edenists to each other as a benefit of the Garden Clubs, and the eventual conversion of the Neo-Pentes and Dominionists in government who were blocking global climate change regulations. You succeeded but failed, and you say that failure was one of imagining the wrong goal for your work?

Cyprian: We asked the wrong question, interpreted the result of the Algorithm in the wrong way. Nevertheless, we did the right thing, and the end shows it was just a matter of probability. We were bound by probability to be wrong in this way a set percentage of the time.

That said, if we had learned nothing more we would have watched as the plagues overcame humanity, not just in this universe but in all universes of the Infiniverse that were replicated to fulfill the requirements of probability in this set of events.

In the way things turned out, the Garden Clubs which we hoped would contribute to a political solution *did* provide a solution, just not the one we had imagined.

Janus: Let me guess. I want to run ahead here. I can feel an inevitability in what you are saying. If we do the right thing it will be the driver of the Infiniverse, instead of doing something that simply has an effect proportional to its probabilities. Right path?

Cyprian: Correct.

Janus: Then, since you had not included Eden in your Algorithm you could not anticipate what the effect of outing Edenists would be, or even what forces existed other than what you included in the algorithms.

Cyprian: We had not counted on Eden, but we did what was necessary to open the gates to everyone, all at once. We found this out using only our imaginations: no paper or pen, no computer, not even a calculator. Our intuitions were more powerful than our math. Once we realized we were using the wrong tools, we made our discovery and reset the goal for the Garden Clubs. It was beautiful and instantaneous.

We had organized Edenists and taught them how to find the gates. They – we – were ready to go, and when we saw no alternative...let me put it differently. When we saw the greatest hope for humanity – returning to the Garden – being possible, we took the chance.

Janus: Is your middle name Raziel?

Cyprian: Nice guess. It's Thomas. I am the faithless one, who believes I need more than proof to be convinced.

Janus: How old are you?

Cyprian: 16.

Janus: How do you know so much at such a young age?

Cyprian: Questions are bias-laden, as yours surely is. My grandmother raised me. She no longer lives, called herself a pagan, spent every daylight hour in contemplation of her garden. I lived in the garden with her as long as she was alive. She taught me to be free of the shackles of society, including 'believing.' I do not follow her, I became her. It's an Eden thing.

Robert Explains the Universe

Janus: I'm here speaking with poet and mathematician Robert Devine, who (as has just been made clear to me) is now more commonly known to the world as the great Prophet John D. Vine. However, he has graciously agreed to speak to us in Robert's persona, as my questions pertain to his work under that identity. So, Robert...what is your theory? You wrote a blog post called '*Time and Space, Place and Relativity: the laws of thermodynamics, the divinity of Jesus and the location of Eden.*'

That's quite a title. I read it, the title, three times before I decided I needed to talk to you first before reading your post.

Robert: How funny. Was it the Jesus part? The location of Eden?

Janus: I read the title over and over because at first it sounded like physics, then like theology or mysticism. On the third read it was all mysticism.

Robert: Good reading, Janus. There is a relatively young saying that "I am you and you are me and we are all together." That was on my thoughts when the title came to me.

In the last year or so several people have attempted to explain the universe, to explain the relationship between space and time. Most attempts describe the possible sizes of the universe, positing multiverses or an Infiniverse as solutions to the myriad of observed physical and temporal problems.

The universe we are in is called the observable universe. It is often described as an expanding universe. What we observe outside our solar system are 'stars,' which are at different distances from Earth. These distances are measured in light-years, which is also a measurement of time.

Janus: Relativity?

Robert: Einstein.

Time means things change. There is an event. Then, there is before the event and after the event. Time is thus divided into three parts. Only that part of time which is after an event can change in our perception.

Memory becomes a sequence of events denoting these changes.

Janus: Are you saying memories are sequential, but that time happens all at once?

Robert: And time becomes space in the observable universe. Someone said that the observable universe proves this very directly and easily.

Try this: the light we see from an object, a 'star,' is as old as its image is far. We say it is 9 billion light years away, where 'away' is used both physically and temporally. It is 9 times the distance light travels in a billion years away in miles and 9 billion years away in time. Time and distance are converted through the speed of light.

Janus: Einstein again?

Robert: Older. There is a belief that the universe started, and another one that the universe will end. These beliefs color many people's thoughts on the subject of time and space.

I would say we are stuck in a universe where this theoretical birth-and-death narrative is believed to be true. It is probably not believed to be true elsewhere.

The result, no matter what is believed, is that time and space are convertible, are essentially equivalent. When asked 'What happens next,' scientists say the universe will eventually freeze in place, i.e. come to an end, since if change ends time ends.

Janus: Well? What do you say?

Robert: As difficult as it is to accept culturally, everything has already happened. Time and Space are ideas people in the Wild have.

In an Infiniverse, everything happens. I would say 'all at once.' What I want to describe is an Infiniverse always changing, therefore making change the essence of creation.

Janus: I am not sure that actually helped. Does that surprise you?

Robert: Human language is made up of opposites and is difficult to understand as one thing. Good and Evil are one thing. Time and Space. Life and Death. Dichotomies create each other.

Janus: Yikes. Is this better? If I get it, it could be that our cultural orientation has meant we divide reality into opposites...

Robert: So we can have language, so we can have something to talk about, because without opposites there would be little drama. Even so, this is delusional in English.

Janus: I am getting tired.

Robert: When you look at your current state of affairs, then you feel frozen in place and time.

Google Raziel. Read the entry.

Janus: Too hard.

Robert: How about Jesus?

Janus: Okay. How about Jesus?

Robert: Jesus is an Edenist who existed, as everything does, before Adamites left the Garden. Jesus was, of course, a disguise he wore, and Aramaic the language he adopted when he used the name. Many Edenists have multiple names and disguises, along with memories of the events that transpired while wearing each disguise. All of these memories are finite, yet they exist simultaneously. So if I were to enter the Garden and think *Jesus*, Jesus would be there as the memory exists everywhere. We simply access him as we would access memory in a computer network.

Janus: Wait a minute. Jesus is a name an Edenist used while outside of the Garden? If so, who is this Edenist and why did he or she do this?

Robert: The Garden and the Edenists change from one person to the other, just like outside the Garden. People are born in the Wild. Their complete atomic composition is changed every seven years, yet they continue to live and use the same name as before.

As a practical matter, discussions about Eden must not be interpreted as being factual. If we try to describe the infinite and timeless, we fail to do more than to define the finite and impermanent.

Somewhere in this we should make a note that one of the reasons god is timeless and unchanging is that everything is always transforming in probabilistic ways. More is always happening, all at the same time. Since everything is always changing, in a way nothing is changing.

Janus: I lied when I said I did not read your article. I read the first paragraph, and then the last.

Robert: They were essentially the same, but with different vocabulary.

Janus: What I got was that the Earth is overpopulated and Eden is not. Eden is infinite in ways that are important, and singular in other ways.

Robert: Number is the first language of humanity. It is Eden's language. A language we all know.

Eden is the total memory of the Infiniverse. It does not change. Since everything that is god includes everything of us, from our histories to our subjective perspectives down to even our sub-atomic structures, then in fact nothing actually changes. Everything must have always been, all simultaneously.

Janus: But not exactly?

Robert: Precisely.

What became of Robert?

Estelle: It has been 15 years since anyone has seen or heard from Robert Devine. On last sighting he was a resident of Costa Rica, and before that a local resident of Humboldt County, California. He lived here for 20 years, during which time he defined the term political activist so well that both the left and the right claimed him – or at least his tactics – as theirs.

If you knew him it would not surprise you that he reappeared today, in our studios at KMUD public radio in Redway, California.

Robert Devine, where have you been?

Robert: Costa Rica, Europe, Hawaii. And places in-between.

Estelle: For those who do not know you, what is your history here?

Robert: In one interpretation I practiced impatience as a virtue. As we know, if we sit around waiting for Democrats to make life better for us we will have to survive CAMP raids, infiltrators, organized crime, gangsters, Patriot Acts, and so many forms of failure, traitorism, and betrayal that many may become hopeful that the Republicans are quote-unquote 'better' than the Democrats. On the other hand, and they are other-handed, the Republicans give us torture, war for corporate gain, economic austerity and dysfunctional government, which used to be called self-government but ours no longer meets the criteria.

Estelle: Nothing has changed. What about a revolution?

Robert: Ah, “The Revolution?” We saw the words, read the words, wrote the words every day. How does a revolution start? The democratic institutions we form are ostensibly for solving disputes. When these fail we need new institutions, or the disaffected will be eliminated. It is not a matter of guesswork. History yields easily to this interpretation. We saw the words and knew their meaning. We saw the institutions failing. We spoke the words ourselves and used them like a prayer. “The Revolution” filled the banners our minds imagined, filled the heads of many others.

A table at the Woodrose Café had that word carved into it. Is it still there? Nonetheless, we were right about the institutions failing. We were wrong about what filled people's heads. We were set upon.

Estelle: You are speaking of the late 1980s, and the so-called Timber Wars. What now?

Robert: We rise. We fall. We rise. We fall. This is our revolution, just like John Trudell told us. We wait as our fates rise and fall for the moment, to begin our new revolution.

In the meantime, nothing new arrives to save us.

Those of us who are used to disguise simply change our disguises. We follow a longer path, as our understanding of our circumstances change. We find out who we really are, and we show ourselves to our supposed foes to reveal more of us. Eden also reveals itself. Then we rise up as one, because we are complete in our new understanding of ourselves and our world. The institutions failed. We founded no more. Those of us who can depart have done so, leaving the others to the Armageddon they desired so greatly.

The Garden saves us.

If someone wonders about the outside, if they have a need to re-enter the Wild, the gate will be there, and the gatekeeper. The wonderment resolved.

Estelle: Er, yeah, okay. Robert, I think you have been smoking something local!

Robert: There's a punch line in there somewhere. Local makes you loco? I try too hard.

Estelle: So what now?

Robert: It is time to depart if you can. Many of our mutual friends have already found their own exit. If you look with your mind open, you will see your own gate.

Estelle: I remember you speaking about Eden as a pun on Hedon.

Robert: The other way around: Hedonist was a slanderization of Edenist. So when I was called a Hedonist and told my ilk were 'of Satan,' I took notice, and the revelation began for me.

Estelle: You aren't kidding?

Robert: Nope. Failure is a teacher. Charlatans can be teachers.

Estelle: One thing that has been bothering me since we last met is the so-called Nightmare Problem. You are a mathematician, if my memory serves; what do you make of it?

Robert: The simplest statement of The Nightmare Problem – how are we going to save at least 50% of humanity from a seemingly-inevitable die-off? – was posed with unconscious biases that remained hidden from its posers. The problem is stated in such a way that it can be interpreted as implying that all options are considered. In the Infiniverse, our universe will be one or another of the outcomes, whether the posers of the problem knew of all these outcomes or not.

How does this work within an algorithm such as the KoAlina Algorithm? The human imagination poses a problem that undergoes a probabilistic analysis. The outcomes are listed, and numbers associated with each, representing relative likelihood. As the analysis is a human product it is subject to errors that result from the limits of an individual's perception.

Regardless of the error in its statement, the Problem has exactly the potential outcomes it has in this universe. The probabilities of each outcome are exactly as they are, unrelated to the assumptions humans make.

Estelle: What is that in English? Mathematicians are human too?

Robert: 'True' is the short answer.

Estelle: And the long answer?

Robert: In the aftermath of the Departure the mathematicians analyzed the result and saw their error in light of the outcome.

The four Young Mathematicians who conceived and designed the Aloha Index, which reported the results of the KoAlina Algorithm, all knew their Eden Identity. All had grown up free from the abuses of shaming and fear inducement most of us suffered in our early years.

One of them – Doctor Dominic O’Leary – is my son. We spoke often about the Problem, and even at a distance we coordinated our lives to minimize the timespan before the anticipated maximum effect could be realized.

Estelle: There is humor in this. You were subjected to the same human failings as I?

Robert: Are you or aren’t you like me?

The problem-posers did not understand the role of Eden; therefore, they could not account for the Departure scenario as a possible outcome. However, the Algorithm somehow reflected what the posers didn’t know. The Index began to answer the question, as if the probability of more than 50% returning to Eden was rising.

The bias was in favor of saving 50%, all of whom would remain alive on Earth, while the Algorithm saw no hope for that outcome. Instead, it responded by saying in effect that the probability of repopulating Eden was high.

Disneyland for the Mind

“The rise and fall of anything is of interest to someone. The momentary changes are measured, and the data stored for analysis.”

An elderly white-haired man was sitting on a checkered lawn chair, leaning on a cane with both hands under his chin.

“Eventually, a question is formulated, the answer to which lies in the analysis. The data is accessed. The analysis is performed, and a result depicted as a possible solution to the question as posed.”

Gillian sat next to the elder, who was talking to a group arrayed around him in the area between the church parking lot and the garden. Someone had just asked a question as she walked up, so she missed it but not the answer.

“The man told me I would see god,” a young woman said.

“He told me my heart would rise up,” the elder replied. “Days passed, and I waited. Every few hours I read a passage from one of the books on silent meditation from the church library. I was not looking for anything in particular, just a new loving view of what remained of my life. I wanted to rise up within myself, just like the man said.

“My daughter said there was a place I could go, ‘the gate’ she called it. That’s why I sat here for ten days holding a book on Chinese Mysticism, reading passages and waiting for the gate to open.

“This garden outside the gate is a peaceful place. Waiting here is not difficult.”

“The man said I would see god, that my heart would rise up, and I didn’t know what to think.” The young woman stood quietly nearby, reading from a book of dialogues.

The elder was still. Another woman walking along the path who had stopped to listen offered her thoughts.

“I read a passage, maybe eight words; hardly enough to change a way of life. I read slowly, not interested in the words so much as making the sounds and not caring about the meaning. I am not a singer, but it felt like being a jazz vocalist, nearly chanting the words in a rhythm familiar but new to me.

“The garden changed in a mysterious way. The colors were new, not a wall of mundane green and brown but rainbows of lush green and brown, commingled with the colors the flowers radiated.

“I thought my eyes were watering, but they weren’t. I took a drink of water, thinking thirst had made me see funny. I wasn’t thirsty. I remembered what I knew from the discussions and sermons I had attended in the last few days. I was seeing the Garden.”

Gillian had heard much of this before, the Way some people called it. A Calling, Redemption, Enlightenment. The Cure. A Hypnotic Awakening. There were many names for what was essentially the same thing. Some saw it as ‘seeing,’ as if their eyes had opened. Some experienced it as a new Realization or Perception.

She did not want to ‘think’ about it. She preferred to feel it.

And, of course, she had her explanation:

The observable universe is expanding at the speed of light. Our lives are traveling at the speed of light. The history of our lives is expanding the dimensions of the universe.

Beginning with the idea of number, patterns are built in the human imagination, as if god discovered what god’s essence was. We are captives of time. We are captains of time. We exist to change. Number measures and counts to compare over time. Number measures time passed. Evolution is a celebration of time, life changing from one moment to the next. Evolution is a great excitement. A great entertainment.

The universe is our word to describe what we see and the extension of the visible through our imaginations.

Only the finite could appreciate the infinite. In a manner of speaking, god desiring self-realization creates a finite being for the sole purpose of inventing the infinite as a means of describing god.

Our measurement of the universe yields a finite result. Infinity is a result of using number to describe change in the finite. We measure the finite. We imagine the infinite.

Py and Gillian

Gillian: This is Gillian West, with PT! Online. In this segment we are continuing with an interview that has kept me fascinated. With me outside the Garden gate behind the First Covenant Church in Merced, Arizona is Pythagóras. Wiki calls him Pythagóras ho Sámios. Welcome again. Last time we spoke on air we discussed the old versus the new...

Pythagóras: Thank you. Oops! Sorry, I interrupted. I was happy with our last talk. The ideas are difficult to grasp, considering. And I have waited a long time for this, so I am a bit anxious.

Gillian: How about a summary of our discussion so far?

Py: In the final analysis we can expect that the observed patterns of nature, of creation, will continue. There are no miracles, only the unanticipated, the surprises. These come from our lack of vision. If we want to know, we must first see.

Gil: Py, this is being transmitted via a means of communication you never experienced in life. Do you perceive any time lags or distortions between what you know and what is quote-unquote 'actually' happening now, outside the Garden?

Py: Are you asking me how theories of time affect this conversation?

Gil: And more. How about language differences, or perceptual differences? Do you see what is around you? How do you interpret these surroundings?

Py: The view from Eden is vast, especially when contrasted against the view from the Wild, which is for the most part stunted and delusional. I am not speaking Greek. I am not speaking English. You understand me, perhaps in a way that gives the word 'understand' a new meaning, or rather an older meaning you may have just re-discovered. That is the problem your question addresses. How can Py and Gil understand one another?

Gil: There was this comedy group that had a routine that always cracked me up. A guy on stage would speak through a voice synthesizer, saying again and again, “How do I make my voice do this?”

Py: Good question. How do we make our voices do this?

Gil: Are you asking me?

Py: When you can enter Eden you understand how this is done. So, you know the answer to your question.

Gil: I am confused. The Wild is not fully out of me. The gate is like a dream, or this life is like a dream. Being in the Wild is confusing. Being in Eden is comforting. This is my first day back, and I am confused entirely.

Py: Remember, we are the same. We are creations of our own impulses, down to the details of our personalities. We are infinity trying to hide itself under a small blanket; it is a game of hide-and-go-seek. The image I have is of a small child saying, “Can you see me?” as she stands in front of me with her hands over her eyes.

Gil: Okay, so let’s go for it. How does capital-M Mathematics play into all this? Last talk was about the First Paradigm, or the understanding of existence. Number became Mathematics, and something was lost in the transformation, to use your terms. Can you pick it up from there?

Py: I traveled as many miles as any person in my era did: a seeker of the knowledge that would lead to understanding existence in a non-delusional way. I did not know about Eden until I passed from the Wild. Jesus was the exception. The two Marys.

Gil: You mean Jesus’ mom and Saman?

Py: Yes. 'Mom' was an adept Edenist from birth and kept from abuse by her parents and tribe. She never learned fear and shame. Saman you know. The historian is the central figure in understanding who you are. The Eden Identity is an historian’s product.

Gil: Let me catch up. How is it your life is a memory in Eden, yet you did not enter Eden like the Marys?

Py: You will see. It is a choice. The term Eden did not exist. It was another world, another name, a different place in the imagination. Number was the First Paradigm; what replaced it is the current paradigm. Call it what you will – I think of it as simply Mathematics. It is not generally stated that way, but nonetheless...

Gil: So when Number was the Paradigm it was one world, and when Mathematics replaced it it became another world?

Py: There was a transition in the imagination that corresponded with the change in Paradigm.

Gil: Where are we now?

Py: Now? The paradigm change is about to occur again, but in a way that makes humans extinct in the Wild. Look, there is a story about me that reflects on this problem.

Gil: Is it the one about how your student was killed for revealing the existence of irrational numbers?

Py: Yes, that story. If you have ever tried to organize a community group you know how the results are most likely not as intended. Not bad, but not the good way or the ideal way – maybe the Eden way.

Look, it's called the Pythagorean Theorem. Side squared plus other side squared equals the hypotenuse squared in a right triangle. Everyone who cares gets it. It is the highest understanding of the Number Paradigm. It is basic and divine. It is the divine imagination derived from the results of the divine imagination. It should be called the Divine Formula, because it is.

Gil: What happened, Py?

