

In *Looking Forward in the Rearview Mirror* Sam Gill views himself in midlife played on the screen of the past offered by travel journals written in 1993-1994 during five months traveling in Australia, Bali, Java, Thailand, and Nepal; in the journals of his 1997 traveling with his daughter Jenny in Ghana West Africa; and in journals and recollections from several other trips. As Janus standing in the threshold of the present looking at once backward to the past and forward to the future, Sam hopes that his reflection on the life course he set decades ago at midlife might reveal new insight and inspiration. He dreams of a revelation that would inspire him to a newly energized endlife phase devoted to the creation of beauty.



Looking Forward has a companion volume *Travel Writings: The Full Travel Journals: 1993-1994 Australia, Bali, Java, Thailand, Nepal; 1997 Ghana West Africa* (2021).

Sam's most recent book publications:

- *The Proper Study of Religion: Building on Jonathan Z. Smith.* Oxford University Press, 2020
- *On Reflection: Vignettes & Images.* Self-published, 2020
- *Dancing Graffiti: Stories From my Life,* Self-published, 2020
- *Creative Encounters Appreciating Difference: Perspectives and Strategies.* Rowman & Littlefield, 2019
- *Religion and Technology into the Future: From Adam to Tomorrow's Eve.* Rowman & Littlefield, 2018

Gill
Looking Forward

Looking Forward in the Rearview Mirror

Sam Gill



Travel Journal Selections with Reflection

1993-1994 Australia, Bali, Java, Thailand, Nepal
1997 Ghana West Africa
Other Travels

Looking Forward in the Rearview Mirror

Travel Journal Selections with Reflection



Borobudur, Java, July 1998

Looking Forward in the Rearview Mirror

Travel Journal Selections with Reflection

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1993-1994 Australia, Bali, Java, Thailand, Nepal

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Other Travels

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To all travelers
&
To my kids and grandkids.
May all your life journeys
Be adventures of love and learning.
Travel safely.

“When we watch ourselves on the screen of the past,
we watch a stranger,
but one for whom we have complicated feelings.”
~ Janet Turner Hospital, *The Last Magician*

Travel
late 14c., “to journey,” from *travailen* (1300) “to make a journey”
originally “to toil, labor” *travail*

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Looking Forward in the Rearview Mirror

An Introduction

The Fantasticks

I have always loved “The Fantasticks” the 1960 musical that ran continuously off-Broadway for 42 years. Louisa and Matt are young people who live next door to one another. Their fathers, eager to match them up, build a wall between the properties and feign a conflict between their families acting on the fatherly wisdom that kids only want what they can’t have. Arranging abductions and other hardships the fathers blunder through their scheme. Finally, Matt leaves home for a long and torturous journey to seek his dreams. Unsuccessful, upon his return home he finds Louisa, finally realizing that the object of his desire was always next door. He had to travel far and wide to gain the wisdom that come with experiencing the displacement and challenges of the foreign.

Literature and mythology are replete with travel adventures as is history. While Joseph Campbell insisted on seeing all these stories as variations of what he termed a monomyth, the hero’s journey, a popular perspective I’ve never much cared for, there are abundant variations and outcomes. It is common that the journey to unknown and often threatening worlds reveals wisdom or character that was there all along. The buddy journey of Dorothy and friends to the Land of Oz allows each to basically discover themselves. The Wizard gave them nothing they didn’t already have. Even the comment “That’s one small step for man; one giant leap for mankind,” uttered by Neil Armstrong on the 1969 moon landing expresses the same. One must venture to the moon to realize the potential of humankind. Seemingly a direct response to the moon landing, Saul Bellow’s title character in *Mr. Samler’s Planet* (1970) understood this wisdom by contemplating the miracle of the veins in the back of his hand as well as the existence of light that so conveniently allowed him to read the newspaper. His were journeys of the imagination and often about the foreignness of the

quodidian. Travels while sitting in his kitchen rather than having to voyage to the moon or some other planet. All imagination is of this remarkable kind of adventure.

All stories are journeys of one sort or another. The movement of the plot into a situation of drama that often leads to crisis. Characters experience comedy or tragedy, or both, while engaging their crises. Wisdom or insight are often realized. Surprisingly the wisdom is pretty much common sense. If the protagonist doesn't gain the realization, those who hear the story likely do. When I find myself frustrated that life always seems to present me with crisis, I sometimes have the wherewithal, sagacity in itself, to remember that suffering is how one builds character and obtains wisdom.

The practice of pilgrimage ubiquitous across the globe may be a technique that acknowledges a fundamental quality of travel. Some pilgrimages are religious, some are not. Muslims take the *hajj* not to go on vacation or for rest and relaxation. It is a journey to the center, but it is an arduous and difficult experience. Travel is travail after all. As one of the five pillars of Islam, it is also a transformative journey. But then the annual trip to the family burial plot on Memorial Day to remember the long dead and mourn the recently dead is a journey in time and space as well. Occasions of remembering often offer new insights and discoveries.

Journeys may be solitary or are shared by pairs or groups. The challenges of traveling with others, invariably long periods of forced togetherness and the common experience of discomfort and trials, have the potential to either strongly bond participants or to shatter any connection at all. Before I embarked on a long journey with my friend Emily I frankly never reflected on the possibility of a complete failure of relationship. In the process of our traveling, I heard stories of horrible consequence of traveling couples. I recall hearing of one couple whose journey led to Nepal where the stress of traveling led to the guy simply walking off leaving his female partner behind, stranded having to find her own way alone. In classic rites of passage, the initiates are often torn from their families and sent off together into foreign territory to experience the threat to their very survival. Such shared experiences often bond an age set for life. I think not only of the rites of some Africans and Australian Aborigines I've studied, but also young adults going off to war together, or to backpack through Europe. If these relationships survive, they are often lifelong and strong.

Emily and I experienced moments of conflict, yet these never lasted long. As the trip grew more difficult in trekking, we gained an increasingly strong bond. Given my utter naivete on this issue at the time, I'm grateful that our relationship was strengthened through the shared challenges of traveling. We were never apart more than a couple of hours for five months. Few can say they've had that kind of connection with another person.

In their classic *Metaphors we Live By* (1980) George Lakoff and Mark Johnson introduced us to the common metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY. My later analysis in my studies of metaphor suggested that the more accurate statement of the metaphor would be RELATIONSHIP IS A JOURNEY. Many common relationship ideas and expectations embed this metaphor. But then an even more common metaphor is LIFE IS A JOURNEY. Both life and relationships are always going somewhere often over rocky territory shaped by decisions on which path to take as choices are presented. If life or a relationship isn't, as we say, going anywhere, it is effectively dead.

The most recent formation of my decades' long studies is based on the commonsense wisdom caught by the phrase "moving is being in no place." Moving, the actual going on process, is thus always a kind of transcending. It requires traveler and territory, yet it always is more than who and where one is. The moving that distinguishes living is thus so engaging in that we never know what's next in that it can't be fixed to a place of anything permanent itself. Those who express either their search for or their discover of "center" or "balance" are, to me, seeking the wrong qualities of life and relationships. The center, as William Butler Yates showed in his "The Second Coming" (1920), will not hold. Or as a corrective to Mircea Eliade's view of religion as synonymous with "the center" or the "axis mundi," Jonathan Smith suggested that this pivot wobbles. Both these giants were my mentors, so perhaps it should be expected that my view is to hold both their positions/dynamics as impossible copresents. Traveling, like it or not, often forces us to experience the most distinctive qualities of life and of relationships, that they are inseparable from the unpredictability of moving, that traveling requires the travail of living.

After I had been gone from home traveling in Indonesia and more particularly in Nepal, I began to discover a whole set of travelers who rarely if ever return home. As a traveler myself with, by then, several months experience, I began to encounter travelers who had been on the road for many months, even years. I often found them annoying in their ceaseless efforts, in conversations with other extended travelers, to establish that they had visited more countries and been traveling longer than their partners in conversation. Yet, I too began to experience the attraction of the road. While at first it is difficult to find accommodations and necessities, there comes a point when you begin to know how to do this more readily and to be more easily satisfied with whatever is available. Gradually one begins to learn the ways of a traveler. At some point it is home that seems the more inconvenient and chaotic. I began to understand the temptation of endless travel and adventure. I suppose this life of endless travel is that of the vagabond or the gypsy, as a romanticization of the Romani a people who have no nation, as also the nomad, even the hobo. This lifestyle also suggests the romance and seeming freedom of the traveling salesman or perhaps

the tragedy of this figure as in Arthur Miller's *Willy Loman*. The recent extended quarantine of the coronavirus pandemic offered perspective on the sufferings of not being allowed to travel.

I found myself comparing these ceaseless travelers to so many in my family and circle of acquaintances who would never ever consider traveling, especially traveling of the low budget backpackers' sort I was doing. Perhaps they might enjoy a cruise or a stay in an all-inclusive resort or a fully scheduled guided tour under the protected care of a tour guide. But they would never choose to simply head out to the unknown and see what might happen.

Eventually, I began to see these polar opposite attitudes toward travel are surprisingly alike in some respects. Neither experience the double arc that allows insight and revelation from the vantage of foreign perspective. To gain perspective, home must be paired with not-home, domestic with foreign. As shown in "The Fantasticks," the arc must lead outward into the unknown and unfamiliar, into the risky and scary, that one gain perspective on what was there at home all along, yet unnoticed, unappreciated. It must also be paired with the arc of returning home to find that the familiar and commonplace have, after the voyage, themselves become alien and unusual.

One of the developments in my traveling to the extent I did in 1993-'94 is that there comes a time when the longing for home and the excitement of the unknown begin to interact in concert, to interplay in an energizing and vitalizing way. When home and homesickness and longing for the comforts of home dominate one's feelings, one can scarcely fully enjoy and experience the surprises and delights of the unknown present of being away from home. Yet, I suggest that what constitutes home—the familiar gestures and spaces and languages and people—must always be, in some sense, present even when traveling to keep the element of creative surprise that constitutes things foreign and unfamiliar. One can't experience anything as foreign without some contrast to home. Coherence is the feeling of rightness gained through the travail of incoherence. Upon traveling extensively and finally returning home, there is often a remarkable flipping of valences that allows one to see the familiar of home with newly opened and appreciating eyes. Home has become newly foreign, if for but a while, offering itself anew to the returning traveler. This was Matt's experience in "The Fantasticks."

As I look back to the foreignness of traveling to such remote places as Indonesia and the Himalayan Mountains in Nepal, I appreciate that being totally and for extended periods out of touch with my kids was, especially in retrospect, terrifying yet in a fundamental way essential to the experience I had. The early 1990s occurred long before the ubiquity of cell phones and satellite phones that today connect everyone everywhere conveniently and economically. GPS or the Global Positioning System was not fully functional until 1995. The first satellite

phones were not invented until 1998 a decade before iPhones were available. When we were in Bali, we had to locate a place, usually a high-end hotel, that had an international phone connection, an actual line, and pay them to use their connection as well as a high per minute fees for each call. In Nepal outside of Kathmandu and Pokhara there were no connections at all. The trek extending nearly three weeks was through territory that had no roads or electricity and certainly no phones. Taking the same trek today would be physically hard, yet the convenience of electricity and communications, likely including internet, would be available. Consequently, the experience of foreignness, would be quite different now than when I traveled.

Life Stages, Life Cages

The stages of life that seem scripted by history and society don't make a lot of sense to me. Every stage seems a misfit of biology, temperament, and experience. Here I am, through no reason other than survival, in the stage identified by such horrible terms as old age, elderly, senior, retired. They all disgust me. Objectively I suppose they are all correct. The feminist movement of the twentieth century and, of course, many other movements have shown that what others call us is often determinative of our action and behavior. We play our lives in the mirrors of others' expectations. My age-set peers, and me as well sometimes, act old and decrepit and forgetful and irrelevant because that's what society expects of us. We often feel obliged to hide away as implicated by the term retire. Not so long ago I encountered a grocery checker, likely was around fifty, who said to me as I checked out, "You know I'm just not as sharp as I used to be." When I moved into my current home four years ago, I first looked for a house in a nearby area that is restricted to residents fifty-five and older. There are hundreds of homes in this area, and they have their own recreation center, lakes, pools, tennis courts. I tend to see this as an example, so common, of the gathering in age-set communities of those who seek freedom from judgement, the judgement of a society that worships youth. I elected to live in the nearby area open to kids and young families, yet I'm the only retired single person I know of who lives in this area, also comprised of many hundreds of homes. I can see many advantages to the camaraderie of this 55-and-up age set, yet I can't help but think there is also a certain isolation, a willing hiding away, from the vibrant world of healthy families where aging is associated with growth and advancement rather than preparing for the unspoken inevitable.

None of these life stage terms for people my age (I'm 78 as of this writing) does anything to acknowledge the wisdom gained by the experience of living many decades. Even the term senior, which might have some possibility of laudability, is rarely used in any way that would suggest wisdom and knowledge and important life experience. It commonly appears in the term "senior

moment” used to emphasize that we are forgetful and in decline. We are the generation who stands before the refrigerator wondering why we opened the door. A few years ago, I taught salsa dance choreography to a woman likely in her fifties. We were to perform together in a public fundraising show. Every time she hesitated or missed a step, she’d annoyingly declare that she’d just had a “senior moment.” I have considered attempting to rehabilitate the phrase to indicate those occasions when we find ourselves drawing wisely on long well-earned experience to act or to advise in a troubling situation with grace and insight.

Recently I have come to be irritated by the common and wide use of the term grandpa (never grandma), I suppose because I am the grandpa to three kids. Late night comedy, of which I consume more than my share, frequently uses the term as the iconic example of some old geezer who is out of date in every possible way, thinks he knows everything but doesn’t, is insensitive to everyone around him, who spouts senseless crap that no one wants to hear, who won’t shut up, who can’t use the simplest technology, who uses foul language and even that is out of date, and who is racist and misogynist and xenophobic. Grandpas are tolerated, barely, and occasionally with a bit of affection.

I propose that much of the unwanted decline and decrepitude of old age is due as much, maybe more, to social expectations than to biology. I reject the whole damned business of cultural life stage expectations, even as I find myself occasionally complying because it is so easy to do so especially when this is what seemingly everyone expects of me.

I experienced the misfit of life stage in my career. As an academic, I’ve often seen that colleagues retire—wish there was a more suitable term for finishing the formal aspects of one’s career—when I saw them at the top of their field. I saw them at retirement to be knowledgeable, seasoned, well-connected, productive, humane teachers and researchers. I understand some academics burn out mid-career and either become administrators or poor teachers and unproductive scholars. Yet, I’ve known quite a few who continued personal growth to their retirement. The advantages gained through the decades are, in part, due to getting past the pressure and competition that seems essential to, in my academic career, establishing a reputation and standing in a field of study. What can occur, if one makes it past these stressful years, is finding a renewed love of and comfort with students and colleagues as well as the freedom to research and write more in the terms of one’s own style. Shelving people who have spent decades learning and developing their skills and insights simply because they have attained a certain chronological age, as expected by society, seems to me such a loss. I always loved teaching and research and writing, more so every year, and had no plan to retire, yet once I passed age 70 the administrators at my university began to do all they could to force me to quit. I finally yielded to their nastiness just before age 76

and then only because my work environment had become so hostile. Yet, to make my point, since retiring I've published more than a book a year—four to the present, two and a half years later—lectured at the invitation of European scholars on two separate occasions, Norway and Sweden, and I have a number of substantive articles in the long stream leading to their publication. My publication record in these less than three years of retirement is more than most scholars manage in a whole career.

Yet, it is increasingly clear to me that universities are more businesses now, worrying about budgets more than they are concerned about education and the quality of research and publication. My continuing work for the university past age 70 was interpreted as a budgetary issue paired with the age-based projection on me of stereotypical expectations of being non-productive and anything but creative. I'm certain that not a single person in my own department faculty had any idea what research I was engaged in. Most employees over age 70 cannot, according to dominating cultural constructs, be worth the money paid to them.

The shaping of one's life in unwanted ways isn't much better for earlier stages of life. As young independent adults we are pressed into relationships and marriage and having and raising kids and establishing a career and building a household filled with material stuff that society tells us we absolutely must have. In my life, this stage lasted twenty-five to thirty years. It was characterized by work, work demanded by necessity, societal necessity. The son of a Kansas dirt farmer with a powerful ambition from early on to work hard enough to escape the hard physical labor of farming, I managed to do so. Yet hard and constant work has continued to the present as the center of my life. But this chosen work was different. It had negative aspects I hadn't anticipated. It has been more isolating, more desperate, more demanding than surely it would have been had I stayed on the farm and worked with dirty hands alongside the neighbors and relatives. It was the hard lonely academic work essential to completing multiple degrees including a PhD in a field that I entered knowing absolutely nothing about. It was finding an academic job and working for years to establish a career. All this work occurred in endless solitary hours in the company of books and typewriters, later computers, and library stacks, later the internet. Lonely work with little feedback. Work that, as characterizing its advancement, had the effect of increasingly narrowing the community of those with whom I could communicate. The bane of specialization and expert knowledge is that it is of interest to decreasingly few. It paid little and with locked in earnings, little impacted by accomplishment.

This was a period of financial struggle whose resolution, in my life, could only be approached by more and more work, even for precious little pay. It was a financial struggle that demanded that, should I want a new house for my family, I had to literally build it myself. And this is what I did. The hard physical fulltime

work of house construction was piled on top of fulltime academic work. It was a period of working on an increasing and inevitably failing marriage relationship that was exacerbated by my need, and of course also desire, to work.

It was a period in which I had trouble relating to my growing children because my home and family life became so separated from my professional working life that I developed separate personalities for each, neither of which was healthy nor pleasant to be around. I missed out on developing myself as a skilled and caring father, my greatest desire, because the work, the demands of the life stage, I thought I had to enact, overwhelmed what was most important to me. A sad aspect of this failure is that I was so overwhelmed by work that I wasn't even able to recognize I was failing and, if I had been aware of failure, I'd likely have thought I needed to add working on being a father and a husband to all my other work commitments.

Divorce and my kids reaching adulthood initiated a new stage of life. I suppose society might refer to it as midlife. Increasing personal freedom, less financial stress, having an established career with a fairly widely known reputation accompanied the onset of something like a successful person stage in life. I traveled. I invested money in real estate and made a little money. I discovered my physical body and enjoyed gaining fitness and health. I danced. I had a series of relationships. Yet, because of the immersion in solitary dogged work in the decades of the preceding stage, I was out of sync in so many ways and I was so shaped—I refer to this shaping by the term “gesturally naturalized”—by the habit of decades of dogged work that I really didn't know how to take advantage of these new possibilities.

This stage, starting at about age 50, commencing concurrent with the travels at the center of this book, and lasting twenty years, was I think the happiest and most creative period of my life, even though I can now acknowledge that it could have been different, better, happier, more fulfilling in so many ways. Even this period couldn't be simply enjoyed. I had to (but why?) launch a business, founding a school and studio of world dance and music. This venture added fulltime work on top of fulltime work and unfortunately cost me enormous sums of money. Despite so many personal and community service gains, this business failed financially and had to be abandoned after seven or eight years.

In the recent process of writings 150 stories for *Dancing Graffiti: Stories from My Life* (2020) I discovered that my identity, the core values that comprise who I am, are easily described as inseparable from an unceasing predilection, or perhaps more accurately obsession, for work done to be responsible for, to express my love for, and to serve the wellbeing of my family. Work and family. That's pretty much everything. Oddly, from hindsight, I now realize that what I felt to be the necessity to work often distanced me from family and relationships. I discovered that rather than work being primarily a means to achieve my life

values and goals, work became the heart of my identity. I suppose it always has been. I work because that is who I am. I have a great love of working to create and to make, or it feels that this is so, has always been so. It is autotelic, that is, it is fully satisfying in its practice without need for external accomplishment or reward or goal. The failures of the various partner and friend relationships, all of them failed, that I had in this midlife stage were, at least in part, due to my unapologetically valuing my work and my expressed devotion to my kids and grandkids over these relationships, over the other person in the relationship.

The consequence of these ill-lived stages of life have left me in the present stage living alone with absolutely no friends despite hundreds of acquaintances. I am not lonely because I continue to work, to make, to create and I continue to do all I can for the wellbeing of my kids and grandkids. The whole of my existence remains the familiar interweaving of work and family, hopefully now arranged in a hierarchy that values family above work. I continue to create academic things yet have zero connection with how much anyone in the world engages the published products of this work. I continue to make things of beauty, primarily photo images. Yet, the only outlet for those is to plaster them, by the dozens, on the walls of my home. Rarely are they seen by others. I've taken to making books of photos sometimes accompanied by little writings, yet who reads these? My constant efforts on behalf of my family are acknowledged by them yet mostly in passing. For nearly eight decades I have been a worker. That's not just what I do, that's what I am. Working for me is little different from breathing. Indeed, when I fail to work, even for a day or a few hours, I often feel a diminishment of the source, the fuel, and the value of my life. In the recent writing of *Religion and Technology into the Future* (2018) I was shocked to see reflections of myself in the workers as depicted in Fritz Lang's classic 1927 film "Metropolis," the first film to feature a robot, a term that means worker. Not only is there a shiny metal female robot in this film, but also the masses of human workers, indistinguishable one from another, who are depicted as nothing more than parts of a functioning machine located underground. The insight? I am a bee in a hive, a cog in a wheel, a cell in an organism. Yet, in my thinking and writing, I'm at least aware and self-reflective. Mirrors are important.

Self-Reflection, Self-Discovery

Part of my work in the last couple of years has been the embarrassingly self-indulgent, if also often painful, process of self-reflection in the frame of the span of my life. I think that life at every stage should include both this long-framed self-reflection as well as the frequent setting and evaluation of near- and long-term goals, what I call goaling to emphasize the importance of its ongoingness. We should live our lives both to the fullest in the present, in the sensuous experience of now, as well as to demand of ourselves sober moments when we

step aside to examine the course and values of our lives and to make changes and corrections, tweaks or seismic shifts. The demands of the external necessities of the consequences of work—financial and substantive—make difficult, if not impossible, this sort of healthy life practice. At least it has for me. Thus, it is only recently that I've had the opportunity to channel some of my working towards these longer term more soberly reflective creative efforts. The rewards, if any, accrue to my kids and grandkids, since what can I gain other than regrets at this stage of life? I have hoped for insights that may give me the courage to be bold in venturing on. The quarantine restrictions on life that have accompanied the coronavirus pandemic that began over a year ago—March 2020, and I'm writing this summer 2021—have also offered the opportunity to look back with perspective if also renewed surprisingly strong emotion.

Dancing Graffiti

It is somewhat discomfiting to find myself in late life engaged in self-reflection including not only accounting for, perhaps justifying, my own life, but also situating it in the longer span of family lineage. The awkwardness is in part due to my recognition that this is an activity expected of the retired. My distress is also due to the implication of self-importance, that is, that this project assumes that my life to be worthy of such an accounting particularly any that might be shared with others. It also seems sheer folly since my own reflections reveal, with certainty, that almost none of us are long remembered.

Still, early in 2020 I found myself wanting to explore and express my strong sense of valuing passion and vision and ideal over the accumulation of wealth or material rewards. Once embarked on this reflection, I soon found myself obsessively writing remembrances and reflections. Every day I awoke with new ideas of topics or events about which to write.

As these writings—I came to refer to them all as stories—accumulated, I wondered what they amounted to. I began to think about and research writing genres that might be applicable. I considered such forms as diary and memoir and autobiography, finding all ill-fitting, eventually settling on seeing the accumulation simply as “stories from my life.” I organized them in several sections. In “Time’s Relentless Melt,” I wrote several stories about genres like diary and memoir and the implications of each. In these introductory context-setting writings I explored titles and reflect on the appropriateness of my choice *Dancing Graffiti*. Then in “Stories” I collected a good many writings that skewed toward remembrances and documentation of events or periods. These were organized loosely by chronology. Some stories skewed in the direction of self-reflection, and I collected those in a section titled “Reflection.”

As an academic still engaged—that phrase is disgustingly telling—in research and academic writing, even though as I go forward, I am eager to write more

creatively and for an imagined, if not real, broader more public audience, I recognize that the ideas and passions that drive me have persisted over a considerable period of time. Certainly, I find the germs for many of these concerns in comments I wrote in the journals from 1993-'94. I decided to attempt to chart in brief essays these various ongoing concerns. They were collected in the section "Persistent Preoccupations." Then I included some "back matter" such as a table to organize the chronology of significant events in my life and a list of my book and periodical publications.

In the process of writing *Dancing Graffiti*, I realized that there was no possible way to do justice to the travels I did in the 1990s without simply overwhelming that already longish book. The journals written during those travels were themselves more than book length. Consequently, in *Dancing Graffiti*, accounts of my travels were minimal, anticipating, if at the time I was only vaguely aware of it, the writing of this more extended consideration of those times and experiences and of my current encounters, after more than quarter century, with the writings I did then. This book, *Looking Forward*, then is a companion to *Dancing Graffiti*.

Old Age Meets Midlife

Having blasted through remembering and reflecting, if rather randomly and obsessively, across the whole of my life, I find myself engaged in another phase of this life stage and pandemic appropriate work. This opportunity arose in my discovery of extensive journals that I wrote in a five-month long journey to Australia and southeast Asia in 1993-'94 and another month-long trip I took with my daughter, Jenny, to Ghana West Africa in 1997. I traveled with a laptop computer through the more extended trip but with only a notebook and pen for the second. For both I made the effort to do more than simply jot a description of what I did, what might technically be called a diary, by including some personal reflections based on my feelings and impressions and some larger sense of contextualizing these experiences in light of my intellectual interests. Inexplicably I did write these extended journals on the Australia-Asia travels more than on the journey in Ghana.

Reading these journals also suggested to me that I must do more than simply preserve some the journal accounts themselves. I recognized that I had the opportunity as a septuagenarian to meet and engage my much younger self. Who was this man and what now do I think of him? How does he relate to, if at all, the septuagenarian he has become? Do these two share common themes, persistent preoccupations, or pervasive values? Is he strange or familiar? Did he have fine ideals that time has unfortunately worn away? Was he so suppressed by the burdens of midlife that he had no sense of any larger set of ideals or values? Is it at all possible to find the nascent roots of my current preoccupations? Might it be possible to discover choices made that, wise or not,

led to my current struggles and anguish? Might I discover occasional flashes of clarity and joy earned by living more decades? Such possibilities seemed worth pursuing and that's what I have attempted to explore herein.

The initiation of my midlife stage was somewhat dramatic. At age fifty, I got divorced and I traveled for five months in Australia and Asia with a woman twenty-seven years my junior. I had at the same time started doing extensive physical activities including mountain and road biking as well as dancing and working out at the gym. I was making good progress on a book on Australian cultural encounters that had shaped Central Australia in the late nineteenth century. It was a book that also developed an important academic perspective. I had envisioned the shift in my academic, as well as my active personal life, to focus on dancing, dancing in the context of cultures around the world as well as my social dancing in local clubs and venues. There were certainly a few midlife crises interwoven through this period, yet the initial several years of this stage might be characterized as an almost giddy celebration of freedom, fitness, health, adventure, social engagement, discovery, new relationships, loving and being loved, travel, hip hop and salsa dancing, and the fullness and joy of life, what might better be termed verve, elan, vitality.

In the summer before Jenny's senior year in high school I took Judy, then my spouse, and Jenny to Australia for a month related to the beginning of research on my Australia project. We spent time in Sydney and down the coast south of Sydney. Then we went to Melbourne and on to Adelaide. Having traveled halfway around the globe, a month was far too short a time to have much experience, yet it was, for me, an introduction to a country I knew I had to visit again.

The prominent memories I have of that trip cluster around what a jerk I was. Judy was a person who needed a high degree of order and control in her life. She did not welcome surprises. The absence of routine and familiar settings made her uncomfortable and upset. Even though we had carefully arranged the itinerary and had reservations at nice bed and breakfasts at all the places we went, Judy was, to my observations skewed as they likely were, generally uncomfortable and hesitant. Rather than recognizing that I might help her adjust to the unpredictable and encourage her to enjoy the experience, I tended to resent her and consequently ignore her. I felt horrible pretty much the whole time largely due to the unhappiness I felt related to my marriage, exacerbated by travel. I aligned with Jenny who as a high school kid was up for anything and happy. My insensitivity and rudeness doubtless pretty much ruined the trip for all of us. It also highlighted the sad state of my marriage despite Judy and I having made a significant effort to rebuild and renew our marriage. I felt like, after decades of working to the maximum expected of any human being, I was not able to simply

enjoy traveling. I resented it and Judy as well. It seems everything I did to make the marriage work had the effect of driving us farther apart.

By the following spring, 1993, I had moved out of the house, started a relationship with another woman, and had asked for a divorce. Judy despised me and let everyone in our lives know how horrible a person I was and, from her perspective, rightly so. It seems most everyone agreed with her, and I don't fault them for that. Consequently, I quickly found myself without friends or family, since most of my friends were related to our marriage and a good portion of my family was closely tied to Judy's kin, who had been my family too for nearly 30 years. To most of them my sin was disgusting. After all I had done the stereotypical thing of a man experiencing the angst of midlife by leaving his spouse of nearly 30 years and starting a relationship with an athletic, active, dancing, attractive woman less than half his age. As absolutely awful as the appearance of this relationship seems to me now were I to observe it in others, at the time I hadn't really sought a young woman. It just happened. At the time I experienced this relationship as literally a matter of life or death, and I still don't think I was wrong. Doubtless there is some psychological insights that might, or might not, be relevant to such relationships. For me the choice was simple, leave my marriage and live or stay and die. Looking back now I can see that this choice, be it a choice at all, was, in some respects, not a wise one. Clearly a relationship with such a huge age difference has a short life. The experience of this freedom and connection, I now recognize, set a relationship standard that could never be equaled, or so it seems to me in retrospect, as I engaged in other relationships in the decades that followed. It led, now it seems inevitably, to a life of a series of relatively short relationships and finally to my current life lived alone. From my present vantage it seems somehow tragic that the action that saved my life seems to have also created a life course where aloneness and a certain diminishment of social vitality was the consequence.

A stark and surprising insight gained now over quarter of a century later is that the time immediately after divorce, including this period of extended travel, was one of awkward and faltering self-discovery supported and enabled and emboldened by this relationship with a much younger woman. I felt newly born, groping about for the novel pleasures of a newly awakened life. Since this crucial period of self-discovery was so intimately intertwined with a new relationship—after all we were never apart for more than several hours for five months—I formed, likely incorrectly I now see, a sense of identity between my newly emerging vital self and my relationship with Emily. Consequently, I experienced the end of that relationship as a loss of my own life. Studying and reflecting on this travel journal has introduced some, yet fewer than I'd hoped, new insights. This identification of my vitality with a lost relationship, while understandable, was not accurate. Only now do I see that. Furthermore, the efforts and failures

of many relationships and even my persistent yet failed efforts to make friends over a quarter century were likely the result of this unfortunate error.

The Magic Mirror

It was Jogjakarta I believe where I picked up a small scrappy used copy of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein: The Modern Prometheus* (1818). It accompanied me on my trek of the Annapurna Circuit some weeks later for my occasional reading pleasure in the dim evening light. I don't much recall my impressions of this novel on this, my first, reading. Several years ago, I turned to it again, the same yellowed copy, in the writing of my book *Religion and Technology into the Future* (2018). Writing that book, I was fascinated by what I called made beings, particularly robots and androids, and I looked to examples that predated the high-tech shiny bodied type. I soon thought of Victor Frankenstein making his creature as a classic case. Shelley's novel is so rich that I wrote one chapter and part of another focused on it. I have reread the novel again and again, each time delighted as if it were a brand-new discovery.

One of my favorite passages describes when the escaped creature has interrupted his travels that occupied him through most of the novel to live for a spell in a shed attached to a cottage, the rustic home of a blind old man and his adult children Felix and Agatha, the DeLaney family. Peeking into their home through a chink in the wall the creature learned language and something of the lifeways of humans. Seeking to support the family, he gathered wood and clandestinely left it on their stoop. The creature had been disturbed by the reaction he seemed to evoke when he met others, so he remained isolated as much as possible. Eventually he discovered the disturbing nature of his own appearance which he compared with that of the cottage dwellers.

I had admired the perfect forms of my cottagers—their grace, beauty, and delicate complexions; but how was I terrified when I viewed myself in a transparent pool! At first I started back, unable to believe that it was indeed I who was reflected in the mirror; and when I became fully convinced that I was in reality the monster that I am, I was filled with the bitterest sensations of despondence and mortification. Alas! I did not yet entirely know the fatal effects of this miserable deformity.

The mirror of still waters revealed to the creature made by Frankenstein something of his own self as reflected in his monstrous appearance. Shelley offered an alternative to Narcissus, and she foreshadowed by more than a century Jean Paul Sartre's "the look" (1943) and Jacques Lacan's "the mirror stage" (1953).

In his classic work *Being and Nothingness* (1943), which incidentally I studied on the same trip while in Bali, Sartre discusses how we as human beings come to comprehend ourselves as objects in the world. This self-reflective awareness is

achieved by our observations of others seeing us as objects to them. Sartre understands that this observation creates a state of emotional alienation whereby a person avoids experiencing their subjectivity by identifying themselves with “the look” of the other. Even before his self-observation in the mirror of still water, Frankenstein’s creature was disturbed by the reaction of those who he observed responded with horror when they “looked” at him. One might say that such encounters led him to acknowledge himself objectively as well as subjectively, giving birth to his sense that he bore an image to the world.

Informed by the earlier work in the 1930s of Henri Wallon, psychoanalytic theorist Jacques Lacan developed what he termed “the mirror stage” in human development. The mirror stage, occurring around 18 months of age, is when a child begins to identify himself or herself as an object when looking in a mirror. Lacan held it to be “a phenomenon to which I assign a twofold value. In the first place, it has historical value as it marks a decisive turning-point in the mental development of the child. In the second place, it typifies an essential libidinal relationship with the body image.” (Lacan, *Some reflections on the Ego*, 1953)

Frankenstein’s creature murders those, including his maker’s new bride, close to his maker. Enraged by his creature’s violence, Frankenstein devotes his life to finding his made creature, now wandering the world, that he might destroy it. Tracking it to the snowfields of Mount Blanc, the creature begs Frankenstein, whom he identifies as his creator, to at least hear his story. This extended story, the autobiography of the creature, within the novel is remarkable in terms of Shelley’s profoundly insightful account of how the creature, created in an adult human body, nonetheless had to undergo the early child development stages constituting his gradual awakening of his senses, gradually making fundamental distinctions such as self and other, and learning language using a process of mimesis. Shelley’s passage where the creature sees himself in reflection documents the stage when young children become aware of themselves as objects by seeing themselves in a mirror as later famously elaborated by Lacan.

In my research efforts over the last decade, I have increasingly focused on human distinctiveness, especially when compared with our animal kin. I have returned again and again to the human capacity for self-reflection, for objective self-awareness. The human capacity to see oneself as an object as well as subject and further to be able to reflect on such things as self-identity is, I believe, distinctively human. Frankenstein’s creature is human, according to my proposed distinction, demonstrated by his capacity to see himself as an object and to reflect on the features that distinguish himself among others like him, both in the likenesses and differences that can never be overcome. The very idea of his monstrosity in psychological terms is inseparable from his realization that he is like other human beings in so many respects—senses, language, knowledge, basic animate form, self-awareness, desire, curiosity, loneliness—yet, different in a

singular sense of being manufactured with the evidence of his construction so obvious in his physical appearance, a literal assembly of parts. The consequences of his being made by man, not nature or God, can never be rectified or resolved. Shelley allows us to experience, to feel the angst of the existential distinction of the creature. His identity designation of a category in which he knows he will never fit or be accepted. It is not that the creature is unique in the sense of being incomparable to any other beings. It is that he is made as a man and given many of the distinctive attributes of a man, yet due to the obviousness of his madeness he will never ever be embraced as a “fellow,” the ambivalence of monstrosity. He pleads with his maker to make for him a mate, a female companion, that he might have fellowship. Frankenstein refuses reasoning that their possible pairing might create offspring amounting to a set, a new kind of human, a removal of monstrosity or more a concern to Frankenstein, a breed of monsters.

The word reflection implicates the mirror. A seeing or knowing as being apart from the presentation of that same being as other to him or herself. The real subjectively known person, and the two-dimensional image reflected in a mirror. Mirroring says, “This is me, but not me.” It is the meeting of the subjective and objective in creative encounter. How do I appear (or be) from the perspective of the world out there? How am I an object to others? What would I look (or be) like if I were not me? These are distinctively human concerns. We are conscious of the complexity, indeed impossibility, of such questions, yet it is of our nature that they exist and in existing they distinguish us.

For decades I have known that I wrote journals of two important trips I took in the 1990s. Other travels came later. These writings documented what I experienced and observed, but they also included reflections on what I described, and they included self-reflection on my personal experience and sense of growth and personal development at this particularly transformative period in my life. They included musings of my ambitions, my hopes for my future self.

Recently I have begun to imagine the insights, the seeings into, of who I am now and have become over the decades by the means of reflecting on, mirror gazing I might say, from the perspective of the present. Me encountering myself in a mirror image formed a third of my lifetime ago. I recognize this process as something of an amalgam of Frankenstein’s creature shuddering upon seeing the horror of his appearance and behavior and of Narcissus enamored by his own reflected image. It is something on the order of looking in the rearview mirror to gain a view of the path forward, to, hopefully with surprising and useful insight, see my life as it exists in the present yet bent on and moving into the future. It is, I believe, an exercise of the highly subjective process of seeing and meeting oneself at a different age and stage as an object of fascination. While such mirror trickery is not all that appears in this book, it is, for me now, an important leitmotif.

Writing is the End

I wrote entries in my travel journal regularly throughout the 1993-'94 trip. I had a laptop through most of the trip which made journal writing convenient. In Nepal during the trek a laptop was impossible, so I hand wrote in a small journal and later typed these writings to obtain an electronic file. Over the years the electronic versions, on outdated types of removable disks, were lost, but fortunately I had printed a copy that still existed. I think at one point I had hoped to make some selections of these travel journals for a version that I titled "Busses Don't Stop for Dingoes." The title was inspired by an incident near Uluru (Ayers Rock). We had rented a car and while driving along the road we noticed a dingo and pulled over on the shoulder and got out to get a better look. While there a tour bus came barreling down the road blasting us with its backdraft. I thought at the time how unfortunate it was for the many passengers because they likely didn't catch even a glimpse of the dingo much less have the option to stop and become friends.

In the process of writing *Dancing Graffiti: Stories from My Life* last year while rummaging around in old files and documents to assist my remembering details of stories I wanted to write, I discovered the typed paper copy of the 1993-'94 journal along with a handwritten copy of the journal I wrote when Jenny and I went to Ghana in the summer of 1997 and even other handwritten travel journals. I used the Optical Character Recognition (OCR) capabilities of WORD to convert the scanned PDFs of the 1993-'94 journals to recreate electronic editable files, a tedious and awkward job. I typed the Ghana travel journals.

I found that my other travel writings were not nearly so interesting and not worth the effort to type them. I read them and include herein but a few summary comments.

I have edited the complete journals for the 1993-'94 travels through Australia, Bali, Java, Thailand, and Nepal and the 1997 travel journals recording the trip to Ghana with Jenny. My editing was largely limited to grammar, comprehensibility, and consistency, removing a few useless passages. I am printing a couple copies of these raw journals titled *Travel Writings* for later reference or posterity or maybe just because I don't know what else to do with them. In this book *Looking Forward* I have selected passages from these journals, most from the 1993-'94 journey, based largely on my sense of their potential interest to others as well as what they might reveal to me as I now, almost 30 years later, read and reflect on them. These selections are presented herein in italics. I have attempted to give a sense of wholeness to this book by constructing an ongoing narrative threading together the selected passages from the journals. This narrative functions to introduce, contextualize, and summarize to give shape and continuity to the unfolding story. More importantly, as is my principal motivation for doing this project and as reflected in my choice of title, I have tried to see my earlier self

anew and to ask him (me) what he might tell me about my current self. I have wanted to exercise the magic of the meeting between my old man self of the present and my middle-aged man that took these journeys. My hope has been that this process has merit surpassing simply being self-indulgent both in offering me some opportunity for reflection and comment based on a perspective from more than a quarter century later and that it might also be of some interest at some point to my kids and grandkids.

Through the process of putting all this material together and reflecting on it I had hoped for some flashes of insight, some clearing of the present fog about how to aim my life going forward. I have felt that upon my gradual acceptance of old age I have failed to muster the courage to act boldly to realize the fullest potential of my life. As the work began to come to a conclusion, I worried that I had failed to experience any brilliant flashes of insight and consequently began to realize how presumptuous I am in thinking anything in my life exceeds the banal. I contemplated simply abandoning this journal-based effort and that choice might remain the better one. Still, I discovered, as I have so often before, what a profound joy I experience, and increasingly so as I get older, writing and the living relationship I have with words as they somehow, quite magically, appear, emerging out of me to find their places all lined up on pages. Thus, in the end, this work exists only because I exist and have loved making it. I seriously doubt it will ever be read, even by me, yet I can't not pursue the process any more than I can't not continue breathing life to its end.

*Chapter One***Australia, Bali, Java, Thailand, Nepal
1993 - 1994**

The year in which I was due a sabbatical, 1993-'94, occurred at a time of the confluence of several streams in my life. In 1992 I shifted my academic work away from Native American studies after almost twenty years during which I'd published a half dozen or so books and many articles on related topics. The summer of 1992 I went to Australia to advance my nascent research on what was eventually published as *Storytracking* (1998) by visiting the country and checking out library resources. Jenny, my daughter, and Judy, my spouse, accompanied me. In the spring of 1993, I moved out of the dome house I had built in the mountains followed by initiating divorce procedures. I applied and received a University of Colorado Faculty Fellowship which gave me a full academic year sabbatical, 1993-'94, to pursue my Australia research. Newly focusing on my physical health, I began to spend extensive amounts of time in fitness clubs doing aerobic dancing. This physical activity led to my introduction to the forerunners of what would come to be known as hip hop dancing. I also found myself beginning a new relationship with a woman much younger than me. Together we biked and hiked and danced. Accompanying my academic shift and my growing obsession with dancing it dawned on me that dancing in the context of religion perhaps had endless possibilities for teaching and academic research. I began to think about dancing in religious settings the world over, and more generally about culturally based dancing. No one in the study of religion was doing anything like studying dancing and religion even though in many cultures, excluding northern hemisphere Christianity, dancing and religion are nearly synonymous.

I had been awarded some research funds to travel to Australia. I began to plan that trip. Given that I had the full academic year available and that I was no

longer living with Judy, I began to imagine a more expansive trip that would allow me not only to do the Australian research, but to also gain some experience and knowledge of other cultures as foundational to my growing passion for the study of dancing in cultures the world over. Australia is southeast of Indonesia placing Bali and Java as rich and convenient additional destinations. Once I seriously considered Indonesia, I realized that I must take the opportunity to travel to Nepal to trek in the Himalayan Mountains. How could I not? I even did a day hike to the top of Longs Peak in Rocky Mountain National Park to see how I adjusted to the highest altitude in the Colorado area, a challenge yet not much of a comparison since the trek I considered in Nepal went to a height of eighteen thousand feet. Studying travel options, I learned that all routes from Denpasar in Bali to Kathmandu went through Bangkok, Thailand. Again, it seemed unthinkable to pass up the opportunity to spend some time in Thailand, especially since I knew their dancing was rich and interesting.

As the trip itinerary grew it seemed that I might be accompanied by my new friend and partner, Emily, who was a graduate student at Naropa University. Excited by the opportunity, she was able to take off a semester to join me. That also set a return date to mid-January 1994, so that she would be back for spring classes.

Our departure date was pushed to near the end of August both by the demands of my personal life with divorce and my eagerness to build new post-divorce relationships with my adult kids. Jenny had just graduated high school and in the fall was going to the mountains to get a ski industry job so she could snowboard. Corbin was, if I remember correctly, at that time a student at Colorado State University in Greeley studying theater. Despite my desire to have the divorce settled before I left, Judy had difficulty deciding on the settlement details even though I was eager to do almost anything to both help her out since I was the one leaving and also to simply get it done.

Because we wanted to travel and explore without a tight itinerary, Emily and I left almost all the interim travel and accommodation arrangements to be made during the actual travel. We arranged almost nothing beyond a list of places we hoped to visit. This gave us freedom, but as Sartre wisely noted there are costs that accompany freedom. For us it was the necessity of constantly having to investigate and decide where to eat every meal and where to lay our heads every night. We had limited funds, so we knew we had to choose low-cost food and housing. The advantage was that this style of travel placed us in constant contact with the folks of the places we visited despite often finding ourselves eating horrible food and staying in cramped dirty sketchy accommodations.

