

Titles

Pencil Drawings With Iridescent & Metallic Paints on Paper

Inquisitive Squid

Oyster on the Half-Shell

Giant Sea Clam

Cat-eyed Catfish

Pencil Drawings on Museum, Card, & Foam Boards

Embrace

Embryo

Yo Picasso

Picasso-ish Doubled Female Face

PotatoHead



gd allen
6/2012

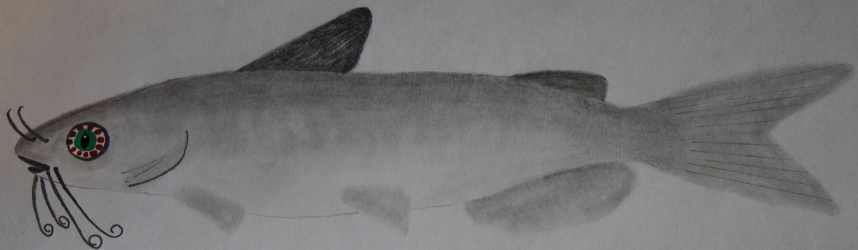


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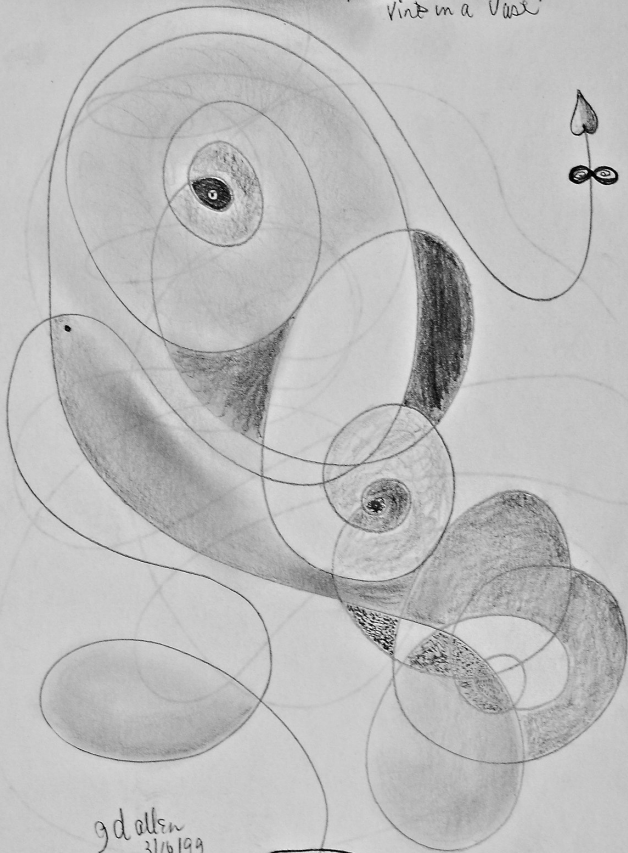
Giant Sea Clam



cat-eyed catfish, slim + trim

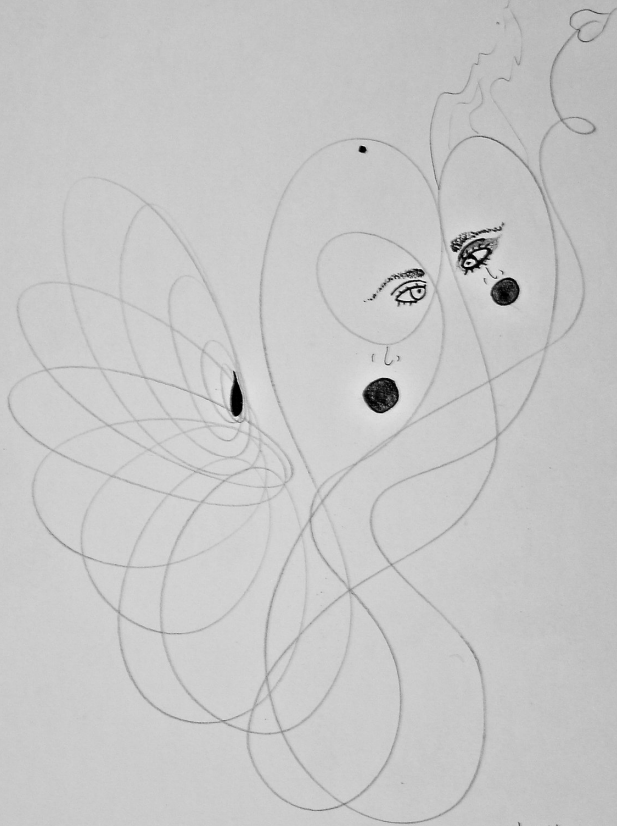
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EMBRYO holding a toy
Vint in a Vase

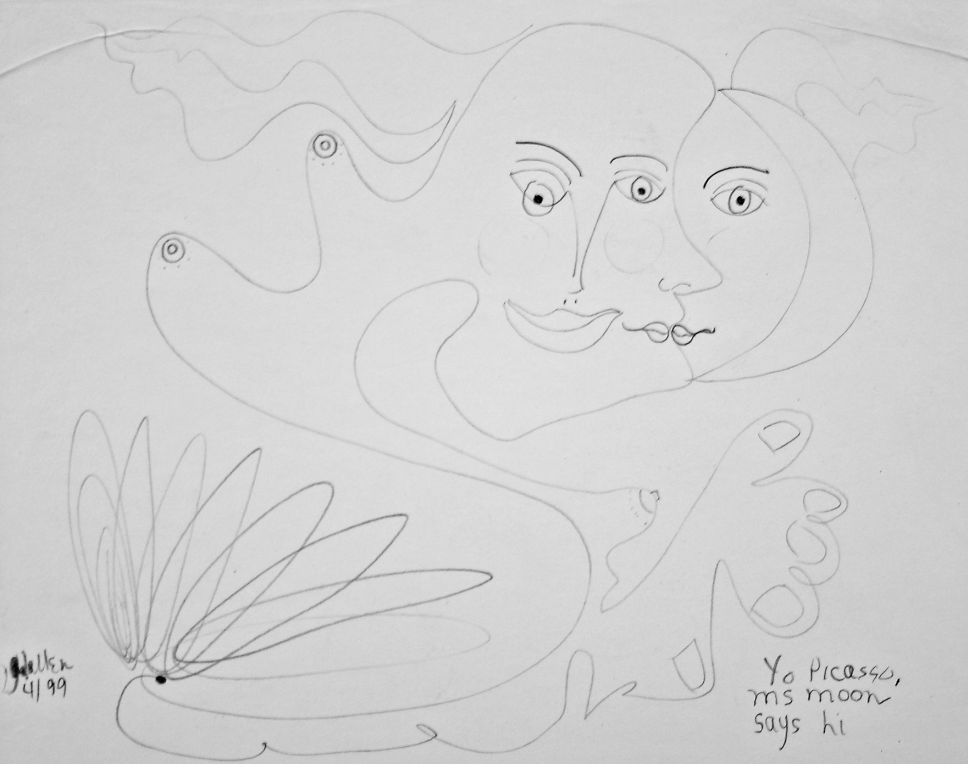


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The whirling and serenely whimsical Embrace! ^{gd allen} 4/4/99



Walker
4/99

Yo Picasso,
ms moon
says hi



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Titles

Technical Pen & Ink on Paper

Scarab Butterfly

Technical Pen & Ink on MuseumBoard

Party Time

Puck

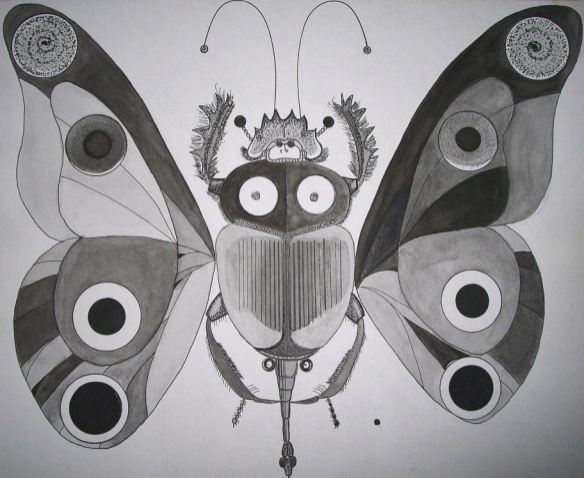
Chameleons Having Fun

Dancing Praying Mantis, Scarab Beetle, & Butterfly

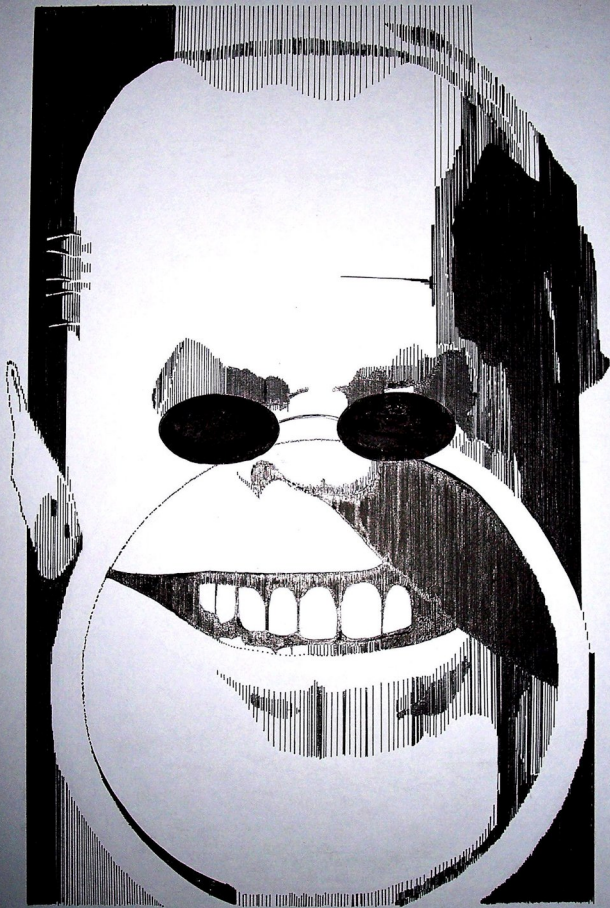
All Are After The Scarab Beetle— to have a bit of fun

Alice's Caterpillar [Floating Lingaraja]

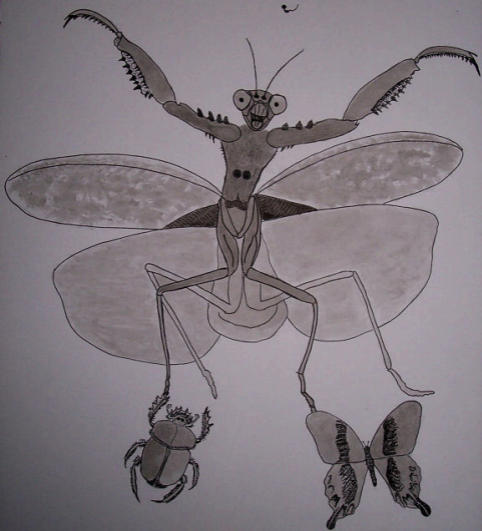
Mr Charlie—Expressive Peekapoo



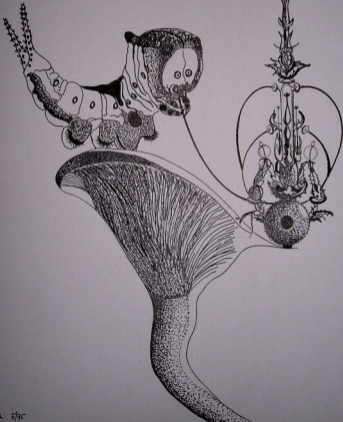














gcl allen
7/95

Once upon a time in psychiatry, the word 'alienation' meant a state of severe despair in which a person finds no purpose or meaning in anyone, anything or any activity. In other words, a particular type of nihilism. To utterly and completely not care about anything or anyone—even oneself. A dangerous, inhumane, and ugly state of being.