Py: I like it that you call me Py, short for Pythagóras. It is a Greek letter 'Pi' that is the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter. If one draws a

triangle with the hypotenuse, the diameter, and the opposite angle's vertex on the circle, then a right triangle is formed.

Using the ratios of sides and hypotenuse, one can navigate the vast oceans. I sailed to Ireland from Ionia through the Straits across the Atlantic to meet the Celtic priests in my journey.

Gil: That is fascinating. However, I think you are resisting answering my question.

Py: First rule of discourse: change the question to one you can answer. My story says I sailed across the seas safely using ratios of whole numbers, natural numbers. When I arrived in Ireland I learned how to calculate the radius of the Moon and Sun, and the distance to the Moon and to the Sun. I helped to build a great monument that preserved these ratios, immemorially marking the orbits of the planets and explaining the beauty of the observable universe.

I, and anyone who knew the formula, knew the limitations of the formula. Solutions existed that could not be transmitted by our symbolic language. I suppose the interpretation is that we 'killed' the student who pointed out the 'existence' of the square root of 2, as it has been called. This number was not a ratio of two whole numbers, and therefore religiously repugnant.

We were not a religion, although we gave spiritual significance to the idea that we were divine, and we enjoyed that divinity and the comfort it lent us. That was the First Paradigm.

The Honest History is that the story you heard about this was invented by the pyramid builders, which gives me a rather ignoble name association, since Pyramid shortened is also Py.

Gil: Every pyramid builder has used your formula.

Py: That's where I learned of it. The Egyptians taught me geometry, the Phoenicians arithmetic, the Chaldeans astronomy, the Magians the principles of religion and practical maxims for the conduct of life.

Gil: Wait. The formula for which you are known was really a pyramid builder's invention?

Py: Yes.

Gil: Have we ever met before?

Py: Whoa! How could we not have?

Gil: Is that a yes?

Py: You know souls return repeatedly to the Wild. In Eden there is a soul's memory, that retains the history of those who return aware. Py is only one part of me as a memory.

Gil: Gotcha. It's just a disguise we use outside the Garden.

Py: Yes. You sought me in this disguise. I could appear in others, but as Pythagóras I can tell you this most clearly: the Powers that slandered me to destroy rational thought invented the irrational.

Gil: Are you telling a joke?

Py: I waited over 2000 years to tell it.

Gil: Thank you, Pythagóras, for your time.

Py: I have lots of it, but you are welcome. Good luck with your project.

Gil: I know you, but where?

Py: You mean 'when,' don't you?

The Apostle

The Apostle gained personal power from his support of the pyramids. Like many before him, he rose in the esteem of the Elohim and was allowed to ascend in the meritocracy through the 8-ball schemes the pyramids used to distribute power upwards. He knew that his was a pyramid, like all pyramids, that enriched only a few. But maybe one day he would be amongst those blessed few.

The Bible was confusing about the Elohim. He only met an Elohim once, and only briefly.

David.

His name was David, and he must have lived a life of purpose and meaning to have the concerns he claimed to have. The Apostle sensed the presence of a masterful order surrounding David. Roles were defined, probabilities considered. Men and women moved around him like a hive of insects, creating a special environment for him to inhabit as he walked and reordering the environment behind him to create the history David dreamed about as he left.

Greg Winton, as the Apostle's now-deceased father called him, knew something about the global elite. His experience with the hidden messages in the Bible left him with an appreciation of 'know your place in the coming days of the Kingdom.' His family tradition was to believe in hidden conspiracies, so it was a natural fit when he realized he could become a part of one. "If God has chosen you to be an Apostle, then you will become one." And now years later, he was one. *So doesn't that prove the existence of God?*

He and his wife, whose name was growing dimmer every day since her death, had no children. *Some gifts, we do not need.* He saw how his older brothers and sisters were dealt hands with no pairs or wild cards. He had an

ace and a joker; if he could figure out how to play them, he might just win the whole pot.

Somewhere in the Bible it says to take risks for Jesus. That is what He taught in His sermons. The idea was to join in *the biggest anti-communist crusade of all times: Capitalism.*

Nowhere in the Bible did it say white men were to take a backseat to anyone. His grandfather and his father had gone to prison to prove this point. Civilization had come when the 'men from the North' invaded the south and brought 'shock and awe' to the browner European southerners.

"Paganism was defeated not by the democracy of the Greeks or the militarism of the Romans, but by hordes of stronger men who destroyed the error of Godlessness, ushering in the Christian Identity."

A voice believed to be God spoke to white men, informing them that white men are chosen like no other to represent God on Earth. This is the source of the superiority: it is God-given.

"We are white. We are men. We are God's chosen." The Wintons had spoken this way for generations. When Greg saw 'David,' a new world – a new universe – opened up to him.

"Power. What is it? How does one use it?" Winton tried desperately to find answers, but 'David' knew, and Winton's grandfather knew too.

The Apostle 'walks with Jesus' for the sake of the power he gains from being seen walking. *What you appear is what you are.* He is aware that there is a system of organization building operating to bring him to the top of his pyramid. He relies on the system. He does not look like he 'walks with Jesus.' He looks like he walks with money and power. Greg Winton wished he could be the pope for the wardrobe and the servants.

When he was studying at Wheaton in the 1960s he was given a real secret. He liked to tell the story about how the secret came to him, but not tell the secret itself. In short, his theology teacher Dr. William G. Williamson had

pointed out the true nature of the Bible to him. The Bible begins with Genesis, and the first line of Genesis reads: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The word for "God" in this verse is "Elohim." The -im suffix is the plural, yielding: "In the beginning, the gods created the heaven and the earth." Williamson had no idea he had revealed this terrible truth. The Apostle's notes from the class, each page sealed in a glassine envelope including the handout for the day, clearly showed the 'original Hebrew,' and later that Elohim was to be translated as 'gods.'

He wondered about what this meant. He wondered how many noticed. There was no discussion of it. Williamson didn't seem to care. But the Apostle was annoyed by this loose end. He spent his senior year walking around seeking eye contact so as to ascertain whether others had made this discovery, whether they too felt things were less than divine at divinity school.

As luck would have it, the Apostle, still just a fledgling newly-graduated 'man of God,' fit easily into Williamson's own plan for success, as his God defined it. "To win in the Christian sense means to lead your life so that God can show his love for you by making you successful in business. God has blessed the rich like no others."

The Apostle was given and accepted an invitation to join Williamson's prayer group, which met shortly after the John Birch Society meetings adjourned. The Professor and his acolyte was an apt description of their relationship, which took a turn for the better when the sons of a coal magnate began to support the Professor's speaking trips. The brothers joined the prayer group, and they brought others into it.

"A slow evolution, that's how it went. Step by step, until Ramiel visited Williamson's room during the prayer group's annual retreat in the U.P." That was how the Apostle told the story in his book, though he was not a witness to the visitation. His book did not promise anything more than his memory, even if all the stories were not his.

The Apostle was not much of a writer. He was too ironic. He revealed his lack of belief by an almost comical 'flashing' of his private thoughts. By the time his opus about the history of Ramiel's Army was nearing completion, things had long gotten out of hand.

The Apostle was the Archangel Ramiel's agent on Earth, the Supreme Commander of Ramiel's Army in the battle against daemons and devils.

The Prophet John Demetrius Vine claims peace was achieved thanks to the prayers of the faithful.

The Apostle's sources in the FBI told him that about 37% of the citizens of the US had literally vanished in the space of a week's time, after the so-called Final Revelation or Forever After Revelation had begun.

What are these thoughts?

Before Vine's annoying revelation, the Apostle knew the time was near. He had spoken about the Apocalypse many times, while almost on automatic; yet every time he did he could hear a voice within him crying like a child begging for help, and another angry father-like voice blustering wrathfully. Each blamed the other for their distress, and both were obnoxious and confusing in their own way.

The Apostle had gone to therapy; praying, more hoping these voices were a passing thing. He learned about himself, a little. He learned to be less annoyed.

All that did not change the future. The end was coming, and no one seemed to care except the entertainment industry. He read a few Endtimes books, the Left Somewhere Else Series, watched a movie by a Christian director.

He quickly realized he was not on the same planet as some of these others, but they were making money, therefore blessed by God. *There is the Bible, and then there are the rich.* The rich lead everything worth joining.

He woke with a start one morning and realized no one might ever read his book. Not because it wasn't good reading or not God's truth, but because no one might be left to read anything by the time he finished it.

He carefully crafted a tomb, as he called it. A cement and steel structure buried under ten feet of earth. He hoped it would survive Armageddon and be found by whoever inhabited this place next...like the Dead Sea scrolls...if there was a next.

He found it hilarious that he was now stuck in New York. He had tried to fly out, but nothing in the city was moving on the surface. He had spent almost six days in an air-conditioned hotel. He had not suffered in the 130 plus degree weather. From the looks of the street below, people had slept all day and rioted all night. He had not seen anyone from his windows for two days, corpses excepted.

I am a lucky one. Without connections in the energy industry I would not know there was a Haven here. Ramiel had paid off in spades. It had been a good idea. Not only did Ramiel bring him wealth and fame, Ramiel brought him power. Literally. He almost spit out the bite of cheese and cracker he had been munching on as he watched Fox News describe the hunt for Vine, along with the latest murder tally. Almost 25,000 new missing person claims in the boroughs alone. All presumed dead: same as yesterday. There really had not been anything new in the news for all the time he had been harbored here at the *Pauline Haven for Overheated Apostles. Funny guy.* Reality was that power was out now in virtually the entire city, except for several survival centers and the secret Havens. This haven was in a building with a coffeehouse and a Pauline catholic book store on the ground floor.

Hunger

The TV was blaring its usual over-active entertainment. The Apostle stood before it, watching as his one-time acolyte John Vine prepared to speak to his congregation – or so it appeared.

John stood at a podium. His hands were clamped tightly on its edges. The room in which he was talking reminded the Apostle of a lecture hall, or a stage he'd seen once *in the round*.

John respected a silence to allow for the audience to reach a meditative state. After several long minutes, he spoke.

“Peace,” John said, “is purchased with a caring labor that does not abide with hunger near or far.

“The word ‘hunger’ has taken on a new meaning in recent decades, but the concept is the same no matter what the object of the hunger is, no matter how material or how other-than-material it is.

“The propaganda machine has always sold bullshit as its first product. It compels us to consume endless unnecessary and potentially harmful products, to meet needs we did not know we had until a sales campaign helpfully informed/programmed us.

“The propaganda machine is in charge of hungers. New products are begat by new hungers. Those with the vision to see the un-entered market can control the universe of the new product and have the coveted corner on the market.

“There is a missing term in English. Who was it that knew in advance the risks of the new idea, who pushed laziness as a marketing virtue, who sold intoxication as a sustainable value? We need a word for that person, or at least that person’s behavior. 'Vampire,' 'Bloodsucker' and 'Vulture' are all taken.

“That is the burden I have long carried: knowing the true dimensions of oppression.

“The burden I carry I must put down. I know that. I raise it above my head one more time to measure it, to come to grips with its actual lightness and how little I will miss it once I put it down. ‘I no longer need this. It will not help me on the trail ahead.’”

John stopped speaking. He did not reach for water. He did not take his eyes away from his listeners’ eyes. *Breathe. In brings peace. Out ends conflict.*

“Almost everyone in this church tonight, in this service has been diagnosed with terminal inoperable cancer. We know that might change with research and advances in treatments. We hope that if that can happen that it happens, ‘in time.’

“This hope is what we call prayer.

“To quote one of our parishioners, ‘Pastor, I tried prayer and now I am happiest not being rejected by God, not being left feeling like collateral damage in some cosmic war. Save that for someone else.’

“This is not about praying. It’s not about much really, beyond the recognition that we have been made to feel and think a certain way through a long-term entertainment process that has not been, nor ever will be, good for us. ‘Good for you’ was never its intention, nor has it been shown to have that effect.

“We call what we do here the Cure. The only question is, ‘Are you able to make the Cure work for you?’ Let me explain.”

The Apostle terminated the broadcast with his clicker and returned to his own thoughts. Under his suit he was sweating profusely.

He had wanted to leave his wife before she left him. He failed. The whole Ramiel thing just took so much time, he'd lost contact with her. One morning last month, returning home after three days away, he had found

her in bed, fully clothed and *dead as a door nail*. The good Lord had seen fit to take her. *So be it*.

One of his friends, the doctor who attended to her death certificate, said she had died instantly. He listed 'brain trauma' as the cause of death. The bullet disappeared. The Apostle kept the gun she used.

Last night he took the elevator down to the coffeehouse. *Strange night*. He met a young couple, Jackson and Alicia, who told him about an old man who spoke there late at night. They were excited. Jackson, who Alicia called a 'disciple of the Poet and Magician,' was talking about the Garden gates being open for those who knew how to find them.

"Where are these gates? I have never heard of them before." The Apostle's steely nerves easily handled the absurdity of the idea. *What crap*.

"Poet tells us Eden is within us. An infinite, boundless, timeless place: invisible, weightless, everything at the same time. He says speaking about it accurately is impossible, so the best way to speak about it is in contradictions."

"You're not serious, are you?" The Apostle did not like to hear such calumny, and Jackson's little speech was calumny if ever he heard it. He could feel Ramiel rising within him. He would smite if he did not flee, so he fled.

Not going back there. False prophets and claims of a new messiah. It all fits. It's the Endtimes. The elevator swiftly carried him to his floor. He had no messages on his cell phone. Only the news channels still worked. Only the Havens had air-conditioning. He had concluded that civilization was collapsing, and that at any time Ramiel would appear and begin the Resurrection of the Dead and the Rapture of the Faithful.

In the early morning, the sound of the air-conditioner stopped. He didn't look to see if other electrical equipment was working. He was sure the grid

had fried, or that a tree had fallen down the street or the generator run out of fuel. He looked outside and saw no movement for the third straight day.

He was in a condo on the 36th floor, accessible by its own elevator *for security reasons*. It had seemed safe a few days ago. Now, in light of the air-conditioning shutdown the condo would soon be unlivable if a cold front didn't come in.

There were no sounds in the building. No machines were running. Only the high-pitched moan of the wind catching at some loose rubber gasket was audible. The sound of his pulse in his ears was louder.

Where did all those people go? He had imagined he would be the one missed while the sinners prepared for death. I wonder what Vine's prayers did to Ramiel.

Feeling alone, seeking company he decided to overcome his foreboding and see what the Poet and Magician was all about. *Maybe I can find someone at Jonah's Midnight Mocha and Live Entertainment tonight.*

The elevators did not work as he had expected. He began the long journey to the ground. *36 floors. Nope, 35. There is no 13. I wonder why? Wait, I only go to 1 not 0, so it's only 33.*

At the 20th floor he considered suicide. The idea passed on the notion that 3 floors would be enough. By the time he reached the lobby he had won a valiant inner struggle against his sinful urge.

The stairs ended at a steel door with no window. As he pushed open the door a blast of hot, stinking air struck his cheek. "What the hell is this?" The sound of his voice was drowned in the quiet of the lobby. Nothing responded to his exclamation.

The End of Jesus

As the Apostle made his way through the all-but-abandoned lobby of the building, he walked past the Pauline Book Store with its display of red-bound Bibles surrounding a glowing computer monitor. Sound was audible, coming from the computer's speaker.

He turned to look at the monitor. It showed a scene outside a garden, a beautiful vegetable garden. Two men who looked very familiar were standing near a picnic table, deep in conversation.

Jesus: The relationship between individuals and institutions is changing in two ways: Corporate 'Capture' and the Death of Truth.

If the corporate capture of public and private institutions is not obvious to you, then a closer examination of any issue involving resource extraction or the privatization of public property should bring the concept into sharper focus. Those who enable worldwide electronic communication are also the chief producers of propaganda – thus, the exclusive never-ending broadcasting of an elite minority opinion.

Democracy, which promised to even out the economic differences among us and share power proportionally amongst economic classes, has failed. The institutions are corrupt and serve purposes other than the social and public purposes for which they were ostensibly created.

How do we proceed? No pyramid building. No special people. Only by leaderless consensus. If we fail, we fail. If we succeed, we succeed.

Horizontal organizing means no one to compromise or murder. We do not expend the energy to create dead heroes, even though we may aesthetically appreciate their sacrifice. They are no longer here. They can no longer act. They can only be used to create ideology and failure through hero worship.

Infiltration will not work against a horizontal organization, since there is no group think. There are simple tests for loyalty to our way of life, since

we have no ideology and are politically anarchists and socially atheists. We are Edenists in our identity, which means we know each other on sight and only those like us can follow us into the Garden.

Pyramids look for others like them to destroy. Do not be a pyramid or a pyramid follower. Do not get caught in someone else's paradigm.

This is not a call for lone wolf actions. Death squads result from military action. This is not a call for public education or protests.

How can we be silent and build leaderless consensus? How can we sit still and help others move?

Let us review:

No pyramid building.

No special people.

Only leaderless consensus of horizontal organizing.

No lone wolf actions.

No fear, no shame.

Yes, organized action is possible if the purpose is 'to get to heaven' by caring for others as you care for yourself.

Yes, gardening is always right.

Yes, we are bodily from the earth and will return to the earth many times during our time in the Wild.

Janus: So were we not created to love, honor and obey god?

Jesus: Tricky question. Short answer: No. Long answer: Yes.

Janus: Let me guess. If we have no time to discuss the terms of the question then the answer is 'No,' because the terms used in the question need definitions which substantially vary from person to person. The

most respectful answer then is 'No.' However, if we take the time to think it through properly the answer becomes 'Yes,' because we see ourselves and the creator god in a different context.

Jesus: The question is changed by the knowledge of who we are.

Janus: No is the answer when there is no supreme being. Yes is correct when we are the Superior Being which includes Infiniverses of beings, whose individual dreams we are until we wake to be the dreamer.

Jesus: You read my mind.

Janus: Are you referring to the Cure?

Jesus: The Cure is for the Curse. If you are thinking as a Cursed Being, an Adamite, then you cannot see the gate to the garden without the Cure.

If you say I was created to love, honor and obey god, knowing that 'love honor and obey' is an Edenist expression for seeking perfection and an understanding of one's True Identity, then the answer is Yes.

Janus: Jesus, you have been a fantastic interview. As we finish up I realize that fewer and fewer people are watching these videos.

Jesus: As the number of souls left to harvest diminishes our job gets easier, until we are harvested too.

Janus: Last words?

Jesus: Amen, my pleasure. Merry met and merry part and merry meet again!

The Apostle stood before the image of the two men, now still. Jesus? Did I hear that correctly? This must be one of Vine's tricks.

Tommy and Jackson

“This valley,” the farmer said, in a manner that told you everything you needed to know about how he felt, “has been my home nearly all of my life.” As he spoke his gaze turned to his left and then his right, taking in low rolling hills to the east and west forested with pines, maples, oaks, birch and popple trees, framing a broad flat valley floor that stretched beyond sight in each direction, north and south.

He stood rod-straight, his cane clutched in his right hand. His work clothes carefully pressed. His work boots carefully oiled. Grey short hair visible around the brim of his Ducks Unlimited hat. His once-six-foot frame, now seventy-five years old, was less than seventy inches. Brown eyes stared at the tree line, scanned over the furrowed earth, searching for more words to say. His memories flooded his mind.

He pointed the cane up the valley to the north. “We have hay fields, forty acres in timothy and another forty in corn. My neighbors are all old like me. They have retired. Their land lies fallow. Couple years ago I hayed their fields too. The country is in trouble, with the drought and all. We need to help each other out, and when a neighbor needs feed for his animals we need to share ours if we can.” The cane stabbed the air as he pointed here and there, up and down the valley.