From my current perspective decades later, I shudder at the sheer hardness of this style of travel. It now seems to me perhaps more suited to kids out of high school or college than it was to me at age fifty and truly unthinkable now. I

survived and remarkably managed to enjoy and flourish in the process. I'm grateful now that I had the foolishness or naivete to simply go for it as an open and exploratory adventure.

Australia

Sydney, August 30 – September 7

Arriving in Sydney we stayed a week with Emily's half-brother Derek and his bride of two months, Moni, whose parents had come from Egypt to Australia 25 years earlier.

We explored Sydney focused largely on the Circular Quay area, the historic landing place of the British who colonized Australia and who, for a long time, used the country primarily as a penal colony. During the early periods in British Australian history the descendants of these criminals were considered low class particularly compared with the descendants of the British administrators and military who were also early residents. In the recent period the descendants of this former outcast lineage have proudly claimed their history to be the source of Australia's famed rugged individualism, if often rough and somewhat crude. The Circular Quay is the location of the Harbor Bridge and the Sydney Opera House. It is also a transportation hub, with rail, including monorail, and roads, and the harbor where cruise ships and ferries dock. The city is adjacent to the quay.

General impressions of Sydney and Aussies were noted in the first days of our explorations and encounters.

We haven't met too many Aussies on this trip. It is rather difficult to believe we are so far from Colorado. Most people here look much like the folks back home. The speech is somewhat different, but much else is the same. One thing that is very impressive is this city. It is clean and very beautiful. There is much to do, yet the city seems friendly and open. There is little that seems to frighten or even close in on one. Still, by late afternoon as we turned homeward, we both decided we didn't want to live in any city. Just too confining. 9/2

My attention was focused on attempting to get my research and writing going balanced with daily explorations of the city. We attended, after much effort to procure tickets to "The Phantom of the Opera" at the Royal Theater and we went to a performance of the Chamber Orchestra at Sydney Opera House.

Last night, September 4, we caught the bus up at Epping Street, went up to Epping (a little neighborhood) and ate dinner at the Indian Star Restaurant. Had papadums (thin tortilla-like bread), a spicy hot chicken, and vegetables (medium hot) in gravy-like sauce, and a thin bread with vegetable stuffing. Very tasty. Then we caught the train to the city at Epping Station, transferred in the city to a loop train and got off at Circular Quay. A short walk to the Opera House where, in the Opera Hall we heard the Australia Chamber Orchestra perform four pieces. The first was by Dvořák. Then a couple of pieces featuring

a French horn soloist: one by Mozart and another by Tillerman. The final piece was by Benjamin Britten, seven parts composed in the 1930s establishing Britten as a prodigy, I think. I liked the Dvořák piece best. It was light, yet complex. I should get the name of it in here, because I might like to buy it on CD at some point. It is "Serenade for strings in E major, Op 22". I also liked the modern and innovative sounds of Britten. The horn pieces were okay but didn't grab me all that much.

The hall was stunning. Also just being able to see the city from the Opera House, being in the Opera House was worth the admission price. The Opera Hall is huge. The acoustics are excellent. Just no words to describe that building and its power. Inside one can see these huge concrete fan shapes towering upward. I just can't get over the massiveness of this building—how heavy it seems, yet at the same time it transcends itself. It seems airy and light. Totally amazing. I also have the feeling that in the construction of this thing, at every point the builders had to improvise, had to figure something that would work to fill the space, to connect the members. This is an aspect of building I always found challenging and fun. Doubtless this building was either a turn-on or a nightmare for its builders. It seems that the interior is built inside the exterior and almost independent of it. I also wondered how they change the light bulbs and dusted the fixtures. Perhaps there is crawl space above the ceiling and the bulbs are changed from there. I'd guess there are a million secrets in that building. 9/5

The year before I had first visited Sydney Opera House. The heart connection I felt with it then was deepened and many years later I would have one more opportunity to spend a day alone at the Opera House. It remains the most favored building I have experienced.

I visited scholars at the University of Sydney and copied a huge manuscript of the only English language translation of one of the first ethnographies of Aborigines in Central Australia written in German by one of the first missionaries, Carl Strehlow.

Ever the worker, I spent considerable time worrying about getting work done and preparing to accomplish the research I wanted to do in various Australian cities. From our second day in Sydney, I began to work and to engage the shifting ground of my academic interests. I wrote of my increasingly intolerance of the politics of the academy which were truly and regularly nasty in Native American studies. I can recognize here perhaps the beginning of migrating to the more accessible and less esoteric academic styles that still occupy me today.

I read Thom Parkhill's [a Canadian colleague] intro and concluding chapters to his Leland book. Interesting responses to it. In his intro chapter he recounts the electronic mail conversation over Ron's "posting" about whites teaching Native American religions. [This refers to Ron Grimes who was a visiting Canadian professor at CU at the time. He had written a series of emails about non-Native Americans teaching and researching Native American topics. He and I were also co-editing a volume of articles on ritual

studies. I later dropped out of that project and had a falling out with Ron.]¹ I found myself surprised by being one of the ones about whom he referred and at the same time I began to realize how boring I had found that whole conversation. I had felt that I ought to have been interested in it but couldn't bring myself to take the time to read the entries. I also began to realize that Ron had been disappointed that I hadn't taken more interest. I see this morning as a sign of my shift in interest. I don't harbor resentments, or anger, or anything much left over. I just am not interested. I am bored by those who want to go over and over all this territory. I am pleased that while I have moved on, I don't have feelings that have not been dealt with. I have just said what I have wanted to say, and I have gone on. [In about 1992 I decided that I had grown weary of studying Native Americans. It was a high politicized field. I also felt I'd done what I wanted to do and found my interests shifting to Australian topics as well as dancing. The travels to Australia were part of my ongoing research on Australian history.] 9/1

We had dinner with Emily's sister-in-law's extended family. Her parents fled the persecution of Christians in Egypt coming to Australia.

Another thing that was interesting, and somewhat sad, is to think about an Egyptian family coming to live in Australia 25 years ago. They bring some Egyptian customs with them: food, memories, a few customs. Their children grow up with Aussie accents, not Egyptian like their parents. The grandchildren will remember the Sunday dinners and something of the customs, but they won't know much at all about Egypt. Both the Egyptian children married non-Egyptians and interestingly Nader and Jill's kids look more Aussie (well 2 of them do) than Egyptian.

Emily and I were talking about this. We wonder how the world will look in a couple generations. Everybody wants to be like Americans (except us). They are becoming this way too. Will it not be likely that in a couple of generations the world will be homogenized to the point that there is no culture, no ethnicity, no difference. We'll all have TV and computer communications as our most fundamental cultural heritage. Even racial differences will have faded. This seems rather sad to me. Maybe in the Himalayas the people will not yet have joined the MTV generation, but I'm not sure about that. 9/?

The travel and meeting people that neither of us had been around before became, for me, a social test of the public response to our May to December, or maybe better March to August, relationship. I wrote of the response we received from Derek and Moni as well as Moni's extended family. It is notable that I was sensitive to, perhaps sensitive about, the nature of our relationship. I also made frequent comments about my appreciation of Emily and that we were together in this adventure. I address this sensitivity regularly throughout the trip as we encountered new folks in every location.

¹I will insert contemporary notes in square brackets throughout these writings to provide information that at the time of writing seemed evident.

Derek and Moni seem completely unaffected by the age difference between Emily and me. We had a delightful chat last night and they were very interested in both of us and with what we have done together. This too is nice for us. We don't need anyone's approval, but it is certainly nice when people don't weird out on us. So far almost no one does. My present theory is that when people see us together, they may at first think our relationship inappropriate. They see, more or less objectively, a couple who have a large age difference. Then, I hypothesize, when they are with us together, even briefly, their perception immediately shifts so they see us in terms of how we relate and then they cease to see us primarily in terms of age difference. If this is correct, it is rather interesting. 9/1

Though it was but the first week traveling, I made regular reference to missing Corbin and Jenny. Doubtless this was due to my exerting so much effort to rebuild a post-divorce, new relationship with my kids, especially Jenny who was still in Boulder up to the time we left.

Almost immediately I began to experience a shift in my feelings of responsibility and freedom and to take note of the ongoing efforts—linked with divorce, a new relationship, and efforts to recreate new relationships with my kids—to overcome the split personality pathology that I'd unfortunately developed over many years of unhappiness.

Now that I am away from Colorado, I am beginning to feel the luxury and delight of being freer of obligations than I have been in such a long time. I have had so much hanging over my head. To not have a million things to do all needing immediate attention is an experience I am welcoming. Only today am I able to begin to experience this. I hope to integrate it into my life during this trip and to begin to undergo further personal transformations. Emily and Jenny both comment regularly on how different I am now from how I was even a few months ago. This is great to know. But I can still use much change. I need to relax, to be more present to everything I do. I need to see more clearly and to know myself more fully. It is thrilling that I can even see this much. I feel quickened as I continue this process. 9/1

Physical exercise occupied much of my time and effort in 1993. Oddly my efforts to repair my failing marriage in the early 1990s led to my introduction to dancing and physical fitness. While it had the opposite effect than I had hoped on my marriage, it quickly led to my strong interest in dancing in cultures across the world as well as my near obsession with my own aerobic dancing fitness. Emily was an avid biker, even racing. And we had taken trips to Moab to mountain and road bike. Traveling would pose challenges to our regular fitness regimes. I tried running, yet this activity irritated a knee injury I had received playing football in high school. Still, I tried to run.

I got in a great run yesterday afternoon. I tried to run the day we arrived, and my knee hurt after about 15 minutes. Yesterday I ran for 35 minutes and I felt great. I had a bit of tenseness in the muscles in the back of my knees, but no severe pains at all. When I came back, I felt so strong that I sprinted around the athletic field behind Derek and Moni's house. I did pushups and lots of sit ups and took a shower. 9/4

With our next destination being Australia's capital city, Canberra, we rented a car and left Sydney on September 7, planning to spend a couple days in route in the Blue Mountains not far to the west of Sydney. The early explorers of Australia in the nineteenth century found these mountains to be an impenetrable barrier. Being finally alone on our adventure the foreignness and the length of the trip suddenly became much more real.

Having left Sydney, Emily and I are both beginning to feel some new things. Being out here in the Blue Mountains and in a weird cabin likely helps stimulate them. We both feel something of our strangerhood. It is now finally like we are in a foreign country. We feel a bit displaced and unsure of what is going to happen next. These feelings are a little frightening, but they are surely essential to the real travel experience. I know that at this point I would begin to feel rather lonely and a little frightened if Emily were not with me. I think we complement each other well and that we both are pretty in touch with our feelings and our abilities to get in touch with where they are coming from. We both also feel a little concerned about the length of this trip. We are going to be gone a long time. Still, when we are back in January, I know that it will seem like a very short time. We'll wish that we had had a lot more time in various places.

This afternoon we went to a place called Glover's Leap. It is just down the road from where we are staying. We are up on a sprawling mesa. When you drive in any direction you arrive at the mesa edge and it is hundreds of feet down. Near this leap was a waterfall. Not a whole lot of water was going over, but the fall was several hundred feet. It was quite pretty. We walked down a couple hundred steps to a vantage point for the falls. We took a couple of pictures there. Then we drove to Katoomba, found a place called Echo Point. There we saw gobs of beautiful parrots. The Australian King Parrot was the most beautiful to us and I took pictures of a pair with my long lens. We found that there are many places in Katoomba that would have been much better accommodations for the same money (a lesson to us) and we walked down several hundred stairs below a famous rock formation called "three sisters." I took their pictures also. Then we walked around the town until we decided on a place to eat and had spaghetti and salad. 9/7

We spent a night at Katoomba in the Blue Mountains as we neared Canberra. The next morning after greasy eggs and fat fried potatoes we explored the area.

We then went to Echo point and started a hike. We walked along the rim on Prince Edward's Walk (I believe) and then descended into the canyon on what was called Federal Pass. It was interesting to me that places that went down were called passes, whereas I think of passes as places one goes up over. This was a descent into the rain forest with tree ferns and lush thick growth everywhere. The path was steep and slippery. There were a number of falls, all with female names it seems, like Linda, Marguerite, Leana, etc. I could begin to see why the early Australians thought this area impenetrable. It is very thick growth with mulga, an alternative term for bush, and the paper bark gum trees grow up out of this tangle as huge, majestic towers. We saw quite a few birds: Australian King Parrot, a Lyrebird ("standard

Lyre” I think they call them), Mina birds and lots of Magpies. We heard the kookaburra laugh but didn't see it. We did see one yesterday sitting on a sign, but it didn't laugh.

We finally arrived at the base of the famous giant stairs. They go up 1000 steps alongside the three sisters rock formation. We sat at the base of the stairs and ate an apple. Several people came down and felt themselves worn out from the descent. We had come down halfway yesterday and back up, so we didn't think too much about it. We ascended in about 10 minutes. At least it got our heart rates up a bit and let us believe that we were burning off some of the grease we had consumed for breakfast. The walk was gorgeous and took us about 2 hours of easy hiking. The descriptions called it a four-hour difficult hike. 9/8

We spent another night in the Blue Mountains before a quick drive to Canberra. I wanted to arrive early to do a full day of research.

Canberra, September 9 -12

Canberra, the name meaning “meeting place,” is the capital city of Australia with a beautiful modern partially underground capital building. It looks to be protrusions spiking out of an expansive grassy knoll. The city was designed by the American Walter Burley Griffin in the early part of the twentieth century, thus it is a new and modern city. It features circular and arcing street patterns. I needed to visit Canberra to do research at the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Studies (AIATS) where collections included many documents unavailable anywhere else. I was fascinated to find that it was also a place where many Aborigines go to search records in hopes of discovering their own cultural roots. Australia practiced the forced separation of Aborigine kids from their parents, placing them in “good Christian homes” in the effort to integrate the indigenous population into the European white population. It is no surprise that it didn't work, leaving many adult Aborigines not knowing their native language, where they came from, or anyone in their family.

I spent several days copying and procuring valuable documents.

We arrived in Canberra today. Spent the day at the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Studies. Emily helped and that was excellent. She looked things up and brought them to me and I looked them over deciding what ought to be copied. Made 360 copies today and will need to make another couple hundred tomorrow. I'll haul this junk around with me until Darwin then ship it to the US. Quite the load, but that is the life of the researcher. 9/9

I feel good about the research I got done today. Got the weird book on T. G. H. Strelbow. Got a book on the building of the telegraph. Got material on the development and failure of the cattle industry. Got lots of stuff by and about the Strelbowns and the mission at Hermannsburg. 9/9

A strange residential hotel was our choice for a cheap place to stay.

We are staying at the Macquarie Hotel very near the Capital building. It is more like a dorm than a hotel. It is not en suite, and this may be the first place I have ever stayed where I

have had to go down the hall to the bathroom and to take a shower. Still, it is cheap, \$42 for both of us, and clean. I think there are some 500 rooms here. Breakfast is included, but we wonder what that will be. 9/9

Breakfast today again raised the question of who these men are who are staying in this weird Macquarie Hotel. Many are alone and most are middle aged or older. I can't see how this could be a residence hotel but some of them look like residents. It is not that they look so terrible, though many are a bit scruffy, but we can't figure out who they are or what they do. 9/11

Walking was our principal access to the neighborhoods and to the city. Our residence was very close to the capital building. My feeling sense of directions was confused not having yet adjusted to being in the southern hemisphere.

As we walked back from City Center after a wonderful pasta dinner we neared the parliament building, beautifully lighted with a huge Australian flag lighted brightly. We emerged from a dark area of trees to cross the long grassy mall that stretches toward the old parliament building. As we were halfway across the mall, we turned to look at the lighted building and just above the flag in the sky was the Southern Cross. What a delightful concurrence. Emily asked if they planned it that way, then realized that it was our timing and our place that made it so. 9/10

Finding places to eat was a continuing challenge leading to some funny moments.

The Thai restaurant was up some narrow stairs above stores in the main shopping area of center city in Canberra. When we got to the top of the stairs, we heard this strange music coming through a closed door. Emily didn't want to enter. She said, "if there are nude dancing girls in there, I don't want to go in." I boldly forged ahead. Was I hoping for nude dancing girls? All we found was an empty place with an elderly lady, the cook, and another about middle aged, the wait person. 9/9

Jane Campion's film, "The Piano," was playing and offered engaging entertainment and conversation appropriate to the general region.

I found myself beginning to settle into traveling.

I feel very happy now. The only anxiety I tend to feel is in being out of contact with everyone. 9/10

We had a very sound sleep. I am sleeping better the past few nights than I have for months and months. This morning we had breakfast at the cafeteria with our weird neighbors, then Emily called her parents and I called Corbin. It was just great to talk with him. He seemed happy and engaged in his classes. We talked easily and it was fun. 9/12

That return arc that is a benefit of foreign travel showed up in my consciousness. Regrets paired with aspirations.

Seems as though I had some reflecting to do. Thought a bit about my divorce settlement today and feel that I would like to have the dome [the house I'd built in the mountains]. I think it would be a great place to live. I also think that when I return to Boulder, I'll live a rather

different kind of life. I am happy to be traveling for some months, but I look forward to landing and settling. And I won't be able to do that when I return. 9/11

I hadn't remembered that Jenny, Judy, and I had visited Canberra the summer before until I read the summary comments on Canberra. It is so odd to me that I have a near total absence of memory of that time.

Some summary remarks on Canberra. The place is beautiful, clean, and empty. The streets are wide and empty. The shops are big and empty. There are no crowds at the busiest of times. This hotel has 500 rooms yet there seem so few here. The vacant character of this place is rather eerie. I also found out that I had been 180 degrees turned around. All the time I have been here I have felt south to be north. That is so strange. I don't have any trouble getting lost or knowing where I am, but I felt the directions the opposite of what they are. It was kind of a relief to get them straightened out. 9/12

Cairns and Mission Beach, September 13 to 20

As I recall we had purchased this amazing air travel pass that gave us thirteen destinations anywhere within Australia for the ridiculously low price of several hundred dollars. To take advantage of that we considered which of so many possible destinations we might visit. Before heading to Alice Springs to continue my research focused on collecting primary sources and visiting many of the places important to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century history, we decided to go to Queensland. We wanted to find a place where the Great Barrier Reef is accessible. I wanted to spend considerable time doing research and blasting away writing *Storytracking*. The principal city that was the obvious flight destination in Queensland was Cairns, right on the coast.

Cairns (pronounced "Cans") is a real shit can. Thank god I am with Emily and we can get a good laugh out of this. After the worst Asian dinner we ever ate Emily cracked up when I gave the whole town the finger. To top it off we are staying in luxury accommodations. NOT! It is the cheapest hostel in the world. We chose it because they had free airport pick up and the place is on the Esplanade, i.e., the front street, next to what ought to be the beach, but is only a 6 ft wide grassy area before the mud inlet. This place is cheapo tourist mecca. Everyone is hawking everything and nothing is worth buying. Our room is four pinkish brown walls, a sink in the corner, a foam on a board for a bed and a weird curtain over what I guess are windows onto a hallway. Oh, and the place is equipped with the strong smell of piss. No wonder, since this place makes me want to piss. Not only that, even before we left the airport, we both got bitten by tiny black bugs and Emily has a number of small round red places likely from the bug bites.

The flight from Canberra took most of the day. We left at 8:40 this morning and flew to Brisbane where we had a several-hour layover. Then on to Rockhampton and then to Cairns. After walking around this town looking for better accommodations and to see what there is here to offer, we both quickly decided that this wasn't the place for the week we want to spend here. We have decided to head south to Mission Beach, which is supposed to be a sleepy little town

with a nice beach. We surely can get a day trip to the Reef from there and that will at least give us that experience. Other than that, we want to spend a quiet week reading, writing and enjoying ourselves. Guess we'll figure it out tomorrow. 9/13

The mission was immediately to vacate Cairns as spurred by the one night in hell.

We awoke this morning in that horrible hostel and knew we would most likely have to face disaster today and we'd be lucky if we came up with anything at all worth our time in the Cairns area. Even before we got out of bed, we were discussing how disgusting the bed was: a thin foam on a board. I had felt something poking me all night and I lifted up the mattress to inspect it and what did we find under the mattress but a porno mag. Yuck! We both nearly flipped out and hurried to get on our way. 9/14

With an alternative location selected and a two-hour bus ride south, we found what we had hoped for.

Mission Beach! Secluded (sort of) beach (a block away) tropical house. After a 2-hour bus ride from Cairns arriving here at 2 p.m. we soon found this fully equipped flat to rent for a week. . . . The flat is wonderful, and we'll enjoy it so much. We can also go the Reef from here as well as Dunk Island which can be seen from our beach. The flat has two bedrooms and a kitchen, bath, dining room, and living room. It is fully equipped. We are just a block or so from the several stores that are Mission Beach and just a short block from the beach. The beach is beautiful and stretches for as far as you can see. The tide was out this afternoon and the beach was probably 70 to 100 ft wide. It looks like when the tide is in that it will only be 15 ft wide or so. But it is still a lovely beach. The rain forest comes right down to the beach. You can see this very clearly on Dunk Island, just a mile or so offshore. We want to read, write, and enjoy some down time before we head for the Interior. 9/14

From the comfort of Mission Beach, I reflected on what I found so disturbing at Cairns.

A few reflections on Cairns. It is just too bad that the place has become over commercialized. It may be due to Japanese investments and tourists. All the signs are in English and Japanese. The Japanese have purchased all sorts of land and resorts in this area. They charge high prices, and everything here seems tacky. Dozens of places are hawking package deals for any and everything. It is a beautiful and incredibly diverse place, but it has been ruined by commercialism. Besides the reef, there is white water rafting, the rain forest, old train rides up into the forest including Aboriginal dance theatre. There are beach trips in both directions at all distances. There is bungy jumping, balloon rides, helicopter rides, boat trips of all kinds, island vacations, scuba schools, etc. Few places can rival what is available here but given what one has to go through to do any of this, makes it not worth doing. It is just very fortunate that we fled the scene and won't even have to go back. 9/14

The leisure and stability of a week in paradise opened the space for me to reflect on my life and the process of transition that I was undergoing. Inevitably that involved some reckoning with Judy, our divorce in process, and a host of questions without answers.

I need to reflect over the next several days on why I have been remembering selectively, recreating the past in much more positive terms than it was. Do I need to feel guilty? Do I need to feel responsible for Judy's feelings? Should I think that I abandoned Judy and really should have brought her? Certainly, I should if I was planning to stay married to her, but I am not. Are these thoughts coming up because I feel less than committed to Emily? Is our age difference somehow something I know will have to be dealt with at some time? Am I frightened that if this relationship with Emily doesn't work out I'll be alone? I haven't consciously thought about this, but perhaps I should. Could I live alone? Would I still want the dome? How would I feel living there all alone? Of course, here I am a sap again, because I begin to think about how Judy must feel living alone. Never having anyone to watch a movie with, never having someone to sleep with. Then I feel like I have done this to her and that I am off on a world trip with a friend and that I have her to do everything with. It is just very hard for me to "separate emotionally" (as Emily puts it) from Judy. I continue to feel responsible for her. I continue to have good feelings toward her. I continue to have concerns about her. I continue to want her to have a good life.

If Emily and I couldn't make our relationship work, would I then think about going back to Judy? I have gained so much since March. I am almost always myself and feel honest and true to who I am. I rarely did that before I left home. I have a wonderful new relationship with Jenny that I didn't have before. I am building a relationship with Corbin that I didn't have before. I have been free of headaches almost completely since March. I am more fit, healthier, eat more like I like now than before. I am looking forward to major mountain and road biking next spring. I am looking forward to a new life. I don't think any of these gains would survive if I went back. It would be like a kind of living death. I just need to continue to rethink these things and make certain I know what I am doing. 9/14

And I reflected soberly on my developing relationship with Emily with nothing but the most positive to say, despite an awareness that the age difference was undeniable and might eventually have consequences.

We spent our days reading and, for me, writing. I wrote about a problem that Emily and I experienced and, of course, it had to do with my over devotion to work.

Emily feels that I may have some issues related to work. She was reading this afternoon and felt sleepy. She thought she hadn't ought to nap because I wouldn't like her. I know that I place high priority on work and that I doubtless judge people who don't work as I do (which is all or most of the time). Likely I do have some issues and I must continue to work on them. Emily has forced me into lots of reflection the last couple of days. 9/18

I likely projected on Em a sense that I thought she was lazy since she wasn't working at the fever pace I demanded of myself. She didn't much care for this and let me know. The upside of this disagreement, as I wrote about it, was that we talked it through with openness and understanding and quickly got over it. This developing relationship skill would be essential for our relationship to survive demands that, at that time, we could never have imagined.

Missing Corbin and Jenny, which I frequently mention in my daily writings, I called them and enjoyed catching up. The call to Corbin included a surprising coincidence.

While we were talking, the birthday card I mailed from Brisbane on Monday arrived at his house. Quite the coincidence. He had received a birthday card from my parents too. He seemed fairly happy, but I think he struggles with things a lot. 9/18

I also called my parents. Since now (2021) my mom has been dead for 20 years and my dad 14 years, being reminded of these phone calls is bittersweet.

I called my parents. Mom answered. I said "hi" and she didn't know who it was. I had to tell her. She nearly cried when she knew it was me. She said that she had never talked intercontinental before and couldn't believe that I sounded like I was in the next room. It was fun to talk with them and to know that they are fine. They sounded good. Mom asked me how you make a call from Australia. 9/18

Corbin's birthday was also remembered with a very special day snorkeling on the Great Barrier Reef. I know that the reef is in danger of dying due to changes in ocean conditions related to climate change. I'm not so sure that I was fully aware of this threat when I was there. This realization makes the beauty and diversity and sheer wonder of coral reef life all the more powerful and somewhat poignant.

Corbin's birthday, but he I'm sure he hasn't arisen yet to begin it. It is 7:15 p.m. here and 3:15 a.m. there. He should have been with us today, because it was incredible. We had a lovely porridge breckie (oatmeal breakfast) this morning and read for an hour or so. Then we walked the block to the center of Mission Beach where we were picked up by a bus that took us up the road a couple kilometers to the jetty at Clump Point. From there we embarked on the Quick Cat, the same kind of boat as at the Circular Quay in Sydney where they are called Jet Cats. We sat outside on the upper deck and applied ample sunscreen, had a cup of tea and readied ourselves for the 20-minute journey to Dunk Island. There we picked up more people and headed seaward to the Great Barrier Reef. The color of the sea all the way out was a deep indigo blue. It was a smooth 50-minute ride to Beaver Cay.

I didn't know it, but a Cay is a sand formation atop the reef, like a beach 25 miles out to sea. On the way out we saw a giant sea snake. Amazing. Once at the Cay, the Quick Cat set anchor about half kilometer from the Cay. The water was the most beautiful aqua color. The reef could be seen as dark patches in the water. Several other boats were near the cay. They moved out farther to another cay that could be seen from where we anchored. We were given a quick snorkeling lesson in the salon and we were soon in the water. We had fins, snorkels, and masks. Neither of us had snorkeled before so it was an experience. When I first got into the water, I experienced some significant fear. I breathed madly through my tube as though I couldn't get enough air. But the sight was so magnificent that I soon began to relax (a little bit anyway) and slowed my breathing. We were just 10 yards off the reef and right beneath the back of the boat were hundreds of significant sized fish (probably a foot to two feet in length). We got our fins working and headed for the reef. Immediately we saw fish of every color and size up to a

foot or so in length. They were swimming in and around coral of every shape, size and color. We saw fish that were bright yellow, orange, neon blue (in huge schools), zebra striped, pink and blue, black and white. At every turn there were fish of a different color and shape.

My mask leaked a bit, and this bothered me. At one point I sort of breathed in through my nose and inhaled some water. This set off major panic, and I rolled over and emptied my mask and assured myself that I was okay then, back on with the mask and back face down in the water. The coral was amazing. There were huge beds of what I'd call staghorn. They stuck up like huge racks on deer or elk. Much of it was brown, but some was bright blue and some, my favorite, was brown with bright almost neon blue tips on the ends of each horn. There were clumps that looked like flat mushrooms apparently sitting atop a stem. Huge brain looking clumps in many colors were to be seen. Some were giant balls, like 15 to 20 feet across I'd guess. Some were wavy, like whole beds of them, and bright green. Then there was other life in the reef. Huge beds of waving sea anemone and single anemone as well. One something or other was a clump of hundreds of jet-black spines. There were bright blue large star fish. These didn't look much like stars, because each of their five appendages stuck out like limp Wieners. They were beautiful. We saw some huge and I mean huge clam shell things. I think they were about 4 to 6 feet across. It is interesting that Emily and I floated above these things for a long time, and she saw them completely differently than I did. She saw them opened out and I saw them closed up. She saw them as broad carpets and I saw them as mysterious slits upward tilted. Anyway, what I saw were half a dozen or so of these clam-like shells sticking upward. They appeared to be open about 6 or 8 inches. Looking down the lips of the shell were smooth and rounded and had bright green dots all over them. In the slit one could see the meat inside which was white. There was a tube sticking up out of this white flesh and the flesh itself parted in places and you could see deep into the mysterious innards of the thing. The shells appeared to me to gently undulate more or less open. They seemed mostly buried and I wondered how, and if, they ever opened up completely. These were the kinds of shell things that as a kid I saw in horror films. They would lie open, and thus disguised. Then when something would step or float over them, smack shut they'd go and capture their prey. These were amazing. I guess Emily saw the same creatures open and I didn't even see them in that state. But she didn't see the closed ones.

We snorkeled together. We couldn't talk, obviously, but we could point and show our excitement at what we were seeing. We went for about an hour, then beginning to freeze we went back to the boat. They had a big layout of food. We ate pasta (which the Aussies pronounce with the first syllable like the word "past") salad and egg salad and potato salad and we had lots of fruit: kiwi, passion fruit, melon, pineapple, etc. It is funny, but Emily has avoided fruit most of her life. I got her to have her first taste of an orange at the Chinese place we go in Boulder a couple months ago. She ate her first grape in the plane between here and Rockhurst (is that the town?). We bought a whole pineapple here a couple of days ago and that was her first pineapple. Today she tried Kiwi and passion fruit. Now all she can talk about is how delicious fruit is. Ain't that a kick?

Then after eating and warming up we took a small aluminum (which the Aussies pronounce with a long "u" and accent the first syllable) boat to the Cay, pronounced Kay but that could

be the Aussie way of pronouncing Key, though they do pronounce quay as "key." Then we found that the tide was going out and the water had fallen significantly. We had a bit of a time getting out far enough on the coral to begin snorkeling again, but we made it and saw many of the wonderful sights I have described. But the water level was much closer to the top of the coral and it was sometimes difficult to find one's way over the coral. You had to find little canals running alongside coral beds and swim them until you could find a deeper area. For much of this swim we held hands and finned along together. It was wonderful to have Emily to share this experience with. Just amazing. We made our way back to the boat again chilly and yet very excited. We warmed ourselves again and I'd have gone for another swim, but it was time to leave. The leftovers and garbage from lunch were taken to the back of the boat where all those big fish had been hanging about all day. They slung a couple of biscuits overboard and wham! the fish slammed into it and it was gone. Other pieces of garbage were thrown overboard, and the fish made a frenzy of the water. Finally, the whole tub of garbage was tossed, and the water was a virtual froth for many seconds until every bit of the garbage was gone, down the fishies' gullets. No wonder they are big getting this sort of feed every day.

The trip back to Dunk Island was pleasant. We sat more in the shade and everyone seemed tired and lulled by the gentle rocking. At Dunk Island we had 3/4 hour to walk about and take it in a bit. It is a resort island. It looked very romantic and exciting. We saw a couple lying in about a foot of water making out. We thought Jenny should have been there to be fully grossed out. Later we saw the girl and she had on a thong bathing suit. Jenny would have given her the Bad Taste Salute as well as hurled on her bare foot. When we stopped at Dunk in the morning a parachutist landed on the island just as we pulled into the bay. There was a cute little island just off the beach front about one kilometer and on the other side of Dunk could be seen the Family Islands, a cluster that are mostly uninhabited, but we read that there is a very exclusive resort on one of them that costs \$400 a night. Certainly, to stay at one of these island resorts would be wonderful.

We arrived back at Stump Point shortly after 5 p.m. with the bus awaiting to take us back to Mission Beach. We felt sticky and sandy and hungry. 9/17

We enjoyed many a stroll on the beach at various times of day. There were few people on the beach. One evening near sunset we had a special and surprise.

It was just after sunset and the moon was a tiny sliver that was like a cup. Just before we got to the beach, we saw flying things in the air and Emily asked if those might not be bats. I saw one land on a high branch and turn to hang upside down. They were bats and we saw dozens of them. Most were flying just above the first row of trees next to the beach and all were flying northward. Wonder what kind of party they were going to. They were big too. I 'd guess they had wingspans of 10 inches or even more. When they flew over you could see the pointy bat shape to their wings. Then we looked back towards the moon and the western sky was aglow in a rosy pink color. The palm and gum trees were set off as fantastic silhouettes. The moon above a single huge palm tree; some sort of delicate leafy tree next to it; with huge gum trees behind them. One or two stars could be seen below the moon. . . . The stars were fantastic. The Milky Way was so visible, it looked like a cloud stretching across the sky. The Southern Cross

was clearly visible (though it seems much lower in the sky here than in Canberra because we are further north) and it seems that there are many more bright stars in the southern sky than in the northern. It was a marvelous sight to behold. We are seeing so many of these amazing things that I may hit overload before long. How much beauty can one take? What a privilege, what a gift, what a delight all this is. 9/18

On another night when we were on the beech trying to see the bats, we encountered an older Australian couple who filled in our knowledge a bit.

They are fruit bats that feed off the Eucalyptus flowers and fruits. Apparently, they don't do much harm, but there are so many of them that sometimes they break branches there are so many of them hanging from them. There are supposed to be millions of them that hang in caves during the day and sometimes there are so many of them that come out at night that the sky is black for as much as two hours. 9/19

We hiked in the nearby rainforest up Bectin Hill. We read a good deal. I finished reading Janet Turner Hospital's *The Last Magician* marveling in its profound message, relevant to my research, as well as it being set in the general area in Queensland where we were at that moment. I think I've since reread that book a couple times. I looked for it on my shelves thinking I might read it one more time to see how it informs my present passions but didn't find it. Oddly a few days later while cleaning the garage I opened a box I surely hadn't for many years to find my copy. And as always concerned about getting adequate exercise we discovered beach aerobics.

We went to the beach and I taught Emily an aerobics class. It was really fun to remember the various routines and to teach them to Emily. We found a slightly empty part of the beach, we started and soon got into the routines. People walked by and gave us some funny looks, but once we got started, we kept it up for 50 minutes. It was really fun and a nice way to get sort of a workout. After we finished, we chased each other all over the beach and into the ocean for a quick dip. 9/20

Our last two days in Mission Beach involved finishing up the food we'd acquired for in-home meals. I also packed a large box of books and other items that I no longer needed—like 25 pounds worth—that I mailed back to the US to lighten our load. Mission Beach offered a week-long period of stability that was filled with lots of fun and amazing experiences, some leisure time to think and feel and even experience a bit of relationship challenge, and to work on research. I found myself both settling into the travel a bit more yet paired with intensely missing Corbin and Jenny and questions about my divorce and future life.

Our forward travel involved a return bus ride back to Cairns and a flight to Alice Springs.

Alice Springs and Central Australia, September 21 to 30

The core of my research for *Storytracking* dealt with the exploration and early settlement of Central Australia, the area surrounding Alice Springs. Following the explorers were German Lutheran missionaries who established in the 1880s a station called Hermannsburg, the name of their German home, fifty miles or so west of Alice Springs. The telegraph from South Australia through the central desert to Darwin was an enormous project of the late nineteenth century that connected the European populated area of southeastern Australia with England by way of a complex of telegraph relays across Asia to Europe ending in London. Alice Springs and several other small settlements along the telegraph line were essential repeater stations. The signal was powered to travel only a brief distance and then had to be received and sent again on up the line. These stations became mail and trading stations and a common place for the interaction of Aborigines and European-Australians. Early to the region were also miners and cattlemen and ethnographers.

All these folks were important to my research that basically tracked the stories of each of these groups to show how their values and needs shaped the character of the interaction among all of them resulting in the shape of Central Australia in this important formative period.

My intention was to visit museums but more importantly to experience the landscape especially at historical locations. This does not amount to what ethnographers would call fieldwork or ethnographic research. It is more a technique that I've found remarkably valuable and that is simply standing in the places and imagining the events that shaped history.

The Alice: We arrived yesterday in the midst of a heavy rainstorm. They provided umbrellas for us as we stepped off the stairs on which we deplaned. We laughed and played as we walked to the terminal. It was chilly, very chilly in fact. We have learned that it set a record for the coldest day on record for September in the history of Alice. What a day to arrive. We were both in shorts and tees and we shivered and shook with damp cold. ... found a nice clean but very basic room in "The Lodge" an Anglican hostel. It is en suite which is nice. We immediately began to see how much we wanted to do here in Alice and set about, almost in desperation to figure out how we were going to work it all in. 9/22

The Aborigines in the region, long residents of the land, were a core interest in my research. In a sense this work extended my research and writing on Native Americans. The term "aborigine" is a sensitive one to me, as also the terms like "native." Aborigine in Latin is "of or from the origin," thus designating the first or original people. This term is a projection made by Europeans to preassign specific values to these people based on Western and particularly Christian cosmological schemes. On the visit a year earlier, I did not go to Central Australia, but noticed an odd attitude of white Australians towards Aborigines. They at once vilified them as drunks and barely more than beasts while they also

romanticized them as “original people.” I had noticed that oddly, most white Australians I discussed Aborigines with indicated they rarely encountered them, yet I saw them frequently. My first days in Alice included observations along these concerns.

First impressions of “the Alice”: It is a clean modern lively, rather upscale, town. My impressions have been informed mostly by the early days and by Robyn Davidson’s Tracks which was about 10 years back. The town is lovely and has very little raw about it. Our first evening we scarcely saw an Aborigine. Today we saw but a few. Separation between races seems enormous. All the whites talk about Aborigines, but we saw no mixing at all between races here. A few times we saw groups of Aborigines: usually one or two heavy set bare-footed women in house dresses with several children of many ages, or a group of teen aged boys, or several men (often inebriated). It is a sad affair and Emily and I spent lots of time talking about this situation 9/22.

The telegraph station just north of Alice Springs was the location of an important event in the last years of the nineteenth century. An ethnographer, trained in biology, named W. Baldwin Spencer had become the first biologist in Australia. He established his studies at Melbourne University, where I had visited the prior summer to acquire unpublished documents.

Spencer joined the first scholarly collecting trip to go to Central Australia, called the Horn Expedition. Spencer wrote most of the reports, collected endless biological samples in this totally new area to scientific study. He also took a strong interest in Aborigines seeing them in terms little different from the species of plants and animals he was discovering. While visiting the Alice Springs station he met and struck up an enduring relationship with the station manager, Francis “Frank” Gillen. For years Gillen served the interests of such famous British anthropologists as Edward B. Tylor and Sir James George Frazer. When these scholars needed ethnographic examples to support their academic theories, which became the foundation for much of twentieth century social scientific thought, they telegraphed Spencer in Melbourne who, in turn, telegraphed Gillen in Alice who then consulted the Aborigines who worked and resided near the station. Many of these examples were simply concocted to support the theories.

Gillen called in a favor in 1896 to get a group of Aborigines to perform a major ceremonial just over the hill from the Alice telegraph station. It lasted three months and Spencer came to record, including taking photographs, some parts of it despite persistent heat way above 100 degrees. This recording became the primary material for the co-authored Spencer and Gillen ethnography titled *Native Tribes in Central Australia* (1899). This book in my reckoning became the primary source of specific cultural examples used to establish much of the social scientific theory that shaped twentieth century thought and, some decades later, also religion theory especially that of my early mentor Mircea Eliade. Thus, to stand on the ground where these events occurred was moving and important.

We drove north of town to the old telegraph station. This is the station I have read about for years. It is where Francis Gillen served in the late nineteenth century. It is where Spencer met Gillen. It is where he and Spencer observed the Engwura in 1896. It is where Spencer returned in 1926 for field study. The place is exactly as I have seen it in early 20th century pictures. We paid for a tour. It was more about the building of the telegraph in the 1870s and the building of the several structures. All very interesting. I was moved to be in the place I had read so much about. Took lots of pictures. Bought a couple of books. Walked to the top of Trig Hill and saw the station from there. One thing that moved me most was the huge gum tree that stood between the station master's kitchen building and the barracks. This is a huge gnarly tree that must be 4 feet in diameter. The top has been broken and has left a big scar, but the tree still flourishes. I could see this tree as a small tree in the early photographs. What history this lovely tree has lived through. The barracks, the first building built, was equipped with holes in the wall through which they could shoot guns (in case the Aborigines were not friendly). They had restored the interiors of these buildings and seeing them was a wonderful experience. After climbing Trig Hill, we headed for the cemetery in which some of the very early settlers are buried (all male). Suddenly a large kangaroo stood up and hopped quickly across the field. The fields were in full bloom with flowers, yellow and red and dusty blue. A lovely, lush desert bloom. We also later saw a euro (small kangaroo) and its joey. [Since I've discovered that the term euro is used to designate the Common Wallaroo also known as Hill Kangaroo.] This euro, we learned, had been attacked by dogs (evident by a permanently bent ear) and had been rescued. Through its recovery it had become so friendly that it didn't leave the grounds. We got very close to these two. The joey was so cute (well so was its mother). We were thrilled by this whole experience. One other thing we experienced during the morning that am sure we will experience much more is having flies crawl over our faces all the time. They don't seem to bite, but they do like to crawl into your eyes and other openings. Rather pesky. We have seen fly screens which are these little affairs you put over your head and, I suppose, tuck the elastic band under your collar to keep away the flies. 9/22

The first Lutheran missionaries in Central Australia endured the hardships less than a decade before they abandoned Hermannsburg. Yet soon thereafter came Carl Strehlow and his group of missionaries. He not only endured, but he also did much to build and establish the mission. Almost all the Aborigines that were attracted to the mission were outcasts from their own people or those who during times of long drought found the resources of the mission lifesaving. Theodor "Ted" Strehlow was the first European child born in Central Australia and he learned Arrernte, the local Aboriginal language, as a mother tongue along with German. Carl wrote a multi-volume ethnography, the English translation of which, was the huge manuscript I acquired and copied at the University of Sydney.

Then we went to the Strehlow Research Institute. I have read so much about both the Strehlows. This place has been built by Kathleen, the second wife of Ted Strehlow, in his honor. It is quite an impressive building with huge walls made of compressed dirt (with a bit of cement

to hold it together), the rich red dirt of the Center. It has a very natural and beautiful appearance. The place turned out to be a museum. Architecturally interesting, technically sophisticated, and loaded with superficial crap about Aborigines. The Emu-footed man was represented as were other sky god figures. There was quite a lot about Ted Strehlow (including some about his first wife Bertha), but little about Carl Strehlow. An Aboriginal man, wearing white shirt and tie, told of the dreaming that "passed along" the earthen wall. It was a sophisticated slide show with synthesized music. Didn't make a lot of sense to me, but doubtless whomever created it had some sort of story to tell. Then this man showed us how weapons (and a couple tools) had traditionally been made. This was interesting and informative. Notably, in response to questions asked after this demonstration this man mentioned a number of things about the nature of Aboriginal culture (always in the singular). He indicated that he raised his children in the old way: with much hard discipline. He said every now and then he had his children fast for several days or do without water. He said this taught them appreciation, respect, and discipline. I know from Diane Bell's book that this is likely not at all how Aboriginal parents treat their children and began to realize that likely these were German Lutheran values that, like so many other things (like the theology) have been transformed into a traditional Aboriginal guise. What a wonder it is that this Aboriginal man can speak authoritatively to a group of whites of the ancient (the 40,000-year figure is broadly used) ways of his people, and they buy it, when it is probably as much, no I'd say more, German Lutheran than Aboriginal. We stayed a long time in this museum and found that Mrs. Strehlow was to be there in the afternoon for a board meeting. I considered trying to meet her but figured I didn't have any real business with her. 9/22

We rented a 4 x 4 vehicle for three days so that we could more safely and freely travel about the area. The next morning, we headed to Hermannsburg.