Dictionary definition: nihilism is the denial of intrinsic truth, meaning, and value in life and existence. Nothing has value. Nothing is true. Nothing is real. To reduce all to nothing.

Through comparative analysis, I'll try to present the different experiences of nihilism found in Shakespeare's **Macbeth**, in Nietzsche, Tolstoy, and my personal experiences.

My experience of nihilism was a direct result of failed relationship with my first girlfriend. We met in college, fell in love, planned to get married and raise a family—once our careers got into gear: typical, conventional world. One summer she decided to help her mother move to another state; a couple of months to help and then back to college and me. The time stretched out from two months to a year and a half. Her letters kept reassuring me that all is well—until she moved back and moved in with her best friend. Through mutual friends, I became informed about my girlfriend. She had changed in that year and half. I would **not** believe what others had told me—until I saw the 'new' person she had become. A surreal nightmare. She had become promiscuous. The shock was more than shattering. Our world was annihilated, reduced to nothing. The framework, the general agreement of how things are, the consensus in which we lived, collapsed. What was most important to me—her, our love, our future life together, our plans of home & children—was no longer valuable, true, or real. At that time, the meaning and direction of my life was gone. Nausea, pain, despair, and chaos overwhelmed me. Lost & caring about—nothing.

A being of a higher order, whose plays can be seen as a developmental sequence of masks that conceal, as well as reveal, the greatness of Shakespeare, who wrote **Macbeth**.
Out, out brief candle!

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
that struts and frets his hour upon the stage
and then is heard no more. It is a tale
told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
signifying nothing. (V, 4, 23-28)

After hearing that his wife had died, Macbeth makes this speech. King Duncan represents the framework of appropriate actions in a specific order, within which each member aptly operates. By killing the king, Macbeth annihilates his own future as the king who possesses 'honor, love, obedience, troops of friends'. Macbeth becomes the instrument of nihilism: the annihilator who murders, destroys, annihilates others and their worlds. Macbeth becomes inhuman horror, terror, and dusty death incarnate. Not only has Macbeth's life become meaningless, but life itself is sans meaning because of the absurdity of death. Life is only the senseless sound and fury, the flux, becoming without purpose or aim or goal.

Let's explore a bit the labyrinth of Nietzsche's mind. Nietzsche's experience of nihilism was

more complex than mine. It involved many experiences. Some of these experiences were prompted by Schopenhauer's nihilistic philosophy of will-negation, pessimism, and pity; Greek tragedy, literature, philosophy, and the **New Testament**. The following comments come from Nietzsche's notes, as compiled and translated by Walter Kaufmann and R J Hollingdale and edited by Walter Kaufmann, the 'Attempt at Self Criticism' translated by Walter Kaufmann, and 'Morality as Anti-Nature' from **Twilight of the Idols** translated by Walter Kaufmann.

For Nietzsche, nihilism can be a sign of strength or weakness— as the power to create meaning or the lack of that power. He distinguishes between active and passive nihilism. Active nihilism is a necessary but transitional stage that destroys, annihilates in order to prepare for the creation of new meaning and value. It possesses the power and strength of spirit to create, from overflowing health and overfullness of existence. Passive nihilism is weakness; it lacks the strength of spirit. Nietzsche associates passive nihilism with Buddhism; this is misleading. As expressed in the **Dhammapada** and his first sermons, Buddha achieved compassionate detachment from his self, his will, his life, others, the world he grew up in, and existence. Life is senseless, meaningless suffering. But Buddha's overcoming of the terrors of existence was not a matter of weakness but of sovereign strength, as the sculptures of the Naga Buddha reveal. His experience of enlightenment under the bodhi tree was the liberating yes to sickness, old age, death, destruction, decay and nihilism. Compassionately detached, gently smiling Buddha, without effort or strain, negates nihilism because it no longer matters— only Nirvana matters.

Nietzsche's nihilism? the annihilation of the philosophical concept of Being as truth, of any two-world vision of existence in which this world of becoming is devalued in favor of another imaginary world of perfect, everlasting, true Being. Our actual existence can't be evaluated by categories of a nihilistic producing fiction. The other world causes nihilism to occur in this world. Nietzsche negates a negation: the Dionysian yes-saying spirit. Nietzsche attempts to establish a naturalistic sanction for what meaning and value are possible in the here and now. Nietzsche's nihilism explodes the framework of Christianity and its metaphysical, eschatological, and moral dualism.

Nietzsche sees Christian teaching as wanting to be only moral and ,therefore, hostile to art and life. It is life's disgust with life, masked behind the faith in another world. Confronted with Christian morality, life must be wrong because life is essentially amoral. Christian morality as the will to negate life, a masked instinct of annihilation—as radical nihilism.

Christian morality deals with the passions, instincts, and drives by means of castrating extirpation; but an attack on the passions is an attack at the roots of life itself. It is anti-natural morality and not a healthy morality. It negates this life in favor of a better one in another world that doesn't exist. It is the nihilism of the sick, the weak, the decadent— declining, weary, uncreative, non-sublimating. Without possessing the power to create some meaning, their lives— end in nihilism.

With powerful clarity and directness, Tolstoy writes in his work, **My Religion** [see **Religion From Tolstoy to Camus**, selected and introduced by Walter Kaufmann] that, until the age of fifty, he was a nihilist; as one who believed in nothing—but experienced the spiritual condition of suffering, wretchedness, horror, and despair in the upfront facing of actual existence as the life of an animal, with no escape except thru death.

To overcome nihilism, Tolstoy joined the Christian Church, believing the unquestioned premise that it is impossible to live without the religious knowledge of good and evil beyond our animal behavior and instincts [there are other options]. But his faith in the Church, the framework and consensus whose roof he had been living under, was shattered by the indifference of the Church to the essential teachings of Jesus, or rather, to what Tolstoy interprets as the essential and true teachings of Jesus: resist not evil, never resist violence with violence, judge not, condemn not, forgive, have humility, deny self and self-aggression, love your neighbors and enemies. According to Tolstoy, the Church interpreted the saying—resist not evil—to mean that it is impossible to put into practice His essential teaching; supernatural aid, the Church, grace, & faith are needed. Thru this interpretation, the Church condoned indifference, intolerance, persecutions, wars, genocide, Crusades, executions, and all manner of inhumanity & animal aggressive behavior thru the social institutions of the legal system, the courts, the military, & the government. These institutions taught and sanctioned resisting evil, resisting violent aggression, the unhumble and unloving self-assertion of judging, condemning, and inflicting punishment on all violent aggression against oneself, one's family, home, and country.

At the age of fifty, Tolstoy had an experience of sudden transformation: an illuminating insight into the key that unlocks the true teachings of Jesus: resist not evil, as the meaning and means of social change. Contrary to the Church, Tolstoy now believes that it is possible to put into practice the non-resistance to evil ([evil defined as violent animal aggression) and to live in accordance with Jesus' teachings: don't resist evil, don't judge, don't condemn, forgive & love—in the streets, in the homes, in the Churches, in the courts, in the columns of the military, in the legal halls of justice, in houses of the government, in all of the social and Christian institutions.

Tolstoy writes that the key of 'resist not evil' allowed him to see how an incoherent and confused heap of fragments fitted together into a consistent whole. And he writes that the Sermon on the Mount had a special importance for him. Therefore, all that is said in the Sermon on the Mount should be consistent with the key. But *Matthew* 5:21-22 contradict the key. So all the fragments don't fit together. What's going on? This inquiry would take us into very complicated regions, take us too far from our present sketchy investigation into the concept of nihilism; therefore, I'll abstain from any further critical evaluation along these lines.

Even though Tolstoy went thru an experience in which a major framework, within which he lived, shattered, there was an even larger framework, a roof under which he lived, that did not shatter. Since his childhood, the upbringing of his parents and home-life, Tolstoy loved with all of his heart the teachings of Jesus that include love, forgiveness, humility, self-

denial, and returning good for evil. In other words, he did not question the framework and consensus of his childhood. Perhaps, if he did, he might have seen that there is a large variety of other alternatives to Christianity in terms of how to live, what standards to live by, what goals and aims to pursue, and how to behave toward oneself, others, and nature.

Going into a more detailed, comparative analysis of these different views of nihilism, here, would take us too far from our present peek at nihilism.

But one last point for now. As an objection to the different species of nihilism, we could say that existence has, perhaps, at least one and only one possible meaning— the exciting creation of beauty. Evidence? within the enclosed wildflower garden, the glorious and gorgeous, iridescent, emerald hummingbird and beautiful butterflies feed on the pollen of lovely lemon-yellow primrose flowers, colorful and well-designed coreopsis, the metallic sheen of coneflowers, and the mythical blue flowers of beauty. Or witness the sublime scenes of the beautiful deepblue of the oceans, majestic mountain waterfalls, limpid beauty of freshwater springs, chromatic pools of breathing liquid lights, the clearflowing creeks thru wildflower meadows streaming, the golden and snowwhite beaches licked and tickled by crystalline waters of melted gems— the various aquamarines, emeralds, sapphires, and different colors of topaz. But existence has this meaning only if humans interpret the meaning of existence— as beauty. This meaning is intrinsic to existence only if humans are intrinsic to existence. In other words, no humans, no creation of beauty, no intrinsic meaning to existence. Or am I mistaken?