“I was the youngest of 13 children, all born and raised in this four-bedroom house. For 36 years my mother grew a vegetable garden and we – the kids – raised the meat: cattle, pigs, chickens. We had 20, 30 head of cattle, and a dozen dairy cows we milked twice a day. In the morning, we milked and fed them all before we went to school. Father sold the fattened livestock for the money he needed to send us kids to college. My brothers and sisters all moved away to jobs in the city, one city or another. I stayed put until the Vietnam War took me from here.

“When I came back my father was still farming, so I tried a job at the Ford plant in Detroit. Two years it took me to have enough of it. I saved my money and came back to the farm. Never regretted it. Never went back to the city. When father passed, not one of his kids wanted to farm but me.

So here I am today, the last one of his children alive, even though I'm as crippled up as anyone my age. The last man standing; I made the right choice, don't you think?" The reporter nodded. He went on.

"I can still ride a tractor. This year I baled 800 bales in one day. Six hours on the seat.

"I bought a new one after I buried my father, an Allis-Chalmers. A beautiful machine that I've spent half my life riding, right here, on these 120 acres he paid off in the year I was born. My father built the barn before that. I added a bit to it about thirty years later, so I could store more bales.

"Now it's just my wife and I. Our seven kids have moved away to college and jobs, just as their aunts and uncles did before them. They are all doing well, but there is no one left to keep the farm going. We won't sell this land. Kids wouldn't let us. We won't farm much more. Time for that is passing.

"Years back we'd work all year – hay and livestock, corn. We'd make our own fertilizer and meat, grown on our own hay and corn. Always had a big garden, and we were happy as two dogs barking.

"Now farming is too risky. Rigged markets, freak storms, drought, fuel prices and super pests are taking a huge bite out of my enthusiasm.

"I keep thinking the end is coming. Endtimes, the plagues, whatever you want to call it."

"How about calling it climate change?" Jackson asked.

"You make me laugh with that. How could living as we did here lead to that? The world must have become a real nasty place. I have not paid much attention to it. Life on the farm, the church, hunting, raising kids was all I did or do. It is hard to hold the end of this way of living in my mind.

“We cared for this land like we cared for each other.”

The sadness in his voice was clear.

Jackson stood near him, recorder in hand, wondering if there would be more to Tommy’s story. On Gatzke Road in Cedar, Michigan he was a legendary figure. Absolutely no one enjoyed living as much as he did. Now, the sorrow could be felt. As the reporter looked around him, searching for something to stimulate another question, he saw the farm in a way his eyes had not seen before. The brick house, the large stately hay barn, the machine sheds with three tractors neatly parked, everything neat, in order, ready for action, ready for winter snows or whatever would happen next. No signs of disrepair. The reporter was too young to see it for what it was; the work of a man who had carefully planned to live the way he saw was best for his family. Ready to die at home. Each day ending with nothing left undone.

“Jackson. That’s your name? I know your dad. He bought hay from me when he first moved here. I liked him right from the time I met him. Few people come here ready to go to work like he did. Saw him a couple days before he passed, at an auction. He was selling some spring goats.”

“He thought the world of you.” Jackson knew his dad had loved Tommy like a brother. “He recommended I come see you and listen to your story. Several years ago I was writing about gun control for the New York Times. When Obama said control advocates should listen to rural Americans, I asked Dad who he would listen to. He said you.” Jackson knew better than to tell Tommy what his personal position was on any subject that mattered to Tommy. If beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so is just about everything else. Point of view. Point of view. Point of view he thought to himself.

“Mr. Popa, my dad raised me to respect everyone, and to respect those who work the land with care for its future the most. I am planning a book, and hoped you would let me tell your story.” Jackson paused, hoping too

that it would be this easy. However, Tommy was not open to mild flattery.

“Son, life is too short even for you. Take my word for it: I have had a wonderful life. Look around you. Can you see the signs of anyone here but me? Not unless you have my eyesight. Look yonder.” Tommy’s cane pointed towards a small stand of trees a quarter mile away. “There is my neighbor John’s hunting blind, in the notch cut out of those pines. See it there?”

Jackson stared in the southerly direction the cane pointed. He wanted to see it. A blind? A notch? All he saw were trees, and he wasn’t sure they were pines.

“I can see an empty cab two New York blocks away. Here I see too much, or too little. No sir, that is why I came to you. There is something I do not see.”

Tommy smiled at the honesty he wanted to hear from his friend’s son. After 50 year of listening to seed, fertilizer and pesticide salesmen he required honesty, or the conversation was over.

“What are you looking for?”

“If I knew exactly I would have told you right away. I guess I want to understand what Obama meant by his telling people from the city to listen to people from the country. As I stand here, I must confess feeling awe for what I see. The Garden of Eden would not be a stretch as a description. If it would not be rude to say, I think you see this valley that way too.”

Tommy looked up and down the valley. Tears grew in the corners of his eyes, and a smile filled one side of his face. “I might not have much more to say. You got that for free.”

“For which I thank you. Eyes closed, now open. Yet I do not see it all. Who does?” Jackson looked for a way to end the conversation, and a way to

leave. His discomfort at being beyond his experience was obvious. His father would tell jokes at times like these, but Jackson was into practical jokes, none of which Tommy looked as if he would appreciate.

“Why are farmers all so serious?”

Tommy stared into the younger man’s face with a harmless intensity that only his wife could interpret.

“Stores.”

“Stores?”

“Yup. If I work my ass off. If every person who lives here on this farm works their asses off, we will have stores – food to eat in the winter, like squirrels. If I and a lot more like me work our asses off, then you can go to your store and there will be something on the shelves to buy. If we stop when we can feed ourselves and do nothing more, there will be nothing in your stores. You will die. Your city will die.”

Silence, as Jackson let the tough reality float away down the valley with the breeze.

“Guns? If I do not hunt for deer I will eat more of my beef. If I eat more of my beef you will not have enough to eat for yourself.

“Farmers are serious because lives are at stake. Your daddy knew that. You must too. You are no fool.”

“Thank you for that, though at the moment I'll confess I feel pretty naïve. Dad was right, as usual. I have a lot to think about. Maybe I should go.”

“Not so fast. Do you hunt? Deer, I mean? ‘No,’ would be my guess. Yesterday I sat in my blind.” The cane pointed northward. “See the tree with its branches cut out? There it is, about half-way between the road to the west and the stand of firs to the east. Yesterday, I was up there for most of the day. I saw a couple dozen deer just playing around in the feed

I put out for them. I planted seeds last year so they would be attracted to the area open to the blind.”

“You mean so you could get a clear shot?”

“Yup. I watched them play for hours and didn’t take a one. Last week I shot a fat doe. She tasted very good. I had her rendered into bologna. Do you like bologna? I’ll get some for you to try.”

“Mr. Popa, I am overwhelmed.” Jackson’s voice was confused. His face was contorted in a wordless question. They walked down from the field onto the flat with the house and the barns. In the closest shed was the smokehouse and from it Tommy Popa pulled a five pound bologna and handed it to Jackson as he talked.

“Your daddy did not hunt. He fished. If he did not fish he would eat his goats instead of the family that bought them. He needed a fishing pole to make that happen. No fishing pole, and that family would go hungry. Me, I use a bow to do the same thing. Take away his pole, take away my gun and someone somewhere is hungry. Tell that to New York, and hope to heaven they understand it.”

The sun was setting. The fall winds were kicking up, and both men walked away from Tommy’s house and towards Jackson’s car. Not another word passed between them. Jackson climbed into his car and slowly drove up the road that would take him out of the valley. Tommy watched as the small car disappeared at the top of the ridge.

He looked around him. Seeing nothing left to do he went inside to his wife and their dinner table, same as every day since he could remember.

The Plagues

Jasmine stood, as she had many times before, on a stage before a large screen facing a large crowd.

“The subject of tonight’s lecture is Armageddon: the Plagues.” As she spoke her words were projected for all to read. “I will stay loyal to the script. The agenda is projected on the right side of the screen.”

Jasmine was dressed in an aloha way: a white dress patterned with multicolored orchids. At 70 plus she was commanding and humble.

“One set of issues regarding plagues is the notion that the causes are irrelevant. I ask: how does arguing the point that perhaps a portion of humanity will somehow figure out how to adapt to increasing heat, violent weather patterns, drought and crop destruction, shrinking polar ice and rising oceans, soil erosion, aquifer draw-downs and poisoning with fracking chemicals and plastics, oceans poisoned by oil spills and dispersants, ocean dead zones caused by fertilizer runoff, ocean water acidification and reef destruction due to CO2 absorption, make any difference?”

Behind her on the screen was a visual display entitled:

The Biblical Plagues:

Plagues of Egypt

Water into blood (דָּם): Ex. 7:14–24

Frogs (צִפְרִידַעַ): Ex. 7:25–8:15

Lice (בְּנִים): Ex. 8:16–19

Wild animals, possibly flies (עָרוֹב): Ex. 8:20–32

Diseased livestock (דָּבַר): Ex. 9:1–7

Boils (שָׁחִין): Ex. 9:8–12

Thunderstorm of hail and fire (בָּרָד): Ex. 9:13–35

Locusts (אַרְבֵּה): Ex. 10:1–20

Darkness (חוֹשֶׁךְ): Ex. 10:21–29

Death of firstborn (מַמָּת בְּכוֹרוֹת): Ex. 11:1–12:36

Jasmine could sense the minds around her attempt to make sense of the list. “I can feel you all grinding away at the items projected here. There are two more plague-sets, one from Revelations and another, more modern one.

“The Egyptian plagues are a list of real calamities that would severely affect a nomadic tribe dependent on water supplies, animal health and climatic events.

“Here is the next list.”

The Plagues from Revelations

Noisome and grievous sores (possibly boils or carbuncles) on the worshipers of the Beast. These sores only affect those bearing the Mark of the Beast and the people who worship his image.

Sea turns to blood.

Rivers turn to blood.

A major heatwave causes the sun to burn with intense heat and to scorch people with fire. (Revelations 16:8-9)

The kingdom of the beast is plunged into darkness. (Revelations 16:11)

The Euphrates River dries up to facilitate the crossing of the armies from the east, on their way to Israel for the battle of Armageddon. This event corresponds with Daniel 11:44.[3]

Worldwide earthquake leveling every mountain into the sea, followed by huge hailstones and lightning. The Earth's geography and topography will be drastically altered forever, as every mountain and hill will be leveled, and every island will either be removed from its foundations or disappear. The earthquakes are accompanied by 100-lb hailstones.

“This list was made about a thousand years after the first. Similar, but with more of an urban set of fears, such as earthquakes and 100 pound hail stones that together level everything.

“I now want to read a few paragraphs that describe the nature of the beliefs about the Abrahamic God.

Some Christians believe that the seals and trumpets will occur during the first half of the tribulation. The vial judgments will occur during the second half, as the first judgment refers to those with the mark of the beast. The mark will not be implemented until the Antichrist appears to be resurrected after suffering a fatal head wound, being incarnate by Satan, and after he defiles the Temple; and this will happen precisely at the midpoint of the tribulation. Thus, the vial judgments will be more severe.

Others, such as many historicists, argue that the seals generally cover man's history from after the first coming of Christ up to the End time, with the trumpets generally covering the Tribulation, and the Bowls reserved for the Wrath of God period — preceding the Millennium.

Next, seven angels are given vials or bowls to pour out upon the Earth which contain 'the seven last plagues.' These last judgments will complete God's wrath. The first bowl produces unbearable sores on humanity. The

second bowl results in the death of every living thing in the sea. The third bowl turns the inland waters into blood. The fourth bowl causes the sun to scorch man. The fifth bowl brings darkness over the beast's kingdom. The sixth bowl dries up the river Euphrates to prepare the way for the kings of the east and causes the armies of the Antichrist to gather together to wage the battle of Armageddon. The seventh bowl results in a devastating earthquake, followed by giant hailstones (Revelation 16:17-21).

“These voices are two thousand years old. To give you an idea of how far away we are from that place, I offer a math problem: how far did light travel during the last two thousand years? Light travels 5,878,499,817 miles, that is almost 6 billion miles, in a year. In a thousand years it would add up to 6 trillion miles. Twice that is 12 trillion miles.

“Maybe we can allow ourselves the freedom to create a new list of the plagues of the moment:

heavy metal pollution of virtually all of our groundwater

inexplicable declines in honeybee populations (now linked to clothianidin)

nutritional deficiencies in almost every fruit or vegetable harvested since the 70s

vast swaths of soil erosion and silt runoff

measurable declines in the quality and flavor of most produce

GLOBAL monopolies on seed stocks, and genetically modified foods

Cross contamination of vegetable foodstuffs from cattle and dairy operations

Inhumane treatment of cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, calves, chickens, turkeys, geese and ducks

Bhopal

Three Mile Island

Chernobyl

Fukushima

Micro-plastics in every glass of water, in every man's testicles and every woman's uterus.

oil spills in the Gulf (and, apparently, an irreparable fissure still leaking more oil)

the nationwide existence of 'Superfund Sites' that are so toxic, massive amounts of our tax dollars have been allocated to 'clean up' these abandoned, hazardous areas (visit Superfund websites and you'll find "Superfund for Kids!")

destruction of the planet's rain forests (actually, widespread deforestation) from clear cutting followed by wild fires that destroy towns

global climate change, resulting in extreme weather conditions worldwide

a pile of floating garbage – in surface area, twice the size of the state of Texas – in the doldrums of the Pacific Ocean (and another similar carpet of plastic in the Atlantic...)

a measurable decline in the amount of food fish we pull out of our oceans and lakes (with toxic levels of mercury in tuna and other large fish)

an exponential increase in obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and other diseases directly linked to the consumption of refined sugars (let's not even BEGIN to discuss hydrogenated oils...)

a growing percentage (almost half) of functionally illiterate (thus, easily manipulated) adults in the US

a now ubiquitous 'message delivery system' (television) that has turned a significant number of humans into distracted, misinformed zombies

a dangerous economic system that concentrates the wealth of this planet into the hands of a VERY few at the expense of the VERY many with destructive, endless 'wars' based on lies and profitability

Depleted Uranium (and bio-weapons so toxic that the US stockpile alone could decimate the entire world population)

A radical shift to exponential growth (read 'change') that few recognize and even fewer discuss.

As she read them one by one, a few gasps, a few short sentences such as 'Oh, my God.' But when she stopped talking there was silence. The audience awe struck into silence.

Jasmine DuBois wanted to walk from the stage but there was more to say and more to do.

"The next item is ...

The Ruby Mountains – Fire and Ice

Jackson held the microphone steady, eyes fixed on the subject of his interview. A middle-aged man, with unassuming desert-bronzed features and a balding patch of wispy-thin hair; he wore thick glasses and hiked-up socks, looking every inch the classic southerly-transplanted Midwesterner.

The man spoke haltingly, as if relating the details troubled him. "As we reached the ridgetop the trees ended and a meadow laid before us. We saw that the storm – we had been watching it pass over our heads, but to the west of us – had changed direction, flowing directly towards us.

“The front was a solid band of clouds two miles high. Black bands laid flat against the invisible layer of warm air that blanketed the desert floor below. Above was a churning mass of clouds and fire as the electrons flowed in a steady dance of bolts from mist to ground, the clouds shimmering as they approached us at a dizzying speed.

“‘Cover, find cover!’ we yelled back and forth to each other. How wise we were, all at once.

“Directly between us and the storm was a sharp drop to the desert floor. Estimations of the height of the first precipice will forever be exaggerated by the fear the view instilled. It was a sequence from a horror flick as the darkness spread below the clouds, interrupted by the flicker from dozens of lightning bolts per second across a plain fifty miles wide, and as far into the desert to the south as could be seen on a clear day.

“We scurried about, trying out potential cover in a low stand of Manzanita on the very edge of the cliff.

“‘Not me,’ I yelled. ‘Run for it.’

“We had hiked uphill for two hours from our camp below on the north side of the ridge, in a stand of pines near a placid lake where our tent and food supplies remained. Between the ridgetop where we were trapped and the edge of the forest below us was 500 yards of deer trails crisscrossing through the low brush the windswept plain supported.

“We had only carried hiking poles and a light day pack. Our clothing was the bare essentials for a hot day walk. My wife was up and out as soon as I’d finished my sentence. The rain had begun ahead of the lightning. In seconds we were on the trail, which was growing slicker by the second, the rain turning dust to muck and mire.

“‘Run!’

“Did you see that?’ A series of bolts hit the ground ahead of us to the east, lighting up our path for full seconds or more, again and again with all the attendant roar and hiss as the bolts exploded at full volume.”

“Were you scared? It sounds crazy,” Jackson asked.

“I was running, and with each heartbeat I felt the air around me for warnings, my skin stinging in anticipation. My eyes darted up and down the trails that wove through the Manzanita, looking for short cuts and barriers between me and the edge of the trees ahead. Split-second calculations were made, and as the bolts crashed around us we made the woods and safety from the worst the storm could do. We lived.”

“Wow. As you spoke, I was amazed by the look in your eyes. You were peering away into the distance, as if watching a movie on the big screen. As you spoke you reported images from the scenes as they flowed across your memory. Do you know what I mean?”

“It changes me to retell that tale. It lives in me in a special place, with other similar scenes of nearness to life by being nearest to death. It was exhilarating. When we finally reached camp, the wind had roiled the lake into whitecaps, but our tent was good – our only refuge, a thin piece of woven plastic. We did whatever came to our minds to do. Nothing foolish, but most unnecessary considering it was only a little storm, unlike the one that struck a month later.”

“The famous August firestorm?”

“Yes.”

“You were lucky then?”

“Yes. We were long gone before that monster hit Sweetwater and Elko. Fire got one and hail the other.”

Jackson

One day after he had met Tommy, Jackson walked along the unpaved country road that led from his mother's home, on the farm he had grown up on, to the mailbox on the 'big road' that went everywhere else.

His recollection of his time at her home was of hard work and adventure. His father had 'gone ahead,' as he put it, leaving them without his kind attentions to their unmet needs.

“Energy is time or money. Nothing else matters.” His father would repeat his small beliefs then pause. His thoughts drifted past the meaning of the words to a hidden, secret place: a hammock strung in a nearby grove of maples. From June through September the hammock, hung between two trees, was whipped at by the winds and fertilized by the birds. Maybe twice a week he would go out to it, straighten it and lay down in it, until scarcely a minute had passed. Then, he was up again and “into the wind,” as he would say.

Jackson played almost every day on that hammock, just like a swing on a playground.

His father said his dreams were born there, and Jackson said he could say the same. The breeze blowing through the shades of leaves, in greens and grays and sunshine broken, reminded each of them of something they might someday become a part of.

Jackson often took the most round-about way to go from here to there when time was not critical. He sought the surprises random walks often precipitated. His path wound through the trees and bogs to a clump of cedars that hid the imaginary exploits of his childhood.

The light was just right in there too, cutting through the latticework of branches the trees threw into the beams. He saw a vision, or what one might call a vision. It was to be seen; it was soundless, not meant for ears. It was born before him. It was simple. It did not move or change, though it

was alive for all the sensations he felt. It seemed to balance before his consciousness, but behind his eyes.

Jackson had never spoken about this vision. He had never written about it.

Wind and Water

The winds blew in August on the Adriatic coast. Mali Lošinj, an island community with beautiful pebbly beaches, a destination for many vacationing Europeans, sat sedate and stately on the hills above the shore, as it had in one manifestation or another for a millennium or more. Dževada and her dog, an eight-month-old lab she called Sheila, played fetch, Dževada hurling spent tennis balls down to the water's edge and beyond for her dog to retrieve.