Saw a dingo and an eagle on the way to Hermannsburg this morning. We arose before seven and had a shower and a quick breakfast in our room. Then started out in our 4 x 4 for Hermannsburg. We left Alice behind us in only a few blocks and entered the most beautiful country. I can't begin to describe this country. The road is fairly flat yet rolling. There are no bridges, just markings that indicate the road is sometimes flooded. The ghost gum trees dot the landscape and are in groves in the lower stream bottom areas. They are spectacular features in the landscape. The area is surrounded by low lying mountains, through some rise up fairly steeply, and look rugged, even jagged. The whole area is green and lush, though somewhat sparse (this is a desert), I suppose because it is spring and there has been much recent rain. These mountains have a bluish or red-grey-blue tint to them. They have such a distinct color. After driving along for perhaps an hour we had seen only two cars. As we came up a bit of a rise off in the distance was a dingo crossing the road. We slowed and it stopped just 30 feet off the road and turned around to look at us. We stopped and it remained for a few seconds to give us a look. It started on, turned one last time for another glance at us and trotted off into the bush. It was a lovely yellow and a fat healthy looking animal. A thrill to see him. Then not more than a few kilometers on down the road we saw an eagle in the air; huge wingspan. It alighted in a tree to the side of the road. We stopped alongside it and had another good look. It seemed

to be being pestered by a smaller bird. It arose out of the tree and spiraled into the air all the time being dive-bombed by this smaller bird.

The road turned from two paved lanes to one with a wide shoulder on each side and finally to a wide dirt, but rather rough road. We bounced along until we finally arrived at Hermannsburg. The old mission sight has been maintained, well sort of. We pulled in the gate of the mission compound and straight across was Strehlow's house, the house built for Carl Strehlow when he took his post. The house now serves as a tea house. They sell a few crafts there as well. The lady who worked in the kitchen, a white lady, said she had been there just a few months and that she just traveled from place to place to find work. She said that she liked Hermannsburg and would probably stay a while. The Strehlow house had some interesting early photos and hymn books and testaments in Aranda [Arrernte] and Loritjara languages, the work of the early missionaries. We then looked into a long building that served as residence for a number of young missionaries and their spouses. It had four or so apartments. This building was very rustic and had not been much restored. Next, we went behind the old church in the middle of the compound to a small building. Curiously this building served as a mortuary. It was only 8 x 10 feet or so and had a slab table (body-sized) in it as the only furnishing. The sign informed us that deceased Aborigines would be laid out here prior to burial. There was a cemetery across the road which we didn't look at for reasons of both propriety and because it looked like a well-traveled path for Aborigines in the community.

The tannery once used as a source of commerce and a building that served as a school for the white children (don't recall its earlier function) were examined. Then a schoolhouse for Aboriginal children which had later become a store. Then were the meat house (or place where meat was stored and butchered) and the huge water tank next to it. This tank was built from donated funds and was filled by water piped from a spring some kilometers distant, an important Aranda-Christian site. Then we went to the church at middle of the compound. It seemed very old and had a bell supported in a weird jerry-rigged way in front. We took photos of several buildings. We also saw collection of Albert Namantjira's paintings and those of other Aboriginal artists influenced by his style. A white ground's keeper provided some stories of Albert and other artists. Emily was rather weirded out by them making so much of an Aboriginal being able to paint, as though all Aborigines are by nature uncreative and incapable. I think that many people have thought just such things.

We drove about the residences a little and went across the Finke River to the Resource Center. Diane Austin-Broos had told me to find Ingrid Blanch here. This was a white woman, obviously German, who was an administrative assistant. Yet she clearly knows much about the society and community in the area. She introduced us to Glen Auricht who runs Tjuampa Resource Center and is, though very quietly so, the historical authority on the relationship between Aranda and the mission. He spoke with us a few minutes, talking about how he was learning about Aboriginal traditions and using them as a way to communicate between cultures. He thinks that Spencer and Gillen were seeing only from the white fella's perspective. He thinks the missionaries were better observers and interpreters of Aranda traditions. Of course, Glen is Lutheran. We stood outside this resource center and saw many Aborigines come and go. They

seem an interesting people. But social contact in short time is impossible. I feel sad about this. I'd like to break down the distance that is assumed between whites and blacks. It would be nice to sit and have a chat, but I don't know about what. Even in close physical space, the distance seems so far. Very sad. 9/23

We took advantage of being in that area to explore a bit. Palm Valley which is in Finke River National Park promised much. Until reviewing information for this book I had thought that this valley filled with huge palm trees was the remnant of a seashore that existed from ancient times. It is geologically accurate that this desert was once a sea as well as the location of high mountains. Apparently recent genetic research on these palms found that they are related to palms in a couple areas on the north coast of Australia. It is now believed that more like 15,000 years ago animals or birds carried seeds to this area that was oddly suited to sustain palm trees. The existence of these palms in the central desert is still an event of a remarkably long period, yet but a fraction of what I had erroneously thought.

The other important connection with this side journey was that it travelled along the Finke River that was but a dry bed winding its way across the desert. This is very rough territory even in a 4 x 4 vehicle. It was also the route, a shortcut, taken in the late nineteenth century when Carl Strehlow became so ill that he decided he had to be hauled out of the area to get medical help. He was tied to a chair secured in a wagon bed pulled by a camel, and they trudged across this landscape. From our bumping and banging along a road close to where he was taken, I can't imagine anyone lasting more than a mile or so strapped to a chair in a wagon bed. Carl's son, Theodor, eventually documented that journey in the fascinating book *Journey to Horseshoe Bend*.

We got information from Ingrid about Palm Valley and other areas to drive to and left. The road to Palm Valley is just across from the resource center. It is about 17 kilometers to the valley. We had to use four wheel drive all the way. There is a lot of deep sand and places where one has to clamber over big rocky places. Palm Valley is a remarkable and quite beautiful place. It is distinctive for having a large number of red palms that survived from ancient times when the area was very different. This has been possible because in this gorge water runs through the rocks to either side of the gorge and into the thin soil beneath these trees. It is a wondrous sight: huge palms amidst ghost gum trees. The rains had left lots of pools of water and it was all quite lovely. Well not quite all. The pesky flies were particularly bad when we stopped there. They land on you by the hundreds, and many try to get into your eyes, mouth, nose, and ears. They don't seem to bite, though I was bitten by something, and just have to be waved away frequently. We were going to sit under the palms for a picnic but gave up because of the flies. We drove away with Emily preparing peanut butter crackers. The road to Palm Valley goes through Finke Gorge. On the way to Hermannsburg, we stopped at a monument alongside the road before Hermannsburg. It said that this is where Albert Namintjima was first inspired to paint. The landscape came to focus on a beautiful gorge at some distance. It was dark green

against the dark red stone. Just spectacular. It was this canyon that we were driving through. The trail crossed and recrossed the Finke river several times. I thought of Carl Strehlow's journey down the Finke when he was attempting to save his life. What a trek that must have been. This evening I read a bit of Ted Strehlow's Journey to Horseshoe Bend to remind me of that event. It was wonderful to follow the same route.

We had wanted to go to Boggy Hole and then on down the Finke River to Running Water then over to Tempe Downs. This is the area of the events I am writing about. It is accessible by 4 x 4, but at this point we are learning of the possible dangers of going to areas where few travel. These are stories of bogging down in sand and not being found for days. After hearing about this we have decided not to try this route. Tomorrow we'll go to Ruby Gap which is to the east of Alice. It will be a fine drive and I'm sure we'll enjoy it. I am a bit disappointed, but the risk is not worth it to see the slight ruins of a couple buildings that existed in the early part of the century. 9/23

I had panicked feelings after this day. The richness of this one day revealed to me not only the potential of this area for learning a great deal but also that it would take perhaps months, if not years, to adequately do this work. I think I've felt this way about most everything throughout my life. So much to learn and so much depth and potential to everything I encounter, yet I always feel I don't have the time, or that I have come on the possibility too late, or that I have so many other conflicting obligations and interests to pursue. Kind of a hell of a way to live. I had a few more poignant comments about my growing experience seeing Aborigines, if casually and mostly from afar.

A word about the Aborigines. I feel so sad that I can't make contact. Is this yielding somehow to my own prejudice? Do I assume, falsely, that they don't want to talk to the likes of me? Why isn't there any forum for intercourse? The only place I see any communication going on is in stores and at the Tjuampa Resource Center. The latter is the only actual communication, the other is done rather blindly. It is also interesting that the Aranda maintain something of their cultural ways even in the dire straits of Alice. One sees women and children together (usually more than one woman and more than one kid). One then also sees men together. Other groupings are teen aged boys. I haven't seen groups of teen aged girls. Most are barefoot. One popular attire among the men is a western style business suit. I notice that particularly the older men, and often they are very thin, like these suits. The women seem often overweight. I don't know what to make of this, but I am saddened that there is so little contact. 9/23

Jumping in our 4 x 4 the next morning, September 24th, we headed out once again to explore the territory in the Alice Springs region. Surprising to me was the contrast with what I had expected. Rather than vast flat emptiness, the desert is filled with mountains and dry river and stream beds, stunning geological features of many kinds, and vegetation of so many varieties and colors. Because I was fairly knowledgeable of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century history that was set in this area, so many of the places spoke of highly dramatic stories and colorful characters who seemed still ghostly presences.

Wow! What a day. The area around “the Alice” is proving to be endlessly exciting. We arose early as usual and set off in our 4 × 4 to explore the area to the east of Alice. After heading a few blocks in the wrong direction, we found Ross Highway and we were off. Shortly after getting used to driving on the left side of the road we came to Emily Gap where we stopped, well we just had too, for a picture of Emily at Emily Gap. Gaps seem to be common geological features here. The MacDonnell Range of mountains stretches east to west just south of Alice. These aren’t really huge mountains, but they are impressive. A gap is just that, a gap in this range. It usually is in the form of a narrow passage through the mountain with high rock walls on both sides. Most gaps have pools of water in the bottom and likely the presence of water as well as a rather distinctive way—the gap in the mountain—of identifying it account for them being remarkable and named. Emily Gap is several kilometers west of the next gap called Jesse. We read that these gaps were likely named by the builders of the Overland Telegraph after women they knew, but it isn’t known by whom or when exactly. Interesting.

A few kilometers on east we turned off to a pillar rock formation popularly named Corroboree Rock. It is a towering pillar of rock in which there is a tiny rock window and below it is an area that used to be a cave, a storage place for tjurungas [wooden objects decorated with totem-specific markings]. We hiked up to the cave and took a few pictures. One of these pictures was taken specially to show what spinifex (a wiry prickly and very distinctive desert plant) is. The road soon turned to single lane and about 80 kilometers out we came to the turn off for Arltunga which was another 40 kilometers on dirt road. Now an amazing thing about all this country is how remarkably it changes with nearly every kilometer. The MacDonnell Range is so varied, and the vegetation seems to vary not only in type but also in thickness. Some areas, particularly those along the dry creeks, are dense with the beautiful ghost gums. At least one area we were in had almost no vegetation at all for a long while. The colors of the stone, the colors of the vegetation all change. 9/24

The driving and stopping and exploring around Alice provided ample time for conversation. Sometimes these conversations were, to me, revelatory as in the following one that interwove my need to measure work outcomes, my teaching style as developed over the years, and psychotherapeutic methods as understood by Emily—all along the theme or insight that often our experience of new knowledge as actually something we’ve known all along.

On the road to Arltunga, Emily and I had a most wonderful discussion about “Knowing what you already know.” This was an idea I picked up in Janet Hospital’s novel The Last Magician. The topic came up with me trying to talk about me always having to have measurable results from my experience. This causes me anxiety and I worry that I am not getting enough done. I was suggesting that it is odd that after having experience like just driving along this road, that when students ask questions in class later on that somehow, I draw upon knowledge I have gained without really knowing it. Then I realized that this is a wonderful understanding of the experience of teaching. That is, as a teacher I learn through reading, but also through driving down a road in Central Australia. While I am doing these things, I know that I am learning, thus that I know some things, but actually I am coming to know many

other things that, until someone asks me about it, I don't know that I know. Teaching is then a way in which we come to know what we already know. With great excitement I began to realize several things. This is why I love to teach. This is why I teach the way I teach, that is, using such interactive methods, for it only when students inquire of my knowledge and experience that I come to know what I know. Those who lecture without interaction only know what they know they know. Ha! What a loss for them. I also found myself beginning to relax to let the experience of being in Australia (and this principal extends far beyond this) have its way with me. I may not know now what I have come to know being here, but I may when I teach about it (and certainly when I write etc. which are also methods of coming to know what I already know). I can see all sorts of applications of this. We related this principle to the psychotherapeutic method. That is therapy attempts to allow people to know things about themselves that they don't have the tools to connect so that they can know that they know and, more likely, that they have hidden reasons for keeping themselves from knowing what they know. When a patient comes to know this moment is often experienced with an "Aha!" Isn't that exactly how we respond to the experiencing of coming to know what we already know? 9/24

Arltunga, 110 kilometers east of Alice, was apparently the first small European settlement in Central Australia focused on mining gold. The pursuit of wealth is commonly the motivator for expansion into an unsettled and unknown areas and Central Australia was no exception. Taking hints from early explorers, seekers of wealth were the first to suffer the journey and living conditions of the region. Arltunga was a gold mining operation and there were some remnants of old buildings as well as well as mining equipment. It was the location of an early mission station as well. We had hoped to not only visit Arltunga, but also Ruby Gap, so named because it was the location where early wealth seekers found what they thought were rubies simply scattered about on the surface. It later turned out that these red gemstones were actually less valuable garnets.

On we drove and arrived at Arltunga. This is the first community formed in Central Australia. It began because of the discovery of gold. We stopped at the visitor center and our car was the only one in the lot and though the building was open no one was on duty. We read about the place and for \$1 bought a guide map and drove around looking at the old buildings and mines. This interested us far less than the telegraph station or the mission compound. Neither of us really knows why. Maybe we simply know less about it. We found ourselves covered by flies the instant we stepped from the car. What a misery those flies are. After several short hikes to see these ruins we headed on down the road. We had planned to go on to Ruby Gap, but at the Arltunga visitor center we learned that it was an hour and a half on before entering the gap area and then it was a number of kilometers through the gap. It described deep sand and the chance of becoming bogged in sand. It asked if we had told anyone where we were and suggested that people rarely go through the area this time of year so to be sure to have water enough to last several days in case you have to wait for someone to come by to help. We said, "no thanks" and went in a different direction. 9/24

Another early presence in Central Australia were cattlemen or ranchers. Their presence always seemed odd to me since it takes something like a square mile to support a single cow. That so many came to Central Australia thinking to raise beef cattle for a living says much about several things. One is the vastness of the area since it would take enormous spreads to have a significant number of cattle. The land was given to settlers by the Australian government in huge tracks—something like 900 square miles—to anyone willing to occupy the territory for a minimum period to try to make a living off it. It also suggests something of the rugged individualism of Australians. Even with the seeming folly of thinking one could fatten beef stock in this area, there was the problem of getting the beef to market, hundreds of miles south to the population centers. Herding the cattle greatly reduced their flesh, the beef to be sold, so that by the time they arrived at market there was little more than hide and bones. Still, ranching persists even to the present.

Our objective was the Ross River Homestead which is a still operating cattle station. We drove the 40 kilometers back and found the road to Ross River. Tooling along this road, Emily spotted in the bush on her side of the car a camel. She, particularly, had wanted to see a camel. We had passed a camel ranch (or whatever you call them) just as we left Alice but didn't even see camels there. There are some 15,000 camels roaming wild in the Centre and we had hoped to see some in the wild. We pulled the car to the side, I mounted my telephoto and squeezed off a couple of pictures. Then we began to see there were more camels and decided to risk getting out of the car. We had no idea how frightened they would get. We took a couple more pictures and decided to enter the bush for a closer look. Closer and closer and they seemed to pay us no attention. I was shooting away at one group while standing on a path when Emily pointed out that other camels were coming down the path. I turned to see two large camels just a few yards away coming directly toward me. I shot a couple more pictures then moved over to let them pass. More and more came by. They were different sizes and colors. Suddenly we heard a terrible sort of bellowing in the direction from which the camels were coming, and Emily ran and leaped back in the car. I made some distance but awaited to see if we were going to be charged by an angry male camel. We both have read Robyn Davidson's 'Tracks and know how nasty these old guys can be. But though the camel was large, it simply sauntered by just a few feet from me. I took more pictures (I may have overdone it, but it was so exciting) and decided as this one passed to try to get its attention. I was near the car. I spoke to it. No response. I spoke louder. No response. Finally, I hollered at it and still it just made its way along. We were both just ecstatic about seeing these camels. They had to be wild, there were no markers, no nose plugs, no saddle sores. They were beautiful and very healthy looking. We wondered at how Emily even saw them, much less how remarkable it was that we were passing along there just as they got that close to the road.

When we got to the Homestead, we weren't all that impressed, but it was nice to stop by. They had camels to ride and rooms to rent. We soon drove on, having learned about the beautiful N'Dhala Gorge, a four-wheel drive accessed area. Though we still worried about bogging in

sand we figured we weren't all that far from help and ventured on. It was an 11-kilometer drive through beautiful canyons and through the same stream bed many times (dry and full of sand). We got to the gorge in great shape and learned that there are thousands of Aboriginal pictographs in the gorge. I was excited to see them and again we donned our new Aussie hats and headed on the trail. We walked about a kilometer into the gorge and found several pictographs. These were complex and are supposed to relate to "dreaming" stories. One had a sign identifying the elements with a story. I photographed both the sign and the rock for use in teaching. However, we had to fight these damned flies all the way. Emily took to calling them "Little pieces of shit." And we had a good laugh despite the almost unbearable nuisance they cause. Back in the car we ate our one passion fruit, nectar of the gods, as a reward for braving the four-wheel drive trail and the hiking trail. We wonder at how anyone can learn to endure the flies without going nuts as not only the Aborigines, but so many others, have. We decided that because of the flies the Center will never be developed for mountain biking or hiking, both of which one could do endlessly. We decided that to call someone a fly was an insult with completely new meaning. I tried it out remembering the woman who waited on us in renting our car. I said that if it was a contest between her and these flies, I'd rather take the flies. That seemed insult to the extreme.

Heading out of the canyon we admired the ghost gums so much. When we were nearly out, I looked high atop the canyon and saw one right up on top. It was backed by a dark blue sky, and I thought this would make a fine picture, especially with a telephoto, this stark white tree against the dark blue sky. I pulled over (we had seen only one car all afternoon) to stay out of the traffic and when we got out, we noticed that the moon (half-moon) was visible in the sky near the tree. It took only a few steps to place the moon close to the tree and we both took some photos. What a lovely sight.

We headed back to Alice stopping on the way only at Emily Gap for another photo of Emily by the "Emily Gap" sign with the gap in the background. 9/24

Much of my research had to do with understanding place or territory and the way that the human interrelationship with the land says so much about the character of their religion, which was my focus for understanding their culture and humanity. All I knew of the Aborigines indicated a very distinctive relationship to the land, one of identity. Where one is born has everything to do with identity, even more than one's parents. The landscape is, for Aborigines, not simply space to be owned and occupied, it is story and history understood not as entertainment or record but as the mechanism for access, relationship, and both group and individual identity. I would in time write an article titled "Territory" to communicate my understanding of how this Aboriginal relationship to land is especially distinctive and important in the context of others around the world. These days of driving around the Alice Springs area were essential to me developing an understanding and appreciation.

I can understand much more how Aborigines are connected to the land and why so many refer to this land as magical. It is so grand, so huge, so beautiful. But it is also harsh, rough,

dangerous, threatening. Many poisonous snakes, scorpions, lack of water, heat, and, most of all, size. It must be approached with the utmost respect and it commands nothing short of awe. One knows that there is no way possible to begin to grasp the fullness of what is here. One feels deeply one's infinite smallness in this land. I better understand now the statement that the people belong to the land rather than the other way around. Possessing this land is unthinkable. 9/24

The third day with the 4 x 4 car was devoted to exploring gaps and to visiting Glen Helen, the location of much early history. Traveling the land also gave rise to my frustration and disappointment at not being able to adequately connect with the land, to have the time to connect specific places with their stories.

Today was gap day. We gorged ourselves out. ... This time we went out the Namatjira Highway east (slightly north also I think). There are many gorges, chasms, gaps that cut through the MacDonnell range. We learned that a very long time ago this area was a shallow sea. Many layers of silt deposited on top of one another until the bottom ones were compressed into rock. Then there was a huge uplifting of the land and there arose mountains here 10, 000 meters high, that is higher than present day Himalayas. Over time these eroded to the present height. The tallest are now only 1,500 meters. Apparently as the land lifted to form these mountains streams were running perpendicular to the uplifting ridge and eroded through the ridge cutting these chasms and gaps. First, we stopped at Simpson Gap, then Stanley Chasm, then we drove on out to Glen Helen, the end of our trek and about 135 kilometers from Alice.

At Glen Helen there is a huge gorge. With the recent rains all the pools at the base of these places were full. At Glen Helen Gorge the pool was about 50 yards across and extended quite a way through the gorge. There were sand beaches and lots of cattails and other vegetation. On the way back we stopped at the Ocher pits which are rock formations of yellow and red formed in a wavy pattern and exposed by the erosion of a stream. This is one of the places where Aborigines have collected ocher for thousands of years. Then we stopped at Ellery Creek Gorge. It too was very beautiful. We took pictures at all of these places and wonder now how we will remember which was which gorge. We have taken some notes and yet we also think it will probably be wise to get a notebook to keep a log of our photos since it will be months before we get them developed.

As we left Glen Helen, I felt some sense of disappointment. I suppose much of this had to do with the damn flies. At each of these gorges it would be great to sit a spell and contemplate the timelessness of this country, to just let one's bones absorb something of the spirit of the rocks. But the flies swarm around your head, land on your face several at a time and it doesn't take long to have enough of being outside. What a pity. We did learn that the flies are present year-round, but that some times of the year, like now, they are worse than others. 9/25

Despite the wonderful experience of being in the storied landscape, I was frustrated by the seeming impossibility to have any sorts of encounters with Aborigines. Those ethnographers and others that I knew who had relationships with them managed to establish these relationships over long periods of time. I didn't have that available to me. I am interested in the people and certainly in

what I could discover of their present life. What little I learned in Alice was disturbing.

We saw an Aboriginal woman with her husband, a white man, and their several children. [Mixed race relationships are common and have existed from the earliest days of Europeans being in the area. The earliest residents, still true today, were men seeking their fortune in Central Australia. The only women they encountered were Aborigines. They not only had sexual relationships with them, but often married.] This mixed marriage brought up all sorts of questions for us. When we returned to "the Lodge" Ann was working on the desk and we stopped to pay our bill. Then we began asking her questions about the Aboriginal situation here. She is a rehabilitation worker and has worked much with Aborigines. She feels that the situation is just a very difficult one, with two cultures so greatly different attempting to live together. She sees much violence and despair among Aboriginal peoples. This is nothing remarkable since it is obvious from just looking around. Alcoholism is the greatest cause of suffering and death. Much of the violence is domestic and some even self-inflicted. There is prejudice both ways. Some opportunities are extended only to Aborigines amounting to discrimination against white Australians. Many white Australians are openly prejudiced against Aborigines. Some Aborigines are offensive to whites and even use horrible methods to bait whites to rob and harm them. Thus, whites who even hit an Aborigine while driving a car will not stop for fear that this is a trap. We observe no communication between races except where there are whites who are expressly in the business of social welfare or something. Ann says that no Aborigines work; they all live on social welfare. However, most Aborigines still speak their own languages as well as English. Most still go out country for ritual. Ritual is still widely practiced by most Aborigines even those who live here in the Alice fringes. The schools have both Aboriginal and white children, though some schools have only Aboriginal children. Ann didn't know much about whether the gap of prejudice is closing or not. 9/25

Actual encounters with Aborigines raised only more complicated problems and serious questions as evident in this exchange near Todd Mall.

Many Aboriginal people were around, some on the grass nearby and others, usually in groups, walking around the mall. I noticed quite a few men and women together where I didn't see this a few days ago. Some men were trying to get food from a vendor, and it seemed they were successful. At one point we looked up in response to a frail old man extending his dark black and rather greasy hand to us. I turned away, but he persisted. Finally, Emily shook his hand and I followed. He had a newspaper and was carrying a Sunday paper. He sat down on the grass next to us and began to visit. He asked us a favor, to give him \$1.30 for a cab so he could get home. I asked where he lived. He said a few miles (I'm sure he used the term "miles") out of town. I gave him the change in my pocket (perhaps \$.50) and he seemed disappointed, yet he pocketed the change. He asked us where we were from and when I told him the U. S. he said, "I thought you sounded like that, but that is a big country, where are you from in the U.S.?" We told him Colorado and he showed recognition. Then he asked us about our interest in football. I think the Grand Finals or something are being played this weekend, because TV

sets are on wherever we go tuned to Aussie football. We told him we weren't much interested in football. He asked then about baseball. Then he left.

We felt rather strange after this meeting. This man, though dressed in rags and obviously living a traditional camp-based life, was educated and interested in engaging us in conversation more than to just get money from us. Still there are many Aborigines here who are openly offensive to others. It is a bit fearful to see them coming towards us. We want to be open and to get to know them, but there seems no arena for exchange. Then too it is impossible to tell from appearances which are approachable, and which are not. This is a sickening dilemma. One response functions from white guilt and fear. Another from curiosity. Another from genuine human interest and concern. When responding from white guilt, you feel a mixture of being manipulated by others who know they can play on your guilt or of manipulating yourself by feeling that while you are trying to be open and benevolent you are also trying to say, "I'm not like all those other insensitive whites, yet doubtless we are." This is very sad, and I don't really know much what else to do. Just wish I had access to some people who are working with Aborigines so that I could go with them and be in more contact with actual humans. 9/26

Perhaps the most well-known feature in Central Australia is Ayers Rock now more commonly referred to by its local Aboriginal name Uluru. It is a massive rock feature jutting out of the ground, mostly flat for miles around. It is 450 kilometers (280 miles) from Alice. We rented a car, so we'd have the pleasure of experiencing the desert. Since unexpectedly, for us anyway, it had rained as we arrived and it continued to do so, we had the remarkable opportunity to see the desert in full bloom.

As a tourist destination there is a little village called Yulara at Uluru with accommodations. At the time of our visit Uluru could be climbed by tourists. There were only limited areas set aside as protected for exclusive Aboriginal use. Since then, I think there has been a move not only to call the rock by its Aboriginal name, but also to offer greater protection for Aboriginal use. I also heard that it is no longer permitted to climb the rock.

The night chill has fallen over the desert at Yulara and a slight mist falls. We've had our dinner, vegetarian something or other, but with some good salads and bread. Thunder is powerful and the rain may soon be splashing over the desert. We had rain off and on as we drove here from Alice this morning. The desert was awesomely beautiful today. Kilometer after kilometer of beauty. Flowers, trees, the great red earth. Four hundred forty kilometers and we saw but 3 or 4 gas stops. We stopped at one. There was one pump. There was an outbuilding that looked pretty bad that was for showers and toilets. They distinguished gender as "Sheela's" and "Blokes." An Aboriginal man standing nearby had about 1,000 flies on his back and, if I could have seen mine, I might have contested him. There was a lock on the gas pump. A boy, maybe about 10, came out with the key and in an Aussie accent so thick I could barely understand him, he asked if I wanted to fill the tank. There was no slab only a thick mire of dark red mud. What a huge country. Vastness and beauty. Incredible raw beauty.

The lightning is quite sharp, and I am feeling rather chilly. I may have to run for my Gore-Tex jacket. As we approached this afternoon (we ate peanut butter sandwiches in the car as we drove along), we stopped to take photos of the yellow carpet of flowers and the stunning green chandelier trees against the richly red earth. Then we saw it, Uluru or Ayers Rock. It was at a great distance. The sun shone upon it and the craggy character of its northeastern face shown, being cast in shadow. The Rock, as it is affectionately called by most here, could be seen through the trees in the distance. What a sight! We took many pictures here. It is now raining hard, and I am freezing. Too late to go for my jacket without getting soaked. We're sitting beside the pool at the Outback Pioneer Lodge where we have separate beds in dorms--all we could get. So surprising to experience so much rain and chill in the desert. We went straight to Uluru when we arrived here stopping along the road several times to look and to take pictures. We drove right up to the base and saw people climbing it. There is a chain to help pull yourself along. At least until you get up the steepest part. We chugged some water, ate some crackers (that is crispbreads), and headed out. Emily froze, of fright, before we even got to the chain. After waiting a bit to see if she was going to overcome her fear, she decided to stay put and I went on. Once up the steep side it was a lovely walk a kilometer or so to the highest point on the rock. What fun. Exciting views and lots of people up there. I knew Emily would have to come sooner or later and I thought I might see her coming up as I was going down. Sure enough about 1/3 the way down the steep part she was coming along. There was fear in her eyes, but a strong sense of determination. I turned around and went back to the top with her. It was much more fun doing this together and by the time we got back down she was completely over her fear.

After we got down, we ate a banana and grabbed a bottle of water and started the 10 kilometer walk around the base of this rock. This is one huge single rock. The walk took us 2 1/2 or 3 hours, though we weren't keeping track of time. It was a great experience to me to circumambulate The Rock—we went clockwise—which seemed to me as much like a ritual honoring the rock and a humbling of myself as anything I have ever done. It was good to go sunwise for it took us first to the west of the rock and the afternoon light was marvelous. Many sights. We also saw 4 small (youngin's) frog-mouthed owls in a tree. Some of the area near the rock is protected for exclusive Aboriginal use. We did see some Aboriginal rock art paintings. They were the superimposition of many layers of designs. When we got back to the car, we noticed the moon rise showing above The Rock as it was growing twilight. We started the 10 kilometers to Yulara (the resort village) to find our lodging. On the way we found dozens of cars in an area designated for watching the rock before and after sunset. We stopped and took in the sight. Uluru turns sort of bluish after sunset as twilight sets in. The moon now high in the sky accented this stone marvel. We saw every kind of person out there. Even one couple being served champagne from the hood of their white stretch limousine. 9/28

Our second day in the area was directed toward visiting a second amazing rock formation, 40 kilometers from Uluru, that pops out of the flat landscape called the Olgas, or now, Yara Tjuku, its Aboriginal name. Then seeing Uluru from a well-chosen location during the morning and evening golden hour is an

effort made by most who visit. Large groups of tourists gather at these spots to take photos and ooh and aah at the beauty of the rock at this time of day.

Another magical day. What I am learning out here in this desert is that one must be attentive, patient, and appreciative. If one is, the desert yields its beauty, its power—just a wee little bit and, when it does, we gasp with the sheer presence of it, honored that it gave us a peep.

The day started almost before I went to bed last night. I found my bed, # 60, took a shower and spread my sheet and blanket. Many had retired already. It was quiet. That is, except for some guy whom I now refer to affectionately as Mr. Snore. This guy shook the walls. As I crawled into bed, I wondered whether I'd be able to sleep at all, but amazingly I fell right to sleep. But I awoke about 12:30 a.m. hoping it was almost time to get up. Mr. Snore was still at it. In my mind I could see his blankets and sheet rise with every roar, as in the cartoons. Once during the night, he got up, I suppose to pee. I was grateful hoping I could get to sleep before he returned and started snoring again. But no such luck. I had to deal with this horror all night.

We arose and met at the car at 5:45. Emily had had a much nicer night than I. We drove to Uluru for sunrise. Busloads of people, many Japanese, were out there lining the road. Many were being served breakfast from tables set out in front of these tour buses. Some were given little folding stools. Tough work watching the sun rise. It was rather cloudy, so we saw nothing special (except this gorgeous rock of course). We came back, had a peanut butter toast for breakfast and headed for the Olgas (Yara Tjuku). The sun shone beautifully on these rocks creating a spectacular sight. We stopped for pictures several times. Everything changes here with each succeeding moment and there is the feeling that each moment tops the last. We arrived at the Olgas about 9 a.m. and set out on the trail through the Valley of the Winds. This is a circuit walk that goes round one huge rock formation and in between two of them. Spectacular. We took about a couple hours on this great hike. After some lunch we went on another hike (there are only 2 at the Olgas). This one goes between the two tallest rocks to the point where they almost meet, Olga Gorge. The rock at the Olgas is composite made up of thousands, rather zillions, of round stones all glued together with other rock material. Ayers is one huge seamless rock. They are actually two totally different layers of stone. The difference is apparent. The Olgas are wonderful, but Uluru seems somehow more magical to me and especially after sunset, as I'll explain. We drove back to Yulara marveling at the flowers, trees, rocks, the red earth. Then, just ahead of us, trotted a dingo. This guy looked like a wreck, very unlike the beautiful creature we saw near Hermannsburg. This dog was mangy looking and scruffy. He crossed the road in front of us. We stopped and backed up. He turned back and crossed the road in front of us again, went to the roadside turned and just looked at us. We got his picture at this point. Wonderful experience. ...

Well before sunset we went out to see the sun set on the rock. It looked like it would be great, but a few clouds along the horizon blocked the sun. We watched a few minutes then started to leave. Just as we backed out, we saw a spectacular little rainbow color patch hanging in the sky to the north of the Rock. We leapt out of the car and photographed it. Another gift. We watched it until it disappeared. In a state of awe, we started once again to leave. Just as we

got past the area where you can best see the full rock (top to bottom) I noticed that the sun was peeking out from under the clouds on the horizon and I said, "Bet we messed up, we should have stayed." Emily said, "Let's go back. I Whipped the car about, and we raced the several kilometers back and flipped off the road at the first good place, jumped out of the car. The Rock was totally transformed; remarkably amazing. It had become a deep deep red in color. A remarkable sight. We took photos, but we were speechless. No words can describe this. No photos can capture it. But I'll always remember this as a precious gift and a magical moment. Once again, now almost reluctantly, we started back. Yet again, now the Olgas 40 kilometers to the west, were silhouetted by the setting sun. Huge boulders black against the setting sun. Too much for words. 9/29

The sheer majesty and overwhelm of this country inspired some reflection. Reading this now almost 30 years later I'm stunned that the sentiments I attempted to express then remain foremost in my current life attitude and my academic and not so academic research and writing. I'm at once gratified that I was feeling and thinking the same things so long ago and also I'm a bit shocked that they still seem fresh and new today with a sense of the continuing great potential for me to deepen and to better communicate my increasing understanding.

I have very deep feelings, but they are almost a lightening of my spirit--a kind of transcendence. It is just such a gift to be alive and to be a sentient being capable of reflection and self-awareness—to know that I know, to know that I feel. It helps me see that no matter how badly I screw up, how badly I fail, to Uluru it ain't shit. helps me lighten up when I think of how much I have to do, how little time I have. Really all the time I have is just now. Even Uluru and the Olgas change every moment. It makes me thrilled and remarkably thankful that in all the thousands of generations of human beings, it is only in my lifetime (and a bit longer) that anyone can visit so many diverse places all over the world. This means that I am of a culture that is a completely new kind of being. As I sit here writing, to my right are two young women speaking happily in Japanese and on my left are two young men speaking earnestly in German. What a world this is, and I am not only part of it, I also make my living appreciating its diversity of peoples. 9/29

And such reflections morphed into somewhat melancholy thoughts on family.

I have been thinking lots of family--this is where I tend to be melancholy--wishing they could share these experiences. My parents I think of often--wishing they had traveled more, had more confidence in themselves. Their lives could have been so much richer, but perhaps they were just being themselves; were living faithfully their storytrack. I think of Jenny and also of Judy, thinking they would both have enjoyed this country. Sometimes when I take photos of flowers, I think of how much Judy loves these things. These thoughts make me very sad. It is too bad we were not good for each other—it is too bad her life will be robbed of the opportunity for these experiences. But then I well remember that when we tried to have them together doing so mostly soured it for both of us. Quite sad. I feel this loss. Actually, quite deeply. 9/29

Sitting on a wall at Yulara in the morning where I could watch the play of light on the moods of Uluru I wrote extensively and as honestly as I could muster about my ongoing relationship with Emily and my leaving Judy. Despite my experience approaching ecstasy by being in this place and having rich experiences at every turn, despite the general easiness and happiness and congeniality of my relationship with Emily, I also felt misgivings about what I had done to leave Judy and about what might be the future of my relationship with Emily. Mustering all possible openness and honesty, I found myself confused and questioning most everything, yet also considering that this was more than appropriate.

Two other things to note at this point. We were traveling on a very limited budget. Almost every day I wrote about how we stood financially. It stuns me, now looking back so many years ago, that finances have had to be at the forefront of my life at almost every moment.

The other thing that the present offers perspective is my frequent reference to photos I took at various locations. A few years after this trip I had enlargements of some of my favorite photos professionally framed. Many are on the walls of my home today. A couple of my favorites were of Uluru. However, my study and experience with photography, even photo philosophy, in recent years makes me long to once again be at those locations. With my present photo equipment and knowledge, I could now make some spectacular pictures. I am also encouraged to soon dig out the slides that I took and to carefully review them. I know that most are faded to the point of being useless, but they should be interesting still.

Darwin, September 30 – October 6

We flew from Uluru back to Alice Springs where we sorted our stuff to select as much as possible to mail back to the USA, 14 kilos, allowing us to be better prepared to move about in Bali. We left Alice the next day and flew to Darwin, our last stop in Australia.

Our first night was spent in a dirty disgusting transit center room, but then we booked a nice sort of home stay for the next two nights that made up for it. We took in a matinee kids' live performance called "Circus Oz" and went to see a Mel Gibson movie to avoid the dirty digs. Wish we would have planned enough to have included a day trip to Kakadu to see the wilderness, but we hadn't.

Several times we observed sad encounters with Aborigines even ones that included our chatting with one or another for a few minutes. Truly a concerning situation about which I couldn't help but feel doubly bad since these folks are in the lineage of those displaced and disturbed by so many European factions that I was studying.

We rented bikes and road to the coast to see the sunset and explored Darwin in the most general way.

Anticipating an October 4th departure, the 3rd was spent with Emily and I engaged in discussion of many of the things we had experienced, making lists of most valued and important experiences and places, and beginning to imagine how it would be in Bali and Indonesia. I had the occasion to write extensively in self-assessment evaluating the sorts of personal changes that I felt I was achieving. I wrote about my changing feelings about home and travel and my abiding longing to be more in touch with Jenny and Corbin. Travel should be a time of challenge that initiates change and I found it essential to take the time to soberly reflect on the process.

After two nice nights in Darwin, we headed to the airport to fly to Denpasar, only to learn that the flight was scheduled for two days later. It clearly was printed as we read it on the ticket, but Garuda Airline said they had not flown to Bali on this day of the week for months. We were able to extend our booking where we had been and returned there for what turned out to be two days of leisure including a great deal of personal writing on my part. Reading all of that now it seems a bit self-indulgent, yet it was clearly part of my effort to reflect on and find some clarity to the many transitioning factors in my life at the time. I engaged Sartre mostly by means of a book on gestalt psychotherapy that Emily's teacher and my former therapist, Betty Canon, had written.

From my present vantage I regret that I didn't use at least some of that time to further explore Darwin and the region.

Bali

Ubud, October 6 – November 6

Returning to the Darwin airport on Wednesday the Garuda flight to Bali was indeed happening. We learned that Bali, particularly Kuta Beach, which is near the airport, is a popular destination for Australian tourists. Kuta Beach, a world-famous black sand beach with a vast support system of inns, hotels, hostels, clubs, bars, and endless shopping, is the destination of tourists the world over, especially crazy young people looking for a wild good time. There were a whole bunch of crude loud, likely drunk, wild young men on the flight. They were roaring away the entire flight. When we deplaned, an Australian woman told me she was sorry for the terrible misbehavior of her countrymen.

A student of mine, Steve Sinclair, who had spent time in Bali had given me some suggestions about accommodations and contacts to make in Bali and which we decided to take. Rather than spend any time at Kuta Beach with the Aussie rowdies, we wanted a Balinese cultural experience and had learned that a good-sized village called Ubud in south central Bali was a cultural tourism center. This,

we hoped would be at least a starting point for what we expected to be an extensive Balinese experience. Our best guess on local transportation was to hire a taxi which we did and asked for a particular location near Ubud. Later, we'd know this to be a village called Penestanan.

Coconut palms sway in the breeze beyond the rich green rice paddies that border the little lawn of our bungalow. This morning we wandered the market and watched as women bargain with each other over fish, fowl, and vegetable. The smells were pungent and sometimes overpowering, rich in every respect, some inviting, others repulsive. The sounds are constant yet not loud, cocks crowing, the wind in the trees, an occasional moo from a cow, and an almost constant beep beep of auto or motorcycle horns.

Following Steve Sinclair's directions [Steve was a student of mine who had spent time in Bali and had given me his recommendations], yesterday we came to Ubud and looked for Londo's bungalows. The trip here was exciting and adventuresome. We paid 34,000 rupiah (less than \$17) for a cab from the airport. I know better prices can be found but it took about an hour and a half. What an introduction to Asia that ride was. Village after village was transited, all run together, of course, in one huge metropolitan mass. All streets are narrow with barely enough room for two small cars, but these streets are negotiated by a tremendous volume of cars, trucks, bicycles, scooters, motorcycles, push carts, and pedestrians. The driving is on the left, but that seems to be a thing one pays attention to only occasionally. Lots of the motorcyclists and scooter riders wear helmets, but none of the bikers. Women often ride on the backs of motorbikes side saddle when they wear skirts. Though every driver is constantly beeping, it seems not to be a signal that causes offense. More like a friendly warning to keep out of the way. Our cab driver suggested a stop as we went through Mas, a village specializing in wood carving. Seems each village along this route specializes in one or another craft. Mas specializes in wood carving. The driver stopped at a place where wood is carved and we got out, received an introduction to woods and carving styles and were shown through the merchandise. Hundreds of beautifully carved pieces. We asked the price on some, but not yet ready to bargain and certainly not ready to add to our luggage, we simply moved on.

Though our driver seemed to take us all over the place and couldn't quite grasp where we wanted to go, we continued. As we approached Ubud, we began to see that people along the road would sometimes see us in the car and call out to see if we weren't interested in something they had for sale. Rooms, crafts, whatever. Eventually I began to see that we were very close to where we should be according to Steve's map and fearing I would never get the driver to really leave us where we wanted to be, I said that he could let us out. As the cab disappeared and we began to collect ourselves, a woman was getting out of the car just to the side of the road. I asked her directions and it turned out that the stairs we were supposed to climb were just in front of her car. Up this huge set of stairs we trudged, and at the top saw a small little sign, almost faded beyond legibility pointing to "Londo's". The direction pointed was along a muddy path with a ditch on one side and a shrub on another. In a few meters we found some men and called out "Londo?" They pointed us on. We soon found a man in white shorts and shirt who was Londo and he began to help us think through accommodations. In less than 15 minutes we

were snug in a bungalow. This one is nice; we will move to a nicer one in a couple of days. We are paying 20,000 rupiah (our budget was set at 16,000, but perhaps we can make this up later, though we're talking here less than \$2).

Londo introduced us to his niece, perhaps 18, who soon came with tea and bananas as a treat for us. Delicious. The bungalow has a large open room on the front that has a tile floor and no walls. This is sort of equivalent to a living room. It has bamboo furnishings, a divan, a chair, a table, and a chaise lounge. Very nice, very clean. It is a step up to this room and one takes one's shoes off before stepping up in it. Inside is immediately the bedroom equipped with two beds, at least one of which isn't very comfortable. The back room is the bath. There is a flush toilet, which is more than I expected, a square tub (about 3 feet square) for bathing, and a shower on the wall by the toilet. There is no shower enclosure. One just stands in the middle of the bathroom and showers away. Showering feels great, though the water is but one temperature, yet it isn't long before I feel hot and sticky again. Just the nature of the place, I think. The roof has bamboo supports and is thatched. This is the most common roof and looks beautiful and I am sure must be excellent. The craftsmanship on everything here is quite amazing. So many people seen working, but the work seems so small scale. Two men might be doing a little concrete work on some tiles. They have only a basket, a trowel, etc. It seems that most things are done by hand with infinite patience, great skill, and taking however much time it takes. These roofs are evidence of that as are the walls and ceiling which are woven panels. Seems that everything can be made of local materials: banana leaves, bamboo, and whatever grasses or leaves are around.

Every morning, at all the homes, shops, everywhere, offerings are made and placed. These are usually little shallow boxes (peti) made of banana leaves. These trays are about 3 or 4 inches square and a half inch deep. In these are placed flowers, leaves, rice, etc. and placed on a post, in a doorway, on a shelf, anywhere—often with a stick of incense burning across the top. Other offerings are made of flowers perhaps three tied to a bamboo shoot and stuck upright into an offering basket. Lining the streets at about the interval of streetlights are huge bamboo poles that are decorated with woven leaves. These poles arch up over at the top and hanging from the tips by strings are whirling gizmos, all quite beautiful. Usually at the base of these poles is a little niche made of these same materials into which offerings are placed. All these offerings, to my present knowledge, are for the purpose of propitiating the bad or malevolent spiritual forces. This is taken very seriously by everyone because these offerings are done by everyone. Dogs roam the streets and help themselves to the edible portions of the offerings.