Chef?

Chef Harry, a possible career choice? No, just for fun. Gourmet gastronomy? the ‘art and science’ of slicing and dicing dead animals and plants into tasty treats and pleasures for the sensual palate. And then we wash down the food with water, various liquids, and other drinks. The word ‘gastronomy’ can be seen as the combination of the words ‘gas’ and ‘astronomy’; in other words, flatulence from the stars or cosmic gas, chromatic nebulae. But what’s the origin of this gas? Around the globe, some world-renowned scientists have speculated that countless ETs broke wind at the same time, giving rise to the gaseous jetsam that was jettisoned into interstellar space— flotsam now reflecting, now absorbing incident radiation. Other scientists speculate that this cosmic farting is the result of a process that hasn’t been experimentally detected. They call it the ‘cosmic sphincter’ effect. And others have different speculations. Thus the debate, in peristaltic motion, rumbles on— to haunt the nose.

Fashion Designer?

Fashion Designer, another possible career choice? What could be the next exciting fad in the world of high fashion? What new clothing design could sweep the wide world and stun the unbelievers? Then it hit him— like a monkeyslap: building material, designer clothes. Pink fiberglass insulation panties & bras [to replace last year’s burlap & sandpaper styles]; steel siding dresses and blouses that can be cleaned by hosing; hats made of fire-resistant shingles; slab shoes made from concrete and wire mesh. Be the envy of your neighbors. Be the first on your block to coordinate you wardrobe to match your house. Order early to

avoid the rush and get a free set of carpenter jewelry: hammer and nail earrings, plumbline pendants, nailpouch necklaces, saw rings, measuring tape bracelets. And if you order early, you will also receive a ten percent discount on everything— and save, save, save! And wouldn't it be nice if clothes could also look like the melted jewels of tropical waters.

Career Choices for Neptune or Poseidon?

Neptune's career? Arriving late in the evening, Neptune enters a spartan, artistic office. Poseidon designed, created, and built the window, the stand, the floor, the doors, the chair and table, and the lamp. A scene of an island beach at sunset glows from the stained glass window; below it, exquisite seashells line the top of a lovely teakwood stand; incised precisely, Poseidon cut the coral shapes into the flooring tiles of coral stone. The walls and ceiling Neptune recently painted aquamarine blue embedded with translucent sapphire crystals with different tints. The teakwood office and closet doors, with limestone (shell-and-coral) doorknobs, match the other furniture, marine themed. A closet hides the filing cabinets filled with bureaucratic paperwork. Plainly dressed, he sits in a teakwood chair and slides into an elegant teakwood desk illuminated by a lamp that's covered with superbly crafted cutouts of angelfish and clownfish. Stressed and anxious, Neptune starts to work on the weekly schedule to accommodate the busy lives of the oceanids, nereids, sea-nymphs, and mermaids. Supervising so many others; taking care of security, payroll, taxes, insurance, retirement plans, computer networking, and other obligations; managing all of the oceans, seas, and waters: these are Neptune's perpetual, repeating, repetitious duties. Rarely has he enjoyed his job. This condition of daily duties contrasts with the higher ontological dimension of genuine 'godness'— boundless, creative acts. Almighty Zeus assigned this work to him. Omnipotent Zeus, the boss of bosses, has blocked, by means of devious ploys, Poseidon's many efforts to find employment in other fields, such as writing or photography or portrait painting [like Rembrandt or van Gogh]. Suddenly His attention creatively turns from daily business to a vacational vision— he sees a resplendent sunset that paints the sea with chromatic colors and a snowwhite beach with foaming surf and splashing waters of a vast variety of translucent liquid gems of emerald, aquamarine, sapphire, peridot, and topaz.

Once again, the high and mighty Zeus denies the god's polite request for time-off. Zeus' usual explanation? No one but Neptune can handle such an important and demanding post. Both know, however, that Zeus can temporarily do the job, if he wanted to put out the effort; but Zeus doesn't want to exert himself at anything but his usual activities: the usually unwanted pursuit of goddesses, human women, and various kinds of female creatures. Because his subordinates do most of the administrative and supervisory work, the boss has a lot of time to goof off from his job and get away from his lush and plush voluminous Mt Olympic, luxuriant office that contains, among other things (for instance, Klimt paintings of superficially opulent ornamentation, gold [or geld], and nudes), a miscellaneous mixture and eclectic collection of many gilded sculptures of nude and semi-naked females made in many different details and styles, like Egyptian, Mycenaean, Chaldean, Hittite, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, and Indian; a lot of time to alleycat around in his most expensive silk attire, embroidered with golden threads; a lot of time to pursue his hedonistic pleasures.

Neptune knows his boss, his ways, his hedonistic activities. In patient silence he endures unfairness. What pushes Neptune near the edge, however, are the malicious, vicious, false, humiliating rumors about his working habits— Neptune has been slacking on the job and out and about and playing around and cruising the beautiful coral reefs, the islands, crystalline waters, surging surfs, and sandy beaches in search of romantic adventures with curvaceous, lascivious sea-nymphs.

But here he stays: in a tiny office, sitting at a desk, and doing the duties of his sometimes overwhelming position that sometimes seems to push him nearer the verge of unknown submerging waters that could engulf the Sea God. Posiden needs a recharging vacation, a break and not a breakdown. But when?

But buried in the depths of Poseidon's mind, and growing stronger— the treasured instinct for autonomy?

Nature

Old Testament, *Job*; and out of the whirlwind, God said: where were you when I laid the foundations of the universe? Buddhist **Dhammapada**: how is there laughter and joy when nature is always burning, always becoming dust and ash? Or is the phenomenology of nature, as pre-Socratic Heraclitus claims [always was and is and will be], an everlasting fire that flames in measure and goes out in measure, by logos? Is nature— the interpretative phenomenology envisioned by Nietzsche, his developmental plurality of striving wills to power? Does the Hindu Shiva Nataraja symbolize nature— the dancing god who creates, preserves, destroys, protects, and liberates the universe? Does the human mind create the universe we experience? Will a grand unified theory of science describe the universe? Can we describe nature as a mythological earth goddess, like the Hindu yakshi with rounded boobs and curving hips? What about ein schauspiel nur [line 454] of Goethe's **Faust**— nature as only a play and interplay of various parts that interweave to create the universe, and nothing more?

Plausible assumption:

Each living organism interprets nature from its own perspective; thus, gazillions of different viewpoints. Nature: infinite interpretations in time?

Destructive Aggression: Terrors

Nature's cruelty: predation: the fight for territory, food, survival. In military wars, h. sapiens battle for territory, food, survival— inhuman predation.

The aggressive predator initiates predation: the greater inhumanity; the prey defends itself: a lesser inhumanity. And then, there's the accumulation of petty crimes and cruelties by far too many of us: not a pretty picture.

Can we develop out of this animalic condition into humane human beings?

What Hurts

Tornadoes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions destroy— the cyclones, hurricanes, maelstroms, blizzards,

the lightning, wildfires, droughts, and floods,
destructive storms and avalanches,
to name a few;
the poisonous fish, amphibians, reptiles, insects, and others,
infectious bacteria, viruses, parasites, plagues, and others;
the slips and falls and strokes,
and cancers, aneurysms, auto-immune diseases, and more;
and disillusionment about love;
and h. sapien atrocities, genocides, rapes, crimes, & wars;
to name some more.

The Aging Pages

The humans, whole, alive,
develop, work, create—
time passes & it takes its time.
Their efforts and work:
the fading fragments
and aging pages, in vain?
the breaking up and down?
the Pre-Socratic remnants,
the ancient sculptures,
the crumbling temples in ruins,
like Persepolis, Konarak, Angkor, Bayon,
becoming atoms and molecules,
dispersed and disappearing?

Intuition

Intuition? remembering, quickly recognizing something that was previously learned by effort. It doesn't conjure up revelatory insights nor innate knowledge or truth. Rather, it's what we learned and experienced as children: our forgotten 'primal nature' of habitual, stored information. And perhaps the strange sense of innate insight, which many people often experience, can be explained by Freud; for example, in chapter ix, **An Outline of Psycho-Analysis**. Here, he presents his hypothesis of the super-ego that contains eerie memory-traces of archaic experiences & ancient heritages of social civilization, genetically passed on from generation to generation.

Encephalitis: Life at the Limits

The attack of encephalitis started as a common headache but soon intensified into waves of pulsating pressure, fever, confusing pain: a burning delirium. While in the hospital, the 'external world' became a whizzing blur of on-rushing sights sensations sounds perceptions smells and more— all melting into one another with rapid speed. The onflowing flux, the streaming sounds and furious sights and pain, the nonstop pulsating pressures with no end—except death—in sight.

Four 'delirious' days in a hospital bed. The pain, intense. The painful spinal tap revealed no bacteria; so the doctors concluded that the cause was a virus. But the selected blood tests didn't reveal the identity of any virus; thus, the exact cause of the infection remained unknown. Recovery took months. As far as medical tests and I could tell, no brain damage.

Any insight? Perhaps. The breakup of my entire perceptual reality strongly supported my lack of the certainty of solid things, objects, substances, beings or essences in themselves, and the concept of inert simplicity. Before the attack and after a murky period of nihilistic disillusionment, my biological brain and underdeveloped human 'mind' had created an inadequately interpreted, little 'world': a bit of stability with a vague sense of meaning; a provisional 'world' that allowed me to somewhat operate, maneuver, and survive in nature. A questionable 'world' that questions more persistently. Is my present 'world'— somewhat human? or merely an eclectic hodgepodge affair in need of morphing?

Motorbike Accident: Life at the Limits

I'm nicely flowing on a 35 mph, local, two-way street on a 125cc motorbike, driving to work. Balmy weather, dry and clear. A routine day, a routine way. Then, without a warning, in a flash, a car refuses to stop completely at an intersection & quickly pulls out— right in front of me in a crash trajectory. Visual perception slows the scene, the slow-mo of a movie, as sounds diminish. No smell or taste or touch: surreal. With amazing speed, evaluation: right, a wall of brick, too hard, will die; in front, the car, my flesh against the metal, will die; the left, a splash of green, a patch of grass, a softspot— only chance of survival, go for the green, now! In an instant, my body swerves the bike to the left; and the bike slips away from under me— careening, cartwheeling, crashing, tumbling into a twisted heap; my body slides across a cemented area, almost ramming headfirst into a iron post, until friction and gravity pull it to a stop. Survival.

