

Islands One Summer
a memoir by Teri Ekland



What would it be like to grow up on an island, isolated from the world by the sea?

Stopping for the moment
Can only be done
When time is still.
It's the little things—
You see—
Coffee with a friend, the landscape,
An empty thought,
Empty time.

Stopping for the moment
Can only be done
When thoughts are cleared.
And then,
In the wake
(Observeth me)
I am alone
Yet,
Surrounded by the sea.

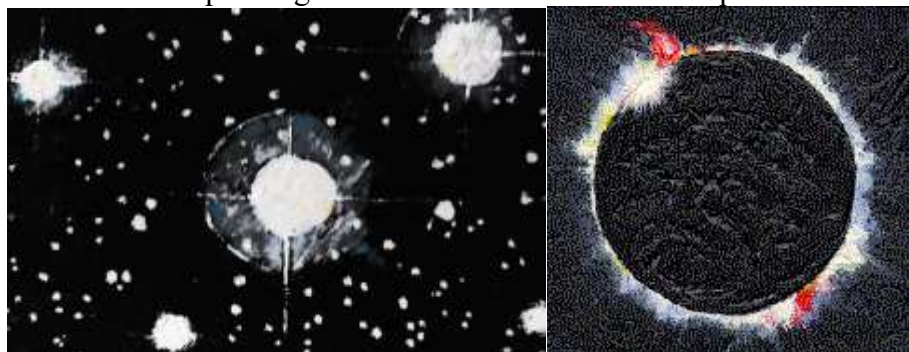
Summer Astronomy Class

In 1978, during my junior year at Portland State University, I took a summer course in Observational Astronomy. A lot of amazing things occurred during that enchanting summer. For one, I was mesmerized about learning the roadmap of the night sky and all the marvelous features of our observable universe. The course hooked me and for several years to follow, I became a dedicated amateur astronomer and stargazer. But many other things occurred for me during this summer course which involved several stargazing field trips around Oregon and Washington. I became friends with a woman my age who was also intrigued by the subject. Her name was Lori and she and I took a trip to Vancouver and stayed at a B&B and attended a totem pole raising ceremony by the indigenous nations of Vancouver, either the Squamish or the Kwakiutl nations or both. I took several pictures of the event with my new Canon AE-1 which I had purchased for Waldon's Photography 101 class. It was a camera I enjoyed for many years with assorted lenses and filters such as a wide-angle, a 200 zoom, a polarizing filter, and a six-star filter for spectacular sunsets and gleaming waterways. This was several years before digital cameras and smart phones took over the world. On the way home from Vancouver, Lori invited me to stay at her family's cabin overlooking a pristine lake in Washington.

I adored the professor who taught the course, and old man who was eager for his retirement in Bend, Oregon, in a few years. Sadly, Professor Walden never made it to his retirement. About a year after this summer course, while I was taking his classes Astronomy 101 and Photography 101, the "Professor" as we called him, died of a sudden heart attack. I was shocked and saddened by the news and subsequently called Cassiopea, the constellation that looks like a "W," Waldon's constellation.



My project for Professor Walden's Astronomy101:
oil paintings of the Pleiades and a solar eclipse



By far the best thing that happened during this summer of stargazing was that I met Lars Radestam, an attractive Swedish man who was gregarious, handsome, and nineteen years older than me. I was twenty-three he was thirty-nine. But that hardly mattered to me. He was Swedish and I was highly drawn to people from other countries and cultures. I had been all my life. As soon as I graduated high school I sped off to Europe for three months, then traveled to Mexico,

and joined the Army so I could spend two years in Germany and get a European ETS (which didn't happen. Please see my memoir "The Trouble with Brass.") So, not only was I a seasoned traveler at my young age, most of my friends in college were foreign. Noura, a very dear friend I made in a Cross-Cultural seminar, came from Saudi Arabia. She would invite me to her apartment and feed me luscious meals that I could not resist. I guess I loved international food as much as international relationships. I also had a friend from Japan, Kazuko, one from Saipan, Rufina, one from Germany, Barbara whom I met in an Arabic class (her husband was Saudi). Really, I was so interested in the world at large, apart from my staid and boring hometown and childhood family, that I majored in Anthropology and took courses in Islamic Studies, Buddhism, Hinduism, and anything else that oozed from the world beyond that of my childhood.

I got to know Lars during the many stargazing outings. He always acted impressed with what I knew because I had poured my heart and soul into learning about the night sky. But more so I got to know him because this class of gazers grew quite familiar and friendly with one another and after the evening class sessions at PSU we gathered at the local eatery called Sam's Hof Brau, a dark restaurant with pool tables and a buffet that served roast beef and German meats and kraut and tall pitchers of chilled beer. Lars and I would end up talking a lot, mostly because I loved hearing his accent. He had an engineering degree from the prestigious Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in Stockholm, had worked as an engineer for a while, and was a single father with four kids ranging from ten to sixteen. At the time we met, he had decided to quit working to pursue an advanced degree in microscopy, something that must have been impressive and state-of-the-art forty-five years ago.

One of the places Waldon's class frequented for late night stargazing was Larch Mountain. On two occasions Lars brought his four kids with him for the experience—a fun

family night. There was Tom, the oldest, his teenage daughter Sandra, and his younger boys Per and Charlie. I interacted with Lars and his kids, shared with them my new found knowledge about the constellations, and pointed out objects through binoculars. Lars was impressed with this and said I'd make an excellent mother. Little did I know that he seriously had me in mind for the job and not long into the course he directly told me he needed a mom for his kids and thought I was a perfect candidate. I was flattered although motherhood wasn't really something I was considering at the time. My mind was directed on earning my degree.

There was one occasion during class when I asked the Professor if we were going to "Lars" Mountain. He burst out laughing over my slip of the tongue. Obviously, I was beginning to have Lars totally on my mind. It wasn't long before Lars asked me to join him and him alone at Sam's Hof Brau for a beer and sandwich. He then said something like, "I'm nearly 40 now and you might think I'm an old guy but I'd love to take you to a beach along the river one night. A private spot. We could build a large bon fire, go swimming, and have a late picnic and beers." He was referring to Sauvie Island on the Columbia River in north Portland. I knew the island well because as a small child my dad, his father, and my granddad's Uncle Willie used to go cat fishing in the slough on Sauvie Island and I would come along to play on the beach and watch huge waves roll ashore whenever a ship passed in the channel on the way to the Port of Portland.

I agreed to the date because Lars enthralled me with flattery about my knowledge of the night sky and about my potential for being such a kind and lovely mother and his maturity and foreignness enchanted me. I really hadn't dated or had a boyfriend since my days in the military and those guys were rather unsophisticated (low lives) and misogynistic, to say the least. They tended to see women soldiers as inferior. But not Lars. We had interesting conversations about

his studies and knowledge of science, about my experiences in the Army, my travels, and about Sweden and the Royal Swedish Academy.

Lars took me to an exclusive beach on Sauvie Island in the darkness of evening. No one else was in sight. He built a large bon fire and we drank cold beers and ate pickled herring and new potatoes with sour cream and chives, the kind of food he liked. I liked it too. It was a new and exotic dish for me. Then he tried to teach me a Swedish song about some maiden who lived on an island outside of Stockholm. “Mai po Malia, vakera Mai...” Mai from the island of Malia, beautiful Mai” that’s all I can remember, in Swedish. In English, it was about this beautiful island girl that fisherman loved to watch her hop from the pier onto her boat and row from island to island collecting flowers, wild strawberries, and blueberries. It was all so charming and sweet. Without warning, Lars began undressing me and we made love by the bon fire then he took my hand and led me to river to go skinny dipping. I believe I spent the night at his home in North Portland, in his small single bed, a cot really, but it was Swedish furniture.

I later asked him how he had dared to be so bold and presumptive about making love to me and he said something to the effect, “I couldn’t help it. The world revolves around the ‘P.’” It’s something he would say to me many times to come.

That summer passed by and I continued dating Lars, going to his home, and visiting with him and his kids and with his cousin Joan Mahoney who lived down the street from Lars with her two teenage sons and daughter Susie who was about thirteen. Lars started inviting me to these potluck get togethers he had at his house with Joan and her friends Charlene, Betty, and Barbara. They were ladies in their forties who smoked, wore copious makeup, and talked about the men they were dating. It was rather boring for me. At one gathering Joan had evidently invited a friend over to meet Lars, her eligible bachelor cousin who knew how to treat a lady.

This was early on before it was clear that Lars and I were together. Anyway, I walked into the dining room where these ladies were smoking and the friend of Joan's said, about me, "And this must be the oldest daughter?" meaning I was one of Lar's kids. "Oh, no," I said. "I'm his girlfriend!" At another gathering Lars invited his tenant living in an adjunct part of the house. He was kind of a rough looking man, younger than Lars, and he pulled me aside at the gathering and said, "I'd like to invite the youngest guest of this party out on a date." "I can't," I said trying to be polite. "Lars is my boyfriend." "Oh?" he said but I don't think he cared and he may have already known.

At PSU, while attending classes during the day, Lars and I would go to the Cheerful Tortoise for tocos or to Sam's Hof Brau, which seemed to be our favorite place.

I quickly became enthralled with my Swedish older boyfriend and checked out a few language tapes from the library, copied them, and started learning Swedish phrases by listening to the tapes in my car everywhere I went. Eventually, I surprised Lars by saying a few things to him in Swedish. He even began teaching me some Swedish songs and phrases. One of the most interesting Swedish words he shared was "fiong" which means a man's "hard on" (erection) and he said that Swedes use the phrase "that has fiong!" to describe something that has power and class such as a Ferrari sports car.

I almost thought I could speak the dam language but I was entirely a beginner. Nonetheless, I impressed Lars. I even learned the song for his big Swedish holiday, Santa Lucia, on December 13th. But when the holiday festivities arrived, Lars really disregarded my attempt at singing the song because it wasn't the version he had always used for the holiday tradition and his daughter Sandra was the focus of the day and the singer of the correct version.

Santa Lucia began early in the morning when Sandra, dressed in a white gown with a red belt and wore a crown of burning candles, served the traditional saffron buns called lussekatt, cups of mulled wine called glogg, and raisins and almonds. This was a really big deal for Lars, his kids, and cousins. One year, probably after I'd been with Lars about three years, I invited a colleague from Portland Community College, where I was teaching ESL, to join me at Lars' house for the early morning event. She had expressed an interest in the tradition and I tended to like sharing my involvement with other cultures. It's something I did more than once. For example, when invited to an Indian dinner at my friends from India, who made fabulous curries and rice, I brought along a colleague and her spouse. Well, Lars later told me that if I come to his Santa Lucia holiday event to come alone and Cholan, the Indian friend, said not to show up with uninvited friends. Oh well. something in me wanted to share the wonders of the international world.

After the summer course in stargazing, as I've mentioned, I took Professor Walden's courses in astronomy and photography. As a veteran, I was entitled to a grant for a tutorship and I arranged for Lars to tutor me in astronomy because of his background in science and math. Professor Waldon signed off on the arrangement and Lars started teaching me concepts in mathematics, physics, and even microscopy. He was quite the engaging tutor which made him an excellent father to his kids. He really promoted them, tried to bolster their interests, and teach them the subjects he knew. Lars was a standup man who had nothing but strong and steady goals and determinations to be a good dad and member of society. And a good boyfriend to me. But there were times of conflict because he was a man set in his ways and at times he grew impatient and agitated and this tended to bother me. For example, one day we had planned to go to Mt. Hood cross-country skiing for the day with the kids. I came over to his house in the early

morning and there was such agitation and commotion to the process of getting everyone ready, all coming from Lars, that I said I was going back to my studio at PSU and he didn't seem to care because he was so wound up in getting everyone ready. Oh well. I simply missed out on a day of skiing on the mountain.

During the time I began dating Lars, before we had made a big commitment to each other, I also had my eye on a grad student in anthropology. He was a husky blond and for some reason he appealed to me and I began hanging out with him in the anthropology lab and obviously flirting which wasn't really something I often did. Maybe I thought that he was interested in my field although, at the same time I remember thinking in a practical way, "what's he going to do with an MA in Anth?" We ended up having sex a few times but he didn't really fall all over me because he had a girlfriend. Still, I was infatuated with him at the same time I was infatuated with Lars. I remember even telling my mother, probably in a giddy way, that I was in love with two guys. That's probably as far as that went because Mom and I never really discussed anything. She had met Lars once or twice, maybe I brought him along to a family gathering, and the only comment my mom made was, "What is he? A perpetual student?" That comment annoyed me but it was typical of the sort of relationship I had with my parents. And they never said anything about the age difference. But that too was typical because they hardly ever said anything to me about me and my life, my whole life, as I often lament in my several memoirs and especially in my poetry collection "Family Secrets."

Anyway, back to my crush on this grad student whose name was Scott. One night he had invited me to swing by his campus apartment after my class. For some reason I saw Lars that night as well but I carried my class books with me as if I was meeting with a classmate to study. That's probably what I told Lars when I said I couldn't join him for a beer at the Cheerful

Tortoise. When I showed up at Scott's apartment with my books he seemed to figure out what I was doing (using them as a ruse) and he called me out on it. Well, anyway, he turned out to be a total slob (purposely farted in bed) and a jerk (grab at my crotch when I was jogging by him on the track and becoming smug and haughty because he knew I had a crush on him). My soirees with him ended soon but I continued dating Lars who had also somehow figured out my little ruse and asked me what I had been up to. I confessed. He was angry of course and wondered if he should call it off with me but I explained that we hadn't really committed ourselves to each other. I think he eventually cooled off and we made a firm commitment to each other.

I continued meeting Lars at the cafes near campus, going to the gatherings at his house with his cousin Joan Mahoney and her smoking lady friends, and going on outings with Lars and his kids. Lars own several classic cars—two 1960's Cadillacs, and a beautiful forest green T-Bird convertible which he kept snug in his garage. He drove the two Cadillacs, which in the late 70's may not have really been classics as they would be today. But I don't remember him ever driving the T-Bird. Maybe he was merely working on it.

He also owned a Ford baby blue pickup truck with a large "Security" camper on the bed. I thought the name brand of his camper rather ironic after Lars told me that the year he bought the camper, the oven inside exploded. But the company fixed it and Lars continued to actively use it. On a few occasions I joined Lars and his young sons on weekend camp trips to lakes and streams on Mount Hood, to Multnomah Falls, and to the Oregon coast.



One of these camping trips was to Ft. Stevens State Park at the beach near Astoria. We spent an afternoon picking black berries on the hillside near our campsite. Lars had a good sense of humor which he used frequently when engaging his sons. When Charlie, the youngest, found a huge juicy purple berry he'd hold it up to show his dad. "That's a general," Lars would say although he pronounced general as "heneral" and that always floored me. I just loved his Swedish accent. "Look, another heneral," I started saying. Lars spoke perfect English but he had uniquely Swedish pronunciation here and there.

In addition to his "dad joke" sense of humor with a Swedish twist, Lars liked to tell stories about Swedish folklore whenever something struck him. He was a highly intelligent man who love dispersing his knowledge in math, science, world events, his culture, the Vikings, and his family history. He often talked about Swedish ferries living in the forests along with ogres and trolls. I was intrigued by his description of how the forest trolls of Sweden blended into the trunks of trees. His stories inspired me to create two painting of trolls blending into tree trunks and I gave them to Charlie and Per. I doubt they still have them after forty plus years but it would

be delightful if they did. Lars was impressed with my artwork and went about telling the troll stories as he examined these paintings.



During my undergraduate and graduate years at PSU I lived in several different campus housing studios. After I had returned home from my stint in the Army, I first lived with my parents in my old bedroom while I started my first year of college at Portland Community College, Sylvania Campus. The collage wasn't far from my parent's home on Maplecrest Drive and was on a beautiful setting in the foothills of SW PDX. At the time I ended up buying an old red Galaxy 500 from a neighbor friend and drove that to my classes. Mostly, I was focused on getting the basic required courses behind me, such as English, and I took history classes and lots of art classes in painting, sketching, and commercial arts. I wasn't sure where I was headed with my education and at first I thought it might be art. My parents probably thought that was the best area for me to pursue, since they thought I was quite artistic, although they never really gave me much input about anything. All I know is that after a difficult time in the military, I was determined to get an education on the GI Bill and make something of myself.

Before my first year was over at PCC I knew I had to go to a regular college or I might lose interest in the whole endeavor. A community college felt something like high school and not all that indicative of higher aspirations. I also had decided that a career in art really wouldn't offer me many substantial opportunities. I had always been interested in world cultures both ancient and modern so I transferred to Portland State (PSU) and majored in anthropology. Typically, my parents said nothing to me about my decisions but I did learn from my sister that Mom had suggested that I was going to major in something stupid like anthropology. This annoyed me but I never confronted Mom. I grew up in a non-confrontational, rather indifferent, and silent family. Nevertheless, I was set and determined to become an anthropologist or an archaeologist whatever that might entail. It didn't matter to me at the time because I was wildly interested in learning all about my chosen field and exploring the many diverse cultures that exist and once existed on this planet.

After a few months I moved out and into a shared Victorian house not far from the PSU campus. I had an upstairs room and walked to my classes about a half hour away. My Galaxy had petered out by this time and I no longer had a car. Actually, what happened to that car is a story in itself. While I was a freshman at PCC I got a DWI but it was not really my fault and here's why. The teacher of my French Class decided to have a French wine tasting party. I went, tasted quite a lot of wine and became significantly under the influence. It grew late and I had made plans to continue parting with a fellow student, a young man, when the teacher ushered us out of her house. Here's the thing. I was still under age, not yet twenty-one, and this teacher was or should have been more responsible. Or, I should have come after her and held her responsible for what happened to me. I left her house in my red Galaxy 500 and drove slowly to some night spot to meet up with my classmate. However, at an intersection on Barbur Blvd. I was evidently

driving too slowly and too obviously impaired and a cop pulled me over. He gave me a sobriety test—the walking kind—and cuffed me for DWI and took me to the station. I had to leave the Galaxy at the side of Barbur Blvd and probably took a taxi to my parent's house, where I was living at the time. The next day, ironically, my dad had arranged for a friend of his to help him give my old car a tune up. I had to tell Dad that my car broke down and was at the side of the road. He helped me retrieve it and I don't recall if I ever got that tune up but I do know that I never admitted to my parents what had happened. I suspect, however, they figured something out but we weren't a communicative family, to say the least. I had to get a court appointed lawyer to help me through the mess. I think I was too and insecure to tell him about the French class party and if I did I don't know why he wouldn't have helped me go after that teacher. In any event, maybe I lost my license for a year and then decided not to drive for a good while. I guess I sold that Galaxy back to Celest, the neighbor friend I bought it from.

I soon tired of living in the Victorian because my roommates were using drugs and the young woman who owned the house wasn't always on top of keeping things functioning. Once or twice the toilet clogged up and remained so for a day or two. Things like made for a very uncomfortable living arrangement. And besides, I wanted to live closer to campus so I arranged for housing through the university and was able to quickly get a studio room in the Montgomery Building situated on the campus itself. This seemed convenient but the housing offered only a small room and hotplates weren't allowed (although I would sneak one into the room and use it) and the shower facility and bathrooms, for some reason, were shared by both male and female students. This did create a problem. Not long after I moved into my room, some Nigerian man, whom I had cordially greeted in the laundry room, learned of my room number and kept pounding on my door at three AM. But that wasn't the half of it. In a neighboring room, a floor

below, a woman had been beaten to death by a man who had climbed a tree up to her window. The news was that her murder was an issue over drugs, as if this mitigated the homicide. The final straw for me, however, occurred while I was showering and I looked up and saw a man peering down at me over the stall. I reported this and said I wanted to immediately move out despite any contract agreement and the manager acted like it was just a common occurrence. “Oh, another peeking-Tom? We get them all the time.” But he did allow me out of my agreement

I was about to move back in with my parents, with dread, but a friend I made in my biology class offered to rent me a room in the house she and her boyfriend were renting. She lived just off Sunset Highway in west PDX which offered a direct route straight to PSU. And she said I could ride back and forth with her. I probably didn’t have a car at the time. She went by the name Angel and her boyfriend, a lanky man who was also a veteran, went by the nickname Lizard. Angel was working on pre-med courses which is why I met her in biology. She aspired to become an MD but I found her to be rather high-strung probably because she was under a lot of stress taking such challenging courses as chemistry, physics, and trigonometry.

I moved in with Angel and Lizard and Angel’s cute eight-year-old son and everything seemed to be working out fine. We even made a few gardens together on her acre of land and I brought over a chihuahua that my parent’s had but didn’t seem to want. Angel and Lizard had two St. Bernard’s they were breeding and I had to constantly watch out for my little dog’s welfare until I finally returned “Ginger” to Mom and Dad.

One interesting thing that came out of this little arrangement was that Lizard suggested I could stay with a friend of his in San Diego when my best friend Kathi and I were making plans to take a bus there during spring break. This friend was actually the

father of Lizard's friend and everyone called him Moby Jack. He was about fifty-five, had a long gray scraggly beard, and was living in a dingy apartment near the beach on a pension from Honeywell where he had worked most of his life while he spent time sailing around the waters of San Diego, northern Mexico, and southern California. He was truly an "old salt" and a prime character for a novel. And so, when I was drafting my fifth novel a few years later, "My Brave Inca Dove," Moby Jack became one of the first colorful characters my protagonist encounters in northern Mexico during her journey to Tierra del Fuego.

Anyway, during our week with Moby Jack he took us to Sea World, out on a harbor cruise, on a sailboat, to the world-famous zoo, to Tiajuana, and to several beaches and restaurants. And the old salt quickly made a pass at me and we had a sort of relationship for most of that week but he was useless in his bed which was a mattress sprawled on the floor with dirty sheets that he washed when I accepted his advances. Moby Jack was a stanch alcoholic and everywhere we went he would shake until he got a shot of alcohol. I became so enthralled with the city's beauty that Moby Jack and I started talking about my transferring to San Diego State University.

When I returned home I actively considered everything I needed to do to make the move work. All the while Moby Jack and I were exchanging letters and he was very hyped up about my returning to SD and staying with him in his apartment. I probably got the old guy's heart to pumping. One problem I had about making the move was that I was in braces at the time (this was before my summer astronomy course when I met Lars). I consulted with my orthodontist Dr. Paicentini and he was rather rude about my pulling out of his treatment. He said I'd have to find an orthodontist down there but he didn't

recommend one. After about a month, I began to pull back on my enthusiasm for SDSU and for living with Moby Jack. I guess reality crept in that living in a relationship with Old Barnacle Bill was rather absurd. I wrote a last letter to Moby Jack and gently explained the move would be too difficult. I think he wrote back and said he understood. And that was that with MJ until I resurrected him in my adventure novel.

Not long after my return from SD an incident occurred between Angel and me that caused me to abruptly move from the home she shared with Lizard and her son. It occurred just before a class session began in cultural anthropology taught by one of my favorite anthropology instructors, Professor Atherton. I had convinced Angel to take this course with me as one of her electives in her rigorous pre-med coursework. I related that the content would be interesting and a hell of a lot less challenging than biochemistry. And so, we were sitting in the auditorium waiting for Atherton to take the stage at the podium when Angel suddenly became a bit deranged. She was evidently extremely stressed out over her other coursework and she grabbed my shoulders, shook me, and said something like, “You have an easy and stupid major in cultural anthropology and know nothing about what it’s like to take challenging courses that have meaning.” I merely gave her a long stare, pulled from her grip on my shoulders, and moved to another seat. Later that day I arranged for my dad to help me retrieve my things from her house and I moved out without saying anything more to Angel. I ran into her a few times and she was cordial, probably realized she had been a psycho and that was that. I also ran into Lizard at a veteran’s place and he made some comment like, “Yeah, Angel is under a lot of stress and gets carried away with her emotions sometimes.” In retrospect, I have to wonder if she ever

made it into medical school. She wasn't getting top grades and she was obviously unstable. But I hope she did. It was her dream.

I stayed at my parent's, yet again, until I could arrange my move into a women's only unit called the Ondine--a fifteen-story student apartment building on SW 6th near Hall Street. It was the quickest student housing that I could get into other than the Montgomery Building.



Sunrise sequence of Mt. Hood and the Willamette River from my studio apartment in the Ondine

The Ondine didn't really have a great reputation as one of the best "honor students only" units, but it was clean and adequate and a whole lot better than the Montgomery Building. The little studio unit was made for two roommates so it had two single beds and two desks and closets. The unit shared a bathroom and kitchenette with the neighboring unit which is how I met Mona Clausnitzer, my Ondine neighbor who off the bat was sure to inform me that her name was pronounced "Mona" as in Mononucleosis and not "Mona" as in "Moan-a" (not that she put it this way.) We got along cordially although we didn't really hit it off as good friends. We had very different demeanors. I think Mona liked feeling stylish and a bit uppity. She had a rich Saudi boyfriend who lavished her with fine things and fine treatment. At this time, my boyfriend was Lars and Mona would make rather snide comments about him and his visits to my studio. She thought he acted like he was trying to be a little kid and once she suggested I was on menopause

because of my twenty-year older boyfriend. Another time she claimed that Lars must have used her washcloth in our shared shower because it smelled like sperm. Other than this, Mona and I got along okay and occasionally went jogging together around the nearby track. We did this because one dark evening Mona had tried jogging alone and some guy started chasing her. Really, downtown Portland wasn't the safest place for a woman to be jogging alone at night. Maybe no city is.



When I was a young adolescent many of my classmates had braces. My parents got my sister braces but for some reason they couldn't afford to get them for me. They suggested that my teeth weren't that bad but I felt self-conscious about having two front teeth that slightly crossed. Friends at school even made remarks about my teeth, on occasion, and when I was in the Army a boyfriend remarked that I looked like a canary. That did it. After I returned home from my military stint one of the first things I did, other than sign up for college courses and take the SAT, was arrange to get braces through the same orthodontist my sister went to, Dr. Paicentini. At first I made payments for the braces myself but after a few months I told my mother that she and dad should pay for them because they should have done so when I was in high school. They took over the payments.

I didn't really like the way the clerks at Paicentini's office treated me. I was twenty or twenty-one and they treated me like I was still a kid under my parents care. They kept trying to

consult with my parents on matters concerning my orthodontic work. I guess at the time it was unusual for a grown person to get braces. Oh well. I hated wearing them, was self-conscious smiling, but in the end I was glad to finally get my teeth right.

During my first year with Lars, I was in braces and each night Paicentini had prescribed that I wear a retainer, a horrible wire contraption strapped around my head and into my grill to help straighten my teeth. However, when I began staying overnight with Lars more and more as our relationship progressed, he did not like me wearing the retainer and in the end I pretty much quit wearing it and hoped that the braces would be sufficient enough. It was such a relief to finally get them off. Lars was pleased. His cousin Joan and her smoking lady friends all made complimentary remarks. And I felt much better about my smile. (On a side note, as I write this memoir about forty-five years later, I have to admit that my teeth stayed straight for maybe thirty years. Then they reverted to their natural crooked positions most likely because I had failed to wear that retainer because of Lars.)

Although I often stayed with Lars and his family in north Portland during our early time together, he also came to my little studio in the Ondine to have relations with me during a break in his classes. That's how that went. But it was also exciting for me to have such a handsome, mature, and exotic boyfriend.

One evening, perhaps a few months into my relationship with Lars, I was on my bed putting my hair in rollers. My little twin bed was against the window that looked down eight stories onto a flat rooftop below and offered me a view of the Willamette River and Mt. Hood. While I was trying to set my long hair, I dropped one of the rollers at the side of my bed between me and the window. As I reached down to pick it up my head pressed against the window and broke through the glass.

I ran to the mirror over the one vanity sink in my studio and saw a large cut across my nose. It appeared like my nose was hanging. I panicked and could only think that I would be marred for life. Forget about straight teeth. Now I'd have a permanently ugly face.

First I called Lars but he wasn't home so I related my story to his daughter Sandra. I must have been hysterical. She said she'd try to find her dad. Then I called my best friend Kathi but she wasn't answering her phone so I called her parents Carl and Fran and they said they'd be right over. I'm not sure why I didn't call my parents except that I had never felt very close to them or maybe they were out of town. And I had relationship with my siblings. That all aside, I sat on my bed and held a towel to my bleeding nose waited for Fran and Carl to arrive and take me to the emergency room.

In very little time Fran and Carl pounded on my door. They were filled with concern for me probably because of my frantic call to them. They looked at my nose and Fran asked if I had taken some kind of drug. She probably couldn't believe that I had been so stupid as to stick my head through the window of my eighth-floor studio. But before I got very far into explaining my attempt to pick up a hair roller, the door burst open and Lars ran in saying, "Teri, where's Teri? Is she all right?"