Cormorants played and fished in the sea as Sheila ran and splashed in the low shore break. Mornings in the fog, with the sounds of nature screeching 'hello' to everyone, were Dževada's favorite moments. On any given Sunday she brought a bagful of the dead balls to hurl for Sheila. Her new dog kept her company as she enjoyed her day off from her job, teaching dance at the local academy.

She walked, smiling at passing strangers, as most who walked the beach were tourists who had come to bathe in the sun, dreaming as she did of a mate who she had yet to meet. Mali Lošinj grew sailors, and she saw herself holding a man of the world, older with a divorce, a home on the inland, a farm maybe. Children, or who knows? Maybe a man who knows the stage. Then I could dance in a production in the capital, or in Rome. It was easy for her to wonder at her future, and every day a new desire rose to prominence as her favorite dream. Today, she would have ten children and grow fat on her home cooking.

At twenty she began feeling lonely. Grief had ruled her for the past two years. One of her mother's dance students, a handsome Turk, whose name Dževada could not pronounce correctly, had left her bed one night and hung himself. It was not her fault. She had been happy in his arms. He'd said he was happy in hers, but happiness at 20 does not mean the future is secure. He had told her he needed medication he could not afford. Dance was more important to him. He gave himself to her and dance, and ultimately to death. She descended into sorrow. Her mother had given her Sheila as a birthday surprise in the hopes that her daughter would find some joy again.

Sunday became her happy day; her day to dream.

Winds in August were not unusual. The sea was becoming rough and churning, which only made the game of fetch more fun for Sheila, who ran into the surf in search of the white tennis ball hidden now in flotsam and foam. The tide receded. Sheila and her mistress followed the movement of the waves. Dževada did not know one sea any better than another; however, she noticed that the water was changing fast, far faster than her experienced beach runner's eye told her was normal. Scanning the horizon, she watched as the waves grew higher than she ever remembered them being. Without words attached she ran to catch her dog, with an eye to the wall of water now swelling beyond her height but still far away. Dog in arms, she ran towards the sea wall.

Edith Fitzgerald and her mother had driven around the island in the early morning because neither one could sleep. Her mother Mavis was infirmed with a lung disease from the pollution she had endured to stay married to her now-deceased husband Harry, a steel worker, whose employer produced the chemical soup that ate her lungs. Edith had been sent to university to study science; she cared about the planet's health. She majored in climatology with a special interest in tsunamis. For her the holiday to the Adriatic was part science and part health treatment for her

mother. The sea brought Mavis a clear breath, and for Edith an historical laboratory.

Two years ago, her interest had drifted to literature, and she had traveled to Milan to meet Dr. Jasmine DuBois, the famous novelist and historian who wrote about the beauty of the planet and the impending end to the stable weather patterns that were the basis of Edith's studies. It grieved her that all she had learned had ceased to be in the brief years since she had taken her doctorate.

"Of Eva first, that for hir wikkednesse was al mankind brought to wrecchednesse." Chaucer's haunting tones led her mind to consider an end-time vision; surely, she, a daughter of Eve, would pay some day for the folly of the men who had led humanity to the precipice over which the species now dangled, helpless.

"The Adriatic," she had told Mavis, "is a wonderfully dangerous place for weather.

"Did you know that in October 1984 a wave 4 meters high struck this coast, and again in August 2008? No one died, but the damage was amazing compared to the storms that usually affect these coasts. The cause was weather – a rapid change in weather."

As she drove the BMW along the coast towards Mali Lošinj, she felt a jittery feeling, a strong foreboding. Now, as she drove along the sea wall she could see the tide had drawn out more than normal. The tidal changes are hard to follow if it's not your job to know; it looked like an extreme low tide to her. Then she saw a woman carrying a dog, running towards the steps that led up from the beach. She sped up by instinct to intersect the top of the stairs and the fleeing woman.

"Mother, we have a situation," was all she said.

In moments the 'situation' became more obvious. The wave she saw beyond the beach was nearly 10 meters high, traveling at a speed of 90

kph. The woman running would, by Edith's estimation, make the top of the stairs with seconds to spare before the rapidly approaching wave overtook her.

Edith was a great driver. She loved feeling the Beemer surge as she floored the accelerator and appreciated the ability of the car to stop on a pence, if need be. This day she put her skills to a test. Instead of turning to escape up the hill into the narrow village streets and safety, she hugged the wall and headed for the stairs. Mavis saw that things were not as she expected them to be quiet and serene. Edith's increasing tension caught her by surprise, and she gasped as her eyes told her what the cause of all the excitement was.

"Hurry Edith!" she yelled over the whining engine.

"Hold tight, Ma."

Down on the beach Dževada saw the car racing down the road towards her intersection with the stairs. She dared not think about what was coming behind her. She dared not look. Her dreams were gone from her mind. The future felt foreshortened as she ran at what felt like a crawl. She projected herself in her imagination, and as she did her dancer's legs made leaps of steps. In moments she was at the stair, making it to the top just as the BMW skidded to an abrupt halt.

The three women (Dževada, Edith and Mavis) thought nothing. No words passed their lips. The back door opened. Dog and girl were thrown in by force of momentum. Edith sped away and up the first path away from the sea.

The wave was only seconds from the wall. Its force was enough to destroy the block structure that had been built by skilled masons now long-dead. The wave, the blocks, the pavement ripped from the road hit the first row of buildings with such force that the sound woke everyone for half a mile inland.

The Beemer had hit 45 km/hr and Edith kept the pedal slammed against the floor. The water hit its trunk and pushed it to 50 in the blink of an eye. She did not move a muscle as she held the wheel in her frozen grip.

The streets of Dževada's home town were narrow and not meant for waterways or raceways. The surge was slowing as the elevation increased. Still, the car turned sideways and slammed first into a parked car and then a signpost announcing a local festival. The Beemer was pushed up by the remaining surge; then, at long last the inhabitants of the car were freed from the deadly wave, which poured back downhill to the sea.

"Thank God," said Mavis.

"Wow," said Dževada.

"Woof," said Sheila.

"Metetsunami," said Edith.

Dževada sat on the curb. Her dog Sheila sat beside her, nervously wagging her tail. Their amazing escape was a memory, recorded in a sense in the chaos that remained in the street below. Dževada could not take her eyes from it. The Adriatic lay before her, calm now, with no signs of the 10-meter monster wave that had just struck her hometown.

Edith, the English climatologist, sat beside them both, but her mother Mavis was still in the car trying to catch her breath – very difficult for her in her failing condition.

No one had spoken since Dževada exited the car.

Mali Lošinj is an island community in Croatia. Dževada, a native, spoke Croat. She knew some English from the music she enjoyed. Edith knew a little French. They looked at each other and smiled. They reached out with muttering comforting sounds, realized they were both in shock,

leaned in and hugged and cried. Sheila licked them until they laughed and petted her.

“Ma!” The sound escaped Edith’s lips. Dževada knew what she meant, and they leapt and rushed to Mavis' side.

‘Ma’ was short for Mavis and pronounced with a long A sound. More like May than Ma, but in the usage, it had changed to be a bit of both.

Mavis had been ‘feeling my age recently,’ and thought a pleasant drive across Europe as her genius daughter gathered evidence for her life’s work would be a nice way to be together and pass a few calm days.

Oh well, she was thinking as the trio approached the car. A bit of excitement can make one’s day.

When the two younger women appeared at her door and the dog (who entered from the driver’s side) was in her face, with the usual black lab dog breath, she was somehow ready for it.

“Ma!”

“Honey, what did you call that?” Mavis asked.

“Lucky,” her daughter quipped.

“No. The wave. You called it something. I want to remember it so when I tell the story I will not sound the fool.”

“Oh, meteotsunami.”

“Meteotsunami, good. Thank you.” Edith adjusted the rear-view mirror and looked behind her, down the road towards the bay. A look of consternation crossed her face as she took in the destruction that had chased them to this spot.

Dževada repeated the word under her breath, “Meteotsunami.”

Mavis heard her echo and was roused to turn toward her. "Oh, my dear. You are still with us. What an adventure." The dog continued to attack her face with its tongue.

"Sheila. Stop. Lay down," Dževada said in her native language. Everybody but the dog understood what was said, in spite of their language difficulty.

Dževada realized her saviors needed a savior. People were coming out of houses nearby, looking downhill and gasping, shouting, breaking into tears. Friends lived down there. Lives might be lost. Crisis had hit the town. The older citizens knew these waves and knew more than another one might come. The waves from the past came in a pattern, was being said.

"In ten minutes more will come. The second bigger than the first. Run," Dževada said in a controlled voice, in English, a language she did not know she could speak, translating the wisdom of the male and female elders who were already encouraging each other further up the hill.

They helped each other up one block, then turned and looked beyond the streets to the horizon. A gasp went up as they beheld a new, terrifying sight.

The bay was nearly bare out to the breakwater, whose effect upon the first wave had been negligible. Dževada saw the problem and began to run. She stopped and turned to see Edith a few steps behind, helping her mother.

"Run!" they shouted to each other.

At the top of the hill, from which one could see not only the island but the mainland, they discerned that the entire stretch of land from isle to coast was bare. The water had gone.

The two women held hands, looked into each other's eyes.

Some meditations beg us to see the divine in the eyes of another. We are asked to see what is not obvious.

Some say emptiness is best: a long process that requires yearning, but which ends in enlightenment when yearning ends.

Edith thought of Eden and Jasmine. Dževada thought of her Turkish lover and a new hello. Mavis breathed raggedly, staring out over the waterless, mucky expanse. Then they were all together, naked together; Edith and Dževada still holding hands. Startled by the luscious garden and the clear sky's sunshine.

Imagination has no limits.

The Old Man

“As long as anyone can remember, ‘freedom’ has been a significant word. Sometimes, it’s capitalized: ‘Freedom.’ Sometimes not.”

His delivery was monotonic, matter of fact, except for ‘Freedom,’ the one word the old man said emphatically. He watched as the eyes of his audience glazed over in preparation for his explanation. Late night coffee clubs can be tough venues for new acts, passed through his mind.

“The harder it is to believe in a thing’s existence without faith, the more likely the name of the thing will be capitalized, like God instead of god.” He was a little less monotonic, but with a similar emphasis on ‘God’ as he used for ‘Freedom.’ He stopped talking. He counted heartbeats until he reached ten. Silence matters as much as sound, he thought. Words can mean something if they are meant to mean something. Silence is essential to the transformation. “If you could see God – capital g – it would become god – small g – no faith required, not that big a deal. If a word is worth

anything it would be Freedom. People are said to fight for Freedom. People don't want to fight for freedom – small f – or bother to venerate a god – small g.”

He was having trouble connecting. The audience was new. They were young and hip in the modern sense. At three times the age of the average customer, he didn't think of himself as hip, though his white hair was longer than theirs and his beard made him look a bit like some images depicting Santa Claus. His wife said the likeness didn't work because the old man did not have red cheeks. “Besides, you are skinny as a rail,” she always added. Later he would tell her that he felt like walking away from the stage and giving up on the routine. Instead, he would say, when he told the story, that he somehow rose within himself to find a different view.

He was awakened from his pause by the clunking of a glass on the bar. He spoke.

“Even from here I can see you are struggling with this idea. That is just what I see when I look in your eyes. I felt you cringe in the confusion of confronting a dichotomy. There is a joke here, but you fear that the joke is on you. Don't worry. I won't tell it.” He paused and smiled for the first time in his act. “Full disclosure? This is not a comedy routine. It's about fear and hate gone beyond the restrictions we thought we kept for them. No matter. This problem started long ago. The problem is that there are far too many of us. Not your fault. We are here to solve this problem.”

“The point is we are too close to one another, standing shoulder to shoulder and chest to back. If one person catches a spate of fear or hate it spreads like wildfire, like a trending tweet or a viral video. With no end to the number of people in sight, claustrophobic fear spreads amongst the crowd until a stampede ensues. The victims were always innocent, and the fear always baseless.”

The old man loved syncopation. He had worked for a decade to bring his ideas into a few paragraphs that would not leave him and the audience as enemies. Jazz can make you cry, he thought.

“If we can think together for a moment, we can find a useful end to this routine, one that will please you.” As he spoke, he searched for the feeling he had once described as the delicious sensation a boy enjoys when the dogs quit chasing him. He had tried standup routines in clubs where alcohol was the main drug flowing through the veins and brains of his audience. Ideas about the nature of existence do not mix well with whiskey. His routine tonight in this coffee shop would not find as pugnacious a foe. Little or no alcohol flowed in the caffeinated veins of these folks.

“I switched from alcohol to caffeine. There was a convincing statistic. Thousands of alcohol-related violent acts versus no caffeine-related violent acts. Wow, I said. Since what I do gets people upset, better they don’t hold a beer bottle in their hand. Besides, service in a coffee joint is so slow that spilling your coffee on a bad comedian could endanger your buzz, maybe ruin your entire evening.”

People tittered. He sensed he had scored a victory over anxiety; now it was time to bring it home. Hit the nail on the head.

“Nothing surprises me anymore. Heard that before? What does it mean?” A hand went up in the audience. The old man saw it go up. He giggled at the expected. He flipped a mental coin. Heads. “Look there, a hand in the air. Sir, you say...”

“Each day is a repetition of the one before. Nothing new happens. Zero surprises. Like, one night as we prepare for bed at the end of a long day, we realize that the time has passed in a blur. There is nothing new to remember.”

The old man had never thought of it that way. “Yeah. Like, one night as we prepare for bed at the end of a long day, we realize that the time has passed in a blur. There is nothing new to remember.”

“Yeah, that’s it. Nothing to remember.”

“Gotcha.” The old man had not waved his hands during his act. He stood still at the microphone, his hands steady on its stand. He now underwent a change, raising his arms and hands high above his shoulders. His fists were clenched so hard his arms quivered. “Math sucks. I know.” He slammed his fists against his hips. He noticeably took a deep breath to calm himself. “There are not many math jokes told by non-mathematicians. Probability, for instance, is one unfunny subject. No matter. Won’t stop me. As more time passes the probability of nothing new happening increases. The chance of nothing new must be approaching certainty by now. It’s only repetition of the good and bad times from now on, according to probabilistic ratios. No surprises.” His voice trailed off into a new silence. The eyes of his audience played with him. Their thoughts were hidden behind the jittery buzz of coffee.

“From the very first moment our eyes are open, the probability of repetition begins increasing evermore rapidly. Everything was new at first light. But now? Let’s do a test. Try this. Right now, close your eyes. Imagine all the things that can happen in a day.” He waited to a ten count. He watched their faces as they remembered/imagined a day in their lives. He saw ideas of pleasure or joy cross their faces as they worked mentally to fill a day with wonder and newness. They were imagining at a fierce pace. Then they were done.

“Now do it again. It’s a new day. Imagine.” They laughed and began again. He waited and watched.

Fewer faces were in constant motion. Some had given up.

“Now again.” He paid more attention to time, noting the speed of the shifting expressions. More were stopping. The faces of the few who went

on changed even more slowly. As is by design suddenly, in the quiet, the entire audience was staring at his eyes.

“Even for your energized minds, this is getting hard. You resist change from one imaginary day to the next. Not saying you can’t get creative, fall upon some scheme to generate a different day. Watching TV would do it. maybe. But maybe not. The schedules change, but the act remains the same day after day. I watch today. I watch tomorrow. Nothing new. No surprises.

“So, it’s easy to see how given more people, fewer new things can happen today compared to yesterday. Each of us has seen so much. Considering everyone’s history combined, by now nothing new can happen or has happened for years, many years. Things have gone on this way for so long that the books written, and the films produced decades ago still ring true. Change comes to each individual, yet nothing new results. God or god. Freedom or freedom. Probably nothing changes either way. Believe it or not.”

There was some laughter. The old man stood still and quiet. The audience quieted, then slowly became more agitated.

“Worse... yes, there is something worse than nothing new happens. See, we were talking about the details of our lives but there are bigger things. These things have happened now and then. They take more than a few minutes from beginning to end. They can be called epochal. Something big ends and a new something big begins.

“There are times when everyone you know changes their mind about something. Maybe a paradigm change where our group understanding of the nature of reality morphs into a surprising new idea. Like black holes or time travel. Maybe a new religion begins and replaces an older version of the explanation of everything.

“These were big changes in our understanding but small by comparison to other possibilities, not to mention probabilities. Under some ways of

thinking the biggest change that could take place in our present reality would be our specie's own extinction event.

"You do not have to have faith to believe that this epoch has resulted in a man-made catastrophe with no way out. With the effects of climate disruption getting clearer every day, thus requiring less 'faith' to believe in, people are being distracted by fears of other capitalized terms, such as Terrorism, which we are to believe is caused by capital-o Others and represents something new, and even surprising, in human nature."

Mentioning terrorism after 5 pm is a buzz kill. The audience lost cohesion. There were signs of rebellion. A blond fullback style man left swiftly for the bathroom. The old man took note.

"Not surprising at all really. Not new at all. We hold onto old ideas like we keep old comfortable shoes. Terrorism is an old idea. We do not care. Same with abortion. But climate change...that is becoming surprising. Like a stampede after fearmongering, except the stampede is not a fool's errand but genuinely spurred by the challenges at hand. We have known for more than seven generations that it would come to this."

Climate change was a worse buzzkill.

Two couples stood when this sentence ended.

The old man stood still and whispered, "It's not your fault. Everyone is afraid. Everyone hates something because of it." The four turned back to their table. Three sat. One stood, looking into the old man's eyes.

"Don't be too sure, old man. If it did not seem hopeless, why would we be here? Fear and hatred don't bother me. No future does piss me off."

A look of recognition flowed across the old man's face, as if he were watching his own life unfold.

"I saw that look cross your face," the young man said, still standing. The blond guy returned from the bathroom, standing aside listening. The

others in the audience sat transfixed by the unusual interaction between the old man and the young man. The young man continued, "Nothing is new. We've all known for half a century or more that a century-old theory about spent hydrocarbons in the atmosphere being fatal to humanity is true, just as you said. The lack of meaningful action on the part of large institutions is also not a surprise. The corruption endemic in resource exploitation has been a feature of life for so long, for all of us, it seemingly had no beginning." His words carried a sense of deep mourning, as if he spoke a eulogy for his world.

The old man was not surprised. He left the stage, walked to the young man and offered him a hug, which was accepted.

No one else spoke. Everything had been said. The audience began to leave Jonah's. The Old Man walked through the remains of the audience and into the street.

The Old Man walked towards home. It was late. It was warm enough to walk without a sweater. He passed a drunken Santa ringing a bell and begging for change. He had on shorts with a sleeveless shirt all in red, matching his wine-reddened cheeks. About three blocks away from the cafe he found a cab waiting for a fare in front of a small hotel. The sign said Hotel Eden. He had walked these blocks before, but the name seemed new to him. On an impulse he went into the hotel.

He passed through the small lobby. The furniture looked comfortable. No one was sitting. The reading lamps on the tables strategically placed for the readers' comfort were turned off. The paneled room was a passive temperature. Warm and cozy, he thought.

No one was at the front desk. He rang the bell. The sound rang smoothly in the wooden room. Comforting, he thought. He walked around the lobby, examining the details. He circled back around to the front desk and rang the bell again, to renew the tone.

There was a row of soft brown leather chairs, padded for comfort, facing the desk. He sat down in one. The old man rubbed his eyes, closing them for what seemed to him like mere seconds. He was unaware of the clerk's approach.