Initially, no pain. A bit stunned. But soon, a foot begins to throb with pressured pain. I think: a broken foot. Suddenly, some sounds emerge: a woman, unexpectedly— screams about the blood, the head is dripping with so much blood. Calmly, I tell her that my foot is injured, not my head. And I ask the gathering crowd to call an ambulance for me. Someone does. Eventually the ambulance arrives; I'm rushed off to the hospital for treatment of my injuries.

Many cuts and scratches over the body, but mainly on the head; nothing serious. The major injury? three broken bones of the right foot. Clean breaks, easily set. The swelling incites the pressurized pain. No plaster cast, to maintain the bone alignments, until the swelling ceases. The medication for pain upsets the stomach, rendering it useless. A week of pain until the swelling subsides. The doctor plasters on the cast. No crutches; a boot. Difficult, getting to college classes, limping around for weeks. It's beginning to definitely **not** look a lot like a fun Christmas.

Where?

When you need them,
where are the refreshing, resurrecting, windswept,

snowwhite beaches splashed by melted chromatic jewels,
basking in the resplendent light & warmth of a healthy sun?

Cumulus Clouds

In aloof grandeur
colossal clouds serenely float high above;
these massively monumental sculptures
move in motion slow with royal grace and airy poise
before the majesty of the sun.

Jokes, the Comic, Humor, and Tragedy

By hushing criticism thru uncertainty, and overcoming an inhibition of built-up tension, a funny joke can be seen as a public way of laughing at smut or cruel aggression or both together— releasing tension or energy [from the inhibition] that flows into a cheerful mood and the created experience of pleasure.

The comic: releasing energy from thinking about incongruities, creatively transforming freed-up energy into flowing delight.

Humor: releasing energy from emotions, creatively changing dammed-up energy into the outpouring of enjoyment.

We can feel empathic enjoyment in tragedy because the artist transforms a depth of suffering into— meaningful beauty.

Check out 'German Wit: Henry Heine', the essay by George Eliot aka Mary Anne Evans.

Drinking

Alcohol drinking
neuters
critical thinking.

Japanese Zen Archery?

Tightly tucked, the fingers curve and touch the chin;
stiff left arm—straight steel beam,
tensed right arm—eternal triangle,
bowstring pulled to limit: power poised. Silence.

Then the fingers open: release—
arrow's swift and flowing flight
ties elusively the archer, bow, & bull's-eye into one.

Persian Afterglow

In ruins, Persepolis, in amethyst twilight;
illuminated dreamscape under moonlight;
& fluted columns randomly stand so tall
while evening winds blow into no halls.

Mahayana Buddhism, Bayon

Hauntingly, out of sheer patinaed, sculptured stone towers,
smiling faces float: the Buddha bathed in centuries of showers.

Twilight; once, I watched a brightly smiling fullmoon
slowly smoothly rise in a diaphanously luminous sky;
then sensed the smiling Buddha's surpassing serenity,
royal repose,
weightless detachment from self and love and life.

Hindu and Buddhist Art: Angkor and Bayon

Wilted brown leaves from withered dead trees,
animated by the wind,
blow across & topple over, tumble & stop dead—
then scoot and swirl and somersault over & over
crossing across the very ancient deserted ruins;
Once, for centuries [moving on, time, in change]
hardworking humans and their once vast vitality
slaved & harmonized to create glorious Angkor.
Here and now, sustaining water:
growing lichen, algae, bacteria, mold, and strangler trees;
jungle thrives & strives to overwhelm & feed on the fallen,
standing stones and sacred spaces,
on Buddha's serenely smiling faces.

Mayans, Tikal, Yucatan

Evening, dappled lawns are seen;
shadows and shimmering greens
in between
empty temples and trees: human and natural artistries.

My Faith?

Eternal You? the challenge to become— anti-nature?
the mystery of infinite interpretations?
mysterious fluent eternal energy
with the inherent force to create mysterious singing forms?

Over-arching Aim?

An overall meaning to my life? The childhood dream of becoming a rambling hobo didn't pan out. Then, after seeing Marvin the Martin on television, I thought about becoming a cartoon character in animated movies. But I said to myself that, perhaps, I need to get a bit more ambitious, like making blooper reels. Then finally, like a monkey-slap, it hit me and this idea popped into the mind: self-sufficient self-reliance. But that sounds so, ah, self-centered, don't you think. How about all that self-stuff but in fluid relations to other people, humans?

How about— ruthfully symbiotic autonomy?

Joy

I decide to take a leisurely drive to visit a freshwater spring that I have never seen before, hidden away in a forest of bushes and trees. The sunny day begins as a pleasant, everyday routine: out-and-about, goofing around in a regular way, a mundane meandering, listening to music (doo-wop oldies) distractedly, in a common state of mind, a Humean mind, a collection of different perceptions in perpetual flux, a theater where ideas, thoughts, and perceptions appear and perform. By following an up-to-date map, I find the spring.

Upon suddenly seeing it, arrested in some sort of wide-eyed awe, intensely focused, I morph into a clean & clear, extraordinary, excited, chromatic wonderland. And the day transforms into an unexpected adventure of exploration of a special place and space filled with virgin treasures of fascinating, strange, and glowing beauty— the sun lights up the liquid jewels of rare & luminous emeralds, sapphires, aquamarines, peridots, translucent turquoise, topazes of many colors and tinted gradations, melted melanites, dashes of chromatic diamonds, touches of citrine, smears of hessonite, brushstrokes of luminous liquid silver-white, dots of translucent pearls, & hints and tints of amethysts, to name a few of the cornucopia of colors: a range of crystalline chromaticisms in lovely lively motion: aqua-luminescence. The same thrill, the same exhilaration that I feel now, surely moved the explorers who first discovered the deserted ancient ruins of Bayon and Angkor in the jungles of Cambodia. The clean and clear, the fresh and dear chromatic waters transform my whole self into a clean and clear, fresh and dear existence. The saturated richness of the colors fills me, expands my whole being with intense resplendence, resting in contented repose: joy! In excited inspiration, I explore, looking from now this angle, now from that angle, walking briskly up and down and focusing to and fro.

This mood, forever? Then remembering: my camera. Capture some of the beauty of this spring in photos. Old photographic habits, long ago learned: searching for exciting angles, beautiful perspectives. Without thinking, second nature, instinctually: intuition. F7.1 through F16, wide depth of field; click, click, click— no thinking, only doing; up and down I go and to and fro to explore some more; click, click, click— a whole person on a mini-mission; intense, an anti-natural human in focused physical animation and repose.

Noon and afternoon and evening. As the light changes, so do the colors of the water. Click, click, click— till the night begins to fall and it's time to go. I pack up the camera, get in the car, begin to drive home, and then think to myself: What a fun day! I hope some of the photos turn out well; perhaps a few might be first-rate.

A few words about a way to evaluate what might be first-rate. I rate my photos by different degrees, from lowest to highest: deletable, quality, high quality, first-rate. Three standards inform my decision to rate a photo in terms of the different degrees: clarity, beauty, aptness of treatment to theme or themes. I delete any photo that is unclear or fuzzy due to camera shake, or other reasons, unless the theme calls for such a treatment. I delete any photo that has any aspects that detract from the overall beauty— such as ugly, distracting, glancing

glare that breaks up the qualities of symmetry, proportion, balance, harmony, wholeness, and rhythmic radiance that create beauty in the photo. Whether they seem first-rate, high quality, or quality, I select photos that fit the theme or themes, and then I place them in the most apt spot in relation to the other parts and in relation to the work as a whole.

My mind shifts. I start to think about the interactions between the sun, the trees, the bushes, the vines, the rocks, the soil, the water, and myself. What an overwhelmingly complicated web of intersecting, overlapping, interweaving complexity of interactions! Let's begin with the sun. In every direction, the sun radiates, thru nuclear fusion, tremendous amounts of energy as heat [atomic & molecular motions] & light [the various frequencies & wavelengths of the electromagnetic spectrum]. Visible light ranges from 400nm to 750nm (a tiny section of the entire spectrum), and it engages with the outer molecules of the plants, the rocks, the water, and me. This intricate and puzzling engagement results in the energetic absorption and reflection of varying wavelengths of light, according to the individual properties of the various molecular structures that exist in multitudinous amounts, beyond simple finger-and-toe count. To simplify the process, thru the pupils, the reflected waves of light (energy) enter my eyes, which are not simple structures, & the lenses bend & focus the light on the retina, with the continuous images up-side-down. The energy of light activates, both chemically and electrically, the rods and cones where, thru chemical and electrical reactions, light-sensitive pigments, not so simple organic compounds, break down and release energies that excite neuronal impulses to travel along the optic nerves that reach into the occipital lobe, at the back of the brain, where resides the centers of visual processing. And neuronal circuits flow from the centers into the integrating areas of temporal, parietal, and frontal lobes. Then the flowing action potentials, the neural signals flow into the frontal neocortex: conscious real-time working memory. Because of the extreme complexity of these interactions in the brain, the complicated biochemical and electrical circuitry or flowing energy, many interpretations, in different dimensions [such as physics, biochemistry, physiology, perception, emotion, imagination, cognition, and language, to name a few] ensue.

But an existing unifier infuses all of these complicated networks of interaction: energy. All is one? The "all" represents, perhaps, the overwhelming diversity of natural phenomena; the "one" represents energy, exciting all into activity. All of natural phenomena are different, non-dualistic forms of energy? But what is 'energy'? Only a linguistic label that points to the strange, uncanny, mysterious— the numinous?

Time to take a break, a change of pace, a change of music. I put a compact disc in the CD player: the outstanding music of Leo Kottke, a virtuoso of both six-and-twelve string guitar, with an unusual singing & speaking voice, and a surreal and oddly offbeat sense of humor. Driving back home, I'm humanly focused, integrated, organized, a satisfied whole.

The Love Shack

I own eleven acres of country land. I want to build a getaway studio on it. I am only in the paper-planning stage. Its name, the Love Shack; remember the song by the B-52's? The Love Shack will consist of parts: the ton and a half cemented, treated 4x4, grounded pilings, floor joists, sub-floor, framing, insulation, rafters for the roof, the metal ties connecting the

wall studs to the rafters, the sheathing for the roof, the felt paper, shingles, the sheathing for the walls, exterior sheathing, windows, a door, the electrical work, and so on. The completed, nailed-together building will be a strong and solid whole. All of the parts will be needed to construct the completed structure; therefore, the parts will be connected to the whole. And the parts will be nailed and fitted to each other in terms of the constructional sequence: the pilings before the floor joists, the floor joists before the sub-floor, the sub-floor before the framing, the framing before the roof, and so on. Perhaps Jedi masters, wizards, witches, magicians, and other fairytale folk can build the roof of a house or camp before constructing its support. But no human can. We have to follow the rules of physics. And the purpose of the Love Shack? To make an art studio, to provide a shelter: a living space: a tied-together, structured, consistently logical, and clearly seen coherence—nailed-together parts: a wholeness.