Temples are everywhere. One huge one is in Ubud and there are dances there rather often. We'll probably go to one this evening. Cost to see the performance is 5,000 rp. (\$2.50). The temples are Bali-Hindu. To go in them one must be properly dressed. We, of course, didn't come with proper dress, but we went this morning to rectify that. The shops were just opening. At one shop a woman rushed out to drag us in her shop. She was a powerful saleswoman. We left with two saris (both men and women wear them to the temples), a long-sleeved blouse for Emily (also required), and sashes for both of us. I learned how to tie my sari (I think) in the men's style. We also got a little experience bargaining. These things cost us 30,000 rp. (\$15). Later Em

bought a dress there for 25,000 rp. Perhaps we got ripped off, but we had fun bargaining and the lady was irresistible, and it seems that the prices are still very good (we still remember Bali Boutique in Boulder). Anyway, we are ready for entering temples.

When we got back to our bungalow around noon, a young man came with forms for us to fill out (registration I guess) and told us that we had missed breakfast. We had a horrible time finding something to eat in Ubud this morning, so we were pleasantly surprised. We had more or less given lunch up for a good dinner this evening, as we had last evening. This young man told us he would still fix us breakfast and he did. It was delicious fruit plate with an egg toasted inside of bread. Seemed like one of those electric sandwich makers like Jenny has. Anyway, it was delicious and provided us with a fine lunch.

Last night we began our first efforts at making sure our water is safe. We have an iodine treatment process we are using. The water this morning tastes a bit like iodine, but it isn't too bad, and it should keep us from getting sick. Last night we ate chicken satay. Good meal.

During our trip through Ubud this morning, I think I went into sensory overload, so many people, things to see, choices to make, vehicles to dodge, I just felt overwhelmed. Finally, we stopped in a cafe and had some granola and yogurt and I got hold of myself a bit. This culture is remarkable, and I just can't quite make my senses and brain and feelings work fast enough to take it in. I told Emily that being from Kansas I have little experience in all this sensual richness and that all my training is to make a great deal of a few small things. This just blows my circuits.. 10/6

This first long Bali journal entry recounts the many things we immediately did and experienced. It also began to comment on and assess feelings and observations about the Balinese experience. This was my first of three trips to Bali. I was concerned that Ubud was too focused on tourists for me to have anything like the sort of unpackaged experience of Balinese culture, especially its dancing and music. On later trips taken with my Balinese friend I Made Lasmawan, we stayed at his village in central Bali and went to many temple festivals and cultural events in that locale yet Made brought me and others to Ubud for these same dances. Given my later growing interest in religion and the senses it is noted that I experienced sensory overload, especially in the early impressions, in this culture which is sensory drenched in its every aspect.

One remarkable thing that I have forgotten to mention is that I have felt like speaking only in hushed tones since I have arrived here. Somehow, the place demands it. Emily has done the same yet neither of us has mentioned this to the other. It seems a place where one must be still and quiet in oneself.

Learned that Walter Spies lived in a house near the suspension bridge below our bungalow. It was Spies--along with Jane Belo, Margaret Mead, and Gregory Bateson--who set the world on end with their reports from Bali in the 1930s. I am sure they would die (of course, they are already dead) if they saw this area now, but still not all that many people come here and see these things.

Most here speak at least some English. Though I want to learn Malay, the people here speak enough English that my attempts to use a few words that I know are seen humorous. Still, I'd like to continue with the language study and see what happens. It is sometimes difficult here to know what is fair and who is friendly. We heard many reports in Australia about people in Bali knowing how to rip people off. Perhaps we are paying too much for some things, but it is difficult to know what is fair. For example, we saw a woman this morning making quilts of batik. They were huge and clearly took a great many hours to make. She began her pricing at 50,000 rp. (\$25) saying that she needed the money badly and had to give us a great price. She came down to 45,000 and said that if we bought two, she'd come down more. They were beautiful, though we didn't know anything of the quality. Finally, we went away, though Emily wanted to buy one or two. At the store next to hers a woman came out and showed us her quilts. These were bigger (like for king bed) and she eagerly told us of the high quality of the batik and that her pieces were much lower (which they were) and when asked her price she started at 50,000 rp. It is so difficult to know, but maybe when one can buy a quilt the size of a king bed for \$20 it doesn't much matter. They were lovely. We are trying to be patient however (not altogether successfully), because we have 2 months in Indonesia and this is surely the most expensive and tourist-oriented place in Indonesia (except for Kuta Beach, where the Indonesians must have a field day with the Aussies).

It is quite warm here. It isn't unbearably hot, but the sun burns down, and the humidity is high. I feel sweaty and sticky most of the time. It did cool off at night, but my sleep was still a bit fitful, because of being uncomfortable. Think we'll rest for a while this afternoon then go back to Ubud, find a place to eat and arrange to see a dance this evening. Though I know these dances are for tourists and that the tourists take flash pictures and videotape them, I am prepared to see them even in this commercial form.

After figuring out the shower and bathing arrangements and resting a bit, we departed for Ubud. 10/6

Anyone visiting Bali for even the shortest time will observe the almost constant ritual activities that occur seemingly everywhere. Ubiquitous are the daily offerings made in Balinese homes. These require the women hand making many little offering trays and then the careful patient process of making the offerings at shrines in the house and home compound. The following is a fairly careful if also naïve description of one of the first of these offering rituals I observed.

Auspicious day as it seems so many are, but I best go back to finish up yesterday.

In the evening we returned to the Ubud Palace, built by the King of Ubud in the 16th century, and the location for the dances. We ate dinner at Ibu Putu's (means Mother Putu's) which is a little house at the top of the stairs down the way from us. I had Gado Gado, which was a vegetable and peanut sauce dish with what I have now learned includes crickets. Hmm. I liked those crunchy things, not knowing what they were. The food was delicious and cost us 4,000 rupiah (less than \$2). But the more interesting thing is that a young woman (probably in her 30s) was doing her daily round of offerings in the house compound next to the little porch

nook that served as the restaurant. She began with a tray of dozens of little offerings. Each contained flowers, rice, and leaves. She began by pouring a small jar of holy water from the large jar that rested beside the main family altar in the corner of the courtyard. Then she lighted a huge bundle of incense sticks. Prior to this I saw her go from altar to altars all around the house removing the previous offerings. So far as I know these are simply discarded for one sees them everywhere. She began with the main altar. It is the highest and located at the most keelod (mountainward) place on the property. It is also the highest altar on the property. She stepped up on something to reach it and placed several of the tray offerings on this altar and placed several sticks of incense sticking out from the edge. Then with some small green leaves held between the fingers of her first two fingers of her right hand she sprinkled holy water toward the altar shrine. She was composed in a respectful and devotional decorum, but she was not praying. She did this water sprinkling three times. Then she went to another shrine and made another offering. In the midst of this she did not fail to do other things like deliver our food to us and visit with her daughter and mother. At one point she went downstairs to the side of the courtyard and as in the courtyard carried the tray of offerings on her head (a most amazing thing in itself that seems to be the way Balinese women carry everything). The whole offering process took half an hour or so and doubtless she had spent a very long time preparing the several dozen offerings. 10/8

One of the central interests I had in visiting Bali was to begin to learn something of Balinese dancing and music. I didn't have time to learn more than the most superficial things about Bali before arriving. I knew that the ritual arts were supposed to be spectacular, and my first actual experiences didn't disappoint as is evident in my first descriptive writings.

After eating we walked to Ubud Palace and saw the Gabor dance. This was preceded by solo dances. I just cannot even begin to describe these dances. The costuming was gorgeous. The gamelan music was magical. The dances spectacular. These are dances done for tourists and are shortened in form, but they are very powerful and clearly done with great skill and talent. I like the women's dancing best because it seems to me to require more skill and has a great deal more movement. Much is done with body attitude and with arms, hands, and especially fingers. The head and eyes play large part as well. It is remarkable how widely they can open their eyes and seemingly never blink. The gamelan is certainly magical: about 20 men hammering away at 8 or 10 different instruments making the most remarkable sounding music. Nothing even close to it anywhere in the world that I know. Tonight, we returned, though we got a bit mixed up on time and were late. It was the Barong. Tomorrow night is the Legong which I am especially looking forward to. 10/8

A fact of life in Bali is that everyone has something to sell, but the terms of this exchange are impossible to determine with any precision. From our first days, almost every Balinese person we encountered was eager to engage us showing us their wares. Many claim to make their goods—jewelry, weaving, carving, services—and seem to relish the bargaining process. Many will describe their prices as “good morning price” which seems to indicate that their first sale

is auspicious and that better to take a low price than to not make a sale. Of course, “good morning prices” are available any time of the day. Comparative shopping often reveals drastic differences. I had some notion that there had to be a cost that would be the base for all bargaining, but the more experience I got the less confidence I had that these transactions were based on any information that would constitute a cost. In just a brief time the following describes the stream of vendors that found us in our house.

We had planned to hang out this morning and read some of the books we have bought on Bali and to walk to Penestanan a village close by and on to the river. We had a lovely breakfast of fresh fruit and a banana wrapped in thin sweet pancakes. Very yummy. We had hardly finished breakfast when we were visited by a young Balinese woman named Budi Komang who knows the man we are renting our house from. She does beadwork and silverwork. She wanted to show us. We accepted her offer and she laid her beadwork out and then the silver. Both were lovely and we visited and looked for a long time. Emily wound up buying a bracelet, two rings, and earrings (for \$45) and I bought 2 rings for Jenny (\$9 I think). They are very nice with silver and Balinese Gold. While she was showing us an older woman (I couldn't guess her age, but I'd imagine well in her sixties, maybe much older) showed up. She is a teacher of Legong. She didn't speak much English, but she wanted to teach Emily Legong. Being interested in dance I encouraged Emily to do this, and we arranged for her to return at noon. 10,000 rp. an hour lesson. Before she got back, we heard from Nyoman Santea, the cousin of Budi, who also was a silversmith and rented cars etc. Emily almost bought from him too, the last minute resisted. This is very hard, because you want to help these people and you know that in the US these same items would be worth so much more. The dance lady, Sang Ayo (Sang Ayo Betut Moklen), returned and I took a few photos of her teaching Emily. I wished she spoke more English so that I could have asked her much more about Balinese Dance. 10/8

While rice and vegetable farming and small animal husbandry is an ancient fundamental to the Bali economy, in the modern era when the island has been flooded with tourists, many Balinese have supplemented their traditional work with various ways to engage tourists to their benefit. It has become a way of life. For those who simply want to sell items to tourists they need only a little knowledge of English and perhaps also French and German. For those who wish to engage in personal services of various sorts, then a more extensive knowledge of English and other languages is essential. Since many Europeans know English, it is dominant.

Among the most common types of service is guiding tourists to various places including providing transportation. The roads are difficult to understand in part because due to the smallness of the island and the patterns of erosion, deep valleys occur running from mountain to sea regularly around the island. Thus, once in the mountains, often the only way to get to another location just a short distance around the island at the same elevation requires going back to

the coast where it flattens out. There are villages and sights to see densely strewn all over the island.

My student Steve Sinclair had told me about all this and suggested that we find a driver and guide. He gave me the name of a young man he knew and where I might find him. What I didn't know due to my travelers' naivete is how complicated such relationships can be.

As we found Londo, from whom we rented a bungalow, exactly where we were told he'd be, I located the guide the same way. This so often happened and suggests something, yet I'm not quite sure what. While Emily took a nap, I went out to see if I could start what I thought might be a complicated process of finding this recommended young man.

I told Em that while she rested, I was going to walk over there and at least see if they could help me figure out the addresses. I was beginning to think that we need to get on to figure out more what we are doing here. I walked down the path to the road and on down that to this travel place. I walked in and asked them if they could help me. There were two guys there. They knew immediately of Mambal (Nama's village) and noticed the name at the top of the note. They asked me if I was looking for that man. I said yes. Then one of these guys seemed to look away. I couldn't figure out what he was up to. I tried showing the address to the man remaining who was paying attention. I noticed that the other one was asking another person to come in to help. I thought maybe it was someone who knew the area better or knows English better. When he came in, they said to me, "This is Nama." I said, "You are Nama?" He looked at me quizzically. "Are you the Nama that knows Steve Sinclair?" His face lighted up and said, "Oh yes. Steve is like a brother to me." I told him that we were here, and he immediately asked where we were staying and said he'd go back to my house with me, and we'd talk about what we wanted to do. He immediately said, "Now that you have me you have no worries. I'll take you anywhere you want to go and tell you about anything you are interested in." We talked for quite a while and even when I asked him what he would charge, he said it is up to us. Steve had told me that he refused to take anything from him. We'll benefit so much. We'll rent a car (\$15 a day) and he'll drive and take us anywhere. He is a very nice man and full of good will.
10/8

The next day Nama took charge which at first seemed perfect. Finally, we didn't have to struggle to locate points of interest and we didn't have to depend on a guidebook to tell us what we were seeing or experiencing. We didn't have to depend on hand gestures and a few words of English to communicate with Balinese. It started out seeming to be a dream.

The next morning Nama showed up to guide us and help us. We'd arranged with Londo to rent a different house. I really don't remember why we did that because it was large enough to house a huge family. Nama helped us move and then we were off to experience a day in Bali.

A major revelation in the early days was just how ritual-soaked is Bali culture. Ritual preparation and performance everywhere all the time and it always

involves the most elaborate and abundant appearances. Large groups of women, men, and kids work for days, even weeks, making ritual offerings and decorations. These appear often as huge piles and stacks of items in a pavilion with seeming no one ever examining them for their obvious high and delicate craftsmanship and sheer beauty often so delicate and elaborate.

I've been thinking lots lately about why I do what I do, academic and even personal writing, particularly in light of knowing that it is not read or appreciated by many, perhaps by no one at all. Still, I've found myself compulsively doing it needing only the reward of the doing. I'd say that this is true for the Balinese as well. They work and prepare constantly with little sense of distinction or acknowledgement. I think the major difference is that for the Balinese, while it is a gestural sense of being who they are, it is framed a bit in terms of living a religious life. I don't think they are looking for meaning or recognition. They do it because as a Balinese that is what one does, that is what one is.

Nama (I Wayan Nama) came to our bungalow at 9 this morning and helped us move to Londo's two story bungalow. It is huge with enough room for many people. On the first floor there is a wonderful bathroom and a room with a double bed. On the second floor are two beds a wardrobe and a double bed and a futon. This is a magical level with cross ventilation and views that are stunning. After we had tea with Nama and got signed in with Londo, we started out.

Nama arranged with his friend to rent his car tomorrow for 30,000 rupiah plus petrol and then took us to his friend's house in Sayan. This man I Wayan Kedewatan is a young man but is head of his village. He graciously accepted us into his house into a very lovely room. He spoke little English, but he was interested in talking with us. I had a million questions about Bali-Hindu. Shortly after we sat down, he asked us if we wanted coffee and we accepted. He got it and it had liquor in it (which Emily didn't realize until later, kind of funny). He also served biscuits (or crackers). Nama told us that Wayan was busy now preparing for a big family ceremonial that would take place early in November and we could attend if we wanted to. We talked for a long time about Bali-Hindu and Bali Aga (the old pre-Hindu Bali). He asked if we wanted to see the preparations for the ceremony. We accepted and he took us to the back of his house compound (comprised of many buildings) and there were dozens of people doing all kinds of work. They were in groups in temporary enclosures all over the place. What I am learning is that Balinese spend tremendous amounts of time on ceremonial activities. Much of this is painstaking work. Intricate decorations that are placed in a temple and may never even be seen by anyone and later either weather away or are taken down and thrown in the garbage heaps. Mats were being woven, food prepared, building was taking place, I don't know what all, but there were people everywhere. They all looked our way and smiled and greeted us. Wayan took us to his house compound temple and there explained each of the shrines. It seems that most of them represent a temple somewhere on the island and having this representation invites the god associated with that place to be present in the family temple. But the gods are never seen so no one knows when they might be present.

There must have been a dozen or more of these temple shrines. Some were decorated with cloth in preparation for the upcoming family ceremony. I haven't learned yet what that ceremony is, but it seems like a marvelous opportunity for me to have access to this religious event. Before we left, we were asked again if we wanted coffee and we accepted again. This time the coffee was boiled coffee in a glass (covered) and a tray of goodies. One kind of goodie is a ball of rice wrapped in a kind of blade of grass round and round tied at the top in a wonderful shape. The rice has something sweet in it and coconut and other things that I didn't know. This was delicious and very nice to look at. All the old men and women sat around and watched us eat to see what our reactions would be. They seemed most approving that we even accepted the food and especially happy that we liked it.

We left there and Nama took us on a wonderful walk across and along the Sayan River. The Dutch constructed the dam and canal system when they ruled Bali early this century. This was an amazing thing. Then, after walking along rice fields, we came to another part of the river. There were people bathing (washing themselves) in the river. Cows and chickens were in small fences. A woman was sitting in waist deep water with a huge basket on her head. She had a big bowl. She leaned in the water, scooped up a bowl of lava sand washed down from the mountain and placed it in the basket on her head. When she filled the basket (and it was huge) she stood up and carried the basket up on the bank and dumped out the sand. Over and over. We walked across a suspension bridge over the river that had a few wires to support the whole thing and it was just several bamboo pieces laid together. We could then see that other women were loading buckets full of sand and placing them on a pulley system that drew the bucket up to the top (maybe 40 meters higher). Once up there we could see the women turning the crank to hoist up the buckets. Once the bucket arrived a woman placed it on her head and carried it to a pile where it was dumped. Nama says that the women who do this work are the uneducated.

We walked along stopping frequently to sit and overlook the wonderful valley full of rice paddies (just an amazing picture book place) and to visit with the people. At one place we came upon a cock fight. Dozens of men were furiously gambling and making deals while some women ran food stalls on the street. Nama clearly doesn't like gambling and didn't spend much time there. Then more magnificent views. From here we saw women walking the path up this steep canyon with huge loads on their heads. One woman carried a bucket full of water. It must have been 3 gallons. Amazing.

When we got back to Wayan's Emily spotted a shop as part of his house and got his wife to come price things for her. Dresses were only 7,000 (\$3.50) and pants were 7,500. Em bought two dresses and I bought Corbin and her a pair of slacks. The ones for Corbin are great. Hope they fit and that he'll like them.

We ate twice at the Bali Restaurant (which we found is owned by the same Wayan who we were guests of) and went to Ubud Palace for the Legong Dance. This was magnificent. I just can't believe this dance. I almost cried when the little girls danced Legong. How they do it is beyond me. Nama went with us and afterwards indicated that his brother is an accomplished gamelan player and his sister teaches all kinds of dance. I must arrange to meet them both and learn about dance and music from them. 10/9

One thing that tends to bother me as I review these journal entries is how willing, even eager, I was to buy Balinese stuff. Seems it was everywhere and the novelty of it as well as what seemed cheap prices, especially knowing how much Boulder stores sell similar items for, seemed irresistible. These journals reveal that this shopping was often the mechanism of cultural encounter throughout our trip. That helped facilitate conversations and connections, yet I was not at the time seeing it primarily as a means of exchange to help me connect with Balinese folks. I now wonder at the wisdom of that eagerness to purchase. We were traveling on a tight budget, yet it seems that we had money to buy stuff pretty much constantly. Now, upon reflection, I find this practice rather embarrassing and disconcerting.

I frequently referred to missing Jenny and Corbin. I often thought of my dad when I learned about things like rice farming. I thought he especially would be interested.

The following day, October 10th, Nama had the rental car we had arranged and arrived to initiate several days of extensive driving to many noted places in Bali. This gave me an extended opportunity to observe, and hopefully survive, the high-speed driving on small one lane roads, a terrifying experience I described.

Sunday the 10th Nama came for us early in the morning. We had arranged to move to a bigger house of Londo's so we did that. This is a huge house and more than we want to pay, but it has a lovely view, and the upstairs is so pleasant and cool. First, we went to cash a traveler's cheque. Got 209,000 rupiah \$100 US. I hadn't taken my passport and they insisted on it, though driver's license had been enough most places. The young men who were clerks didn't know much about passports and seemed sufficiently confused that my driver's license number worked as my passport number, and I got the cheque exchanged. They wouldn't let Emily do the same thing.

Off we went on the first of many terrifying drives along roads only wide enough for two or one and one-half small cars, but crammed with dozens of vehicles: motor bikes, bicycles, big trucks, people, cars, chickens, and dozens of dogs who often nap in the middle of the road. All drive as fast as they can, pass every vehicle that they can out power and do so even if there is no possible way it can be accomplished. To make matters more terrifying (at least to me), there is usually not enough room alongside the road for construction materials (sand, rocks, poles whatever) so it is simply dumped in the road narrowing it by half a lane or less at these places. The practice is to constantly beep one's horn. I first thought this rude and aggressive. Now I still think that it is aggressive, but that no one takes offense. They just seem thankful to have a second to step from the road to avoid a hurtling vehicle. Nama seems a good driver, but at times I felt like hiding my eyes and praying that we would survive the next whirling maneuver. It seems amazing to me that there are any dogs, chickens, and children left in the country, but all seem to know how to stay out of traffic and all are constantly alongside the road unattended.

10/12

I would return to Bali two more times over the years and while I felt that Bali remained pretty much the same with each succeeding visit, I noticed a major upgrade in the roads. While seemingly all road work is done by gangs of workers working mostly by hand, the roads seemed wider. The vehicles seemed newer, spewing less pollution.

Bali, as much of Asia, is rice. I think I remember that Made told me there were something like two dozen different varieties of rice grown in Bali. I experienced black rice pudding and red, yellow, and white rice at meals. Bali is a small island with steep slopes that are dotted with terraced rice paddies. Even vast valleys of rice paddies. We had an opportunity to stop and hang out with a group engaged in harvesting rice. This is one of those things I knew my dad would love.

We had gone only a few kilometers before seeing the rice harvest. The rice is cut and carried to a single place in one paddy. Here it is stacked up evenly in a large pile like a cord of firewood. Next to this pile are several women positioned along a beveled winnowing board on the ground. This has ridges along it sort of like corrugations. It rests on a huge plastic tarpaulin. The women take from the pile bunches of rice and raising them above their head beat them down on the board several times. This beats the rice from the head. Then they throw the rice straw to the side. Here several old women sit taking up small bunches and with a small stick (a simple tool I am sure) stroke the heads of every stalk to get every grain of rice from the head. The straw is then set aside. The rice is somewhat green at this point. If they wait until it is completely ripe, it falls from the head when cut and is lost. This means that the green rice must then be spread out on big plastic sheets to dry. I saw this too and a person must walk along with a sort of solid rake and shift the rice so that all can be exposed to the sun. Very labor-intensive work. Every grain seems precious. I also saw smaller operations where the beating of rice was done in a smaller contraption perched atop a rice bag. 10/12

Bali has temples everywhere. I believe there are something like four thousand and that wouldn't include any of the tens of thousands of shrines. There are several types of temples and each village, region, and the whole island has representations of each of these temple types. Each temple is the locale for at least one major annual festival which has a second part, sort of a redo, something like three months later. This means that temple festivals (*odalan*) are taking place all over almost constantly. These festivals involve dancing, gamelan, ritual masked dance drama, and they go on throughout the day and night sometimes for several days.

When Islam came to Java in the 16th century, they suppressed much of the native Javanese and Hindu and Buddhist influenced religious life. To be free of the constricting influence of Islam many of the kingdoms that existed in eastern Java fled to Bali and reestablished themselves. Balinese religion and culture have evident influence in the present day of Hinduism, Buddhism, and the native Javanese traditions as well as the prior native Balinese culture that was influenced

by the Chinese and even the Dutch who colonized Bali briefly. Islam has little presence other than in the northwest region. Christianity also has little presence however I noticed that many Balinese I talked with about their religion seemed quite willing to give Christian explanations and interpretations for the Balinese mythology and pantheon of gods (if this is an appropriate term). On our early explorations of Bali, we spent quite a bit of time at one of the temple complexes that dates to the early Javanese movement.

We went on down the road and came to an ancient Royal Temple. I don't know much about this temple, but the Javanese entered the country in the 16th century fleeing Islam in Java. These royal families established themselves in Bali and introduced Hinduism (or it may have also introduced before directly from Indian and China). These royal families established temples. This is one of those. It was not much in use and has the shape of the high tower shrines so common to most Bali temples. The temple also had inner and outer temple areas; the most inner temples were closed as is also common. It was very large and the inner temple which could be easily seen over the stone wall surrounding it had many temple structures (I don't recall the name of them). There were two long rows of them, the largest to the upper side and descending as one moves toward the downside as is also common of all temples. We also climbed up in the bell tower, a platform to the side of the grounds for a look around. This was a tourist stop and we again saw the Japanese couples that dress alike as we saw in Australia. But we haven't seen any of them in Ubud. Nama calls them ducks. He says they get off the bus, the guide tells them to see everything and return in 10 minutes. They walk around like ducks quacking. 10/12

Adding dimension to the sensory banquet we enjoyed these first days in Bali, we had the opportunity to try a few fruits common in Bali, but completely foreign to me. Our tasting opportunity occurred at roadside stands as we drove through the country. One thing I found so interesting is the intensity of the taste. Delicious, yet satiating almost immediately.

Traveling onward we stopped alongside the road a couple of times for exotic fruit. The first was a stop for Jackfruit (nangka) which is a huge bumpy fruit. It is sort of the shape of a very fat kidney bean but about 12 to 15 inches long. This is cut in 1-inch slices and you normally buy a wedge of it. This has some sort of stiff membranes in it and some large seeds, but amongst these is bright orange meat. This can be taken out in small pieces about 2 inches long (the thickness of the inner meat of the whole fruit) and eaten. Like all the fruits we tasted, this has a powerful taste and on first tasting it seems the most delicious thing ever eaten. However, it soon is overpowering. I ate quite a bit of it, Emily could eat much less. Then it was just too much. Almost sickening. The other fruits we tasted at other roadside stops were selak urian. Selak is a small brown sort of pear-shaped fruit with a skin that reminded me of scales. It comes in bunches and grows on fairly large trees, maybe up to 30 feet tall. Inside the thin skin is a white dense meat (water chestnut like in texture) that divides into two or three irregular sections. Each has a brown seed inside it. This fruit is far less powerful in flavor, but it isn't a flavor that I much care for. Durian is about cantaloupe sized or maybe an oblong softball and yellow to green in color. It is bumpy all over the outside and each bump comes to a very sharp

point. It is difficult to hold this fruit in the hand because of these prickles. This fruit cracks open a bit when ripe. When it is opened it divides into sections and each section has a sort of porous white material like the white stuff in oranges. In the midst of all this are large seeds (an inch or two long) several in a pouch and each surrounded by a slimy fibrous material. It is this slimy stuff that is eaten. It, like the jack fruit, is delicious, yet overpowering. Even the texture of it is almost too much to bear, though I wasn't at all hesitant to try it. What smells. What tastes. Amazing. 10/12

Having been to Bali three times, one of the places that always draws me to it is the small island temple or shrine that is in Lake Bratan and is part of Pura Ulu Danau temple complex. I suppose, though it is on a completely different scale, I might add this place to the other "heart places" I have. Borobudur in Java and Sydney Opera House. I was introduced to it that first outing with Nama. On the second trip to Bali I learned that Made's village Bangah is in charge of this small island shrine and they have vigils and rites timed to a ritual calendar. That time I hired a young man to drive me on his motorcycle up to the area so that I could visit this place again and photograph it. It is just a few miles from Bangah.

The Pura Ulu Danau is an ancient temple on Lake Bratan, high in the mountains. The lake is surrounded by mountains. An idyllic setting. The temple area is huge and multifaith. It is a temple for the goddess of the waters that she provides Bali with sufficient water. The main temple compound is Hindu. There is a Buddhist stupa outside this compound and up on the hill with a silver Arabic looking dome is a Muslim mosque. By this time, we began to see the pattern that has now become familiar in visiting temples. There is a charge for visiting one, usually 500 rp. plus a surcharge of some sort. There is also a parking fee of 200 or 300 rp. In some temples one must wear a sash (minimum) or sarong and if you don't have one these can be rented (more rupiah). All temples have long rows of shops selling everything imaginable at every price imaginable. Walking along one of these areas is an experience. Everyone is calling out to you to come look. Those selling cold drinks call out their prices. At the mother temple we visited yesterday the price for a can of coke ranged from 500 to 2,000 rupiah within a several hundred-yard area. Even as they call out their price to you, they change it without a moment's hesitation. "Cold drink madam? Cold drink sir? Very good. 800 rupiah. For you 500." The Ulu Danau Temple had a small temple on a tiny island just a few meters from the shore. There was evidence of recent offerings here and evidently there are times during the year when people come from all over the island for ceremonies to Dewi Danau, goddess of the waters. Many family temples have a shrine to this goddess, and I think this shrine is like a miniature replication of Pura Ulu Danau. 10/12

Before I left Boulder for this long trip, I'd heard about a Balinese man I Made Lasmawan who taught Balinese arts along the front range. I couldn't arrange a meeting with him, but I was able to with his wife, Yuni. Yuni is Javanese and a classical dancer. She gave me information on her brother-in-law who lived in a mountain village in Bali called Bangah. She encouraged me to look him up while I was in Bali. I don't know the circumstances but Made's marriage with Yuni

didn't last. On the first trip I took to Bali where I stayed in Made's village, I remember traveling with him to visit several prospective new wives. I wish I knew how that process worked, but it sure seemed that Made was simply shopping for a wife and had several women to choose from. He chose a woman named Ketut and I've spent plenty of time with her and their growing family.

I did make the effort to find Made's brother and meet with him. The search through the mountain back roads offered us views of magnificent valleys of rice paddies. In awe of this beautiful place, we finally located Bangah and Made's brother's house. It was a funny meeting.

After we left this temple, we headed off to look for a man whose sister-in-law Yuni whom I had met in Boulder shortly before leaving had tipped me off to. This was in the village of Bangah. Nama didn't exactly know where this place was, but we drove all over the back roads. This drive in itself was a treat, seeing so many villages and beautiful areas. In one area there was obviously a huge temple festival going on. We began seeing truckloads of men dressed in white (shirts, trousers, and head scarfs) all going in the same direction. Then we saw women dressed in beautiful colorful blouses and sarongs with huge bowls of fruits perched atop their heads walking in the same direction. One place we stopped, and I photographed a long line of women beautifully dressed every one carrying something on her head. They were walking the zigzag path along the edges of rice paddies. As we traveled on down the road, we heard gongs and saw a troupe of men dressed in white led by men carrying tall banners. There were perhaps a couple hundred. Most were men and boys. They seemed, to walk in groups. Small boys led. Older boys carrying flags followed. Groups of men then followed. Each group seemed like the same general age. One group of musicians came along and then at the end were many sorts of stragglers. A barong costume was carried by two men. We stopped beside the road and watched the procession pass. It is apparently the appropriate gesture to do this. Down the road another kilometer or so and we came on another procession of the same kind heading for the same regional temple. Once we found the general area of Bangah, we went another direction to Jatuluib (pronounced ja two lew e). The word means, truly magnificent (or "really beautiful" as Nama rendered it) and that is an understatement. It is a huge valley filled with terraced rice paddies. Little shacks occasionally are perched at the edge of a paddy, the home of a cow used for its labor in the rice. Since the cow lives most of its life in this little shack, people must get feed for it. This is done by taking a sickle (a tool carried by many village men) finding a bit of uncut roadside grass and cutting it and bundling or bagging it. This bag is then carried to their cows on the head by women or on the back of a bicycle or scooter by boys and men. Sometimes a cow will be led on a leash to the roadside where its attendant will sit while the cow grazes. The secondary benefit of this practice is that the grass has a mowed appearance nearly everywhere. Everyone constantly looks for a bit of grass to cut for their cow. Jatuluib is a little village at the rim of this valley and has, of course, its temple compound overlooking this beautiful valley.

Then on to Bangah where we finally found I Ketut Supiarta. As we were looking for this man, I began to realize that I had no idea why we were looking for him. His sister-in-law had given me his name and I was just following that. It turned out that he was a fairly well to do

person in this village. None of his family spoke any English and yet they invited us in immediately making quite a fuss, to get us settled in their formal living room. Emily and I sat as Nama talked with them explaining who we were and why we were there. Realizing that we knew his brother, Supiarta wanted to know what we knew of his brother, did we have a photo of him, etc. Since we have never met him, we couldn't give many details. Nama and Supiarta talked and talked. Soon their conversation turned to the fact that Lasmawan (the brother in America) had sent them an application for their daughter to come to America to enter an English as a Second Language program. This daughter, Ni Nyoman Eravati, apparently wants to go to America. The father soon began to find ways that Nama and I could help. First, he thought the daughter could go with us back to America since she has never flown. Then he got Nama to tell him all about how to get a passport for her. Then he wanted her to come live with us in Ubud to teach me about dance (she knows a little something of Legong, but I doubt more than any schoolgirl [this turned out to be very wrong, Komong, as she was called, was a classically trained dancer]). Then they wanted us to be her American sponsor (a requirement of the Indonesian government perhaps). Emily and I were left out of most of this and clearly, we were seen primarily for what we could provide. They were very gracious and served us coffee. We also began to see what power Nama manages by knowing English, Bahasa, and Balinese. ... we left with a big bag of tomatoes and headed back to Ubud. 10/12

Thinking back on this situation now, I so wish that Yuni had been able to prepare us for the possibility of hosting Komong. Over the years I got to know her well and it would have been an amazing experience to sponsor her to study and live in the USA. Later as the owner of Bantaba World Dance & Music I sponsored visas for a couple dozen artists in the late 1990s. I think I even got visas for some of Made's family. But on this first trip I had no knowledge or experience at all.

Despite a huge day of travel and highly sensuous experience, I couldn't pass up the opportunity to see more dancing in Ubud during the evening.

When we got back it was after 6 p.m. and I was bonking big time. I was so shaky when I got out of the car, I thought I might puke, and I had a terrible headache. But with hands washed (a feeling that is wonderful but all too rare), a sugar soda, and some food, I revived remarkably well and rapidly. We then went to Ubud Palace and saw Mahabarata Epic: The Death of Kicaka. This kind of dance weaves the more dramatic forms of masked dance with some female group dances. It is entirely developed and choreographed for entertainment, but it contains the styles and forms of the more traditional dance. This dance had a wonderful comical element with three funny clowns. Though this dance is much more complicated and refined in some ways, it still reminds me a bit of some Hopi dancing. These clowns even looked a bit like Hopi clowns. I will write more about dance later. 10/12

So much experience in a single day was emotionally taxing. Perhaps it would have been advisable to have a day to rest and process a bit. Yet we had made a commitment for a rental car and got ourselves ready for another long day of Bali adventuring.

This Monday we decided to take a huge circle drive during which we could visit many temples, shrines, and natural features. It would prove to be a jam-packed day. Getting an early start, we were able to visit places almost privately. We began with Goa Gajah the Elephant Cave Temple and the ancient memorial Gunung Kawi, both carved into the living rock. Such religious places add to the endless temples.

Monday morning, we got started early and attempting to keep our commitment to Nama and the rental car, we suggested we make a big circle up through the northeastern portion of Bali and return by the southeastern coast. The first stop was Goa Gajah the Elephant Cave Temple. Knowing that we would be going into temples Nama brought along scarves for us. These need just be wrapped around the waist and tied on the left (I don't know that this is customary). We walked downstairs that took us to the hand-hewn cave. This temple is very old. Outside are bathing pools (mostly empty now) that reminded me of places where Hindus bathe on the Ganges. But there were no bathers, just a couple of older European women sitting on the steps reading their guidebook about the temple. Surrounding the mouth of the cave is a demon's face carved in the stone. The cave opening is the mouth. To the sides of the face can be seen the ends of the fingers of the demon in what looks like him trying to pry something apart so he can stick his head out. Outside the cave were several of the shrines common to all Balinese temples. Some of these had fresh offerings on them and some men dressed in ceremonial sarong were sitting near one of these shrines. A pool had a shrine built in the middle of it. We went inside the cave. After a short passage the cave branched in both directions for a few meters. There were a few offerings on altars in there and lots of incense burning. Quite the incensing just to go inside. In the outer temple area women were making rice balls and men were working on something that I suppose had to do with the festival or ritual. Apparently, this cave and the pools were only unearthed earlier this century and have been reactivated as a religious place.

Up the road near Tampaksiring is a fascinating temple called Gunung Kawi. We were accosted by many children before the car even stopped. They stuck their wares through the windows and pushed and pushed to get you to buy. They even know the technique of saying, "Here take, this is free." I think they know that few tourists will take anything offered from a child without compensation and that the compensation from a few hundred rupiah will far exceed the worth of their trinket.

Gunung Kawi is 10 memorials (candi) cut in the face of the rock alongside a beautiful stream surrounded by rice terraces. These monuments are huge and appear as if set in niches in rock face. Alongside some of these are monks' cells. I took off my shoes, as required, and walked around among them. These too are hewn from the rock. Outside of the monks' cells is a temple with the typical three divisions. I try to understand what all these shrines are for and I'm never very clear I know what is going on. Nama is eager to tell me about them, but I don't think he knows that much and on things like this I'm sure his knowledge outpaces his knowledge of English or mine of Balinese (which is none). Perhaps I'll need to read a lot more. I do recognize the principle that temples are microcosmic and that they also replicate the parts of the human body.

To get down into the canyon where these monuments are cut, Nama took us along a canal, passing a young woman standing in the canal bathing her children (or brothers and sisters), and along the edges of the rice terraces. This was fun and adventuresome. At the river we had to cross by leaping from stone to stone. This took us some time because Emily and I had cameras and we didn't want to get them wet, nor really did we want to be wet ourselves. We returned by the stairway. Gunung Kawi is one of Bali's most ancient monuments and is thought to have been built in the 10th and 11th centuries. I don't think much is known of it and I'd guess not much is known of ancient Balinese religion. 10/12

While of course attention is drawn to the temples and the rice paddy-covered valleys, Bali is a tropical paradise. Though it is just south of the equator, as a small island its temperatures are moderate, especially in the mountains. It is a volcanic island. We visited Gunung Batur where, from the old volcano rim, one can look into the depths of the earth now a beautiful lake surrounding the interior cone.

On to the great volcano, Gunung Batur, which can be seen from Penelokan. ... The volcano was very lovely. The large crater spans many kilometers and has a huge deep lake along the east side. In the middle spiring up like a craggy mountain is the central cone with a plateau on top. There were a few clouds hanging near the top of the cone, but as they parted and shifted around the mountain lighted up beautifully. After we left this overlook, we drove eastward along the rim and stopped at another overlook that placed the lake and a village below us and between us and the cone. Very lovely. 10/12

Each village and each district in Bali has its own set of temples, so too does the entire island. High in the mountains is a vast complex of hundreds of temples comprising the island's mother temple, Pura Besakih. Strolling among these temples convinces of the centrality of temple ritual to the Balinese and offers the opportunity to appreciate the variety of temple architecture. High on the mountainside it also offers grand views all the way to the sea.

Then on [from the volcano] a few kilometers to Pura Besakih, the mother temple of Bali. It is the temple that serves the whole of Bali, and it is quite old and comprised of 30 temples. Its most ancient parts are over 1000 years old. Nama didn't care to go with us. We signed in and paid our fee. Then started the trek up incline after incline toward the main temple. It is indeed huge and yet very like all other temples we have seen. It has the three main parts (the main temple had 5) and inside each walled area were many of these shrines (I must figure out what they are called). The main temple was quite large and there were many others nestled around it. We stopped for a coke (the first one Emily and I have ever drunk together) and headed back. ... Though it was the mother temple, by this time it seemed to me like one more Balinese temple. It is remarkable how my expectations were so wrong on these. I expected temples to be something like Westminster or Chartres or something (well, I really didn't). They are all open air. All have the high pointed doorways (most of red and grey brick, but some of a black material). All incorporate these shrines. Driving along any road one sees literally one of these temple areas (perhaps 50 feet on a side) associated with every group of houses. Then there

are larger temples for every village, every cemetery, and on and on. One gets tempted to death in just no time. One special treat was to be charged 200 rp. each to pee in a dirty hole that was called "Toilet - W.C." One makes one's living by having a hole. Interesting. Something for nothing. Thank you very much. 10/12

Circling to the east side of the island we turned south heading for the south shore and a couple other attractions. Candidasa is a temple on the beach, and we just had to stop at Goa Lawa which is a bat cave temple. This cave is said to be connected via a tunnel to the mother temple up in the mountains.

Prior to the introduction of Hinduism to Bali centuries ago there was what might be termed indigenous traditions evolving over many centuries perhaps influenced some by contact with Chinese and other sea-traveling traders. This pre-Hindu Balinese culture persists in a few villages. I was eager to visit one called Tenganan. No temples and quite a different feel to it.

Onward to Candidasa and the beach. We stopped there for a brief view and a stroll along the wall above the beach. I had hoped to see some of the Balinese triangular sailed fishing boats. I saw some along the shore, but none in the water with sails up.

I had wanted to come this way to go to the Bali Aga (pre-Hindu Bali) village of Tenganan. They are famous for doing a double ikat weaving. In this weaving the thread, both warp and weft, are dyed in several colors before the weaving is done. When it is woven together it is done in such a way as to make a pattern. I can't imagine how they do it, but I saw women doing it. This style is done with a belt loom in a sitting position. It looks like very hard work to me. These weavings were attractive, but not so much to my taste and they were mostly strips about 12" wide and 6 feet long. The least expensive were \$75. They also sold many other weavings from Indonesia. I bought a large tablecloth for \$25 that is single ikat, which means that the weft is dyed as thread and the warp is one color. It is very beautiful. It is made in Gianyar, which is known for its weavings. When I bought the material, I actually thought it was made in that village. I was a bit disappointed later when finding out, but I still like it and maybe I'll give it to someone. This village was very interesting and was built on terraces. It spread in one long stretch. At each terrace was an incline of cobblestones. There were huge gray horned bullocks in the village. The houses and shops lined both sides and there were common areas and temples in the center. ...

... we stopped briefly at Goa Lawah (Bat Cave) Temple. Again, fees and scarves. This temple was unlike the others in sitting against a cave full of bats. Some of the shrines were located inside the cave and were covered with bat shit. The bats were everywhere, a crawling squeaking mass. According to the story the bats are said to feed the giant snake Naga Basuki who lives in the cave. I can't quite figure why this would be a nice place for a temple. The bat shit and bat breath odor were noticeable as were the charming little girls that just wouldn't give up on selling their trinkets. 10/12

On the way home we had dinner at a restaurant that, early in the 1930s I believe, belonged to Walter Spies who was a renowned European student of Balinese art and culture, instrumental in introducing Bali to the world beyond.

We had rented a car for three days, but by the end of two exhausting days we decided we just couldn't add a third day. We needed time to rest and reflect. We both had begun to feel shades of discomfort with our relationship with Nama, at once deeply grateful for all he was doing, yet beginning to realize that he was subtly shaping, perhaps more than subtly, our Balinese experience. Having a few days experience in Bali and with a variety of people, I spent this rest day catching up on my journal writing. I concluded by attempting to honestly reflect on my experiences with the people and this complicated culture.

We began early to see that we might have some trouble with Nama. When I found him, he immediately said he would just take us anywhere and do anything for us. We talked of this and how we would compensate him. He told us not to worry, it was up to us. We didn't realize then how, after three days of being taken everywhere, obligated we would feel to him. Further, we began to realize that he was setting our agenda and pace. Nama is, like everything and everyone in Bali, something of a contradiction. He says so many things yet also does and demands something different. He seems very nice, and he certainly is, but he latched on to us and we couldn't seem to shake him or free ourselves to have the sort of experience we want. This is very hard to describe, and Em and I have talked a long time about it. One minute we feel like we are jerks for even feeling the least bit weird about him. Then we begin to feel that he is a master manipulator and knows exactly what he is doing. The setting is terrible here to judge oneself because no one here sees you as a person. They all say, "Where you from?" When they learn "America" they know how to set the price. Nama constantly told us he considered us true friends, that he hurt when Emily hurt, that he cared for us, that he would do anything for us, that he wanted nothing in return except what we had too much of (which for us reads, money). But he never has asked either one of us a single question about ourselves. He didn't ask a single question about America. He didn't ask any questions about the meanings of words in English, though clearly, he is just learning it. To us friends aren't friends unless you are interested in who the others are. So, friend to Nama means something else and we haven't been able to figure whether that is good or whether that adds up to obligation. We tried talking with him directly and that didn't seem too helpful. But today we refused to go with him and still are paying the 30,000 rp. for the car. Emily isn't feeling well, a cold, and we finally just insisted that we needed rest and time to reflect on what we are experiencing.

When he stopped by late this morning ready to take us on another tour, we told him we just couldn't go. He seemed a bit sad but agreed that that was fine. He immediately began to plan for a couple days hence. We told him we would decide what to do in a day or two. He stood up, said he was tired, and went in the house and went to bed (there is a bed on the first floor we don't use). We sat there looking at each other in amazement. He said to wake him when we got ready to leave. Interesting. There are many things to reflect on here and I hope to do so in this journal soon, but at least Em and I learned much about our own interests, our own likenesses in not wanting to get obligated by others and not wanting to be manipulated by others, and about Bali.