"Sir, may I help you?" the clerk asked softly.

Startled from his nap, the old man sat up, then stood. "Why, yes. I thought I knew this block and came here to find a cab as I have done many times. I was curious about the name. Hotel Eden. Sounds new to me." As he was talking the young clerk came to stand next to him, and then sit in a chair next to the one the old man had been sitting in. With a wave of his hand, the clerk offered an invitation. The old man resumed his seat.

"Some news. This will surprise you."

The old man grinned as he felt as if he were under a spell, an enchantment. He said nothing.

"Today, an announcement was sent over the internet that a Final Revelation, a Forever After Revelation, would bring the people back to the Garden or garden, our true home."

The young clerk smiled as he and the old man, sitting side by side, stared up from their overstuffed chairs at a framed photograph of a redwood forest, sun beams knifing through the varying fog and the massive trees, striking the large ferns that hid the forest floor. The old man couldn't see what the young clerk saw. There were birds the clerk saw swooping through the trees and sunbeams. The clerk heard the birds' piercing cries. There were tree frogs, and he saw the scuttling ground critters that ate them. The old man saw only what he could see.

"The Garden of Eden?" The old man checked to find out if his ears were working properly.

“Have you heard of the Prophet John D. Vine? He has been all over TV lately.”

“I don’t watch TV.”

“Have a smart phone?”

“No. I am a comedian. I work the coffee clubs. My audiences are your age. All of them have...what do they call them...devices.”

“Smart phones, iPhones and droids.” Silence followed the clerk’s information.

The old man was not surprised that he didn’t know about something that had happened. He was content in his ignorance. His wife saw him as delusional at times because of this predilection, but it was how he was raised. “Ignorance is bliss,” he said out loud.

The clerk kept his gaze focused on the redwood photograph. “Some can see it, and some can’t. The change in world views and paradigms is happening so fast I have trouble keeping up.”

“What is seen by some but not seen by all?”

“The Gate...”

“Ah, Eden Hotel, gate seen by some. Got it. Can’t see it myself, I guess. Or if I can I don’t know what it is.”

“Do you want to see the gate into Eden?”

“Well...”

“You could watch an interview with Jesus or Pythagoras. They explain it all. About the Curse and the Cure.” Assuming the old man would follow him, the clerk rose and moved into the small bar off the lobby. He turned on the TV over the corner of the bar and started a video of two men talking. It appeared to be a discussion in progress. He paused it and

turned to see the old man coming up behind him. "This is Jonus and Jesus. Jonus interviewed a number of Edenists for Prophecy Today!"

The old man stood before the TV, his head craned upwards, eyes opened wide. He had never heard of Prophecy Today. A few words passed his ears as the two men on the tube spoke: "As we seek to understand we see understanding leave us. We pass each imagining and each paradigm as we get it, or it gets us. Finding the Way in a life in time is the trick." The episode must have ended, because the scene changed to a picnic table set up against the edge of a thick woods.

"Who was that speaking? Jesus?"

The clerk nodded his head. "Yup. That is what he is called." He turned to the TV as the next episode began. He raised his hand as if offering it to the old man. "Here is Pythagoras. Interested?"

The old man shook his head. "Thank you, but no. I am late. My wife worries. Maybe tomorrow."

"Time's a-wasting. But we can hope to be here."

The same cab was waiting as he stepped outside the hotel and onto the sidewalk. In a few minutes he entered his apartment. A few more and he was sitting on his couch, an open beer in his hand, his wife snuggled up against him.

"Well, what happened? Did your act work out, or did the anxiety of coffee interfere?"

"Peg, I feel like Thespis must have felt; sitting on the edge of something wholly new."

"Aha. Thespis, hey? Is that good or bad?" She laughed at the thought.

"What I am doing is not what I want to do. I imagined something more in it. I sense a missing part. A feeling that maybe I have not yet experienced." He sipped his beer, then put it on an end table. He began

talking about the Hotel Eden. His hands moved about in front of his face, as if he were trying to mold the words out of his mouth into shapes that meant more than the words. “We should meet there tomorrow after my act. The clerk was welcoming, and we could watch Pythagoras. It might interest you.”

Peg knew her husband well. His passion for ideas was his love. She was a friend who did not judge. Every day he left their home to travel around New York City, looking for venues that suited his need for an audience for his love. They had met in a comedy club when he was first getting started. He wasn't funny to her. She saw his inner need, and she knew what he was seeking. As he described the Hotel Eden, the clerk, the comfortable chairs and the TV with its scenes from Eden, his eyes sparkled. That his brain was stimulated in a new way was obvious to her.

She thought of him as Isaahka. She had a fraction of native blood. The notion of a life with the Creator was important to her. They did not have children. They were both too wise to bring more into a world that would not tolerate so many for much longer. She sighed and nuzzled back into his shoulder. “Of course I will, Isaac. Send me a cab.”

They talked for hours, the pleasure of it unmeasurable. As the sun rose they fell to sleep.

Jonah's Midnight Mocha and Live Entertainment

I met three friends from our book club for coffee. We talked about organizing a demo. Others who heard us talking joined in, people like ourselves, coffee fiends.

One of the others said, “Bring rocks.” Others tittered.

Phones were everywhere around us. We spoke openly, but privately. We wanted others to join us, but some of this talk was beyond my experience. "Marching isn't enough. We need to do more." "Black Mob." "No masks. No hiding. Do the thing you can do fearlessly." "No Clandestinism." "Meet in circles. Stay in circles. No sides. Agents welcome." "We are nobodies using our amendments. No leaders. No agenda. Just talking."

Democracy, Freedom, no Violence: people my age want those things. Family stories of fathers, uncles and sons lost in battle for peace and freedom filled my mind. The Others had other ideas.

We met in the same place, at the same time, the next week. They were there; the ones who joined us in the last meeting.

We'd had our demo. The four of us, the friends, had walked silently. No signs. No message. We walked as if we meant it. One of us brought flowers. We gave away the flowers. Someone gave us \$10. We bought more flowers.

The coffee at the meeting was warm inside me. My friends were quiet, the others not. "What did we gain by that?" "Yeah, no media. It was dead."

The demo was our creation, something in our minds. If we'd had an agenda it would require paper, but we are against paper. We prefer trees.

"Maybe we were saying there is nothing more important than your smile. Have a flower. Thanks for the smile." I thought about my uncles, the ones who came before; from my mother's description of them they would have joined us. I felt my uncles in me.

The third time we met, the next week, same place and time, the venue was packed with students from Montreal and their teachers having coffee. We went next door. The place was empty. The music was louder.

The meeting went well. The next demo was planned. The others came near the end.

“Oh, you're here. I didn't get the memo.” One said. I smiled. They persisted: “I hate being de-looped. I thought this was an open meeting.”

“Say,” I said, “who are you? I don't know your name or why you come to our meetings.”

Silence is wonderful. They hadn't heard about that.

“I am new in New York. Looking for some excitement, fight back, send a message, FU the system.”

“Me, too,” another new one said.

Didn't fool me, I knew.

I pointed at the one doing the talking. “You are here to find out who we are. Make us enemies. Bring on the attack. Stop our agenda. Am I right?”

“Funny guy,” one said.

We called them smile haters. Who knows what they thought of us. Our club had read a book, *Nobody*, about people who smiled and won.

The next demo was wild. We walked with no signs, just flowers. We spoke to no one. We gave smiles, and sometimes flowers. No one spoke to us. Some pushed a few bucks at us. We walked.

The next meeting was tense. New people showed up with pieces of paper, suggesting 'organizing principles.'

We smiled.

“We're going nowhere.”

There is nowhere to go.

“We'll never win at this rate.”

There is nothing to win. We passed the hat for flower money. Others said they would come. Maybe they will. The meetings were growing. We four planned. The others drank coffee and talked.

The police were there at the next demo. Police?

“What for?”

“Public safety.”

“Want a flower?”

“Move back.”

We walked, the four of us and a few of the others. We had no signs. We talked to no one. The police moved ahead of us, setting up roadblocks, directing traffic.

We made the news.

“Why? We want to know why our traffic is being disturbed in order for these ragtag groups to walk through red lights. Joining us tonight from our studio more than a thousand miles away, an expert. Why did they do it?”

“Putin is setting up sleeper cells in the US.”

“ISIS has crossed the northern borders and are setting up shop in the city.”

The weekly meeting was sad. Too many people. We left before we could get coffee and went down two blocks to a bar and grill – just the four of us. I ordered a mocha. It was like old times.

The day before the next demo, I was awakened by a knock, a loud knock. The door gave way before I was awake. “FBI,” he said, looking down at

me; actually, his gun looked down at me. His eyes searched my room for...what? Weapons? Porn?

“Black Uhuru? Where is Black Uhuru?” They were a band, once. They sounded bad in a dub sort of way. Four giggling guys from Jamaica looking for a crash pad. We had given them the address of a hostel nearby.

“You're in the wrong place.” I said. FBI looked as if he preferred to torture me. Another country and I might be on my way to a quick death, body mutilated, dumped along a highway.

“We are sparkly clean. Not even a steak knife in the house. We eat our veggies raw.” I smiled as I spoke to his back as his head turreted about to see I was correct.

“Withdraw!” he yelled.

Shaken, I made coffee and called around to tell my friends what had happened.

We moved the demo to another part of town. Flowers and smiles, we had fun.

Like old times.

I love walking. I walk for a living. I am a shoe tester and a dog walker. I have clients. I make the bucks. The next day after the demo, like 6 AM, I was out walking, testing and picking up poop for Flossie.

There must have been three of them walking behind me or crossing my path ahead of me. I knew all the regular walkers. These were new. Flossie loved running. I was testing running shoes.

We reversed course and ran like hell, crossing through the light traffic, zipping into a small breakfast cafe.

I went to the kitchen and stood with the owner, my brother, watching the front door.

There hasn't been a new early customer here since Ralph, a longtime customer and a senior citizen, first retired.

“How long’s that been?”

“A year.”

One man came in, slightly out of breath. “You open?”

“Nah, I live here. What do you want?”

“Seen a guy?”

“Me? Who are you? I just live here.”

“Not you. Guy with a dog.”

“This dog?”

The three of them now were crowding in the doorway, demanding I come with them.

“We want to talk to you about the direction your life is taking. You are making bad choices. Let us help you.”

Flossie didn’t like their attitude and snapped and barked. The men drew guns from their waistbands and pointed them at the dog. My brother took the dog into the back office behind the kitchen that served bacon, eggs and pancakes all day.

As I was watching my brother depart, one of the men pulled a black cloth bag over my head. I remember crying out, “Help!” before I lost consciousness.

Apparently, I woke. I was seeing a man's eyes looking down into my face. I smiled.

"Nobody's going to help you." He didn't say it the way he meant it. I made a note of the implied threat. I weighed the effect of a sense of humor in this situation, shackled to a chair, hand and foot.

"I want a lawyer."

"Like I said." I had been here before. I have the scars to prove it. He wanted blood. If he hits me once and I talk, he will feel fulfilled and maybe shake my hand. I tried it. He liked blood. In Nobody's Business there is a torturer who loves the sounds of it. I hoped he would settle for blood and not demand the sound of breaking bones.

"Answer me!" he bellowed. Now I had him.

"What's the question?" Pain does not clear the mind. Thinking back to his last question, I said,

"He's out back waiting for you." He believed me and walked out back. I passed out again.

Don't know why I woke up. I thought I had been up late and fell onto the sidewalk. I was weary and sore. He didn't break anything, passed across my mind. Then I remembered: if I had been in another country I wouldn't be able to remember anything. It was daytime. I was outside. In the city. I became absorbed in counting fingers and toes, remembering I had passed out after a light touch beating. My clothes stank of sweat and blood and urine, the smells of torture. I checked my watch.

The demo was starting. The street signs told me to go west and north. They were there. My friends were walking, handing out flowers. I joined them. "I was kidnapped. Beaten." I didn't know why, and I told them so.

None of us wanted to have another meeting. Smiling and flowers weren't enough to overcome fear. We stopped.

Over, passed through my mind. Everything ends. "Free speech, damn it." Sadly, I went to the old coffee shop for the mocha of my dreams.

"Coupon clipping trust fund baby," someone called after me as I entered. Free speech is for the stable and well-funded; not for the wild ones whose poverty is real. There is no amendment guaranteeing life or liberty or happiness – just speech, if it's backed by money.

"No cream," I said.

"It's free."

"Don't want it. Can't you listen?" I thought about yelling that at him. He would have told me I had had enough and refuse to serve me.

"Thanks," I said. Without my friends I was alone. I thought about them as lost. I left the shop and headed to the site of our first demo.

Nobody was there.

When I walked I always had test shoes. I walked to work, literally. Sometimes I had a dog. Multitasking I thought of it as. I'd reread Nobody, trying to crack the code. People asked Sarge how they – the Smilers – did it, and Sarge said he didn't know. He lied. It's that simple. It's not about heroes, it's about extra-ordinariness. It's not about people, but situations. The focus on the hero destroys the message. "We don't need another hero. We all need to know the way home." Simple to say. Dreams of power crowd the minds of any political actor. Once the camera is on you it feels like now you will be heard. In that is defeat. That was Sarge's experience.

He was honest about that, at least. It started to rain. I went home.

The weather was in charge. Storms always keep me in. The time money gave me left me free to think. I thought about Sarge. He has had more

effect on me than any character in any book. Sarge's near-death experiences drive his love for humanity. From his low position he chose to give the last of his optimism to strangers. His giving carried the others – Corporal, Janelle and Charlotte – along. Taken together, the rest happened naturally. I must not have been Sarge. My smile brigade of four failed. I was not Sarge in so many ways, yet Sarge said it must be something that any Nobody could do. He picked smiling. I was missing something. I decided to cry.

My accountant called. When one is attempting to be Nobody it is a buzzkill to have one's accountant call.

“The market turned against our risk position,” he said. The details were boring. I had hated him for years – a vestige of my father's estate. I did not trust him. “You are wiped out.” He was happy sounding, like 'FU, you're the bitch now' happy. Trust, or lack thereof, limits action. He was not to blame, and he was wrong. I hadn't followed his advice. I wanted to tell him, but he wouldn't have understood. The point is that advisers fail. Nobody succeeds. Capitalism is a carnivore, vegetarians need a different idea. I was getting the idea Nobody offered.

Nothing really happens; neither the accounting principles nor the accountant make decisions. 'Wiped out' is a relative term, signifying the present inability to continue on one's determined path. Taking my accountant's advice would have led me to my accountant's end. Not mine. I was way diversified. I always had employment with the companies I controlled. I tested shoes, walked dogs, wrote stinging memos about corporate waste for my blog. My accountant was wrong. I didn't need time to think it through. Nobody called; time to smile. The late-night desire for mocha and a little company brought me to the usual place for that hour: Jonah's Midnight Mocha was open til all hours, pushing sleeplessness and offering the mild entertainment of an open mike talent show.

The place had changed in an unusual way. I remembered the cellar's coolness. That was the same. There was the same feeling that people were smoking; a swirling haze hung around the forms of others as they moved slowly from the bar to their seats as a singer or a poet performed on the small stage set against the opposite wall. The night scene in this place spoke of magic from ancient wizardry; all of that was the same. Tonight, an old man was speaking. I saw the audience firmly in his grasp.

I went home alone. When I woke an echo was saying: We live in a time of messiahs. I pulled on some test shoes and went for a run around the lake. The last time I was here I was snatched and tortured. My imagination was awash with that memory and the messiahs.

“Now, with the plagues reminding us that we have failed as a species to curb our appetites, we have to face it. There is a history of failure that inevitably leads to the plagues, the locusts of humanity set upon the garden in an effort to defeat it, perhaps thinking it is Satan, but transforming it into private wealth. What was God's (and everyone's by implication) became one man's by one man's decree.”

The Old Man (now capitalized in my mind) had said this.

“Exploitation yields progress and global climate change. Progress is privatized and climate change is socialized. The downside is that to resist this decree causes social destruction multidimensionally, in all directions. Like an explosion, like a chain reaction.”

The next day I ran into my friends. We talked about philosophy. I was stuck on plagues and messiahs. I told them about the Old Man. They were not as impressed by my descriptions as I was with the real thing. I said so. They tried to settle me down. They spoke about peace and the need for optimism. “The failure?” I said. “What has failed us?” They said the messiahs. I knew they were kidding, but I took it seriously. That night I went back to Jonah's Midnight Mocha.

The crowd was virtually the same. The Old Man took the stage after a Joan Baez-style singer had completed her set. He looked sad. I raised my hand before he began. He came over to me.

“What failed us?” I asked.

“There are many deaths, at least one for every being.” That's the first thing he said. In a flash, I realized the beauty of what he was talking about, how in special times special things happen, deaths and rebirths.

“Messiahs?” I asked.

He said, “You know we each are one, together we are all.” He was only there for a minute, then he regained the stage. My sight was blurred by my tears. I could hear his voice but not his words, until he slammed his hands together. The invisible book he held shut with a sound so loud a gasp followed.

“It is not my job to judge you,” the Old Man said. “The failure is to see possibilities as right or wrong, good or evil. The mathematicians tell me that the nature of probability is evolutionary. One says, ‘certainty is always changing’ – so much for the value of judgment by comparison to an absolute.

“This likely upsets your sense of self but it is not a thing to fear. You do not know who you are. I can practically assure you that you are in the right place to find out but there is an ‘if.’ We’ll get to that.”

I thought we had all been set at sea without a compass or a map, much less a rudder. I went home to dream. On the way I fell on the concrete. I hadn't noticed the heat. I dreamed Sarge and Corporal saved me from the night. A young woman, my age, pulled me to my feet. “I know you,” she said.

The morning began as life anew. She was there sitting at the foot of my bed. “It's not love,” she said. “The Old Man doesn't talk about anything but breathing. Love is selfish. Sex is sharing.” In the face of such certainty,

I hid behind my silence. “I saw you marching with your friends. Selling flowers? You looked happy enough. We coffee fiends have our ways, n'est ce pas?” I agreed. I did not want her to leave. “Did you see the Old Man's first show? You did. I can tell.” She was so warm. So naked. I fell for her. Like I said, I wanted to keep her near; love is a drug, addictive to some. She covered herself and looked into my face.

It was me who spoke first.

“Tell me the story of how we came to be here and what will happen to us.”

“It’s a long story.”

“This is a beginning. Start now.”

“I’ll read to you from my novel. The one I’m writing called Jonah’s.”

Jonah’s Midnight Mocha and Live Entertainment

The Second Night

Jackson moved among the other coffee house habitués. It was after all his place in life, with the minds who thought like his. This was his comfort zone – a New York coffeehouse. There was nothing special for him about this night. Open mike at Jonah’s Midnight Mocha and Live Entertainment was sometimes dreary, but the place got lively after it was over; when the crowd cleared and the ones who stayed behind channeled the energy of caffeine to pair up and seek pleasure in the night. That was why he was there.

A folk singer with a guitar was on stage, singing the ballad “The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald.” Her voice was highly reminiscent of Madonna. The growing crowd at ten at night had already become quiet in respect for Edmund and Gordon and Madonna. Jackson found a seat gifted by a slight acquaintance who was heading home, a good seat with a view of the crowd.

Mercifully, the song ended. The singer fled to polite applause, followed by a stir as the next act drew close to the stage. A murmur followed a small man moving smoothly through the tables, an old man with long hair and an equally-long beard. His two sprightly steps up to the stage brought the silence of attention to the room.