Art Studio: The Love Boat

I imagine a place where I could develop my artistic skills: a studio. The initial imagining of the studio hoots with delight: a wonderful way to toy away the time, an amusing seduction of enthusiasm; to monkey, toy, and play around with different designs for the structure and the landscaping around the building. I seem to change into an animated cartoon, doing impossible feats with ease, happy at work, singing songs like “Whistle While You Work” and the “Monkey Song” from the original animated movie **Jungle Book** (Disney Studio [with some slight alterations to the lyrics]):

Whistle while you work,
I'll build this lovely place
and hum a merry tune;
it won't take long when there's a song
to help to set the pace.

I'm the monkey king of the swingers' hop, the jungle VIP;
I've reached the top and had to stop and that's bothering me.
I wanna be a human and proudly stroll into town,
and be unlike the others who keep on monkeying around.
It's true, a monkey like me can learn to be—human too.
Now don't try to kid me, I made a deal with you;
what I desire is the Promethean fire,
to make my dreams come true;
give me the secret, clue me in, to what to do;
give me the power of the Promethean flower,
so I can be human like you.

What does it genuinely mean— to be human? No longer a monkey? No longer an animal? But that's impossible— because every breath we take is like the breath other animals take. If we stopped breathing, we'll die. Ancient mythologies envisioned breath as the essence of life and transformed this idea into the concept of supernatural spirit that belonged to another, higher, eternal world of non-nature. Of course, this concept really embodied a

magic trick of the imagining mind of *h. sapiens*, a biological species that belongs among the overabundant, vast variety of other species of flowers, plants, and animals that exist in the unimaginable, sublime over-vastness of the universe. What makes *h. sapiens* different from other living organisms known on earth resides in our capacity to become human. *H. sapiens* have the strange potential to rise above, to go beyond, to stand against and over nature—to become anti-natural, super-natural, supra-natural. The problem? this elusive potential has to be developed. I'm not automatically human simply because I'm a *h. sapien*. It takes a lot of effort to actualize my human potential. Then, at best, I can only be an animal who strives to try to live as a human? Once again, then, what does it mean—to become human? And how to become human? By sailing to brave new world-visions in an art-studio, love boat?

Art Studio: The Love Shack, The Love Boat

Over a period of years, on 11 acres of country land, I build a place, for now, where I conduct experiments in painting, pencil drawing, pen and ink drawing, photography, writing, and the sporadic development of critical evaluations.

The land is located 10 miles north of Picayune Mississippi and around 30 miles north of the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Tucked away in one of nature's nooks exist a 16' x 32' main structure, two attached smaller sheds, a covered deck enclosed in a dogfence, and fences connecting the dogfence to a shed: all constructed of wood. Except for putting in the plumbing, well, & septic tank, I do all the work—even the lovely landscaping. A profoundly difficult project. Unforeseen problems pop and crop up. Obstacles that blocked the progress of the project; a series of problem-solving situations, frustrations, tests, and trials; the tons of very hard physical labor; and sometimes, extreme exertions to my limits. Not trained professionally in any aspect of this monster of a task—even though I had summer jobs [between my college semesters] that involved a bit of landscaping, carpentry, electrical work, and cement work.

Except for the deck, the rest isn't carpenter plumb and straight—even though I often use a bubble level. The overall effect belongs in a circus—a funhouse with warping mirrors, or a bird's nest in a cartoon—this odd, amusing, off center, askewing funplace.

When I write 'tons' of work, I mean it literally. For example, I hand-mix, pour, and level one and a half tons of cement to secure the pilings that support and raise the structure above the ground. 38 bags of cement, each bag weighing 80 pounds; thus, the total amount is 3,040 pounds; a short ton equals 2000 pounds. The summer's humid heat, without shade or help, debilitates. And when you add the total weight of the lumber that I carry and put into place to the weight of the cement, I literally work with tons of weight. No hyperbole; no joke.

The difficult process of making & pouring cement—by hand? I saw the process in a cartoon once, imagining I could do it easily. I'm wrong about the degree of difficulty. Hercules and his labors; yeah, right! Since water makes the dry cement bond together, I dig a well to fetch the many pales of water. Then I cut open a bag of cement, pour some into a bucket, pour the water into the cement, stir until a certain consistency—not too watery, not too thick—

occurs. I repeat this sequence until the five-pound bucket fills up, then pour the mixture into the hole (where the piling has been positioned) and smoothly level the hardening cement. I repeat this process for 45 holes and 45 pilings. Digging the holes and cutting the pilings to the right size? A draining, sweaty mess— with no support from a goddess in the guise of a crone; no aid from a fairy godmother; no help from Hermes, hermits, supernatural helpers, or Puck; no chants or ringing bells or sorcerer's magic tricks or spells; no ewoks or wookies; no pixie dust from Tinkerbell to cast assisting spells; no ogres or Shrek or talking donkeys or flying monkeys; no magic wands or incantations, prayers, or sacred words; no mantras, mudras, or mandalas; no exciting maithunas; no flying brooms, or wizards, witches, pixies, trolls, or centaurs; no hobbits, elves, or dwarfs; no help from the hobnobbing goblins, the goblin girls from the mystery world. A bit too much! But somehow, I manage to finish the cement work. Break time; beer time. And God said: Let there be light—Busch Lite. Got my vote. After a few beers, the laborious work becomes a loony tune, a lunatic affair, a lover lost in moony madness. Wouldn't it be more fun to take a romping ride on her lubricious, salacious slip and slide?

The landscaping costs me a lot of sweat too. But I enjoy this work because of the physical focus & the clusters of tiny, four-lobed flowers of the sweet olive bushes: an aromatic quality on the wind, the breath of nature— volatile molecules blown by a breeze to our noses, into our brains, processed, transformed into perceptual sweetness that our amazed and curious minds interpret as— extraordinary. I plant 24 sweet olive bushes. Also plant a gem magnolia tree, a gardenia bush, two japanese magnolia trees, a miniature azalea bush, two banana bushes.

The planting process proceeds in this sequence: dig a hole, sufficiently sized; then drop a layer of diluted fertilizer, gravel, compost, sand and a layer of topsoil— parfait-like— into the hole; then place the plant, upright, into the hole; deposit another layer of topsoil over the roots, and mound up more of topsoil around the stem or trunk of the plant; then water generously. I cross my fingers, saying: thrive, survive, & do well, my botanical babies.

I transform the dogfence area into a wildflower garden, with a deck inside, becoming a simple temple overseeing it. Up bloom the poppy plants: the seafern-looking, blue-green leaves with red-violet tips; flowerbuds looking like the conical hats of wizards; poppy petals with the touch of silky softness; four-petaled wavy-edged flowers painted with oranges of different degrees of saturation; and flowers on slender stems. Up pop the lemon yellows of the primrose flowers with heart-shaped petals. Up spring the di-colored firewheels whose petals have edges of triple rounded points, and the flowers sprout on top of thin, elongated stems. On graceful stalks, up float the coreopsis: violets, purples, yellows, oranges, yellow-oranges, red-violets, reds, and whites; some with cross designs on its flowerbuds. Up grow the many types of coneflowers whose centers resembled cone-shaped volcanoes that often had metallic sheens when the right angle of sunlight hit them and whose petals usually had a round or rounded-point shape to the petal's edge. Upshoot other wildflowers: mythic blue flowers, delicate clusters of tiny white flowers, cactus flowers, bee balm flowers, crimson sage or red salvia flowers, and others.

Titles for the Artwork

Redwood Deck & the Incipient Wildflower Garden

Zen Cactus Garden

Cacti & Gypsum Sand

Bricks Around the Sunflower Seedlings

Growing Sunflower Plants

Emerging Spikey Sunflower

Opening of a Sunflower, at Night

Enfolded Sunflower Yellow Petals

Fully Opened Sunflower, 1

Opened Sunflower, 2

Sunflower, 3

Sunflower, 4

Sunflower, 5

Blue & Violet Flowers

Yellow Coneflowers & Primroses

Coneflowers & Coreopsis

Blue Flower

Fully Opened Blue Flower

Flowerbuds & Opened Blue Flowers

Saturated, a Deep Blue













































Titles for the Artwork

Orange Poppy, Glowing Yellow Pollen
Orange Poppy, Glowing Yellow Pollen, Poppybud [a wizard hat]
Dappled Poppy, 1
Dappled Poppy, 2
Firewheel, a Dappled Poppy, Poppybud—a Wizard's Hat
Cylindrical Poppy
Poppy Painted with the Subtle Hues of Orange & Yellow
Poppies [used in **The Wizard of Oz?**]
Conical Poppies, Dewed
Firewheels, Poppies, Wizard Hats, 1
Firewheels, Poppies, Wizard Hats, 2
Firewheels, Poppies, Wizard Hats, 3
Firewheels, Poppies, Wizard Hats, 4
Firewheels, Poppies, Wizard Hats, 5
Glowing Yellow Primrose
Purple & Yellow Coneflower
Red & Yellow Coreopsis, Coreopsis Buds
White Coreopsis
Poppybud Appears as a Wizard's Hat
Japanese Magnolia Blooms in the Spring
Pooh Bear—in the Shade of a Japanese Magnolia—Lounging
Cornucopia of Coneflowers
More Coneflowers
Yellow, Red & Yellow Coneflowers, 1
Yellow, Red & Yellow Coneflowers, 2
Yellow, Red & Yellow Coneflowers, 3
Red & Yellow Coneflowers
More Coneflowers
Coneflowers
Red & Yellow Coneflower
Yellow Coneflower
Yellow Coneflower with a 'Metallic' Center
Sweet Olive Bushes, the Love Shack
Red Azalea Bush in Bloom
White Gardenia Bush in Aromatic Bloom
Violet Japanese Magnolia in Bloom
Unassuming Sweet Olive Bush

Sweet Olive's Tiny, Clean, & Fragrant Flowers
Sweet Gardenia Flower
Pregnant Gardenia Flower
Japanese Magnolia Flower, 1
Japanese Magnolia Flower, 2
Japanese magnolia Flower, 3
Japanese Magnolia Flower, 4 [shooting the bird?]
Passion Flower
Mushroom, at Night
Sparkling Mushrooms, at Night
Abundant Life on a Branch
Mr Charlie—Expressive Peekapoo
Pooh Bear—Good-Looking Border Collie
Puppy Buddies









































































































On my birthday, August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina hits the studio. What a birthday present! At the peak of this storm, I watch from a window as healthy, huge, and well-anchored trees snap with ease. The snapping sounds are loud, distinct amid the roaring winds that sound like rushing trains. Continual waves of wind and water move in so many, too many directions simultaneously: chaotic, confusing, stupefying, massive motions in dizzying speeds; monstrous amazing marvel; prodigious prodigy; extraordinary wonder! As seen in the rain, the grasses, trees, & bushes— the winds move in straight lines, in curves, in doodles, spirals, swirls and curls and whirls; wheeling, reeling, speeding, vortexing; a gigantic whirlwind driven by tapas, heat. Eventually the storm completely passes thru the area, after a brief break in the action when the clearing eye of the storm appears. The studio, a shed, the fences, and the deck, all intact. The hurricane damages the shed that encloses the front door. It also bonks a few roofing shingles.