Obviously, Sandra had gotten my message to her dad and he had dropped whatever he had been doing to rescue me. I was filled with a resurgence of hope by his mere presence. He immediately took over my care, thanked Fran and Carl (who later told me how impressed they had been with my dashing and chivalrous boyfriend), and then he drove me to the emergency room where a doctor cleaned up my poor nose and stitched it in place. I had a scar line that eventually diminish into obscurity but over the years I often pointed it out and retold the story of how I had stuck my head through the window of my eighth-floor studio at the Ondine

During my early college years at PSU, I had a series of work-study jobs that I possibly got through VA programs. The GI Bill paid for my tuition and I'm sure I wanted extra money for food and entertainment. One of my first jobs was at Montgomery Market, a kind of hippie co-op store at the bottom corner of the same creepy student housing where I encountered a peeping Tom in the shower room. The market was just off the parkway plaza of campus and I didn't mind the job of clerking at the front counter and stocking the inventory and I also enjoyed taking a handful of nuts from the bins and nibbling down, from time to time. The only memorable occurrence was of a scraggly young man who came up to me at the counter and asked if I wanted to buy some lettuce. I didn't understand him and kept asking if he wanted to sell us produce but he kept persisting with one phrase "want to buy lettuce." He was beginning to annoy me and I could see him growing agitated and frustrated. Finally, he simply blurted out, "Do you want to cop a dime of marijuana?" "Oh?" I must have said then told him to be on his way. But he wouldn't leave and seemed to be growing personally angry at me so I had to say, "All right. Let me go get some money in the back room." The stupid dude waited at the counter and I appeared with a co-worker, a man who was certainly more imposing in appearance than me, and he told the guy to leave and not come back and that he had already called campus security. The guy left and I don't think we had really called security. Not sure why. We should have. Maybe we were afraid of future trouble from the scraggly guy having a vendetta against us, against me, personally, and sometimes I worked into the evenings and had to walk to my studio in the dark.

Another work study job I had, possibly after or simultaneously with my job at the Montgomery Market, was as a file clerk in the university's accounts receivable office. It was a horribly boring and tedious job that Mona had previously had. The work study pay was on an honor system. I was to keep track of my hours and the office overseer checked it off and

submitted it to the VA. At first I tried being forthright and honest about each hour I worked and the manager even suggested she'd see to my getting a raise. But then I started padding the hours more and more to try to get through the program. Maybe I was just lazy or maybe I suffered from ADHD. Don't know. But the manager knew I was padding hours, although she didn't confront me about it but she certainly didn't see to my getting that raise. Didn't matter because I soon couldn't stand the tedious job and I quit.

During the summers of my first two years at PSU, I read gas meters. My father arranged for me to get the job as a summer hire at Northwest Natural Gas Company where he had worked since his late teens. His father, my granddad Stan, had worked for the company and evidently he got his two oldest sons jobs there as well. My father and his older brother Jack started out as meter readers. Uncle Jack worked his way into a supervisory position and my father ended up as a manager of the meter reading office where he worked when I signed on.

The first summer was great for me. I enjoyed the exercise, being in the outdoors, and earning over nine hundred a month which was a lot of money back then. There were a few down sides to the job, of course. Once I entered a back yard and two huge Great Danes chased me out the gate. Another time it was two St. Bernards. I don't remember a dog ever actually biting me but there were several close calls especially with little dogs when the owner was standing there saying, "Oh, she don't bite." The owner's words only seemed to motivate the dogs to protect and attack. And a few times homeowners were rude to me such as when I crossed someone's lawn "get off my yard" or when I mistakenly went into the wrong backyard looking for a meter. "Get out of my yard!" "Oh, I'm looking for a gas meter?" "Don't use gas! Get out!" "Okay. Sorry."

One perk for me was a forty-dollar bonus if I caught someone tipping their meter to cheat the gas company and steal gas. On one day I discovered two such meters. There were no cell

phones in those days. Only pay phones. But I ran to a neighbor's house and asked to use the phone so I could call the company and report the thefts. The lady I asked was a bit apprehensive as if she would be doing something wrong to her neighbors or as if I were doing something wrong but she let me use her phone and I earned an extra eighty dollars. Sweet!

My second summer reading gas meters turned out quite different. First off the company had, for some reason, decided to decrease the monthly pay for the summer hires by three hundred dollars. This upset me and I considered not taking the job. But seven hundred a month was better than nothing. I wrote a long letter to the supervisor expressing my grievance about the deduction in pay. I even read it to Lars to get his opinion. The only thing that happened was that the supervisor, Mr. Mayfair, an old white man with gray hair in a suit, called me into his office and essentially said there was nothing he could do to change the policy. Then he pointed out how I had misspelled a word in my letter and that this wasn't a good precedence for future career opportunities. This was 1978, before computers and spellchecking.

Because of my dad I probably kept the job. I didn't want to let him down since he had arranged for me to get the job in the first place. And I saw him every day at the corporate office where I collected the series of punch cards that I was to mark on the day's route. I would read the meter dials, a series of five or six analog clock-like gages (no digital readings back then) by tilting my head to the right for the first gage, marking it down, then tilting my head to the left to read the next gage and marking that down and so on. Tedious in today's thinking, I know. But it worked back then. I usually also carried a set of keys for each route to let me into different cellars or garages filled with dust and cobwebs. Once I had dropped a set of keys and spent half a day retracing my route to find them. At the time I didn't have a car and so I had to take the bus which added probably an hour to my day.



I had cut the sleeves off of my meter-reading shirt to get some sun. In my belt is a can of mace to ward off dogs and I'm holding a flashlight and punch cards; I'm ready to hit the day's route.

By August on my second summer of reading gas meters I was ready to quit. The dock in my pay had bothered me all summer. I began to take shortcuts during my routes by estimating some of the more difficult meters to get to. Of course, this was a no, no, but I did it anyway and it showed on the monthly report of the readings. My readings were like 20 percent off the mark and it was obvious to my dad what I had been doing but he never confronted me and I kept at it. By Labor Day when I had maybe two or three weeks to serve out my "summer hire" agreement I turned in my resignation letter because Lars and his two youngest sons planned to take a trip to the San Juan Islands in the Puget Sound and then a ferry over to Victoria on Vancouver Island in Canada. I could not pass up the opportunity to join them. Maybe I had even made the plans. Anyway, this was something I would typically do when it came to an opportunity to travel to an interesting and exotic place. For example, a few years later just after I graduated PSU with my MA in English, I handed over the last week of the class I was teaching in the ESL department to a professor emeritus so that I could attend a friend's wedding in Calcutta, India. I could not miss the event even though the director of the ESL department, I would later learn, became furious

and gave me a B instead of an A on my Master's thesis. While in Hong Kong before I headed to Wuhan for my first teaching job at a foreign university, I wrote this poem. It seems to fit this little habit of my past.

I had to make a date

In the hours of early morning,
I think about Today –
Of what to wear to look just right,
Of what I ought to say.

It really doesn't matter
Which gown which frock or pants,
And I take my disposition
As the subject to enhance.

The dawn is dead,
My hair is soiled
But I have to make a date
In accordance with my reverence
I must not show up late.

I take a scarf and wrap it
In a style to match my skull
And formulate facial facts
To fade away the null.

Who can say that I'm not pretty?
Immaculate is my name.
As I dash in new appearance
Endeavored to remain.

When I told my dad I was quitting I really don't remember what he had to say, if he tried to discourage me or not. But he did say that my gas company file would be stamped with "Not for re-hire." I don't think I cared much, at the time, because I had to make a date, but a few years later, maybe after I returned home from Asia, I applied for a job at the gas company, my dad again helped me, and sure enough, they wouldn't re-hire me.

Vancouver Island, Victoria, San Juan Islands, Whidby Island, Mercer Island, Summer 1978



Labor Day week 1978 I traveled to the islands of the Pacific NW Puget Sound with Lars, Charlie, and Per in Lars' "Security" travel camper on a baby blue Ford pickup. We first drove to Mercer Island in Lake Washington, Seattle's main lake.

My Uncle Bill and Aunt Hazel had lived in Seattle for perhaps forty years where my mother's older brother worked as an electrical engineer at Boeing. My uncle Bill was an honorable, forthright, highly intelligent, and enterprising man. He and my mother were very close. They had chummed around all through childhood, hung out together with a group of friends during and shortly after high school. My uncle treated my mother like loving brother and he treated his wife like a queen. Hazel had multiple sclerosis and they were never able to have children. They always came down to Portland to stay at my maternal grandparents house every holiday, birthday, and mother's and father's day. A few times during my childhood my parents took my sister and I up to Seattle to visit them.

Bill loved sailing on Lake Washington and on the Puget Sound. He had owned several sailboats throughout the years. He was a partial owner of a Cessna and flew to places like New Mexico, Chichen Itza, and Cancun. My father, who had a good sense of humor and was always making light jokes, often made comments about my uncle Bill's intellectual egghead demeanor. But Bill always impressed me more than any of my other aunts and uncles (siblings of my dad) including one uncle who was a clown on a kids show on TV. (Rusty Nails)

Not long after my Labor Day excursion with Lars I joined my parents on a weekend trip to visit my uncle and aunt and Bill took my parents and I sailing on the lake, along with a nephew of Hazel's who was about ten. He was an annoying chubby boy. Bill let me steer the sailboat a while but when he let the nephew do so the boy would goof around and steer the boat in circles until I simply took over the steering and wouldn't let him have it back. No one stopped me including uncle Bill even though the kid started whining that it was his turn. The lake was just too beautiful, fresh smelling, and cooling in the breeze to let the boy spin us around like we were doing ice skating pirouettes. Besides, and I must admit this now, I had just learned I was nearly two months pregnant. I think I went on this trip with my parents to think about my situation before I even told Lars. I loved my boyfriend, wanted to be with him, but I had college ambitions and wasn't sure if I was ready to be a mother. Of course, I said nothing to my parents about my predicament. They were mostly useless to me as any kind of soundboard anyway.

After sailing on the lake my dear uncle offered to take my parents and I up in his Cessna for a view of the city, Mt. Rainier, the Olympic Peninsula, and the Puget Sound. I was feeling a bit nauseated, pregnant wise, and I have a fear of flying and had never been in a small plane before. But I think my uncle reassured me about the safety precautions he took and encouraged me to go. My parents were gung ho and so I went and during the entire flight I felt nothing but

scared, woozy, and very pregnant. (I will elaborate on my pregnancy saga after I finish relating my summer of '78 trip to the islands of the Puget Sound with Lars, Charlie, and Per.)

In Luther Burbank Park on Mercer Island, the boys fished along the shore while Lars and I hiked around the lake and watched a small plane with pontoons land in the water. Lars and I were both photography hobbyists; I had my Cannon AE-1 and Lars had a Scandian camera called a Hasselblad. He tended to gravitate toward anything Swedish or Scandinavian as if it were of the finest quality possible. Although people usually thought my pictures were ever bit as good as those of Lars, men do have their pride, I was learning in life, and often Lars was a bit patronizing toward me. I imagine it had to do with our age difference but there was a lot of “a man is the man” going on between us. I was generally accepting of this “chivalrous” attitude although, at the same time, I was a conscientious female; it was the time of the Equal Rights Amendment, of Gloria Steinem, and Roe v. Wade had only recently set the precedence for a woman’s right to choose matters pertaining to her own body. I had grown up seeing my father as head of the household; Mom had taught us to look to Dad first, see that he got the best pork chop, and she waited on him hand and foot. Dad merely had to tap a finger on the table and Mom knew he wanted more coffee or evening tea.

Lars didn’t really expect me to wait on him like this, but I did take on the role of being “nurturing” and supportive to his boys. I wasn’t their “Mama” but I engaged with them in their interests (fishing, looking for rocks) and we often made jokes together and enjoyed ourselves. Lars was always a thoughtful gentleman toward me even while he delved out his knowledge about so many things. He even explained to me in detail the aerodynamics of the pontoon plane landing on the lake and I was wrapped up on his every word. It was a time in my life when I

really soaked up knowledge and had a wide range of interests in the scientific and global world. That facet about me has never gone away.



Not only was Lars a chivalrous man to the ladies, according to his cousin and her lady friends, he was an engaging and active parent with his kids. I enjoyed being a part of the family and Charlie and Per seemed to like me although there were a few clashes. Mostly because they had grown used to just their father being the authority figure in their lives and here I came along, this wildly young woman, and their Dad was smitten with me. Maybe all males have ADHD and can't take criticism or more than one request or requirement at a time. I couldn't tell them too many things at once, in the way I could talk to Lars, and certainly if I had complaints or requests I learned to be tactful. Once during this trip, I brought up maybe two or three critical points such as telling them to quit messing up the camper or traipsing sand into the back part of the camper where Lars and I slept behind an accordion screen door. Charlie blew a missel at me for overwhelming him. I think Lars intervened and I backed off and understood where I went wrong. I was only twenty-three and was not used to kids.

Another time, soon after we launched off on this trip, Per became very upset when he realized that his daddy and young girlfriend would be sleeping in the main bed at the back of the Security camper. Per protested that he and Charlie had always slept in that bed and their single dad slept on the table. I tried to explain that I need privacy but my words only further frustrated the eleven- or twelve-year-old boy and Lars had to intervene and carefully and logically explain

why he and Teri were taking the large bed. Lars was always as logical as possible with his boys and I think I joked with them even more than he did. Maybe the boys had some slight resentment toward me but nothing that I ever really noticed. For most of the trip we enjoyed the vast activities and fun and the kidding around.

I think we often camped at roadsides or beside streams and not in pay-campsites because Lars was very frugal with money. He didn't have a job, after all, and was trying to run a household on student loans, credit cards, and food stamps while he pursued his degree in microscopy. He even told me before we set out that I needed to pay my own way, for my ferry tickets, and maybe for some of the gas and food. I suppose I would have liked a rich Arab boyfriend to lavish me at times, like Mona, but I thoroughly loved my mature Swedish boyfriend and didn't mind contributing with my big meter reading earnings.

Our first stop, after Lake Washington and the Space Needle, was 25 miles north of Seattle at the small town of Mukilteo that hugs the Puget Sound across the channel from Whidbey Island. The area is home to the Snohomish Native Americans and the county bears their name. Mukilteo's main attraction is its lighthouse built in 1905, and the fishing docks into the Sound where the boys went fishing for hours, maybe for a day or two. I believe at this time we splurged and stayed in the state park.



From Mukilteo we drove up Whidbey Island to Deception Pass and camped at the state park for the night before catching the ferry from Anacortes to Friday Harbor on the San Juan

Islands, the crown jewels of the Puget Sound. It was during this time, possibly at Deception Pass as Lars and I lie in the back bed of his Security camper, that he said to me, “One day you’ll look back on this trip and you’ll think about ‘the old guy you were traveling with.’” It’s as if he knew we wouldn’t always be together. But besides that, at the time Lars was only forty. At this point in my life looking back forty-five years, the man I was with then is quite young to me now. I would be twenty-eight years older than him. It all seems kind of whimsical and prophetic. He seemed such a catch to me back then and he most certainly would be a heartthrob to me now.



I don’t remember much about my time on the San Juans with Lars, Charlie, and Per other than camping, hiking, fishing, and exploring the beaches for rocks. But I clearly remember two subsequent trips I took to the San Juans with my brother and his rowdy group of friends. In stark contrast to the wholesome and loving closeness between my mom and her brother, my uncle Bill, I grew up having a terrible relationship with my brother who is two years older than me. For most of my earliest years I only remember that he constantly bullied and berated me and even hit me at times. Finally, when I was maybe ten or so I completely disengaged with him. If he were around I either hid or did all I could to avoid him. We ended up not speaking to each other—it became routine—until I returned home from the Army at age twenty. At the time my brother was

married to a very nice lady, Nancy Cox, who drew me into her fold and started inviting me to join her and my brother on a few hikes and camping trips. During these times I mostly spoke with Nancy and my brother was just there. But they divorced after a few years of marriage and after having my nephew. Nancy moved back to her hometown of Bremerton, Washington with my nephew. My brother and I picked up and started being cordial to each other. I remember one time when I was at his house, probably at a party because he threw lots of keggers, he remarked to one of his friends that I wouldn't speak to him for ten years. It struck me as odd because he made the comment like something was wrong with me when in fact he was the culprit and the reason I disengaged with him.

After my brother had divorced Nancy he offered me his spare bedroom for fifty dollars a month. I was living at home, probably while I was studying at PCC, and I jumped at the chance to get away from my parents. At the time I really wanted to have some kind of relationship with my older brother. I wanted to feel like I had a brother, like my mother did with my uncle Bill. The relationship wouldn't last and in the end I got on with my life and would never hear from or about him again.

The first trip to the San Juan Islands with my brother, his rowdy friends, and a few of mine own, was a camping trip at Moran State Park on Orcas Island. Despite not caring too much for my brother's crowd, I believe I agreed to join him for two reasons. I had fond memories of the islands from my recent trip there with Lars and his sons, and I wanted to bring along a friend of mine from the Army who had recently re-appeared in my life. Mike Skipper had called me out of the blue a few weeks earlier (after perhaps three years since my honorable discharge) and what he related after our initial "how are you" really caught me off guard. While in the Army I had known Skipper as a friend and as a kind of Army misfit who liked doing drugs. When I was

in the service at the end of the Vietnam era, the conditions among the troops were chaotic and, at least at my permanent station in Darmstadt, Germany, drugs were rampant. That aside, it turned out that Skipper had married a fellow woman soldier who I knew quite well because she had lived in my barracks and was in fact in the same company as me. Sherry Johnston had beautiful long blond hair and she seemed terribly shy and never said much in conversation. The story Skipper related was heart wrenching. He and Sherry got out of the service and moved to Tacoma, Washington where Sherry came from (I think Skipper was from the East Coast). They had a child and named him Michael Jr. and then they had another baby boy who was born just after midnight on New Year's Day. They were so proud and had even made the news about having the first New Year's baby in the Seattle area. But the after a few months the baby died. Skipper said it was crib death and Sherry evidently couldn't withstand her grief and she took a shotgun to a service station restroom and ended her life leaving Skipper to raise their little son on his own. This was the story Skipper related when I met him and I spent a lot of time trying to do things for him and making him feel better somehow. I helped him retrieve his things from his apartment in Tacoma and for a while he even stayed with me in my on-campus apartment. I especially felt bad for the little boy who would say to me "My mommy shot herself." This is why I invited him to join me on this expedition to the San Juans despite my brother and his crowd.

In my first new car, a Renault Le Car, Skipper, little Michael, and I drove up to Anacortes and caught the ferry to Orcas Island where we showed up unexpectedly at the camp where my brother and his rowdy redneck friends were drinking and joking around. Then one of them made a loud racist joke, a "N" word joke, and my friend Skipper is African American. That made for an uncomfortable start. Skipper and his son slept out in the open with blankets and my brother invited me to share his two-man tent because I really had no camping gear other than blankets

and my car. But the idea made me cringe for some reason and I strongly rejected sharing a tent with him. I'm not sure what was happening in my mind, at the time, but it felt like a bad childhood experience hidden deeply in my psyche was screaming out and preventing me from sharing a tent with my brother. I believe Skipper, Michael, and I stayed two days and spent our time to ourselves while exploring the island because the group of my brother's friends were intolerable—pissing in the Sound waters, cracking bawdy jokes, drinking, smoking pot, and just being obnoxious.

A few years later, however, while I was writing my thesis for my Master's in English, I agreed to take a second trip to the San Juans with my brother. This time it would be different, I assured myself, because it involved my brother captaining a large sailing yacht around the islands for a week. He had taken lessons in sailing large boats and arranged to rent one for a week. At first I hesitated to go because of my intense studies and research. My thesis was about using computers to teach English. It was a survey really on the new, burgeoning field of Computer Assisted Instruction. This was during the time of mainframe computers and before laptops became widespread and prevalent. My brother urged me to go on his trip because he needed the passengers and he insisted that I could study in the cabin during the week then take breaks and relax in the cool breeze on deck and explore the island beaches where we docked. He said the trip would only cost me three-hundred dollars, plus a four-hundred-dollar deposit which he assured that I'd get back. In the end I agreed to go and I brought along a suitcase of paperwork, books, and files for my research.

That week, sailing among the San Juan Islands offered me tranquility because of the stunning setting, fresh sea breeze air, and bright blue skies, but I also encountered a few unsettling times because the trip was conducted by my brother and the crew was mostly with his

rowdy friends. My brother allowed me to steer the yacht a few times but never for long because he had to give turns to the other passengers. When the boat was steady and anchored, I spent most of my time in the cabin, my papers and books spread out on the table, but then my brother wanted to let his other passengers take turns at having private time in the cabin and he said I had to go ashore until my it was my turn again. This upset me because I couldn't do my research on the beaches and that was the point of my coming along. But I went along with the program and at one point I even let my brother take me scuba diving around our anchored yacht. That turned out to be a harrowing experience and I nearly drowned.

My brother and his wife Nancy had been very active in outdoor sports. One of their hobbies was scuba diving. Before the trip my brother suggested he'd take me out diving and had me ask Nancy to borrow her scuba gear which he assured me she no longer used now that they were divorced.



On the way to the islands, we had stopped in Bremerton and I had retrieved the suit. But when I tried the head part on during the sailing trip, I found it to be too tight and had to make a cut in the neck just to get it to fit. The whole suit was very uncomfortable but I gave it a try. And my brother acted like my brother during the whole experience—yelling commands at me like I was a stupid little girl, and I would yell back calling him out on his behavior. Then, as I was trying to breathe through the awkward tanks and swim in the water at the same time, I came

across strong deepwater currents that began to sweep me away. I struggled until I was able to pop to the surface then I screamed that I wanted out. Again, my brother acted like I was stupid but I got out and made it to the skiff and back to the yacht. I got nothing out of the experience except fear and aggravation. I'm sure there's great beauty in seeing the depths of the sea but I prefer fresh air on the deck of a boat. Later that day I took the skiff out for a little side trip with one of the passengers on my brother's yacht, Barbara Erlich, a nice, normal woman who was a police officer, ironically. We got caught in the current and these two men on their own anchored sailing yacht helped us out our situation. We sat with them on their vessel and one of the men remarked that he had heard my brother and I shouting at each other during the scuba diving ordeal and he suggested, rightly so, that we must be brother and sister. About this time, I heard a group of people shouting and looked over to our anchored yacht. My brother and his other passengers were lined up on the deck, their backs to us, and everyone pulled down their pants to show off their butts. They mooned us, in other words. I thought it was funny at the time. But most often, my brothers friends liked partying or acting like they were characters in the novel Lord of the Flies and the men would run around the island collecting shells to wear as necklaces.

On our last night of the trip, we docked at Friday Harbor on the main San Juan Island and everyone went to a seafood restaurant for a great dinner with lots of drinking. I became quite drunk and needed help stumbling back to our yacht at the docks. Somehow I made it to bed but the next morning as I was walking with my police woman friend on the docks, some woman from one of the anchored yachts greeted us nicely then made some terribly snide remark like, "Hope you've been having a nice stay. We haven't because of all your rambunctious partying last night!"

I wrote the following about my experience sailing that week in a journal Barbara Erlich gave me before I left to teach English in Asia. It was one of the first passages I wrote while I was wandering the lanes and avenues of Hong Kong:

“Freedom in sailing is the wind against the sails creating a clean, clear, natural movement toward being away from where you once were. The wind—cooling, gentle, and yet firm, is claiming the vessel that dares enter into its direction. Sailing is seeing the proud sails show off their fabricated purpose as the vessel heels to the speed of the wind’s might. It’s hearing impressions of the wind and breathing the freshness of salt water air coming together inside of myself. I love to sail. And when I reach the zenith, I am sailing; I am not mind, thought, nor emotion; I am only the sensation of my experience.”



The big breaking news during this sailing trip, which I only learned about when I returned home, was that Princess Grace Kelly of Monaco had died in a car accident on the swerving roads of France. Other than that, this was the last trip I ever went on with my brother and I never got my four-hundred-dollar deposit back because, as my brother would explain, the owners of the yacht he rented had found too many scuffs and marks on their vessel to return any deposit. No. The week of sailing had its moments, but I’m sure that my trip to the San Juans with Lars, Charlie, and Per offered me much more enjoyment and tranquility.

After a day or two on the San Juan Islands with my mature boyfriend and his sons, we caught the ferry from Friday Harbor, crossed international waters, landed in Canada on Vancouver Island, and drove down to the city of Victoria. Our main activity, other than riding around and exploring the idyllic town, was to wander the flower gardens of Beacon Hill Park where both Lars and I took bountiful film pictures of flowers and swans and of each other.



Nothing else notable happened during my summer trip to the Puget Sound islands with Lars and his sons except when we were trying to return into the US from Canada. We were taken by surprise when customs would not permit Lars and his sons to re-enter the US because they were, after all, foreigners and not US citizens. Charlie and Per had lived most of their lives in North PDX and they seemed more red-blooded American than me. But they were Swedish and for some reason Lars had failed to bring along their passports and visa papers. He thought that his was enough because his children were listed on it. But it wasn't and we were stuck at customs for hours and hours until Lars' cousin Joan Mahoney arrived with the correct documentation. Then we drove straight home and probably slept for three days.

After that whirlwind trip I was back at work finishing up my last year of undergraduate work in anthropology. Not long into the semester I decided that I'd like to move into better student housing than the Ondine. My name had been on the list for a towering apartment complex that overlooked the hills before Washington Park and the famous Vista Ridge freeway

tunnels. The sixteen-story building was called the Goose Hollow Towers and when campus housing informed me that my name had come up and that there was a tenth-floor apartment available I quickly arranged to see the apartment. It was a lovely studio with a large kitchen unit with a long bar, a bathroom, ample cupboard and closet space, and large picture windows overlooking the west hills and tunnels.

I asked my neighbor at the Ondine, Mona, if she'd like to move in with me and split the rent which was ridiculously low back then. I just looked up the units on the internet and they now start at \$1030 a month. Mona and I split a monthly rent of about \$150. Additionally, I was spending a great deal of time staying at Lars' house, at least every weekend, and Mona spent much of her time at the apartment of her Saudi boyfriend, and so it seemed a good idea and a vast improvement over the Ondine which wasn't that much better than the Montgomery Building. In fact, one night at the Ondine while I was sleeping in my single bed against the far window, I had evidently failed to lock my door because these two Arab men woke me up and were hovering over me. "What the hell are you doing in her?" I screamed. "Oh, we are looking for so and so," they exclaimed. After I screamed at them a few more times they left and I hurried up and locked my door. I don't even think I reported the incident but it could have been a very dangerous one for me.

I was happy with my new apartment and the arrangement with Mona. She slept on floor bedding when she stayed at our studio and I slept on a foldout couch I got from my parents. Everything worked out fine except for the few times when Mona unexpectedly arrived with Abdula while Lars and I were enjoying our privacy on my couch.

Another incident happened to me while I was living at the Goose Hollows. Unlike the Ondine which was close to campus, my new apartment was fifteen blocks away and I had to

walk along a pathway beside the freeway to reach my classes. I didn't mind the walk; I liked the exercise, but one early morning on my way to class, some scrawny little man with a pantyhose stocking over his head jumped out from the bushes along the path and grabbed my crotch. I screamed at him, hit him with my books, but no one was around to help me and even if the cars passing by on the freeway witnessed the incident there wasn't anything they could do. No cell phones at the time. Not even On Star. But I broke loose from the scrawny thug, threw a book at his head and ran off toward campus. I reported the incident to campus security and they acted like it was a run of the mill occurrence. I met with a reporter from the PSU school's newspaper, the Vanguard, and she wrote up the incident and advised that she not reveal my name, for my own safety. I also met with a campus feminist group to discuss the matter, told my colleagues in the English department (must have been a teaching assistant at the time), and I told my mother who seemed outraged and riled up about what had happened to me. I probably should have spared her. Nothing came of my reporting the incident and in fact one teacher in my department somehow misconstrued what I had said and thought I had been raped. In any event, I was henceforth careful about walking alone in the wee hours of morning or in the darkness of night.

I was also careful not to be alone with a strange man in the elevators of my complex; I had heard stories of women being accosted and I didn't take the stairwell because that seemed even more precarious and risky. There was another incident that happened at the Goose Hollow. Mona happened to be in our studio while I was away and a bullet shot through the window narrowly missing her. She called the police and reported the occurrence and a news station even came out to investigate. But the story had no meat to it and nothing ever happened. The police suspected it had been from someone just randomly shooting off their gun.



A Portland silver thaw from my apartment in the Goose Hollow Tower

While in my new apartment I also landed a job at the Portland Airport. The job came about while I was over at Lars' house at one of his get-togethers with his cousin Joan Mahoney and her lady friends. During our potluck discussions one of Joan's friend Charlene began raving about the job she had as a hostess at the airport restaurant. "You get free air travel anywhere in the world . . . health benefits . . . bonuses" and so on, she said. Charlene had had to quit because of poor health and the ladies began urging that I apply for this "great" job.

The free travel benefits did sound wonderful and I quickly landed the position of hostess at the airport restaurant Sky Chief. The problem was I didn't have a car at the time. I had sold my Le Car to an Arab student because it was starting to give me problems that I just couldn't deal with. It was petering out. But I did have a ten-speed bicycle that I had often ridden across Portland from my parent's house in the Southwest Foothills or from my campus apartment to Lars' house on Rochester Street in North Portland near Roosevelt High School and the St. Johns Bridge, a landmark of Portland.

When I worked at the airport I began staying with Lars and riding my bike to the airport which is also in North Portland about eleven miles from Rochester Street, a straight shot along Columbia Blvd near the mighty Columbia River and the slough. At times, Lars drove me to my new job in one of his Cadillacs. Eventually, with my persistence, Lars permitted me to drive his

white two-door Cadi which I started using it on a regular basis until I went to my brother's house, for some reason, and my brother backed into the Cadi and created a large dent. And then he never paid to have it fixed. Lars was of course furious and I think then he again either took me to the job or I rode my bike.