The old man moved to the microphone stand, his hands flat against the front of his long sleeved black t-shirt. He stood still until a heckler yelled out, "Who are you and why should you be standing there, taking up our time?"

The old man stood even more silently, until as if by impulse he raised a fist into the air. "I am a Poet and Magician. You are lost and need inspiration." He pointed directly to the heckler. "These are dark times and we need a bit of brightness to sooth our darkness. Bright like a soothing lamp or a small smooth stone we can roll in our fingers to settle our thoughts.

"Do not, therefore, think as you do that you know what it is you see before you. Your sight is blurred. Your minds are trained to see only what you are told to see. Poets and Magicians free minds such as yours. Sit still and listen to every sound you hear. In ten minutes, you will see again.

"Ready?"

The Poet and Magician paused to let some air into his lungs. In a slower and lower voice, he continued: "People have stopped talking about the heat. Have you noticed? We have learned to be quiet with each other, as you have become just now. No reason to add your hot breath to an already miserable day.

"Otherwise, thank you for the only applause I need – your silent approbation, your misbelief in happiness and order, your subservience to the structures choking our public discourse, your tolerance of the angry and inane. Here in my hand," he waved his fist in the air above his head again. Jackson followed his jabbing gesture. It seemed to him something

was really there, clutched between his fingers and his thumb. "Here in my hand I hold an ancient book worn thin by time. It's called the Book of Nightmares. An old book. You probably think you can see right through it, but like I said do not believe your eyes tonight. Can you hear me? If you cannot hear my voice, then close your eyes. Now you see the book."

"There, what a relief. Blind or deaf or both. Does that describe us?"

"I know what you are thinking." The old man quickly lowered his hand. "You don't believe me either," he said, in a voice that trailed off into silence. He held his hands in front of him, as if holding an open book.

The heckler repeated his question: "Who are you?"

The crowd stirred again. Jackson sat intently, watching the act. Where is this going?

"I see you cannot live with mystery, which is why I am here. I am in disguise like many of you. My name is Dr. Laplace." He paused. That sounded contrived.

Someone in the crowd shouted back, "Yeah, and I am Dr. LaGrange." Jackson felt a chill run up his spine, as if his awareness was peaking at the precipice of a new consciousness. The next step could bring pain.

"I see you cannot live with mystery, which is why I am here. I am in disguise like many of you. Some days I know what I really look like and others I cannot see even the smallest part of me. A stranger to even myself."

"Let me read to you from the book. Maybe just a few paragraphs." The old man looked down, and after a heartbeat of stillness he began. "The propaganda system was introduced to exploit you and all prior generations for as far back as history is written to tell us."

The old man began to shout, as if he needed to command the silent crowd to quiet. "Bullying, rape, manipulation, fraud, assassination...the list goes

on and on of words you know. The propaganda system was used to promote them.”

He wiped his brow without blinking. His eyes darted around the room, looking into eyes as eyes looked into his. His next words were conversational, matter-of-fact.

“The walls of a narrow hallway were constructed with these words. People move up and down the hall, unable or unwilling to move outside walls built so strongly, made from fear and shame and the debilitating ideology represented by the words. Thus, the great powers control us.

“No one speaks about it, yet we all sense it is true.

“Thirty years ago, we said, ‘If voting could change things, they would make it illegal.’ It was probably said by many others in earlier eras, for this subversion has been going on for quite a long while.

“Today, we are being ruled by the gun and the man with the gun – the assassin or the men in black helicopters or black vans or black cars or black drones. Technological men, who can live among the savages. Men without identities, who move within the veins of oppression from airport to airport, exercising muscles trained to use the new tools of physical and mental domination.

“The rules changed from the post-WWII belief in fortress America to the era of ‘Bullying, rape, manipulation, fraud, assassination the list goes on.’ Nothing really changed at all, except the words. Perpetrated by the silent minority, whose need for comfort controls the words used in the system. This makes the shaming system work. If one does not use the correct words one may not be allowed to talk, or to talk loudly, or to talk outside a small, controlled circle.”

For a moment he stopped, clearing his throat. His eyes scanned restlessly over the audience, lingering on those who offered their eyes to him in turn.

“All conflict, no matter how contrived, is fought along the lines the propaganda system tells us exist between people. It is white, guns, America, and Jesus on one ‘side,’ with color, slave, devil, and death on the other. These are the words used to control us. I am white. I am not black or brown, but I wonder if this hatred is uncomfortably obvious, just like a very hot day except all the time. Me, I can hide in white, but some can’t. It’s all the same anyway; we just do not let ourselves say it.”

The old man’s voice cracked a second before he reached for a glass of water. “Excuse me,” he said, looking about ready to return to his rambling dissertation. Instead, he froze for a noticeable length of time. His eyes rose from the imaginary pages of the book, and he looked first at one, then another and another member of the audience, directly in the eye.

What was he looking for?

“We have reached an interesting new era. The human mind has run up into a cul-du-sac. No longer able to turn, as the corridor of allowable words form a physical barrier so narrow and overpopulated that each being is shoulder-to-shoulder, chest-to-back with others similarly situated. We cannot stop. We cannot turn. There is no way forward.

“I look at you with love. I speak truth, a truth you know. Yet what is said is difficult to hear, and thus the possibility of understanding shifts to inevitable condemnation. I hear, ‘This speech is outside the limits.’ Some want to leave to avoid the discomfort of the meaning inferred. Shame and fear control them, yet almost against their will they stay.

“We speak and hear in contexts. All words come from somewhere. All meaning, all outcomes come from something. It is these contexts, the somewheres and somethings that comprise our inner landscape. This landscape is our guide, but it is our personal delusion in the current context. We are awakening from a bad dream to realize ‘reality’ (as defined by the Pyramidal Paradigm that rules us) is just that: a delusion.

“We, you and me, are collectively at a dead end. If you cannot see that close your eyes. Stop looking at what you are told to look at. Give yourself another chance.” The audience obeyed for a few seconds before resuming what was now a blinkless stare.

“Feel better?” He pulled the music stand over and placed his book between him and his audience. He carefully placed it open to what looked like a favorite place as he lovingly stroked the page. “Now, for the good stuff. Are you ready?”

Jackson sat stunned until he heard the question. He shouted, “Yes,” but the din was so vast, so thorough, neither he nor anyone else could hear their own part of the roar of assent.

“There is a way out of the failure memorialized in the Book of Nightmares.” The lights flickered. “Last call. Our time tonight is over. Tomorrow we will find the way. Thank you.” With that the Old Man left the stage. In silence the audience dispersed.

The Third Night – Trauma and Propaganda

“I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so, I hid.” The heckler announced his arrival.

As the Old Man climbed onto the stage at Jonah’s Midnight Mocha and Live Entertainment on his third night of his new routine in the open mike segment, he was hoping he would get off to a good start. He had a big plan in mind. He lowered the book some said he carried in his hands, which he placed onto the music stand he used as a podium.

“These are the first words spoken by man to a God or gods, according to the Abrahamic religions. What Adam said, as the story is told, and based on the evidence given, was also a lie. He feared the creature that created him and to preserve his own existence, instead of telling the God that Eve had eaten the forbidden fruit, he claims to be fearful of being naked.

“If I had been God I would have laughed and asked Adam if he remembers being naked yesterday.

“For this, God issued his fatwa and The Curse that expelled man from the Garden, according to the story, begun a moment later.

“More clearly God said, ‘Look you are going to be deprived of knowing who you are. This garden is your home but only if you know how to be here. You are foolish. You will always be in the garden, but you will never know it unless you listen to the wise among you – a chance I doubt you will take. I can set the probability but then you would be bored, so I let it float to keep you guessing.’

“The first event of early childhood trauma in the Abrahamic world is the simple telling of this first story in the Book of Nightmares, causing a disorder called the Eden Complex, a syndrome fueled by the frequent doses of shame and fear.

“The Curse is propagated thereby.

“The infusion of fear and shame produces a screen memory – a recollection of early childhood that may be falsely recalled or magnified in importance. A screen memory replaces an earlier memory of deeper emotional significance. The screen memory masks the infusion of fear and shame into the psyche by external forces. It is called the Eden Complex in part because the subject’s screen memory blocks the early childhood experience of a fear-and-shame-free consciousness, as life in the Garden is described.

“The Eden Complex is absent in adults whose childhoods did not feature such an infusion.

“Several subjects have been studied who do not have any substitute screening memories. Significantly, these subjects are neither theists nor non-theists, as religious beliefs are formed after fear and shame have been infused. This last conclusion indicates that though spirituality is natural to humans, the organization of a religious ideology is a defensive response for safety against these early life traumas caused by the infusion.

“I am not making this up.

“The Cure, as it is called, reverses the effect of childhood traumas, ends the Eden Complex and restores the memory of our Eden Identity. Our Eden Identity was lost in shame and fear. The Book of Nightmares at least gives us a name to use once we recover: Edenists.”

“Yeah? So what?” the heckler began.

The Old Man stood still in the silence that followed the heckler-for-hire’s taunt.

“Exactly,” he said. The audience was still absorbing the Old Man, Poet and Magician. It was only his third show on this rant. He looked as if he had hardly begun.

“At times like these, we wonder if there is any way we can communicate flawlessly. If someone came up on the stage and spoke more clearly than I, would the same words have more meaning?”

He spoke near a whisper. The audience was forced to shush each other to silence. No one moved. The only sounds in the room became the collective inhale-exhale of the slow yoga breath that flows in without effort and releases itself without thought.

“We all know who we are. We all know what is before us. We still have a few nights left, estimates vary.”

“So what?”

The Fourth Night – Mathematics is Mystical

“Who cares?” Even before he could start speaking the heckler began his part.

The Old Man, Poet and Magician had yet to step on the stage. He and the heckler worked together, more and more as time allowed. Jonah’s did not have a bouncer. He had a heckler-for-hire. The Old Man’s wife was a woman who knew the stage, having traveled with an experimental theater troupe in her 20s; she advised him to control the opposition by making sure to pay the heckler.

“Tonight no one will pay attention to you if someone doesn’t oppose you. The conflict will heighten their desire to listen and thus increase their understanding.”

The Old Man took her advice, though he did not trust her reasoning. He knew her well. She had been wrong on occasion. He thought she was wrong this time.

“Conflict is denial.” But now it did not matter. The audience was not aware of The Old Man’s wife’s advice.

“This book,” he said, raising his hands over his head in an unmistakable gesture insinuating the presence of a book, “is a book of lessons. These

lessons are taught through error and failure. The nightmares in this book are whatever causes fear and shame. There are dozens and dozens of them. This is not a spiritual book. It is an ideological book, and the nightmares are the ideologies contained herein.”

The heckler stood. His voice was coarse and demanding. “C'mon, this is bullshit. Why are you wasting our time?”

“You are right. I am not here to disparage.”

“Get on with it,” the heckler whispered. The audience waited for the display to end.

“Okay. Here is the problem. Philosophy is about describing the Good. History, as it has been popularly recorded, is a philosophy.

“Mysticism is about a direct experience of the Good. Number is mysticism expressed in symbol.

“There is no enlightenment to be gained from philosophy or history. Is there enlightenment from mysticism, from Number? At some time in the past, Yes. But now, there is some doubt.

“Number is a practice of mystics seeking knowledge of the creation/creator: the study of nature, of Earth, of the patterns contained therein. All these observations led to the discovery of Number and the relationship of numbers to patterns in nature, thus disclosing the revelatory Paradigm of Number.

“This practice of observation in search of Number ‘unlocks’ meaning. Some pathway exists in the mind, created by necessity – in an evolutionary sense – that moves, notes and abstracts data absorbed by the senses, storing the information in memory for analysis by a nontemporal portion of the mind.

“In this process, numbers represent the Creator. Numbers are the secret operators in the Infiniverse, the missing force we cannot see. In Eden this makes sense, as you will soon rediscover for yourselves.

“The downside is that mathematical terms, like all words, are tortured for new meanings contradicting the originating ideas in favor of new ideologies. Humans seeking personal power have corrupted the Number Paradigm into Mathematics as an attempt to use the power of Number to create social pyramids that do not support human imagination or our Eden Identity. The introduction of symbolism and abstraction expanded Number from mere observation of nature to Mathematics, which became a static field in the post-Curse mind within which formulas supporting pyramidal power are devised and stored.

“Time applied to this process of corruption yielded the plagues that you find at end this Book of Nightmares.”

The Old Man had read these words from the invisible book. With a sharp gesture he slammed the volume shut, startling his audience; the room echoed with the imaginary sound.

The Fifth Night

Jackson had listened to his father for only a few years. He listened fast. An older man by more than 60 years, Daddy retired on the farm while Jackson headed off to Columbia. Jackson knew his father well. He was one of Jackson’s first teachers, a man who was aware of who he was, having learned ‘the lessons’ as he referred to the experience of being a man who never could sit still.

“I meditate on my feet,” he would say in the midst of an exhortation on the need to know thyself, quoting some obscure source of wisdom.

“Rather, the Kingdom is inside of you, and it is outside of you. When you

come to know yourselves, then you will become known, and you will realize that it is you who are the sons of the living Father. But if you will not know yourselves, you dwell in poverty and it is you who are that poverty.”

“If I know who I am, I will see more of what is in front of me” became Jackson’s mantra as a journalist. Now, as the Old Man spoke, what was in front of him was sounding more and more like his father.

As the applause rose, Jackson’s attention flowed from his memories back to Jonah’s Midnight Mocha.

The Poet and Magician, as he called himself, carried an invisible book which he referred to as the Book of Nightmares. It was closing in on midnight in Jonah’s coffeehouse; tonight, as every night, was open mike. Bring your humor, bring your shtick, sing a song, play guitar, read your poem, throw your rant was how it was, until the Old Man walked out onto the stage. The open mike was supposed to end at 10:30, but the Old Man kept late hours, and no one cared more for silence than to listen as he droned on.

“These are the lessons,” the Old Man whispered. “These are secrets, not because they should not be widely known, but because almost as many times as they are uttered they are not heard.

“For instance, tonight, right here in this room, there are people in disguise. Their true selves, the one they could know if they were to know themselves, might stand here and say to you, with the full confidence of a wise man, a Magus, ‘You will find Eden. For you are from it, and to it you will return.’

“Is there anyone here tonight who understands what was just said?”

Silence.

“I will say one thing more: that your life depends upon rediscovering your Eden Identity. The Nightmare is upon us, and I know you understand what

that means. I can see into you, through your disguises into the place within, where you dwell in your fear and shame, hidden from your Eden Identity and the truths you therefore cannot live with.”

The Poet and Magician was captivating and hypnotic in his tone, the rise and fall, the staccato and the smooth. Jackson felt familiar, at home with the strange man and his odd message.

“Does anyone even want you to continue?” the heckler asked.

Compelled to answer, an “I do!” jumped out of Jackson’s throat into the silence, surprising his near neighbors as the murmur of the shifting audience increased with anticipation.

“We live to learn,” the Old Man said. He turned his attention from his book to Jackson, now standing in a spotlight the crew at the coffeehouse had settled on him. “I will give you a choice of poetry or magic. Which do you pick?”

Jackson did not hurry. The silence surrounded him, cradled him.

Finally, “You are Socrates,” Jackson said, taking an unconscious step towards the stage. “Your act is therapy. We seek contentment in a new idea or an old pleasure to satisfy a longing to escape death. Eden fits the need, not because it is poetic or magical, but because it is our home from which we came and to which we will return, if we can but learn to see.”

Alicia, Jackson's lover, listened to her boyfriend's speech in appraising silence. What is this?

“Hey, don’t test our willingness to put up with drivel,” the heckler shouted out. “The act was interesting up until this point. 'The way that can be named is not the eternal way.' I'm afraid that is where we are going,” he finished, a slight snarl in his voice.

The audience began to rustle more loudly. Jackson sat. The beam of light disappeared. The change brought quiet as the audience obeyed the signs of order and turned their attention back to the microphone.

“Where have you been? What took you so long to get here?” the heckler shouted into the silence.

The crowd broke into applause as the Old Man raised his empty hands above his head.

“I know you. Raise your hand if you are new to this audience, never been here before, never heard this act...there’s a hand, another one? There, another one. Welcome. Happy to see you. It’s true. True even though I know there is no way we share any knowledge of one another. You speak English?”

“Great. I won’t say ‘sit down and shut up,’ but that’s what I mean. Okay? Good. It’s my turn. You, sir...you want to come up here and do this? No? Do the right thing. Thanks. I don’t want to be your friend either. Look at you. It’s the middle of the night and here you are drinking coffee of all things.

“Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. I can hear you saying it! ‘You’re here too, expletive deleted.’”

The Old Man seldom raised his voice above a whisper. A stage engineer who'd begun recording the Old Man starting his third night mic'ed the inputs and found the audience contribution to the sound dropped off to below the barely-audible sounds the Old Man made. This is a coffee shop in New York. Try saying ‘shut up’ in one of those. Technically, he never did.

“Don’t be offended if I don’t like you. It’s all in your imagination. How much energy do you get from that? I’m not here to offend you. I’m here because this is an open mike and I am a Poet and a Magician. You are here because you are an audience. Be all you can be in the audience.

“It is one hundred-fifteen degrees F tonight; right outside the door. The power is out in huge swaths of the city. My job is to help you feel cool. I applied for this job. It’s not civil service. It’s more like my homework. Something, a requirement, I must do to graduate.”

“Why do we put up with you? Why are you here?” The heckler had learned to love the Old Man. The symbiosis of supply and demand yielding the paid heckler felt fated and correct. The audience, as always, thought the gambit of untrained hecklers dangerous. The thin veil disguising the actor could be torn by a non sequitur, the illusion abruptly burst, the purpose lost. But, not now.

“This is an act. You are here to find out who you are. You do not know because you too are an act. Tonight, you will realize what this means. I will show you through a bit of magic.

“First, a poem to set the mood for the seduction.” The Old Man raised his cupped hands above his shoulders and began to read:

“When flowing amid the heavens and the earth

“We call it ghostly and supernatural.

“When stored within the chests of human beings,

“We call them sages.”

He had read this poem every day for more than ten years. He began his meditations with it in its entirety. It was beauty to him, this oldest idea.

He stood in silence, the audience respectful.

“That’s it? That’s what we came back here for?” The heckler stood and gestured with his hand and arm, an offer to incite.

Jackson saw this. He stiffened to rise. Alicia’s hand on his thigh settled him. The audience, as if by some cue, followed suit. No one rose.

“This is an act. ‘We rise. We fall.’ The meaning varies. We’re just trying to understand. Like the heckler, we want to know why we are here and what we are supposed to do. He is right to challenge me to tell him why I stand up here ‘wasting your time,’ since it is what I promised him I would not do.”

The Poet and Magician often thought there should be a background sound to his act. He did not understand music in the modern sense and preferred the sound of a lone chanting voice. The heckler (who was also the sound engineer) toggled a monotonic chant, a song of one note, onto the PA as the Old Man closed his eyes and listened rapturously.

“A monk listening to this song wrote that poem, the oldest wisdom ever recorded. The lone singer with one note. The lone poet with one poem.”

His wife had told him to avoid the sense of eulogy. Ah, well. I move as the spirits bid me, he thought.

“The Paradigm of Number ended with the square. If we listen to the oldest thoughts, we find harmony in the circle but not in the square. The message from the past is that we will not be happy unless we organize ourselves in circles, like Stonehenge and Philadelphia, rather than in squares like New York or a pyramid’s base.

“This break with creation doomed the Atlanteans, and by extension us, because we did not know how to be with creation anymore. Creation is growing according to the Paradigm of Number, based on the circle where everything is uniformly connected and balanced, rather than a square with disconnected, parallel sides and conflict.