I think everything in Bali is subtext (i.e., the unspoken) and variable. I have never been able to understand those descriptions of the world that are derived from Einstein's relativity before coming here. Nothing is dependable. There are no points of reference. Everything is negotiable and people say everything but what they mean. What would raise major ethical and moral issues for me regarding honesty seem not to apply here. Beginning to experience this throws me into a mode of being highly suspect of everyone. Buying something for 25,000 rp. one place, after bargaining for 10 minutes for it, only to find it offered by someone only a few feet away for 8,000 just blows one's mind. It makes me distrust and dislike and to be wary of the friendly and those who seem to be extending trust. This is a very friendly country. At first, and even now, this is something gratefully received. "Hallo" they all call. Even children in villages when you are flying through in a car will yell "Hallo" and wave to you. Everyone smiles. Yet, most seem to have in mind getting something from you as they smile. There are contradictions everywhere. The whole country seems to be living on the food that grows at hand. Everyone seems to be at work in the fields, with the cows, whatever. But everyone seems to be interested in money. Everyone in some sense has something to sell. Every village is lined with tiny little shops with curios, food, and junk. How they sell anything with hundreds of these shops in every one of the hundreds of villages is a complete mystery to me. I'd think their merchandise would get so old it would rot awaiting the first person to stop to buy. Yet they all sit there in their shops.

Sweeping is a favorite activity of people everywhere. They sweep the grass daily to pick up the flowers and leaves that fall. They sweep the dirt in front of their shops. They use two kinds of brooms: one is a bundle of stiff sharp sticks the other is a long handle with some soft black feather looking things on the end. But the toilets are horrible stink holes. .

There are interesting contrasts to the Australians, I think. Australians charge for everything: tomato sauce (catsup) and jelly, for example. Everything is divided and everything has a price. Likely this is based on the cost and to make a given profit everything must be sold for its fair price. In Bali, nothing has a price, everything changes if sold with something else, everything changes when sold to different people, or at different times, and other variables that I doubt have limits. One wonders if there is such a thing as "cost" in Bali. Einstein must have been Balinese. 10/12

A distinction of Bali that I quickly realized is the ubiquity of ritual and cultural events. They occur, it seems, constantly and in most every locale. Not only the local daily offerings but the local and regional temple festivals and many other rites. It seems a mystery how the ordinary work of making a living and the normal daily chores ever get done given the enormous time and resources devoted to the ritual aspects of culture.

While we intended to stay home and rest and process a bit, we were soon distracted by cultural events, processions related to a temple festival, taking place near us that we simply couldn't ignore.

Interrupted yesterday by a procession that was going from Penestanan temple to the temple below the bridge near Ubud. We began to hear gamelan gong and cymbal music and went to see what was happening. It was a procession along the road like the ones we saw in the

countryside a couple days ago. We followed the procession, though were far behind it. Stopped at the Bali Restaurant to find Nama to pay him for the car rental and clothes we bought. We went to the Walter Spies house restaurant--it is called Beggars Boost or something like that--for dinner. It overlooks this river so we could hear the gamelan and could see a bit of what was going on far below. The procession formed again and headed back to Penestanan.

After eating we followed again, stopping at Campuhan (also spelled Champuhan and Tjampuhan) for chocolate cake and a brownie to go. We got to the temple at Penestanan and found everyone eating and since we didn't have sarongs and sashes, we just returned to Ubud to see the dancing. It was Ramayana Ballet and was very good. Quite theatrical. I am eager to see more things of the culture than things made for the consumption of tourists. 10/13

Then one doesn't even have to go far to follow the sound of the gamelan to find Bali ritual. Simply sitting in our bungalow is sufficient.

An old lady showed up in front of the house. She carried a silver tray and wore formal clothing including the wide sash that must be worn while doing offerings. Clearly this woman didn't speak any English. She was performing rituals that seemed to me to be to bless the houses. It seems that today is a transition time here all around. The woman nodded to us, communicating that she recognized our presence but had something she had to do. She came to the corner pillar of the house and removed a lovely decoration made probably of palm leaf. She took it to the edge of the yard and disposed of it. Then she approached the house and with green leaf between the first two fingers of her right hand dipped 3 times into her jar of holy water sprinkling it toward the house. Incense burned on her tray the smoke wafting toward us. She then paused for a few silently, but mouthed, words--prayer or incantation--then repeated the holy water sprinkling. Then too the tall, beautiful bamboo pole decorations are being removed this morning. ... people don't talk at all about what these things mean, just what things must be done. 10/13

Throughout much of my academic career I have been critical of what has seemed to me a misplaced intense focus on asking of everything studied, "What does it mean?" I was suspicious of this concern studying Native Americans and here in Bali it again seems an irrelevant or misplaced concern. Notably now, looking back over a long academic career, I have in recent years been focusing on how to state the reasons I think meaning is not so important and to offer rich alternatives. Interestingly these alternatives are based in moving body and often have to do with repeated gestural practices. I see these repeated actions on the order of building skills, as in music or sports. One learns to play an instrument or a sport through practice and repetition. This is done ultimately not to win or achieve something external, although these are possible, but fundamentally because it creates who one is, it creates identity, it establishes the confidence and acumen to be who one is. Thus, it might be appropriate to say that Balinese ritual practice builds the skill to be Balinese. As with any skill set there are endless ways one can engage in the intricacies of the practice. I don't think that my recent

work has acknowledged that I was beginning to develop my views evident these first days in Bali.

As I reflect on my research and interests and my experience in Bali, I realize that I am seeing so many things of relevance. If one learns and bears one's culture in the body as much as in stories and articulated beliefs, then things like sweeping, walking, making offerings, dress, carrying heavy objects on the head, squatting to work are all important. I see a clear connection between the women doing drudge work--walking with heavy water buckets or baskets of sand on their heads--and the movement of the most formal Balinese dance. The foot is placed flat on the ground with each step, the toes often poised as though in reserve should extra balance or support be necessary. For a woman carrying water these toes may be the thing that keep her from losing the load and having to return to the river again. The body is relaxed and low. Very elastic which must be necessary to walk evenly keeping the head level and to bear the weight of the load. The same posture is stylized in the body positions in dance. Surely this body posture must preserve the back. I don't see bent old people. Often the old women seem to have an even more erect posture. Surely their posture in carrying loads throughout their lives must be healthy. I don't see how, with Western posture, one could stand a single day of bearing such loads on the spine. These are the things I am interested in. Yesterday, a group of women that I recognized from passing them repeatedly on the road to Penestanan were carrying black sand along the path behind our house. Each carried a large basket full. At their destination they dumped it and returned for another load. One woman stopped on her return, hoisted her skirt up well above her knees and spread her legs to pee. Quick and easy, even with modesty. These women who do the drudge work are of interest to me. They have a grace and dignity, a style and even beauty, that is Balinese in character. This is something I am interested in. 10/13

Cremation rites are common public events almost always highly elaborate and dramatic events. In the three times I've been to Bali I was able to attend several of them. Since they are so elaborate and thus expensive requiring extensive periods of preparation, deceased bodies are often buried and then symbolically cremated in an event involving a few deceased people. Sometimes the body is preserved and is cremated at the burning ground in a cemetery.

The first cremation I witnessed was as a tourist where I paid a small fee for transportation with a group of tourists to a village and house location where a cremation rite was to take place. The following is my surprisingly detailed, if also rather naïve, description of what I witnessed that day.

The cremation. I don't know how to begin to think about it. Perhaps first some feelings. I had no idea what we were going to see or do, though I had read a chapter in a Bali book about it. I didn't know whether the event would be an actual one or something for tourists. We were never told anything or given any instructions. For me the day was a curious process of trying to locate myself, to get in touch with my feelings, to constantly readjust my sense of propriety with being in the presence of a family cremation and in the presence of other tourists who were trying to figure out what the hell was going on. The barriers between my culture and Balinese seemed little greater than that between me and my fellow tourists most of whom spoke little English

and in fact spoke little to each other throughout anyway. The performance elements--smells, sights, colors, textures, activities, tactile sensations--were so rich as at times to be nearly overwhelming. But, as I think on it, what is emerging in my mind and feelings this morning is how incredibly powerful is the ritual process. Clearly, I didn't know much more than the outline of what was going on. Maybe more than the average tourist, but perhaps not all that much more. But even the Balinese family constantly argued and yelled about procedure. Some things would start and then had to be restarted as someone would shout out that something or another wasn't being done properly. I think that on nearly everything that was done there was discussion, even argument, much shouting and laughing before the action was finally completed. No directions were given tourists at all. No censure, no direction, only one occasion when a young man asked a few tourists to move away from a particular area where an action was about to take place. But as the process unfolded, the distance between tourists and Balinese, the distance between all was overcome so that in the procession carrying the body to the cemetery for cremation, we all walked along, seemingly swept by the mood, by the need to get everything from one place to another. This intermingling remained at the cremation site. Though there was little verbal communication, people looked at each other and messages of welcome and acceptance were passed this way.

Certainly, the event was the most ritually powerful experience I have ever had. I really did participate as at least two families cremated the bodies of at least three people in a huge and amazing festival only a very few hours of which I experienced.

The mood for a Balinese cremation is a festive one. There are no tears, no mourning, nothing somber. Black seems to be a common color of dress, but often a shirt or blouse worn with bright colored skirt or slacks. The event requires much planning and preparation and expense. The offerings alone would take weeks to make. The house compound is restructured in preparation for the event including making temporary structures in which to work, for offerings, for the priest to perform rituals, etc. All the workers who prepare offerings and build structures must be fed and given frequent snacks. It is a big and very expensive deal. The two most interesting preparations are the animal (a bull) that serve as the sarcophagus for the body at cremation and the high tower on which the body is transported to the cemetery. These are quite amazing. There is so much that goes on I can't begin to figure out or describe much of it, but I want to try to describe what I saw, even if just as a means by which to remember it and to later reflect on it.

We went to the tourist information center in Ubud where we had seen a sign indicating "cremation ceremony --14 Oct - 6, 000 r." We paid our money and returned at 10:20 to catch a Bemo (transportation van). Loaded in this, 15 or so of us headed north and east of Ubud (I didn't get the name of the village and regret this deeply). When we arrived at the house compound 30 minutes later, we first saw a bunch of people there awaiting us to sell sarongs, sashes, and other things. I thought, "oh no, another tourist attraction, what have we gotten in to?" The Bemo driver told us that he would be at the cemetery after the cremation and to meet him there. As we turned around and fended off the sellers, assuring them we had sarongs and sashes, we saw the tower beside the road. It was maybe 8 meters high and sat on a large bamboo platform that extended quite a way out on each side. The tower was elaborately decorated and brightly

colored. A gamelan instrument was attached to the platform on each side. In front of the tower was a large black bull perched on a temporary platform. We looked at these and photographed them. I began to realize that this was the real thing and that the vendors were just a part of it as were us tourists. Walking up a steep driveway we arrived in the family compound. A temporary large shed was the first structure, and it was for the gamelan, which was already there, but without the players. A large structure was immediately on the right (I've seen these before). It is open on three sides and has sort of like a bed up on one corner. This place was just full of offerings and other things I can't even describe. I'd call this a pavilion.

Across from this pavilion was a building open on three sides that was prepared with food, which I learned later was to be served in a rather formal way to the male (and a couple of females) dignitaries. Two other houses were in the immediate compound. Both had open rooms on the front with closed rooms behind, the doors were red with extensive gold inlay. Perhaps the body of the deceased was in one of these and I heard someone say that one could go into the house and view the body laid out on a bed, but I didn't go. The male dignitaries gathered throughout the late morning at one of these houses. They were served coffee and treated with great dignity. It was interesting to see that some men approached this raised room and awaited to be invited into the room. There was much decorum here and the body language was most interesting. One young female was part of this group. I'd loved to have known her role. One man looked very (what is the word? Stylish?) ... with sunglasses and long hair pulled back. He reminded me of some young Native American leaders. The young woman may have been with him. In the courtyard were other temporary structures. One was a platform built about 12 feet above the ground and roofed. There appeared to be food offerings there. Late in the morning a priest (I'd say) came and with the assistance of two men sat in this pavilion and did extensive and obviously esoteric rituals. Interestingly the priest clearly was not directing any of the general activities nor did anyone but his assistants pay the least attention to what he was doing. Lots of what he did was pray or recite something and he used incense, a lamp (maybe coconut or palm oil), and he often rang a bell to accompany his inaudible words. I watched him to the extent I could see him, but no one else did.

Another temporary structure was a huge platform to hold offerings. These were often woven, folded, cut palm leaves (done in beautiful shapes and patterns), palm leaves covered with rice or satay, or raw meat, flowers, etc. Much incense was burned on this. Coconuts whole and parts were present also as were eggs, and anything one can imagine. The family temple was in the corner of the family compound. At least one shrine there was newly painted and seemed to be the focus of much activity in the temple. When we got there, it was raining lightly. About half a dozen women with plastic bags on their heads were squatting beneath a temporary platform attached to this shrine. Perhaps this shrine was designated as the residence for the ancestral soul released in the cremation. I don't know.

We wandered about as did so many tourists and watched what was going on. The gamelan played now and then. Women were constantly busy finishing the offerings and ritual materials. I loved watching them. They would laugh and discuss procedures and eventually agree and get the thing done. So much was going on that I hadn't a clue about during all this time. Finally,

with the priest still finishing his thing, the women began to go around to all the offerings and sprinkle holy water repeatedly all over them and to recite something or other. One woman seemed principal here. She carried a small silver bowl which she waved towards the offering as she silently recited.

Meanwhile, without my knowing it the bull was taken on to the cemetery about a kilometer down the road. The final preparations of the tower were made including attaching a long white cloth to the tower that stretches out in front of it to be held and pulled along by those who cannot get to carry the platform on which the tower is built. A yellow cloth was also attached.

One rite took place centering on objects that were in the pavilion. One looked to me like a spear about 6 ft long. It was carried out and, along with an intricate cone shaped object, was circumambulated about the offering table three times. This was a wild and furious event very like what would also take place with the tower on way to the cemetery. I read that if the body has been buried it is not actually transported to the cemetery on the tower. In this case a cone shaped object stands for the body. The wild circumambulation is done to confuse the soul that it does not return to the home (am I right on this? will need to look that up). I heard that there were two bodies: an old woman and a young girl. At the cemetery there was evidence of two bodies: one placed in the large black bull another a small package placed in a white one. Perhaps the girl had been buried and she was represented by this cone shaped object. Anyway, I now think that this procession was a mini procession done around these offerings and had the same intent as that of the tower procession. From my vantage I could easily see that there was constant discussion, even argument, on how to do things. Clearly there was no single ritual leader. Often quite young people seemed to have a significant say in how things were done.

After this circumambulation (oh this circumambulation included the cone shaped object being pulled along by a whole crowd of people holding on to a white cord like that preceding the tower) the group stopped at a huge container of very fancy palm leaf objects. Here two very small children were important in the rite and at least one older girl. One of the acts involved taking a stick on which had been tied a kitchen knife and using this in a ritualized cutting motion to cut at many of these objects. Then all the young men and women (boys and girls most of them) gathered, and a woman amply applied holy water to them. Lots appeared to try to get all they could on them. All wore white head band scarves.

The next part involved everyone kneeling or sitting on the ground and some people went up into the main open pavilion. Here everyone took flower petals held them between their fingertips in a praying hand gesture and spoke silently. Tiny children as well as people of all ages did this. During these rites several men sang a sort of chant from the open room of the house facing the pavilion.

There then seemed to be a pause. We tried to think where next to be. We saw a line of women, carrying huge baskets of offerings on their heads go down the driveway and we decided the procession was about to begin. We went down in the road in front of the tower. Hardly had we arrived when a group of shouting young men came barreling down the driveway carrying the coffin roughly. There was much shouting and laughter and rough actions. The cone shaped thing and the spear were also carried down accompanied by a black umbrella held high being attached

to a long pole. The procession with the cone began. The ladies with the offerings on their heads were a hundred yards down the road all looking back awaiting the procession. The people with the cone stopped and argued quite a while on whether to go on or not. The umbrella man also seemed to be late. Finally, they turned back as the coffin came down the driveway.

The coffin was hoisted up on the platform and finally placed onto a shelf beneath the roof at the tower's top. Several young men hung on the top to hold the coffin in place. On the platform beside the tower sat two men playing the xylophone instrument in the gamelan. With a terrific shout the whole thing arose as dozens of men lifted. Everything swayed but remained together. The whole contraption moved several feet to the road's center and the procession began. We were very excited by all this, and we were virtually in the middle of it, no more than a few feet from everything. We took a few photos and beaded on down the road to await the procession with the offering-bearing women. We had a good chance to photograph them, then as the tower approached, we ran on ahead.

About a kilometer down the road was the branch to the cemetery. As we approached it, we saw that another tower from another ceremony in a nearby village had just reached this branch in the road. There was a signpost in the middle of the road and the whole board with the platform went wheeling around this signpost. Next came the tower of the group we were with. They went round so fast that the tower swayed and bobbed. I could see women near me gasp and groan in fear that the whole thing would be lost. I don't know how the young men atop the tower even stayed up there much less managed to hold the coffin in place. But after 3 times around the procession headed on to the cemetery.

We all joined together through this procession. Balinese from both villages and likely visiting from all around and tourists. People looked at each other and shared the excitement. Near the cemetery two gamelan orchestras were playing (there might have been dances, but I didn't see them). High up on a ridge were three bull sarcophagi. One black one by itself and a black one and a smaller white one together. These were installed in temporary pavilions. The towers were set on the ground and moved off the platforms. The backs of the bulls were cut open and laid back. The coffin was taken from the shelf at the top of the tower and lowered to the ground where it was opened, and the body carried wrapped in a mat to the bull. Here the bodies were slid off the board that supported them and with quite a bit of effort placed in the carved-out container prepared for them and embedded in the back of the bull. The body for the white bull was just a small bundle and less attention seemed to be paid to it.

After the body was in place some ritual was performed on the body including pouring lots of holy water on it after which the containers (pottery it looked to me) were smashed on the side of the bull. Lots of cloth was laid on the body and even little objects set up on it. Finally, it was covered with a cloth. Green banana logs were put in place to each side of the bull to prevent the fire from spreading. Then to increase the temperature of the fire (I take it) a coil of a kerosene burner was placed between the bull's legs. Interestingly since the bull had huge gold testicles and penis these interfered with getting the burner in place. First a young man, showing what I thought was a little embarrassment attempted to hold them to the side to allow the coils to get into place. But there wasn't enough room. Finally, a man took his axe and reached under the

bull and performed a quick castration (and whatever it is called when the penis is cut off: a penisectomy?). Now the coils could be put in place. The lighting of the fire seemed almost incidental. The cloth covering the bulls was merely lighted. The fire at first only played around on the bulls before beginning to grow. When it reached the torch, it took light and then the fire grew intense. The outer frame of the bull burned quickly as did the temporary pavilion. The sarcophagus inside the bull now could be clearly seen.

Many of the Balinese people began to leave as soon as the fires were lighted. We grew rather uncomfortable at this point as well and decided to move along to the awaiting Bemo. Much goes on after the cremation including a ritual repeat of it in a month's time, this time without the body. I'd like to know more. 10/15

Commonly during or shortly after one of these intense cultural experiences Emily would become emotional usually accompanied by some potential strife between us. Some of this response was due to not having adequate and proper food. I too was impacted, just not as much as was Emily. As I'm reviewing these journals now so many years later, I am surprised that these moments were fairly common throughout the entire five months. I have also been surprised that, at least in my descriptions of them, it seems we put in the effort to talk through the issues and soon resolved any sense of conflict. I often wrote of these as growing experiences and as leading to a closer stronger relationship.

Interestingly, after I finished *Dancing Graffiti*, I noted it on Facebook and Emily, who now lives in Vermont, expressed interest in how I portrayed her. (A quick aside. The several who have read any portion of that collection of my life stories, with one exception, have been focused on how they appear.) Emily acknowledged the great importance of this trip to her life, yet she remembered our relationship in terms of a presence of a power difference. That is, she was a young female grad student, while I was a fifty-year-old man with a well-established career, adult children, and a home that I'd built. Of course, she is exactly correct, but when she noted this as a major determinative factor in our relationship, I was quite surprised. I didn't recall this power difference as having much impact on shaping our relationship. As the more established one in the relationship, I suppose that makes sense. Yet it is unsurprising now, being made aware that it is how she remembers it, that I'm shocked by my own naivete.

What seems surprising in this rearview mirrored experience is that, while we were, I believe, honestly very close during this whole trip, I now see aspects of our relationship present in my descriptions that would not justify me being so utterly crushed a couple years later when the relationship ended. How odd are our memories? How odd it is that memories held for so long, when matched with documented evidence, are found to be more constructs than actual experiences. I feel now slightly embarrassed and self-deluded.

I had held the memory of my relationship up as something of a standard for all the relationships I've had since. Now I see that I likely had a fictionalized and

romanticized image that set a false and impossible standard that, unfortunately, likely played an outsized role in the failure of all those relationships and in my recent sense that none of my partner relationships in my life were worth the pain and trouble I feel associated with them. Relationships, both partner and friend, and their persistent failure have been a constant and great disappointment throughout my adult life and at which I've always felt the failure.

* * *

In mid-October in Bali I began to engage some strong feelings generated by the realization of the full extent of this journey. Drenched daily with novel cultural experiences and with the constant effort to adjust to always new living situations. I'm sure these sorts of crises are common to any extended adventure. As I have been engaged in editing and reading these journals, I have regularly felt uneasy about what I—imagined in some way myself as “that guy”—was going through in his life. I feel his pain and yet I admire his tenacity and his willfulness to both acknowledge the difficulties he was experiencing as well as to find ways to resolve them, if for no other reason than to just go on. There is a sense in such a journey, as I'm reflecting on it, of keeping the forward motion, retaining the momentum. The flavor of this moment was noted in my journal.

Had kind of a rough day today. After writing a journal entry yesterday I realized that I was homesick. Emily was writing in her journal, and I sat down beside her and said, “Em, you know what?” “What?” she said. “I'm homesick.” I said. She was too but was trying not to tell me. We both had a nice cry and felt better because of it. 10/16

That day I found that the lack of physical exercise was part of my problem, so we did an extensive period of aerobic dance along with sit-ups and pushups. Another part of my problem was missing Corbin and Jenny, so I resolved to call them soon. Yet another part was not knowing what to expect in Java and beyond and the absence of any actual itinerary about when we'd leave Bali. I think I was feeling that being in Bali is an exhausting experience. All of one's senses are on high stimulation constantly.

Over the next day we resolved to workout daily, to buy some novels to read, to see American movies some evenings that were shown nightly at some Ubud restaurants, and to stay at least two more weeks in Bali and we arranged with Nama to participate in several other Balinese religious cultural events.

My computer screen went blank, so I was upset that I'd not be able to do journal entries easily although that issue for some mysterious reason resolved itself in a few days. I finally talked with Jen and learned about her plans to get a job at Steamboat Springs, although I don't recall her living there. Even making a phone call is a difficult and expensive process. The ubiquity of cell and satellite phones taken for granted today makes shocking the descriptions of what I had to go through to make a call. We also found ourselves spending more than budgeted so we moved to a smaller bungalow, one where we had first stayed

several nights and renegotiated the price from the 20,000 rp. we were paying for it before to 15,000.

All these negotiations spurred me to write about how such machinations advanced my understanding of free play, one of my persistent preoccupations. Indeed, now a quarter century later I'm still working out implications of play.

All this [negotiation] confirms my growing awareness of the complete relativity, the free play, of Balinese culture. There is no cost, no fixed base, no constant, no formulae, no rules of thumb. All is negotiation with infinite variables only a very few of which can ever be identified, even by the Balinese, though they certainly are in the know more than we are. In reading about Barong, I thought of play--neither Rangda, the witch, nor Barong, the monster, wins in the end. They are in eternal play, though Eiselman [reference to author of book on Bali religion] refers to it in the less than adequate terms of "balance." Then in reading about gamelan, the instruments are purposely tuned not to be perfectly together. The disharmony when played produces a third tone or "beat" (like the "blue note" I'd guess) that is characteristic of the music.
10/16

In settling ourselves to stay in Bali for a couple more weeks, one of the key opportunities was a tooth filing ceremony, something of an initiation rite for young adults. There are many ritual procedures, and the events take place over a period. The nominal event is when the initiates have their incisors and canines filed which is just a short, but powerful, part of the whole process. We were present for several hours morning through mid-day to observe and participate, such as one can.

We were to meet Nama at the Bali Restaurant about 8:30 a.m. I showed up in shorts carrying my sarong and he helped me get it tied to approximate the proper male style. Then we sat on the stoop in front of the restaurant and watched the event unfold. The event was a tooth filing, which is a rite of passage, perhaps like bar mitzva. It is a complicated affair lasting some days, with the main event taking place on this particular day. It was an auspicious day in the Bali calendar, and ceremonies seemed to be taking place all over. The house where the ceremony was taking place was directly behind Bali Restaurant. A shrine by the road marked the walkway to the house. I had never noticed it before. A number of young men sat on their sandals by the road near the shrine. A couple of them sat behind a table close to the walkway. Women wearing their traditional ceremonial dress approached the house, mostly from the direction of Penestanan (I think this house is near the outskirts of the town). Many of the women walked down the road carrying their gifts (personal wrapped gifts for the initiates, food, and highly decorated palm leaf offerings) on trays on their heads. They were so bright and cheerful as they approached. Not all walked. Many were driven, mostly by young men on motor scooters or motor bikes; a few in cars. They sit side saddle on the back with their bundle on their laps. Arriving at the sidewalk they paused at the table where the young men wrote the name of the family presenting these gifts on slips of paper which were taped to the offerings and gifts. The tray full of offerings and gifts was then lifted to the head to be carried to the house.

After watching this for quite a while we went to the house to look at the offerings and the altar. Four or five apartments (houses with rooms open on one side facing a courtyard) were used as the setting for the ceremony. One of these was installed with an altar and a bed on which the initiates would lie. In the corner of this room was a table filled with the usual ornate offerings made of folded and cut palm leaves. In the apartment were dozens of round trays that contained more of these offerings. A standard feature that I am beginning to recognize is an elevated temporary structure built on bamboo with a shelf about 10 feet high on which certain kinds of offerings are placed. In front of this hangs a kind of palm leaf scenic embroidery and many other things. Next to this was a sort of tapestry made, presumably of rice dyes different colors especially pink and yellow, that had human forms and some sorts of scenes depicted. I don't know much about any of these things and would like to know more.

I looked at all these things and noted that some priests (all dressed in white) and some of the elders were sitting around awaiting the beginning of the ceremony. There were temporary shelters for men and for other groups that were to gather. Behind this area in places I could not see were the kitchen and I think an area where everyone would eat and enjoy themselves later in the day. Staying only a few minutes to see the arrangement, I went back to the front to watch the gift bearers and to enjoy the sport of the men onlookers. Most of the women bringing gifts stayed only a few minutes and were then on their way. If escorted by a young man on a motor bike, as soon as these women would appear at roadside having left their gift, the young men would magically arrive to whisk them away. Nama said that every family in Penestanan was supposed to bring a gift of some sort on this occasion. It seems there is a major social thing going on here too. I suspect that the size and quality of the offerings and gifts is duly noted, though, to my untrained eye, the enormous detail and intricacy gets lost in the sheer volume.

I persist in seeing Bali as characterized by enigma or by eternal opposition. For example, a single offering may consist of a large number of elements. I am sure that the preparer of the offering gives extensive attention to make certain every detail is perfect. These offerings require much craft skill, patience, and time to prepare, and as single pieces each is lovely to look at. The way the leaf strips are folded and cut and stitched together with tiny pins of vegetable spine is a marvel. The women prepare these by the hundreds and surely spend countless hours in the task for something like a tooth filing. Then these offerings are brought and all placed together. Dozens of similar offerings crammed together fill the floor of a whole room. They constitute but a tiny part of many other, even larger and more elaborate, offerings to be found in every corner of the ceremonial place. The care and detail get lost to the observer due to the scale. From a theological and performance perspective, there is much profound and interesting here. From a theological point of view, these offerings are for the gods, not for humans, therefore no one need see these, they aren't made to be seen. From the performance perspective, it is in the preparation and proper presentation of the offering that they are meaningful to the people. They clearly are not intended as works of art or objects to be kept and critiqued.

In time we were told that the tooth filing was beginning, and we went back into the house compound area. A few other non-Balinese were there and were armed with cameras; we, despite Nama's advice, choose to leave ours behind. In the little open room where the altar had been set

up, was a bed on which two initiates, all dressed in fine gold sashes over white sarongs and shirts, lay for tooth filing. The teeth are “killed” by the priest who taps them with a rod struck by a mallet. Then the six upper front teeth are filed. These six include the four incisors and the two canines. The filing is done to remove some of the point on the canines. The Balinese represent the evil figures as animal-like with fangs.

The canines should not be fanglike as humans should not be animal like or evil. The other teeth are filed to even them and to beautify the mouth and smile. These six teeth also are associated with powers or forces (though I need to read more on this) of every person. The filing is apparently more or less painless. The initiates are given mouthwash to rinse their mouths and a mirror to examine the results. If they want more done, they can instruct the priest to file away. A priest and a woman chanted away across the courtyard, near where I was standing, using a small booklet to remind them of the words.

I didn't see much of the actual filing. Those with cameras were shoving their way right to bedside. I feel ashamed of these people so forceful and so eager to catch on film the most dramatic moments. They seem not the least embarrassed or shy at shoving their way past family to get their picture. While I am embarrassed for being one of these non-Balinese, I detect not a bit of scorn or concern expressed by the Balinese. They seem to accept and permit this without any concern. Nama, when asked, confirms that no one really minds. Most Balinese seem little interested in these focal points of ceremonies. When a crucial moment (the actual filing) takes place, they seem uninterested, attention directed elsewhere, or seemingly satisfied to sit at a distance. Most interesting. Also notable is that as soon as the filing was done, the non-Balinese soon packed their cameras and disappeared. I like to see the whole range of events, so I stayed.

Shortly after the filing was done for two sets of two young people (I'd say they were 16 to 20 years old) three male and one female, other rites were performed. The four initiates were brought back out altogether. They sat in a front corner of the room where their teeth were filed. The priest sat on the bed and began his prayers. I'd call this a prayer ceremony. During prayer everyone squats or sits down; apparently the proper posture for prayer because this is when the gods are present. I squatted down where I stood along with the others. Some prayer was conducted by the priest, others by the priest and initiates. At one point a small strip of palm leaf with a tiny object in the middle was tied around the forehead of each of the initiates. When the initiates prayed, they held flower petals between their middle fingers and held their hands in praying position at or above their foreheads. For every prayer set they used new flower petals.

After squatting for quite some time during the prayer ceremony part, now the only non-Balinese present, we arose at the end and noticed that what I'd call a purification rite was about to begin. At this point a young woman approached us with a tray with two covered glasses of hot tea. These were offered to us, and we were invited to sit down. I think this attention to us is significant. I would interpret this as a gesture of gratitude and hospitality in response to our showing some respect (wearing sarongs and sashes and lowering ourselves during prayer). We accepted the hospitality and sat down while the women began the purification rite (if that is what it is). This amounts to using a number of objects (a sort of wicker cone, a bunch of brown grass shredded at the end, stoppered coke bottles, dishes, etc.) to spread and shake holy water.

A group of women, consulting each other constantly about using the right holy water (this is actually labeled on palm leaves floating in the custard dishes filled with holy water) and performing their rites correctly. While we drank tea, these women doused nearly everything with holy water making circuits around the courtyard focusing particularly on various offerings and altar places. Again, I found the energy and constancy of the discussion about ritual procedure among these women to be highly interesting. They are both getting it right and agreeing on how to improvise as they create the rites anew with each performance. They watchdog each other as well. If one fails in proper procedure or skips a step, the others shout out to her demanding correction. This seems to be done brusquely, but in good humor. Again, the performance element is important here: these acts are not done to be watched by others, they are done because the effect they produce is desired and because the procedures are how one is Balinese in these times.

After the purification, clearly the initiates, beginning to fraternize with friends, seemed relieved and this shift in tension marked conclusion of the formal aspects of this ritual occasion. Time also for us to leave.

While Nama had taken us into the house for the tooth filing, he did not care to stay. He returned to his cronies at the Bali Restaurant where we found him. 10/23

As noted, Balinese seem to be a people almost constantly involved in ritual action. There is a complicated Balinese calendar and something akin to astrology is a system that designates particular dates and days of the week as especially auspicious or inauspicious. The scheduling of ritual events is determined by the calendar, with the auspicious days obviously preferred. On the same day as the tooth filing in mid-day, there was a wedding that we had the opportunity to attend that afternoon and evening. It was one in which a man of high caste was marrying a woman with a lower caste standing, requiring some additional ritual elements to adjust for this important difference. As with all the Balinese ritual I observed, weddings are complicated and elaborate events.

It took about 20 minutes to drive to the place of the wedding, a huge and rather lavish family compound. There were two high pointed door gates and inside the compound were many house structures, most very nicely built and beautifully decorated. The eaves of most of the houses were draped with a decorative material for the wedding. Some had paper streamers, and everything was lovely. We were quite early and found the bride and groom dressed to the teeth in formal traditional wedding costumes with large gold headdresses sitting with a group of relatives at one house visiting and joking. We were escorted to another house where a few people were hanging out and after meeting the head of the household, a very friendly and generous man (the brother of the groom), we were offered tea and some little cookies prepared in the shape of a figure eight. Tasty. From our spot we could see the preparations taking place in the kitchen and elsewhere. We could see the movement around of the bride and groom. Emily and Nama ate a bite, food was available. I decided to wait.

In time the group formed, and a procession took place. Led by the bride and groom, the whole wedding party, us included, walked down the road to the house of the bride's family. Entering this compound was interesting. We knew that the groom was of a higher caste and

clearly his family was much wealthier. The bride's family compound was not at all nice. Where there were goldfish ponds and lovely sculptures all over the compound in the groom's family, here was a bare yard full of scrawny chickens and unkempt houses. The bride and groom went onto a porch of one house and sat on a carpet. They looked utterly bored. The high standing men (I'm guessing) sat on the other end of the elevated porch. Other men sat on one side of the compound, the women on the other. Emily and I, the only non-Balinese, sat together on a stoop sort of at the end of the men's group. Many checked us out. Tea, coffee, and banana leaf wrapped rice goodies were served. In time the priest of the bride's family arrived and took the couple along with a few women away from the compound apparently for one ceremony. When they returned, the priest took the bride into an open fronted apartment facing the courtyard and there both sitting on kitchen chairs facing an altar on the wall (of some sort I didn't see it, but I'm betting it was one of those rice tapestry things) performed another ritual. Again no one paid any particular attention to any of this. Everyone visited and snacked.

Once this rite was finished the bride and groom got back together and led the procession back to the groom's house. The groom was equipped with a golden kris dagger which was carried for him by a young boy (perhaps 8) who seemed to stay by his side all the time. The bride's house was just a block away, making the procession easy. If the bride's house is very far away the wedding party is taken by truck and auto (sporting a special palm leaf emblem indicating it as a wedding procession) to and from the bride's house. We saw many of these during our drive back and forth. The calendar said this was a most auspicious day for ceremonies and I guess especially weddings.

Back at the groom's house we took up our old perch and I noticed as it grew dusk (this had taken several hours by now) that in a pavilion across the compound a priest had begun a ceremony. We went over to see it. Again, no one much watched. The priest, a skinny old man wrapped from waist to chest in white sat on a bench before a table on which were placed his ritual equipment. To his left was a wooden box on which his bell rested, the box his "ritual box" (i.e., the box in which he carried around all his stuff). An elderly woman stood near the priest assisting him and she seemed to direct most of the actions of others that had somehow to correlate with the priestly ceremony. For much of the first part of this rite, a group of middle-aged men chanted. They sat on chairs in the grass below the pavilion. The bride and groom sat on chairs facing the pavilion. A group of women seemed to be assisting throughout running here and there placing incense, etc. Two gender gamelan instruments played from time to time in the same pavilion where the priest performed.

Near the pavilion was one of those temporary bamboo structures with the high shelf. These need crude ladders to reach what is on this shelf, an occasional need. The altar part of the pavilion seemed to be, made of those colored rice embroidery things. I noticed during the prayer ceremony of the tooth filing that while the praying was going on, several of the women who sat near this thing looked intently at it and seemed to be pointing out features of it to one another. Even some of the initiates got involved in this.

Another thing I notice as oppositions in Balinese ritual that some ritual objects and instrument are finely wrought and clearly of great material value: the priest's bell, the gamelan

instruments, the use of fine cloth, etc. On the other hand, there are lots of very crude materials: animal flesh offerings, weird constructions of grass or bamboo used for something or other, coke bottles. There seems no embarrassment, no distinction. Very interesting.

The priestly ceremony went on for a very long time. It wasn't easy to see what the priest was doing, but for sure lots of praying or at least reciting something. Lots of bell ringing (which seems to accompany prayer). Lots of incense. Lots of sprinkling of holy water. On and on. The gamelan, the men chanting, the incense being carried here and there, the priest performing, the assistant directing everything. Quite a scene, though most who were not directly involved seemed uninterested. Again, the priest is esoteric and what he does, while essential, is for him. It need not be understood. There is nothing he does that need have meaning for anyone else. I'm sure the bride and groom, though present at this ceremony, understood nothing other than that it was getting them married.

At one point there seemed to be a shift in this ritual. The bride and groom got up and joined friends nearer the central compound. But later they returned and standing some distance from the pavilion were escorted into the pavilion. At first the bride sat on the floor (because of her lower caste?) and the groom sat on a chair. Later she was given a chair and allowed to sit at the same level with the groom. Apparently when there is mixed caste marriage the lower one must be elevated to the same caste (Nama's not all reliable information). Also, if some of the rites of passage have not been performed by the time of the marriage on either bride or groom these can then be done. Some elect to have mini versions of all these rites done again at the time of a wedding, the last life cycle rite before cremation.

Sometime in the last portions of this rite attention was directed to the beads of the bride and groom. The priest had turned around on his bench by this time and was facing the bride and groom now. The woman assistant snipped some of the groom's hair (significance is beyond me) and rice was placed in the hair of both which I think was eaten by a duck (though it looked like a chicken to me) held by the assistant. Quite a bit more attention was given to head and hair. At one point the palm leaf bead bands were tied to the beads of both bride and groom (as in the tooth filing). Nama said that that was for growth (more of his imagination?). At some point along this process, it was now good and dark, and the half-moon directly overhead shown through the trees overhead, the group of women did their rounds of sprinkling holy water (much as in the tooth filing, but they covered this large family compound). As the bride and groom descended from the pavilion the compound began to fill with older teen age youth, gender segregated as is everything. Nama told us it was now over, and the rest was socializing. He said that this was an occasion for the young friends to sort of say goodbye to the bride and groom, who were now among the married adults.

It was an exhausting day. I was very hungry, had a headache from lack of food and water, and yet I was thrilled by all I had seen and experienced. It was an honor to attend so private an event and to be the only non-Balinese. 10/23

Exhausted and food and water depleted by the end of the wedding added onto attending the tooth filing, I was none the less excited by everything that I'd witnessed. Constant ritual with exacting and over the top elaborate preparations

and executions is clearly typical to Bali life. I'm constantly fascinated that few Balinese seem to have curiosity about any explanations or interpretations other than the most practical. There seems to be a strong compartmentalization of ritual duties and parts of the whole event that are not one's responsibility seem not of much interest. One assumes that there is a sense that everyone has a part, and all must be performed accurately. Ritual procedures are commonly discussed, even argued over, during the performance.

Having spent a few days with Nama, our guide and driver, I began to reflect more on his role in Balinese society. He has located himself, as so many do in many cultures, on the fringe of his own society that he might serve as a means for outsiders, tourists, to gain some experience with his culture. In my studies of the early Australian history of encounter, it was the outcasts and misfits from Aboriginal society who became trackers and stock boys and interpreters. Being marginal meant that they were likely the least reliable sources of information that accurately represented their culture. Further, their ongoing means of living was to do as the outsiders wanted. This often meant telling them what they wanted to hear about their own culture. I think Nama is one of these liminal persons. His penchant for New Age nonsense no doubt has been honed by the stream of tourists who come to Bali steeped in New Age expectations. I took a bit of time to reflect on Nama.

I am grateful to Nama. I think the wedding was tiring for him and may have caused him some anguish. I don't know his caste, though I suspect it is the low caste he calls "peon," and yet he has friends who are of higher caste. He had to sponsor his own tooth filing and he knows he'll never have a wedding like this one. I suspect he has mixed feelings about all this. Interesting to me about Nama is that he is Balinese in bearing huge irreconciled incongruities. He seems to spout a kind of self-coined New Age perennial philosophy as Balinese wisdom. He constantly criticizes some Balinese for doing meaningless rites. He insists that knowing the meanings is what is important. Yet the meanings he attributes to these elaborate affairs is global trendy or common sense. He insists that the meaning of tooth filing is to mark the independence of the child from the parents. He insists that is what it means to him. Yet, he clearly remains dependent on his parents. Girls have the tooth filing sometime after beginning menstruation and most then would obviously not be independent of parents after this time. So, this business of independence makes no sense while presenting a kind of common-sense explanation. Nama seems insistent on these positions and actually preaches about it. He is a contradiction in other ways such as his insistence that to be Balinese is to do as the Balinese (I'll buy that), but then he doesn't really participate in anything ritual that I can see. He doesn't work. He doesn't date. He doesn't support his family. He doesn't participate in any traditional Balinese art forms. The only girl he talks about, and he talks about her much is Lynn his California girl friend who wanted to marry him. But the other day we got out of him that it has been four years since he last was in contact with her and that he no longer knows her address. He is a mystery.

10/23

The two days following this ritual marathon were spent reading and reflecting and journal writing. I reflected on my gradual evolution as a human being, my thoughts on my relationship with Emily, my missing Corbin and Jenny and family, and how I was becoming a traveler.

The first of these days, October 24th, included a long self-reflective journal entry.

I discussed the development of my relationship with Emily expressing irritation at what I described as her daily breaking down and crying, indicating her doubts about herself and our relationship. I acknowledged the importance of and confidence in my relationship with her, yet my acknowledgement that, once the trip was over, likely it would not be long before we would both find the relationship unsatisfactory. What I find amazing now, so many years later, is that my assessment was sober, honest, and realistic. I was caring and appreciative, yet I saw the obvious limitations that any relationship with our age difference has. The shocking thing is that something happened after we returned from traveling that caused me to no longer see the obvious, to attach the life and vigor of my life to my relationship with Emily, to be devastated for so long when the relationship failed, and, finally, to remember that my relationship with Emily, as imagined more than as reality, served over all these years as my “gold standard” for all partnerships and friendships, an unrealistic expectation that would contribute strongly to all those relationships failing. I now seems likely that the details of the gold standard were just concocted by me and somehow attached to Emily rather than being truly reflective of the actual relationship. That’s pathetic and contributed to the waste of much of my life.

Yet also in this journal entry there are many notes that express how much I like being alone and doing my work. There are many notes that show that what I took as unquestionably important was family. Family and work were the core values that thread through the stories in *Dancing Graffiti*.

My attention was drawn to an excitement about returning to live in the dome, even though at that time I didn’t think it was possible and wanting to redo it extensively realizing that it needed to reflect who I was becoming post-divorce as the outcome of midlife crisis. One of the details I mention is building a darkroom which grounds in these early times my current extensive interest in photography, now including the philosophy of photography as well as all the techniques of artistry.

I find myself today teeming with ideas for academic and artistic (photographic and writing) projects. Much of what I wrote that day almost 30 years ago I could have written this morning.

I am feeling a calmness within myself, an acceptance, a kind of inarticulate knowing. Yet I also feel a quickening, an excitement, a grounding, an inspiration, a strength of will. From whence these things come I don’t know. How I will be different as a result, I do not know. That

there will be any difference, certainly one perceivable by my closest friends (actually I'm not at all sure I have many real friends), I do not know.

I also am beginning to realize that I feel more, am open to more feelings and to others more completely. Yet this is not the kind of feeling that produces greater displays of emotion. It is merely a fuller acceptance of what is present; what is life.

As I am writing the image of my house comes to mind. I see myself after I return in my house, finishing it, fixing it, building a darkroom, repairing and cleaning and revitalizing it. I see myself by myself, but with friends and my children there from time to time to enjoy it. I see myself settling into deep satisfaction in doing and feeling so many things yet knowing that some of these will be hard and perhaps uncomfortable. I see myself trying to meet new friends, trying out new relationships. I don't want to rush any new love relationships, any long commitments.
10/24

In Bali, many villages have developed to specialize in the making of one or another particular item that is fundamental to Balinese life. Some provide an essential item—bricks and temple components, cremation towers, the bull sarcophagi, weavings, costumes, masks—essential to Balinese life while others focus more on goods that will be sold to tourists—jewelry, paintings, carvings, and an endless variety of tourist items. I suppose there is some economic and skilled labor basis for this village specialization. Villages that have some commercial appeal for tourists have large elaborate stores on main roads or in homes that have a room containing items to sell.