The job itself wasn't all that great and I never took advantage of the travel perks. For one thing you had to work at the job at least six months before these benefits kicked in and I would never make it that long. Some of the waitress really hustled for the best tips, which as hostess I never got, and they would push me around, demanding I seat rich looking clientele in their sections, hurry up with it, and so on. I tried standing my ground but some of these women, especially an older lady, were relentless.

Whenever I rode my bike I had to wear long pants which had slight flares at the bottoms as was the style and so I would place this metal clips around my pants legs by my ankles so the pants wouldn't end up in the spokes. Consequently, I arrived at work in my bicycle clothes and headed to my locker to get my uniform (an ugly navy-blue shift like dress with short sleeves and a white and pink polka dotted scarf). I had my shoes and pantyhose in my backpack. Anyway, one of the managers of the restaurant, a man perhaps in his mid-forties, looked me up and down and said something like, "When you come into work you need to be wearing your uniform." His comment was the clincher for me and at the end of my shift I turned in my resignation without any explanation and without confronting this manager for his remark.

When I told Joan Mahoney and her friends I had quit (they had probably asked me how my job was going while we had our little potluck gathering at Lar's house). These ladies just could not understand why I would quit such a great job and not hang in there at least for the travel benefits. Then I made some kind of remark that evidently implied that I thought I was too

good for the job and Joan said something like, “Teri, I just can’t believe I’m hearing this from you. I never thought you were the type of person who thought she was too good for something.” Or some such remark. I felt kind of stupid but left it alone.

Now I come to a very difficult part of this story, for me. That year, my second year with Lars, I discovered I was pregnant despite my carefully using a diaphragm, the birth control method of the time. I didn’t want to take pills and sometimes Lars would use prophylactics but of course he didn’t like doing so. I spent some time contemplating my situation and even considered marrying Lars and having our child. But I really wanted to finish my schooling and I did not want to become a traditional housewife and mother. Really, the clincher of the time was that terminating a pregnancy was commonplace. It was only five years after the Supreme Court ruling that gave women the right to choose and there were plenty of clinics in Portland that performed the service. I went to Planned Parenthood, paid three-hundred dollars, and on the day of the procedure Lars, who was very supportive, took me to the clinic and waited to take me home. It had been a horrible ordeal and I got very sick. The nurse thought I had disregarded their guidelines and had eaten before the procedure. But I hadn’t.

Lars took me to his home and put me in his little single bed that we slept in together. I grew terribly upset that night, manic really, and grew horribly angry at Lars. He couldn’t calm me down and I ripped from his wall a painting of a sailboat I had made for him and I tore it to shreds. I think at this point Lars left me alone in the room because he could not deal with my hysteria. I might as well have been out of my mind drunk.

We continued on with our relationship that year and I continued plodding away at my studies eager to earn my BS degree. I even had visions of earning a Master’s then a Ph.D. It annoyed me that Lars wasn’t very supportive of my academic goals. He would say things like,

“You don’t need a Ph.D. You just need to make me happy in bed—the “P” makes the world turn round.” I think it was just the old school chauvinism deeply ingrained in his Swedish head. But in the end I’ve always been my own support system.

After the harrowing ordeal, I became a bit confused about my relationship with Lars; maybe it was fear of the same thing happening again. Then I would change my mind and tell Lars I wanted us to have a baby and get married. Maybe this was all just reverberations from the trauma I had endured. From the guilt I carried for having given up a child, to put it mildly. Or maybe my maternal feelings were real. In any event that very same year it happened to me again and when it did I got really agitated, maybe frightened, and decided I did not want to have Lars’ child. And that is all I have to say about this. Lars and I drifted apart, maybe emotionally on my part, maybe ethically although neither one of us was avidly religious. And by the time my graduation date approached I was making plans to explore the archaeological sites of the British Isles and Ireland and Lars was making his own lofty plans to take his brood of kids, plus two cousins, on his own trip to England and Sweden. Now it seems, as I look back, that our relationship had really only just begun.

When I enrolled for classes at PSU in the fall of 1976, bicentennial year, I was happy to be going to a university, no matter how humble it might be, instead of a community college; and I was thrilled to embark on my chosen major in anthropology, a field that embraced my interests in world cultures both ancient and modern, history, archaeology, travel, sociology, and the evolution of the human species. I opted to get a Bachelor’s of Science instead of Arts because I had already explored art at PCC and was interested in learning more about the sciences. I believed a degree in science was more prestigious. In truth, I’ve always had an eclectic,

renaissance mind and pursued a wide range of interests (except for knitting and homemaking arts). For my BS, I took courses in biology, physics, genetics, astronomy, algebra, and the like.

I also took courses in philosophy, psychology, Hinduism, Buddhism, and French. I enrolled in first year German because I had lived in Darmstadt, Germany for a year while in the Army and had already studied and spoke some of the language. For fun, I took two semesters of karate but never earned anything more than an orange belt. The path to a black belt was simply too vigorous for me.

During my second year at PSU, I began working on a certificate in Middle Eastern Studies and took courses in Arabic and Islamic and African cultures and history. It fit along with my anthropology degree and my neighbor Mona had recommended I add it to my curriculum. She was pursuing it mostly because of her Saudi boyfriend and she was trying to learn Arabic. Mona was a business major and at one point she convinced (or coerced) me into taking Principles of Economics with her. I don't know why I did other than it seemed a practical course with vital information to carry under my belt. The course didn't work out for me because before the first mid-term exam Mona and I talked about having some kind of method to clue each other in on the test answers while we sat next to each other. I wasn't really enjoying the subject matter, found it dry and boring, so hadn't put my heart into studying the textbook by Milton Friedman. Anyway, during the exam Mona and I sat at the back of the auditorium and for some reason Mona began enthusiastically chatting with some young student next to her and she jokingly said, "Oh, you should cheat like we plan to do." I couldn't believe she said such a thing and I felt it was a bad omen. Then, during the exam she would tap me from time to time and whisper a question and I'd do my best to answer. It went like this for the first part of the exam then suddenly the professor, a strait-laced looking nerdy man, was standing before our seats and

accusing us, quite loudly, of cheating and advising we stop or he'd report us and have us expelled. It had been a terribly shocking and embarrassing moment and I plowed through the rest of the tedious exam without any heart put into it. I knew I was dropping from the stupid course anyway. Why would I continue when I got caught cheating and I hated the content. I certainly didn't want to keep showing up for class a pegged cheater. Mona had to stay with the class because it was required for her major. She pleaded that I stay too but I changed the grading to an audit because it was too late to drop out and I never came back. I would resort to using the audit a few more times during my undergraduate work. It seemed the best recourse when I didn't like a class and it was too late to drop it. Although an advisor told me that audits don't look good on the transcripts. I didn't care; I had no plans to go to Harvard Medical School or some such thing.



During the same year as my exciting and intriguing course in observational astronomy, King Tut bombarded America as his exhibit toured the country. PSU offered several courses on Egyptology and I took everyone: the Art of Tut, the History of Egyptian Pharos, and my favorite a course Egyptian Hieroglyphics. I still have my textbook from that course, the classic tome by Gardiner. One enterprising man in my class, who was also majoring in anthropology, used his newly acquired hieroglyphic skills to the Tut exhibit in Seattle where he set up a stall outside the exhibit hall and, for a price, wrote the names of tourists in hieroglyphics.

I went to the exhibit at least two or three times, mostly with Lars and his crew of kids and I collected books and souvenirs concerning the unsurpassed ancient treasures. I completely fell in love with ancient Egypt and in the years to come I would pen my first adventure novel “Ten Years Past Cairo” and base it on my travel experiences in Europe out of high school and on an Old Kingdom daughter of Pepi II. I’m not sure why I chose to write about the Old Kingdom—Tut was a New Kingdom king—except that the Pyramid Texts and the age of pyramid building is probably the most intriguing era of ancient Egypt. Of course, I made my ancient character in the novel an astronomer of her time.

During my third and final year at PSU I kind of shifted from my aim for a certificate in Middle Eastern studies to one in teaching English as a second language, ESL. I really hadn’t been getting that far in my effort with Arabic; unlike Mona, my boyfriend was Swedish, not Saudi. Mostly, however, I realized that teaching English made for a promising ticket to travel and live in different world cultures, a prominent goal of mine. And I had already taken courses that fit into the ESL certificate program. To help me along, I signed up for classes in American literature, linguistics, and an interesting course called Intercultural Communications which explored the vastly differing mindsets from culture to culture and how abruptly immersing into a new and different culture can create mental chaos and a condition called “culture shock.” It was something I would experience later when I lived in China, Thailand, and Kuwait. Especially in Thailand where my direct approach to matters did not sit well with the “indirect” culture. But I survived and basically understood what was happening because of what I had learned from my classes.

A flamboyant couple who had a posh house with a Japanese garden, the Bennets, taught the course. Later, during my pursuit of an MA, I became a teaching assistant for the Bennets and

helped teach the under graduates the beginning cross-cultural course. What I really want to say about the International Communications course that I took my third year is that I made the most charming and best kind of friend a person could ever ask for. Her name was Noura and she came from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The class assignment was for an American student to pair up with a foreign student and discuss our different cultures and issues and values that might create communication difficulties. I eagerly paired with Noura and she subsequently invited me to her home, a house she and her husband rented, and she fed me magnificent Middle Eastern food. Noura was studying for a Bachelor's degree while her husband was on some kind of Saudi program to earn his degree in probably business-related matters. Noura and I plugged away at our little cross-cultural term paper and I primarily wrote the paper and typed it up for both of us. In other words, the papers were identical because I basically thought that was what we were meant to do. But it wasn't and Dr. Bennett wasn't going to give us a passing grade. I met with him and explained how I misunderstood the assignment and he gave both Noura and I passing grades. After the class ended, Noura and I continued our friendship. We'd meet for lunch or coffee, I'd help her write and type her class papers, and she often invited me over and would feed me her irresistible and elaborate dishes. In fact, one time I went to a dinner party and then Noura called and invited me over and although I was full I could not resist her hospitality and food.

Whenever she returned to PSU after a visit to her country she would bring me expensive gifts: 24 karat gold earrings and a necklace with a charm depicting the Saudi swords, and an embroidered long coat that I ended up wearing to costume parties. But it wasn't just the food and gifts that made Noura such a wonderful friend. She was always interesting, polite, gracious, and happy. We wrote me a few letters after she returned to Saudi with her degree and when I was

teaching at Kuwait University I called her a few times. I really wanted to visit her in Riyadh but she discouraged me from this. Her society is too closed off to women and I think she either couldn't invite me or she dreaded how my visit might impact her or me. So, I let it go but my life has been enriched by having such a friend if even for a short while.



During my last year as an undergraduate at PSU, while I was pursuing the certificate in ESL, Mom heard over the radio that Portland Community College, Ross Island Center, which isn't far from PSU, was looking for volunteers to tutor English to foreign students and newly arrived refugees from Indochina. I had probably told Mom what I was pursuing and I was happy to investigate the opportunity. Subsequently, while I continued with my studies I started volunteering as an English tutor at RIC mostly to a few men from China who worked in Chinese Restaurants. I really enjoyed teaching and the coordinator of the program, a woman named Virginia, suggested I apply for a real teaching job at the center. I did and the department hired me because I was nearly finished with my degree and this is how I began my teaching career. I spent a few years at PCC RIC teaching mostly Hmong, Mien, Vietnamese, and Laotian refugees trying to adapt to their new country and I also had older students from India, Latvia, Japan, and Russia. I felt like I had found my niche because I loved learning about the cultures and heritage of my

students. I even became close friends with a young Hmong woman named Yi Yang and a gregarious and intelligent Mien woman named Muong Pu. I went to Hmong New Year's festivals and to the homes of Yi and Muong Pu for meals and visits and I tried to help them sell their reverse applique and embroidered traditional crafts.



Teri with two Hmong students; dressed for Hmong New Years; with Muong Pu and Yi Yang



My class at PCC RIC; Yi Yang and her Hmong family

Of course, during my three years at PSU I was taking courses in anthropology and pursuing my BS degree. At this time there were three main disciplines in the Anth department: Cultural Anth; Physical Anth; and Archaeology. Entire courses seemed to be about spear heads and Clovis points. This field, like every other field in science, has drastically advanced since the 70's in research techniques, archaeological discoveries, and in technological innovations. Computers were scarcely around forty-five years ago and the biggest discovery of the time was "Lucy" the australopithecus in Ethiopia. We talked about Margaret Mead and her study of Samoa

and Louis, Mary, and Rickard Leakey who were sifting through the Olduvai Gorge. Louis Leakey famously assigned three young women researchers to study the great apes: chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutangs. I did not know much about Birute Galdikas who studied orangutans in Indonesia. Dian Fossey studied gorillas and was murdered in '85 in the jungles of Rwanda for her conservation efforts that clashed with local poachers. The most famous of Leakey's three ladies is Jane Goodall. She gave a lecture at PSU that I was pleased to attend. I also attended a lecture by John Nance who wrote a book about a stone age group of people in the Philippines that he called the Tasaday. I read his bestseller "The Gentle Tasaday" but the whole thing turned out to be a hoax.

Other than my textbooks I leisurely read "Ascent of Man" by J. Bronowski; "The Human Zoo" and "The Naked Ape" by Desmond Morris; and "Kon Tiki" by Thor Heyerdahl. Truthfully, a few people were reading "Chariots of Gods" by von Daniken and were quite certain there were aliens and became quite passionate when arguing their positions, but I usually argued against the theory and felt more convinced with standard archaeological evidence. In cultural anthropology I read a lot of booklets in the series "Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology" about cultures like the Neuer, Masai, and Dogon of Africa, the Yanomano of the Amazon, and the Cheyenne of the Americas. I often joked with Lars' young sons Charlie and Per about the fun facts I was learning such as the Masai drink cow blood and urine, the Yanomano use urine in their hair, and the Kalahari people make a click when they speak.

My professor of physical anthropology was Marc Feldesman, a burly young man with black hair and a beard who often had his newborn baby cradled in his office. He taught the most challenging and difficult courses because they were science and math based. Two that I recall were Osteology and Myology, the study of primate and early humanoid bone and muscle.

Feldesman often tried to trick us during exams that had us identify bones by throwing in a rodent femur. I remember him joking with another prof, "I've got a bone to chew with you." The other course was in computers. Feldesman was obviously extremely intelligent and the course went over my head at times possibly because back then it was all about using punch cards. Talk about old technology. Anyway, I tired of my own questions trying to figure out the system and I ended up falling back on an "audit" to get out of the class.

Feldesman helped me out of a jam one time. When I was in the Army I had taken a few college courses through the University of Maryland: German 101 and a course in Black History which I had forgotten about because before it began when my unit was called into a field maneuver. Anyway, while at PSU I was talking to a professor and mentioned that I had earned a few college credits while in the Army and she urged me to transfer them to PSU. I did without even considering the Black History course. As it turned out, I had an "F" in the course because I never attended class. PSU admissions was upset about this because I hadn't disclosed this "F" when I applied to their college. Feldesman listened to my story and wrote a positive letter on my behalf to the admissions board and resolved the matter.

Interestingly, while writing this memoir in 2023, I looked up the PSU Anthro Department and discovered that Marc Feldesman was still around as a professor emeritus. What a great guy but the thing is if you really love what you do for a living, if it's your life, why would you ever retire if you still have the mental and physical stamina to keep going. I can relate. I hope to keep writing my books for as long as I can. Age is meaningless in this sense. I mean, what else would I be doing? Sitting in front of the TV, eating bon bons, and waiting to pass on?

By the end of spring semester 1979 I was ready to graduate with a BS in Anthropology. I wanted to do something spectacular after I earned my first diploma, something that involved

another trip to Europe and had to do with archaeology. I started planning a trip to the British Isles to explore the megalithic sites as well as the general historic places of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. To help me achieve this I consulted with my cultural anthropology professor, a tall, young, attractive man with reddish hair and a beard and a very congenial personality. When I met with Professor Atherton and explained my intentions, he enthusiastically recommended a recent book by Aubrey Burl called “The Stone Circles of the British Isles.” Along with buying this book, I went to several used book stores in downtown PDX and shuffled through the National Geographics for every issue that pertained to the archaeology and history of the regions I intended to explore. Rather like Lars was doing for his big trip to Sweden with his brood of kids and cousins, I used my BankAmericard and student loans to help fund my trip but I also had some savings from my jobs as a meter reader and hostess at Sky Chief.



Islands One Summer, my 1979 trip to the British and Swedish Islands

For some reason, I’m not sure why now, I enticed my roommate at the Goose Hollow to join me on my trip to Europe. She was also graduating with her degree in business and it seemed like a good idea at the time. Although, Mona and I were very different in our outlook on life and our dispositions. I was more earthy, willing to get my nails dirty to explore the world, Mona liked the highlife and enjoyed the pampered and luxurious treatment from her rich Saudi

boyfriend. Nevertheless, we made plans to fly to Heathrow and travel in England and Ireland. It seems that we really didn't have a clear itinerary other than she was going to go along with what I had mapped out with my Nat Geos and book by Aubrey.

Our flight to London took off from Seattle and I arranged for us to first stay with my dear Uncle Bill and Aunt Hazel for a few days. During this time my uncle took us to a few sights in his illustrious Puget Sound city—to the piers, the Space Needle, and maybe even to Lake Washington. I convinced Mona that she had too many things in her luggage to tote around and we sorted out her hair dryer, curling iron, iron, and a few other unnecessary items that she left at my uncle's to retrieve when she returned to PDX. I guess my uncle was going to call her when he came down to visit my grandparents and bring down her things.



During my 1979 summer trip to Europe, I kept a journal of my travels which I now offer to help convey my story. It is the earliest of the many travel journals that I have miraculously kept over the years.

London 6-18-79:

In this life you either find yourself or you don't. But what does it matter anyway because one way or the other you're going to die in the end? God, am I tired of all these tourists. I think that tomorrow I'd like to get the hell out of London. It's not just these crowds that are getting to me; it's the awful smog. I feel filthy. And Mona and I are incompatible!

The trouble between Mona and I started after we arrived in London and after an eight-hour flight. We landed at Heathrow around noon and then caught a bus to Kensington but could only get into the Holland House Hostel, where we were hoping to stay, if we stood in line the next morning by 8 AM. We then looked for a B&B and walked up Earls Court to Old Brompton Road, dead tired and carrying all our luggage. I did try to travel as light as I could knowing what it would be like if I didn't, but no matter how little I ended up with, it was still too heavy to lug around.

We stayed at this horrible hotel in a tiny room with a tiny bed for 24 dollars—and no breakfast. The next day we went to the Earl's Court Hostel near our crummy hotel and checked in for the upcoming night. The hostel wasn't too bad and only cost 1.90 pounds per night. We shared a room with four other girls from New Zealand who said their flight took over twenty hours. The shower was just a trickle of water, usually cold to medium warm and rather smelly like sewer water, but at least I felt a little clean after spending a day in the heavy London smog.

I enjoyed the sights of London but had difficulty getting used to the opposite direction of traffic. When crossing the street, I automatically look to the left which is the wrong way to look in England. The traffic was so quick and caustic that I constantly worried about a car hitting me.

The day after we arrived we were out walking toward Buckingham Palace when we came across something wonderful. It was the queen's 53rd birthday celebration and we watched the

queen ride her horse wearing her red British uniform. After the parade, the whole royal family appeared on the palace balcony and waved at the enormous crowd gathered before the palace. I saw Prince Philip, the Queen Mother, Prince Charles, and Lord Mountbatten. At the time, I really didn't know about Mountbatten, first Earl of Burma and great-grandson of Queen Victoria. But only two months after my visit to London, on August 27th, Irish terrorists assassinated him while he was boating in Ireland and I was traveling on the British Isles.



The English in general were friendly when I talked to them, except for the lady behind me in the crowd of observers who held my head in place because she didn't like my enthusiasm for taking lots of pictures of the passing queen. Evidently, I blocked her view from time to time. If I had had my wits about me I would have pulled my head from her grip and walloped her one.

After we watched the queen's parade, we went to the National Gallery, the Tate Gallery, and we took a two-hour bus tour around London for 1.60 pounds. We saw the most famous parts of London—Big Ben, Parliament, London Tower, and the London Tower Bridge. We should have been satisfied but decided to stay another day. That evening Mona returned to the hostel while I spent some time sitting in Trafalgar Square watching people. Then I took a long walk by the river front trying to work my way back to the Tower and Bridge to recapture the wonderful sight. But I soon discovered that it was too far away and I caught the tube back to Earl's Court Hostel.

That evening one of the girl's in our room, Debbie from New Zealand, went out for a walk and orange juice with me. We ended up in some pub along Kensington. I enjoyed watching the English people in the pub. One older couple had a large black dog with them and fed it some chips. Debbie said she'd been traveling for about three years and had recently dumped her boyfriend she'd been traveling with and was on her way to Edenborough to find work as a travel agent. You meet all kinds of interesting people when traveling.

The next day we had a terrible breakfast at the hostel—raw eggs and raw bacon. Mona spent part of the day with an Egyptian she had met the evening before and I planned my day as follows. First, a walk along Hyde Park. I saw King Albert's Hall and monument, another magnificent structure; then returned to Buckingham Palace where I happened on a crowd. This time it was for the changing of the guards. I peered through the crowd to watch but soon decided I'd seen enough of crowds and ceremony. I went to Piccadilly Circus which wasn't much, then went to the British Museum where I waited for it to open at 2:30 because it was Sunday. The museum was a wonderful place for me because of my interests in anthropology but there was too

much to see and not enough time. I was enthralled with the museum's most famous feature, the Rosetta Stone.



I then went to the Tower of London on the tube. A black lady taking the tickets scolded me for not having paid enough. She made a big scene and I paid the difference, 20 pence, and continued on my way. The Tower was closed anyway so I couldn't see the crown jewels but I walked around Tower then went to St Paul's Cathedral and tried being religious but the priest escorted me out because they were closing up.

After three days in London, Mona and I decided to head off for Ireland.



6 AM 6-19 almost in Ireland:

One of the most comforting sounds I know is that of seagulls in the distance. We've been on the Connacht, a large ferry, since ten last night. Heavy fog this morning so our arrival in Cork

has been delayed. But as I gaze from the observation deck into the fog, I feel peaceful. I love the sea, birds, and islands and am hoping to find a small fishing village along the shore where seagulls caw and the sea makes its clashing sound. I've had this image in mind for a long time and feel like Ireland and Scotland won't disappoint me. It's pleasant to be far from crowds and smog and breathe fresh sea air.

I didn't sleep too well last night. Mona rented a bunk for one pound and I slept on a passenger chair. The ship's motor was noisy and penetrated my sleep. I dreamed a Russian space craft was hovering over us and forcing us to return to the US. Someone said that the boat's noise reminded them of WWII.

Yesterday we changed trains at Swansea and went to Pembroke where we caught the ferry. On the train to Swansea a Welch gentleman sat next to us. Nice conversation. Nice to look at. He impressed me when he said he traveled an hour and half to Cardiff each morning and evening for his job. Incredible. Love such people. The Welch countryside is beautiful but not much different from the Oregon coast. No forests or any large clusters of trees. It was green patchwork farmland with herds of cows and even more sheep. Along the shoreline There were a few recreational resorts for camping in tents and trailers that were packed with people.

6-20-79 on a fishing boat to Clear Island, Ireland:

Ireland has to be one of the most spectacular places in the world. Must be because my family name is Irish. We arrived in Cork around 7 AM yesterday. Had no trouble making our way to the hostel across from Cork College University. I left my hostel address book at Earl's Court but we'll do fine without it. Caught bus yesterday at 12:30 out to Blarney. Went to Blarney Castle and kissed the stone twice so Mona could take my photo. Wasn't much to Blarney but tourist shops and the castle. School children with rosy cheeks and freckles were gathered at the

castle. As a wedding gift, I bought my sister some Waterford crystal goblets at Blarney for \$100. Will be sent via Ireland's postal service when their strike is over. Has been going on now for four months. Bought myself a dark green wool sweater for 14.50 pounds.

This morning we started our "Rambler Ticket" and caught the bus from Cork to Skibbereen where we transferred on the bus to Baltimore and caught a fishing boat to Clear Island for one pound.

6-21 Killarney:

We stayed at a youth hostel on Clear Island last night. Mona was sick so she went to bed when the hostel opened. I walked around the island and enjoyed its immense beauty. A local man on his tracker passed by on the dirt road. His cock was hanging out of his trousers. So, I saw an Irish cock.

We left this morning and caught a fishing boat back to Baltimore. The weather was wet and cold and the ocean was rough. There wasn't a bus from Baltimore to Skibbereen until 2:15 in the afternoon; it was ten AM and we decided to hitch a ride to Skibbereen and caught one right away. In Skibbereen we caught a ride from an Irish man going to Bantry. An interesting man. I smoked for the first time on this trip. He gave me a journal he wrote on the O Mahoney Clan and I intend to give it to Lars' cousin Joan Mahoney. The man let us off at his home and invited us in for tea but Mona didn't want to (fear of stranger danger I imagine). He had a beautiful home overlooking Bantry Bay and told us about the oil spill in Bantry last January. Evidently, the entire crew of fifty people aboard the Gulf Oil Ship had perished in the accident.

Near the man's house we waited about ten minutes and got a ride from an English couple on holiday around Ireland. They let us off a few miles up the road at the Italian Gardens (purple rhododendrons were everywhere). We waited a long time for a ride then the man at the entry to

the gardens suggested we walk to Glengarriff and hitch from the road up to Kenmare. We had a bite to eat in Glengarriff.

An Irish couple on holiday picked us up and took us to Kenmare. There were no buses out of Kenmare up to Killarney so we had to hitch again. This time we got a ride from a young American couple who had rented a car to drive the Ring of Kerry. We finally made it to Killarney around 4:30. The youth hostel was three miles from town so we decided to spend the night at a B&B; it is clean but has a small double bed to share for four pounds.

This evening we went into town to eat and listen to Irish music. Had a salad and chips for 1.20 at the Imperial Hotel. Then we went to a pub and met an American couple. The music was nice but it wasn't the traditional Irish instruments I've been wanting to hear. We went to another pub, The Tattler, to find Irish men and Irish music but the music wasn't too traditional and instead of an Irish man we met a guy from Vermont who seemed lonely and in need of company when he asked us to join him. We did until closing at 11:30. He walked us to our B&B. Mona thought he and I made nice couple. That's insane. He was too ordinary and nice. I want to meet some crazy Irish man.

6-25 New Castle England:

It's really wonderful. Mean it. I am now traveling by myself waiting for the bus going to the ferry terminal to see if I can get across to Sweden, via Denmark. I shall start from where I last left off in Killarney.

I knew before we ever left for this trip that Mona and I were very different and perhaps ultimately incompatible. Although we shared a room for over a year, we had never really done much together to determine our compatibility.

When Mona and I split up I decided to postpone my exploration of the British Isles from John O’Groats to Land’s End and go to Sweden to join Lars and explore the islands around Stockholm that Lars had so fondly described many times. As for Mona; she said she was going to London and call Abdul to see if he could join her for a week or two. That’s really what she needed to do in the first place—stay at a fancy hotel with a boyfriend who could lavish her with expensive treatments and NOT explore the islands with a pure-hearted traveler like me. What a clash of personalities. What vastly different yet exotic boyfriends. What different expectations from life. (Lars didn’t want to hear me complain about my fiasco with Mona when we met up in Sweden, but his youngest sons Charlie and Per were amused and made jokes at Mona’s expense.)

6-26 Ferry to Denmark:

It didn’t work out between us from the second day in London. We decided to leave Killarney in the early morning and I thought we’d be heading up to Limerick and then on up the coast. To my disappointment, on the train to Limerick which went through Dublin, Mona stated that she wanted to go straight to Dublin. She had had enough of Ireland (and of me, I’m sure). I was quite disturbed and told her I wasn’t about to waste the five more days we had on our pass and I could meet her in Dublin. We did try to compromise but it just didn’t settle well. I felt “how dare she ruin my travels” because I was so impressed with and enjoying Ireland. I really wanted to hear the traditional music up north and see the Shannon River and more of Ireland. I certainly didn’t want Mona to ruin my plans to see Scotland and all the islands. She could do as she liked and I was fed up with her and her difficulties with traveling. Anyway, enough of this. We stayed a night in Dublin at a B&B for twelve pounds.

The ferry left Dublin for Liverpool the next evening at 11 PM. We really didn’t care much for each other at all. Was a pity and I blame myself quite a bit for it. I am probably quite

selfish, inconsiderate, and sarcastic (as Mona told me) but some people just don't mix. We couldn't get two different tickets out of our pass to London so when we arrived in Liverpool Mona ended up in a huff and bought a single ticket to London and gave me our shared ticket and left me standing by the ticket counter. Probably the last time I'll ever see her.

This was on a Sunday and I hadn't any British money left. I wanted to find out from a travel agent the next day about ferries to Sweden where I hope to hook up with Lars and his troop. Fortunately, I met a kind Irish guy, Des Sharkey, coming off the ferry from Dublin. He was staying at the YMCA and paid for my room for the night as well as gave me a couple pounds for a meal. The room was 4.10. I paid him back the next morning after I went to the bank near a travel agency where I learned about a ferry from Newcastle upon Tyne to Gutenberg, Sweden. I bought a ticket voucher for the ferry leaving that evening at 7:30 then bought a train ticket for 9.50 pounds from Liverpool to Newcastle. Unfortunately, the ferry voucher I had bought wasn't leaving from Newcastle; I had thoroughly misunderstood. The ferry was leaving from Felixstowe which is three-hundred miles south of Newcastle and I missed it and probably lost forty pounds.