Hurricane Katrina causes the most destructive, natural disaster to hit the United States since its inception, at the time of the American Revolution, producing catastrophic effects on the states of Mississippi and Louisiana. But it also affects many other states. Millions of people suffer from this devastating, overwhelming nightmare. Many, deeply traumatize. And deaths occur. Each person, each family has their own personal experiences of this cruel and unpredictable storm. And I say 'unpredictable' because no one, not even the meteorologists with their hurricane computer models, accurately imagine the cataclysmic strength of Hurricane Katrina, how powerful the storm could be until it hit— and then, too late.

My inconvenience? waiting for the electricity to come back on; it took two weeks. And while I wait, I have some time to think a bit about some things, like sublimation— an important process in art, as well as many other areas of humane endeavors. And art's created in the art studio, the love shack.

Modern science defines sublimation as the physical process in which a solid changes, at low pressures, directly into a vapor without becoming a liquid. For example, frozen carbon dioxide, or dry ice, sublimates or evaporates or changes into a vapor at room temperature and atmospheric pressure. The English "sublimate" stems from the Latin "sublimare," meaning: to rise, to raise, to lift up, to elevate. In Europe, around 1390 CE, sublimare specifically meant the purifying or refining of a substance by heating, turning it into a vapor that rises upward into the air. This medieval meaning had its origins in alchemical and medical writings. Two of alchemy's principle refining processes were distillation, or the evaporation and re-condensation of liquids, and sublimation, or the evaporation and re-condensation of solids. The purpose of these processes? to purify, refine, distill, sublimate a physical substance by removing the unwanted impurities that were mixed with the desired substance.

In 1879, in the second volume of **Human, All-too-Human, Mixed Opinions and Maxims**, aphorism 95, Nietzsche gave 'sublimate', or 'sublimieren' in German, a new psychological meaning: sublimated sexuality. In 1881, in the **Dawn**, aphorism 109, Nietzsche wrote of the dislocation and diverting of the play of forces and passionate drives into other channels.

In other words, the sex drive, for example, can be re-channeled from direct sexuality to the refined, uplifted activity of artistic creation. Instead of using one's sexual energy to make a baby, for example, one uses it to make music. We engage in the ontological dimension of creative deeds and love.

In his **Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis**, translated from the original German into English by James Strachey, Freud wrote, in 1917, on pages 22 and 23: Among the instinctual forces which are put to this use the sexual impulses play an important part; in this process they are sublimated—that is to say, they are diverted from their sexual aims and directed to others that are socially higher and no longer sexual...this arrangement is unstable; the sexual instincts are imperfectly tamed, and in the case of every individual who is supposed to join in the work of civilization, there is the risk that his sexual instincts may refuse to be put to that use...sexual impulses also make contributions that must not be underestimated to the highest cultural, artistic, and social creations of the human spirit. Here, Nietzsche's new meaning to the word 'sublimate' received the backing of the newly developing science of psychology, and in particular, the science of the unconscious.

The words "sublimate" and "sublime" are derived from the Latin word "sublimare" which means to lift up, raise, refine, and purify. According to **Webster's Third New International Dictionary** [1971], sublime means 'to cause [a substance] to pass from a solid state to a vapor state by the action of heat... purify... elevate or exalt... render finer (as in purity or excellence)... to convert (something inferior) into something of higher esteem or worth [or value]... to cause to rise upward...' And according to the same dictionary, sublimate means '...to direct the energy of (an impulse) from a primitive aim to one that is higher in the cultural scale'. In other words, sublimation represents the mysterious process of emerging, morphing into the ontological sphere of creative Eros.

Metaphors: the waves of water playing with the sandy beach; the windy weather playing with the cirrus clouds and scented flowers. But animals, adults, and children really do play, for instance, at the park. In play, our spontaneity becomes a freeing, creative activity that flies beyond the biological needs & daily routines of physiological survival, as well as many psychological needs.

Animal or natural sublimation rechannels the energy of chasing the satisfaction of biological needs & physiological survival to non-biological activities that express the sheer enjoyment of being alive. But 3 qualities, differences, dimensions clearly distinguish human play and sublimation from animal or natural play and sublimation: invented symbolism; a qualitatively higher degree of artistic output in terms of selection, organization, expression, significant form, & beauty [symmetry, proportion, balance, harmony, rhythmic wholeness, and vibrant radiance]; and critical reason or logical rationality [in varying degrees, amounts, and various intersecting overlappings].

Animals do not invent— symbols; they manipulate signs. A sign is a realistic, practical application of a common agreement among a group of animals or people about a specific

'meaning' given to a sign. A sign is univalent: one 'meaning' assigned to one sign. A symbol is multivalent; many fluid meanings can bind and bond with a symbol.

Examples. Springtime, flying mockingbird; a male 'sings' its mixed collection of sounds, attracting females for mating. It puts these eclectic sounds together artistically, forming a single sign with one meaning— mate attraction. I'm driving down a country road on a 150cc motorbike. Up ahead, an intersection with a four-way stop sign that legally binds a driver to completely stop their vehicle at this particular intersection. The red metallic object serves as a sign with one meaning: completely stop at this physical point on the road. The image of a cross serves as a symbol. It can have many possible meanings or interpretations. It can have a Christian meaning that can be interpreted in many ways: the person of Jesus himself as a historical being, or the intrusion of the other world into this world, or a divine figure; or the personal salvation of someone through the belief in Jesus; or the crucifixion of Jesus at the hands of the Hellenistic Romans. It can also be a decoration of honor or chivalry.

Animals can display and organize artistic motifs into a larger context— but only at the most rudimentary level of artistic output, like the tied-together sounds of the mockingbird during mating season. Yet the mockingbird makes up its artistic motifs thruout the rest of the non-mating year: evidence of natural sublimation expressing enjoyment beyond the biological needs of survival. Who would deny the artistic motifs of the graceful curves, the spiraling shapes, the twisting turns, the other pretty moves of penguins, sealions, seals, & dolphins playing underwater and leaping into the air— intense, exuberant enjoyment of themselves in action. Or the artistic motifs of buzzy bumblebees, shimmering hummingbirds, and lovely butterflies in beautiful flight! But as far as I know, it's only humans who create complex, extensive, qualitatively different, selectively organized contexts of artistic meanings and significant forms.

Animal play or natural sublimation doesn't display any high degree of critical reason or logical rationality that creates and criticizes concepts, standards, theories, norms, ideas, opinions, and visions— criticism that guides selection, organization, expression, beauty, and significance. Only human play as sublimation engages in a high degree of rationality, which is more prominent in science and philosophy than in art and religion. Only humans engage in a high degree of reasoning.

To conclude, human sublimation appears as the dynamic process and psycho-physical power to master, limit, organize, prioritize, refine, distill, intensify, concentrate, saturate, lift up, fly, go beyond, control— and artistically create out of the flowing chaotic surges of powerful passions and energetic instinctual drives: the power to sublimate, the power of poetic reason, in both a creative and critical sense. Human sublimation? poetic reason in heated action: rationality of creative energy revealed in deeds and acts. Different degrees, amounts, and intersecting spectrums of sublimation exist— ranging from animals at play to children intensely engaged in creative play to the highest leap of great art as seen in the best work of Moses, Lao-Tze, Plato, Shakespeare, Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Mozart, Beethoven, Goethe, Nietzsche, Pauling, Einstein, and Walter Kaufmann, to name a few.

Make something of myself— what does that mean? To create my own self? Integrating the practical & the theoretical, life & learning, Socrates gave style to his character. He created himself— his self, his character, his personality: the liberated, living individual passionately engaged in the critical activity of free inquiry, continually questioning consensual common sense and authority, probing people's faith and morals thru dialogue & personal interaction, open-ended, in a serene and sublimated form of the Greek agon. His playful seriousness— his happiness. Evidence? Plato's dialogues, the **Symposium** and the **Apology** [Jowett's English translations of the original ancient Greek texts]; and a comparison of Socrates with Homer's Odysseus & Achilles, with Aeschylus' Prometheus & Cassandra, with Sophocles' Antigone and Oedipus, with Euripides' Medea and Pentheus might prove useful. But since I'm extremely unfluent in ancient Greek, and there seems to be no adequate translations of the Greek tragedies, what is a poor boy to do but sing 'That's the Way it Goes'. And Socrates was a great human being. I'm not in his league and not on his level; so what is a poor boy to do.

Along with creative activity, rooted in sublimation, at least try to develop the critical activity of free inquiry— in the service of a social conscience, a concern for others? In this context, the concept of self, or more precisely, over-self can be seen as a paradigm or role model that's place above and over me— as a meaningful norm, significant standard, important aim, and satisfying gratifying goal grounded in the ontological dimension of Eros. But am I being realistic here, or just fooling myself?

Objection: your work's effect? a mere eclecticism that lacks an underlying structure and an overall design? A confusing, miscellaneous collection of incongruent, unrelated parts and pieces? A variegated mixture, variety show, a mingle, grabbag, mishmash, hodgepodge, motley medley? Cooked-up concoction; potpourri, a gumbo. a cauldron of the witches' brew of eye of newt and toe of frog and wool of bat and tongue of dog, and jumbled together with many other, various ingredients? Example of haphazard, hodgepodge thinking?