Mas is a village not far from Ubud that specializes in masks. I'd briefly seen some beautiful masks there and, given Corbin's lifelong devotion to theater, I wanted to buy him a special mask. I described the day in a letter to Corbin.

Dear Corbin:

Yesterday I went to a village named Mas to buy you this mask. I had seen a couple of masks of this type in a shop in the main village where I shop. This village is called Ubud. Most of the villages around Ubud are known for a single craft. It seems everyone in these villages specializes in the same craft. If you are interested in silver, you go to the village where they make silver, and go on with baskets, weaving, woodcarving, and masks. I knew that Mas was the village that specializes in making masks. I knew that I liked one particular kind of mask, the kind I got you, because it is the Balinese version of the comedy\tragedy masks that are emblematic of western theatre. I thought you might like one of these.

Emily and I left early in the morning deciding to walk to Mas, a few kilometers away, rather than hiring "transport." We walked through the open market in Ubud which is always a terrifying, yet interesting, experience. There are dozens of people selling their wares, mostly vegetables, meat, eggs, and edible (at least to the Balinese) things, but also cloth, sunglasses, watches, anything you can think of. The sounds and sights are amazing, the smells are overpowering. Some smells are so strong and, to my nose, offensive as to make me nearly ill. It is an experience and finding myself not overwhelmed by it helped me see that I am becoming familiar with Asia.

Trudging on along the road, temples on every corner, dodging trucks and motorcycles constantly, we made our way in the direction of Mas. We had looked at a guidebook map but stopped for a soda and directions at a warung, a place where the Balinese eat. No one spoke English, but when we said “Mas,” they pointed on down the road where we were headed. Okay, so far. Not too far from there we began finding many shops selling wood carvings and masks. One of the first ones we saw had masks like this one and I was stunned to find that the price they asked (and they would take much less than this) was only one third what the starting price was in Ubud (just a few kilometers away).

Now a seasoned shopper and bargainer, I did not even think of bargaining at any of the first places, because if you name a price and they meet it, you have to buy. I wanted to see a great many masks and to compare. I wanted to become a little knowledgeable about masks before I thought of buying. I find that it is difficult to know quality when you are unfamiliar with things. Some things, after you buy them, turn out to seem a bit like junk. I didn’t want this to happen. So, we turned down every alley way and hunted every shop. We saw lots of masks being carved—every shape, size, and character. We priced many. “How much?” We went where tour buses always stop and there found the prices in US dollars rather than in Indonesian rupiah and the prices were at least 10 times what the same objects costs 50 meters down the road, i.e., at the places without western flush toilets.

Finally, we went off the street to a sign “mask maker” and talked with I. B. Anom. He had just a few masks in his shop in contrast to most shops where there are so many masks you cannot really see any of them. He had two of the “happy-sad” masks and immediately popped one on his face, the one I eventually bought you, and performed for us, first as sad and then as happy. He was a fine character actor and we talked with him. He is also a masked dancer and, later we read a magazine article about him. He told us that he was the designer of this mask style. When I asked him why they appear elsewhere, he said that others copied him. I believe him, though one is never sure. I examined his masks very carefully and began to discern what distinguished them in quality and what might justify his prices, which were very high compared with most other shops. With his masks in my mind, we went to a dozen more shops and looked at them to compare. I could begin to see why his are so wonderful.

Now you have not seen any of these masks, so let me at least tell you some of the things that make this mask so special, to me anyway. The most important thing is how the carver has worked with the natural colors in the grain of the wood. He has used the color to emphasize the eyes and mouth. When the sad face is showing the colors look like tear stains. Other areas of the wood color highlight the expression. No other masks like this showed so much understanding of the wood; no others began to be so fully expressive. Other things important about this mask were the added small details in the carving that make this mask more expressive. The way it is carved. Then the proportions are so that the mask actually fits the face. Many of the lesser quality ones didn’t even fit the face (they were sculptures that looked like masks).

After all this comparative shopping I went back and bought this mask for you. No need to bargain, though I tried, I paid the asking price.

Stopping at a warung for a snack in the blazing heat, we saw a collection of young (and a couple older) men who each carried their pet rooster (fighting cock) to an area under a huge (really huge) banyan tree. As we sat there, we watched how much these men love these birds. We joked, the possibilities are endless when you know that these birds are “cocks,” about how these men loved to stroke their cocks. Occasionally a couple would go to an open area and engage the birds in mock (because they were not equipped with the deadly spurs) battle. Quite a sight. Very fun to watch.

Then the long walk back to where we are living. The shopping trip took all day and was exhausting. When we got back, I was starving, yet completely satisfied with this wonderful purchase. I do wish that you could have met Anom and seen him act the mask. Hope you enjoy it.

I think there is another reason I chose this mask for you. First, I thought of getting you one of the painted masks that represent one of the many figures in Balinese dance drama. I've seen many of these and the masks look very Balinese. But I thought that since you haven't seen these dramas or know the stories, the figure might not be that significant to you. At first, I thought this double mask didn't seem very connected with Bali. Then I realized that it is quintessential Bali in that everything here is a combination of opposites. Nothing is only what it first appears to be. So many things appear simple, like buying a cheap sarong, but turn out to be infinitely complicated, like actually bargaining for the thing and figuring out whether you got good deal or were scammed. This seems impossible for it seems nothing anywhere has a fixed cost, a fixed value. All sales are complicated interactions with dozens of unspoken and even unknown variables. Many people here seem to work all the time. Everything is done by hand in the hardest most labor-intensive way. Yet, it seems like everyone here has plenty of time, especially for ceremony and dance. The women carry the heavy loads. The young men sit around admiring their cocks and showing them off to their friends. Life is very slow here, but don't step in the road without looking for everyone drives fast and dangerously. The malevolent and benevolent spirits are always feared and held off by constant offerings, yet they do make themselves present on many occasions and do battle, but neither side wins. Everything has two faces and so this mask is wonderfully Balinese, as I am experiencing it.

Love,

Dad 10/26

What is so shocking reflected in the rearview mirror looking at this distant event is how it specifically engages (introduces?) ideas that I have been writing about and publishing recently. In my 2020 Oxford University Press book *The Proper Study of Religion: Building on Jonathan Z. Smith*, I write extensively about Smith as my mentor. In that book and a couple of recent article publications I identify his work, especially on comparison, with the term the “necessary double face.” He used this term in his 1969 doctoral thesis on James George Frazer’s *The Golden Bough*. I sought the classic Greek sock and buskin double mask, what we popularly identify as the comedy/tragedy mask of theater, as a principal illustration for how something can be two opposing things at the same time.

Beyond Smith, I've developed this idea of the human distinctive capability, indeed a forte, of holding together at the same what we know to be not the same at all. This seeming impossibility characterizes common metaphor, the workhorse of language, in that it holds that one thing equals another thing that we know all along it does not. Argument is war—she destroyed (or defeated or shot him down or blasted) him with her argument—when clearly argument is not literally war. I pose this way of holding *as equal what we know not to be equal* is true of art, symbol, language, map, photography, masks, and on and on. I believe it is ultimately based in the interconnected evolution of human posture (upright smooth walking), big brains capable of reflection and objectification, and opposing thumbs that allow us to grasp both physically and mentally. I have found that, while this principle is in a sense obvious, most scholars have never considered it to any extended way. I am in the process of writing a collection of essays that I call *Symphony of Impossibles* illustrating and exploring this notion. I may also need to write a book on moving from interrelated philosophical and biological perspectives. Curiously the first academic essay that I wrote focused on my experience in the 1970s with Hopi masking as part of initiation rites. I also have outlined essays for this collection on both photography and dancing.

The mask I so carefully selected for Corbin and my explanation of it and how it so fittingly represents Balinese culture, which itself might be called a symphony of impossibles, reveal that the idea I have felt has emerged only recently has deep roots, indeed.

A local hub for our activities was a little restaurant and shop called Bali Restaurant. This is where I met Nama and where he hung out. It was run by a young man named Nyoman who also owned the car we rented. Knowing that we were interested in all cultural things Bali, Nyoman, who did not speak English, asked us to be his guest at a cremation ceremony that involved someone in his family. I quickly accepted.

This turned out to be a huge event involving many families and I was able to add to my small but growing knowledge and experience of these events. I'll just include here the parts of my journal related to this event that add to what I've already described.

When people are poor and are of low caste, they cannot afford to have a cremation ceremony. The body is buried. I don't know what sort of ceremony there is associated with burial. However, these people still must be symbolically cremated, if, in fact, their bodies are not actually cremated. I have read that the bodies are dug up and the remains are cremated, but that wasn't the case here. As clearly as I understand it, some 30 or so days before the ceremony, the families of people who have died and been buried come to the enclosure near the cemetery. Here they make preparations of offerings, they make personal symbols for people who are to be honored. They sleep there. We saw this place and every person who was being symbolically cremated had a place along the walls of this area, sort of a stall. Here a symbol of them (it looked roughly like

an effigy, but not a realistic one) was made and hung up in the sheds that surrounded the area. Other symbols of them were made: one to be burned and one to go home with the family. I supposed that these people simply await a death of one of substance and caste to occur in the area. When this takes place all these other people share in the honor of an actual cremation ceremony. All twenty or so of these people have their personal symbols which are collected on a small body tray (just like the one used for an actual body) and wrapped in cloth. These, like the coffin of a dead person to be cremated, are all loaded on a single tower where they all ride together to the cemetery escorted by a single bull in which all these symbols will be placed for a common cremation.

At the cemetery, the bulls go on into the cemetery and are readied to receive bodies and the towers are placed at the edge. If a coffin is present, it is unloaded and taken to the bull in which the body will be burned. It is the tower with the symbols of all those symbolically cremated, these bundles are unloaded from the tower one by one. As the bundle is picked up the name of the person is called out. His or her family comes to pick up this bundle and takes it to the area where it will be placed into the bull for cremation. With 20 or so being honored together this was quite a procession just from the tower.

There were small towers and many bulls all over the cemetery. It was quite a sight. The backs of the bulls were hacked open, and the bodies loaded into the sarcophagi, then the women who carried the offerings on their heads in the procession to the cemetery came to the sarcophagi and these offerings were placed in with the body. I noticed that a symbol representing the deceased, even when a body is present, is carried in the procession and I was pleased to identify that included the man's kris dagger.

This time we remained in the cemetery long after the fires were ignited. Bulls were burning all around. The Balinese use kerosene torches to assist in the burning. On the bull nearest me they used two torches, trained carefully on the sarcophagus. As the wood of this enclosure burned away, the body dropped down into the wire that had been wrapped around the bamboo to make the body of the bull. It hung there, rather unrecognizable as a body for some time. Finally, the wires burned through and the lower part of the body fell down to earth pulling the less than completely burned skull out of the partially burned sarcophagus. There was little interest shown in this, though at this point it hit me emotionally rather directly that I was witnessing a real event and that this was a human body being burned. The men attending the cremation simply used a metal pole to shove the body on down between green banana logs used to contain the fire, covered the body with a sheet of corrugated iron and pumped up the torches after redirecting them.

After the body is burned as well as it could be, bone fragments are retrieved and taken to the home where they are placed on what is described as a "bed." Here the fragments are arranged in a human shape and dressed (I don't know how this works) in clothes of the deceased. Then at some point (maybe another 30 days) the ash fragments are taken to the sea and placed in the ocean. I think one of the personal symbols winds up in the ancestral shrine in the family temple, the place of residence for the spirit of the deceased. The whole thing is finally concluded.

The experience of this cremation was quite a bit lighter and more fun [such an odd kind of evaluation it now, 30 years later, strikes me] than the first one. I think part of that is that in the first one we were in the family compound, spatially confined, and we didn't know what the heck was going on. We identified as tourists, but there was no camaraderie because I felt alienated for taking the same photos I was taking. All very weird and tiring. Here not only did I know what was going on, we didn't go into the family compound, also we were with people we knew a little and we had been given a nice transition by Nyoman by being offered tea. Then we were less physically confined at this cemetery. Incidentally, though not really incidentally at all, the cemetery was in a very beautiful area. It was filled with very tall and quite beautiful palms. Looking through the cemetery which sloped downward to a valley in the back I could see on the opposite slope beautiful, terraced rice fields. It was cool and pleasant in the shade in the cemetery, the gamelans played in the background and the fascinating and beautiful Balinese people sat around everywhere watching as others were busy with the work of cremation. 10/27

Even the most banal aspects of Bali are interesting and noteworthy. Since our bungalow was in the middle of a gorgeous rice paddy the stages of rice cultivation were our daily education. When the rice starts to ripen much is done to protect the grain from marauding birds.

The rice paddies in front of our house are now getting grain in their heads. The presence of the grain makes rice prey to the birds. Tiny little birds some black with white breasts and others that look to me like wrens, love the rice. The Balinese put contraptions all over their rice fields to serve as scarecrows. Mostly these scarecrows are bamboo poles to the top of which is attached by a string a piece of plastic garbage: a bag, a sheet, a wrapper. Other things are old shirts, rags, tin cans with pebbles in them. There are hundreds of these in the rice fields and to cast one's eye across a huge area these is quite a sight, beautiful really even when, perhaps especially when, you realize that this is waste plastic. Guards are assigned to the field as well. In the one near our bungalow, the guard has built himself a little platform with a thatch roof over it where he sits to watch for birds. He has connected a great many of these plastic bearing poles by strings that all come together at his shack. From dawn until dusk, he can be heard shouting at the birds and rattling the cans and shaking the poles by pulling his strings. Adds quite a bit of local flavor to an already delicious dish. 10/27

Reading Sartre and about Sartre occupied me for several days. I was particularly interested in his notions of play and freedom. I began to imagine how to relate these ideas to my study of dancing. They also offered some insight for some reflections on the potential of being a tourist, at least the sort I was trying to be.

Thought some today about the notion of being a tourist and the elements of choice that one has to engage. This is a controlled process of experiencing the kind of freedom that Sartre talks about. In traveling the way we are, one is forced repeatedly to make choices not knowing or often even guessing what the results may ultimately be. There is no alternative but to choose, where to go, what to do, what to eat, when, etc. Hundreds of choices every week. Most of these are made simply on the faith that they will take one in an interesting and growing direction. To be in a

situation where choice is necessary is an exercise of freedom. To experience this freedom, even under the circumstances that the period is known to be limited (i.e., the trip will one day be over), nonetheless gives one the experience of choice. If I can choose and thereby exercise my freedom as a tourist, and survive and find it meaningful, then I can choose and make choices and exercise my freedom related to the balance of my life after I return home. Thus travel, if conducted in a way that demands choices, ought to have a high potential for personal growth in the sense of catharsis, the dismissal of the substantive self, the overcoming the spirit of seriousness, etc. 10/29

As I have written, temple festivals (*odalan*) occur frequently. Each of the four thousand temples has an annual festival, often more than one. We had seen and been on the fringes of these a few times. Nyoman, the young man we met and knew at Bali Restaurant invited us to attend an *odalan* in his village. It happened to also be Halloween, which was in evidence only by those who had lived in the USA, and it was also Emily's birthday.

Nyoman is such a nice young man, 25 or so. He had arranged transport through a friend, another Wayan. We went to Nyoman's house as we did for the cremation ceremony, and he served us tea and we relaxed. Emily loves the Balinese children and enjoyed trying to get them to come to her and for the babies to let her hold them. She is very cute in these effusions of warmth and friendship. Around 6 p.m. we went to the temple. Throughout the afternoon women had been coming to the temple with huge offerings arranged beautifully on trays on their heads. They were still streaming into the temple well after dark. The gamelan players showed up and began playing music. Around 8 a loose procession formed and tramped about 2 kilometers to another temple. Here the gamelan of the other temple was playing. The members of "our" gamelan set on the ground in the outer temple grounds and waited. The others played several songs. We were awaiting some ceremonies to be complete in the inner temple. Then the image (or symbol) of the god, in a box, is finally carried out and the procession begins to take it back to the first temple. This was very fun, and the procession involved a whole gang from one temple joining us and heading down the road in the dark with two gamelans playing as we went. Women carried "things" (what they were I don't know) on their heads in both directions. The god symbol was comprised (I think) of a big box carried on the head, and a sort of throne carried on poles between two young men. I don't know how the women carried the things on their heads. I could hardly walk (and I even wore my sneakers) on the uneven road. Oh, while in Nyoman's family compound, one of his female relatives was doing her daily round of offerings. As she walked across the courtyard with the offering tray on her head, she lost it. It crashed to the ground. This is the only time I have ever even seen a woman have to catch or steady a tray thinking it about to fall. I am relieved to know that this is not some completely mysterious thing that all Bali women can do innately.

When the procession arrived back at the first temple, the gamelan set up and began to play and many others went into the middle temple area (within the walls). They all sat down. Prayers were offered here and then they all went into the inner temple with the symbol of the god to pray. In the middle and inner temple, the offerings brought there throughout the afternoon were stacked

everywhere. Hundreds and hundreds of these huge, stacked trays of offerings. Quite a sight. Nyoman took us into the middle temple, though I sensed he was a bit uncomfortable in doing so. Then when the group entered the inner temple, he escorted us to the outer temple grounds to await them coming out. He and Wayan wanted to go eat and so Emily and I remained at the temple.

The gamelan was playing in its pavilion. Many people were selling nuts and snacks on the outer temple grounds. Groups of men and groups of women sat and chatted and enjoyed themselves seemingly everyone eating snacks. The gender segregation here is quite remarkable. Rarely do you see a man and woman talking. Yet the counterpart of this is interesting too. The contact among individuals in both genders is very close, very friendly, and physically affectionate. It is common to see men, especially unmarried young men, walking along holding hands, hugging one another, arm in arm or even for one man to stand behind another with his arms around him. Women are equally affectionate with one another. Both genders love the children. They play with them, hug them, hold and kiss them constantly. This is a very affectionate culture except for between genders. We asked Nyoman about how males and females get together and what they do. It is very limited. He is 25 and says he isn't even thinking of girls and won't until after 27 when he can get a good job. It seems that if a male and female catch each other's eye, they can rarely even talk. On Mondays the boy can go visit the girl in her home, I suppose if admitted and always under supervision. If they see each other on the road, they might chat a bit if the girl's family is not in sight. Other than this there is little contact until the boy tells his father he wants to marry a girl. The father (I suppose he must agree) then talks with the girl's family and then they must agree. Much care is taken that marriage doesn't involve a match that is within the descendants of the first four generations of a common ancestor. The fourth is marginally acceptable, but the fifth is finally okay.

While Nyoman and Wayan were gone to eat, Emily and I noticed how much attention we got from the Balinese. First of all, of the hundreds of Balinese there, we were the only non-Balinese present. Secondly, we were together--a man with a woman. Thirdly, I know the Balinese are totally curious about our age difference. We could see groups looking in our direction and chatting among themselves. We have grown quite accustomed to being looked at and talked about and we tend to respond by smiling at them to let them know that we know what they are about. The Balinese have wonderful senses of humor and are constantly joking and enjoying each other. They love it when they can include you in their joking and when you respond with a smile and good humor. For example, we have been debating about Balinese physical characteristics. I argue that there is a Balinese walk. Emily now sees this and thinks it is a very sexy way for the young men to walk. They walk very smoothly with relaxed bodies with the pelvis slightly forward. Very comfortably in contact with the ground, with a relaxed confident unburied gait. She commented on how sexy this walk was as we walked down the road with Nyoman and Wayan. I decided to try to walk this way. Without telling them, I tried, in earnest, to walk this way. They immediately knew exactly what I was trying to do. They thought this to be very funny. They even began to talk about how to walk. For example, to walk like a king requires that the little "tail" that hangs down in the front of the sarong should be carried

over the left arm. Nyoman did this and everyone around, seeing him, laughed and thought it a grand joke.

When Nyoman and Wayan returned from eating we went to the area near where the gamelan was playing and listened to that a while. Then in the back of that pavilion the dancers were getting prepared in their costumes. We went in this little room and watched them for a while. Then we took a place on the lawn near a sort of temporary bamboo pavilion with an enclosure at one end with curtains constructed that would act as the stage for the dancing. The gamelan players moved their instruments to this open pavilion and set up to accompany the upcoming dances.

The music began. The first dance was solo Baris. The young man with the triangular military hat and the distinctive wide eyes raised shoulders and Baris step. Interesting dance. It seemed more comical to me than I had expected. Seemed the caricature of a warrior rather than anything very realistic. It was fine and I am impressed that even in such a small community (there are literally hundreds of these all over Bali) that such fine gamelan playing and dancing could exist.

The next two dances were done by young women. One was solo and was a version of Legong (though done as a solo and shortened). The second was done by two dancers and was a "new" dance, the one we had seen at Ubud Palace involving the dancers using the edges of a kind of drape behind them to form yellow wings that they raised and lowered at times. This seemed to me to be a kind of courting dance and might represent two butterflies (though Nyoman indicated he thought they were birds). It turned out that Wayan, who was with us, is a fine dancer (having danced Barong, Baris, and others), and that one of these female performers was his dance teacher. Wayan is 18 and a remarkably handsome young man. After this female dance was Topeng, the masked dance. This is a drama more than a dance. The maskers use postures and walks related to Baris, but they speak their roles. This was quite a long drama involving something of the story of the founding of Klungkung or something on those lines. It involved one character at first (the classic Topeng) then he changes to "the old man" (much joking about who will look like this old man and how soon). Then several characters who simply stand and speak their parts dramatically while the gamelan at this point takes up a kind of pace keeping refrain awaiting the signal that the characters have spoken their parts. Finally, a huge fat guy (one of the few I have seen, and it turns out he lives in Nyoman's family compound, his cousin or something) comes out in a female mask and plays a comic role. The audience became more attentive. The drama finally wound down with a final character with a very small white mask and that ended the dancing for the evening.

Everyone watched the dancing. They watched it with rapt attention. There were many young boys who sat right to the side of the curtain and seemed completely fascinated by every moment of the performance though by this time it was nearing midnight. Other children seemed fascinated by the gamelan and sat as close to a gamelan player as they could. Some gamelan players actually played with a child sitting on their laps. Other than during Topeng, everyone was remarkably attentive. Still there was little visible audience reaction. No applause after dances. When the butterfly dancers wiggled their hips at one moment in a move seemingly designed to attract the

other, there was some laughter and response. Also, quite a few people began to mill around a bit during Topeng. It seemed that only a few were following the words during Topeng. Many stood, some sat on the ground, but everyone was attentive throughout most of the 2-hour dance performance. The dances are sort of entertainment, sort of offerings to the gods who are present. The continuity between the entertainment and the offering quality of a dance is measured by where the dance is done. In the inner temple it is an offering mostly, though lovely to watch. If in the outer temple, it is more entertaining, though still an offering. I think that individual variation and that dancers showing a mild amount of individuality are tolerated only in the outer temple. Knowing that all dance, like all offerings, is for the gods, it need not be seen as an offering (interesting point in my discussion of dance theory) though it must be very beautiful, the dancer is a medium as much as anything, hence the fixed (masklike) facial expression (this is interesting to my theory as well) and rigidity of dance forms..

After the dance was over, everyone started filing into the middle temple. Prayers were then to be offered. We elected at that time to head home. Wayan brought us; Nyoman stayed since it was his temple to, in his words, "enjoy the festival of his temple." I was profoundly impressed with the whole affair and delighted to finally see temple dancing. Emily felt that she had had quite a remarkable birthday and enjoyed everything as well. 11/1

Spending more time with Nyoman without Nama's presence revealed that Nyoman is much more knowledgeable about Bali religion and culture, where Nama's information appears more of a New Age construct intended for tourist consumption. I also found that Nyoman was interested in knowing more about us, where Nama showed little interest.

Nama showed up at our bungalow on November 3rd informing us that at the village of his friend Wayan, whom we knew, this was what he called "top day" of a temple festival. He said we were invited. We quickly dressed in our Bali ceremonial costumes and were off for another day of Bali ceremony. While Nama took us to this event, at some point he abandoned us without telling us. Fortunately, it was not far from our bungalow, and I remembered how to walk back.

Soon after arriving, a marching gamelan had formed in the road and many young women came from Wayan's houses into the road carrying large offerings, ones made of bamboo and other grasses formed into beautiful designs, on their heads. With those long flags and umbrellas we processed to a nearby village temple where everyone except the hired gamelan players went into the inner temple to pray. The women filed up one by one and placed their offering on a large concrete table that was in a pavilion before a covered shrine that looked like a chair or throne, perhaps the seat of the god? With the offerings in place everyone knelt on the ground and while the priest in a pavilion on the side prayed with the typical accompaniment of his bell, all the people prayed. After the prayers they took the offerings up again and returned to the street forming a procession. Again, back down the road we went, this time passing Wayan's house and going one or two kilometers down the road to another temple. This temple happened to be alongside a grade school and the gamelan players set up in the school yard to perform. I sat with

Emily in the school yard and watched the gamelan players. It was interesting for me on this whole deal to be near the gamelan players so that I could try to figure out this kind of music.

I found that much of it is constructed on a basic eight or sixteen count. Each instrument has a fairly rigid combination to beat out within this base count. For example, one large gong might strike on beats one and seven, while the other large gong strikes on beats six and eight. The small gongs have similar patterns, though some of them do more than simply strike the beat, they have a double strike or a special striking technique. The ceng (or cymbals) have whole sections signaled by the drummer who is the leader. I could anticipate their playing patterns fairly well after just a few repetitions. It is quite amazing and fascinating the results of all these instruments each doing its own thing, once they all fit together. Still, I don't know how they know one song from another, though clearly there are dozens of them. Somehow the drummer signals the song in his introductory phrase, and they all know what to do. While I thought that I might like to play gamelan in the Naropa group in Boulder, I have decided that perhaps this isn't so appealing. [I did end up playing in the CU gamelan for several years.] I like listening to the effect of the whole piece better than I think I would like to simply count an eight-count making sure I hit a gong on beats two and seven. [Interestingly, eventually I preferred the challenge of playing to listening to the music I was helping to make.] I don't know, perhaps there are other attractions. Perhaps there is a kind of meditation that one falls into while keeping one's part going in the pattern. It was interesting that once in a while the music got screwed up. If one person gets off, there is certainly a notable change in the music and the other players tend to get on the one who gets off. That part was fun to see as well, since these were just local people who happen to enjoy playing gamelan.

After that procession we returned to Wayan's house. The offerings were taken into the temple area and the rest of us went into the house compound. I could hear singing and praying in the temple. The gamelan players were given coffee and offered lunch, for it was noon by this time, given a gift of goods in plastic bags and they left. We hung around wondering where Wayan Nama had gone. He deserted us soon after we arrived leaving us, the only non-Balinese, to our own devices. By this time, we were beginning to wonder if the family even knew we had been invited. A couple people made an effort to visit with us: a young college student and an elderly quite stately gentleman. Though both were nice, after an hour or so of waiting, Nama had not shown up, and I felt much like an intruder. Though I had met Wayan, the host, and his wife and had greeted both earlier, I didn't feel that anyone else knew we were anything but tourist gatecrashers and so I choose to leave and walk back. It was only a couple kilometers or three and the walk back was nice. 11/3

Constant ceremony. While throughout the morning we had been at the "top day" at Wayan's and walked home, we had an invite back to Nyoman's in the evening for the last night of the *odalan* we had been to before. My description is extensive, based on the best of my memory and with little clarity of what was actually going on. I wonder if I should include the whole thing here, yet its extensiveness, if nothing else, conveys the complexity and richness of the ubiquitous Bali temple festivals.

The evening was for the Temple ceremony in Payungah, Nyoman's village. This was to be the last night of the main ceremony. We got a ride with young Wayan shortly after 8 p.m. and again spent some time in Nyoman's family's house. I met his brother who was working on his computer in his apartment. He is working on a master's degree through a university in Yogya. He is interested in teacher education. He is a very nice man, and it is nice to see a Balinese home with books, a computer, and a resident student. Clearly the family was very proud of him and his accomplishments. His apartment was set up very nicely for him to work.

Then we went to the temple. This required some waiting at the waring across the road where Emily sparred with the locals. She gets into their joking and has lots of fun with them. Finally, we crossed to the temple and after all the people prayed in the inner temple (which we watched from the middle temple) everyone gathered around the outdoor pavilion where the dancing was to take place. While watching the people praying in the inner temple, I noticed the dancers, mostly men of middle age, preparing their makeup and costumes in a shed along the side of the inner temple. Clearly their role is religiously important.

The dance pavilion was equipped with microphones and lights, some of which were designed to have dramatic effect. The performance that was to unfold, interrupted one time only by a brief shower, lasted more than three hours and had many parts and characters. A great deal of it was clearly humorous, though I got only the physical humor of the clowns who performed near the end (the last hour I suppose), but everyone was riveted to the dialog and there were many laughs. The gamelan sat to one side rather than around the dance area as before. The gamelan clearly had some music to accompany the performance, but it became very clear that they, through the drummer leader, were taking cues from the performers.

I don't know how to begin to describe this performance. It involved many scenes and many characters that seemed in the last hour to build very dramatically, though interestingly with clowns mediating everything, to quite a finale: the entrance, stabbing, and speaking dance of Rangda, the last part of which she was accompanied by her two sons. Also, it turns out that when Rangda entered, she did so by coming down a ramp that went to the top of the temple wall: she literally descended from the temple amidst fire and smoke. When her presence was felt, the audience all knelt as she was the "symbolic god" I was told. Now let me return to the beginning and attempt to recall some of the scenes.

An early part of the dance involved a single masked figure, like Topeng, perhaps Jaok. Then the figure changed to "the grandfather" and danced. This was interesting in that the old man engaged some of the children who sit attentively near the stage entrance. I also noticed that one little girl showed great fear of the old man. When he turned in her direction, she fled which required nearly climbing over half a dozen people.

Another scene involved two figures, seems like they were the same performers as on Sunday evening. One was the straight man, and the other was a comic. They bantered back and forth many times and this was a delight to the audience. Some of the humor is physical, but most was verbal. Even the small children seemed to stay with this, though clearly some "got" more of the humor than others. People near me would laugh heartily and then repeat quietly to themselves the funny lines and laugh again.

Then the drama went into a mid-section that involved two figures (neither masked) and a young woman. She perhaps was a consort of Rangda, I don't know. They were joined eventually by another woman. These women danced some but had long speaking parts and one of these dancers in particular gave a very long monologue received with shouts and boos.

This troupe was eventually joined by what appeared an old lady, but it might just as well have been an old man, and there was dialog among all of them. None were masked but were clearly playing familiar characters. The audience seemed a bit less attentive though perhaps this was due to the hour that this group performed.

Next, if memory serves me at all, a group of four women did a very pretty woman's dance and before they finished the performance was briefly interrupted by a shower. We all ran to the gamelan pavilion, and I was surprised that even before it stopped raining, everyone hurried back to the performance pavilion to get a better place to see. I was amazed that while by this time it was well past midnight and I had been standing on my toes all evening trying to see a little, all the Balinese were hanging in there.

Once everyone was in place again, the drama started with the entrance of a skinny old man clown. This guy was a marvel of comedy. He had a huge wooden meat cleaver in the back of his sash. He wore a black sarong, a sort of rag covering tightly his hair. His upper body was naked, but painted with a few simple white lines, a couple over and under his breasts, and perhaps a vertical line down the center of his chest. He soon did a caricature of women's style dancing that was most artful. He had all the moves and seemed to imitate them perfectly until he would give comic exaggeration to a hip move, like doing a hunching move along with a side-to-side hip movement. Everyone loved this and crowded forward like canned sardines to catch every move. Soon another clown entered. This one a slightly plump man with his face painted with red and white in a manner that made him look rather monkey-like to me. He too was bare chested and wore a sarong. An early joke was a physical one. Apparently, he made some reference to his penis and threatened to expose it. He pulled back his sarong, only to reveal another sarong, everyone laughed. Then he pulled this back, yet another sarong, everyone laughed. Some also gasped at what they expected, but then the men pulled back, in a flurry, several more sarongs, never getting to his bare self (perhaps a physical demonstration of Sartre's insubstantial self-my own joke). At times these two clowns caricatured women's dance together in a most hilarious way. The second clown would caricature the first clown's caricature to great effect, especially since he would do it behind the first clown so he couldn't see him. One great joke was a play on the Balinese fingers curving backward. The first clown could do it. The second clown used one finger to try to hold his fingers into a backward curving position. Everyone loved all this. Much of their humor was grossly physical: lots of belching, farting, and sexual interplay. The second clown carried a black portable microphone in his sash. This technological innovation became also a comic innovation. First it looked like a large black penis. They played on this resemblance for quite some time. Further, with the mike close to the mouth the clown could make funny farting and belching sounds accompanied, of course, by the appropriate physical actions.

A masked monkey figure joined these two for quite a time. They teased and threatened the monkey (man or woman? I rather think woman). They chased her, the first clown chased her

with his cleaver (after of course going through the motions of sharpening it on his thigh and threatening his own genitals). At one point the two clowns lay down on mats to sleep. The monkey woman joined them after they went to sleep. The second clown got up but the first one got hold of the monkey woman and began fondling and caressing her as a man might his wife in sleep, or in the dark in bed. Everyone nearly lost it at this point. When the clown awoke to see what he was "loving" he went on and climbed on top of her and imitated in a highly exaggerated way, sexual intercourse. This nearly did in the monkey and the first clown invited the second one to follow him, an invitation accepted. Hump. Hump. Hump. The monkey figure finally left.

The sequence may be wrong here, but either at this point or during the discourse between these clowns and a male figure dressed in what I'd call royal garb, there was a furious mock funeral. This was conducted completely by young people. They sprinted into the pavilion with a bed made of bamboo that they erected on bamboo stilts near chest high. They carried a body of a young man wrapped in a mat. They erected the bed. Roughly and furiously, they placed, the mat bound body on the bed, unwrapped it, washed it by dumping a bucket of water over it, covered it with a sheet, added a few offerings, and rewrapped it in the mat. They secured the mat to the bed. Then they spun round and round, reminding me of the spinning during the funeral procession, and flew out of the pavilion into the road in front temple. With torches they ran in one direction, returning in a few minutes they ran to the other direction. A few minutes later they could be heard to the side or behind the temple perhaps a block or so away. I would love to know what this was about and how it fit into the pattern of the drama.

Then entered a sort of royal looking male figure. This figure talked with the clowns extensively. Attention turned to a secondary curtained platform up a ramp to the top of the temple wall. It seemed to me that they were arguing who should go up to that area and get whoever was behind the curtain. Clearly it was a frightening thought, as with attention directed toward the platform, a fire emitted billowing smoke around the platform and flames shot in great blasts from behind the wall here and there (incidentally effected by a man blowing a flammable liquid into the path of a torch). At this time, everyone knelt or sat on the ground, the Balinese gesture of respect when "the god is present." I noticed some in the audience were very serious, some even appeared frightened or awed. A preliminary to this scene was the entrance of umbrella bearers who stationed themselves with red umbrellas atop tall poles at either side of the base of the ramp. These umbrellas also apparently signal the presence of the god. As this happened, the young 16-year-old Wayan said to me, "The coming of the symbolic god." The royal figure brandished his kris dagger and threatened the clowns. They would make feints at going up the ramp, but they never had the courage. Finally, the royal figure began his slow ascent. At the top he went behind the platform and dragged the costumed witch Rangda down the ramp. At the base of the ramp, he took his kris and stabbed in highly dramatic effect Rangda time and again. Rangda did not appear to suffer. Rather she entered the dance pavilion and did her speech (and dance?). Soon other umbrellas (yellow ones) appeared signaling other deities and from the center door of the temple wall and the side door came two other Rangda figures. These were sons of Rangda. They joined her in the pavilion (the clowns and the Royal

dude were still there), danced and the whole group excited in a rushing procession up and down the road and back into the pavilion. A brief dance seemed to follow and the three Rangda figures excited by going into the middle temple through the central door. That ended a 3-to-4-hour performance. Everyone was going back into the temple to pray, and we excited for home with Wayan. The time was after 1:30 a.m.

On the way home, I was totally confused by all this. From my reading Rangda is an evil witch. How could she be “the symbolic god”? Wayan said that in his village there is also a Barong. The Barong and Rangda fight with one another and Barong wins making the world right (a noted difference from Eiselman’s description that neither wins in the village he lives in) Wayan first suggested that since Nyoman’s village has no Barong, that Rangda must represent good, but then he said that he couldn’t understand it himself. My reading this morning suggests to me that the box that contains the symbol of god contains the masks that represent god. So, on Sunday night when we went to the other temple what we brought back in the box were the masks of Rangda and her sons. On the third day of the temple ceremony, these masks are taken out of their boxes and activated for the evening performance. Eiselman describes these being returned to their boxes at the very end of the festival and returned to their safe place to be kept until the next appearance of god.

There are lots of things I don’t get. Why the mock funeral? Why the stabbing of Rangda? Is Rangda a witch? How can Rangda be the “symbol of god”? What do the Balinese mean by “the symbolic god”? What is the effect by this dance-drama? Why are the clowns so intimately connected with the entrance of the “symbolic god”? 11 / 3

Emily’s behavior at this festival was something I wrote about. She pretty much ignored me the whole evening and focused her attention on the young Bali guys who were jesting with her and ignoring me and what I thought of as hitting on her. She repeatedly said she had fun and that it was the first time during our trip that she had a social time with others and that she had been aware of my age. Remarkably I didn’t feel jealous so much as somewhat embarrassed or perhaps ashamed that I was clearly perceived as the stodgy old man, ignored because of my age. Again, such experiences should have signaled volumes to me and perhaps they did, yet it leaves me even more confused by my strong identification of my vital self with the relationship later after we had returned to Colorado. The image in this rearview mirror remains clouded these many years later, more accurately, it has become clouded only recently as the result of my peering more closely into it.

Frequently, if I count the three times I have been to Bali, I have seen trance dancing. It is a thing for which Bali dancers are well known. As I recall Gregory Bateson and some of the anthropologist crew that documented Bali stuff in the early twentieth century filmed and described remarkable feats by Bali persons in trance. One of the most common occasions for trance that can be observed is the kakak (pronounced ka chak). It was my early impression that this event was made at some point principally for paying tourists. But I have seen it several

times in local villages with no tourists present. Usually works the other way around. During the many years I taught Religion & Dance at CU, I always invited Made to come teach a studio class. He would divide the 90 students in the class into four groups and we'd all do a simple version of kacak. Students loved it.

We paid to go see one of these more tourist kacak events and my reactions are divided between criticism of the performers, as if I somehow had any right to do that, and my irritation at being a damned tourist among other damned tourists.

Went to kacak last night. This is a for tourist dance, so it isn't done other than for tourists. We paid 5,000 r. for the Bimo ride and the admission. Not many attended. The area was the outer temple of a village temple compound, but it looked like an abandoned temple. Chairs were placed around the grounds and a blue plastic tarp covered the ground. In the middle was a makeshift metal affair that served as the principal light.

The men entered, more like 30 than the 100 indicated on the program, sat in a circle, and did their cak (chak) cak thing. I thought they were pretty shabby. Their sarongs (the black checkered ones whose name I forget) looked like they had never been washed. They were bare chested and of many sizes, shapes, and ages. Some old guys who were in the back seemed only to fill places, never cak-caking, just holding up their hands when it was time. This annoyed me as well as the constant flashes of the cameras by the tourists.

This dance includes a little of everything. Legong style women's dance, the deer dance female, several masked figures including the ever-popular monkey god, the works. It didn't make a whole lot of sense, as any of these ever do all that much. The tourist next to me from Australia literally spent half her time trying to figure why her camera wouldn't work, and most of the rest of the time looking at the meaningless program trying to figure out what was going on. Hope she got a picture so when she gets home, she will have an icon of a nonexperience. But I must get over this being offended by others. They do their thing, I do mine. We do what we do. So that's that. The Balinese seem to let this be. I should also. Damn it. I will. Sartre says I have free choice.

The evening also included trance dance. This was the best part for me. Two men carried a young, perhaps 8-year-old, girl each into the dance area. These girls had their eyes closed and expressionless faces. They stood them on the blue tarp. A group of women singers sat on one side in the background and the kacak men sat on the other side in even rows. These became the singers who accompanied the "trance" dances of the little girls' legong. The dances were lovely, especially as performed by such young girls. At the end of the dance, the girls would collapse on their sides on the ground. Two women then came from the chorus and lifted them to their feet and placed them again in the center in readiness for the next dance. One of the dancers had a bit of her headdress come loose. She danced on, eyes closed all the time, and a woman came from the chorus and fixed this without interrupting the dancer. Again, they fall to the ground. After the third dance, I believe, the girls were tended by the two women. The women held them lying stretched out on their backs with their heads on the women's laps. Their headdresses were removed, and hair undone. The priest came out sprinkled holy water on them. Then the women

holding them from behind, the girls still in the position of reclining on their backs and shock them from side to side several times. Their hair flew free, and they awoke. The priest gave them holy water to drink, and they excited fully awake.

The next dance was supposed to be a fire dance, another trance dance. For this the blue tarp was removed. A rice bag full of coconut husks was dumped in the center of the dance area. A flammable liquid was poured on the husks and lighted. A man with a wooden rake stirred the fire until it was burning well. Then an old man riding a weird sort of stick horse affair entered. He went straight for the burning pile and kicked it, exploding it all over the dance area. He turned and kicked it again. Round and round he roared kicking the fire. He used a sort of shuffle step I take it to keep from stepping directly on burning embers. As he kicked the mess around, the rake man raked it back together in the center so the old guy would continue to have something to kick. This went on until everything had pretty much burned up and only embers were left here and there over the area. Then the rake man chased down the horseman and forced him to sit on the bottom step to the temple door. The stick horse was removed, and the priest came out to sprinkle the man and give him holy water to drink. Again, he was supposed to exit from trance. A man announced this was the end. The cast of players had been larger than the audience, and I felt quite disappointed as we crawled into the Bimo for the return trip.

*Regarding the trance. Likely this was but theatrical, but to me it doesn't matter much whether trance is technically an altered state or not. Simply to appear to be entranced could have a significant affect if done in some contexts. This was a tourist context, however, and had no meaning other than entertainment. I have loved the video tapes I have seen of *kacak*. This, seen in Bali, experience was less than what I had hoped for. 11/4*

With plans to leave Bali and head to Java on November 6, I spent time not only getting arrangements made but also reflecting on the month spent in Bali. I had done considerable work on several academic projects. It is fascinating to me now that I was planning on a few expansive projects—dance theory, Bali dancing, mask theory, the *Storytracking* book, a book on play, and ideas that I now associate with my current writing on the *Symphony of Impossibles* book. The *Storytracking* book was published in 1998, but most of the others remained ongoing work now decades later. Soon after returning from traveling, I started teaching “Religion and Dance” and my life was obsessed with actual dancing. In the late 1990s I founded Bantaba World Dance and Music, a studio. My energies were in practice more than in academic writing. It seems that many of these ideas became aspects of my life of dance and movement, more lived and experienced and my academic reflections were largely limited to teaching. Now, these many years later, I am finally bringing to fruition the new ideas that excited me during these travels.

Knowing that I was leaving Bali, I tried to set down some few general thoughts about Bali and my experience in Bali. At the time I don't think that I knew that we would shortly return to spend more time on Bali's north coast.

I will remember the Balinese as warm, friendly, humorous, enigmatic and the living symbol of relativity. I find their way of life, family and friend centered, strongly revolving around home, village, and temple. It is through and through a religious way of life in the most formal ways. Nothing is excluded from religion, and no one escapes extensive involvement in formal religious practice. Few places could you find it common for almost all young men and women to pray at temple regularly, to do religious dance, to play religious music, to dress in the traditional religious costumes. They do this openly and without resentment or second thoughts. They openly admit and proclaim their religious practice to one and all. People of all ages are involved seemingly equally, though the women certainly seem to do most. We have found no one to be rude, or crude, or uncaring, though certainly there is a sense in which many Balinese seem to be angling for something from you wherever you go. I can't tell if this is real or imagined, but other non-Balinese we have visited with feel the same. The Balinese seem on the one hand completely leisurely, always time to sit, to visit, to watch the road, to smoke, to show off your cock (describing the men primarily). But, on the other hand, the Balinese are always working and often working very hard (describing the women, mostly). Again, today I encountered the sand ladies with huge baskets of sand on their heads. Well, I'm sure I'll have lots more reflections as time goes on. I am certainly ready to leave Bali, but I have enjoyed it here and do not regret any of this experience.