Anyway, I decided to fork out more money and catch the 35-pound ferry leaving Newcastle for Denmark. I want to get to Sweden especially after talking to Lars on the phone. I am anxious to see him and the Swedish islands. It's nice weather and I'm on the sundeck of the DFS Line sunning my horribly white skin. It's a nice ferry and last night I slept quite well in the couchette.



What is an Island?

I suppose the simplest answer is that an island is a body of land surrounded by water—be it in a lake, in a bay, a river, or in the sea or ocean. Islands primarily arise by way of volcanic activity from the ocean bottom such as Hawaii; or from coral forming reef atolls such as the largest one in the world Niue in Polynesia 1500 miles from New Zealand, or they come from pieces of the continental shelves such as the thousands of islands along the coast of Alaska and west Canada.

One lake island that quickly comes to me is Wizard Island on Crater Lake in southern Oregon. It's a place my family went to when I was a child. Three river islands that I've experienced are Sauvie Island on the Columbia River, which I've described, Ile de la Citi in Paris, and Zamalek on the Nile in Egypt where I went in 1994 when traveling in Egypt to research for my novel "Ten Years Past Cairo." As for islands in the bay only two come to mind: Ellis Island in New York Harbor simply because it's so famous in the US as the designated starting point of last century's immigrants; and Alcatraz Island in the San Francisco Bay, a former prison and now a tourist designation that I've been to at least twice. But really, for me, these islands don't really count as my prototype island because they aren't remote. People can access them quickly in a boat or they have bridges to reach them.

Accordingly, I really only want to point out those islands that are surrounded by a sea or an ocean. Remote singular islands, or groups of islands called archipelagos. I first heard of this word back in 1976 after I returned to PDX from the Army and read the popular book floating around at the time called the Gulag Archipelago by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. The nonfiction is really about political prisoner labor camps in Siberia Russia and I was deeply captivated by the harsh revelations.



Sweden and the Stockholm Archipelago

LARGEST ARCHIPELAGO EAST INDIES. THEN CANADIAN ARCTIC. THEN STOCKHOLM ARCHIPELAGO. FOUR A. PLUS ALONG SWEDEN....

6-27 on the train an hour or more short of Stockholm:

So far things have worked out nicely. I met a nice girl from Denmark on the ferry. She was on her way home after six months working in England. We arrived at Esborg at 6 then caught the train for Copenhagen along with a very kind Swedish girl, Bitte, who was on her way home in Helsingborg. She was knitting a beautiful purple sweater. It seems that most Scandinavian girls like to knit. We made it to Copenhagen along with Christina, another Swedish girl on her way home to Stockholm. We arrived in Copenhagen at 12:15 AM and the next train for Stockholm was at 7:30. So Bitte invited us to stay at her flat and catch the morning train from Helsingborg. We reached her flat at 2:30 or so and had a little breakfast which she generously provided us. Then we caught the 9:55 train to Stockholm. I called Lars who is staying on Nämndö Island, a nature preserve where his brother Aka resides. Aka answered the phone and told me Lars wasn't around. I left the message that I'd be arriving in Stockholm at 16:44 but I don't know if Lars will be there to meet me.

July 3. Saltsjöbaden.

Lars did meet me at the Stockholm Central Station. From the train window, I anxiously looked through the billowing crowd of heads along the train platform hoping that Lars would be among them. Then he appeared to me like a solid Viking man standing out from everyone else and looking around for me. I said good-bye to Cristina and promised to send her a card then I grabbed my bags and jumped from the train just as Lars spotted me. He seemed to push aside everyone to reach me and when he did he gave me a tremendous hug that lifted me from the pavement. After my foibles with Mona and my misunderstanding about the ferry, I was so happy to see him that I nearly cried from joy. He had gotten my message and found me.



The Larsson house in Saltsjöbaden with the baby blue Volkswagen Van

(story summarized from my journal, 2023)

From the train station, my dashing Nordic boyfriend drove me into Stockholm and we dined at a pub eating a smorgasbord of Swedish foods: pickled herring, sour cream, new potatoes, Swedish meat balls, beet salad, pickled beets and cucumbers, deviled eggs, potato salad and on and on. We washed down our meal with spicy Glogg wine and lots of “skols!” Lars had previously instructed me that whenever we skol (toast) we first hold up the drink, look at the people we’re with, nod, say “skol,” then hold up the drink once more and look at everyone again.

Lars was driving a 1960's baby blue Volkswagen Van that he and his cousin David had purchased when they first arrived in London. It was a pretty ingenious idea, I thought. Then Lars and David took turns driving to a few sites in London with the five kids in the back. They traveled by ferry to Calais from Dover and drove through France, Germany, and Denmark to Sweden while staying at roadside campsites. Lars and the kids slept in a huge Army type tent while David, who was in his mid-thirties, got the van to himself at night. He was probably grateful to be away from all the commotion of everyone else.

While in Sweden, Lars and his troops were staying in two places. For a few days they would stay at the home of Lars' father in a suburb of Stockholm called Saltsjöbaden (Sea Salt Bath) a small town on the Baltic Coast before the vast Stockholm Archipelago. Then they would take a boat down the channels among the islands to the sub-archipelago of Nämdö. Lar's brother, Lars Aka (my Lars was Lars Arne) lived on the main island of Nämdö. I found it odd that both brothers were named Lars but Lars Aka, the younger brother, went by Aka and my Lars Arne just went by Lars.

It was nearly nightfall when Lars drove me from Stockholm to Saltsjöbaden where we first went to meet Lars' father and his father's girlfriend Evor. I think Lars' father was also a Lars but I called him Mr. Larsson. This was Lars Arne's original family name, but when he immigrated to work in the US he changed his last name to Radestam because he felt Larsson was too common.

Mr. Larsson and Evor were living in Evor's flat and as soon as we arrive inside her quaintly furnished and very Swedishly decorated home, she sat us down at a coffee table with an embroidered cloth and started bringing out another smorgasbord of foods. And Glogg for skols. I used some of the Swedish I knew, from the tapes and from what Lars had taught me and Mr.

Larsson and Evor were amused but said my accent sounded Norwegian. I told them maybe that's because my paternal grandmother came from Norway. That amused them even more. Then I did my best to eat the blood sausages, pickled beets, and herrings placed before me but I was already quite bloated from all the food at the pub in Stockholm. It simply got to a point where I couldn't fit in another bite, and I generally have a horrific appetite. Evor said something to Lars, or his father did, and Lars said, "They want to know if you don't like Swedish food."

"Lars," I said. "Tell them how full I am because of all the food we ate at the pub." He translated although I suspect they understood and spoke a great deal of English. Lars' father then said to me, in English, "You are how many years younger than my son?" and right away Evor, a nice elderly lady who was about ten years younger than Lars' father, said something like "Pashaw! Twenty years is nothing. It doesn't matter. My first husband was that much older than me." She was a sweet lady and I thanked her dearly for the wonderful spread of food and forced myself to nibble down some rice pudding dessert and make a proper skol with my glass of Glogg.

That night Lars and I stayed at his father's huge beautiful house. Only the upper section was used for the Larssons' living purposes. Mr. Larsson rented out the rest of the house to businesses. The next morning Lars and I walked around the clean and beautiful neighborhood in Saltsjöbaden. The waterfront was just down the road from the house and the countryside was as lovely as Ireland and rocky like Ireland's southern region.



Brothers Lars Arne and Lars Aka. Lars with his father. Evor with her grandkids and Lars

Nämdö Island

Lars and I drove into Stockholm later so he could more fully show me the City of Islands. The next day we took a boat out to Nämdö Island, the main island in the Nämdö Archipelago of hundreds of smaller islands that are part of the larger Stockholm Archipelago. Aka lived year around on Nämdö in a small cabin hooked up with electricity so he could use a computer terminal to do his work for an engineering company in Stockholm. (This was back in 1979 so I wonder what kind of set up he had. There was no Wi Fi back then, no internet, and Apple Computer had only been around two or three years.)

From time to time, Aka traveled in his large wooden boat back to his company in Stockholm for meetings and conferences. The boat was made from teak and was a standard Swedish design quite common among the Swedes living in the archipelago. I had never seen such splendid craftsmanship in any of the boats my grandparents and parents owned which were made either from fiberglass or aluminum. Aka gave his older brother Lars Arne use of the craft during his visit to the archipelago.

Aka's quaint little cabin was painted red with blue trim around the door and window frames, a typical motif of the islands. It had pumped in water with an old-fashioned pump but no toilet facility. Aka had an outhouse about fifty yards from his cabin and he did his bathing by

heating water on his stove and washing up at the sink. One time while I was staying on Nämndö wandering the grounds near the cabin, I happened upon Aka sitting on the pot of the outhouse with the door wide open probably so he could breathe fresh air. He looked at me with a huge grin, without an ounce of embarrassment, as if our encounter were perfectly normal, and he said, “sag dar” or what sounded like to me “shann’ar” as a greeting. Or some such phrase. Perhaps it amused him to see my reaction to the lack of concern for privacy on the island. No big deal to Aka.



A similar incident happened while I was staying at the Larsson house in Saltsjöbaden. Lars’ dad, Mr. Larsson came to the house nearly every day during our stay to either manage the business renters in his house, perform maintenance such as unclog the plumbing or make repairs here and there, or simply hand over some much-needed kronor to Lars for his expenses during his stay. One morning, while I stepped from the shower in the upstairs bathroom, Mr. Larsson happened to be at the large window that looked out on a deck. He was evidently painting the trim of the window frame. He looked at me standing before him stark naked, grinned, and greeted me with “shannar.” I quickly toweled up and later told Lars about the incident. He laughed and his father made a joking remark to me when I later saw him. Probably something like he now knows why his son is with a girl twenty years his junior. It was simply no big deal.



Aka at the helm of his beautiful teak Swedish designed boat

On Nämndö Island, Lars and his four kids and two cousins set up a tent camp with a cook stove and small refrigerator plugged to an extension cord running from Aka's cabin. Everyone shared the outhouse by the cabin and washed up with buckets of heated water in the shrubs near camp.



Sandra and cousin Susie. Tom and Sandra at camp.

The island was rocky with lots of small shrubbery, lichens, wild flowers, and wild strawberries and blueberries. The beauty and charm enticed me to explore the island on my own, take pictures, write in my journal, and eat the wild berries on the spot. It felt like I was wandering an enchanted forest on the movie set for the Hobbit. Most days everyone went fishing from the rocky shore to catch pike and trout for the evening's dinner at camp. Or we packed up a picnic lunch and went hiking and ate on the rocky cliffs. Often, Lars used Aka's boat and we

traveled to various islands. Whenever Aka was available, he did the steering at the helm and showed us around the little coves and bird sanctuaries of the archipelago. We'd pass by tiny red cabins with white or blue trim nestled into the rocky shoreline among windblown scrub and trees and with little wooden boat docks at the water's edge. Aka towed along a rowboat that the kids and I would take out on the water whenever we anchored the boat for some fishing.

When traveling among the islands I enjoyed sitting back in Aka's boat, feeling the cooling breeze, smelling the fishy and salty sea, and listening to the humming and purring of the motor, to the lapping water against the hull, the birds cawing, and the distant voices on passing boats or on the islands we were passing. Often the voices were laughing or singing Swedish songs. I could imagine the ancient Swedes, the Vikings, boating among these same islands, casting large nets to catch the pike and bass, maybe checking out islands to pillage or setting a funeral boat on fire and casting it out to sea.

I imagined the Vikings as rowdy he-men stealing women and children and tossing axes and hammers at one another, sometimes lodging the ax in someone's chest. Like a group of Danish men I encountered on the ferry from England to Denmark: drinking, laughing, joking, and merrily singing. Rowdy men who could not contain or control their impulses, could not set boundaries or maybe their manhood culture had no boundaries.

When I walked around the islands I imagined the trolls, dwarfs, elves, and fairies of Swedish folklore. Lars had told me about invisible ethereal beings, probably female, who were always present on the islands and came out to dance in the morning and evening mist. Whose little footsteps left behind rings of mushrooms. They seemed to exist for me in the lichen-covered rocks, the gnarled tree trunks, the flowers, butterflies, berries, and birds. I could see and hear in

my mind the nude pan like boy playing his violin and bringing about danger to the waters, causing people to drown.

Lars told me many heart wrenching true stories about these islands. In the winter time the water freezes up in lots of places and the locals are able to walk across the ice. But on one occasion a woman with her several children, don't recall how many, fell through the ice and they all drowned. People believed the nude violin playing spirit brought about the tragedy.

Everything enchanted me and I understood how legends and mythology arose in such a place, how Lars was enthralled with his heritage and the Swedish folklore and the Scandinavian pantheon of gods and worlds. When I saw islander men in overalls on their boat decks, holding hammers or axes and making repairs, I could imagine Odin, Thor, and Lokir in their world above ours. The many layers of existence filled my mind: my place in this world of humanity, the place of other people like or unlike me, and the place we wish to be after we die. A place called Valhalla where we will drink glogg with the superior yet human like gods and raise our glass to them and say "skol."



Eight of us slept in the tent which made it crowded and uncomfortable especially with everyone snoring. Then I found that Lars was sometimes difficult to get along with. He tended to be demanding of everyone, as camp leader, as head of the clan, and as an old-fashioned he-man

from the old country. But besides these discomforts, I was enjoying my time in Sweden and knew I could always take off whenever I wanted to.

Lars could become quite angry at times mostly with the two younger boys. One time I really saw his kettle explode when Charlie had captured a tiny snake, probably a Gardner snake, and he put it in a box and placed it in the tent. The snake got loose and Lars wandered into the tent and saw it. “Fan i helvetes javla skit!” he yelled, meaning “devil hell shit.” I heard this phrase from time to time.



One night an island badger invaded our camp and wreaked havoc as we hid in the tent to avoid him. Another time I caught this picture of a bird stealing a morsel of food from the top of our camp refrigerator.



In Aka's boat Lars took me to the outer islands in of the Stockholm Archipelago—Langviksskar and Bullero sub-archipelagos which at least these days are nature preserves. The islands are made up of mostly gneiss bedrock with very few birch and pine trees because previous inhabitants used most trees for fuel. When I saw these islands they were mostly barren rocky bird sanctuaries with lichens, heather, peat bogs, and wetlands with rushes and reeds. Swedes had inhabited several of these outer islands until the 1940's. They had farmed and raised livestock and a few raised mink. This created a problem for the natural environment when the mink started invading the habitat. People have tried to get rid of them but when the seas freeze over mink from other islands re-enter the bird sanctuaries. When I was there we saw lots of gulls, eiders, and white-tail eagles.

Lars actually took me to the most outer of these islands in the Baltic Sea, Tarnskar. As we voyaged on Aka's craft, Lars loved telling me dramatic stories from Sweden's history and from his parents' very interesting past. One story concerned a ship that blew up in the area and in graphic detail Lars described how a recovery crew found body parts everywhere such as arms and legs in trees and heads on the rocks. Most of all Lars loved telling me about his father who was a sea captain who sailed to parts around the world. Mr. Larssen had in fact met Lars' mother in Shanghai, China. I'm not sure what she had been doing. Maybe she was teaching languages like I did. But would she be teaching Swedish in China during the 1930's? I do know that she

spoke several languages, English, French, and Swedish because when I was at the house in Saltsjöbaden Lars gave one of her textbooks which I treasured for many years. It was a Swedish-French grammar. Lars had been very attached to his mother who came to PDX to help with the kids when Lars and his wife divorced. (The wife left him and returned to Sweden). Anyway, Lars' mother became very ill when she was in the US, perhaps from cancer, and she died. Lars felt terrible and believed that if she hadn't come over to help him she wouldn't have died.

Another story Lars told me concerning his father as captain of his ship was that one windy day the canvas covering the cargo hull started flapping and coming undone. For some reason one of the crewman suddenly ran and flung himself on the canvas to hold it down and he fell through into several levels of the cargo hull. Then Lars described in graphic detail how his father and other crewmen had to climb down and pick up all these pieces of the man's ripped apart body. Perhaps it was Lars' Viking heritage that made him prone to relate these kind of stories in gruesome detail.

Well, one particular thing that happened when Lars had me way out and alone on Tarnskar Island was that he questioned why I had come to meet him in Sweden, as if I had ulterior motives. "I thought we had broken up," he said.

He caught me off guard and the only reply I could think of giving and one that was most likely very true was, "I wanted to see the islands of Sweden that you've so often described. And I missed you." I think this satisfied him because he never brought it up again and we continued having a fairly close relationship for perhaps a year to follow.



Langviksskar sub-archipelago and Tarnskar Island

Back to Saltsjöbaden

After I spent a week on Nämdö, we got in Aka's boat and returned to Saltsjöbaden to stay for a week and then return to Nämdö Island.



July 13th, my birthday in Saltsjöbaden:

I've been in Sweden two weeks. The weather has been cloudy and wet. Today we had a large thunderstorm that poured buckets all afternoon. I wrote postcards to Bitte and Christina. Lars took me to a service in an old Lutheran Church in Saltsjöbaden but the best site for me was the Saltsjöbaden Observatory which has a Grubb forty-inch reflector telescope and old clocks.



David, Charlie, and Per picked a bucket of blueberries yesterday and Sandra and Susie baked a blueberry cake for my twenty-fourth birthday. We had a festive meal with blood pudding, my cake, and bottles of Ramlosa mineral water.



Everyone has been going to bed late and getting up late. I'm going to try and change my schedule and get up earlier. I've gone into Stockholm about four times. First with Lars. Then with Sandra and Susie for a day. Went by train for five crowns each way. I bought black wooden clogs which I really wanted and are very comfortable. I also bought a pink corduroy jacket for 200 crowns. We walked around the shops of old town Stockholm then up to Sergels Torg where

we called Lars. He decided not to come into Stockholm that evening with the rest of the guys. It was the fourth of July but we didn't celebrate. We ended our evening in Stockholm inside this pub listening to a jazz band. We each had a coke for 6 crowns each. Got home at ten and fixed a late dinner.

On one of my trips into Stockholm was with Lars his whole family. He took us to a living museum park called Skansen. The park had a zoo with wandering moose, geese, and reindeer, old replica buildings from the nineteenth century before the industrial age, and actors in the park dressed authentically at their shops as tanners, blacksmiths, bakers, cobblers, and glass blowers. At the glass blowing shop Lars bought me a little green glass fish which I still have forty-five years later. It's sitting on my altar. One of my most impressive memories about visiting one of the replica houses was that people back then slept sitting up against the headboard. I just couldn't fathom how one could sleep this way.



We watch a royal parades and marching guards in the city and Lars pointed out all the monumental buildings. Sweden has been a monarchy for a thousand years, since the Viking Age. The current reigning monarch is Carl Gustaf who has reigned since 1973, the year I graduated high school and six years before my trip to the Stockholm Archipelago. In 1986, when Lars and I were still friends seeing each other on occasion (I think I would drop by for a visit at his house on Rochester), Lars was quite dismayed because someone had assassinated Prime Minister Olof Palme of Sweden as he was leaving a theatre. It was something unheard of in Sweden, except

probably not during the Viking Age. The case of who actually assassinated Olof Palme remains unsolved.



Travel to Paris

When it was time for Lars and his brood to head back to London, sell the van, and return to Portland, we traveled in the van to a few sites in Sweden, then drove through Denmark, Germany, and France. I had told Lars that I would travel with him to Paris where I was hoping to study French at the Sorbonne or the Alliance Française (AF) before I embarked on my exploration of the British Isles. For many years, it had been my dream to study in Paris and become fluent in French. I reasoned that this was my opportunity.



Viking Graves at Gravhogar Vid Riksvag E4

Lars' took us to a few Viking graves while I envisioned writing my first story, a novel. I was going to make this memoir the basis for that novel but decided to write the memoir instead.

The storyline concerned a young modern-day traveler, me, who comes across the bones of a Viking warrior and magic somehow happens and the Viking man comes alive and sweeps her into his world. The story was to involve Lindesfarne, a city in England that the Vikings first invaded and I would actually travel there on my way to Scotland later that summer. But I wrote my other stories (novels) first and magical realism connecting the past with the present became a tool I'm quite partial to. And besides, Gabriel Gabaldon seems to have created a similar kind of story taking place on the British Isles before I ever began to pen mine. Although hers involves a Scotsman and the megalithic stones create the magic and my story was to involve a Viking and his bones were to bring him magically alive. Who knows? Given the time, maybe this will become my ninth novel and I can explore the Viking world and that of Boudica the Great Celtic Warrior Woman.



Sunset at Lake Vattern from Granna

We camped at Granna, a city beside Lake Vattern and I took some magnificent sunset shots using my six-star lens. During our drive to Paris, cousin David was at first sleeping alone in the van while the rest of us, seven people, slept in the tent. It made for crowded conditions and at Lake Vattern I became very upset when Lars tried to quietly make advances toward me in the middle of the night. As if no one else would hear us or notice. I started hitting Lars then I jumped up and ran out the tent. Sandra followed me concerned about what had happened to upset me. Of

course, I didn't tell her and Lars didn't come out to console me in any kind of way. The next morning, I confronted him and practically demanded that he tell David that Lars and I want to sleep in the van so we can have some privacy. He did and David reluctantly agreed. And for the rest of the trip to Paris, and while in Paris, Lars and I enjoyed the privacy at the back of that old baby blue VW van.

Paris



When we pulled into Paris the first thing we did was look for a campsite. There were several outside the city and we found one next to the Marne River, an eastern tributary of the Seine. There seemed to be quite a few gypsies at the site as well, an entire community in fact not exactly at designated campsites but in the shrubs and trees along the river they had set up a sort of lively community. We found a site as far from them as we could probably concerned with their reputation for being a nomadic tribe of people who acquire things that don't belong to them.

After we set up the tent we drove off to see the marvels of Paris. Probably after a cheap dinner in a pub we wound up at Montmartre, a hill in northern Paris where the famed basilica Sacre-Cour sits at its summit. The area was crowded with lively tourists as we wandered the hill and basilica in the darkness of night. At about midnight we were ready to leave when we noticed that Lars' eldest son Tom was not among us. We spent an hour or so searching for him and finally asked a policeman patrolling the site to help us. "Notre fils est perdu," I exclaimed using what French I knew. The officer then asked us in French how old the boy was. I told him eighteen and the man laughed and said something like, "He isn't lost then. He's just out having fun!" And sure enough, a few minutes later Tom suddenly showed up as if nothing was out of the ordinary. But the night wasn't quite over.

We loaded back up in the van and Lars tried to make his way back to our campsite. However, we became hopelessly confused in the harsh chaotic traffic at night, horns blaring, headlights blinding us, and sirens in every direction wailing. By about three AM we felt completely and hopelessly lost and when I spotted a paddy wagon type van filled with Parisian police I told Lars we needed to flag them down and ask for help. We had even forgotten the name of the campground.

"Nobody speaks French," I remember Lars saying. I couldn't believe he said this when he knew I spoke enough to get by. The thing was, I knew, his male ego couldn't tolerate a female knowing more French than he did. Anyway, that's how his comment felt. "I speak enough French and you know it," I declared and we flagged the police van down.

The same sort of chauvinistic thing happened while we were traveling through Germany on our way to France. I had left my pink corduroy jacket that I'd bought in Stockholm at a pub where we had had dinner. After I discovered I forgot the jacket and we were several miles down

the road, I insisted we turn around so I could retrieve it. I really liked that jacket and didn't want to lose it. Lars relented and we returned to the town but it was late and the place was closed.

"Well, you've lost it," Lars or David said. No one speaks German."

"Yes I do. And you know it. At least enough," I said as I knocked on the door, heartsick that I'd lose the jacket, when an elderly man opened a shuttered window in an upstairs room above the pub, obviously the owner's residence. "Ich habe meine mantel vergessen," I yelled to the man and he came down and handed me my jacket. Neither Lars or David said anything more about it. No, "well done, Teri," or anything like that.

Anyway, back in Paris on the night we got lost. The paddy wagon officers were extremely congenial and even funny. I did my best to explain that we were camped somewhere at a site along the Marne, among gypsies, and the officers laughed and told us to follow them and their paddy wagon van led us through the monumental commotion of Paris straight to our campground. They somehow figured out right where we needed to go.

I imagine Lars and his crew stayed in Paris only a few days. Before they left, Sandra came with me to find a cheap hotel through some kind of travel service. I ended up at Hotel Charmon in the Saint-Germain district near the Ile de la Cite, Notre Dame de Paris, and Pont Neuf. I loved the area but the room the hotel gave me was the size of a small walk-in closet with a bed and bureau. Sandra couldn't believe it when she left me to my new room and Lars picked her up.

I stayed at the hotel perhaps a week but I was able to change to a somewhat larger room. I spent my days clothes shopping at Lafayette department store along Champs-Elysees, visiting the Louver several different times and Jeu de Paume to see the impressionists paintings. EIFFEL TOWER SECOND LEVEL BECAUSE ON FIRST TRIP SIX YEARS EARLIER MADE IT TO

FIRST LEVEL. RESTAURANT PEAS AND TROUT. WANTED COLD MILK BUT GOT MIXED UP LAIT WARM.... Went to laundromat and had haircut and styled. Went to see silly movie with silly jerk..... Finally, I checked into Alliance Francaise but hated the crowded classroom and quit after attending classes for a week or so.

Besides, my hankering to explore the British Isles and use Aubrey's book and Nat Geos took hold. I was tired of my cheap room and the crummy croissant and jam breakfast. Tired of crowds, traffic, and smog. I wanted to experience fresh island air as I had experienced in Ireland and the Stockholm Archipelago.

Nine Largest Islands in the World

Because they are isolated and surrounded by the sea, I believe that Australia and Antarctica should be counted as islands but they are continents by some authority in history. The world's largest islands begins with Greenland which lies due east of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago and is home to some of the most remote settlements in the world. After the Native American Inuit peoples arrived over 4000 years ago, the Vikings of Iceland and Norway landed a thousand years ago. Greenland is now part of the Kingdom of Denmark.

The next largest island is New Guinea north of Australia in the Pacific island region of Melanesia. The island's west half belongs to the country of Indonesia and the eastern half is the country of Papua New Guinea where headhunters and cannibals traditionally lurked. The next island in size is Borneo also called Kalimantan. The island is divided among three countries: Malaysia, Indonesia—where Birule Galdikas studied the Borneo orangutans, and the sovereign and independent nation of Brunei in the north. Brunei gained its independence from Britain in 1984. One of the world's richest men, the Sultan of Brunei, rules the small country under Islamic

law. I used to kid my friends in college before I set out to teach in Asia that I wanted to teach in Brunei and marry the Sultan.

The fourth largest country is Madagascar off Africa's SW coast. It's a country I had hoped to one day visit, especially for the 2002 solar eclipse, but my life took me elsewhere. The next islands in size include Baffin in the Canadian Arctic near Greenland, Sumatra Indonesia where endangered orangutans still live in the jungle, Honshu Japan, Victoria in the Canadian Arctic, and Great Britain where I traveled from head to toe in the summer of 1979.

The British Isles



Aug 15, 1979:

I left Hotel Charmon in Paris and charged for my ticket straight across to Dover – Boulogne to Folkstone. What a crowd of people. Had to change money from French Francs to pounds on the ferry across the channel then I took the train from Folkstone to Dover where I spent a few hours and walked to castle and saw the White Cliffs of Dover. Then caught the train and started my Britrail Pass and went in a roundabout way to Canterbury. I headed to the closest B&B only to discover that it was full but the owner gave me the number of a private house with a room. About a ten-minute walk away. Nice room and nice lady owner.



Aug 16:

I left Canterbury around noon after spent AM walking around lovely mediaeval town. Stopped off at Hastings for a few hours and walked along crowded beach. Intermittent sunshine and I snuck on my two-piece suit and tried absorbing some sun. left Hastings then stopped at lovely mediaeval town of Lewes but instead of locking my luggage up I tried lugging it with me as I strolled through town. Another tourist town. On to Portsmouth. Was growing late and was pouring rain when arrived. Called around for B&B and finally located one at a distance. Took a cab after waiting about twenty minutes for one. Room nice.

ISLAND MEGALITHS AND CROP CIRCLES

EASTER ISLAND....

Aug 17 Portsmouth to Salisbury:

After sleeping in a comfortable room for five pounds charged and a good breakfast, I headed to train station and stored luggage. While walked down to Royal Naval base and went aboard the HMS Victory of Admiral T. Nelson. Was impressed especially with the free tour on board. Still a lot of people even though it was raining. Around noon I headed for Salisbury. Met Mrs. Thorp on the train with her little brown dachshund. She gave me some addresses and numbers to contact her at. Arriving in Salisbury I found a nearby B&B for six pounds. Then I caught a tour to Stonehenge. Was cold and windy with crowds. Spent only ten minutes looking at

the world's most famous megalith. But bought book on the subject in Salisbury and spent time later reading up on it. Gerald Hawkins on astronomical dealings.



Aug 18:

I left Salisbury in the AM took train via South Hampton to Dorchester to see Maiden Castle about an hour walk from train station. Could only really appreciate the Iron Age hill fort from the air.

