

The Old Man and the Book of Nightmares



A story by Bob Martel

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forward

Being a human is often unsatisfying. We seek simplicity, stability and satisfaction and get complications, depression and death. Before I could ask questions, before I learned that humans began in tears, pain and separation, I knew that what lay before me was a path I could not see, going to a place I could not imagine, to end in tears, pain and separation. From dust to dust, from the universe to the universe, from Eden to Eden.

Our lives are the part between the beginning and the end. Nous sommes, en fait, ce que nous nous disons que nous sommes. This story is simply a dialogue between the beginning and the end of me. It is the last part of a three-volume story called the Eden Trilogy that begins in the 1980's in the battles in northern California to protect the ancient forests, gardens planted eons ago to become the best version of the Eden dream of my youth. Decades later, the end of the story is at the gate into Eden.

Black Mariah is the first part, the part about the struggle to preserve the Dark Forest, the Headwater's Forest of Humboldt County, California. Robert Devine, a leader in the movement was suffering from the effects of decades of action including the death of friends, some at the hands of terrorists in the employ of the corporations trying to destabilize their foes by making their lives akin to political combat. PTSD affected many. Robert left politics in favor of poetry, seeking Eden again on the Trinity River.

The second volume is called The Young Mathematicians – Forever After. The third volume is The Young Mathematicians – Among the Magi. Forever After is about a grand coming out of the people who have regained an understanding of their commonality that they are all from Eden, of Eden, in Eden. Eden surrounds them and invites them back.

This story ‘The Old Man” is the last part of Among the Magi. I read it a few times a year to redirect myself to stay on the path to the gate and to prepare myself to return Home. The story begins with The End of Jesus. Prepare to be surprised.

I dedicate this story to the beautiful people in my life. To my three daughters: Heather, Holly and Evelyn and to Marie Annie Louise without whom this story would not have been written.

Bob

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 years 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 (צִפְרֹדֵי): Ex. 7:25–8:15

Lice (כְּנִים): Ex. 8:16–19

Wild animals, possibly flies (עָרוֹב): Ex. 8:20–32

Diseased livestock (דָּבָר): Ex. 9:1–7

Boils (שחין): Ex. 9:8–12

Thunderstorm of hail and fire (בָּרָד): Ex. 9:13–35

Locusts (אַרְבֵּה): Ex. 10:1–20

Darkness (חֹשֶׁךְ): Ex. 10:21–29

Death of firstborn (בְּכוֹרוֹת מֵמֶת): 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 testicle 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 dearness of 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 LoÄinjin 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 hometown 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.

“Meteotsunami,” 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 LoĀinjinj 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 that 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 establish a thing exists 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 redwood 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 from “Nobody” 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. La Grange.” 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, recorded in this book it is said.” He raised the book in front of his eyes as he said this.

“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, and 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 the end of 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 was 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 Erdös 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, his 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, Un-raptured.”

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?”

“Prophecy 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 La Grange 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 an 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.”

Author's note

Global Climate Change or global climate change is in all likelihood a death sentence. As this story tells us humanity is ill equipped to change their ways soon enough to the extent necessary to even slow it down a little. Decades of inaction, deception and terrorism have sealed our fate.

In the struggle to preserve the ancient redwood forests from human 'use' there came a day when it was likely we had won a small victory and a few thousand acres were preserved by government action in purchasing the land.

On that day activists were claiming the result was these redwoods would never be logged. The truth is that nature is not preserved by words on paper about who owns them and for what purpose because GCC will make trees extinct if we do not stop it. The piece of paper and the words will not preserve the redwood groves alone.

I am 80 years old. I have been an activist since my mid-20s. I do not regret a minute of it.

The options of the circle or the rectangle and the horizontal or the pyramid have been made. My circle of friends built horizontal organizations. Many of them are still meeting.

Happy trails, merry met, and merry meet again.

Bob Martel

bonsvoisins@hotmail.com

If you would like to read the entire trilogy. Email a request to the address above. I'll send you three pdfs.

We also publish a journal, Le Petit Journal, in French about life in Quebec City, our home and another in English: Bob's Bad News mostly in English focused on climate change.

How will our lives change with each degree of temperature change?

How would our lives need to change to stop the effects of climate change from increasing?

The chart below includes a few of the effects of climate change as temperatures rise.



In the drawing below recent data shows +4C in 2030.

+4C ends passenger travel by air due to extreme air turbulence.

It is irrelevant because the condition will also cause widespread hunger and chaos.

See BBN1 for the details. bonsvoisin@hotmail.com for a digital copy

What's all the panic about?

Come on Bob! It will all be OK. Oil scientists aren't worried.