We did not leave from Bali until 3 p.m. from the main bus station in Denpasar, so we packed up and went to Bali Restaurant to hang out for a while. I wanted to talk with Nyoman more about Bali dancing which I did for a couple hours, yet I have no recollection whether I took notes or what we talked about. He also wanted to tell us about his foreign girlfriends, one in Germany and one in Australia, for whom he'd been a guide, yet it developed into something personal. He also talked about Bali male-female relationships and more. Quite confessional. The taxi we had arranged to take us to the bus station didn't show so Nyoman and Wayan agreed to take us. That was fortunate since the bus station was a chaos of busses and it would have been very difficult without Nyoman's help. The bus was an hour late and Nyoman and Wayan insisted on staying until it arrived, and we were on board. So thoughtful.

The struggle to know how much to pay Nama for his guiding was a constant concern for us. I was shocked when I read in the journal that we paid Nama 50,000 rupiah (\$25) and Nyoman 30,000 (\$15). From my present perspective that seems embarrassingly low given all the time and effort they put into us to make our Balinese experience so great. I don't recall how we decided on those amounts. Now I wish they had been more generous. I have notes that Nyoman kept thanking us for the money.

Java

Yogyakarta, November 6 - 11

Java is a much larger island than is Bali and it lies to the west in the string of 13,000 islands making up the Indonesian archipelago. The bus was a modern tour-style bus, so we were fairly comfortable. By mid-evening, we had arrived at the ferry port and, after waiting for a while for the ferry to arrive, the bus drove onto the ferry for the hourlong float over to east Java. We got out of the bus and went up on deck to spend the damp hot trip outside the confines of the bus. Since it was night, there wasn't much to see. The bus drove midway across Java to Yogyakarta on the southern coast. We stopped late in the night for a buffet meal. It rained much of the night, yet there were people walking and on bicycles in the narrow road all night long.

We didn't know the bus route or where we should get off as we came to Yogya. In Bali, there was a woman from Yogya who worked at one of the restaurants we frequented who gave us a recommendation for a place to stay. When we did get off, we hired a taxi to take us to Sari Homestay which had a small room, shower, and toilet near downtown Yogya. We took it for one night thinking if we decided to, we could transfer to another location

It was early in the morning, and we'd had very little sleep on the bus, yet we were eager to get going on your Java experience. With a shower we tried to rest a while, yet it was still early in the morning, and we couldn't sustain inactivity. We headed out into the city.

We walked through the city along Malioboro, the main street in the city, and saw all the merchants setting out their wares. Our destination was the Sultan's Palace. The sultan is the equivalent of a city mayor, yet with the lavish trappings of royalty. Daily the palace sponsors gamelan and classical dance performances and this is what we were interested in.

At the Sultan's Palace we found another market and after a few wrong turns found the palace. The current sultan (a symbolic figure only) lives in the palace. The 1,500 r fee gave us entry and a personally guided tour through the palace compound. I wasn't all that excited about the sultan, but it was interesting and beautiful. We finished the tour around 9:40 and had time to rest and drink some water before the dance began at 10:30. The gamelan was a huge orchestra that also included a men's and a women's chorus (perhaps 8 men and 8 women). The Javanese gamelan uses the same instruments as the Balinese, though larger instruments (I think) which would mean a deeper tone. They didn't seem to use the ceng-ceng or the long instrument played by 4 or more people (don't remember the name just now). The music is much slower than Bali gamelan kebyar. The singing I don't much care for. It is a kind of melody-less whining or something. To my ear it distracts from the gamelan.

The dance pavilion is huge, and I recognized it as the same as in the PBS "Dancing" film where I saw the Javanese Sea Nymph dance (bedoyo). The dancing began shortly after 10:30

and was lovely. The first was a single female. The second involved 2 women who enacted something of a dagger fight near the end. Two young men danced next--again enacting a fight with one killed at the end. The last dance was done by a young man wearing a bright red close-fitting mask. He seemed to be imitating a shadow puppet character. His face and arm and leg movements were very controlled and precise but presented that sort of jerky stiffness of the shadow puppets. He was wonderful. There may have been another dance in the middle there somewhere.
11/8

By the time we had returned to our homestay we were both super-hot and tired and seemed disenchanted by the city. This disappointment likely skewed the rest of our Javanese experience. Looking back at this now I don't really understand. A few years later I returned to Java by myself because I had the sense that I loved it, that it was a magical place. I wanted to again experience Borobudur and hang out longer at the Sultan's Palace. I even returned at a time when Java was in the midst of high-profile protests when no tourists were visiting the country. I don't really comprehend why we were so quickly and decidedly soured. I think as much as anything we realized that we had traveled to so many places and seen and done so many things and we were but at the halfway point in our journey. I know I missed Corbin and Jenny so much and felt so isolated from them. In Java it was so terribly hot and uncomfortable. Given all that, I describe again and again that we talked about it, that we cried when we needed to, but that we rallied and did our best to take fullest advantage of the experiences available. Sometime as I read these journals, I find I can barely go on reading because I have such empathy for myself in that situation. I wonder how I did it, what kept me going, what was the source of the strength I drew on to rally and keep a positive attitude and openness, even eagerness, to experience more? And to maintain workability and health in my relationship with Emily.

Yet I also often feel as I look back that I didn't take the fullest advantage of the opportunities presented to engage and experience these cultures more deeply and even more academically or professionally. I know that most scholars would have done a great deal to be an academic and make the professional contacts one might expect. My approach was far more naïve, simply putting myself in the midst of something foreign and unfamiliar and allowing myself to respond emotionally, to learn whatever I could, an approach more personal than professional. I don't know if this was the best approach, but I do know that, given the time I had to prepare and the background knowledge I had at that point in time, this was what I felt was the best I could do.

The next day we spent traveling around Yogyakarta checking things out. We shopped a bit looking at local batik shops. We hired a becak, like a bicycle rickshaw, to take us around both so the driver could serve as a guide and because it was so hot.

In the afternoon we discovered a shadow puppet theater (*wayang kulit*) rehearsal that we could attend. It was in a small venue with no one really watching save us.

The gamelan players were very informal and chatted throughout. I imagine they do the same in actual performances. An old woman played the lead gender (is it?) and another woman sang. The dalang, puppet master, was excellent. A beautiful singing voice. He also spoke. While speaking he would tap a rhythm with a block or stone on a box in which he kept lots of his puppets. He held a ceng-ceng between his toes and played them by striking it to another on the box. This allowed him to set the pace and rhythm. It was especially effective during the many fight scenes. The woman who sang used a book. The rehearsal included numerous pieces, maybe five. The last one was high comedy. In anticipation of this, four young Javanese boys came by and sat near the dalang. They got a great kick out of the performances.

The theatre allowed for viewing on both sides of the screen. That was nice since Javanese shadow puppets are decoratively painted. Neat.

Paid 2,000 rupiah to a skinny little guy to bring us back in his becak. A long uphill ride. He was pooped when we got here. A 30-minute ride for less than a buck! 11/9

We made calls to Em's mother and to Corbin and Jenny. Always bittersweet since I miss them so and they are so far away. We had made arrangements to go to Borobudur and Prambanan, major Buddhist and Hindu sites in the area.

Borobudur, which is an enormous stupa not far from Yogyakarta, was an essential destination for me. It was built in the 9th century and is clearly the most elaborate architectural form I've ever experienced. My return to Java years later was largely due to what I familiarly refer to as my heart connection with Borobudur.

Arose at 4:30 a.m. and we were picked up at 5 for a trip to Borobudur and Prambanan temples. Arrived at Borobudur before it opened at 6 a.m. and we were among the first to approach the temple. This is a huge and amazing place. Covers the whole top of a hill and contains thousands of stupas, base relief sculptures, Buddha statues. It took 75 years to build in the 9th century, doubtless employing thousands of stone carvers and laborers throughout this time. It was abandoned shortly after it was finished, got buried in volcanic ash and fell apart until it was discovered by the Dutch in the early 19th century. It has been restored twice, the second time involving taking the whole thing apart stone by stone, numbering the stones, and keeping all the stones recorded in a computer. There are hundreds of thousands of stones. The temple is a wonder. While there, one of the Buddha statues in the midst of these bell-shaped stupas is said to grant wishes to those who can reach through the holes in the stupa and touch, for men the ring finger of the Buddha, for women his head. I climbed to the reaching place, was successful despite my short arms reaching his ring finger and wished that we would have a safe journey and that all our relatives would be healthy and happy while we are away. A wish worth a very long stretch for any day.

The drive back to Yogya after Borobudur was hot and very polluted. Then also back in another direction to the Hindu temple complex, Prambanan. This temple (temples rather) is

very tall and as amazing in its own way as Borobudur. It still has Hindu sculptures--all of the gods in the interiors of the temples. This place also was built very early and fell into ruin. Also restored. Same principle, I'm sure. Then back here by 1 p.m. or so. 11/9

Given how, over the years, I have continued to remember Borobudur as such a magical and amazing place, one of my few heart-connected places, I am quite mystified that my description of this first visit is so limited and impersonal. There seems also the strong indication in these Java journals that we really didn't like Yogya and had decided almost immediately to return to Bali's north coast to spend a couple leisurely weeks rather than to continue our Javanese experience. Looking back now, especially in terms of the memory I have held for so long and that I had such a strong desire to return to Java by myself a few years later, I think this decision was not a wise one. Looking in the rearview mirror I am now rather baffled and don't understand why we had this negative reaction. The only reason mentioned is that it was hot and polluted, and we were physically uncomfortable. I did engage this negative reaction in one entry.

Nights here in Yogya are hard. Without a fan it is very hot in our room. Then it seems no one here ever sleeps. You can hear people talking, music playing, people walking all through the night. The Muslim call to prayer is at 4 a.m. someone near here has a weird clock that plays a different little ditty--twinkle twinkle little star, pop eye the sailor man, etc.--every hour. Such a struggle to get any rest. Last night when I went out to call Corbin the streets were full. Everyone was out and around. Then this morning at 5 a.m. as we drove through the streets and along the roads there were people sweeping, going places with their bikes loaded down, full buses going somen'here. Same weirdness as in Bali. The guy that runs this homestay does absolutely nothing. He is a young man, maybe 30. He sits by the door, sits outside, sits on the floor and reads the paper. He is always here, and I hear him walking around during the night. Seems he lives with his mother. Sometimes she too sits by the door. All these becak guys sit daily in their bike cabs for hours. I think many of them must actually live in their cabs. There are thousands of these guys. They mostly don't work, but when they do it is hot and hard. Seems to me most people here have a hot hard life. I couldn't take it that's for sure. Think of the hundreds of lifetimes of human labor it took to build, restore, and restore again the temples. Along the roads, road crews digging ditches, building walls, working with the simplest tools, never do I see power tools. Amazing what they do accomplish in this way. All it takes is a huge nearly free labor force and no deadlines. It took 75 years to build Borobudur. Everyone here seems stuck for life.

But there is an upper class here. There are many fine hotels, with a doorman and a piano bar (even at 8:30 a.m. when we went looking for a phone). The people who own these hotels, doubtless Indonesians, must be fabulously wealthy. I don't understand who stays in these hotels. Can't imagine a person who would want to stay in that kind of hotel would last more than five minutes on the street.

So, the Yogyakarta experience. We did lots in a very short three days, but we are both ready, more than ready, to leave. We worry about being travel wimps, but we are doing the whole trip on a shoestring budget and this is a very long trip. The pollution is perhaps hardest

for us to take. Then the crowds of people always in your face wanting something, seeing you only as a business opportunity. Very hard.

We have met a few nice people here: the guy we stay with, the people who run the restaurant where we have been eating, etc. Still, I ain't a city kind of guy. I needs my mountains, my quiet, my clean air, my privacy, and good clean food and water. 11/9

Spent an evening making lists of favorite things experience while traveling so far and then boarded an overnight bus the next day for Lovina, a beach town, on Bali's north coast.

Bali

Kalibukbuk, Lovina Beach, November 12 - 18

The bus trip from Yogyakarta to the Lovina area was long and terrifying to the point of, once survived, being a good story. Rain and terror all night. A lovely early morning clear sky crossing on the ferry with views of volcanoes. And a long bemo ride across north Bali. My writing on this adventure catches the emotion.

On the Bali side we were met by a Bali bemo and we transferred our luggage, which is now rather formidable, to the bemo. The drive began as a lovely drive through the most isolated part of Bali I had seen. Groves of coconut palms planted at equal distances, so they made rows. The ground beneath these palms had been or was being (with men managing a single share behind an oxen) plowed. Don't know why. As we began to arrive in more populated areas, we started picking folks up along the road. Bemos are Balinese public transportation. The fuller the bemo got the faster the driver drove. He was a maniac. At times he passed when I knew we would never make it. Other times he tailgated the vehicle in front of him at speeds up to 50 mph. It was terrifying. I was surprised to see a significant Muslim Balinese community in this northwestern coastal area. I didn't know that there were any Muslims here. I suppose they are among the most recent Javanese to come to Bali, though I don't know that. I also saw the simplest family temples I've seen in Bali. They were just little boxes with roofs, atop four legged platforms perched in the corner of the lawn. And of course, the directional orientation of the temples is reversed here, for the shrine representing the mother temple (if this is correct) is on the southeast to be oriented toward the mountain, the abode of the gods. I don't think Bali Hinduism is nearly as strong here as in the Ubud area. I see few panjars (the bamboo pole decorations) and few offerings. Did see one offering remains on the beach.

Finally, after a two-hour ride and now 20 plus hours since leaving Yogya, we reached the place we had hoped to stay. The hotel was quite upscale, and the rates were higher than we had been told. No possibility of staying there. Emily came unglued about that time. She had just about had it. We ate a little and very expensive breakfast. I found a nice man--Nyoman, wasn't that expected--who agreed to haul us around to look for a suitable place to stay. He had several suggestions. We looked at quite a few and finally found the Rimi Hotel and put in there for 25,000 r per night. It is certainly the nicest place we have stayed since arriving in Indonesia: spacious, ceiling fan, very clean, vaulted ceilings, no creatures that I've seen, shady and for Indonesia a bit cool. 11/12

The Lovina Beach culture was pretty typical with the locals hawking their stuff to the few tourists that were there and befriending as many tourists as possible to do personal service for them for a fee.

The restaurants seemed to be the focus for local culture, yet of course, done for tourists rather than part of ceremonies. It seems to me that the dancing is the same quality whether in a village ceremony or in a restaurant. We quickly discovered a restaurant that had a very cheap delicious buffet. They charged extra for drinks. We had only bottled water, but I think most tourists drank heavily.

The food was delicious and included many different things. It was a good filling meal. The dances included two by a single female; the first a version of the opening offering dance pendet and the second one I don't know but the girl wore trousers and a sort of military head dress, perhaps playing the warrior. The male dances were the white faced Rangda, the witch done in a humorous fashion including some sexual gestures, like scratching her crotch and smelling her hand and like offering her black and white striped pendulous breast to tourists to suckle. The second male dance was Topeng, the old man or the grandfather. I've seen this dance now half dozen times it seems, and I think I could do a fair job with it. It almost always includes in the later portion the wiping of the sweat from the face and the picking of lice from the hair which are examined and squashed by the old man. He usually also interacts with the audience, and he did so again last night. A group of older German people had quite a time with Topeng and got their pictures taken by each other as the old man shook hands with them. The dances weren't bad at all for just the relatives of the restaurant man, which I'd guess they are. From the intro to this area, it seems restaurants do this kind of thing several nights a week and by going from one to another one cannot only keep well fed cheaply, but also see some dance. 11/12

The first extensive journal writing in north Bali included an effort to assess myself in light of the trip experience to date, now just past halfway. Although I wrote extensively and at least wrote that I thought I had changed significantly due to the traveling, I can't say that now decades later I noticed anything very surprising. I indicated value of my kids and of having a home that reflected who I am. I tried to examine the divorce-in-process situation and noted that it was a good thing, yet I hoped eventually to at least be friends with Judy. I commented on possible limitations on my relationship with Emily yet acknowledged that it was good traveling together and that being with her was important in my learning about relationship. I wrote about wanting to be present to everything in life, yet of course my very reflection is in a sense other than being present. I showed that I was grateful for all the experience I was having and indicated my desire to live a life appreciating the smallest thing. None of these values is any different from what today I hold these many years later.

The next day or so, having been only a couple days in north Bali, while we had expected to stay for three weeks and rest up, anticipating that Thailand and Nepal would be difficult, we changed our minds and decided to head on to Thailand earlier, so we'd have more time to go to the Chiang Mai area in north

Thailand. This change turned out to be a good choice. We set our departure date as November 18.

Being in north Bali on the beach, the tourist/local culture was in my face all the time. From an anthropological perspective this raised for me the large complex issue of the impact of tourism on local cultures. While I clearly felt that there were many negative aspects to this influence, I also recognized that to keep the Balinese “pure” was a horrible colonialist attitude. The personal dimension was present every time we went to the beach and were inundated by so many Balinese trying to be our friend and sell us stuff. What I didn’t recognize then, but do now, is that the issues I was considering were front and center to my long experience with Native Americans and Australian Aborigines. Don’t know why I didn’t make that connection then since it was dominant in my life.

A fascinating eventuality is that several years ago, after being away from these cultures for quite some time, I became aware of the rise of the term indigenous to collectively describe these sorts of cultures. I saw this term as perhaps an improvement, yet all these terms from primitive to aboriginal to native to indigenous are all soaked with colonialist values and that likely any encounter between cultures has potentially dangerous implications. To finally deal with these issues more thoroughly after many decades of experience I decided to write a book on the topic that took the name *Creative Encounters, Appreciating Differences* (2019). An essay “Not by Any Name” written for that book examined this naming conundrum.

Every day on the beach we would be approached by numerous young guys asking, “Dolphins? Want to see the dolphins?” Early each morning canoe style boats would take folks out from the shore to see dolphins. We kept putting these guys off, even though the price was small. They’d ask for a promise to go another day. Finally, we relented.

Dolphins. Yes, we saw the dolphins and that was a delight. Leaving our hotel before 6 this morning the young man that had arranged the trip for us awaited us in the road and took us the few meters to the beach where his father had the boat launched and his motor running awaiting us. Wading out to the boat we climbed aboard. These boats are something. They are hollowed log canoes about 15 feet long equipped with bamboo (that ever amazing material) outriggers 10 feet out on each side. The pilot sits in the back where he can work a crude rudder device simply tied onto the side of the boat. The boat is powered either by a sail (I’d love to see these, but there is no wind this time of the year) or an outboard motor. The motor is 5 horse and attaches to the side of the boat near the back and has a very long (I’d say 10 feet) propeller shaft. So, the motor sits at a radical angle, so the propeller extends back and downward into the water. The boat being 1 to 2 inches thick wood really doesn’t displace much water, so they ride sort of high. These boats are used as night fishing boats and at night the lights (Coleman lanterns) on the boats make quite a sight from the beach after dark.

We headed toward the open sea at a snail's pace. Once we were several thousand yards from the beach the boats (there were perhaps a couple dozen) began to choose which way they would go. We went west along the coast. All these boats putted along at a leisurely pace seemingly going nowhere in particular. Then we began to see the boats in front of us (a thousand yards or so) all turn toward the beach. As we approached the area, we could begin to see the water surface disturbed by schools of dolphin. They would mainly just pass through an area with their backs only--their back fins making them easy to see--breaking the water surface. They would come in waves with their bodies arching as their noses came out of the water readying them to return gracefully into the water. In and out, in and out, wave after wave. A few seconds passed and then they would disappear. Once spotted the boats chased them and circled the area awaiting them to resurface again. Sometimes they did, often they did not.

Our pilot, a skinny, sharp-eyed man of mature years (I started to call him a little old man until I realized that he probably was my junior (god I hate being this age)), seemed to know the game well and, unlike most other pilots, didn't stay with the bulk of crafts. He found his own waters, often accompanied by no more than one or two other boats. We saw many appearances of the dolphins. sometimes just a few--maybe 15 or so--that would surface only a few times before disappearing. Sometimes a great congregation--maybe 50 or more--that would occupy a large area with lots of groups above the surface at the same time. Quite the sight. Only a couple times did I see dolphins actually leap free of the water. One time there were several who together made the beautiful graceful parabolic glide through air before returning to the sea. Another time seemed more like the frolic of a kid when a dolphin leaped above the surface and turned sideways splashing, undolphinlike I'd say, on his or her side on the water's surface. The dolphins seemed smaller than I had expected, conditioned as I am by dolphins in Sea World and on TV. These seemed perhaps five or six feet long, though it was difficult really to judge their size. At one point seeing a large group of them move along the sea I was really quite overcome with the emotion of seeing such a sight. I'd love to touch one of these animals. They were beautiful to see.

We circled for perhaps an hour seeing dolphins fairly frequently during this time. Then the sea became glassy still, it had been only mildly choppy before, and we headed back to shore. A wonderful experience, despite the difficulty in trying to please the dozens of young men who are constantly trying to get you to go with them to "see the dolphins."

These dolphins have something of the mystery of so many things I have experienced on this trip. Seeing them reminds me a bit of the Ayers Rock experience. There tourists lined the lookouts at sunrise and sunset in the hopes of catching that wonderful moment of the sun on the rock. We were fortunate enough to see it. Here too the tourists are driven by crude crafts out on the sea early every morning to see the dolphins. It can't be known--for only god, if any, controls these events--whether or not dolphins will be seen and, if seen, what they will do. Seeing them, then, is a gift, a fortuity for which one must be grateful. 11/15

I devoted the last several days in Bali to reading fiction, fighting stomach problems, and writing extensive reflections about my life. Later in Nepal I would look back to this time as the beginning of stomach problems I suffered through most of the rest of the trip. Disgusting yet a great weight loss program. I reflected

on not only my current academic projects—*Storytracking*, play, and dance, especially—but also my style as a traveling academic. I had strong self-doubt about my tourist-style travel. I could certainly imagine that many scholars of my stature would have made extensive official contact with a number of universities and wrangled guest lecture opportunities as well as persuading the local faculty to conduct tours and make special research connections within the culture and society. In my writing these days I found myself feeling inadequate as a scholar and had tinges of being irresponsible and a fraud. Tourist connections with a culture are a long way from getting to the heart of a culture. It is a marginal view at best. It is premised on economic exchange. Now many years later I don't know that I feel much different. I have published far more than all but a very few scholars who are my peers. I know that my work is more innovative and provocative than most others. Yet, I've always had these feelings of inadequacy. I didn't have the same higher educational training that most had. I didn't learn research languages. I didn't develop extensive international networks of colleagues. My interests have always been varied and broad counter to what is essential to become an expert in any sense. I've been mostly a loner scholar. At this point it is far too late, yet my style had been firmly established at the time of these travels and it didn't change much after that.

At the time of these 1993 travels I had no inkling that I'd be opening a dance and music studio within a few years and devote so much of my time, energy, and money to it for much of a decade. That enterprise shifted my devotion to traditional academics to which I only recently returned in my own fashion.

I also reflected on the frequent reminders I encountered of my significant age difference from Emily. I acknowledged again that almost certainly the relationship could not last long after the trip ended. Now, many years later, I still do not know why I didn't retain that acknowledgement of the obvious after we got home.

Where I would live when I returned from the trip was on my mind. I had come to accept that I would doubtless lose the dome in divorce and I began to reflect on what I might do as a result of finalizing the divorce and moving on. It would only be in the last weeks of this journey, in January 1994, that I'd hear from Judy that she was leaving the dome and it would be available for me to move into upon return. I wound up staying there until about 1998 coincident with opening Bantaba and moving to the big house on 3 acres in Niwot. Looking back, I think moving back into the dome was probably not my best choice. I struggled with that house for five years or so before moving and that was time, money, and creative energy wasted. Had I not done that, who knows what cool option I would have created for myself. While the dome was an exciting project it became a decaying nuisance.

Departing Bali meant a 3-hour bus ride south across the entire island, past Kuta Beach, to the airport. We left the north coast at 10 a.m. arrived at 1 p.m. for a 6:45 p.m. flight that was delayed until 9:20 p.m. and then an almost 4-hour flight to Bangkok on a plane load of obnoxious French folks who had been beach vacationing. An exhausting day with me still feeling a bit sick.

Thailand

Bangkok, November 18 - 21

Arrival in the middle of the night, now November 19, in Bangkok led to a terrifying experience that turned out to be a humorous story.

In Bangkok, we immediately felt that we'd like Thailand lots. Everyone was friendly and helpful. We cleared customs. We exchanged money and we repacked everything so we would be stripped down to only our large frame packs. We stored everything else in one very tightly stuffed duffle and checked it in "Left Luggage" for the duration of our stay in Thailand. We knew where to get a cab and did that. Fixed rate. We got into the cab, number 219. Our driver got in and turned around and asked us, at least that is what we figured, where we were to go. We told him. He began to speak enthusiastically in Thai. We got out a map and pointed to the place. He spoke now more loudly and showed some exasperation. We pointed to maps, talked slowly, etc. Finally, he inquired of another driver and started out. After driving into the city, we got to the area of the Sheridan. We knew that our intended destination was close to that. The driver looked to us for directions. We couldn't give them. It was now between 2 and 3 a.m. and this was a rather frightening looking area of Bangkok. At one point we said for him to let us out at the Sheridan, and we'd walk. He understood "walk" and let us know that he would never allow that. He stopped at one point and called the place, the River View Guest House. Then on we drove, seemingly in circles with his frustration growing and our fear rising. At one point he stopped and inquired of two young men. Finally, one of them got into the car and we began to weave down a crowded little alley way. Emily was freaking out and I was just trying to remain calm enough to keep from doing so myself. Finally, they pointed up to a sign with arrow attached to "River View Guest House." The car stopped, we got our packs from the trunk and the four of us started a walk through an ever-narrowing passageway. It was dark, crowded, industrial, and frightening. After 75 yards or so we turned to follow another sign along another narrow passage and arrived at the door of the guesthouse. We checked in and tried to find the way to the second floor where our room was supposed to be. Once in the room, we collapsed. it was a fitful night spent as much wondering where we were and how we'd survive.

11/22

Bangkok was a stopover for us on the way to Chiang Mai. It is an enormous and daunting city, yet the center of much in the country. Our first day there was one of slow exploration, gawking at everything, and trying to grasp something of the color and character of Thai culture. It was impossible not to compare it with

what we had experienced in Bali and Java. Expectedly it was a day of amazing surprises and contrasts.

But morning brought a surprise. The room in daylight looked rather nice. It was clean and even had a live plant in it. Emily had seen that the hotel had a restaurant, and we went to the top floor to find it. Opening the door to the restaurant we entered a lovely wood paneled room with windows on the opposite side overlooking the river and the city. It was a view dimmed by the pollution, but it was a breathtaking sight, and the restaurant was wonderful. We had a delicious breakfast, and our nerves began to come back together. The waiters were very pleasant, and we began to perk up. This was going to be good after all.

We had given the address of the American Express office in Bangkok to several people, and we decided to go see if any mail had arrived and to get train tickets to Chiang Mai. We located the building on the map where the Am Ex office was and, thinking it wasn't so far, decided to begin walking. First, we had to inquire at the front desk how to get away from the guesthouse area. We left. Sure enough, this guest house, as are so many very nice places in Bangkok, was built in the midst of a small shop highly industrial area. There is no access at all except to walk and to walk down a labyrinth of alleyways filled with these little greasy shops. Lots of people live in this area as well in tenement and slum conditions. After several blocks of this we came to a street. and began our trek. After quite a few blocks, as we walked along a nice-looking Thai man who spoke excellent English, asked us if he could help. We were studying a map. We told him where we were going. He said that the Am Ex office wouldn't open until after noon and that we might want to go to a place called Peter Lang's to shop. We said no, but he said he'd just help us get there by arranging transport. It was in the direction we were going, so we agreed to the ride in a tuc tuc, the motorcycle carts common as transport here. We arrived at Peter Lang's and were escorted in, shown to a private room and there a man began a hard sell of custom-made Thai silk, or whatever fabric we wanted, clothing. We were polite for a while, then left. We recognized that this friendly man on the street had been a tout and we had seen through the snare. Leaving there we were soon approached by another. We didn't even let him talk. We walked on and finally found the building where the Am Ex office was. It was just noon and the office was closed between 12 and 1 p.m. so we decided to get our train tickets. This led us to the Siam Center, a huge indoor shopping complex. We began to look around and were blown away by how classy this place was. There were many Thai people shopping and it was expensive, and all these shoppers looked very fine. We just couldn't believe what we saw, having just left Indonesia. Amazing. Such style, such class, such expense. Lots of people in Thailand must have gobs of money. So many of the young women looked stunning in their costumes, for costumes is what their attire seemed to be. I saw an advertisement for a shop called Nambe and realized this was drawn from the American southwest. Just had to go there. Sure enough. It had a Santa Fe feel and lots of ecologically tasteful American Southwestern items from kitchen things to jewelry. I bet no one in that shop had even ever heard of the southwestern pueblos much less had ever visited the almost nonexistent village of Nambe. I visited it many years ago and there isn't much left but a couple houses and a kiva.

Silk and Thai hill crafts are everywhere as well as very fine jewelry. This shopping complex was huge and filled with this fine kind of expensive merchandise and the most beautiful people I've ever seen shopping and selling there.

Out in the street we looked for the travel agent across a very busy street who sells train tickets. Women with nursing babies were sitting on the pedestrian crossover bridge begging. A glimpse down alley ways that were at the back sides of attractive buildings on the street side revealed 4- to 6-story slum residences in which clearly hundreds and hundreds of people were crammed to live a very impoverished life with only a bit of sunlight that made its way down into this chasm of poverty. Sad and heart wrenching. Smelly and offensive. Still, one must be quick and observant to take that peek down the alley way to even notice that this part of the city exists.

We bought train tickets at 335 bhat for a day trip to Chiang Mai and visited a bookstore. This was a delight. There were hundreds of books and lots of Thai people browsing. Indonesians seemed not to read or have anything to read. But Thai people not only enjoy reading, but have a huge selection to read in Thai. The book shop was small but had a nice English section and we each bought a couple of cheap books on Thailand to begin our fast education on this place. I bought a book of essays on Northern Thailand. Very fun.

At the Am Ex office Em got a letter from her mother. Enclosed was a copy of my review of Steltenkamp's Black Elk book. Nice of her to see it and to send it.

We had lunch in this shopping area. It was a simple little food shop, but it was delicious, and we got our first chance to eat Thai food in Thailand. It was more than we had expected. Just wonderful. We began to celebrate being in Thailand with that meal and began to feel our enthusiasm return after 6 hard weeks in Indonesia. Since then, we have had to refrain from being harsh on Indonesia. It was increasingly clear that we suffered much while in Indonesia. It was hot, impossible to get around, irritating to have people in your face all the time, etc. Here, though we had been hit up by a tout and had breathed in tons of polluted air, we found ourselves renewed in our travel and ready to experience all we could. After shopping, rather window shopping, for a while longer and treating ourselves to a Svenson's ice cream cone, we headed back. A taxi driver refused us upon learning where we were going, so we walked the whole way. A long walk but it gave us some sense of the city. We arrived before dark and after showering and resting a while we went to the guest house restaurant for dinner. It was a wonderful Thai meal in a most relaxing atmosphere overlooking Bangkok at night. There were even fireworks over the city throughout the evening. 11/22

The heart of Bangkok is known for its magnificent temples (wats) and stupas. We spent the day in the city experiencing these places before heading north. I'm rather surprised that my journal describing the experience is so brief as well as general. I well remember the awe with which I was struck. Interestingly however these amazing buildings did not inspire the heart connection I have felt with other places.

After a night's rest and another fine breakfast, we started out on my mother's birthday to see Bangkok. We expected a difficult time to get to the city but learned that all we had to do

was to go up to the Sheridan and there catch an express ferry to the city. It would leave us at the Grand Palace and wat Phrae Koe where we wanted to visit. This was a very fun ride down a polluted and busy river filled with barges, long tailed (actually nosed) boats, and crafts of every kind and description. The fee for the ferry was 6 baht or 25 cents.

The grounds of the Grand Palace were just across the street. We had worn long pants anticipating a dress code at the palace and we barely passed, I think. We are beginning to feel that we look pretty ratty after living in the same pair of shorts and several tee shirts for months. We bought a ticket 125 baht (\$5 bucks) and began our tour. This is an amazing area. The temples are simply beyond description. They are so elaborate and complex as to make one simply stand mute and marvel. Honestly, I can't begin to think of any way to even describe these places, much less to do them justice. Every inch of several of these temple buildings is covered inside and out with small tiles, many of them reflective or mirrored. The colors are rich, and the effect is stunning. The buildings are large and impressive. Elegance and richness are words I'd use. 11/22

Apparently, my brevity of description was because my laptop screen was dark, and I wrote the entry without being able to see what I was writing. Once in Chiang Mai I took up pen, more reliable technology, to add more response to the day in Bangkok.

The Teak Mansion was a lovely old residence open and airy built in an "L" shape three stories high. Some of the rooms were octagonal, some semicircular, some circular. The rooms were huge, and we saw something like 30 of the 70 rooms in the house. The grounds were extensive and nicely kept. In a small portico area next to the mansion, we saw classical Thai dance. Five women danced. The first dance had something to do with 5 jewels, all different, each dancer was beautifully dressed to represent her jewel. The dance is slow and involves subtle but precise movements. The bare feet are mostly on the floor, but I noticed that in several of the dances one step involved lifting one foot, heel flexed, high to the back without repositioning the upper leg. Sometimes with the leg in this position the dancer would slowly rotate her body on the one leg with the foot providing the movement around. In the 5-jewel dance the dancer in white was in the center of a semicircle formed by the other four. At different sections of the dance each of the four would come forward for a bit of a solo dance before the standard dance maintained by the others. The head and arms were very like Hindu and Bali dance. Fingers often in mudra positions and the fingers often arching back. The dancers made quick, very small movements (almost imperceptible) of the head or upper body. Very nice.

There was another dance group with male and female dancers. They each carried some percussion instrument. All were dressed in loose pants and shirts all green except for two of the drummers who wore different and brighter colors. This dance involved quite a bit of play and improvisation. I certainly wouldn't call it classical dance. More like informal village dancing. I think they said this dance was preparation for a hunt or something.

We hailed a taxi back to the Grand Palace, or a huge park near there and after a couple photos of the Grand Palace temples from a different perspective we made our way to the river for a cram-packed ferry ride back to near our guest house. We ate a very late lunch in the huge

and very fancy River City Shopping Center. Another interesting experience. This center had four floors at least and the majority of stores were either silk or fine jewelry. There must have been a dozen of each. Amazing.

That evening we stayed in and enjoyed a wonderful meal in the restaurant overlooking the city. I had a chicken peanut dish that was one of the best meals I've had anywhere. Delicious. 11/22

Surprisingly the train station to Chiang Mai was within walking distance of our guesthouse. We caught the train in the morning for the all-day trip north through the flat areas of north Thailand before climbing up through the jungle to Chiang Mai.

Chiang Mai, November 21- December 10

Upon arrival we quickly and fairly effortlessly found a nice place to stay.

We arrived in Chiang Mai just before 7 and walked through the station ignoring the touts for all the guest houses and found a tuk-tuk to take us to the Guest House we'd gotten a recommendation for at River View Guest House in Bangkok. They were full up, so the driver suggested another place, the Lai-Thai Guest House. It turned out to be wonderful. A lovely room with hot water (ah!), a ceiling fan (ah!), and plenty of light (amazing). After spending months with the smallest watt bulb (like about 10) to see at night. This light is the greatest luxury. The place has a wonderful pool, a great restaurant, free drinking water, FAX and phone service international, and even stamps. All for about \$12 a night (300 baht). We settled in and will enjoy 2 weeks here. 11/23

The first day in Chiang Mai was spent wandering all over the city within walking distance—bookstores, Thai restaurants, the night market, the old city with its many wats. My immediate impressions focused on how convenient, clean, and easy it was to be there. Couldn't help but see Thailand in sharp contrast with Bali and Java. This is rather interesting since in later years I returned to Bali two more times, Java once, and Thailand not again.

A walking exploration of the northwest side of Chiang Mai included a search for the Thai Tribal Craft Center and the Northern Tribal Craft Center. They were in a different part of the city which we located the next day, Thanksgiving. I'm pretty sure that I had no previous knowledge of these tribal cultures, so it was all new to me. I'd studied Native American cultures for years, and, of course, we were just coming from Australia with my research focus on Aborigines. Last year, 2019, I was in Norway and Sweden and learned about the Sami people, often romanticized as reindeer folk, and engaged much more extensively the emergence of the collective term indigenous people. It would include these northern Thai cultures. It is unfortunate that I wasn't sufficiently self-aware to pay much fuller attention both to the trip preparation to know much more about these cultures as well as to take more time while in Thailand to visit them more extensively. This angst was and remains a constant concern. The research that

motivated this long trip was explicitly limited to historical documents from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Some of these could only be acquired in libraries and archives in Australia. Traveling to Australia to do historical research only seemed unconscionable. With incremental expansion to Central Australia and then to Bali and Java and then to Thailand and then to Nepal was done on the spur of the moment largely taking advantage of being on the other side of the planet. Obviously, I didn't have time—which would have taken years—to do adequate preparatory research on the many cultures that I would encounter. None the less I felt constantly this regret and irresponsibility both for not adequately preparing but also for not using these meetings of so many new cultures to initiate a new committed area of study. These feelings attest at once to my endless interest in most everything as well as my constant sense of being ill-prepared and a charlatan, a fraud. Indeed, as I read these journals now I often feel that most academic studies of other cultures are inadequate and misleading in so many ways. Our humanity depends on being eager to appreciate those different from us because they are different, yet it is impossible to avoid transforming others into some mirror of ourselves.

Thanksgiving Day was a time of nostalgic memories of Corbin and Jenny and of traditional foods. Late in the evening, since Thailand is like 17 hours ahead of Colorado, I called Jenny but was only able to talk with Judy. Seems there was no gathering on Thanksgiving. I did learn that Jenny had gotten a ski industry job at Winter Park and was living in Granby. We walked all over the inner city. Chiang Mai has a large forbidding wall around the inner city surrounded by a moat. Many miles of walking were a nice way to experience lots of the city. I am now a little concerned that it seems that around the time we were in north Bali and beyond, we became more and more focused on shopping and buying local craft items. Crafts are a good way to learn something of a culture, yet, as I read my writing, I think we became overly concerned about getting good prices and finding the next treasure. I rather regret this stereotypical Western behavior. Embarrasses me now.

While we had not known to be intentional in setting our plans for our Chiang Mai visit, we were fortunate enough to be there for two major public festival events, Loi Krathon and the King's Birthday. Loi Krathon, the festival of lights, is three days of major celebration. I don't know why it is scheduled for late November. I would have expected it to align more with winter solstice. It was such a gift to be present for all these festivities.

Loi Krathon is a lovely festival. People make small floats of banana leaves decorated so beautifully. These have candles and incense sticks on them, and they are set afloat on the river, on moats, and on any bit of water. Offerings to the goddess of the waters, though there are Buddhist connections as well. The people decorate their gates and house fronts mainly with green

banana trees, animal figures woven of palm leaves, hanging lanterns, and lots of lights. It has a bit of a Christmas decoration feel to it.

Last night we watched a parade down a main street of the Old City and out Thae Pae gate. Dozens of groups--many children, but sometimes groups of teens, young adults, old women--paraded by carrying lanterns, candles, etc. Many groups were accompanied by a musical group--either percussion, drums and cymbals, or strings (little 1- or 2-stringed bowed instruments). One group featured 2 middle aged men playing very odd instruments that looked a bit like large clarinets with metal bells that were attached at a slight downward angle to the rest of the instrument. All the groups were preceded by banners identifying them and last in the line for each group was a kraton float--a lantern like affair often carried on a truck, but sometimes by several older boys or men. These were lighted inside with candles usually, but some had generator powered electric lights.

The reconstruction of the old wall at the gate made a lovely setting for the parade where we watched it. The wall as well as the moat was covered with lanterns.

We went out through the gate to the large area where entertainment was going on. We saw what must have been a contest. Groups of about 16 identically dressed women, though some groups were clearly young girls, rushed successively onto the stage and each did a dance (sort of a simple hip hop style) to a song played by an orchestra and sung by the singer for each group. The music never stopped simply going from one song through a musical interlude into the next song. The music wasn't much appealing to my ear, sort of 50s style sounds I thought. The group costumes were elaborate and widely differing in design and color.

Throughout the evening from locations throughout the city people launched hot air balloons. These were launched with fireworks attached that as the balloons ascend, they are like a comet with a fireworks tail. Each carried aloft a tray of embers which serves both to keep the balloon aloft and also casts a red glow as the balloons reach altitude and stabilize. The full moon sky was full of new bright red stars.

Today big rounded cornered cube-shaped balloons have been launched from all corners of the city. They are made of what looks to me like kite nylon cloth, though I think they used to be made of paper. The sky is full of these colorful balloons today. 11/28

I spent much of a day sitting poolside at our guesthouse reflecting on all sorts of things, but mostly just my many usuals. Missing Corbin and Jenny. Wondering about my relationship with Emily who, at that point, I thought was less than enthusiastic about everything. Worrying that I wasn't working enough. The usual. And then there was more Loi Krathon.

It is Loi Krathon here in Chiang Mai and to being here at this time is quite auspicious since we hadn't originally planned to leave Indonesia until December 2. The Thai really get into this festival, the most lively surely of their annual calendar. Throughout the last three days and even still this morning the sky is dotted with the squarish hot air balloons. Just a few minutes ago one of these arose from not far away and on reaching altitude, several hundred feet, a string of firecrackers went off followed by the uncoiling of a nice tail which hung 20 to 30 feet below the balloon. Then it floated gently along on the breeze. These colorful daytime balloons

are replaced at night by cylindrical shaped balloons with a tray of hot coals attached to the balloon. These are launched with fireworks attached that made quite a display until the balloon has arisen well into the sky. Then the embers make the balloon glow like a red star for a very long time. For the last three nights the sky has been filled in every direction with these red glowing stars. Quite a sight. Another even larger balloon of many colors is overhead just now with its tail unfurling. Lovely sight.

Every evening for the last three has been a raucous celebration of parade, dance, launching of krathons on every body of water and endless fireworks. The last two nights the parades have been comprised of elaborate floats brightly lighted on which are placed for show several lovely Thai women. Last night a parade lasted for hours, and I watched from just inside the Thai Pae Gate. The parade is highly fascinating in a weird sort of way. Each of the many groups is preceded by a banner carried by several people announcing, I take it, the name of the group sponsoring the float. I think many of the groups are schools and others are wats (temples). Since schools are often attached to temples, likely many are both. I also saw in a temple compound a float being decorated which adds to this evidence as well as the fact that many of the floats depict wats, stupas, dragon staircases, etc.

Following the banner are a large group of walkers usually in common dress. These may be lovely sarongs and traditional Thai costume--even the sarong style typical of Thailand (Siam) with the tail drawn up between the legs to form pantaloons. But often the dress is jeans and work shirts. These work shirts are neat, and I may buy Jenny one. They are dark blue denim with round neck, no collar, they have long tails even all the way round that hangs well below the waist and have pockets low in the shirt front. They are neat shirts though while watching the parade last night it struck me that these have a kind of Communist worker flavor to them when worn by everyone. The people in this group often carry candle lighted lanterns (Loi Krathon is a festival of lights) or long streaming banners hanging from tall bamboo poles.

This group is usually followed by the float. Some of these were a marvel to behold and were the product of countless hours of labor. Many shimmer and sparkle in the lights cast upon them. Many are covered with strands of colored blinking lights. To provide light for these floats power is necessary, and this is provided by gas powered portable generators carried on trucks that precede or follow the float. So the beautiful and breath taking look of so many of these floats is matched by the ugliness and pollution of these power trucks. The engines chug away noisily (often half a dozen or more on a truck bed) and belch clouds of smoke and fumes into the air.

Another weirdness is that many of these groups include a sound truck, again generator powered, with dozens of speakers all turned to the max in an ear-piercing blast producing a mix of speech (obviously meaningless to me) and really bad (to me) music.

The pollution produced by this festival is impossible to overstate. The long wall near Thai Pae Gate was adorned by hundreds of oil lanterns which were lovely to look at, but each wafted streams of black smoke. The balloons are filled with an ugly black smoke. The fireworks exploding everywhere produce clouds of smoke. Endless lines of traffic produce visible smoke from every exhaust pipe. Street hawkers each have a portable brazier attached to their carts on which they cook their foods. These too produce smoke. In and along the moat surrounding the

Old City torches are set up in lines, each producing smoke. The result is pollution almost impossible to long endure. If I didn't know that my stay here is short and that I'll have a chance to really clear my lungs in the Himalayas, I'd be seriously concerned. My mouth and throat seem constantly irritated and filled with dirt. I've taken to frequent spitting even along the sidewalks. Emily is even less tolerant than I am and refused to endure the pollution last night and went home early without seeing all the parade.

Night before last we went across town to the Ping River. On the way we stopped at Mr. Chang and Miss Pauline's for a surprisingly delicious pizza. On the way to the river, we had frequently to dodge fireworks and one large firecracker exploded far too close to Emily. It freaked her out and she was very jumpy through the balance of the evening. I became as fearful as she, realizing the wantonness with which these fireworks were being set off.