Left Dorchester and made way by train to Bath. Saw Westbury's White Horse from train window along the way. Took picture.



Arrived in Bath in the evening. Found Janes Hotel down road from train station. About 8.5 pounds charged. Room included teapot, instant coffee and tea. Had a TV where I watched Elvis Presley "Blue Hawaii."

Aug 19:

I walked about beautiful city of Bath. Bought ticket for pound to see Roman Baths. Worth seeing. Phoned Mrs. Thorp in the morning. I think she was delighted to hear from me and wanted to keep in touch.



From Bath I traveled to Penzance but stopped in Exeter for a few hours to see the cathedral. I arrived in Penzance in the evening and was lucky to find room at B&B where I spent three nights charged. Very friendly couple. Lady enjoyed talking with guests. At her suggestion I took 9:30 bus to St Ives. Lovely city and beach. Laid out few hours. Clouded up around noon for rest of day.



I then went on bus around peninsula to Lands End. Took few pictures and bought a small cup. Lovely bus ride. Saw Cornwall country side old tin mines. I traveled from Lands End back to Penzance about 5 PM. Went to a hotel restaurant and had chicken and mushrooms. Charged.



Aug 21:

I caught a bus that dropped me off at the megalithic circle stones of Merry Maidens the Two Pipers and the Tregiffian Burial Chamber. In afternoon walked from Penzance to nearby town three miles. Laid on beach. Evening called collect to Lars. Wasn't home. Took train four hours to St. Austell and back. Called Lars around ten. Really miss him and was so happy to hear him. Said I'd be back next week ended up three weeks later.



England's stone circles





Aug 22:

Caught morning train from Penzance and changed at Reading for Oxford. Spent few hours in crowded Oxford. No rooms. Went to Swindon got out hundred pounds from bank. No rooms but crummy hotel for eleven pounds. Horrible but I needed a place to stay. I left my luggage at the train station



Aug 23:

I caught a bus to Avebury in the pouring down rain. Got soaked while seeing Avebury Henge and Stone Circle. Also went to the Iron Age hill fort at Solsbury Hill and hitched ride to West Kent Long Barrow then back in time for a bus to Swindon. In the afternoon I took the train from Swindon changing at Gloucester. Stratford upon Avon....



Birmingham, and Crewe. At about 8 PM I arrived in Liverpool where I spent two nights at YMCA 4.5 lbs. I checked about a refund at the travel agency where I bought the ticket to Sweden and went to the wrong place. The agent suggested that I call later to see if I could. I took the train to Chester for few hours. Lovely old city. Ate at an Indian restaurant in Liverpool.

Aug 25 Liverpool- Carlisle.

CAR LESLIE. HADRIAN'S WALL.... LINDESFARNE HOLY ISLAND.... VIKINGS
FIRST LAND



Arrived afternoon. Found B&B 4.5 lbs. took 2:45 bus out to a spot of Hadrian's wall with lots of chickens. Evening saw movie "Escape from Athens" 1.2 lbs

Aug 26 Carlisle – Edinburgh. 2 nights B&B.

Aug 27 5 lbs. saw military Tattoo 130 lbs. waited almost 2 hours for ticket. Lord Mountbatten assassinated.



Aug 28 Edinburgh – Inverness. 2 nights B&B 4 lbs. Urquhart Castle Loch Ness 20 p

Aug 29 Caledonia Canal ride 2 lbs. started Highland Pass.



Aug 30 Inverness – Thurso five hours B&B 3.5 lbs

Aug 31 luggage at train station. Ten AM bus to John O'Groats. 12:00 back to Thurso.

17:45 P & O ferry from Scrabster to Orkney. Three nights at SYHA

Sept 1 tour around Orkney from Kirkwall – Scara Brae, Ring of Brodgar, Standing Stones of Stenness, Maes Howe Cairn,



Scapa Flow where Royal Oak was sank.

Sept 2 Sunday, everything closed at 2PM. Had lunch buffet at Stromness hotel 3.2 lbs.
6PM service at church. Lovely sermon. Met Mrs. M. Swaney. She took me for evening drive to see Churchhill barrios, Italian Chapel and St Margrets. Beautiful evening.

SHETLAND ISLANDS ferry 8 hours stromness to



FAROE ISLANDS

Sept 3 Stromness – Scrabster, Thurso – Inverness. Spent night at class 1 SYHA. Lucky to get in. went to highland program at 8. .75 lbs. “The Kilt is our delight” kids doing Scottish highland dances

Sept 4 Inverness – Ullapool – Stornoway (Lewis????) – Tarbert (isle of Harris). Spent night on cabin in ferry from Tarbert to Uig (isle of skye) then back to Tarbert by ten PM. When I got a cabin for 6.3 lbs wasn’t anything to Uig so my only safe choice was to sleep on ferry.

Sept 5 Tarbert – Uig – Ft Wm. Called at Kyleakin and Kyle of Lochalsh. Met nice New Zealand elder lady on holiday. Ft Wm – Oban stayed 2 nights at “Kelvin Guest House” 4.8 lbs. small room. Went to movie at the Parish Church Hall. Excellent. “The Massacre of Glenco” also “The Castles of Scotland” narrated by Sean Connery. Produced by Austin Cambell





Sept 6 Oban – Craignure (isle of mull). Crowds and crowds. Craignure – Fionnphort. Lucky to get spot on buses without reservation but was second in line and four seats left. Fionnphort – Iona – and back Fionnphort -- Craignure—Oban. Took two pictures of Duart Castle. Watched evening TV

Sept 7 Inverness – Pitlochry. B&B reserved 2 lb for reservation in advance. 1 lb going cost of B&B down payment. Cashed \$50 TC fir 21,6 lbs. made it to Pitlochry by ten. Walked from RR station to McKay Hotel where called taxi. None available til 10:30. Party time in Pitlochry so had half pint dark beer in pub. At least I've got a room to go to. Taxi to B&B 1.5. lb.

Cab back to town 1.15. couldn't charge ticket to London at train station. Town too small. So shall try to go to Edinburgh with last of my highland pass although not supposed to be valid outside highland limits. From E. hope to catch train to London tonight. Went to highland games. Wonderful. As was entering met up again with my Australian friend for third time. We interchanged lenses during games. After games I went to train station caught train to Edenborough and was able to charge for ticket to London. Left E. on crowded train. Lucky to get unreserved seat. Berth I was in was full save for one seat next to me. Slept awkwardly most of night. SITTING UP LIKE SWEDES HUNDRED YEARS AGO....

Cleaned up. Started period. As soon as train arrived at Kings Cross Rail Terminal, London, called Pan Am and it sounded like I'd be leaving today. Had to get to Seamly Place near Victoria Station to confirm my standby. Crowded again on the tube. But I made it to Pan Am terminal at Seamly Place. Got booked on the flight to Seattle. My orange pack and blue Swedish duffle bag were sent on their way. Hope they make it as well as me to Seattle in good condition

1980 The Year Mt. St. Helens Blew



When I returned to PDX in the Autumn of 1979 I began working on my Masters degree in English. I had decided that a Masters would suit me better than an undergraduate certificate in teaching English because I wanted to work at universities in different parts of the world, not merely at language schools.

Most of the volcanoes around the continents bordering the Pacific and including some of the island chains are part of a tremendous geological structure called the Pacific Ring of Fire. This massive feature of the Pacific is dated at about thirty-five million years old and it basically is comprised of the subductions zones of several tectonic plates. Seventy-five percent of Earth's volcanoes are part of this feature and most are underwater. The Ring of Fire is horseshoe shape and runs from the tip of South America, runs up along the Andes Mountains, along the coast of North America across the Bering Strait through Japan and into New Zealand. Mid-Pacific islands such as volcanic Hawaii aren't part of this geologic ring. The most famous volcanoes that are a part of it include Krakatoa volcano on a small island between Java and Sumatra Indonesia which had a cataclysmic eruption in 1883 that destroyed most of the island; Fuji on Honshu Island near Tokyo, Japan, last erupted in 1707; Llullaillaco volcano in the Andes Mountains at the border of Argentina and Chili. And the most famous of all Ring of Fire volcanoes, at least for me and the

people of the Pacific NW, is Mount St. Helens in Washington State not far from my hometown Portland, Oregon

About six months after my return to PDX from my trip to the Swedish and British islands, Mt. St. Helens unexpectedly erupted on the morning of March 27, 1980. Like Mount Hood and Mt. Adams, St. Helens was a feature of the landscape view from PDX when I grew up and I don't think anyone expected it to blow. But like all the mountains in the Cascade Range Ring of Fire, along the Pacific NW, St. Helens was a volcano and it became no longer dormant. I captured the above picture of the pyroclastic cloud beyond the Fremont Bridge in downtown PDX. Nearly sixty people were killed; most were daredevils who went to see the volcano when it erupted again. For weeks to follow ash showered over PDX covering the streets, houses, cars and everything in sight. It was pretty like fresh snow fall in a way but very dangerous for breathing. I'm not sure if we wore masks at the time.

My mother collected bottles of the ash to give away on a big trip to the British Isles my parents and six of their square dance friends were planning. After I related my trip to them they became enthusiastic about going themselves and at first I planned to go with them and show them the sights I had seen. But that didn't pan out although I helped them form an itinerary. I was simply too busy with my graduate work and really had no interest in traveling in a van with four couple friends from the Castle Eighters Square Dance Club who were in their fifties and sixties. My parents had a wonderful time and had so many stories to tell me. Mom raved about how they had stayed at a castle, demonstrated square dancing, and how the castle's Earl was overjoyed to receive the St. Helen's ash. I believe this is why my dad started his collection of small bottles of sand from every part of the world my parents' traveled to, mostly on cruises. I also contributed to

Dad's collection with sands from Tibet, the Andes, and Vietnam, to name a few of the subsequent places in my many global travels.

When Lars returned to Sweden he must have finished his degree in microscopy because he took a job for the Washington State Department of Transportation as a Research and Technology Manager at the Highway Administration Building in Olympia. We were still together for at least the year as he worked at his new position. Lars really didn't want to uproot and move to Olympia so spent each weekend at his home on Rochester and early Monday morning drove up to the State capital in his blue Ford with the Security camper. During the four nights of the week, Monday through Thursday, he lived in the camper in parking lots, roadside pullovers or rest stops and the like. I often went with him when I had time off from my studies or teaching assignments.

After several months I thought it might be nice to live in Olympia and I tried to convince Lars that we get an apartment. I think he finally agreed to rent a small house but even so he could not pull himself away from returning to Rochester each weekend. I think this job lasted less than a year and the last I remember is that Lars took a job in Oregon doing some kind of research with dirigibles and logging. By the time he had this job we were really no longer together. The final breakup happened when I was on the basement phone of my parents' house and for some reason I became manically upset with Lars and screamed curses at him. I'm sure my parents and perhaps even the neighbor's heard. After that we were still friends and kept in contact until I left for Asia.

For many decades to follow I would dream about Lars all the time as if he were my primordial boyfriend. The dreams were usually good and about my paying him a visit and our getting back together. This went on until maybe this last decade of my life when my dreams

about Lars became less frequent and when I did dream about going to his house to connect with him he never wanted anything to do with me or would turn me away against my expectations.

When Islands became political

Like people, it seems, islands can become political entities depending on which way the headwinds blow and who arrives at the shores, conquers, and lays claim. after the European Renaissance maritime empires emerged seeking trade routes, and spices and goods...Portugal led the way and was soon followed by the Dutch (Indonesia, Antillies) and Spain and the French and British (not to mention the Danish (Greenland), Norwegians, Belgians (the Congo), Italians (Ethiopia), Germans, and later even the Americans of the US. These empires colonized and claimed islands and territories around the world which is why Latin America speaks mostly Spanish, the US Brazil speaks Portuguese, and many islands in the Caribbean speak French. The territories and islands often changed hands over the course of history, changing their political identity and even language and cultural influences. Today we're left with such island places as the French Polynesia, the British Overseas Territories—Bermuda, Turks and Caicos, Cayman, St. Helena, Gibraltar, Tristan da Cunha, Ascension, to name a few, and the US territories or possessions that include American Samoa, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, Guantanamo, Guam, and Northern Mariana Islands which includes one of the islands I visited during my graduate work at PSU.

Saipan Island and Japan, Christmas 1981



While I was teaching mostly Indochinese refugees English at Portland Community College, Ross Island Center, I became good friends with a fellow teacher, Rufina Miles, who came from Saipan. Rufina was a friendly young woman who seemed to find humor and good cheer in just about everything and I soon learned that this seemed to be a trait of people from the Pacific Islands. They don't take life so seriously, gravely, and find a lot of playfulness and good times among their community. Rufina and I started chumming around, going out for coffee,

meeting for lunch at PSU, and soon she was inviting me to her home and to several gatherings with her family and friends from Saipan or other Pacific Islands who lived in the Portland area. These parties had lots of “luau” type foods and tons of laughter, music, dancing, singing, and kidding around. I always felt quite welcome among the Islanders and never missed an opportunity to attend one of these gatherings.

Greg and Rufina Miles. Greg, a counselor at PCC Sylvania. Became Muslim to better relate to his students.

When she asked me if I wanted to go to Saipan during Christmas break, 1980, Made it happen.

Now to the crux of my Pacific Island essay, my story about Saipan which lies in the third section of Oceana: Micronesia. Actually, North Mariana Islands, I remember being corrected several times.... Now known as CNMI Us Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Micronesia as an area in Oceana consists of the CNMI with 14 islands in the NW Pacific, an unincorporated US territory and commonwealth. Guam at the southern end of the chain as a separate US Territory, Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Kirabati Islands formerly called the Gilbert Islands, and the Marshall Islands. In the Marshalls is Bikini Island which has some personal history for me. My Uncle Bill....

Bikini island tests contaminated water sprayed over islands and islanders causing havoc. Testing until '58. Low lying atolls rising sea water warming sea.



FB Post comment “Dear these men are spirit soldiers heroes who the creator knows well.”

Nauru is a lone island sovereign nation between micro and melan. It’s the world’s smallest republic.

Trip to saipan 12-17-81 PDX to SF 1 half hrs. SF to Japan eleven hours. Didn’t keep much of a journal on this trip other than jotting down a few cultural notes and recipes of the dishes served at the festive gatherings, the “luaus.” Getting off the plane at the Saipan International Airport was a bit of a shock, a blast of hot sultry tropical air which I had never before experienced. Would stay in the home of Rufina’s younger sister which had no air conditioner. To cool off mid-day I took a cold shower, like everyone else it seemed.

After the Spanish-America war ended in 1899, Spain ceded Guam to the US and sold the North Mariana Islands and the Caroline Islands to Germany (which included Saipan, Tinian, and Rota). Then during WWII, a day after they invaded Pearl Harbor, Japan invaded the N. Marianas. Japanese, Korean, Pilipino, and Taiwanese migrated to the islands and make up a significant portion of the population.

In 1944 the US invaded the Marianas in the Battle of Saipan. Japanese troops diminished from 30,000 to about one thousand. Rather than surrender, about one thousand Japanese civilians jumped off what is known as Bonzi Cliff and committed suicide. A solemn Buddhist marker designates this spot. The US recaptured Guam, invaded Tinian and used Tinian island as the take off point for the Enola Gay plane that bombed Japan with nuclear arsenal. On August 6, the Boeing B-29 bomber flew six hours to Hiroshima and dropped the first nuclear bomb, Little Boy, devastating Japan and the world. Five days later the plane again left North Field Tinian and devastated a second Japanese city, Nagasaki, ending the war with Japan. It's interesting to me that my Uncle Bill spent most of his career as an engineer at Boeing. He seemed well connected to the events of Enola Gay.

When I was visiting Saipan I saw places in the clear aqua sea where tanks and other WWII machinery lay rusted and cluttering the reef. A famous story occurred on Guam. Until 1972 a Japanese soldier from WWII was hiding out and unaware that the war was over.



Most of the Marianas are limestone coral reefs, at least in the south. The northern islands of the archipelago are volcanic. The two islands offshore from Saipan are Tinian and Rota.

Carolinian Culture: women lower when leave room. Rise when men leave. Especially brothers to show respect. Rufina had a large extended family. I don't recall how many siblings she had but most were older and both her parents were alive during my visit. Her father originally came from Madagascar an island off the southeast coast of Africa that I had hoped to visit one day but never did. An interesting thing about her family, which was a tradition of the

Carolinian culture, was that some of her siblings adopted the children of other siblings I guess if one sibling had an abundant number of kids and the other one had only one or two or none at all

Customs: the male must stand up at table when his close female relative stands. Stays standing until she returns. Children kiss hand of aunt, younger kiss hand of older. She wasn't strong. Couldn't hold him so he flew away. Beena



People so friendly always light natured and laughing. Smile because I'm going to dream about you.

MONEY FROM YAP men from Yap, an island in the Federated States of Micronesia would travel to Palau, an island close to the Philippines at the southwest edge of the Micronesia region, and carve out large stone disks thirteen feet in diameter, drill a hole in the center to carry and transport back to their island. Used as a form of currency. I HAD A PICTURE OF RUFINA'S SISTER WITH ONE OF THESE STONES, NO LONGER USED AS CURRENCY. BUT LOST.

My trip to Saipan was all about spending 2 weeks sun, among hibiscus flowers and franjipani, bougainvilleas, Flowers for mar mar: plumeria, hibiscus, la ngi lang, tai bo



on the beaches among rock formations that looked like the faces of old men and wandering everywhere were these huge hermit crabs carrying large shells on their backs and there were also lots of stray flea-bitten dogs.



I made friends with one once and he followed me on a walk from Rufina's sister's house, where I was staying, to the beach. By late afternoon it was growing too hot for me and I tried to

walk back but couldn't. the dog followed faithfully along and either I hitched a ride from a local or he stopped and offered me a lift. "What about the dog?" I asked worried I had taken the dog astray from its home. I wasn't sure whether it belonged to Rufina's sister. The local man, a young man, called the dog inside at the floor of the passenger seat where I sat. I'm not sure if he thought about picking me up or was just being a hospitable islander. There really weren't many women, Caucasian, like me on the island. But he took me and the dog back to the sister's house without incident. There was one time I toyed with relationship with a Saipan friend but he was too beholden to Greg and Rufina.



There seemed to be large parties nearly every night feasting on roast pig and a potluck of dishes.... Most of the gatherings commemorated the birthdates of elderly people, the anniversary of someone's death, christenings because most of the Carolinian people were Roman Catholic presumable originating from the time of the Spanish occupation.

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The food: one barbequed whole pig. Sa Shi mi: raw fish dish

Rice with atchacte

Bananas with coconut milk

Bunelos: flour milk eggs deep fried

Escabeche: tuna fish noodle dish Philipino, Panchit: noodles and chicken dish

Chicken with corn soup. Fried chicken

Food: hot pickled papayas. Chicken kalaguen, bunelos: deep fried balls with bananas yams, singiri: green papaya salad. Sweet potato with coconut milk. Atul: meat, rice and coconut milk.

Shrimp kalaguen: shrimp, coconut, onion, red pepers, lemon juice—chill

Escabeche: fish onion garlic mango ginger vinegar salt eggplant cabbage

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After each meal everyone chewed on a Beetle nut and lime and leaf. Walawal poo may. In india, I would later learn, this palm tree nut is called pan and is equally enjoyed by the locals.





Not long into my stay on Saipan I Thought about ESL jobs on the islands, I was feeling so enchanted with the tropical paradise setting. I think we inquired with a head teacher Garapan is the largest city on Saipan but I never followed through with the idea. Instead, I would return home, finish my masters and then head to China for my first teaching job.

Japan on the way home



I had traveled to Saipan with Greg and Rufina but I left on my own about New Year's Day and decided to stop for a few days in Japan to see the sights of Tokyo and enjoy some delicious Japanese food. Like the different cultures of the world, Ethnic foods tended to always be a draw for me because the type of food I was brought up on, the typical American diet of the 50's and 60's, was about as boring and uninteresting (not to mention unhealthful) as my childhood family itself. I'm talking about creamed chipped beef and flour gravy on white toast, pigs in a blanket, pot roast with potatoes, venison liver and onions, venison steaks, fried chicken and creamed corn, pork chops and applesauce, ...hamburgers, hamburger helper, creamed tuna on toast.... Even as a little girl, I hardly liked any of it, especially the creamed whatever on toast. I don't think I would even eat it, no wonder I was such a skinny child. But when the doors to the world opened to me, when I went to college and started trying ethnic foods, I became a aficionado of my taste buds and a gourmand of the most pungent, bitter, spicy, and outrageous ethnic foods I could find. Even after I became a vegetarian and vegan in my early thirties. And it seems that a lot of the times, over the years, the foreign or ethnic people were astonished I liked

some of their foods or that I knew the names. “She knows about masala dosas!” “she very much likes chilies!” “she’s heard about okonomiyaki,” and so on.

The Japanese archipelago offshore from Korea is one of the world’s largest island nations. Other than its four main islands—Hokkaido, Honshu, Kyushu, and Shikoku--the archipelago of more than 14K islands (260 inhabited) is like a string of pearls stretching along the east coast of mainland Asia.

My flight from the warm sultry airport of Saipan to the much cooler Narita Airport took three and a half hours. In Narita I caught a train to Tokyo which took one and a half hours. English is spoken here over loud speaker and at least a little is spoken by people I’ve questioned so far. First went to travelers info and got number for a YWCA kanda surugadai. Kese train from airport to ueno station. Change to shin-o chanomizu station. \$16 for tiny room where I stayed one night because the next day Went to imperial hotel (hybiya station) to cash traveler’s checks. Walked around. Japanese New Year. People dressed in kimonos. Very crowded. Bought sweaters. Had sushi. Felt awkward not knowing Japanese mannerisms or language. I wasn’t even sure how to open the door to the small restaurant so I watched an old man go inside first. No one spoke English. The old man wrote down for me the sushi special. From a small glimpse, I really like Japanese culture.

Later at 5PM a young Japanese man named Tanaka came up to me and asked if I spoke English. Eventually this led to going for coffee. Then he took me to the Ashanti temple where I bought a buddha for John Johnston, a boyfriend in PDX. What a crowd for New Year. Went in temple. First washed in fountain then in smoke. Went to dinner later at a small private restaurant. Had okonomiyaki. Wonderful. Soba and liver Sapporo and kurin beer.

Came to stay at Japanese style hotel with Tanaka. He wanted me but I wouldn't allow him full access because I had no birth control and he had no protection. Beautiful. Hot bath. Futon on floor. Tea. TV. sushi again for breakfast. Went to world Trade tower. Tokyo TV tower and another temple with baby graves. He took me to this kind of club down a side ally. Inside it was dark and it seemed a place for couples. We sat in a private little cubicle and had saki and sushi. Okonomiyaki.

A few months Later when tutoring a Japanese woman back in Portland, I asked her husband about this exclusive place in a picture I took of the ally. He pointed out the distant man standing in street posing for my picture. It was Tanaka and I felt slightly embarrassed because the husband knew about the "Lover's Cove" little club, or this type of place, and he understood that I had gone there with the man in the picture.



PSU Masters in English

While working on my Masters at PSU I had several boyfriends including men from my classes, from my teaching jobs at PSU and PCC, friends of friends and Don Ellis who would eventually become my first husband after we hooked up when I returned home from my three-

year sojourn teaching English in Asia. Lars was still my friend and I would visit him from time to time or invite him to a party I hosted. He wanted to have sex but I held him off because, as I would tell him, we were no longer together.

For much of this time I lived in an apartment in NW PDX, a swank and hip area of town, and I owned my first new car which I bought from Kathi's brother who was a car salesman in Vancouver, Washington. It was a small blue Renault Le Car and I felt quite set with my life. But I had the problem of parking my car at night along the street outside my apartment building. All the parking was by street meter and I had to get down to plug the meter by eight AM each day or be on my way. Parking was free from something like 8 PM until 8 AM.

At another time, perhaps after I moved from my swank apartment, Kathi and I invested in a rundown house trailer on a trailer park in SE PDX. It was a bad bad investment but Kathi had been successful buying house trailers, living in them a while, then selling them for a profit and moving on to another one. The house trailer we bought for 3K was in need of so much repair that we couldn't possibly make a profit from it. And when we tried to sell it, get rid of it, to a young couple, the lot's management told us they weren't eligible to live in the park because the young woman was pregnant and children weren't allowed in the park. So we were stuck. I lived in the home for a while, suffered from leaks when it rained, and a moldy smell, then I moved out perhaps back to campus housing and rented out the house trailer to one of my boyfriends Greg Ellars. Greg and I were mostly great friends. He was an ESL teacher at a PDX high school and a staunch Buddhist who had studied Buddhism in Japan. I was leaning toward Asian philosophies and so we got along quite well.

Toward the end of my graduate work, I started dating a man from India whom I met at a Volley Ball party on a farm with a bunch of hippie like Co op Organic people. They were friends

of one of my colleagues at PCC RIC, Story Norman. I thoroughly enjoyed going out with Shiv Balankrishna and visiting him and his two roommates from India, Arya Batacherjee and Cholan Muthukumarasami. Cholan was a fabulous cook and made fantastic South Indian meals that I never missed if I had the opportunity.

On one occasion Arya told me he was returning to Calcutta to marry the bride his parents had arranged for him as was typically done in his culture. When he off the wall asked me if I'd like to come to his Hindu Brahman wedding I said, without hesitation, "Yes!" And I did everything I could to make that happen.

It coincided with the time I was ready to head to China for my first teaching job at a university in Wuhan. Here was the problem. An astrologer had firmly set Arya's wedding on an auspicious date in December, as was the custom. I've told this story before when I HAD to go to the San Juans with Lars and Saipan with Rufina. "In accordance with my reverence, I had to make a date . . ." My job in China wasn't scheduled to start until February, so that was no problem. But my TA job in the English Department didn't conclude until a few days before Arya's wedding. I couldn't make it fit because if I left after I gave my last final, I'd miss the first part of Arya's three-day event. And I couldn't do that. To remedy the situation, I convinced a professor emeritus in the department to take over my last week which really only amounted to being a proxy at the exams. She kindly agreed and was even enthusiastic about the opportunity. I had everything perfectly arranged, got my ticket to Calcutta, and ended the lease on my campus apartment.

However, I did not tell the head of our department, an Egyptian man named Dr. Naguib Gries, because he was a man I couldn't tolerate and I don't think he liked me all that much either, certainly not after he discovered I had bailed out of my TA position without telling him. I would

learn this three years later after I returned to PDX. He gave me only a “B” on my Master’s thesis which really deserved an “A.” It involved a great deal of research into the new and upcoming field of using computers to assist in teaching English. And he also tried to stop me from receiving my modest paycheck for my last month of work as a TA. Oh well. I didn’t care because the wedding was over-the-top worth my efforts to attend. And besides, Gries was a chauvinist jerk who would say things to me like “don’t you have someone supporting you?”

Post graduation trip to Asia 1982-85

I wrote about my first sojourn in Asia in my first memoir titled “Moonbeams in Asia” and in this memoir I only want to touch on the spectacular islands I experienced during this time. I became so enthralled with islands, in fact, that I garnered all my cash and credit reserves and tried to invest in a bungalow business for tourists on a remote south Thailand island called Lamsom.

But first, allow me to recount the many heart throbbingly beautiful islands I encounter during the entire three years. It started with my arrival in Hong Kong after I left India. At the time the island group belonged to British sovereign. It wouldn’t be for another nearly fifteen years when China took over the rule with an iron fist, so to speak. WROTE FEW POEMS IN INDIA... BUT WHILE WANDERING HK... ENTHRALLED WITH ISLAND BEAUTY, JEWEL OF THE CITY AT NIGHT...

LEFT CHINA FOR JOB IN TL PSU... FIRST WENT TO PHUKET... MET NUTA WUT... LAMSOM DREAM... READ MEMOIR. WHILE AT PSU TO TARA TAU ISLANDS, TO KHO SAMUI, POEM. TO PENANG.... SINGAPORE... Kuwait expats to island country Bahrain... DUBAI ARTIFICIAL ISLANDS....

Pen pals and Arastar Agents

my entire life I've been interested in the varied and many cultures of the world. As a little girl I loved pouring through my grandparents' Nat Geos and cutting out pictures of people dressed in different costumes from different nations. This is why I took to traveling right out of high school and why I majored in anthropology and even English which became my ticket to live and teach in different parts of the world. It's not that I think cultures, traditions, and religious beliefs are profound sacred institutions that should be protected at all costs. Studying them is just something interesting to do. But in truth, human cultures, societies, religions, and most beliefs are merely artificial constructions of the mind that often create delusions about the self. No different from the artificial borders nations draw or from the constellations astronomers have drawn in the sky. It's all very interesting but artificial and unreal. When we believe these constructs to be real, to be the truth about reality, then we become delusional because we are merely adhering to what's artificial. We go down rabbit holes and cling to popular conspiracy theories. This is just my opinion. My belief.