Manual Labor [my Spanish nickname]

Humid, hottish sun, hands on, hard work, the heavy sweating. In piles, like clouds, I rake together the recently mowed variety of grasses, weeds, and wildflowers to keep the yard as clean and neat as possible. Through the kreb's cycle and the release of energy from the reduction of ATP to ADP, the body rakes the scattering of clippings into condensed piles that resemble the shapes of summer, cumulus clouds or condensed piles of water vapor raked up by the sun. I scan the sky and see the clouds resembling other shapes, like human faces, flowers, birds, and bees. But after the Big Bang, what raked up the scattered subnuclear particles together into condensed clouds and piles of atomic nuclei, atoms, molecules, moons, and planets, stars, a cluster of stars, the galaxies, cluster of galaxies, and nebulae of cosmic dust and gas resembling clouds and piles of clippings? Perhaps gravity? From clippings to clouds to the cosmos: a flowing imaginative flight of fanciful lighthearted fun transforms the everyday, workaday, two-dimensional, repeating, daily routines into the brief emergence of the higher, ontological dimension of creative Eros.

Morning Autumn Colors

The autumn air is clear and dry and more than nippy cold; involuntarily, I quiver, quake, and shake. Cirrus and stratus streak the eastern horizon. Sunlight paints the clouds with golden yellows, oranges, reds, blues, and other colors. Fullmoon floats above the western horizon: translucent but thick white with darker splashes, splotches that form a female face, the woman in the moon, la Luna surrounded by a luminous nimbus, radiating pulses of glow. Branford pear, below the moon, displays its autumn leaves: the thumbprints of mostly reds, and also oranges, yellows, greens, and other colors.

A freshwater stream reflects the yellows, oranges, reds, and other colors of autumnal trees and bushes, while generously adding its variety of various jeweled violets, greens, and blues— creating a beautiful cornucopia, to view.

Why?

Why is the sky, usually blue? At sunrises and sunsets, why can we see the colors of violet, green, yellow-green, orange, red-orange, and red, sometimes? Why are clouds, a variety of whites, usually? I'll present two explanations: one fanciful; the other, scientific.

Invention. Between the sun and the earth chromatic, translucent jewels float: the various bluish hues of topaz and sapphire, the reds of rubies, oranges of amber, yellows of citrine & topaz, yellow-greens of peridot, the greens of emeralds, the various violets of amethyst. Sapphire & bluish topaz, the most abundant, fill the bulk of the sky. Thus, the sky appears mostly blue. The other gems embed the edges of the sky, the earth's horizon. Therefore, their colors appear at sunrise and sunset. Nature paints the clouds with different hues of pearl.

Science. The various colors of clouds and the sky appear because molecules of mostly oxygen, nitrogen, carbon dioxide, & water vapor scatter light. This scattering is proportional to the 4th power of the frequency or wavelength. Short wavelengths produce more waves that cause an increase in the scattering of light— a measurable quantity. Violet and blue have the shortest wavelengths, 400nm to 480nm; and red, the longest, 750nm. Violet has the shortest wavelength; so why's the sky not mostly a violet color? a matter of quantity. Blue has a larger quantity of wavelengths than violet; therefore, blue scatters more light into various hues of blue. At sunrise & sunset, sunlight passes thru less atmosphere, removing big quantities of bluish wavelengths, allowing other colors to show. The clouds? composed of water molecules. Because water molecules are larger than the wavelengths of light, they scatter all the frequencies of light in all directions— causing the perception of the various shades and tints of white— the colors of clouds. Is my science, correct?

What is time?

Time is the perception & measurement of change. Absolute or Newtonian time spatializes time. Modern, scientific, arrow of time makes time— irreversible. Solar time: night changes to day, from sunrise to sunset, day changes to night. Chronological or clock time: a 24 hour day; sixty minutes, one hour; sixty seconds, one minute. Calender time: 28 to 31 days per month, 12 months. Lunar time: the phases of the moon. Geological time: the large scale

changes to the earth, like the ice ages. Cosmological time: large scale changes in the universe, such as the Big Bang; lightyear time. Atomic and subatomic time: much faster than a speeding bullet or superman. Mythological time: cyclical, repeatable, reversible. Historical time: irreversible & linear change; unique events. Embryonic time: the changing development from the zygote to the newborn. Experiential time: lived time; different stages of developing and changing life; sequence of changing experiences. Playtime: the change from everyday routines to a bit of inventive or creative activity.

Variation on Ovid's 'Pythagoras' (Book 15, **Metamorphosis**):

Fluent time is a freshwater spring
forever streaming and changing,
forever new and renewing— nothing is permanent
but the flowing that dances, thinks, creates, & sings?

Hunches: Tentative Over-generalizations?

Thru transitional spectrums, nature becomes anti-nature: polychromatic, dynamic monism?
Language: the incipient appearance of h. sapiens with humane potentials, like the creation of mythology?

Religion: womb matrix of art, philosophy, science, and everyday common sense?

Art: the appearance of error and knowledge of anti-nature?

Philosophy: the appearance of error and knowledge of nature, anti-nature, and everyday common sense?

Science: the appearance of error and knowledge of nature?

Everyday common sense: diluted distortions of error & knowledge of nature and anti-nature?

At their best— religion, art, philosophy, and science offer some of the finest fragrant flowers. My knowledge of these various phenomena is even less than sketchy. But without trying to explore them and their histories, how else can we learn to be humane? Talking to living people, male and female? What does it mean— to be humane? to engage in activities like science, art, philosophy, religion, and ethics? To become humane: an overall aim that provides meaning and purpose— a means to overcome nihilism?

Mythology

Across the earth in ancient times, mythologies were the means to create & maintain various worldviews. Rooted in the cycles & rhythms of nature, mythological time is cyclic: day and night, the seasons, the phases of the moon.

What is mythology? It's the critical inquiry into the scientific knowledge of myths. That's a modern definition. For archaic societies, however, mythology meant the oral or written narrative of mythical tales or myths. What's a myth? One possibility: a guiding paradigm. Written down around 2000 BCE, perhaps, let's start with a concrete example of a mythical story— the creation myth of archaic Babylon: the Enuma Elish. Marduk, the creative power thru limitation, transforms Tiamat, amorphous chaos, into a cosmos or a structured order of power, efficacy, duration. The myth revealed how the ancient Babylonians could return to the mythical time in the beginning— to create and participate in a non-nihilistic world,

supported by meaningful paradigms, created by the archetypal activities of their gods. This myth, as well as others, showed the way to maintain a viable social structure by revealing what to value and believe. It revealed their role models. Because the Babylonians accepted the myths as authoritative, they mirrored them in their behavior, actions, acts, and deeds. Thus, the myths acted as a guiding paradigm.

A mythical mind didn't imagine time in a linear, irreversible, historical manner but in a cyclic way—the cycles of eternal repetition. Time, not as the perception of genuine change but as the returning to the Great Time in the beginning. Mythology ignored irreversible time and actual change. What mattered? the myths, the great time, and imitating certain actions by means of their festivals, rites, and rituals.

Can this myth, or any other myth, present a guiding paradigm for us today? What about the myths of the ancient Egyptians, Mesopotamians, Persians, Hittites, Hindus, Greeks, and the many other archaic civilizations around the planet, thru time and history? What about the myths of Ovid, William Blake, James Joyce, William Butler Yeats, and the many other mythmakers? What about the rituals, stories, myths, and images of Mesoamerican's peyote perspective? Or the Amazonian ayahuasca experiences, points of view, approaches, and avenues?

MASKS

In a protective manner, masks conceal— reveal. A contradiction? inconsistency? paradox?

A mask disguises & hides a human face. But painted faces become masks, like the circus clown, the joker [Mr J, & two thumbs up & a pinky promise to Harley Quinn's fantabulous emancipation], the merry-maker. Masks can, but don't have to, be dualistic; they can, but don't have to, show appearance and hide reality or vice versa.

Balinese masks conceal a person's personality and reveal the mythological demon, poetic demigod, make-believe supernatural power, visionary god. Balinese Legong dancers have painted faces [and flowered headdresses] to conceal their personal identities and reveal their religious deities. The mask & person are real— but they present different degrees of reality.

Japanese masks conceal the person and reveal variety: different states of mind.

The masks of Marsyas & Silenus: golden apple images of fascinating beauty. The masking form— of a socratic artist?

Masks: beliefs, convictions, make-believe, pretending, playing around.

A mask can hide the shy, retiring, public persona and reveal the fun-loving reveler.

Computer graphics utilize a protective mask to screen— or a selective mask to unscreen a variety of images.

Masks are selective, concealing this & revealing that. Masks are like consciousness. They both conceal and reveal, select and protect. Both are— surfaces that reach into the depths of energy.

Expressed emotions, symbols;
the symbols: masks;
expressed emotions— masks.

Art creates symbols that express –press out– emotions: the ideations or imaginative ideas of feelings, moods, emotions.

We create experiences.

Art creates symbols, imaginative ideas of experiences: complexes of thoughts.

Artistic experiences— masks? the making of masks— art? The making of art: the inherent force producing organized forms selected from the field, the flux, the sound & fury, vortex, maelstrom, whirlpool, whirlwind, hurricane, very chaotic stream of experienced perceptions, impressions, moods, emotions, feelings, mythopoetic ‘thinking’, reason, rationality, ideas, and the many interconnected complexes of thoughts.

Wave/Particle Duality?

Wave/particle duality of light? But nature doesn’t directly produce dualities, the ‘faith’ in opposites. Walking barefoot in the crunching snow is not the opposite of sticking your finger into the promethean flames of a campfire. But the extreme abstractions of cold and hot are opposite dualities. Dualities? the abstracted constructs of the human mind & valid in limited contexts. The wave/particle in quantum physics depends on a scientist’s interpretation of the experimental evidence: interference, for the wave; photoelectric effect, for the particle. But this dualistic interpretation can be removed by seeing that the wave and the particle show different aspects, effects, and playful deeds of energy.

What is a particle, atom, molecule, object, matter, a thing, a substance, an entity supposed to be? A permanent, unchanging, inert ‘reality’ that’s the same thruout the movement of time: self-identical. In quantum field physics, a particle is a localized excitation with definite energy: a field. Even though ‘real’ in some degree, it’s not a thing because it changes; not self-identical. An atom is not a thing, not matter, not a substance because it changes; not self-identical thru time. An atom? its sequence of deeds of energy: emission and absorption of light, ionization energy, electron cloud or probability distribution in discrete states of definite energy. A molecule? its series of deeds of energy: how it bonds, with what it bonds, the angles of the bonds, the molecule’s distinctive properties.