“That is why the tables here are in a circle, where there is only one side. Paul Erdős used to ask his mathematical friends if their brains were open for business, like, ‘Are you thinking?’

“Erdos was said to love only number. He was eccentric. He was creative and maniacal. He bathed in the harmony of number like no other modern

human we know. One could argue that he was great because of the circles of friends he formed, his work formed. He eschewed squares and pyramids alike. He was an Edenist, I think.

“The magic you seek, that you need, is everywhere around you, if you would but open your eyes to see yourself. It could be said that the supernatural is in your chest. But to be fair it is also everywhere else.

“One of Erdős’ mathematical followers said the basic truth of life. ‘If you join a religion and read its book in the way the master intended, then you might learn empathy. Empathy turns your ‘I’ into a ‘We.’ If you get empathy, then you can begin to understand the cosmos.”

The Old Man, Magician and Poet closed his book. He raised it to his lips and kissed it signifying the preciousness of Truth and his willingness to die in its service, as he soon would.

Sixth Night

The TV behind the coffee bar turned on suddenly. First it showed a test screen with voice speaking slowly and at low volume. There was a clock ticking down the seconds until the next hour: 11PM.

“The control of western society was executed via electronic media, essentially through broadcasts of opinion and news which were designed to appeal to the popular desire for visual and audio stimulation, a form of Dopamine, that were substituted for thought.

“Certainty was a human creation, and easily available through the media; the only problem was that it did not conform to reality, which was fine in some realms. However, the concrete reality of climate change was becoming more and more difficult to spin, and the propaganda system

was unable to produce an alternate 'reality' magically yielding the obvious environmental conditions necessary for human existence.

“Control on a passive level, 'massage' as this was called, would give way to more repressive and violent methods as and when needed to maintain control. The costs involved were greater, but it was deemed a natural progression (as in, a mathematical sequence generated to maintain the basis of private privilege at the cost of the general population's life, liberty and pursuit of happiness).

“The government had given some consideration to destroying the internet, but once gone there would be no intelligence system available to track troublemakers. If the internet did not force some 'transparency' onto the 'enemies of the state,' the internet would have disappeared as fast as flood insurance after Katrina. After the Reverend John D. Vine reconfigured the religious world, the population subjected to the government's effective control via the internet plunged by 50%, the percentage of humanity who had been Cured from the Curse and re-entered Eden over a period of the few weeks since the Final Revelation.

“Regardless of the poor state of effectiveness of the propaganda system, there were still at least 35% of the originals who would need to listen to and watch the broadcasts to balance the anarchy the internet supported. This was hardly responsive to the Great Departure because the powers behind the system could not understand what had only recently happened. But this propaganda was the mainstay of their existence.

“For this reason, it was determined that the electrical power system must be kept running so the TVs could keep working, continuing to pump out propaganda for as long as possible. The military was put in charge of maintaining the electrical grids. Even as the actual control of the propaganda system dissolved in the general meltdown of institutions, the broadcasts continued.”

The test screen was replaced by a message in English.

PT! returns you to the scheduled broadcast: The No Spin Zone

This screen stayed until the remaining seconds ticked off. Then the intro screen for the next show replaced it and then a picture of a man. A voice, syrupy and strident, began.

“We heard the propaganda star telling us that “The so-called Prophet Vine evaded arrest again today. Sources close to the investigation who spoke to us on the promise of anonymity say that an arrest is imminent. Vine and his terrorist group, called ELF or Eden Liberation Front, have armed psychotics to murder innocent patriots in their sleep, according to our sources.”

That was Billo who used to be Billo Reilly who once was a human paid to spin a version of an alternate, pyramidal ‘reality.’ In recent months, he had grown so caustic and hateful even he knew it was time to go; he'd bought a handgun but hadn't had the nerve to load it yet. The current Billomorphic spinner was computer animated, and never worried his handlers that he might go too far from the script. The dosage of bullshit had to be carefully metered, the Media Masters thought.

“Vine, the leftwing media darling, has been connected to the disappearance of over 500 people since the terrorists struck the 700 Club broadcast with a piece of fiction only a devoted Marxist and mass murderer could love.”

We saw Billo smile wryly into the camera and into our heads and the heads of 35% of what was the human population of the US, who somehow knew that the key to avoiding the ill effects of climate change was to deny it existed based on the time-worn suggestions that Ignorance Is Bliss, What You Don't Know Won't Hurt You, and a few other invaluable bon mots.

When Billo was ‘modernized’ it caused a stir amongst critics of ‘the system.’ He was almost real, which fit quite comfortably with the news he spewed, which was not exactly real either.

Ultimately, the demographics of reality were changing faster than the producers of Billo could anticipate. Unlike broadcast journals which rapidly aged, internet sites (especially blogs) could languish without much notice. A broadcast that has stopped is immediately noted by its fans, since the stream ends and nothing new is produced. In a way the powerful elite (as they liked to call themselves) were out of power. The broadcasts continued, which made it appear that they were still in charge. This illusion notwithstanding only pieces of the prior connectivity still existed. The same momentum that caused the climate to distort beyond its natural boundaries shot the propaganda system far out of control of its architects.

“Vine infiltrated the Christian Identity Movement and used young mathematicians, students corrupted by his revisionist ideas, to attempt to dethrone the One God from His righteous control of the One Universe.” As he spoke Billo's voice gained slightly in volume and momentum, as if stirred by a slight passion. Still, he sounded weary of his own words .

As Billo talked, his image was broadcast over the TV, visible on the two big screen TVs over the coffee and tea bar at Jonah’s Midnight Mocha and Live Entertainment. He was entirely ignored. Only the security camera confirmed that the Billo show was on the TVs as required.

Seventh Night

The Poet and Magician was in the house, and the crowd was wall to wall. Jackson had become his first disciple: Saint Jack, as the audience had dubbed him in humor. The first time the Old Man performed on this stage, Jackson had been waiting impatiently for him to finish so he could

hook up and have sex with an as-yet-unidentified female in the room. The Poet and Magician's act had changed all that.

“Why? Why do we as humans allow manufactured reality and manufactured certainties to replace the truth we have known all our lives? When is it that what we know ceases to be real, allowing the inventions of a private corporation to replace our old ‘truths’ with ideas that are contrary to our very survival?” The Old Man, Poet and Magician, was not reckless. He did not appear to be a danger to himself or others. ‘In your face, but harmless’ might have sized him up, yet he was compelling.

“You and I are all the same. If we find ourselves in the midst of unrealities which we abandon as useless or worse, we are naturally compelled to seek a new explanation of what we are experiencing here on this Earth.” He did not shout this, he did not inflect his voice at all, as if to say, ‘The words are real. The meaning is obvious. Let us start here and build a new way for ourselves.’

“I am not a revolutionary. I am an observer of the revolution. I bring you news from the front and hope the news will set you free, free from the chains of fear and shame, free from the chains of idea-as-master, and free of the boundaries you Sons of Adam have so ruthlessly set, rendering you powerless to save yourselves.

“I came here before, but I did not find ears to hear or minds open. Neither Jesus nor Erdős would have been happy here. I wasn’t either, but there was no other way forward. I returned here to find a way to move you. I was anxious that you hear, because in my vision you are the daughters and sons of god, not Adam, and should not perish in the way the Book of Nightmares speaks.”

He raised his right hand above his head. **“If you see my hands empty you need to shut your eyes. If you then see the Book held high above my gray head, your eyes are open. That is the first rule of poetry and revelation.**

“The future is written here, which is why so many cannot see the Book. The Book will be, but is not yet, some say.”

He stood still until the heckler yelled out, “Wow, neat. The invisible book again. Who are you and why should you be standing up there, taking our time?”

The Old Man lowered his book, smiling. “Everything I say is a review of what you already know. What is the value of that? Or better: why are any of us here tonight?”

“Who are you?” The heckler/sound engineer was the same man every night. He was making sure to record every moment.

The Old Man cringed at the heckler’s words. “That was not my question,” he said, his voice a whisper. “How do we approach each other in the confusion of the world, in the Wild, to hear or tell a new revelation? But after all my attempts to answer, if you still do not know, I will tell you.

“Look at me!” He was yelling now. The audience went as wild as he. Voices were raised in jagged shouts without words. As the yelling continued the voices took on a rhythm like the beat of a drum in 1:2, and another in 5:4. The stage lights changed, mimicking a mood of magic settling around a campfire; the Poet and Magician stood transfixed by an artificial moonbeam.

“I am Plato, Pythagoras, Saman the Persian, Ptolemy, and Jesus of the Way. My words come from Thomas and John, from Buddha and Lao Tzu. Our language is Number. The world we know, the one in which we dwell, was constructed with numbers. This was understood so precisely, little we have accomplished since Pythagoras has added to our knowledge without diminishing our place in the created world. I am the end of time, and the beginning of time.”

The Old Man had learned from a prior experience at Jonah’s. He had tried a standup comedy routine, a cross between George Carlin and Lenny

Bruce; without a doubt no one was ready for that much truth all at once. After a few tries his natural inclination for seriousness took over. He 'recast' himself as a prophet, though he was closer to an historian. With advice from his much younger wife, he reached back into his years spent teaching Peano's axioms to rooms of 5th graders.

"Socrates?" she had said to him. "You look a little like he is depicted in Jacques-Louis David's The Death of Socrates. Plus, I love the irony. 'The way to gain a good reputation is to endeavor to be what you desire to appear.' If you really are as you appear, you might be able to pull it off."

Finally, as the crowd's enthusiastic chaos subsided, the Old Man spoke again. "There are secrets in the world known to some which have been relearned, rediscovered, uncovered by others countless times. The only reason they were secrets and not on the tip of everyone's tongue is that the ones who kept these secrets did not understand them, and still do not know how to use them for their own private gain."

The Old Man started pacing. Each step was short. After crossing the stage twice, he stopped at the music stand, and as the silence held he turned slowly toward the audience again.

The Poet gripped the stand, knuckles whitening. The crowd remained silent, having learned that silence was the Old Man's set up.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we live in a time of messiahs."

Next to the last night

The Old Man, Poet and Magician, looked into the eyes of as many as he could see of his audience. His audience knew his act and gazed determinedly back, as if to say, "Take it. Make it yours." And he did.

“Do you know what I see when you let me look out at you, the undisguised you? ... Me.” He paused, as if he was reading from the transparent Book of Nightmares. “It’s in here.” He raised his hands just above his eyes, and then down again. “The Book of Nightmares says it all.

“The worst thing that can happen to us is to die in the poverty of a failed life. That is what it says in this book. This book is a history of the failures that inevitably led to the plagues, as the locusts of humanity set upon the garden in an effort to defeat it, transforming it into private, hoarded wealth.”

As if on cue, the heckler chimed in: “So what?”

“You ask the existential question. So, you obviously know that’s all changed now. The ‘what’ is that greed has reached its own Endtime. Greed kills, extreme greed kills everyone.”

“Why are you wasting our time?” The heckler delivered his lines without emotion, as he almost always did.

The Old Man looked as if the heckler had really gotten to him, as if he felt the question like a blow on his shoulders. He shrank before the microphone, standing alone on the small stage at the far end of the bar at Jonah’s Midnight Mocha and Live Entertainment, one of a thousand coffee clubs in NY City.

“I have never told this to anyone, but I live in an imaginary world. Every morning, as I have done for the past 75 years or more, I wake up to a day peopled by the creatures of my dreams, sprites and elves, graces and spells; never do I allow them to be fully human, weak or sinful, slovenly or in poor mental health. The creatures of my imagination are as agreeable as I am.

“These days with the internet I do not need imagination entirely. Have you taken in any of the interviews with Jesus and Saman? Must do YouTube. We live in a Probabilistic Infiniverse. There is a universe for

every outcome, for every event ever in the eternal and timeless everything.

“In my favorite universe everything and everyone is agreeable. In this one – aka Reality – it is not so; some Adamites have been on a bad power-trip that has lasted for far too long. Human efforts to repair its effects have been ineffective. Now, having passed through desperate times, the great game is up. The plagues have wrought their harm and the planet is in revolution.”

The crowd took it in. The caffeination bubbled in their language as they spoke out their approval. The heckler rose in the midst of the audience. Jackson, who had been quiet throughout, thought the rant too pointed, too judgmental. But the Old Man, Poet and Magician was in the house. Let him say it his way.

“Words. It’s just a bunch of useless words,” the heckler cried out in his fashion. But, as if taken in by his own act, he extended his arm towards the Old Man, middle finger positioned neatly between his eyes and the Old Man’s face.

The crowd registered its recognition of the rejection of the undesirable truth.

“Mathematicians will tell us that we had a choice, and in this universe, we chose mass suicide. Words to be sure, but as we see around us in the After of the Great Departure, the ones that remain cannot repent, just like it says in here. The plagues are on us now, yet still some withhold the realization that Belief was their undoing. If they had not believed, they would not have hated. If they had not hated, they would have been able to hear and see the warnings that rose to the heights and fell into the depths as the days slipped into oblivion.

“The word ‘Believe’ ends the best of life: exploration, discovery and enlightenment. Fear and shame are produced by ‘Believe.’ We are fed our daily propaganda, sopped in fear and shaming, demanded to believe

more and more in ideologies that support what has become a painful end to humanity.

“I saw this coming. Did you?” The Poet moved around the room, carrying the microphone in one hand and his Book of Nightmares in the other. He stopped at Jackson’s table and put down the book in an unmistakable gesture of surrender. Returning to the stage with his hands at his sides, he seemed lighter afoot than he had previously been.

“I am free. I put down the biggest burden of our time, of our universe, and now I can think and feel whatever there is to think and to feel. I did this for myself 50 plus years ago, and today I do it for you. I put down belief, and now I can see and now I can hear.”

The lights over the bar flickered in the unmistakable signal for last call. The Old Man waited quietly. “Tomorrow is my last act. I feel my end closing in, but it is too far away from where we are to get there tonight.” With that he left the stage. The lights were dimmed, and the crowd began chattering enthusiastically amongst themselves, cogitation filling the half-darkness with voices and clinking cups.

No one left the building to enter the streets and the heat. Only one person made his way up the stairs to his room above. The stairs were steep, each one fixed in his memory from the long journey down. As the Apostle climbed, he thought about what he had just seen and heard. However, he was not hearing the Old Man’s words, but his own inner monologue that rose and fell in waves of confusion.

Jackson and Alicia

One night, as he was looking fondly at the woman of his dreams who was peering back at him, he heard the Poet and Magician say that the blind and deaf were better at seeing and hearing than those who claimed no such disability.

Jackson stood upright. No one but the heckler did that. He shouted out his name and claimed to have had visions of the end of the world, as he put it.

The Old Man asked him to take the stage and explain himself. The last week had been Jonah's Midnight Mocha's best week ever. One night it stayed open to 2 AM, with conversations more excited and with larger and larger and fewer and fewer groups, until as if by consensus from thereon only one group formed.

Jackson took the few steps ahead and up, turned and saw for the first time from the Old Man's point of view, with the sea of eyes gazing up at him, darting randomly, refocusing. His emotions roiled like the sea, rising and falling, crashing; foaming waves ran ashore to withdraw, only to rise and fall again, the pulse of the heart of the Infiniverse.

His excitement was unabated.

"We know that where we are going as we re-enter the garden is the same place we would go if we died. We know too that to re-enter we must give up life in the Wild, put down our chores and our baggage, leave the worries of the world behind – all largely delusional.

"The end is a return to the beginning. Being from Eden, we will return to it. Life is a circle – a hoop. 'From dust to dust' is a powerful expression because it is certainly and simply true. I wonder if it isn't star dust to star dust. Either way I know who I am and who I will become. The vision that persists is played like a trailer in a continuous loop on our inner screen: call it the Eden Identity."

The Old Man put his hand on Jackson's sleeve, and the younger man turned to him as if in a trance. "Yes, Father?"

"Thank you for your words."

The heckler filled in the lengthening silence. "Time or money. Pick time."

Jackson stood there half-stunned, realizing that something had changed. The vision was one thing, this thing another altogether.

“Sit down or speak.” The heckler knew the rules.

Alicia

Sorrow is a teacher. Alicia thought fondly of her own teachers; each a sorrow in its own right. Her mom, her dad lost to grief over the death of her older brother. “Happens every day,” she’d say, as in real time Jackson wiggled in his chair, the taste of chocolated caffeine bursting into his bloodstream. God, she thought of Jackson, he is such a creature of this place. High all day on the rush and mental contortions of coffee and sugar. God’s drugs.

Tonight, she wondered if she was embarrassed by his antics. The plan was to have one heckler with set lines, so everyone could focus on the Old Man. She had noticed how New Yorkers turned on hecklers who went too far and expected the acts to hire their own so that the proportion could be maintained.

The Old Man’s heckler, a crafty entrepreneur who had opened his own church which he claimed ‘does not prey on anybody,’ always said the same things, like a new ritual to balance the one voice. He was totally acceptable. Also, he ran the soundboard, so things would have been fairly awkward – or at least hard to hear – without him.

Then Jackson happened. Then the heckler began to do and say different things. The Old Man was at first taken aback. Yet, he recovered and even seemed to grow from the changes. But then...

The last night Alicia asked him, “Jackson, what is the point of causing a change in the way things are going?” They were waiting for the Old Man to appear, hands clutched around steaming coffee cups.

“Time is not our friend. We are steps away from being there at the gate. I can feel it in front of me...”

“Jackson, flow with me for a day or two.”

“Flow river, flow stream, creature fashioned from my dreams...is that what you mean?”

“Creature for sure, but dreams? Maybe someday,” she said. She paused, looking into his face. “Too late. Your eyes have changed.”

Jackson saw his vision again in the few seconds his gaze went elsewhere; Alicia saw his departure and looked to where his eyes were focused in vain.

The Old Man’s familiar voice changed the scene, and the return to Jonah’s Midnight Mocha and Live Entertainment commenced.

“Are we ever going to get to the other side?” yelled the heckler over the massed voices of half the audience and the Old Man.

The change had overcome almost everyone.

“We used to have order, and even in our chaos we found patterns to give us a feeling of cohesion between people and planet. We were made of the same stuff, we used to think. No more. We are too much god’s souls, waiting to be harvested and brought to heaven; too little a part of the world that gave birth to us. We are not seeing life as we once did. Not entirely. A part is missing, the self-knowledge and recognition of our own divinity. We are not sub-creatures. We are god: that which is the name of all things in all universes that were, are and will be. Nothing left out. No place other than Here. No time other than Now. There is no ‘too big to think’ or ‘too long ago to remember.’” The Old Man was speaking with uncharacteristic forcefulness, his words a near-invocation raised over the audience's frantic chatter.

Jackson stood again. “Who are you?” he called out loudly.

The Old Man looked at him and said, “Raziel.”

“Welcome back.”

The Last night, last hour

Jackson knew the legends regarding Raziel, this world’s first activist, and one of many Archangels. Their task was to help the rebellious Sons of Adam repent and return to their home: Eden. They appeared just a few years after the expulsion from the Garden and again at other times as described in the books written to help guide the lost back to the Gates of Eden.

In the legends Raziel was given a special assignment from the god of the legends. The assignment was to try to change the only thing that kept humanity from the bliss of life in Eden.

At one point in the legend, Raziel appeared in the desert inhabited by the people of the old testament. He appeared as a wise man, a revolutionary spirit trying to teach empathy to the Adamites so that they might see a way out of their plight of slavery at the hands of an empire of egoists.