What do I mean? I believe foremost, for example, I am a human being striving to survive in this world. I've been given a life, for whatever reason or by whatever cause, and how I live that life is up to me. I aim to live with a clear head and with compassion for other beings on this planet, and to respect the life I have and the world I live in. All else, religious, cultural, traditional, societal, political beliefs are delusion to me. Sorry. That's just how I feel. So, when someone says to me something like it's important to keep this or that culture intact, I don't agree. Cultures are just human constructs and most impose a lot of negative delusions upon members of the culture and those outside the culture. Mostly, that negativity has to do with beliefs in hierarchical levels of people. Of one gender, race, sect, or religion being superior (better) to

another one. Usually, women get the brunt of this negativity which has become mainstream and institutionalized in religion. Psychological labeling is another hogwash delusion. Some cultures of the world view a person who thinks differently as a shaman. Others see the same type of person as bipolar or some other psychological term. To me, it's all delusion. People think in different ways, that's all. Some think more deductively, others more inductively. Some are artistic, others scientific.

In conclusion, I do not hold dear the idea that tradition or culture are valuable and sacred institutions. Compassion and respect for others and for the world are what matter. But the human world of today and possibly always clings to their valued cultures and religions and from what I've observed people become ethnocentric, bigoted, misogynistic and that is why the human world is so filled with hate (for those outside the culture), anger, and greed. And when we cling to our culture, ethnicity, religion and so on we start acting stupid by discussing things like Mr. Potato Head culture wars and "wokeness" whatever that ridiculous term is supposed to mean. It's all delusion and fodder for political movements that don't offer a person clarity of mind and a compassionate respectful view of our world, of our individual lives.

Given all this, I am still fascinated with world cultures and people outside the ethnic group I was born into. Maybe because I find distaste for my childhood family, because of a variety of factors, I have always gravitated toward people from other cultures and countries. They are much more interesting to me than what my childhood family had to offer.

The Pacific Islands, also called Oceania, was one area of the world that I studied during my anthropology courses at PSU. It's a fascinating and vast region of Earth's islands and if I'm going to write a memoir about islands, I feel obliged to offer an introduction to what I know

about Oceania before I relate my trip to Saipan during Christmas of 1980, nearly forty-five years ago.

Anthropologists or the like have sectioned out the Pacific Islands, the largest section of the world by far, into three major areas, maybe five if we include the Indochina Islands and the area of Australia. But to keep it simple I will discuss the three areas which are Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia. They say that people from Indochina migrated to Australia perhaps first and then to the islands of Micronesia maybe two or three thousand years ago. In more recent times, the peopling of the Pacific Islands happened in Polynesia, the largest island area of the Pacific which is a triangle from Hawaii in the north to New Zealand in the SW to lonely Easter Island in the east toward South America. In fact, Easter Island is a territory of Chile. These days if I could travel anywhere in the world it would be to Easter Island so I could touch one of the giant stone moai and possibly receive some kind of ancient powers. It's just a thought. The only place I've been to in Polynesia is Hawaii and that was only a stopover with my first husband on our way to Asia in 1995. We weren't able to leave the airport. My parents went on a cruise to New Zealand and they traveled to Hawaii perhaps four times, so has my friend Kathi and my sister. But I've always felt that at least I went to Saipan which is perhaps more unique because it isn't such a famous tourist destination. Anyway, this is all I have to say about Polynesia.

I have a few things to relate about Melanesia, however. During law school and shortly after I graduated, I established my own business with my first husband. We called our company Arastar. At first we were pursuing avenues to develop websites because it was in the mid 1990's at the birth of the world wide web explosion. For several years, around this time, I had been corresponding with "penpals" from around the world. I began before I went to law school using an organization I found, perhaps in a magazine because it was before the Internet. It was an

excellent organization that hooked me up with correspondences from around Europe, Africa, South America, Asia, and even the Pacific Islands. At a time, I must have had up to twenty or thirty interesting people I was writing to. The most unusual places on my list included a woman in Siberia, another woman in Belarus, man in Samarkand, a friendly fellow in Cuba.



Siberian children, friend from Samarkand and his twins



Russia, Australia, Belarus, Brazil



Taiwan, Czech Republic





Anyway, when I was trying to establish Arastar I decided to begin an import-export business on the web and I enlisted many of my pen pals as what I called, Arastar Agents. THESE AGENTS WERE TO HELP ME FIND BUSINESSES IN THEIR COUNTRIES WHO WANTED TO USE ARASTAR'S WEB SERVICES OR WHO HAD PRODUCTS TO EXPORT FOR MY IMPORT BUSINESS. SOME PEN PALS DIDN'T CATCH ON AND SENT ME A LIST OF BUSINESSES FROM THEIR PHONEBOOKS EXPECTING ME TO PAY THEM

FOR EACH BUSINESS NAME. SOME OF MY PEN PALS THOUGHT I WAS BEING UNETHICAL IN A WAY, THAT THE PEN PAL ORGANIZATION WAS JUST FOR FRIENDSHIP AND I HAD CROSSED THE LINE. BUT I GOT A FEW VERY GOOD AGENTS THROUGH MY EFFORT. Young men from Africa were especially interested in joining Arastar. In Togo I worked with two men who called their affiliate Partner's Sarl. I sent them Arastar pamphlets and banners and they sent me wooden animals and African deities which I posted on their website. I also had agents from the Ivory Coast, Mali, and Madagascar, a country island just off the southeast coast of Africa that I hoped to one day visit. My agent in Uganda died of AIDS, something that was prevalent at the time, but before he succumbed he arranged for me to help the Molly and Paul orphanage with a website. TWO OF MY AGENTS OR BUSINESS CLIENTS BECAME A BASE FOR A PROTAGONIST IN MY NOVEL "KEY TO 1000 DOORS:" MELAN SUBA IN NEPAL AND WILSON YAPA IN SRI LANKA. Built a website for a travel agent and exporter of Thangkas in Nepal which I use in my novel. Everest Legendary. Melan Subba a friendly man who even invited me to come stay with him in Nepal after he learned about my divorce. I helped My agent from Sri Lanka, Wilson Yapa, actually come to the US and help me with my B&B in Florida. I base my protagonist in my novel Key to 1000 Doors on Wilson, an ambitious man who tried to take advantage of avenues in the US, such as taking out credit then leaving without paying his debt.

All this aside, I did have two interesting Arastar agents from Melanesia, one from Papua New Guinea and the other from Fiji, the two major islands of this region. I actually almost made it to PNG in 1984. I was teaching English at a university in Thailand when I met a young traveler named Graham who was headed to PNG. It was near the end of my teaching contract and I wanted to meet him in Port Moresby. But I chickened out in the end because of the dangers I

heard about on the large and partly unchartered country which shares the island with Indonesia. Headhunters and travelers gone missing. The agent I had in PNG didn't really pan out except for sending me a few pictures of products from his country for the website. I don't remember much else about him, not even his name.

However, I remember very well my pen pal from Fiji, George Viliame. He wasn't one of my active agents but we became sort of friends after my divorce. George was interested in a lot of things so our letters discussed many topics. I thought about traveling to Fiji to visit him, having heard about the island mostly through a colleague of my first husband who went there to scuba dive. I guess Fiji is well known for this. But as it turned out George was really looking for avenues to leave his country for some reason, maybe to make more money, maybe to leave his wife. I'm not sure. I think he found his way to Australia and was trying to come to the US, like Wilson. George started calling me. In fact, we spoke over the phone several times but soon enough my life after the divorce became too chaotic to keep up with him or with any of my pen pals. Things fell apart for me but that's another story which I address in my memoir "The Desert's Edge."

What I really want to offer in this memoir are some of the letters I wrote to George during the height of our friendship. As I said, he was interested in a lot of things, about me and my interests, and when he learned that I read Tarot cards he asked me to teach him and send him a Rider's deck, which I happily did. I started reading Tarot when I worked at the University of Kuwait in 1985 so by the time I wrote these letters to George in Fiji I had been familiar with the cards for about fifteen years. They really suited my artistic way of thinking, that is, in images more than words. And now I want to present those letters which I originally intended for a book in itself that I wanted to call "Tarot letters to Fiji." But soon after I left my B&B business I quit

reading the Tarot mostly because I became religious for a short while then never went back to them. I tried to follow the religion of my second husband but that didn't work out for me because, as I've mentioned, religion and culture tend to create a lot of delusion in the mind, at least for me and in order to gain clarity of mind and have a positive view of myself I had to abandon the idea of following a religion. I just never resumed Tarot reading maybe because my writing and artwork take up all my time and fulfill my need to express myself, and understand myself in images rather than words.

In any event, here are my letters to my friend George Viliame from Fiji:

“Tarot Letters to Fiji:”

Dear Viliame,

February 25, 2000

Sorry for not writing sooner. As it is now I have about 26 jobs running this B&B. I'm also getting up around 4 am every day to work on my latest memoir (“The Desert's Edge” concerning the past 2 years of my life). It's going well and when it's done I plan to revise my other memoirs and start sending them out for publication.

I'm also doing a lot of art projects around the place, adding my touch. I designed and made the brochure logo in the brochure I'm sending you, and I've been painting furniture and wood floors with art, decorating my grandmother's old trunk with coins, stamps and her pictures, and creating a mural of the Sonora Desert on my office wall.



Well, I hope you are well and enjoying each day in Fiji. What are the difficulties there? Isn't the weather always pleasant? Here, it has been fairly cold in early January. These past few days have been warm and nice, although humid. Every morning and evening I walk my Dobermans to the nearby beach. Now I've been feeding the seagulls popcorn. They flock around and are learning to expect us. What kinds of birds are on Fiji? What kinds of animals?

I've been thinking about starting the Tarot lessons with you, if you are ready for all that. I'll send you a few cards each letter from one of my decks that I can't use (cats or dogs chewed up one or two cards). Well, here goes:

The Tarot is a personal deck of cards. To become a reader, you have to follow your own instincts and voices and relate the cards to your own experiences. I can only introduce each card and give it a general meaning, then offer my more personal meaning. But in the end each reader has her or his own imprinted version of the cards. Otherwise, how can they interpret the cards on a psychic or spiritual level?

There are 78 cards in a deck: 56 Minor Arcana (similar to a regular deck of cards with the addition of 4 knights), and 22 Major Arcana cards (arcana meaning cards with hidden meaning, with deep interpretation.).

To begin the study of Tarot, I recommend beginning with a thorough familiarization of the Major Arcana, a thrust of allegories on a spiritual journey toward self-knowledge, or

enlightenment. The cards are symbols for phases in life's struggle to survive and grow as a spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and resourceful human being. The symbols tap into our subconscious patterns of thought and help bring about a clearer picture of surrounding events and influences that hinder or enhance our journey through life.

One important note I want to make is that the message of Tarot is to learn and grow even from the most trying and difficult situation, to move on, to understand and improve. In other words, I am not a doomsday reader of misfortune because even an apparent misfortune can be a very great life evolving lesson.

The Major Arcana usually begins with the Fool, who is zero (I prefer these cards), though sometimes the fool is the last card, number 21 (which just shows the full circle of our journey, going back to our origins—nature's understanding of itself). In my deck, The Ryder Waite, zero is the fool and 21 is the universe (enlightenment).

Here are the Major Arcana cards: zero = the Fool, 1 = the Magician, 2 = the Priestess, 3 = the Empress, 4 = the Emperor, 5 = the Pope, 6 = Lovers, 7 = the Chariot, 8 = Strength, 9 = the Hermit, 10 = the Wheel of Fortune, 11 = Justice, 12 = the Hanged Man, 13 = Death, 14 = Temperance, 15 = the Devil, 16 = the Crumbling Tower, 17 = the Star, 18 = the Moon, 19 = the Sun 20 = Judgment, and 21= the World.

In my next letter I'll talk about the Fool.

Hi Viliame,

February 27, 2000

Now see here it is two days later and I had the urge to write more Tarot letters. I also read your last letter again and found a few interesting points to comment on. I think it would be great

if you could stop by one day. I'm really hoping this place will grow and prosper soon, so I can buy a house. It's difficult to live in a real home that becomes public here and there.

I'm in a relationship now with Sonny who works at helping this place go. He's planning to bring his 15-year-old son here, maybe this summer. Everyone wants a new start. Well, I'll send you my book chapters and then you can get the story. All right? (I'm on chapter four now).

This is such an exciting age we now live in. the year 2000. the binary year. And it seems we all have or can have a new beginning. This is the **Fool in the Tarot deck**. He is youth, at any age. A surge of energy, revitalization within. Despite all odds, despite everyone around us – negative or positive forces alike, we launch off and set forth on a new journey toward success. We want to be fulfilled in life. We want to know Truth, Happiness and Love. And by golly, we can do it and we do it with a self-esteem more powerful than a locomotive....

Risks. Oh, there are risks in such a tribulation. But we have FAITH in our destiny. We can take what comes because we believe in the powers that be. They – he, she, it – exist to guide us. They are Bodhisattvas disguised as life. (They at times may seem to hold us back, or maybe they did.) But now we don't care. We are on our own. And we use each experience as a stepping-stone. We are as bright as the sunshine over our head; as jolly and energetic as the loyal puppy at our feet. Our spirit soars as high as the tallest peaks. And we do not care what lies ahead. Because we have faith in our destiny. And we KNOW our destiny is GOOD. We may not yet understand that Good is Self-Knowledge and spiritual growth among the world community, but we know we are after good.

REVERSED: For me, if the card is reversed there is a drainage of that energy. That youthful vitality. Or possibly there is more bad intent – greed, hatred, jealousy– that buries our force and misleads us. This may be a temporary pause. But even upside down, I believe the FOOL at his/her purest, will emerge – especially given the surrounding influences (other cards in the reading).

As I think of it, I will give examples of relating cards. The Knights align with the Fool, and so do the Pages (Face cards: Kings, Queens, Knights, and Pages) are usually personality influences, even if aspects of your own personality). With another Knight in the reading, the Fool's power bends the way of the Knight's powers. If more than one Knight, the Fool becomes a Knight in his Quest, rather than a gentle soul, or a resourceful marketer, or a student... He is on a serious quest. Same with the Pages. I'll go more into this later.

Well, I'll get this off and get started now on my book. I have about two hours before I have to get the kitchen ready for guests. We have a full house this weekend, thankfully, but I never know when and who will show up for breakfast at 8:30.

Take care and more soon,

Teresa

Hi George,

March 2, 2000

The Magician comes after the Fool. He is older sister/brother. Son to the following personalities. He is Ganesh, the elephant god son of Shiva.

He is the next step in the journey. Possibilities are limitless – Infinite. He can use all resources at his disposal (master of the sword), in order to reach his goal.

Without being a Magician, we remain a fool launched on risk-taking journey. We need to stop, pause, and figure out ways to get there from here. So the magician becomes our guide. Cunning, craftily, slick, resourceful. Manager, Maneuver, Manipulator. He stands at the threshold of endless possibility. And he is proud of being clever.

Aligned with the Swords: especially page, knight, Ace, 4 (pause), 5 (maneuver), 6 (stealth). He will get out of a bind (swords). He will see you through difficult situations.

But watch out for his craft when the card's reverse....

I know the Magician very well. He can pass any lie detector test because he doesn't flinch at telling a lie, a tall tale, or stretching the truth. He is fluent in lying. So good at not flinching that he will bend twist enhance even the most outrageous tale without "copping" to the truth. He has developed this craft of cunning through a life of necessity. He knows the streets. He is street smart. You may never get at the complete truth with this fellow. Just recognize his nature and use your own judgment.

The Magician is necessary to survive the most difficult of journeys. He may be your key to success or your downfall if you are not cautious of his slight of hand (what you see is not what you get).

Best advice: Know the Magician and use his powers to your advantage (grow, learn, at least). Use the Magician within yourself.

By the way, a negative reader of Tarot, does not see the human soul as rising above any given situation to learn the great Truths of our existence: those of Buddha.... Especially compassion... those of Jesus such as forgiveness... self knowledge of one's nature of Nature....

If you just see in Tarot cards -- death, destruction, disaster, you haven't read far enough. (this is the TV and Movies gypsy way of fortune telling)

THE PRIESTESS: comes next. She is early on in the journey, ancient innate, instinctive wisdom.

Hi,

I got your last letter and fax. Sorry if it takes me a while to reply. But then I get a puff of air, and here I am. And thanks for the calendar.

I'm glad you enjoyed your trip to Australia. Sure, I'm happy to send or fax a sponsor letter. Just fax me what needs to be said for the invitation. You have much determination to leave Fiji. I'm

sure you'd love Florida. And you could tell me how Pensacola's beaches compare to those in Fiji.

I am so busy now. But it has to be done. I am preparing to open two shops – the coffee shop and the gift shop art studio, we are remodeling and decorating, I am creating art pieces to sell, writing my recent book, and trying to make this a successful business. Oh, and one other thing,

I would love to get some wonderful things from Fiji for my store. Fine art of the traditional craft or something representative of your culture, especially something spiritual!! Can you help me on this? After deciding on some items, I'd wire the money and trust you to send them, or something like that. And you could simply then on, set me up with the exporter... (since it seems you're leaving Fiji). But then you could do the same from NZ....

I hired an accountant, which is a great relief. I can hardly even read what you must be going through with your "reports." Belaboring, right?

Sonny's son, Cameron, is supposedly coming here this week, possibly to stay. This will certainly add a dimension to our lives around here. (I think that after I'm settled and pulling in some good income, I'll adopt a baby girl, or young girl, from somewhere in the world.)

You will be one of the first people I will send chapters to after my final edit (which I hope to be by July). I'm also putting first chapters on the Internet, and selling manuscripts in my store, until I get properly published. Once I get one book out, I have about 20 ready to go (books of poetry, 10 novels and non fiction books, journals, already written). And then there's the Tarot book. Letters to Fiji....

I know it sounds like a lot. It is. But everything also sort of works together. I'm not going in opposing directions. I hop from task to task throughout the day (writing, art, business, responsibilities, housekeeping...) but going from one, such as business, to another, such as art, is like taking a relaxation break. And then my art will be products for my store and the Internet.... And writing, well, that's what I feel I'm most designed to do.

Now, let me throw a little Tarot into this: The **High Priestess** who quietly sits, dignified, with the Magician and Empress to her sides. She is the noble lady, sister to us all. Some know her as Guardian Angel, some as Mary, or Guan Yin, Tara, others as consort to God. "Mother Mary come to me, speaking words of wisdom, let it be...." (The Empress would take action).

Be calm and think. Know thineself. Meditate. Follow your intuition, and that be positive. If she is in the spread, she will guide you to inner truths, often through much difficulty, or in spite of any difficulty. She is often in between you and a bad decision. Go with her...

She knows your heart, she knows your soul. She is your mother. You cannot fool her, even though you think you do. And she will still love you through your trials and errors. So have comfort with her presence.

Reverse: have you forgotten your mother?

More on all this later. Take care for now,

P. S. Now that I think more about it, I'd really love to learn the lore and all that fabulous with Fiji for both my store and possible eco-travel... Again, especially the spiritual.

P. S. S. I used to write to French and Spanish pals, but now that task of stumbling through those languages is just too time consuming, except once or twice a year. But I do have some pals from Cuba. Products from there would really be amazing....

Hi again,

April 22, 2000

You see, this Tarot thing hits me now and then and I set out to write about the next card. Thanks, actually, for helping me put together this book. But will you be gone from Fiji by the time I'm through? No matter, I'm sure you'll keep me posted.

I'm a little unfocused this morning. I've got so many things I do, in addition to my relationship with Sonny. And now Sonny's son Cameron, is going to live with us. He's a very nice kid about 15 (tall basket ball player) and he has taken right to helping create this place.

Mosquitoes are back. They sneak out in the evenings, especially if I'm at the pond. And Florida mosquitoes like me more than any other sub-species. Do you have bug problems on Fiji?

Have you thought about those Fijian Spiritual things?

Now about Tarot:

So far I've been talking about the Major Arcana cards depicting stages in a spiritual journey toward enlightenment. Starting with the Fool, then the Magician and the Priestess.

Beside the Priestess and Emperor is the Empress, III. In contrast to her sister, the Priestess, she is firmer in her demands and persistent with her requests. She will not tolerate endless misbehavior or injustice. She is poised, dignified and she has a tremendous heart, flowing from the depths of earth.

Whereas her sister, Priestess, will guide you gently to those depths, the Empress impresses that you must be organized, neat and clean, when behaving with such tremendous heart. Do not be

sloppy with the actions you take. What is your focus? Get there, but conduct yourself respectfully.

In a spread, the Empress represents these influences, and she also most likely represents a powerful female personality (your mother, sister, wife, daughter....). A promising guide. You'll like her because she's the best your mother had to offer.

If reverse, she may be the worst your mother had to offer, or it may be indifference now when you expect something nurturing. Also, an upside down card can simply mean, energy drained from best qualities, or that expectation just ain't happening. You expect something, from someone, and you don't get it. Maybe you're wrong to expect in the first place. Note that reverse meanings aren't negative Tarot cards in the spread. A reverse card may just mean you have to try harder despite surrounding and inner influences.

(One note, this card doesn't have to be a female. Men possess these qualities to differing degrees as women possess qualities from cards such as the Emperor and Pope.)

The Empress and Emperor: In contrast, the Emperor is straight rule. Follow these rules of conduct. He would not have so much heart in decision making, "off with his head!". He is Bill Gates, our founding fathers, (as well as stanch leaders as Castro, Khomani, Sadam). She is Lincoln, Princess Diana, Corazon Aquino – the ruler with a heart.

Both Empress and Emperor in the spread suggest a strong marriage, tight bond (Bill and Hilary Clinton)

The Empress and Queens: fertility, heart, intuition, jealousy, or bitterness, it all depends on the other cards and how they appear.

More later,
Teresa

Dear George,

June 8, 2000

How are you? I don't even know if you'll receive this but its early morning and I needed a warm up before working on my novel, which I plan to finish by July 13. I just have three chapters and editing to do. The initial writing can take some time, but most edits are quick.

I'm sorry the cell phone cut off when you called. The sorrys of technology. Anyway, you should get my invitation letter before this. You really must get email!

I've been painting the house with Sonny, trying to get that done. Remarkably the weather yesterday was wonderful – not so humid and lots of cooling sea breezes. We hope to get the house painted by June 16.

I have so much varied work to do, all the time. My biggest problem seems to be getting interrupted. That's why I resorted to getting up early to write. Otherwise no writing gets done.

Well, I looked at my cards this morning and decided it was time to tackle the Emperor, who follows the queen.

He is such a rigid man, though so needed. That is, his discipline and command are often essential otherwise we all get wishy-washy and unproductive. He is unrelenting and can be very annoying. Authority battles occur. But at his best, his command, rules and discipline are what's good for our soul. He knows that. He does care about others. In fact at his very very best he might even sacrifice himself to save another. But often we fail to see his love, finding it overshadowed by too much stern ruliness.

He does indeed rule. He doesn't take command, He assumes it (like my Doberman Max).

So how to work with him? (you see the Empress is more willing to work with us). Anger does not conquer anger. Sarcasm is a downfall. Revenge is uncalled for. Personally, I have always battled authority because I can't accept what's dealt to me: as a woman of a certain race of a certain age mind and soul. So often I have left when the authority became too ridiculous. This would be the Emperor down, at his worse a tyrant. Then it is time to leave. However, when the discipline, though rigid and strict, really aims for betterment, then it's time to seek inner peace and "bite the bullet." You and the Emperor are both aiming for success of a worthy goal. He (or she) has his idea – his certainties – about method. You have yours. Conflict after conflict because ideas are always yours or his! Key: if you can't bite the bullet, try compromising even if only an inch. See the positive – the aim – disregard the negative, this becomes too preoccupying and unproductive.

Where the Emperor appears in a lay-out: He could be from your childhood, recent past, he could be your guide. And the case might be, you are in part the Emperor. He would be the environment of law, business, serious studies – NOT art drama. And he is not New Age. He comes from "how he did it when he was a child."

If you try, you can love and understand this character. You can work with him. Or, leave and before long you'll encounter a new Emperor.

More later,
Teresa

PS Hope to see you here in Pensacola!

Hi George,

June 14, 2000

Are you still in Fiji? Sorry we got cut off the other day when you called. I was on the cell phone. I have to forward my calls whenever leaving, and sometimes I'm not quick enough in forwarding back the phone, and then I haven't charged up the cell phone. Isn't technology wonderful? But I'm strapped to it: phone and Internet.

I assume you'll call if you get the visa. Good luck. You seem to be eager to set out for something new. Well, I hope we continue to write and don't lose contact. After all, I have 73 more cards to go!

The Pope, card V, is our spiritual leader, our religious rules and regulations, the confines of our spirituality. He tells you who you are, how you should behave, and what you should do. This is an immature spirituality, most often, because to be truly spiritual, you must know yourself. You, yourself, must determine who you are and what you intend to do with your life.

It is best to take the Pope at face value. Listen to him, heed according to what makes sense. And do not let him dictate your life unless you, yourself, decide to follow ways of his because.

Personally, I respect him, I want to hear what he has to say, but I view him as no more spiritually based than I am. And therefore I determine for myself which of his rules and regulations that do not make sense to me.

I'm sure it sounds as if I don't like the Pope. In many many ways I don't. But he is my background, my father and his father. He is my up bringing and not everything he had to say was bad policy against the female. So, in many ways, I respect him. He, father, was my provider (though my mother was as well). He loved me, cared for me, and tried to show me right from wrong.

In his old age, I will duly respect the Pope. And I will sacrifice some of my ego out of respect for his age and his position as my father.

If the Pope and Priestess appear in a spread, there is probably a union in religion: you will marry in your own religion and hopefully the power of the Priestess will balance the Rules of the Pope.

Hi George,

June 26, 2000

I have a feeling I'm writing these letters for a book. I'm not sure what you're doing. When you last called, I was on the cell phone and, sorry, the batteries went dead. I hope you get these letters and your visa for the USA.

Now, feeling a need to break from my current book, I am prepared to write about a most powerful and important card, one representing cross-roads in life – a time of new direction, new choices and new opportunities that have recently opened up to you.

The Lovers stand before the sunshine of clarity and innocence, beneath angels of judgment, beside scriptures of judgment (from old religion). In the distance, behind them rises a mountain under the sun. A monument of earth beyond the grasp of scripture and judgment, a place where lovers find their vision. A place for a life changing vision quest. The clouds are between that mountain and the Lovers at the crossroad.

The sun stele has had its wrath,
You know,
Casting shadows here below,
The torpid hills
Where we once lay
Beyond the voices of today.

The sun stele has had its wrath,
You know,
On all the creatures here below
The torpid hills where we once lay
Beyond the echoes of that day.

But now, my love,
The rains have come
And lonely nights
are far from one.
And lonely nights
Have finally won.

This card breaks away from the line of personalities: priestess, queen, king and pope. It is not about people or societal influences. It is about choosing anew despite those influences.

The Lovers is about standing at the crossroads, choosing direction, the right direction, and in order to do so you need to take the time to focus on a Vision or a life goal. Thus, this is the card setting forth, like the Fool, on a Vision Quest. The Fool set forth on a Quest, mostly for adventure and because he/she was at the beginning of something, of adulthood, of a career, a marriage. The Lovers have traveled a while and are in need of revitalization – the Vision Quest in the mountain. Take the time to let sunshine penetrate your thoughts, back away from imposing judgment and scripture. It's time to decide for yourself.

The reason this figurative card is the Lovers, is because most often, or very often, a life decision involves the Relationship of Love (divorce/marriage; commitment/severing commitment). Stay with him/her or leave and move on to a new life. If you move on, what is that new life? Take time for a Vision Quest. If you stay together, take the time for a Vision Quest together. You and yours must renew vows or set vows.

If the more literal lovers, the 2 of Cups, appears in the spread with the Lovers, you have probably encountered your soul mate, someone spiritually connected to you. Someone you knew in previous lives, someone so intertwined with your spirit you will have to believe in fate, destiny, even reincarnation.

A soul mate is not necessarily who you expect, who you imagine. He/she may not be just like you, on the surface. He/she may seem so different at first appearance that you cannot imagine a soul mate connection. At the same time, you may click from the get go, fall in spiritual love at first sight. Anything is possible. However, you need time for a vision quest no matter what. An assessment of who you are together and where you are headed (together or not). It might even be a difficult relationship, one that takes tremendous honing. Maybe your spirit is more developed, maybe you are leader in the quest. Give and take, give and take, oh where are we heading?

So when this card appears take heed. It's time to assess your life, where you've been and mostly where you're headed and with whom. Will you be happy? Maybe. Alone? Maybe, if need be. Judged? Always. But head in the direction of the earth and sun for clarity and your own judgment about what you will do with your life. It may not be the time to continue life even with your "soul mate."

Dear Viliame,

June 26, 2000

It really all came to me on my birthday, after I had organized and placed almost all of my writings: poems on the computer, manuscripts filed or placed in a cedar trunk, files reviewed, everything backed up by zip drive disks and, I began plunging into revision of Dream Notes, the first novel to go online. Well, with all this, I felt like the Charioteer, taking reigns and ready to forge ahead – toward the goal (of getting all my materials published and published well).

Under me is the spirit of the Fool, his unabashed energy to set forth on a remarkable journey. He is youngest sibling to the Charioteer. Then I have the resourceful Magician to move me along; the intuitive wisdom and poise of Priestess and Empress; the discipline and command of Pope and Emperor; and the Vision Quest of the Lovers. I am set to go. Only I can stop me now.

It's kind of ironic that I start revision of Dream Notes, where Jason (the protagonist), hitches the reigns of his buckboard and I note the power of the coach man on my birthday. There is power is making ready to go, really move ahead.