What is ‘mind’? its sequence of significant, middle of the road, and peripheral deeds of energy; what it does in historical time. Here, the mind = mentality = personality = person

= soul = spirit = self = character. They're equivalent, interchangeable words. Or are they?

One possible vision of the universe: non-reductionist, mysterious eternal energy that has the inherent capacity to give mysterious forms to itself, in varying degrees not dualities or, to be a bit more precise, in overlapping and intersecting spectrums and chromaticisms— thru creative limitation, informed selection, and playful development? Can stars be seen as sparkling dew that's scattered over cosmic fragrant flowers of dark energy?

Nature: Predation, Symbiosis

H. sapiens vampire h. sapiens.

People parasitize people.

Creatures eat creatures.

Critters feed on critters.

Viruses, bacteria, plants, and animals
prey on other viruses, bacteria, plants, and animals.

But also, in contrast, mutual beneficiality;
a lot of symbiotic activities can be seen,
like the Percula clownfish and the sea anemone,
like the mitochondria in the cytoplasmic sea.

The lucky ones? Plants that survive & thrive
on sunlight, water, minerals, carbon dioxide,
like Vincent van Gogh's painted sunflowers:
the giants in the world of botanical flowers.

Sunflower

A mission: a lot of groundbreaking labor. Till the soil by breaking up the dirt into chaotic heaps. Parfait-like, layer down the compost, sand, and fertilized terra firma. Sprinkle the seeds and cover them over with a thin layer of topsoil. Water & wait. Eventually the plants emerge from underground— to grow, expand, survive, and thrive within the limits of the fence: the overflowing fertility. The parts? the exuberant wildflowers. The whole? contained, restrained, confined by the fence, the overabundant, jungly wildflower garden.

The majestic annual sunflower towers over the many other types of lovely, petite, perennial wildflowers growing within the fenced-in garden and deck. Its stalk is straight, a little fuzzy, & limegreen. The heart-shaped leaves, with jagged edges, zigzagsharp, are roughraw [a little Scooby Doo], and scratchy to the touch. And out of the top of the stalk explodes the painted yellows of the softflaming petals surrounding a complicated disc of interwoven spirals of sheens of golden-oranges & greens of the florets, the reproductive parts. Out of the top overblossoms the flower, a source of energy, food, and oil— an earthly symbol of the sun.

A Lot of Hardy Labor

The fenced-in, raised-up deck area: a garden of various types of sunflowers, coneflowers, different kinds of coreopsis, crimson sage, the yellow primroses, and other wildflowers that attract the volatile butterflies and bumblebees. The deck? a modest, inexpensive, simple temple—opened to the winds & sky & sun. It's made of pressure treated wood, not stone, like the temples in Greece. It won't defy the centuries, like Greek temples. But eventually, time will dissolve the wood and stones into the raw material of atoms and molecules. Until another creates a new temple from out of the raw material of existence. Creating's joy—**not** enduring durability. But it's nice if it lasts long enough to enjoy for a while.

But, to be— a bit more precise: chromaticisms of inspiration and joy. The nuances, varying degrees and gradations, different tones & overtones, various chromatic values of shades and tints & flavors exist. A few flavors of joy? the imaginative conceiving of a reasonably possible project, the core and point of departure from the usually mundane, the increased vitality, the fire that lights inspires & sparks. But a lot of difficult efforts manage the making of a provisional actuality. A possible recipe for making a valid way of living [and a self]? energetic hard work—knotted with critical imagination and poetic reason—that results in triumphant tasks and significant missions, spotted dotted with vacations of fun, delight, enjoyment, play, and hedonistic moments. But is this the best way to live? Are there many 'best' ways to live? Is artistic activity an adequate response to nihilism? What about other, different ways of life? What about other types of responses to nihilism?

Delicious fruits of our labors: relaxing on the deck, amid the bright and open air and light, among the animated colorful wildflowers. Surrounding the deck and wildflower garden? the landscaped parameter of japanese magnolias, a gem magnolia, a miniature azalea bush, a gardenia bush, and the many sweet olive bushes in bloom. The breezes blow on the aromatic clusters of sweet olive flowers. Their clean, non-cloying, distilled, invisible, volatile, mortal scents of the lightest sweetness gently float to us. We breath in the delightful smells. In spire the enjoyable loveliness of all, all that's around, so close, for a while, while we can.

Morphing. Caterpillar: initial fence & deck, only. The butterfly: wildflower garden and simple temple affirming natural colors, beauty, and a bit of enhanced life.

Sunbathing: Developing New Qualities

It's a funday to sunbath. Kiddie pool; well water, cool. No tan lines. Privacy. The northwind? a dry clean coolness in varying degrees of intensity & speed. The heat of the sun cascades in various degrees of intensity and speed. The various degrees of heat and coolness mate with the temperature of the water from the well which is cold, up-pumped from 400 feet down underground. Then a series of delightful changes happen.

Around the pool, a variety of grasses, weeds, and wildflowers grow. And also, the many

different hues of greeny, yellow, violet, cream, and white. The reddish raspberry colors of a dwarf azalea. The white to cream to yellowish painted clusters of sweet olive flowers, smelling sweet and clean and non-cloying, blooming in profusion. The flowers of the gem magnolia? lightly aromatic, large, & white. The gardenia droops and swoons with so many flowers: wavy fold within another wavy fold within another, all white and curvy, heavy sweet in smell. The many reddish, red-violet, and violet hues of the japanese magnolia flowers stand out against the bare bark.

The trees: a tulip tree, banana trees, pines and pin oaks, maples, cherrywoods, crabapples, & pecan. Beyond the cleanly landscaped area— a jungle, the bush. Formidable woody landscape, wild & wooly, overgrown with thick sylvan thickets of shrubbery that's overhung with purple dewberries, the bumblebees' honeysuckle (creamy colored, wild and sweet), the passion flowers, the hummingbird's trumpet flowers painted yellows oranges peaches, and many other kinds of unnamed plants.

Creatures: mostly insects, such as honeybees and bumblebees. Others brilliantly painted—the iridescent and metallic sheens of flying, crawling, buzzing bugs: dragonflies, butterflies, beetles, spiders, wasps, and flies, to name a few.

Birds: the mimicky, feisty, unassuming, spunky, sportive, playful mockingbirds; bluebirds, bluejays, cardinals, finches, sparrows (one's named Captain Jack, the pirate), egrets, herons, hawks, the owl, and the occasionally geese and ducks, to name a few.

The sights, smells, sounds, heat, coolness combine and change an ordinary way into a day of delightful fun, enjoyable stay and graceful sway.

Gem Magnolia: Developmental Growth

Against the dull greens of grasses, leaves of dewberries and honeysuckle, varieties of shrubbery, and the bushy plethora of pine needles—the gem magnolia stands out.

Out of the ground upshoots the cylindrical trunk, the wick of the tree. And we can see its painted mottles, patches, and blotches of browns and tans and greys and thickly impastoed greens of lichen, algae, moss, and mold.

The trunk, a wick, supports the general shape of the tree— a flame. The trunk changes into blotched and mottled branches that transform into fuzzy, coppery, segmented stems that transfigure into leafbuds, leaves, flowerbuds, flowers, seedbuds & seeds. The parts repeat the fiery form of a flame.

The fuzzysoftcopper suede, cylindrical, flamelike, segmented stem transforms, from the petiole, a wick, into a leafbud, an elongated flamelike leaf enwrapped in a blanket of furry

coppery lime green that dreams of seeing, kissing, and hugging the sun. This snuggling? photosynthesis.

Taking in water, minerals, and carbon dioxide— as the leafbud enlarges— its bedding cover recolors to a copper suede. As the leafbud expands, the cover splits open from the vertical center, its seam. A flameshaping leaf emerges.

Patterns vary from leaf to leaf. Some have curving edges. Others, wavy or curvilinear or straight. A few elongate more than others. Some shape into more oval or rounded or elliptical forms.

The chroma range from a lime green to a dark forest green on the topsides with their rubbery feel and silvery grey to golden-yellow to copper-sheen to darker copper on the softfuzzy undersides.

The stem transforms into a flowerbud enwrapped in a dreaming nap of copper-tinted lime-green furry material.

The bud? a flamelike elfin hat, so soft and furry.

As the bud expands, the flower pops the seam, emerging, a frozen flame of white and lime.

With a backdrop of dappling colors, glossy greens, furry suedes, & metallic copper sheens, nature paints— with shadows and sunlight— various shapes of varying whites. The stages of the developing flowers in blossoming delights.

The flowers as a whole and the individual petals look like many shapes. White balls, globes, spheres, bowls, spoons, scoops, cups, hoods, overhangs, opening mouths, facial profiles, white tongues, folded tongues, canoes and pirogues, crabclaws, eggs, and seashells, tipped ellipses, ovals, circles, a variety of oddly shaped polygons, and various shapes of flames.

At the center of the flower stands the rounded, flamelike, ovoid seedbud mounted on a red-violet stem, a dimpled wick. The seedbud covers many shiny red seeds. Strange. This tiny shiny seed has the potential to become a large magnolia with glossy greens, frozen flames, and coppery suedes.

Petrified fires of multi-shaped flowers that perfume the air with the invisible scents— elusive aromatic sweetness.

I photograph the developmental sequence of the seed, the tree, the leaves, the flowers, the

flowerbud, the leafbud, the seedbud. To see them in a visible series, wow!

Digression. A few words about photography, then and now.

Training in photography began with a 35mm SLR Canon Rebel G camera, a 35-80 mm standard zoom lens for general work, a 50mm macro lens for magnified closeups, and Kodachrome 25 slide film for saturation, clarity, and high definition.

Now I use a 35mm SLR Canon Rebel XTi 10.1 megapixel digital camera, an 18-55mm standard zoom lens, a 60mm macro lens, and a 70-300mm telephoto lens.

Then, it used to take weeks to process the film with unforeseen results.

But now is only a matter of minutes with the options, provided by a computer and an image editing program, to fix photos that are off-center, too light, too dark, or some combination of these, or some other problem. Problems that often occurred with slide film and couldn't be fixed, then.

Also, then, a role of slide film only provided 15 photos— and the role was expensive, and so was the K-14 process that developed the color reversal, transparency slide film.

Now, the camera's eight gigabyte memory card provides over 800 photos in the RAW file format. The major increase in variety, freedom, options, ease, & speed makes photography more delightful, fun, and easy.

Enjoy the following photos of a developing gem magnolia tree.

Titles for the Artwork

Gem Magnolia Sequence of the Making of the Seed























