As the story goes, They were crucified, a death so unimaginably cruel that it appeared saved for those who stole from the rich and gave to the poor. If you stole from the poor and gave to the rich you were ‘free’ to do as you wished.

The Old Man Poet and Magician stood on the stage. He was nearly alone. He had an urge to move. He left to empty his bladder while no one was there to notice.

The Apostle who was staying on the top floor of the building, some 30 stories above had headed for Jonah’s when the air conditioning had stopped. When he opened the door from the stair, he noticed the quiet.

Where is everybody? Nobody answered.

As soon as the Apostle asked the question, he knew the answer. The winds had died to a breeze if that. The heat had lingered. So had the dead. The odor was the second insult to his body after the heat. His agitation increased.

The sun must be setting.

He turned to the doorway to Jonah's Midnight Mocha, entered to find he was back in the cool again. Someone had set up a few candles and some battery powered lights.

There were two couples sitting together enjoying conversation, sipping at cold coffee drinks. The stage was empty. The battery powered clock over the bar was approaching 7:30.

Where is everybody?

The other patrons drifted away as 8:00 arrived. The Apostle waited, listening to the sound of his hungry stomach. He was alone in a world of the dead.

The Old Man came back. The Apostle saw him enter. He saw the Book.

"Is that the Book of Nightmares?" he cried out, almost weeping.

"Yes."

"Where can I get a copy?"

"Any hotel room." The Old Man smirked, walked up onto the stage.

The coffee bar had remained cool after the power grid died because it was in a basement. The generator in the building had kept the air-conditioners going until a few hours ago. There were no windows, and air circulation was limited. Few people had been in over the last several, increasingly fatal days.

“Jackson and Alicia told me about your act. I saw a little bit of it the other night.”

“Not an act. More like a recital. Were you hoping to see it tonight?”

“Just curious.” As they talked the Apostle noticed that the air was getting stuffier. The smell of burnt rubber and rotting flesh permeated even the stage at Jonah’s.

“Face it,” said the Old Man. “You are close to being alone here. Your privilege has bought you time – a few days. I hope you spent them wisely. Everybody else who couldn’t leave one way or another is probably dead by now. The noon temps hit 130-something and have pretty much stayed there for the last week. There are neighborhoods – everyone dead or gone – just completely abandoned. Isn’t there some poetical scripture about that?”

“More than likely.”

“No matter. You can see the Book. I’ve come to collect you.”

“Are you Ramiel?”

“Figment. Ramiel is real. That idea, Ramiel’s Army and everything that goes with it, is a figment of someone’s imagination. Yours for instance.” The Old Man reached out to him, leaning down from the stage’s modest elevation.

The Apostle stepped back. The Old Man retracted his hand and smiled; his eyes fixed on the Apostle’s eyes. The Apostle relaxed in the silence.

“It is not my job to judge you,” the Old Man said.

Turning, he made an obvious effort to place his book on the familiar music stand, lovingly stroking the pages, as if he gained pleasure from it.

“I met some people recently who are memories. These memories represent the journey of each soul to achieve awareness of the nature of

life. 'Sins' are failures to revere life. The failures are not remembered, but the successes are manifestly glorified.

"The memories of past lives do not consciously remain when the soul re-enters life in the Wild. There is the oblivion, described as a river of forgetfulness through which we travel before we begin again. No memory of success and no memory of failure. The game is on, and there is no rule book."

"I see. Or do I?" The Apostle was feeling ill. Dehydration. Is there clean water?

"If you have to ask...time is short. Like many before you, you must take the next step. What you see with your eyes open will not help you. There is a way out if you can but perceive it."

"Those cannot be your final words." The Apostle rallied his will to resist what the Old Man was saying. As he spoke, he sat down at the nearest table to the stage. The makeshift electric lighting flickered. "I suppose at times, dialogues like these seem apt, but this is your act for the night, your recital, is it? I followed your drift right down to the contradiction. I had my eyes wide open, but I didn't see you coming. I was looking for the Endtimes and instead found you.

"What I really want to know is who you are, what you are. I have an explanation. I am Ramiel's Apostle. I guide God's vision. I anticipated all of this, but I have to be honest and tell you I did not expect to still be here at this late date, Uncaptured."

The Old Man laughed at the humor. Leaving the stage, he carefully walked through the dimming light to sit across the table from the Apostle. He held his hands like he was carrying a book, which he placed before him as he sat. He set about searching for a passage in the book, then with an 'aha' he began to read.

“And He answered and said unto me: Hear the word of the Most High that you may know what is to befall you after these things. For you shall surely depart from this earth, nevertheless not unto death, but you shall be preserved unto the consummation of the times.’

“Go up therefore to the top of that mountain, and there shall pass before you all the regions of that land, and the figure of the inhabited world, and the tops of the mountains, and the depths of the valleys, and the depths of the seas, and the number of the rivers, that you may see what you are leaving, and whither you are going.’

“Now this shall befall after forty days. Go now therefore during these days and instruct the people so far as you are able, that they may learn so as not to die at the last time but may learn in order that they may live at the last times.’”

The Old Man ended his reading, out in a bookmark and closed the book. “That was Ramiel talking to Baruch about the coming Apocalypse. You have read this, I assume?”

“Oh, yes. 2 Baruch, Chapter 76. Hearing it come from you with your beliefs makes it sound very strange to me.”

The Old Man continued reading: “Ramiel had two creators, each with their own motives. Ramiel: he is described as responsible for divine visions. He guides the souls of the faithful into heaven. He is described as ‘one of the holy angels whom God has set over those who rise from the dead,’ in effect the angel that watches over those that are to resurrect.’ Wikipedia has it all.”

“I wrote that entry.”

“Good job. That was then. This is now. What sayest thou?”

The Apostle's face screwed up in a paroxysm of confusion and fear. “Old Man, what is your name?”

“Laplace, Doctor Laplace.”

“Laplace? I know the response. ‘My friends call me Dr. LaGrange.’ I do not understand what it means. Do you know?”

“Where did you pick up the response?”

“Prophesy Today!”

“Did you not watch the interview with Saman? No? There were once mathematicians who opened Pandora’s Box. They let the furies out in the form of equations; these led to algorithms that quite literally enslaved humanity into a pursuit of mass suicide. Laplace and LaGrange were two such mathematicians, unwitting architects of both ultimate slavery and transcendental freedom. There were many others.”

“Seriously? I know very little about it.”

“Einstein.”

“What?”

“Relativity. It's all about relativity. Look, I am not your judge, but I am your teacher. In the 1960s it became known through high-level studies that population, CO2 emissions and the financial economy would grow at a compounding rate that is unsustainable over a 100-year period. The growth was seen as unavoidable, and even good. The needs of an expanding population would spur growth and the creation of paper wealth, but also produce a proportional amount of pollutants known since the 1880s as climate change agents.

Mathematicians, using equations from the box, estimated that we would soon consume at unsustainable rates, and so we have. They also predicted we would become aware of the true severity of the problem only after it became too late to reverse course.”

“We knew and did nothing?” asked the Apostle.

“We knew and did as much as Adamites do. Some saw that they would benefit the most financially from the exponential growth, and they did. In the early 1980s, as we became aware of the corrupt path we were hurtling down, Reagan and the men who operated him empowered corporations to extract the last resources from the planet with the help of the military and created a reactionary Supreme Court.

“And that is where you come in. Ramiel’s Army became one of the enforcers of the extractors. This Ramiel’s actual God is coal, and a continuous growth in profits is as far as his divine vision goes.”

Silence followed. The Old Man looked forlorn, as if he had run out of material at long last. He had risen during his monologue and walked back up onto the stage. Now finished, he returned to his seat at the Apostle’s table.

Suddenly, moved by feelings he could hardly define, the Apostle rose and took the stage. As he did so, out of his sight Jackson and Alicia entered and sat at a table, far away from the dimming light. As the Apostle started speaking others entered and took seats. The candles began to flutter as the human influx continued. Some extinguished, adding an encroaching, almost-ceremonial darkness to the moment.

There was no spotlight on the Apostle’s face. He wore the clothes he’d come there in, with the exception of his coat; this he removed as he stood at the microphone which no longer worked.

“I wrote a speech last night. It’s in my coat. I dressed up to come down here today because it was my habit to always look my part. Ramiel’s Apostle. It doesn’t sound the same any longer. Used to make me feel all, you know, warm inside.”

“Like you were somebody? Is that it?” The heckler did not sound angry. He sounded helpful.

“Yeah. That is it. I was addicted to feeling like somebody.”

“Who are you?” the same heckler demanded, as he had every other night.

Dialogue of the Apostle and Andrew

“My name is Greg Winton. I rose in the ministry through the 8-ball pyramidal system. I rose to the top. On my own.

“My granddaddy founded Our Savior's Independent Christian Church and raised me in it while my father was in prison.

“It was God’s will that we use all our resources. It was God’s will that Judgment Day comes.

“I am an instrument of God’s will. He acts through me, Ramiel’s Apostle, to bring about the Endtimes. The Endtimes are here, and I am glad.” The Apostle was shaking. What had begun with anger ended in sharp sobs. As his shoulders shook and his breath became labored, he continued trying to talk.

“But...not...”

The heckler stood and walked towards him, to the edge of the stage. Looking up, he said, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me!’ Is that where this tired recital is going?”

“Andrew! How...?” The Apostle first covered his mouth as the words escaped him. Then in silence his head turned from the scene and then back to Andrew. “We killed you. You are dead.” The air rushed from his lungs as he deflated. His body hunched forward. “What is this?”

“He is risen.” Andrew, still dressed as he had been in death, rose up onto the stage. “I was sent back to help you learn, in order that you may yet live at the last times. Baruch’s Ramiel would have wanted it that way. But you cannot come if you do not know the way. Only minutes remain before darkness settles the future for you.”

“Am I Thomas? Should I stick my fingers into your wounds? And will I then believe?” The Apostle reached out trembling but withdrew his touch at the last moment. “I saw you dead, watched you die. Now you are here, again among us. Who are you, and how is this possible?”

The Old Man joined the poor Apostle on the stage.

“Have you read Shakespeare? Macbeth? ‘All the world’s a stage...’”

“I prefer the opening scene of the Merchant. ‘Every man must play a part, and mine a sad one.’” The Apostle rose from his forlorn posture, as if by speaking the words with a flourish he might more accurately portray their meaning. As he did so his face changed to that of an actor, a man in disguise whose part is done. Then, he slowly became Greg Winton once more.

Only the battery powered lamps continued to bring light to Jonah’s Midnight Mocha and Live Entertainment.

The Old Man pointed to the door leading to the lobby and outside. “There is the door to a literal hell, with its heat and stench of death and decay. No one would choose it if they could do otherwise.”

Winton looked to the door. “No one would choose it if they had another choice. What other exit is there? The one you’ll take. The Garden gate? It is just me?”

“You are right.” The Old Man looked up into his eyes. “Are you in there? Can you see me? If you can see me, you are one of us. You saw the Book. If you see us, follow us, and we can go before the darkness falls.”

Jasmine and the Apostle

“Greg Winton.” From the doorway a new voice was heard.

The Old Man turned from his recognition of Jasmine to the Apostle’s face, which showed him puzzled at his name being called. “Mr. Winton, please allow me to introduce Doctor Jasmine DuBois.”

Jasmine moved across the floor towards the stage, her movements a paragon of grace. Her silver hair shone like white fire in the dim glow from the lamps.

“Gentlemen. Good evening.” Jasmine stood beside the other two. “Here we are again.”

“Doctor? How can this be? Isn’t this new?” The Apostle was barely audible, his voice mostly a whisper.

“Good questions. What I know is that it is not new, not even newly known or newly remembered. Dead-end ideologies depending on pyramids to suppress evidence of the private power implied in the structure. Nature is not ideological. Ideologies do not determine either probability or certainty.

“Christianity is a good example of suppression of evidence. Saman was forced to flee the Roman Empire, and those who refused to succumb to the pyramidal power of Peter and his male successors were violently suppressed, even into modern times.

What was suppressed was more than the horizontal nature of life, but also the identity of the Master. Saman’s interviews on Prophecy Today! revealed her history as a companion of Jesus called Mary Magdalene in the so-called scripture. She was a female from Persia and a Magus. Cultural contexts demanded that he be the One and she be a follower, so Peter was able to take to pyramid building with little resistance. His conflict with Saman drove her away, and with her the means of awakening.”

“Jesus was not the Master?” Winton asked.

“Saman was. She was the Messiah. Remember, these words are not meaningful since that paradigm is destructive. It was not a messiah that was promised. The promise was not made by a male God who valued human sacrifices. The bible is about a human sacrifice. Ring a bell? Who

sacrificed humans? Christians. Nope the messiah was sent by Eden, the garden, the creator, not a male God.

“Saman and Jesus were both Edenists fully awakened, perfected as any Edenist is. Saman was the daughter of a gatekeeper and knew of Eden from birth. She was never subjected to fear and shame. She did not require a Hypnotic Awakening. When Jesus was in his early teens, he was awakening and searching for the Way. They met, and Saman took him to the gates to meet the keepers and learn the Way.”

“Is that what they called the Hypnotic Awakening – the Way?” The Apostle wanted more than he was being given.

“Yes. The Way back into the Garden. Did the Old Man tell you?” asked Jasmine.

“Yes. He said he’d been through all this once before, and that we were just as doomed then. He is sure there is a light side to this, but that the humor is too subtle to be appreciated. Almost no one will get the jokes.

“Do you know what is happening out there?” The Apostle looked around, as if he could see through the basement walls into the charnel streets beyond.

“It’s pretty much what you were expecting to happen, except for the parts about angels blowing trumpets and some God swooping down to save the so-called righteous from the clutches of the devil himself. Instead, we have been left to ourselves.”

Jasmine moved off the stage and headed back towards the doorway to the toilets, which was the gate to Eden at Jonah’s Midnight Mocha and Live Entertainment.

“That makes me feel sad,” the Apostle mumbled.

The Old Man mumbled back, “A new wrinkle emerged this time. Edenists organized to save those they could. It was a strange tableau. People

walking into an oblivion they knew instead of staying in the libertarian paradise on fire.”

“You have seen this before.” The Apostle seemed certain now.

“One of the fascinating outcomes this time is that the further people evolved from the Fall and the expulsion, the less they understood about what they were supposed to be doing with life's gift. People with this ignorance work themselves into a dither and determine falsely that those of us who are more purposeful are evil.

“Yes, there is often an Adam and Eve who bring an arrhythmic modulation to the harmony devolving into cacophony. It’s as if there can be only so much order before the onset of chaos. As humans destroyed the natural order trying to tame the Wild, they thought they were acting in favor of an orderly society.

“They destroyed the order that would feed them when society devolved into disorder. Nothing was created in that process. Destroying order because one sees chaos is common,” the Old Man said.

“My head hurts,” the Apostle replied.

“Try this then. At any moment in a finite universe only a finite number of things can happen. Instead of a universe of only one outcome, we have an Infiniverse of all outcomes occurring according to the proportions probability assigns. If additional universes are created to accommodate the probabilities, it becomes so. It is an Eden process built into the system, so to speak. The result is a very large number of universes. This is a Multiverse.

“Creation has the potential of an Infiniverse. An infinite number of multiverses would work as well because with a god there are no limits. If we imagine a god powerful enough, then we get at least an infinite number of universes: ‘at least’ because such a being could not be

imagined and surely not truthfully spoken about, especially in a context that limits the imagined creative power.

“The God you imagine is no more powerful than you, which explains why your God is vengeful and wrathful instead of a positive creative force. There are no violent gods. There is only probability, under which violence happens. Your God was overwhelmed by one species on one planet in one universe. Not powerful enough for an Infiniverse.

“You mock God?”

“No, just you. It’s my act.”

“Who are you to stand up there and waste my time?”

“Good point. Are you coming with us?”

“I can stay and die. Is that the other outcome? Leave or die?”

“Stay and find out. I don’t know the future, just the odds. In a moment you will know it all – if you follow.”

“I hate losing.”

“Is that a joke?”

“I guess so. Let’s go.”

“Turn out the light.”

The Gatekeeper’s Tale

The room was nearly empty. A few sat here and there perhaps enjoying the end of it all. The TV over the bar came on and a interview began.

Janus: This is the last you’ll see or hear from PT! in the Forever After. There is a sensation of completion.

We have produced 25 interviews with 25 Edenists, which contain a total of 65 hours of discussion. The files are to be preserved on a mountaintop, which 'probably' will survive the coming mass plagues.

Maybe some future Moses or Martin Luther King will find the cache and discover our version of the book Raziel brought to the Wild, to Adam and Eve so the two could find their way back 'home' and better understand their god. At least, that was the intention.

This last interview is with a gatekeeper, or perhaps we should say The Gatekeeper. Her name is Miriam. Do you have a last name?

Miriam: I have no last name. My existence consists of the hoop, the four directions and the relations. All of my relations are a part of my name. My name changes as each new relation comes along. It has grown ever longer throughout time. My new relations have had no end, so my name has no end at all.

Janus: I have talked to your daughter, Shalla, and your grandson Dominic O'Leary. Tell me about Shalla's father.

Miriam: O'Leary found me living in the jungle near the gate he could not see. He had bought the land on which I lived from my father's family from another wife. My mother left little except a secret no one could believe, and other notions about how to live in the Wild. My mother, and her mother before, came from this place by the river mouth, hidden by the ridge from the inland valley which for many centuries was the edge of the jungle, and lately cocoa plantations.

Janus: Were you the gatekeeper?

Miriam: I and my mothers back through time.

Janus: Is there one gate or many gates?

Miriam: The gates cannot be counted. There is one.

Janus: There is one, but they cannot be counted. How many gatekeepers?

Miriam: Same. Remember that Number is a matter of sense. In Eden, number is its own language. If one is not confused by counting, it makes sense.

Janus: We are in Merced, Arizona at a gate. You lived in Quepos, Costa Rica at the gate you kept. Saman talked about a gate in Indochina, another in Scotland, and Shalla talked about one in Paris. Is that not five gates at least?

Miriam: There is one Eden in this universe. There are many universes with Eden gates, yet there is only one gate into Eden. It is a matter of sense. I am only me in the Wild, in one place at a time, but I live in Eden and tend the gate perpetually. In Eden there is only one gate and one gatekeeper.

In the Wild this may be an unsatisfactory answer, but yet...

Janus: I suppose you could argue that the audience has been warned about the impossible, contradictory things we can say, but we are aware that anything we say will not be correct.

Miriam: Janus, you are well-named: a stranger at the gate. I have known you for a long time. O'Leary was the same way. Are you him?

Someone must have told you there was a surprise waiting in Eden.

Janus: Rusty, your son's partner, said something to that effect, and suggested it was not the time to reveal it.

Miriam: There are no secrets. We take the thing we have not yet heard and say it is a secret. We humans like mystery and surprises.

Janus: So now I really want to know. If it is not a secret, then it is a surprise. Will you tell it?

Miriam: I think I like teasing you, O'Leary,

Janus: Then I know what the surprise is. There is only one being.

Miriam: Welcome home.

Last words

Jackson watched from a dark corner of the room as Andrew, the Apostle, Jasmine and the Old Man conducted their conversation. As they left he turned to look around, spotting Alicia. She was smiling at him.

“When we leave and turn out the light, we will not speak again in this world: this language we speak will never be spoken again,” Alicia said.

“Should we have a ceremony?” asked Jackson. “A final word?”

“E pluribus unum,” Alicia offered. “Not to coin a phrase.”

“That’s Latin.”

“So it is.”

“Sic factum est.”

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