August 10, 2000

I just got a call from a friend thought lost. Viliame from Fiji, I was sending him Tarot letters. He's somewhere in Auckland, after escaping Fiji after their recent coup. He said he received my invitation letter for his visa, the day he left the island.

And now I will read for him the next card (see Tarot Letters to Fiji). The card today is the Hermit. He stands alone after the coup of his country. He is a wise old man, he is a curmudgeon. And that seems divided down the middle. Why? Probably because we are flock animals. We live in groups, though often we are pushed into being Alone.

So the question is, how does one take that Alone, that "on your own," value of our culture.

My life suddenly has come all together in me. My vast experiences are here with me and so are the many gems I had practically discarded along the way held dear.

I've come up with another book I need to write: Hermit Woman: doing it alone. I have grown up learning, and lived 45 years experiencing that in the end, no matter how much I would like it to be otherwise, I must do it alone. I am on my own. Even though, I'm supposed to be a part of this universe. I am a part of it. But I am still on my own (much of my poetry reflect this):

Stopping for the moment
Can only be done
When time is still.

It's the little things –
You see –
Coffee with a friend, the landscape,
An empty thought,
Empty time.

Stopping for the moment,
Can only be done,
When thoughts are cleared.

And then

In the wake,
(observeth me)
I am alone
Yet,
Surrounded by the sea.

I am the Hermit Woman.

This is a scary card to be. A difficult place to be along the journey to enlightenment (resolution of a goal). Here is the beginning of great obstacles to follow (wheel of fortune chance, justice self-righteousness, the hanged man hang-ups, the great change Death, the devil's addictive behavior, the Tower of Maya). And we must face these obstacles, if we are the Hermit, alone. We must draw on inner strength, our card before, and we must find strength in our solitude.

Nobody is going to make you, except you (as in this poem):

I am going to make myself
(and maybe make you too)
dance along the way of life
to a Krishna floating tune.

I am going to make myself
Into who I'm going to be
In decoration and full accord
With who I want to see.

I am going to make myself,
You'll see.
I am going to make myself
Continue as, a follower of me.

I've never really liked it that in the end it's me who has to make me. I want a mommy to nurture me, but I've had to nurture myself. I've wanted others to do it – expectations of a spouse, a friend, family, but in the end, if I want anything done, I have to do it myself. This is the truth of life that I have most clearly learned.

But there's the downside to the Hermit. That's finding weakness in solitude. Loneliness:

Oh, what a fool I'd be –
If I cried.

Alone I share my misery.
Alone I die.

Oh, what a fool I'd be –
To shed a tear.

In front of all,
Who come around,
For me to hear.

Oh, what a fool I'd be

To show I'm sad.

(For I'm the only one,
who knows,
the one who's truly mad.)

--

Of hours long,
In days of late,
Only careless voices
Greet me in empty halls.

Half hearted
In justice,
while my stomach
Brought me spiral calls.

And the book
I selected,
Was not to be borrowed!
(So a careless voice explained the way).

Solace,
Was the pleasure,
Of an earnest bed,
Where soliloquy
Came to play.

I gave myself
A funeral
Inviting all
My friends,
From far away (some near).

And Pathos
Was my pleasure:
Not a careless voice
In an empty hall
To hear.

--

Why do you love your loneliness?
So callow is this vice.

In crowds you speak of solitude

(a melancholic slice).

And on and on I've written about loneliness. Loneliness can lead to bitterness and to the curmudgeon, rather like the down side of the bitter queen of swords.

We must be careful that we gather strength from our hermit and over power the weaknesses. Look for Balance in temperance to come, though she arrives after major obstacles. If she is nearby, your strong powers are in force.

Dear Viliame,

July 29, 2000

After taking hold of the reigns.... Do I have the strength to forge ahead? Infinity at my head, courage in my grasp. True strength, like wisdom, is from the soul. Now it takes strength to carry on the journey through Great Obstacles: Solitude, Chance of fortune, Cries of Justice imposing on your wisdom, Obligations that won't release you; Change in Path, Temperance, Temptation, Cataclysmic collision on values held dear.

Hi Viliame,
October 18, 2023

Wednesday,

Hi again,

The Justice Card: to really understand this card, know that fairness is something we create... Truth is random issue – though we believe in Fate. What is justice for one, is frustration for another.

Most beautiful in world...

How can we say which island is most beautiful. Like people, each possesses its own kind of stark beauty although some may feature dramatic scenery such as Mauritius, Easter, Zanzibar, Sicily, Madagascar, Prince Edward Island, Martha's Vineyard, Tahiti, Azores, Okinawa, Canary Islands. Wake, Bali, Seychelles, and the Florida Keys to name a modest sampling. Wish to see Easter Island and touch a moah....zanzibar

A true island.....

No. For me the true notion of an island is one far removed from the mainstream, if that makes any sense. And these islands are primarily in the Pacific, Atlantic, Arctic, Antarctic. and Indian Oceans; and the Caribbean and Mediterranean Seas. There are of course a lot of other places but the number of islands in the world is simply too vast, like counting all the stars in our Milky Way Galaxy.

In the Northern Atlantic I have been to one island for a brief stopover on my way home from Europe. My first trip to Europe occurred in 1973 right after I graduated from high school. I tell that story in its entirety in my memoir "Law School High." Iceland is a Nordic volcanic country on the rift of two tectonic plate just south of the Arctic Circle. It was first inhabited by the Nordic Fox that walked over the ice sheets during the ice age. Then Norwegian Vikings arrived and inhabited the island. The island was under Danish rule until about one hundred years ago in 1918 when it established itself as the Kingdom of Iceland. after WWII became a republic.

An interesting group of islands in the North Atlantic off the coasts of Portugal and west Africa are lumped into the name Macaronesia. These archipelagos include the nine volcanic islands called the Azores and the Maderia islands, both autonomous regions of Portugal; the Canary Islands autonomous community of Spain off the coast of Morocco and Western Sahara; and the independent country of islands called Cape Verde off the coast of Senegal. When I was teaching English for a private language school in Boston called Language Consultants, I taught a class to a group of factory workers who came from the Azores, probably from the capital. I was always asking about their islands but they were dead set on becoming Americans and had all come from working as fishermen on their islands which they didn't like.

I don't know much about Cape Verde except it was once occupied by the Portuguese and consists of ten volcanic islands. It became prosperous during the days of slave trading and

buccaneering. The Canary Islands really came to awareness back in 1977, while I was starting my undergraduate work at PSU. On March 27th of that year, two jumbo Boeing 747 jets collided on the airport runway as the planes attempted to takeoff during dense fog. Nearly 600 people died in the deadliest accident in aviation history.

The eighth and ninth largest seas in the world are the Caribbean and Mediterranean. I have never cruised in the Caribbean like my parents have but in my novel “My Brave Inca Dove” my protagonist, a woman who is traveling from Arizona to Tierra del Fuego, goes to the San Blas Islands off the coast of Panama because the Durian Pass through Panama is dangerous and virtually inaccessible (drug dealers and terrorists inhabit the area of swamps and jungle). I enjoyed researching this tropical archipelago. The Kuna people inhabit the islands and are famous for making molas, a reverse applique handicraft. Due to climate change these islands may become submersed by the end of this century.

The Mediterranean is brimming with world famous archipelagos, island countries, and islands with world history: the islands of Greece (Santorina), Corsica, Sardinia, Iberia, Crete, Sicily, and Cyprus, to name a few. There are two islands in the Mediterranean that involve me. One is featured in my novel “Ten Years Past Cairo” and the other I traveled to in 1974 while I was on leave in the Army from my station in Germany.



My ancient Egyptian spirit from novel

My novel “Ten Years” is an adventure story that mingles, through magical realism, the adventure story of a modern-day protagonist who steals back her son and escapes up the Nile and across the Nubian Desert. A spirit from ancient Egypt guides her way. Toward the story’s end, the protagonist and her son escape to Cyprus, the closest Mediterranean island to the Egyptian delta. Cyprus is also home to an ancient kingdom that existed during the time of my ancient spirit protagonist. I have never personally been to Cyprus but through this novel I have and I hope to take my readers there as well, both in modern and ancient times.



Now for my 74 trip to Sicily. While I was in high school the Godfather movie was all the rave and my best friend Kathi and I fell in love with Al Pacino and James Caan and Sicily. Then, while we were traveling in Europe in '73 Kathi met a young man from Sicily named Lilo (I

wasn't with her at the time). Kathi and Lilo kept a correspondence going and about a year later, while both Kathi and I were in the Army stationed in Germany, Kathi arranged for us to visit Lilo in Sicily during our leave, November 1974. We probably met somewhere and took the train to Messina via a train ferry from the mainland which is about 350 miles distance. Then we traveled by train to the capital Palermo where Lilo and his many friends lived. They were all students and most were unattached young men. One tall lanky guy kept trying to be my date but I wasn't attracted to him. Instead, I liked this handsome young man named Salvadore and during the week we were on the island I spent most of my time with him while Kathi was preoccupied with Lilo. They all showed us the beaches and sights. Lots of Mosques from the Muslim occupation about a thousand years ago. Mt. Etna, the largest active volcano in Europe, sits closer to Messina and we didn't travel anywhere but to the sights of Palermo. As far as my romance with Salvadore; it went nowhere. We hung out together, had pictures taken of us with his arm around me, but I don't think he really wanted a relationship with me and in fact he suggested I consider being with the tall lanky friend. It was rather like he felt obligated to be my date during this time as a friend of Lilo. Anyway, after Kathi and I left Palermo we stopped in Rome where I had an authentic romantic relationship with an Italian named Giovanni. I describe this episode in my Army memoir "The Trouble with Brass."





My 1986 trip to Prince Edward Island

When I was in the sixth grade at Chief Joseph Elementary School my teacher Mr. Verbout, a middle-aged man who lived outside of PDX on a farm, gave our class the best assignment I ever had during my time at Chief Jo. We were studying the Americas, both Canada and Latin America, and he assigned us to create booklets covering the countries involved. I loved the project and I still have those two booklets, my first books. Of course, they are quite simple but I included news articles, Nat Geo pictures and my own artwork when describing each country. My Canada book had a chapter for each province and territory and I was fascinated learning about our northern neighbor. My chapter on PEI is sparse and only includes the name of the capital Charlottetown, the island's population, and its primary industry fishing.

In 1986 I had just returned to the US after teaching at Kuwait University and was living in the Boston area with Don before we married about three years later. I had wanted to tour the area of Maine, New Brunswick, PEI, and Nova Scotia. We had already seen the other parts of Canada including Quebec on our way to Boston from PDX. I ENTUSIASTICALLY arranged the trip when Don got two weeks off from his job at GTE and I cleared my teaching schedule at Language Consultants and the YMCA in Greater Boston.

We first explored Maine and drove around Acadia National Park which takes up half of a shore island among many islands along the Maine coast north of Portland and on the way to New Brunswick. Basically, what I remember about our visit to Acadia occurred when we were fighting through the traffic in Bar Harbor and Don flipped off a driver out of frustration. Talk about road rage, this driver, a young man in a blue Ford Fiesta, turned his car around and followed us through the entire park, honking at us along the way and trying to get us to pull over and duke it out, it seemed. For perhaps an hour we drove through the park, in circles it seemed, trying to shake free from the irate man. But Don couldn't and he finally pulled over when we were nearly back in Bar Harbor. The Fiesta pulled behind us and the man approached in huff ready to fight. "I'm sorry. Sorry," Don said. And somehow the man eventually cooled off enough to let us be on our way, after Don gave him a hundred-dollar bill. For the rest of the trip, through New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and on PEI, I couldn't get the incident out of my head. It had really upset me and basically ruined the tranquility of the trip.

But we forged ahead to PEI to see all the marvelous fishing harbors, boats, inlets and coves. At the time the Confederation Bridge across the Northumberland Strait between NB and PEI was from ten years short of being completed. We took the Abegweit Ferry from Cape Tormentine to Borden-Carleton and enjoyed the true sense of arriving on an island. I felt as

though I was living what I imagined the island to be when I wrote my little booklet nearly twenty years before.

1995 Trip to Asia

A little over a year after I graduated from ASU College of Law, my husband of the time took a three-month sabbatical from his job at Intel and we traveled through Asia. I felt like I had suffered through three grueling years of law school and a bar exam and deserved this break. Besides, I wanted to explore Buddhist sites in Asia and research for my latest novel “Key to 1000 Doors” which takes place primarily in Nepal, Tibet, India, and Sri Lanka.

This would be my second trip to Asia where I had lived and worked in China, Thailand, and Kuwait in the early 1980’s. On our ‘95 trip we tried to go to many of the places I hadn’t seen on my first trip which I wrote about in my first memoir “Moonbeams in Asia.” These new countries for me included Nepal, Tibet, Vietnam, and Indonesia. In this memoir I want to particularly tell the stories of the islands I visited on this trip, namely the archipelago of Ha Long Bay off the northern coast of Vietnam, and Java and Bali, Indonesia in the East Indian Sea and the world’s largest archipelago.



Ha Long Bay

After a visit to Hanoi or Ho Chi Men City, we traveled to Ha Long and hired a boat for the day to take us among some of the most beautiful and dramatic islands I've seen. The boat ride was relaxing and refreshing as we drifted among the towering rock outcroppings and into island coves with hanging stalactites. The most memorable occurrence on that day happened about noon as we were enjoying a lunch of rice, tofu, and vegetables. At the time I was still using my Canon AE-1 and all its lenses and filters and I was taking pictures when suddenly this small sampan like boat pulled up along side ours. A man was running the motor at back and a friendly woman whom I assumed was his wife started chatting to us in Vietnamese. Suddenly we heard sirens blare and a police boat with flashing lights approached us and the sampan boat sped away. The police pulled up beside us and chatted with our captain and guides and the young 22 year old guide said that the people on the sampan were pirates who would have grabbed my camera bag and fled before we knew what had happened. He said there were a lot of such pirates lurking about the bay preying on vulnerable tourists.

From my Asia 1995 Journal:

"We decided to fly to Hanoi because we don't want to miss Ha Long Bay and we only have four days left for Vietnam. The flight leaves at 9 AM but we must catch a bus to the airport. Yesterday we rented bikes for 80 cents and rode to the main pagoda feeling concerned about the chaotic traffic. The pagoda along the river was beautiful although merchants continually accosted us selling fans, wicker toy boats, paintings, bananas and cakes. Saw monks and nuns praying at the main temple. Of course, the nuns were behind the monks. My feeling is that Vietnamese Buddhism is Mahayana from China rather than Thai Theravada.

"We took a six-hour boat trip through Ha Long Bay. At the Hanoi airport I negotiated a one hundred round trip to Ha Long Bay. Our drivers seem nice. One is a forty-five-year-old man

with blemished teeth from beetle nut chewing. He apparently owns the old Rambler. His side kick, the guy who negotiated with me because he speaks minimal English, is 22. They seem genuinely kind and not yet as corrupted as the touts of Thailand.

“the journey to the bay was arduous especially with my feeling ill. Filthy air along the way from all the exhaust and stifling humidity. We had to take three ferries to get here which made the trip an hour and a half. We decided to let the drivers take us to their ‘network’ hotel. Obviously, these people network for perks or places to stay and eat. The boat we hired was probably also part of their network. They took us to the boat after we took the ferry from Hong Bai where we changed money. The boat was eight dollars an hour. We gave the captain fifty dollars. Our hotel room was fifteen dollars because they turned off the air conditioner.”



Java, Borobudur

The archipelago of Indonesia was our last stop during our three-month tour of Asia in 1995 and by this time we were travel weary and exhausted. We no longer wanted to stay at budget hotels and so starting with Jakarta we began splurging and booking into five-star hotels. This made for a marvelous ending to our journey.

We flew from Singapore to Jakarta BREAKFAST...

then flew to Yogyakarta because I was set on seeing the famed Borobudur Buddhist temple.... stayed t the swank Hotel Santika.

BOROBUDUR AND ISLAM AND BUDDHISM AND HINDUISM INDONESIA...

Asia 1995 journal:

“The hotel in Jakarta was so amazingly relaxing that I decided not to be concerned over budgeting. After the best breakfast buffet I’ve ever had: miso soup with tofu chunks, nori and other seaweed, fine white rice, excellent coffee, rolls with chocolate, tropical fruit papaya.... Don got up late and had to shower away his buffet which was included in the price of the hotel. Caught the hotel van to the airport, then an easy 45-minute flight to Yogyakarta.

Don had selected a Lonely Planet one star hotel. I argued for a four star because I want to relax and enjoy the rest of our trip without any stress over budgeting. Don can worry about values. It feels good not to care anymore. There are four stars in the seventies of dollars and we ended up at Hotel Santika, Yogya’s best, for over \$100.

Today we’ve made plans to take a taxi to Borobudur and the Hindu temple Pom... for \$36. Tomorrow a noon flight to Bali. This will be our last stop unless we go to Komodo Island to see the dragons. But I’m not sure I want to watch a tied and tethered goat being sacrificed to the giant lizards. Then four more flights home: Biak, Hawaii, LA, and PHX.

On our second night in Yogya, we stayed at the Phoenix Heritage Hotel for half the cost of the Santika (\$55/night). It’s a nice enough room but the hotel has its quirks and I don’t appreciate all the caged birds in the courtyard singing but also fluttering about and wanting to be free. I wish the hotel would build a garden atrium so the birds could have some room to fly about instead of ding flips in the cage. I think everyone should drink tons of black coffee until they

have a headache and then are forced for hours to watch a caged bird, or any animal, flutter about trying to free itself.



BALI

HINDU ISLAND

JOURNAL

“Out on second floor balcony of the Natour Sindu Beach Hotel, Sanur, Bali. It’s our fourth day here. I haven’t written lately because I’ve been preoccupied with reading novels. Lovely view of the gardens of bougainvillea, frani pani, coconut palms, lawns. Then the ocean beyond. The beach and surf aren’t quite as nice as I hoped. Aqua blue large waves, long white sands, large reef. Don walked to it when tide was out and got his pants wet when he came back because the tide returned and tide pools disappeared.

Anxious to return home but can’t get early flight. Will probably leave on our original date of July 31. Hotels are fairly booked up with Australians. This hotel is more expensive than what we’ve been paying but we both no longer want to stay in dives.

Sunday AM:

At the Ubud Village, a top range hotel in town. Garden shower, balcony overlooking palms, bamboo with sparrows and distant tiered rice paddies. Judith Krantz Dazzle.

I'm starting to love Bali. Plenty to see. the cultural dances and music are spectacular. Each night another dance. Last night Legong dance with young girls. Big crowd. Barong dance at palace another night. Lots of vegetarian restaurants in Ubud. At Bumbu restaurant found a caterpillar in one dish. Waiter picked up green bean from plate and suggested it had crawled out from one of these. Lost my appetite. But they didn't charge us for the dish.

Yesterday we spent over one thousand dollars. Taxi driver from Ulan Ubud to us around to wood carvers in local towns. First we moved to another hotel because our hotel wanted us out for an Australian tour group and we had only paid for two nights. Rude desk clerk. Bought a teak altar table and a screen intricately carved and painted with Mahabharata scenes on one side and Ramayana on other. Artist won an award from president for it. \$650. Taxi took us to place where we shipped items home for \$250.



1998 Solar Eclipse in the Galapagos



Soon after law school Learned of solar eclipse over the Galapagos archipelago. Asked parents. They jumped aboard. Then moved to rural desert but couldn't pull out. I'm not sure why my husband of the time didn't jump aboard for such a once in a lifetime opportunity. It could be that I didn't push him to join us because I was really questioning my marriage at the time, whether I was even happy with him. It was a stressful time in our thirteen-year marriage because my husband feared he might lose his job at Intel, due to a terrible review, and we had almost recklessly moved to a rural ranch house that turned out to be a money pit. Although, I loved living in the raw open space of the Sonora.

On February 23, Mom, Dad, and I flew from Sky Harbor to Miami from where we flew Saeta Airlines to Quito, the world's highest capital, then on to Guayaquil and San Cristobal Island Airport in the Galapagos. With fifteen passengers, including ourselves, we boarded our 83 foot cruise yacht, the Eric which would be our home from February 24 until March 2. The passenger list included three single ladies (myself included), six couples (three elderly, three young), and one single man, an ornithologist probably in his early seventies, the same age as my parents. He was so interesting I tended to gravitate toward him the entire voyage. In fact, for much of the voyage, especially at the meals, I hung out with Charles the ornithologist and pretty much avoided my parents, like I had in high school. Not all the time but whenever I could. The entire voyage I kept reflecting on my marriage, on my husband back home. I just wasn't feeling

good about him or where our marriage was headed. It seemed kind of boring and the fact that we rarely had sex and that kids didn't seem in our future made it seem even droll. On the Eric, as we cruised among the world heritage islands, the showcase of nature and animal evolution, I was craving a new romance. But it never happened between me and Charles. The only thing that did occur was one of the crewmen, perhaps the janitor, came on to me and wanted a liaison. I didn't welcome his advances and it in fact became an issue for me. I reported his conduct to the crew director and they investigated it, had a talk with the crewman. About a month after I returned home from the cruise I received an official letter from the cruise company concluding after their investigation that the incident had been a misunderstanding. Oh well. That was if for my romance in the Galapagos.

The Galapagos Islands has thirteen major islands, six minor, and several rock formations that are mostly bird sanctuaries. Unlike the coral reef atolls of Micronesia, these islands are mostly volcanic and have lots of cauldrons and lava fields and rock formations. At the Charles Darwin Research Station, we watched the giant tortoises chow down on leaves. Most had been repatriated to the island, given back from people who once owned them as pets. Unfortunately, through the years, many of these unique giant tortoises had been slaughtered and used for food. It became quite convenient for earlier seafarers, mostly whalers, to throw hundreds of these creatures into the bowels of the ship where they stayed alive and were taken out to use as a meal when needed.

The main animals we saw on the rocky islands, in the coves and cacti covered lava beds were sealions, boobies, lava and marine lizards and hawks. One time I caught sight of a hawk picking at and eating a live iguana lizard. It was rather gruesome and looked like a slow tortuous death for the poor creature, if it has a nerve system.



A sad fact about the islands concerns all the foreign animals and plants that people brought in, such as dogs, pigs, goats, and rats. These invading animals take over, crowd out the indigenous animals, or outright kill them through predation or infectious diseases. A great effort has gone into eradicating these invading pests. When I visited the islands, I saw only the native animals that were seemingly unafraid of our touristy presence because for the most part they weren't used to predators.

It seems that the first human visitors to the islands occurred during the reign of the Inca king Tupac. In 1832 Ecuador claimed the islands and in 1841 Herman Melville of "Moby Dick" fame paid a visit to the Galapagos. Darwin was only twenty-six when he sailed on the Beagle and arrived at the islands where he spent five weeks gathering evidence for his theories of evolution, mostly from the island finches. Fifty years later he published his famous book, "Origin of Species, by Means of Natural Selection." For me, an anthropology major, it's a good sound theory except perhaps for human societies and cultures. Sure, those who are stronger physically can use brute force to assert their way, like bullies. But, at least in my mind, humans have the ability to critically think about their actions, to show compassion toward those with less advantages, to help one another, and so on. I'm not so sure other Earthly animals possess this ability, maybe some do, and in fact, given the human world as it is, especially these days, I have to wonder that maybe a lot of humans really don't have the mindset for compassion. There seems

to be a lot of ethnocentric greed, anger, and hatred in the world. Sometimes it seems these traits overwhelm the efforts of compassion, respect, and understanding that other humans have other beliefs, traditions, and opinions and the result tends to be the infliction of a lot of harmful behavior toward others. Genocide, war, racism, misogyny, bigotry—hate, anger, and greed.

Back to my two-week venture in the Galapagos. Of course, our cruise directors told us not to take anything from the islands and we had to brush off our shoes each time we got back on the boat. Everyone was concerned about the environment conservation of the islands. But my Dad somehow was able to sneak a vile of sand from one beach for his collection of sands from around the world. I think on his first trip to Hawaii back in the eighties he started this collection by gathering the different types of sand around Hawaii and filling little bottles, like liquor bottles, of tiny maple syrup bottles from restaurants. Both the sand and the bottles really became a part of Dad's collection and I contributed to it with soil or sand samples from places like Tibet and the Andes, wherever I traveled I thought about providing Dad with sand. Even his sister added to his collection when she took a trip to Gibraltar and brought him home some pebbles. I was glad Dad got his sample from the Galapagos but otherwise, we were all very careful to follow the rules and to apply scads of sunscreen each time we went on an outing, the sun at the equator was so intense. Sometimes I barely had time to reapply the sunscreen we were so rushed from place to place.

From my Galapagos' journal:









“Dad’s 72nd birthday. He’s down below, perhaps resting after this morning’s walk on Hood Island. I haven’t been able to write until now, due to queasiness from the sea. And other

distractions, such as chit-chat from other tourists in the group, seasoned travelers. An interesting ecologist. The amateur astronomer for the solar eclipse.”

This is one of the best things to do—visit the natural habitats of the world and view life in all its variety and splendor. The birds, lizards, and sea lions on the islands aren’t cautious of human invaders. Birds approach quite close. In fact, a juvenile Boobie attacked one member of our group as she tried to pass it on the trail. I saw a few marine iguanas and lots of lava lizards. Some baby sea lions. A babysitter female stays with the pups while the mothers go look for food.

The solar eclipse was spectacular, God’s gift of heaven. It only lasts a minute when the new moon passes between Earth and the sun, blocks the sun, and casts a shadow over Earth. Nearing totality the temperature dropped significantly... and then the light dimmed, though there was no need to squint the eyes in the noon time sun. We were able to see Venus well before totality—as the solar crescent grew thin... Slowly, the black disk of the moon covered the sun. very slowly, it seemed, until totality, which speedily went by... First the diamond ring, then a tiny ring—orange white yellow red—around the black disk. Solar flares. Then the corona blossoms and spreads in streamers. Jupiter and Mercury popped out from the day light into darkness. An eerie calm all around. Like twilight. I spotted some Baily’s beads along the solar crescent. We were able to take pictures as the excitement of totality hit the group on the yacht’s sun deck. After totality the eclipse was over. We went down in the gully for lunch.”

During this revitalizing trip, I feel like a dreamer, hoping for romance, hoping to fall in love. I just am not “in love” with my husband. I don’t think I ever have been. I feel like I’m married to someone without stimulating interests and passions. On group trips Don, he asks, “so what are we going to do today?” rather than initiating adventures. Stimulating intellectual pursuits. He has never played the piano for me. Or the clarinet. Both of which he plays quite

well. And that has always bothered me. I must confront him and aim for changes. Otherwise, why stay married. A trip like this fills me with a desire to make change. I can survive and find richer rewards in other relationships. My marriage is stifling. It doesn't make me happy And now I'm seeking romance."

2-25-98

The journey to the G. went well. Had minor anxiety from turbulence and being cooped together with parents. 6 Am flight Phoenix to DFW then Miami. Only four hours to quayquil but then had to wait and fly on to quito. But quito had cooler temps and the Sabastian Hotel was pleasant except put with my parents in a triple room. Hoping this will change on return. The other group members are interesting to chat with, mostly seasoned travelers. One interesting ecologist, another amateur astronomer along for the eclipse. It has clouded up and now about 2PM. Let's not even imagine the eclipse hidden from view tomorrow. I did not star gaze last night. Just had to lie down and sleep off the effects of all this rocking. Mom got seasick. Thx god we have separate rooms. Originally, ours was to be a triple and so I would've been cooped up with them in the bottom deck rooms—not tolerable.

Very hot and humid. Remember from other places I've lived and visited.

It is one of the best things to do—visit the natural habitats of the world to view life in all its variety and splendor. Birds, lizards, sea lions on the islands are not very cautious of us human invaders. Birds walk up quite close. In fact, one of our members, Joan, was attacked nd pecked on the knee by a juvenile Boobie as she tried to pass it on the trail. The guide found this highly unusual.

Later that afternoon, on the Sun Deck of our yacht the Eric, Voyagers Tour to the Galapagos. Just had a walk around Isle Sante Fe where saw 3 land iguana males, one quite huge,

3-4 feet long. Saw few marine iguanas. Lots of lava lizards. Some baby sea lions. One about 15 days old. A “babysitter” female stays with the pups while the mothers go out to look for food. The males fight to become “beach masters” heads of harems of 20-30 females. Bitch masters.

About 2PM 2-26-98. Two hours after totality. We succeeded. Eclipse was perfect. Have to keep moving away from island which clouded over and rainy. Fortunately we made it to perfect spot on sea. A calm sea. Nearing totality temp dropped significantly, a cool temp with breeze. Then the light dimmed, though not so noticeably. No need to squint in noon sun. spotted Baily’s beads along solar crescent then magnificent diamond ring effect and could take pictures as excitement of totality hit group on sun deck. Saw Venus well before totality as solar crescent thinned.

First diamond ring then tiny ring—orange white yellow red around black disk as corona blossoms and spreads in streamers and Jupiter, Mercury pop out from day light into darkness. Eerie calm—all horizon like twilight. Spent much time taking photos with 1000 speed film. Forget to set speed on my old Canon A-E1 so doubt will get any good shots.

We began watching eclipse about 10:30 as moon nipped a bite. Watched with filters on both glasses and taped to my 8x40 binocs. Slowly black disk of moon covered sun. very slowly it seemed until totality speedily passed by. Then second diamond effect and it was over. Even though the moon still crossed sun to other side. After totality the eclipse over for most of us and we went down for lunch. Will aim for future eclipses. France next year. Madagascar 2001. Where have an Arastar agent.

I think preoccupation with photography interrupts the experience but perhaps it’s just part of the excitement.

Last evening was nice for dad's birthday. We were invited to sit with Captain and Beti, one of the guides. Served white wine with meal and for dessert a cake for dad.

Marvelous trip. Can't imagine saying it's not worth visiting G. (as friend Libby suggested because of hearsay). Such a marvelous natural place with islands, sea, vast species of birds. Reptiles, sea lions, crabs. I have always enjoyed boat travel to islands (HK, Sweden, San Juans) and now the G. traveling with parents has drawbacks, however, though I try to make do. (am I actually related to them?) How can I be so related to people I cannot relate to? "her husband stays home and works so she can travel" mentality. And little things that get on my nerves if and when I let them. There is not much to the idea of having a good conversation with them. We are simply related. But I am glad to take this trip with them because it's well organized and planned out for us. It's our last such opportunity, I believe I will make it our last, so we must relish the memories as we live them. Really, I will relish this experience of a world class natural setting during an awesome astronomical event. Parents are simply things we have in life. Perhaps if I had kids I would relate better to the monotony of their viewpoints, of their "coupled togetherness." Probably not.

I'm not sure of date. Prob. 2-27, day after eclipse which means three more full days and 2 travel days back home. Wonder how home will be with Don and animals. Haven't been able to communicate with him and prob won't. Some anxiety that a disaster might occur. A robbery etc. but I always seem to have some anxiety over travel and life's toils in general. Sometimes wonder about my being paired up with Don. Just wish he had more interests, hobbies, that involved ecological causes etc. I feel our lives are bit stifled, though can see picking up a bit.

Last night saw false southern cross and crux for first time though the many boats in harbor made viewing difficult. Today was lengthy and everyone was tired.

About noon 2-28. At table on dining deck. Most people are back at Tower Island snorkeling. I can seldom get chance to write as thought I would. Too much activity. Interruptions. Have tried to speak some Spanish and realize I need to target learn it fluently. Along with French. This means to actively attempt to master these 2 languages, not passively.

Yesterday we first landed at Darwin Station to see giant Tortugas, hatchlings and “pets” people volunteered to return to preserve. Day was long hot muggy. Highlights: lava tube, cauldrons, pincers finches vegetarian warbler, annie bird—large black bird introduced to habitat which is destructive, eating the finches. Saw vermillion.

This AM on Tower Islandsaw red-footed Boobie, yellow crested night heron, frigget males. Swallow tail gull, wandering tattler.

3-1-98

Siesta time on Eric. Prob won't get far writing because of interruptions. Prefer to write at dining table. Trip marvelous. Learned much especially from other passengers: an ornithologist, amat ast, multi-media expert. Most ppl on such tours highly intel and cognizant of world and its plight. Last night was on sun deck until 11:30 peering at stars fading in and out of view while talking to Steve, the amat ast, and Joan about possib of aliens and about Darwin evolution. Felt satisfied when discussion ended on note of resourcefulness as true key to survival of fittest (SWORD SUIT IN TAROT). That resourcefulness combines both physical power with intelligence. Often, I am reflecting on my own while fanaticizing about crew members, the older ornithologist. I realize what's missing in my life: intellectual stimulation, excitement about ecology and environment. My marriage seems dull but really I feel married to someone without stimulating interests and passions. On group trips my spouse would ask “so what are we doing today” rather than initiating the adventure, stimulating intellectual pursuits. And this has always

bothered me. I feel like he is satisfied and happy to do whatever makes me satisfied. So, I must confront him and aim for changes. Otherwise, why stay married instead of seeking a more powerful and stimulating and fulfilling relationship? A trip like this fills me with a desire to make changes.

3-2-98 last day

My feelings have been wrapped up on this trip. Am beginning to see that my marriage is stifling. Doesn't work, doesn't make me happy because I find little stimulation from Don and now am seeking. Am attracted to older man, the ornithology prof. because of his passion for what he does, for the environ and world community. Not semiconductors and UNIX. Really, it makes me feel stuck now in a world of routine and looking forward to watching video movies. Weekends of spouse sleeping late and only challenged to do something interesting if I am. Usually we have no stimulating conversations concerning world ecology. I feel stuck. It will be difficult to separate because I have not worked at a conventional job for years. But separating will work. I can survive and find richer rewards in other relationships.

Truly, it is time to separate and I will bring it up though know he'll be sad. Perhaps we can wait a few years and fix up new ranch house to sell while I find permanent work or while my business takes off. If only I could make go at writing and running Arastar. Do have a good start. Now it's not that I want to be alone or really way from my spouse. I want to be independent with someone else. The ornithologist, i.e. someone to travel with on eco tours, to share passions, interests, to be with and be in love. This hasn't happened in my present marriage. It has taken my seeing someone I'd really like to be with in a relationship to realize how stifled I now feel with Don. I'll feel bad at how hurt he'll be. But what we have can't last. Don't want to be held by him. We of course don't have any sexual passion between us. It's vapid, like the fruit I had for

breakfast. Want more from life. We can figure best way to separate financially. Can't grow in this relationship anymore.

What of the animals? The ranch and NH house.? Possessions? Financial security? It will work out. I am bright, resourceful. Want to meet other people such as ornithologist on this cruise. I wonder if he is attracted to me. Probably is and that adds to my attraction, with his body of knowledge. He is a founding member of the EPA. The very sort of person I want a relsp with, indep relsp and no longer a fantasy. By end of this expedition, I should at least hint at my interest in him. Have nothing to lose except possible connection to EPA. The last few days of this trip he has consumed my mind. I look around for him to talkto despite the presence of my parents. I believe they're having a good time without my hovering over them. We aren't a close family anyway. We rarely sit together at meals. A stifling relationship though on a different level. My parents, I can do no other but accept them. The marriage I don't have to accept. Don is dear friend but I'm not in love with him and now at age 42 I realize that this is precisely what I want in my life. An "in love" stimulating, action oriented relsp. Not just se3xually passionate affair. I could have that on this expedition as well. The cabin boy, with whom I've politely chatted with in Spanish on this voyage, pestered me to sleep with him last night on the sun deck as I stargazed alone. Steve and Joan had left. I laughed it off and continued star gazing but by AM I felt harassed and disrespected especially after 2 other women passengers confirmed that cabin boy "predator" had ogled them. Told our guide and she told captain who apologized through guide.

This a'noon the cook, another ogler and man I could've invited to my cabin, did not ogle at me. Had prob been warned. My friendly "hola" was evid enough for them to stalk me. I'm sure I can star gaze tonight without interruption, on sun deck.

Got up at 5.. stars brilliant as they've ever been on this trip. Saw Triangulum, Crux, Omega Centauri globular cluster, Alpha and beta Centauri, large Magellanic cloud. Scorpius was practically overhead. Only Venus out. Mars, Mer, Jup at sun during eclipse so did not see them s evening or morning planets. A grand display. At night and in AM

As for voyage to earth's natural wonders, my greatest education aside from learning about birds, lizards, sea lions, is the devastating effect human intervention has had on the fragile integrity of an island system. All introduced species: goats, cats, dogs, rats, elephant grass, and birds, devastates indigenous population that has such a specialized niches. They cannot escape predation. In fact, a remarkable feature of animals here is their lack of fear. Can walk by them, take macro lens close ups and animals don't flee or flinch. They developed this lack of fear because they lacked predators before human intrusion. Now with feral predators introduced, many indigenous species nearly extinct, esp turtles. Well, speaking of Darwin, I must make a change now. No longer adapt to marriage. Am going to have tarot reading about this.

Tuesday, waiting to leave the Eric for the plane to Guayaquil. Read Tarot cards until nearly midnight last night. For the captain three times and in Spanish then for two other crew members. It was exhausting though very doable. That is my Spanish worked especially for the captain who could follow the spread and understand some English.

I saw him in the command room not long ago. He wanted me to tell him who had tried to seduce me and I explained. Wonder if cabin boy will get fired. (month after trip received letter saying after investigation decision that a misunderstanding).

Anyway, after Tarot readings last night couldn't fall asleep. Wired and feeling so enchanted with ornithologist as if he showed signs of having feelings for me. Got up at 6 AM and saw Crux. Saw the ornithologist a bit, sat with him a while when we went ashore for lunch.

Had felt sure last night that I would confront him with my feelings, perhaps on deck when we'd be alone, and would become apparent. But never happened. It was always my parents who appeared from behind me. Oh well. No romance. And then in town I finally asked if he was married and learned he was. Though his wife isn't a naturalist. In the end I feel calmer now and not quit so sure how to handle my feelings for Don. There is a lot to explore. This whole experience has been good, insightful, growing. It's not that I am let down by the exciting possibility of a stimulating relationship. It's that "why do my feelings spark for another when I'm away from Don?" I hardly miss him. This tells me I am just not content at all and my emotions need a new and exciting relsp.

Yes. I know the marriage I have doesn't work. It only provides me with a place to stay. I am very confused about this. I know that the leap into separation would become easier if I fell in love with someone else. Perhaps that's what my emotions are waiting for. But this is too unfair to Don, unfair to me, if we stay together. I just hope we can take the time to sort out any separation. It can't be that I stay with him under this pretense, that I make do, unhappily emotionally, until the right person comes along who can make me happy.

In short, I want to fall in love and feel all the physical stimulation, the emotions, and the security in that. If it is not to happen here, on this trip, it is bound to happen one day and I hope one day soon with someone like the ornithologist. Passionate in his endeavors, interesting and interested and active in ecology. A leader not a follower.

Seven months later: 9-25-96

Incredible what has happened since Galapagos trip. No. I didn't find that ecologist professor and fall in love. HAD EMAILED ORNITHOLOGIST AND SUBTLY HINTED MY

LIKE FOR HIM. NO REPLY. I have fallen in love and betrayed Don. My love is a homeless felon, and a crackhead with charm.

AND THIS STORY IN MY MEMOIR THE DESERT'S EDGE.

FLORIDA KEYS 2000

CRUISE TO TIERRA DEL FUEGO ARCHAEPELIGO 2010







My mother had been widowed a little over five years in 2010 when her brother, my Uncle Bill, succumbed to brain cancer possibly derived from his tour of service at Bikini Island seventy some years before. My mom and uncle had been very close as kids growing up on the Oregon Coast and all through their adult lives. When he became ill, mom dropped everything and headed up to Seattle to take care of him. Then she stayed up there to sort out his affairs. She was dedicated and devoted to her brother Bill just as she had been to my father when he was dying from Parkinsons and other conditions.

My Uncle Bill had over a million dollars in several accounts and when he passed on he left my mom a big portion of his estate. He had no children, his wife, my aunt Hazel, had died several years before but Bill also generously left his alma matter the University of Portland and each of his nieces and nephews a portion of his wealth. From him, my siblings and I inherited about forty-five thousand dollars. My Uncle Bill was a stand-up man, a “soldier hero spirit” of WWII and I am very proud to be his niece.

In any event, my mom, perhaps at the prompting of my sister, decided to take one last cruise with some of the money she had inherited and take my sister and me with her. Mom and Dad had taken lots of cruises during their retirement years to places like Hawaii, Alaska, the Panama Canal, New Zealand and Australia, and around the Caribbean (and the Galapagos with

me!) Evidently, they had talked about taking a cruise around the southern point of South America, around Cape Horn and Tierra del Fuego and so this is why my mom selected to go here with her two daughters to see the penguins and maybe even take a side trip to Antarctica.

When she called me and asked if I'd like to go on such a cruise, I was hesitant because I was at a point in my life where and when my life had become very difficult and I was suffering from a lot of stress and health afflictions. Was overweight at time. High blood pressure. Been through terrible divorce and in a relationship with a difficult man with ADHD who traumatized me with his irrational fits. Jekyll and hyde syndrome.... Cecil with obvious girlfriend but didn't confront anything. He was too harsh. Too traumatic. Traumatizing me....

Tried moving away several times. Chance to get away from him for three weeks. But more so... novel Inca Dove char wants to travel to tierra del Fuego. My opportunity. Not so much to bond with mom and sis. That never happened before and didn't during trip.

Valum

DIDN'T KEEP JOURNAL. Itinerary flew from Austin to Buenos Aires, Argentina where we toured the graffiti on statues bustling city. We boarded the Holland America ship the Veendam, settled in our ocean view cabin and cruised to our first side trip to Montevideo, Uruguay where we had a meal at a vineyard and watch Tango Dancers. When I was in sixth grade my teacher Mr. Verbout assigned us to create little booklets of the countries in South America. It was perhaps the best assignment, for me, I ever had in elementary school, one I thoroughly enjoyed and I still have that booklet. One chapter was about Uruguay, featuring only a few lines and pictures I drew, but I was struck by the interesting name of the capital Montevideo as I was by the name of Paraguay's capital Asunsion. It was my first book and first

formal exploration of the world beyond my provincial hometown (except for grandmother's Natgeos).

Next the Veendam voyaged for two days across the South Atlantic Ocean to the Falkland archipelago which consists of two main islands East and West Falkland separated by the Falkland Sound. I was looking forward to seeing the Falklands which I remembered well from the Falkland War of 1982 while I was finishing up my Masters and preparing to travel to Asia. The Argentine Navy invaded the islands trying to lay claim as part of Argentina. This was when conservative Margaret Thatcher was prime minister of the United Kingdom. She had been prime minister since May 1979 during the time of my exploration of the British Isles. Everyone knew about her because she was the first woman PM in the UK's history. But she really came into force during the Falkland invasion. The islands had been a territory of the British Crown since 1841 and most of the islanders were of British descent. At the time of the war, Falkland was a self-governing British Overseas Territory, like a lot of island states around the globe, and Thatcher dispatched her navy to take them back with the slogan from the popular movie at the time "The Empire Strikes Back." Even Chili's dictator Pinochet supported Britain during its retaliation. Argentina eventually surrendered after a few hundred men were killed and to this day Falkland remains a BOT along with several other nearby islands including South Gorgia, South Sandwich, South Orkney, and South Shetland which are near the British finger of Antarctica.

As for my 2010 visit to the Falklands where I anticipated seeing my first penguins, it didn't happen because of stormy weather and choppy seas. But the Veendam came very close to Stanly because the crew had to transport by tender a passenger who broke her arm while exercising in the ship's gym.

The archipelago of Tierra del Fuego, Land of Fire, is divided between Chili and Argentina. Archaeologists say the area was first peopled about 8000 BC by the Yaghan. Magellan arrived in the area 1520 and Charles Darwin voyaged around the Drake Passage in the Beagle on his voyage to the Galapagos from England. In the 1800's the gold rush occurred and European sheep herders began populating Tierra del Fuego and they virtually hunted down and killed the indigenous population, the Yaghan and Selk'nam for poaching. It was virtual genocide and seems reminiscent of the invading species on the Galapagos, the dogs, pigs, goats, and rats, that began killing out the indigenous animals through predation and disease. This seems to be the theory of "survival of the fittest" in a nutshell or more precisely "survival by brute force over the weaker."

When our cruise liner traveled around the "end of the world" Cape Horn we really began seeing icebergs and islands cluttered with king penguins. On one island I collected a sample of pebbly sand for my dad's collection, even though he had passed, but my mom still had the many glass vials lining the ceiling shelves of her small prefab home. We went to the Argentine city of Ushuaia, Glacier Alley, and Begle Channel. My mom had prepaid for us to take a side trip to the Antarctic Peninsula across Drake Passage from Cape Horn, the southernmost island in the Tierra del Fuego archipelago. The peninsula has strings of islands, volcanoes, and bases and research stations of Argentina, Chili, and the United Kingdom who dispute claim to the peninsula. At the southern end of the Antarctic peninsula is Eklund Island, a derivative of my chosen name.

Antarctica itself is a dry desolate polar desert. In the second half of the twentieth century the peninsula was the fastest warming place on earth. However, the sea ice sheets of antarctica aren't melting as fast as those in the northern arctic polar region. Antarctica contains ninety percent of the world's ice and if it all melted the sea level would rise, globally, 190 feet and

perhaps most of the world's islands would be underwater. The south pole also contains seventy percent of the world's fresh water, locked in its rivers, lakes, and ice sheets—an obvious resource that may be tapped into in future years.

The tip of the peninsula is 620 miles from the tip of Tierra del Fuego and I have to wonder just how long our flight would have been. The truth is, I felt nervous about flying in a small propeller plane on this excursion. the Valium pills hadn't really worked for me and I hadn't forgotten when my uncle Bill took me up in his small plane. when the trip was cancelled due to stormy weather in one of the roughest sea and air places in the world, I was relieved although I would have loved to see emperor penguins and elephant sea lions. I was pleased when Mom gave me the refund for my ticket. It amounted to about three thousand dollars.

I did see lots of smaller penguins on many many islands during the rest of our cruise up the west coast of Chili which is mostly national parks on archipelagos with lots of glaciers, icebergs, and penguins. We voyaged through Cockburn Channel, the Strait of Magellan, Sarmiento Channel, the Chilean Fjords, and stopped at Puerto Chacabuco and Puerto Montt.

My mom made a comment during the voyage that she thought this was a good opportunity for me and my sister to “bond” which isn't the word she used, I'm sure. I've never been close to either of my siblings and in fact my older brother was a virtual brute when I was growing up and we haven't spoken for over forty years. My younger sister, four years younger, is a pleasant sweet person but we never related and we certainly didn't during the voyage although we went on a few around the ship's deck walks. We have rarely if ever spoken on the phone over the many years and I really don't remember much about her during my childhood probably because I was preoccupied with my brother's bullying and with the traumatizing punishment sessions from my parents over my throwing tantrums when I was very little (they took to

throwing water on me as if to tame the wild beast). It's not that I want to continually harp on this, especially at this point in my life when I strive to live peacefully, enjoy each day anew, and not dwell on the past or anything and not really anticipate or dream of my future. But it seems I always need to provide a bit of background, some context, when writing memoirs that reflect on my relationships with members of my childhood family. Suffice it to say, I sum up the kind of family I come from as indifferent and non-engaging.

That being said, my sister and I really had very little in common to discuss on this voyage. She has a daughter and two grandsons she adores and she has even more or less adopted two other grandkids that are the children of her daughter's best friend. For most of the voyage, she talked about them and all the things they did together. There wasn't much room for me to say anything about my life. For one thing, I was in a relationship that at its worse became toxic and traumatizing. But I have always enjoyed my life in the rural desert and the dogs, goat, chickens, cats, and other animals I care for. At one point as we were on our deck walk I told her she had a "charmed life." I meant no disrespect. It seemed true to me. She was a happy grandmother who loved spending time with her grandkids and doting on them and buying them gifts. I think she took offense at my comment, however. Maybe it's a phrase that sounds like I'm saying she's superficial. I'm not sure. But anyway, she immediately replied, "Oh, you have a charmed life too" which struck me as so untrue. I live under a lot of stress from a difficult partner and I really had no friends other than my animals and my life hadn't been blessed with children. But I let her comment slide.

What was really notable between us occurred a few days into the voyage and it seemed to be the first of many incidents that made our fragile relationship completely estranged. In our cabin was a safe where my mom, sister, and I kept our purses or money belts. I had brought

along all the money I could scrounge up for the trip, about five hundred. Since about 2003 I've been completely living off of VA disability compensation so I really didn't have reams of cash. But I had enough for this trip because Mom really paid for everything and my little cash was for spending money, for souvenirs. Anyway, one morning I looked in my wallet and most of my cash was gone. I thought someone, maybe a crew member, had robbed me but my sister admitted that she had probably took it. She made it right with me and gave me back three hundred but I never understood why she had done that and she never explained. It's not that our wallets were identical. I let it slide but then over the next eight years or so a few things happened between us that deeply upset me. In 2015 my mom invited me up to the Oregon coast for two weeks. At the beach house she rented she offered me one of the guest rooms on the main floor. Then my sister stepped in and said it was for her daughter and son-in-law when they were coming up on the weekend and she took me to the basement and told me I could sleep in a kind of romper room with bunk beds. A few other things she said over the years seemed off, when I saw her at Mom's home in Bullhead City, but the clincher for me was when she lifted my military picture off my face book page that I was using to promote my memoir "The Trouble with Brass." What got to me was that she said nothing to me, made no comments on my page, not even a like, and she posted the picture on her own face book banner and still made no comment about me. The picture was of me and her in front of our family house. I was in my uniform home on leave. But her comments on her page were only "this is me in front of my childhood home." I really went to town letting her know how her indifference toward me upset me. And since then, we've been estranged. But who knows, maybe someday we'll reconcile. One thing I feel certain about is that my sister and I will reconcile before it ever happens between me and my brother.

Sorry for the digression. Now back to the end of our cruise around Cape Horn. Our last stop was Santiago, Chili where we spent a few final days off ship touring the sights. Ironically, a day or two after we flew back home, on February 27th, Chili had a large earthquake that prevent anyone from leaving the country for a while. In fact, one of our table mates in the dining hall, an elderly man from Scotland, had traveled north from Santiago to the Martian-like Atacama Desert west of the Andes and I'm sure the earthquake forced him to make alternate plans for his return home.

The 1000-mile strip of land is the driest desert in the world after Antarctica. It's a place I would have loved to see, one excellent for stargazing because of the cloudless skies and absence of any artificial city lights for miles around. But I am happy living in my desert home which these days is in the Mohave.

Living on a Desert Island



RIVER ISLANDS: SAUVIE, ISLE CITI, ZAMALIK. NOT REALLY THE SAME. NOT ISOLATED. MOST ISOLATED ISLANDS IN WORLD.... NAURU 3RD SMALLEST WORLD COUNTRY. KIRIBATI 32 ATOLLS, TRISTAN DA CUNHA VOLCANIC BOT. PITCARIN BOT, NEAR EASTER. KERGUELAN FRENCH ANTARCTIA DESOLATION ISLANDS. ST HELENA BOT WHERE NAPOLIAN DIED IN EXILE.

My cruise around all the islands and archipelagos at the tip of the world turned out to be my last international trip. Five years later, in 2015, I moved from the Sonora Desert to the Mohave Desert in Northern Arizona. The sometimes cantankerous and irascible man, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, moved with me and my animals although I moved in part to leave him but mostly to be near my elderly widowed mother who lives in a RV retirement resort in Bullhead City. I moved to rural property near Kingman, up the mountain from BHC along the Colorado. I didn't want to give up my rural life with animals, in the desert. My mother has moved away to Portland where she is living in a memory facility. I really have no contact with her or with my two siblings. That aside, the most I travel these days is to the VA in LV, to Phoenix for hip surgery, and to Needles to buy my husband marijuana at a Veteran's twenty percent discount.

It's too complex to repeatedly explain why I'm still together with my second husband other than to say that I am comfortable and content when living with his good side and compassionate and understanding about his difficult Mr. Hyde afflictions of ADHD anger. Though not always during the times he expresses it.

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Although I've lived through a lot of trauma in my life—by no fault of my own—I don't feel like a victim. I feel more like a conqueror. I have conquered my own mind, determined who I am, and conquered my emotions that can run away and plague life with chaos. I'm not talking about the emotion of compassion, if that is even an emotion, or love although to tell the truth I'm not sure what love is except perhaps what the Bible says: patient, kind, not envious, and respectful. My husband, in his good moods likes to say "I love you." It's not something I freely dish out because just by saying it doesn't make it so. He seems to think so. But then he turns around as Mr. Hyde, threatens to tie me up, to push me over (which he has) to take my money or

what not, or to hover over me pointing at my face and saying “FY Bitch over and over again. It’s horrible tramatization that has been going on for 25 years. And the blame and projection on me. Accusing me of the mental problems when I defend myself in reaction to his ADHD aggression. So no. I really don’t know what love means when he says it to me. Seems like an bandaide for himself. He says this and he justifies himself as being righteous.

Through the years with him I’ve learned not to complain about the relationship. It’s a disservice to myself. Besides no on really understands a relationship but those in it. People think they do, “oh, get rid of him,” “leave” walk away. But they don’t know the nuances and dynamics the heart of the matter the psychology that is the relationship. I have tried many times to leave and have moved away at least four times. Kicked him out with protective orders. But always took him and his issues back. He has no place else to go. His head, mind ever changes. He is still Jekyll ad Hyde. It may be drugs. I’m not sure because I’m not that intertwined with his doings. I live my own life not as a nurturing parent, as his mommy. He is a grown adult. 60 years old. But to him, it seems to me, religion, culture, tradition instilled in his mind make him see me only as his wife, the nurturer and his servant because his master. It seems impossible for him to eradicate this from his psyche. To me when he is at his worst—Mr. Hyde fits—misogyny is a systemic and institutionalized notion at play and I am but a “bitch” or a “whore” to him.

But this is his worst side at play. Otherwise he is calm and sometimes polite to me as I plod along with my day without stress. My mind is calm. I know myself and am completely satisfied with who I am. (because I’m not nurturing he believes I’m selfish. An example of misogyny.)

And who am I? a human being filled with compassion for animals and others and filled with hope and pride in myself. I value my life despite all its difficulties, traumas, and stresses

that I've had to confront since childhood. I am not to blame for everything. Somethings, maybe. But not for much of it.

I accept some responsibility for my behavior. I do have will power. But I refuse to take claim that I am somehow a broken individual and that I did it all to myself. I do not claim the social, psychological, and religious labels imposed on individuals. No one can tell me who I am but myself and this is why, in the "wake" "I am alone." Yet. I am fully immersed in the world. It surrounds me like the sea surrounds an island. By all the life and manner of this world.

Misogyny, racism. Bigotry, and really, religion, make a person or group feel superior or valued over others. This is shameful because no one is better than another. We all have a life to live. And that's all there is to it.

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I just try to live each day and enjoy the little pleasant things about my life—my animals, gardens, and my writings and research, mostly. At the same time, it is nice to know I have someone around even though that someone has a down side. If he weren't here, I would possibly be completely alone in the world and that isn't the best situation to be in especially when no longer young and when having difficulties with mobility and pain.

All that being said, I want to emphasize now how much I love living in the desert. I would rather live here than on a mountain, in a jungle, or in a forest. I grew up in Portland and didn't like the smothering foliage, tall trees everywhere, hedges, and rain and drizzle. What I love about the desert, be it the Gobi, the Sahara (where I've been in my travels) or the rural Sonora and Mohave, is the open spaces, the vastness, the dark skies at night that are delightful for stargazing, the dry cleansing and fresh smelling air. Nothing musty or dank. No. I simply prefer a desert life to any other ecosystem in the world.

So why do I see myself as now living on a Desert Island and what does that really mean? It's kind of a double play because I live in an actual desert and my life feels like I'm living on a Deserted, uninhabited island, for that's what a Desert Island actually is. It's not an island that is a desert; it's the word deserted and not desert. I now live a very isolated life. Not really by choice. It's just how my life has evolved over the years. I doubt there are many people who truly wish to be isolated because the human animal is a social creature.

the Hermit card in Tarot seems a play for me for my life. Circumstances have left me where I now am: no longer young, left with mobility problems, but praised with the wit and determination to keep forging ahead with hope and fortitude for as long as I can even as a castaway on a Desert Island. The following are two poems I wrote during my sojourn in Asia in the early 1980's. I believe they describe where I'm at today, forty years later. I think poetry is a better descriptive tool than rambling on and on about the condition of one's life. When we do that, we sound weak, like a complaining whining victim. But a poem is concise, simple, and with powerful imagery.

If only I could Find my Friend

If only I could find my friend,
Invite him up for tea,
We'd talk about a journey's end
And what was meant to be.

But all my friends have gone away,
By time or distance take.
(I really can't remember now
what kind of tea to make).

In all, I only could enhance,
To free my errant fire,
Through all my self-indulgence
I forgot a friend's desire.

And now has passed from arcane whim,

To a home where youth is old.
I sit a while and think of him,
Our story never told.

Impact Crater full of Hope

Though I dwell in an impact crater of hope,
I just can't do it, now.
I'm a bundled-up knot,
My stomach churns,
My heart palpitates,
Vultures circle overhead.
I'm alone in the desert
And cannot survive.
I don't even want to try.
Some days
I do not care to survive.

I survive?
Because I try,
Because I continue forward on a vision quest that has no limits beyond
My imagination.
My heart.

Beyond all hope, I fly through
Pain, agony, and sometimes
I burst with hope for survival . . .

But I am exhausted now,
And alone
(every one's got their own problems.)
I am
"oh, ah," all too tired
of trying day by day,
hour by hour,
Always stretching forward
To quench my thirst in a dry desolate land,
A difficult thorny land,
I pull myself across.

Tug and pull until I die.
Thus, sayeth the Prophet of Hope,
the spirit who roams Earth
Like a dust devil spinning high and long

disturbing those upon the scene,
those who cross my weary path of
murals on the wall of
hope, like my heart –
or is it that
hope is my heart
and both have no limit.

There is no limit to hope
As there is no limit
To adjusting
In order to survive.

Survive the desert crawl:
Behold!
All around there is water in hidden places–
Water pure and clean, like breath itself.
All the gold and jewels of Earth
are not as wonderful as water
to quench my thirst,
as I walk to the desert's edge
and paint bedazzling frescos
about adventures beyond my scope,
I am an impact crater full of hope.