In any case we did make it to the river to observe the thousands of kerathons set afloat on the river. Just below the bridge a platform had been built extending out over the river a few feet. A ramp had been constructed so people could easily walk down to the platform. Each person carried a kerathon--and leaning over the river set it afloat. Each one has incense sticks and a lighted candle. A dozen or so boys were in the water, yucky polluted water, to help shove the kerathons out into the wide river. Each kerathon was soon caught in the river current and started its way out into the river of lights. These launch platforms were at intervals on both sides of the river. The effect was quite moving to me--these kinds of things seem often to be--the observation of hundreds of people setting forth an exquisite work of art onto a huge river the accumulative affect being a river of candle lights.

*The river was filled with lights. The sky was filled with lights and the area in between was filled with exploding fireworks on every side. Beautiful, moving, dangerous and polluting. Asia!
11/30*

I couldn't seem to move past more personal reflection. Appropriate to travel and being for a long time a long way from home and family. I summed up my feelings and thoughts.

I must see this as a time of regeneration, of forging a completely new life, of engaging in newly creative adventures, of gaining the life and character forming experiences I should have had when I was in my 20s. What is it I want to do with the rest of my life? What is it I want to be? So many of these questions must remain unanswered for now, but one thing is certain--I want to foster and build close relationships with my kids, my parents, and my sisters. Also, I want all my relationships to be honest (completely so) and founded on integrity. I want to live every day fully, mindfully, and to be present in all that I do--the small and mundane things as well as the large ones. I want to be a teacher and mentor to a few. I want to write and read and think, hopefully creatively yet without the anxiety that what I write and think need be anything for anyone. I want to be very physically active: dance, ride bikes, hike, lift, cross train like I never have before. These are a few things. Oh. I want a neat place to live that I can build, design, create and make my own. I want it to be in the mountains, in clean air, in the quiet. I want new friends with whom to share many of my values and interests. 11/30

Now almost thirty years later and retired I can assess these goals. I have maintained a close and constant relationship with Corbin and Jenny. I remember that not so long after we got back from traveling Emily and I went to Texas to Elaine's house and my parents and other sister, Karen, were present. That was very strange. They had little interest in our travels. The main comment was, "I'm sure glad it was you and not me." I discovered how religiously and socially conservative were my sister and her husband. Since then, I've never felt close to Elaine or had much interest in trying to be so. I also remember that I had a rather major break with my parents. Although that was eventually patched, I now see it as unnecessary and selfish and immature on my part. With Emily I had a certain kind of relationship and I didn't think my parents' relationship was like that, mostly because my mom was so dominant. My family-related ideals and values were only partially fulfilled. I did live in the mountains on returning, but this eventually became a burden rather than a pleasure. I now see that I have always had a strong emotional connection not only with the place I live, but with the very idea and hard physical work of making a home. I have loved and been thrilled by designing and decorating several homes. I did pursue an active physical life in all the ways I indicated, and I remain fairly active now at age 78. Dancing and moving became the center of my academic and teaching life from that time to the present. The expansion of friends, not so much. Always a failure in this area. The absence of friends has been a confoundment most of my life. I was a good teacher and think I inspired and enriched quite a few of my students. I have been and remain a creative and productive scholar and likely will continue the rest of my life with several academic projects currently in progress and endless ideas always arising. Currently I ask if my aspirations were ambitious enough and certainly if I chose my career wisely. Even though teaching can be considered a service profession, I often feel now that I have not done enough to serve my community and fellow beings.

We rented a car for a trip outside of Chiang Mai on December 1. It included stops to see elephants, a butterfly and orchid pavilion, a destination to visit hill tribes, and a rim drive in the mountains around the city. A bit terrifying to drive, but we managed to survive.

Years ago, when I lived in the big house on Hills View Drive in Niwot, I somehow scraped the money together to have some of my favorite photographs from my travels professionally framed. One of my favorites is of Wat Phra That Doi Suthep, a temple in the hills above Chiang Mai. My photo is of the totally gold covered main stupa and a large gold filigree umbrella set against a brilliant blue sky. I have often thought about how one's framed photographs and works of art provide an ambience that over the years has a deep impact on who one is. This 16" x 20" framed image has been something I have appreciated and lived with every day for a third of my life. It became quite faded a few years ago and I

went to considerable trouble to get a new brighter print made to replace the old one in the frame. Wat Phra That Doi Suthep was a place we visited early in December in our explorations of the Chiang Mai area, a day I still so clearly remember.

Yesterday we explored Doi Suthep, i.e., Suthep Mountain, which is just to the northwest of the city. From the city you can see (if pollution permits) Wat Phra That Doi Suthep. We took a tuc-tuc to Chang Phuak Gate north of the old city where we caught a songthaew, a pickup with two rows of seats in the back. These trucks, mostly red, are everywhere and serve as taxis along with tuc-tucs and bicycle 3-wheel affairs. The songthaew was full including an English-speaking tourist, a German woman, a couple Thai people, and 2 hill tribe women with 3 kids between them. We also stopped at an ice factory and loaded a bunch of ice on the back step. The journey up the mountain was a twisting winding steep road with the truck belching black smoke all the way. The hill tribe women sat across from us and chatted with one another. They ate small turnip looking food. One had a plastic bag of ice water. One, the older one who looked 40 but was probably 20 something, had 2 children, one sitting on a stool the other, without pants, on her lap occasionally breast feeding. The other woman was maybe 18 though she looked older. She was quite beautiful despite her obvious poverty. Her son, perhaps 3, sat on the floor picking up and eating any incidentals he found there. Very interesting to see and listen to these women. When we were leaving the wat, we saw them again on the stairway, their children in their laps, begging. How sad.

The wat is atop a hill and a long stairway, edged by the bodies of undulating dragons, leads up to the temple compound. We hiked the stairs taking note of how well we did physically, one part of our minds on the Himalaya. Not so bad I thought. Going up the stairs seeing no one dressed in shorts, as we were, I realized that “polite” or “respectful” dress to the Thais means long pants. I figured we wouldn’t be able to enter the wat. After circumambulating the compound, we found a basket full of sarongs and big baggy blue denim pants. Em donned a sarong and I pulled on a pair of baggy pants. Off with our shoes and into the wat. It was beautiful. The center object was a huge golden stupa with a five-tiered umbrella affair at the top. Golden umbrellas were at each corner and the whole area was surrounded by a square that had Buddha images all along the wall and several chapels filled with Buddha images and worshippers. At two locations worshippers lighted candles and incense, left flower offerings, and many made offerings of gold leaf. They buy these outside--a piece of gold leaf folded in a piece of paper. In the wat the worshipper selects where to place the gold leaf--on a Buddha image or other places, unwraps the gold leaf, and presses it on the chosen place. Many people prayed. Some were led in a vocal prayer by a monk. Some shook a canister of sticks, like the I Ching, and read the message on the stick that first fell out. The area was active and very beautiful. Tourists, both Thai and non-Thai, intermingled with worshippers easily. Em and I drew a few looks and comments for our weird dress, but all in good humor, at least, I think. 12/5

A bit more local experience was enjoyed during an evening at a Kantoke dinner that included classical Thai dancing as well as Hill Tribe dances. I remember the “fingernail dance” and the “candle dance,” both classical, that

feature the bent back fingers of the beautiful dancers emphasized by very long arching fingernails.

We went to a Kantoke dinner at the Chiang Mai cultural center. Kantoke means round table. We went in a huge room that was sort of divided by a raised stage area. Many Thai people were seated on the floor in long rows facing each other with kantokes (round tables) brought to each pair on which was an assortment of foods. We sat next to the wall on a slightly raised platform. We were first brought soup, then plain and sticky rice. The kantoke had pork curry, fried pork skins, fried chicken, a vegetable dish, a dip for the pork rinds and vegetables, some sort of sweet fried noodles. Maybe other dishes. The food was good, though it seemed toned down for the occasion. It was fun to eat sitting on the floor with the little table full of food. A British couple, probably in their 50s, sat next to us only a few farang (foreigners) and seemed neither to enjoy each other nor sitting on the floor to eat. One of the few things the woman said to me was "I'm not used to having my feet in the food." Made me think about traveling once your children are away from home. Perhaps couples do so to finally try to enjoy one another and their money, but by then they don't really even know one another or care to try to know each other. Their communications patterns are probably so strongly established they couldn't begin to know how to renew themselves or their relationship. Given my marriage, I feel I was in that same situation. Travel together but feel alone. Seems sad to me and of course it has everything to do with me and probably nothing to do with the British couple. They may have been as happy as larks. Ha!

After the meal musicians began to play Thai music and there was a performance of seven classical dances. Very beautiful. After the dancing we went to a nearby pavilion for some hill tribe dances. Here the audience sat on bleacher seats surrounding a concrete dance floor area. Several of the tribes performed. The program proclaimed the dancers to be authentic members of the respective tribes. They looked authentic to me, but during their dances, certainly more primitive but no less interesting than the classical Thai dancing. The Thai people in the audience seemed often to laugh. The laughter was obvious and seemed to me derisive, but I didn't know what motivated it. It seemed disrespectful but later when we asked Thai people we met why--they suspected the dance wasn't authentic and the people knew it. I somehow doubt this, but I'll probably never know. It was a very fun evening. 12/8

Perhaps the most valued and memorable experience I had in Chiang Mai occurred over two days just before we left Chiang Mai. We learned about the state sponsored arts schools for young people. The kids are carefully chosen and then trained in classical music and dancing and are provided a broad education. These very special young people are assured jobs dancing and playing music.

Monday morning, we went to find the Chiang Mai Dramatic Arts College and National Theatre. It was simply marked on the map, and I knew nothing about it. We first couldn't find it. It didn't seem to be on the street where it was marked on the map. We almost gave up and went on to something else, but I decided we should try another street. As we walked down the street, we began to hear music and peering over a wall saw young people dancing and playing music. We asked the guard at the gate if visitors could visit. He took us to the administration

office. They cheerfully got a sense of what we wanted and called for someone. A man soon appeared, greeted us in English, and began to take us on a tour. His name is Boonrok and he teaches English at the school.

There are 8 years of arts and general ed at this college. The youngest students are 12. The first level is 3 years, the second level is 3 years, and the third, 2 years. You must be examined at the end of each level to move to the next level. Most students are girls and most study classical Thai dancing with some studying Thai music including singing and a variety of Thai musical instruments. A few boys study dance, but this is a form of masked dance that seems very like martial arts.

As we walked along room after room was filled with groups dancing. We paused at several to watch and take photos. The students noticed us but were not nervous or affected by our presence. The dances were beautiful and performed very nicely by the whole class in unison. The teacher mostly counted the rhythms, did a little leading and sometimes would go to an individual student to physically correct her position.

We went into one class and learned that it was divided into two groups, two teachers in one room. All were female, but the girls had been divided into female dancers and male dancers. The division was made primarily on the shape of the face. The female parts go to girls with round faces--ones with a smaller forehead and a broader face. The male parts to girls with tall foreheads and narrow faces. Once we were told this you could clearly see the two types.

After they danced for a few minutes one teacher stopped the classes and had the dancers sit down. She asked one female part dancer and one male part dancer to come before us. They demonstrated standing, sitting, and various body positions to show gender differences. The male stands more open-legged, more side to side and more elongated than the female. The teacher corrected and adjusted her students to the perfect form. Very meaningful to me to see this.

I asked Boonrok if he had the time to spend with us as we went to watch the boys train. He said, "Oh yes." He seemed to be learning too. About this time, we met a young American, Bruce Collett, from Wisconsin who is there for the fall term teaching English and studying Thai music. He is learning a 2-stringed bowed instrument--a classical Thai instrument. We chatted a bit then watched the boys train. They were dancing a very vigorous "monkey" role. The teacher sat on a bench in front of the 4 boys and hammered the count out by hitting a stick on the bench. Wrong moves by these 12-year-old boys drew a sharp whack on the hand, head, or thigh with the rhythm stick. Ouch. Then we visited music classes--some held in the hallways, others in rooms. Students willingly demonstrated for us. Teachers gladly interrupted their classes to answer questions and to demonstrate for us.

About this time Boonrok suggested that we stay for lunch then visit his afternoon class. He said he wanted his students to hear English spoken by Americans. We accepted the invitation glad to repay the favor of Boonrok's hospitality. We had a nice, but very small, 7 bhat lunch. Visited more with Bruce and entertained a cluster of students who were very curious about us.

In the class we introduced ourselves and told a little about what we did. Bruce visited the class to observe. The kids were very excited and completely relaxed. They bow to their elders, but they are boisterous and move freely about the classroom. They asked us dozens of questions.

How tall we are, our ages, our marital status. When Em told them she is single, they made a huge bowl and wanted to set her up with Bruce. They especially wanted to know how we like Thai food, Thai people, Chiang Mai, etc. They loved it when we told them how much we liked Thai food, culture, and them. They cheered and clapped. We asked if they wanted to come to America and almost all said they wanted to visit. They like Michael Jackson and Madonna. They then wanted us to sing for them. They wanted to sing for us. We asked Bruce to join us and learning that they knew the chorus to Jingle Bells, we sang the first verse, the "Dashing through the snow" part and invited them to join us on the chorus. They loved that. Then they sang us songs in Thai and in English, putting us to shame.

The class ended with as much energy and enthusiasm as it had begun. During the class students asked if we'd come back and we agreed to return the next day.

Then Boonrok asked if we'd like to meet another class of his that afternoon. We agreed. This one met outside and was a repeat of the first.

We then found a group of young men jamming mostly on classical Thai instruments, but a Thai style amplified guitar was added. Very fine music. Reminded me so much of Jenny's Sept School band. We asked if that kind of music was available on tape and Boonrok arranged to get a tape copied for us.

We left the school around 4 p.m. excited and looking forward to returning. We were told that on Tuesday there would be major rehearsals for an upcoming performance. 12/8

Tuesday, we returned to Chiang Mai Dramatic Arts College. Oh, on Monday I had an hour to look at some books on Thai dancing in the school library. They were dated I suspect, but still relevant so I wanted to copy some from these books.

We watched a dance rehearsal when we arrived at 9 a.m. Then went to copy the pages. We had lunch with a large group of students who were very eager to talk to us, show off for us, teach us Thai language, and tell us Thai customs. Very fun and we began to identify that a few students were especially interested in us, and we were also in them.

After lunch we went to the English department and met a Thai Muslim woman Umpan (Oom—pun [short u]) who is chair of the English Department. She is a wonderful and beautiful woman. She told us much about herself; asked us much about ourselves, and soon invited us to her house for lunch on Wednesday. We accepted.

We visited Boonrok's class (a third group of first year students) and all was fun again. They even wanted us to sing Jingle Bells having heard we had sung it the day before. By this time, we began to realize that Thai people think Americans are attractive. They constantly told Emily in English, "You are very beautiful." They told me I was handsome. They told me I looked smart. Very interesting since we think we are pale and ordinary compared to them. They all look so beautiful to us.

After class we went to a rehearsal of advanced students preparing a complex Thai dance drama. This is a complete merging of dance and theatre. They dance extensively and have long speaking parts. This drama was an old Thai folk story about a giant (or someone) who lost his eyes. The part we saw had to do with a hero trying to recover the eyes. He (played by a girl) courted a woman who knew where the eyes were. He got her drunk and got the information

(secrets) from her. Very interesting story, the whole performance takes 2 hours. This rehearsal reminded me so much of Corbin's theatre experience and parts of it I have seen. 12/8

That evening we met Bruce for dinner and had a nice chat. Then a rather strange yet important encounter occurred between Emily and me. I'd enjoyed the visit with Bruce and yet, after we left, learned that my behavior hadn't pleased Emily. The conversation that ensued was insightful to me.

We parted at 8 p.m. As we left the restaurant, I said that I'd enjoyed talking to Bruce and asked Emily if she did. She said, "I guess, but you talked all the time." That statement burned like fire, and I closed down emotionally so fast I couldn't stop it. She knew it instantly, but I was a goner. It was a fairly unpleasant evening and night, but this morning I was able to describe the process and what happened, and this seemed to get me out of it and us back together. Really interesting how that worked. By describing what happened, an ethnography of a psychic shift, I could see myself clearly enough to break the spell and move out of the veil. What happens is that when something occurs to hurt me or threaten me seriously, I have a coping mechanism. It is like a veil falls between me and my own thoughts and feelings. Em constantly said, "Talk to me! Tell me what you're thinking, what you are feeling." All I could do was to say I was okay. I couldn't identify either thoughts or feelings. I couldn't really think what I could do to make the situation better. I was cut off from myself and unable to act. Thought my defaulted actions were clearly hurtful to Emily, and I could see this. The old pattern--how many times I've done this in my life only to have to take days to wear it out. Amazing. I was surprised when it happened last night and seemingly, I was unable to prevent it as I now almost always can.

So, this morning I could describe rather objectively what happened. After that I felt much more in touch with myself, my emotions, then I could begin to see why Em's statement was so hurtful. Many reasons. 1. Judy told me the same thing countless times telling me I am self-centered, that I must be the center of attention, that I care nothing for others, etc. I always hated that and felt it unfair. 2. I do not want to have a relationship in which I must hold myself back because the other is too weak or shy to engage in conversation as strongly as I do. 3. I feel that I have changed so much socially, feeling much more comfortable with so many people now. I didn't want to think that I'd somehow become socially dominating when I had been too shy socially. 4. I thought Emily had exaggerated in her statement of the degree of my dominance. She agrees that she did. 12/8

We indeed returned to the Arts College the next day with the treat of being guests for lunch in the home of one of the faculty, the chairwoman of the English Department.

At 11:30 we went to the college. We met Bruce but Boonrok and Umpun were not there. The office soon filled with students. The same girls we had been having lunch with. One, a very sweet girl that likes English and especially touched both Em and me, asked me to read English passages with her from her textbook. We did that and she was very good at reading. Em had some photos and all the kids loved looking at them. These girls were sad to learn that we weren't

eating lunch there and lined up, to bow to us and tell us goodbye as we left. Em and I were both moved to tears in our sadness at leaving these new friends.

We went with Bruce and Boonrok to Umpun's house. A very lovely Thai home, quite formal near a mosque on the north side of the old city just outside the moat. She had prepared a huge meal. We ate about 1:15 or so. She had invited two women teachers from the college who were interested in meeting us and especially to talk with Emily. We had a delicious meal beautifully served with engaging conversation. Umpun is very Muslim and has strong Islamic views. She rejects every other religion particularly any that suggests superstition or magic.

I asked about an offering I had seen alongside a street. Em had taken a picture of it and the picture was there. They explained this was placed at the location of a traffic accident where someone had been killed. It was an offering for the spirit of the dead person. I also asked about scarves I'd seen wrapped around some trees. I was told that a yellow scarf designated that the tree was like a monk and should never be cut. A red one indicates that a spirit of some sort resides in the tree. I'd seen rice and a cup in a niche of a tree with a scarf. An offering to the spirit in the tree. We asked how the spirit houses fit with Thai Buddhism. Boonrok said most Thais are a little bit Hindu. He sees the spirit houses as stemming from Hinduism. And of course, most of the classical dramas come from Ramakien, the Thai version of Ramanyana. Ramakien should be an entry in both the Dancing and Acting dictionary projects.

The two women teachers at the lunch were very interesting. Toy and Chim (their nicknames). One taught non-Thai music at the college. The other taught guidance (or psychology). They were very nice and practiced their English with us. When it was time to go Umpun told us she felt we would return. In fact, everyone constantly asked us when we'd come back and encouraged us to do so soon. Again, they all lined up on the porch and wished us well, encouraged us to return, and to say goodbye. What a wonderful experience this was. Chiang Mai is a lovely city (not to forget the pollution) with lovely friendly, gifted and talented people.

Umpun had done the Hajj last year and has traveled often and extensively. She plans to come to American next Summer. Her husband, a banker, is, in her words, "a China man." We met him briefly. She asked Em to be her daughter and said I might be her brother. She has a daughter studying to be a nurse. She told us she had a son who died five years ago. He would have been 17 now. Very sad. She is a lovely person and I hope I do meet her again.

12/8

We took an overnight train back to Bangkok and this time didn't have difficulty finding our old digs The Riverview Guesthouse where we slept and ate and prepared to travel on to Nepal. I learned that I'd lost about 15 pounds during the trip to that point, down to 143 pounds.

We arrived at the River View Guest House about 7 a.m. Got a room, took a shower and caught some z's before breakfast. Had a delicious muesli breakfast and inquired how best to get to Siam Center. We took bus #36 and did fine knowing where to get off. The bus cost 7 baht for the two of us. At the American Express Office, I got a package from CU that was totally without significance except for letters from Karen and Mother. It was great to read these letters. I had to have Emily read Mom's letter I was choking up and had too many tears in my

eyes. I particularly miss communicating with everyone, not hearing from anyone, and not being able to talk to Corbin and Jenny. Boo boo. 12/9

The short stay at The Riverview Guest House offered opportunity for me to make some summary comments, at that point on Thailand.

So, we are closing our Thailand experience. We're sitting in the restaurant atop River View Guest House enjoying, yes, the river view. We are both very excited about Nepal and trekking. By this time tomorrow we'll have had our first views of the Himalaya. Thailand has been a total gift. We didn't plan to come here at all then when we had to change planes in Bangkok, we added a week for Thailand. That grew to three weeks when we wore out on Indonesia. We have had a wonderful time here and have new friends. I knew almost nothing of Thailand before coming here and now I know a little something at least. Know some about Thai dancing and music, some about hill tribes, some about crafts and silks, some about the geography, history, climate and religions of Thailand. Thai people are so friendly and gracious. So helpful and thoughtful. ...

We have both really settled into the travel experience. Though we feel homesick and miss people and things, we are good at putting these feelings in the perspective of our whole trip. We also think that our relationship is pretty amazing for us to get along so very well.

In Karen's letter she mentioned that reading about my experience put her problems and concerns in different perspective. She seems to be appreciating the size and diversity of the world through my letters. That is interesting to me. I've had some of the same feelings. For example, in Bali with cremation ceremonies going on all over the place all the time and experiencing death as a joyful experience certainly puts life and death in a different light. Death, the dead, are much more common and perhaps therefore more acceptable. That may just help one to live more in the present, more in the moment. We may be experiencing something of this living in the present through travel.

As the sun sinks near the horizon and glows huge and red through the polluted air, I listen to popular Thai music and look with happy/sad feelings over the watt spotted skyline of Bangkok. Farewell Thailand. I may be back.

On to the Nepali Himalaya. 12/9

Nepal

Kathmandu, December 10 – 17

Departing Thailand was not difficult. We got a lift to the airport from a guy with a pickup truck. An hour-long drive. Our "left baggage" at first seemed lost, but then it was found. We repacked everything on the floor of the airport. We saw a Buddhist monk holding forth with some devotees or something on that order. Customs, passport check, and we were ready to board the flight to Kathmandu on Thai Airlines, which at that time was a swank outfit.

A remarkable and unexpectedly emotional experience occurred on the flight. As we approached our destination all the passengers shared our first sighting of Mount Everest, the tallest mountain on earth.

As we approached Kathmandu on our Thai Airlines flight from Bangkok, Emily and I went to the back of the plane to pee. She said on the way that she had seen some really big mountains, but I looked out and didn't see them. As I sat back in my seat after peeing, I looked out the window and there they were, the Himalaya. I just started crying and I haven't really gotten control of my emotions since. When Em came back, she saw me crying and said she had felt like crying too. Mt. Everest was in the second group we saw. These huge completely snow-covered mountains are way beyond description. As I looked across the land they seemed to loom as high as the plane flew and I suppose they did. Everest has a dark face to the side we saw it from, I suppose from being so sheer the snow falls off or it is cast in shadow.

I did finally get hold of myself enough to get my telephoto lens on my camera and a nice young gentleman offered me his window seat so I could take a picture. I'm crying again now as I think of this moment. The first sight of the Himalaya is surely one of the peak moments of my life and to think that I'll get to spend more than a month with them.

Everyone, well most everyone, on the plane seemed excited. Clearly many on the plane had planned and dreamed for years of coming to trek in these mountains. 12/11

By this time in our travels, arriving in Kathmandu was engaged with ease and confidence since we'd had lots of experience. Fortunately, we cleared customs quickly and without hassle, as some other travelers were experiencing, and procured a visa quickly as well. We had not made prior arrangements for anything, so we knew that exiting the airport we would be met with chaos. By this time, it would be an amusing and interestingly crazy encounter.

Once outside the customs area we got hit by several touts regarding housing. Since we didn't have reservations or any recommendations, we choose one who showed us a photo of a half decent looking place and promised a good price plus free transportation. Then we were assisted, like it or not, by a herd of teen age boys who wanted to carry our luggage. They ran around chattering, encouraging us to watch, to count the bags, to be sure they did everything right. Em went to pay them in Nepali rupee, but they saw she had Thai baht and preferred that. They seemed willing to take anything and assured her they would share whatever she gave them. I think she gave them 30 baht (about \$1.20).

Next our ride to the guest house. This took us through winding narrow streets bustling with hundreds of people, rickshaws, bicycles, a few motor scooters, and an occasional car, and, of course, a few strolling cows. These cows are a kick. they aren't fenced or tied and simply wander around the streets eating this and that. I think people feed them scraps etc. 12/11

Our agreement with the driver was that we had to see the accommodations and find them both satisfactory and at a price we could afford before we'd commit to staying. He was gracious and assured us that we would be happy. Indeed, we were.

He had told us we were under no obligation, so on arrival at the Snow Lion Guest House, I asked to see the room before deciding. We went through a very nice lobby and a restaurant and up four flights of stairs. We emerged on an open walkway, and he pointed out Mt. Ganesh (which one I don't know yet) to us. Mt. Ganesh is a huge mountain far to the south, snow covered and massive. We looked at the room, which is large and very nice with a bath including hot water, tub, and shower. Very nice. The man told us his name was Siddhartha ("like the Buddha" he added) and took us up one more flight to the roof. Here mountains can be seen all around and across Kathmandu valley is the monkey temple, famed for its bearing the image of eyes, easily seen from our room. Siddhartha instructed his helpers below to bring up our bags and thus we were settled. 12/11

Even though we had traveled for hours, we were eager to get out into the city. After a quick shower we walked the neighborhood interacting with the people, exchanging money at a much better rate than expected, looking in shops and finding restaurants. At one point we encountered a procession with music and costume in the streets that was part of a wedding. How fun! We both immediately loved this ancient city and looked forward to the experiences we would have. We were excited for the next morning to get an overview of the city from our roof.

This morning we had a delicious breakfast of toast, oatmeal and pancakes, and a big pot of tea for a whole \$1 each. Then we went up on the roof to have a look around. I'd wanted to get up for sunrise and did, but the whole valley was fogged in. After breakfast the sun was beginning to burn away the fog and we watched things emerge slowly out of the mist. The surrounding houses with people hanging laundry, reading, playing with puppies, dancing, drumming on tin cans, drawing, knitting, pounding herbs (I suppose), or just relaxing. Our roof is a couple stories higher than most so we can see many roofs. This seems to be a place where many people go to enjoy themselves, work or whatever. It is very fun to look over this area of the city and see all these people.

We could see people stretching laundry on the ground and fences to dry. Cows wandered along. Children played. A few houses have small vegetable gardens.

Finally, the Monkey Temple began to emerge from the mists and that made a couple of nice photo moments. Then we could begin to see the white mountains to the south a little. Prayer flags flutter from every roof. A few satellite TV dishes can also be seen.

Music can be heard and there is a constant din of human voices arising from the street below. There is a little traffic noise, but very little especially compared with Thailand and Bali. The air here is polluted, but it seems nothing compared with everywhere else in Asia we've been. 12/11

The first order of business was to outfit ourselves for the trek. We would learn there are many options. One can get a fully supported guided trek and pay a lot of money for it, or you can outfit yourself and go it alone. We had to check out the options and find where we felt secure and confident. It would be a major trek of 200 kilometers over a pass near 18,000 feet in the winter. Kathmandu is

the city through which all the international climbs in the Himalayas go. Well-outfitted climbers start with new equipment and then sell it off in Kathmandu before leaving Nepal. Specialty trekking gear shops buy this high-end equipment and either resell it or rent it to folks like us. We headed out to explore our options starting with an outfitter recommended to us by the folks at our guest house.

He seemed to discourage us from going alone, but of course, he is in the business of providing guides. He wanted \$700 each for one package and \$380 for both for just a guide. Not for us. We then found a shop that has good equipment and rents bags and jackets at good prices. I was thinking of just buying a bag, but we'll need 20-degree F. bags, and that kind of bag would be useless to me in Colorado and a down parka wouldn't be worth much either. Then we checked on people who will get a permit for you. The guy wanted \$90 each to get the permits. The cost is only \$13 or so. We'll wait in line and get our own, thank you. 12/11

The morning of December 12 started with a bit of an emotional crisis. I found myself missing Corbin and Jenny and feeling totally distant. It was possible to call Corbin, but I felt the emotional affect would be hard. I didn't even have a way to try to call Jenny since she'd moved to Granby and I didn't have her phone number. Getting myself back together a bit, we headed out to Immigration to get our trekking permits and visa extensions. That involved more money than we thought it would as well as standing in several lines for some time. I don't even know how we knew we needed them. We were successful. Then on to the trekking outfitters to begin to select and arrange equipment. We also bought bus tickets to Dumre for the following Tuesday, which we had learned was the village along the road where one started the Annapurna Circuit trek.

Trying to think of everything, we were considering clothing strategies since we would be trekking in the middle of winter and travel from just 3 or 4 thousand feet elevation to almost 18 thousand feet. Since there is no access by road or even by helicopter in the high country, we had procured a little very practical Himalayan trekking medical book. I still have it and occasional still consult it. It takes any symptoms of illness, evaluates the various things the symptoms might indicate ordered in terms of what is most likely, and offers treatment options. The book included a page of recommended drugs. Acquiring medications was part of our preparation. Little did we know at that point how valuable these would be on the trek.

Em began to worry about medications we might need and about whether we should hire a guide. With so much affecting me at the point I felt very impatient. But we made a list of medications for every known human ailment and went to dinner.

Dinner, by candlelight for the power was off in that neighborhood ("the Bluebell" same as last night), offered us a chance to relax, reflect, and converse about our roller coasting emotions and where we stand. We agreed that we are really doing very well and cheered up considerably. I particularly feel hopeful and grateful because I moved a long way in the direction of

understanding more fully my withdrawal weirdness. It is a severing of myself from feeling emotions, potentially painful ones. I drop a curtain between myself and my emotions and in that space I'm unable to feel much of anything. It is sort of an emotional Novocain. I know the pain is there, but I can feel nothing but general pressure. But I also can't feel what I'm doing, I can't feel anything good or bad. When others push me, try to anger me or humor me, or love and support me, the very feeling heightening character of those efforts only deepens my withdrawal. What helped me today was when Em told me she thought I was cutting myself off from my feelings about Corbin and Jenny. This purely rational explanation helped me build a bridge toward my feelings even though there wasn't time or place to truly feel these emotions.

After dinner we went to tackle the drug/medication issue. I anticipated much confusion and difficulty communicating. We had a dozen or more drugs that in the US would not only need a prescription but wouldn't even be available. We walked into a tiny little pharmacy. We told the man we were preparing for a trek and needed medicines. He smiled. As we started down the list, he had every drug and most cost but one or two rupees a pill. After half an hour we walked out with a big bag of stuff, antibiotics, bandages, eye, ear, throat, skin, anti-diarrhea, constipation, and anti-nausea, etc., etc. All for 613 rupee or about \$12. We did not fail to get a single thing we requested including 3 exotic high altitude sickness medications. It was actually fun. 12/11

Last minute arrangements were a bit hectic. Then last minute as we were ready to leave Emily got sick. Knowing that we needed to be as healthy as possible to start this long trip, we postponed. I used the day to make final contacts back home. I was able to talk with Corbin and he was fine and happy. I talked with Judy, and she assured me Jenny was happy working at Winter Park and living in Granby. Judy also informed me that she had moved out of the dome into a place in Boulder and that I could live in the dome upon return if I wanted.

Yesterday was very hectic trying to get ready to go. Lots of things to buy arrangements to make. We finally decided to hire a porter/guide. At the trekking shop where we rented equipment, they introduced us to this young man Parang Lama. He had done the Annapurna Circuit 25 times. He knows the way and can help us negotiate for places to stay. He speaks a little English. He is 22 and very nice looking. He was to meet us at 6 a.m. this morning. He was there ready to go. I told him Emily was sick. He understood and said he'd be back at 10 a.m. to go change our bug tickets. He was here (it is now 11:30 a.m.) but we weren't ready yet to decide if Em will be ready to go by tomorrow. I told him I'd come to the trekking shop at noon. 12/14

With everything ready to travel it was just a matter of awaiting Emily's return to health. Spending time on the sunny rooftop of our guest house afforded me the opportunity to write some of my observations and impressions of Kathmandu.

Now we are roof top of the Snow Lion Guest House. It is hazy this afternoon so fewer of the huge peaks are visible. I'm so eager to be trekking. Hopefully tomorrow.

Walking back here from lunch impresses upon me the conditions of a third world country. The street is dirt but with some rock and stone on it. There are many potholes and even deep excavations (open for days) who knows for what. Buildings crowd the narrow street on both sides except for a couple areas where there are open spaces. No matter what time of day or night the streets are full of people. Most walk but a few travel by rickshaw, some on motor scooters and an occasional auto.

A few people beg. A little girl, a total urchin dressed in rags, runs along beside us with hands out. She doesn't give up easily, perhaps because there are almost no Europeans in the street. Perhaps we are her only hope. There are stationary beggars usually old men, who sit or stand. They call out to you "Namaste" and bow and give you a big haggled-toothed grin with a wild weird look in their eyes.

But beggars are not so many as I had expected. Actually, lots of people in the streets are what I'd call dressed up and well groomed. Some men wear tailored western style business suits, others in jeans or slacks and attractive shirts. Many of the women wear skirts and blouses, often of beautiful and colorful cloth, sometimes with pants beneath the skirt in the same cloth. Most women wear the tika or dot or decoration on their forehead. Sometimes it is a red line that goes up into the part of their hair. Many have attractive long black hair. Many of the women--dar skinned, eyed and haired--are very beautiful, the men handsome. Some children wear school clothes of a western style. There seems to be a youth center near here.

As in other Asian countries I've visited there is here much physical expression of affection within gender. Men, youth, and young boys walk hand in hand or with arms around each other's shoulders or waists. Women show the same affection to one another.

Babies generally go without diaper. You often see them, bare bottomed, crawling about the stoop or the house next to the busy street. Not infrequently the mother takes them into the street and helps them to squat, early toilet training.

There are many vendors. Many houses, as in Indonesia, are fronted by a tiny store that sells everything. We stopped at one last night for supplies. The man had everything we wanted and much more. All good prices and he was very friendly. Others vend from stands on the street, particularly oranges (a greenish orange small fruit, mandarin I think), bananas, and peanuts particularly. There is one very remarkable woman, very dark and completely dirty and disheveled, who sits near the busy intersection of about 5 streets near here selling peanuts. She has a large wicker tray with a mound of peanuts and sells them by the cup full. Cups used to measure peanuts are slightly cone shaped with the small circle at the top. I wonder why.

Fruit seems to be sold by the weight rather than the piece. The street vendors are equipped with a crude balance scale. They hold it with one hand and with the other place weights on one tray and fruit on the other.

Then, of course, there are many shops selling crafts, carvings, sweaters, woolen jackets, cashmere, jewelry, carpets, Indian clothing and tapestries, trekking equipment, medicines, and books.

There are roving street vendors selling a single piece, a carved elephant or a little gadget of some sort, or a peacock feather fan, or something.

Regularly you pass near someone who whispers to you "You want to change money? Very good rates." This is the black-market currency exchange. You may also hear whispered, "You want to smoke something? Hashish? Cocaine?" They always ask me regarding changing money. They always ask Emily regarding illegal drugs.

It is a great joke and a kick to see the cows wandering the streets. They plod along, stopping at garbage piles to nose about for food. Sometimes they are huge horned black bulls. One was lying down on the sidewalk just outside a busy bank where we went to change money yesterday. Often, they lie in heaps of garbage. No one seems to pay them any attention. There are quite a few of them also.

Yesterday some drew the attention of a few in the street as the bull proceeded to mate with a heifer. Dogs do it in the street as well. There are many street dogs who live on garbage, and often fight with one another. But the Nepali also like dogs for pets. These dogs live on rooftops rather than the street and get only the exercise of running about their small patio. Of the dog pet variety there are many. A German shepherd lives on a nearby roof and on another live about six of those funny little mop-like dogs that look like bedroom slippers.

Nearly every night I've been awakened by dogs barking. They seem to yap endlessly at one another from their rooftop locations, seemingly hundreds of them. This may make sleep impossible for an hour or so.

Nepali sweep much like other Asians. Women with short-handled brooms, and often pathetic brooms at that, walk along slightly bent over sweeping away. The hallways and stairs are swept daily here at this guest house. The homes sweep stoop, street, courtyard, whatever, every day though these surfaces are themselves often nothing but dirt.

As I look over the city from here many pieces of cloth flutter in the slight breeze. Many are simply laundry. A huge field near here is almost always filled with laundry hanging from lines and lying flat on the ground. I noticed an interesting substitute for clothes pens. They take two pieces of rope and twist them together. The laundry is held to the line by the corners being inserted between the two ropes. This works very well, and I think it quite clever.

Other fluttering cloths are prayer flags. There are some on every roof. Usually this is a piece of cloth attached the length of a 15 foot or so pole, like a very short but very wide flag. Some have prayers written on them; some are colorful. Most look like gray rags. Perhaps they all begin as colorful flags with inscription and time renders them all the same.

Flags attached to stupas usually are attached to lines or ropes that go from the ground to the peak of the stupa. These are small 10" by 10" rectangles, often presented in many colors.

Though garbage is everywhere and there seems to be places along the street that accumulate huge piles of garbage there are trucks that seem to rove around occasionally picking up this garbage. I have also seen a few garbage pickers--people who sort through this mess looking for something of value to them. I can't imagine what it could be.

Several boys, I'd guess 12 or so, just came up here to the roof top. All wore nice pants and shirts and had stylish haircuts.

Nearly everyone here is friendly and pleasant. All call out "Namaste" or "Hello." Most smile and a few bow. So nice.

We have hired our porter and guide for \$8 a day if we want him for 12 days only and for \$6 a day if we keep him the whole circuit. That will be about \$100 to \$150 depending on what we decide. We will each be spending more than this on food and lodging for the circuit and he'll eat the same food and stay in the same places. Don't know how he'll make much money. He seems a fine young man, eager to work. I'm pleased we decided to hire him.

Perhaps this will have to do for Kathmandu at least until after the trek. It is simply impossible to capture in words or pictures the feeling, the situation, here. It is at once so poor and sad and so beautiful and alive. I am completely grateful for this experience. 12/14

Emily's illness grew worse, and we continued to delay the start of the trek. Caring for Emily I spent more time on the roof not only writing more of my observations of Kathmandu, but also using it as a kind of observation tower. While I was super impatient about getting off to trekking, I did try to use this time in an interesting way.

Kathmandu is a sprawling active city with much going on. Temples everywhere and processions, music, etc. part of the course of the day, just like power outages. I feel rather restless. I'd like to be learning about this culture, seeing dance, talking with people, especially since I'm not trekking, but I don't quite know how to do that.

First thing this morning after catching a bit of extra sleep after deciding not to go, I heard a bell ringing nearby. It sounded like a small hand bell. They have such lovely sounding ones here. Though hearing bells in the early morning is not uncommon I got up to investigate. On the roof top just across from my window a monk was doing a ritual for the erection of a new prayer flag. He stood beside a red flag across from the newly erected flag and prayed, rang the bell, and dipped and flipped water toward the new flag which is white with white, red, green, yellow, and blue fringe pieces and inscribed with a prayer (I suppose). I slipped out on the balcony and got a couple of photos of this. Very lovely mystical image through the morning fog.

It is not a very clear day today. I cannot see any of the high mountains from here. I'm writing while sitting on the roof top this Wednesday afternoon.

Want to write a little about games. I've seen in just a few days the Nepali playing all sorts of games.

Cards are popular on one roof top just below me. Two little girls are playing with an old woman. A man is looking on. I haven't a guess what game it is. The other day a group of men and women were playing cards on the same roof.

At midday these same two little girls, I'd say they are 8 years old, were playing a sort of jump rope game. They had an elastic rope about 10 feet long. They tied one end to a pipe or pole. One girl held the other end. The other girl began astraddle the rope and began a skipping kind of step in which she bounced one foot on one side of the rope several times then began a rhythmic pattern of steps across the rope catching it with her foot behind her, etc. I couldn't really figure out the pattern. I went outside to see if they were reciting words, but they seemed not to be. One girl seemed more advanced than the other and for her the rope was held about crotch high while for the other it was between ankle and knee high. While I watched a young woman, 18-20 come on the roof. She wore jeans and dressed rather western in style. She took her turn

at the rope and added some turns the little girls apparently hadn't yet mastered. This game seems to me aerobically active, and it actually reminded me a little of aerobic dance.

I've seen several boys rolling hoops along with sticks. I've read about this game for years, but this is the first time I've ever seen it done. One I saw was a hoop about 2 feet in diameter. The boy ran along beside with a stick pushing the hoop along. He went right past a group of cows laying in a heap of garbage. Another boy is often seen rolling a small hoop no more than 10-12 inches in diameter in a little garden yard below me. He has a long pole with a bend in the end. He runs behind the hoop with his pole in the middle of the hoop.

Men are sometimes seen street side squatting in a group. In the midst of them is some sort of board formed by scratching it crudely on the street. The game pieces look like bits of rubbish. Clearly this is a gambling game for it draws much observer as well as player interest. Wonder what this game is.

Then a while ago I saw a man playing a game resembling marbles with a small child. Again, the balls were small round stones. The man would hold the "marble" between thumb and forefinger of one hand and flip it with the other forefinger. Again, I don't know the object of the game, but clearly the man and child were enjoying the game. 12/15

Hoping to speed up Emily's recovery as well as to assure that she didn't have any serious illness we took her to an Indian doctor that was recommended to us by the folks at our guest house. This too turned out to be quite a Kathmandu experience.

When we found the place there was just a small sign above a little tiny pharmacy (and I mean a single counter 4 feet long with a couple of shelves behind half filled with boxes randomly arranged). Two young men stood behind the counter. A man sat on a stool out front. Em asked about the doctor and the man stood up, escorted us through a curtain into a tiny, not at all private office, behind the pharmacy. Here he took a careful history, did his examination, and upon making a diagnosis wrote out the prescription and carefully explained it to Emily. Three of the 4 prescribed items were available, and they sent someone to run down the street to get the 4th item. Amazing. But more amazing is this. The streets here are full of sick people. I can't begin to contemplate the kinds of sickness and sufferings going on here. Yet this doctor sat awaiting a patient and the pharmacy is supplied with many modern western drugs at one to 10 rupee per pill, ten anti-biotic tablets cost about \$2. I suppose that it is simply that few people here can afford even these small prices. Perhaps few have any conception of this kind of medicine. I did pass one stall this morning where a man was making some sort of preparation of powders, some bright colors, on a piece of banana leaf. 12/15

Emily agreed to return to be checked out and be cleared to start the trek. My leisure time was filled, as it seems is my custom, with self-doubt based on regret related to my lack of preparation to visit Nepal as well as my irresponsible, to me, academic methods. Ironically, while I so often criticize others for just snapping photos without really engaging and experiencing what they are recording, I looked to my photos and my journal writing, yet inspired by Janet Turner Hospital's novel, to serve as my memory. Of course, these many years

later as I pour over these journals and recall the photos which I next want to consult, this odd method proves at least of some use. I am learning now, these many years later, both about my travels and also about myself from my snapshots and incidental descriptions.

As I sit here writing about so much, I'm seeing with so little I'm understanding, I fathom my unpreparedness for Nepali culture. It is a wonderful experience, yet I feel ignorant and naive. Doubtless I should have prepared more, as I should have for Australia, Indonesia, and Thailand, but then it would have been years before I'd have travelled. So, things are as they are. I'll practice my skills at observation and, following Janette Turner Hospital's (whose wonderful book I read, it seems, so long ago) method of later coming to know what I already know. I hope these journals to be like photographs containing things that I'll later understand when I find them again. 12/15

As the sun begins to sink ending another day in Kathmandu, I feel I am experiencing so much and understanding and knowing so little. Humbling. Certainly, the religious cultures of Nepal, a tiny little country, could occupy a lifetime of study. One thing for sure is that none of it is simple and none of the religion and culture practiced here is remotely resembling the classic descriptions of Hinduism and Buddhism. Both these traditions inform the religion and culture here, but it is mixed and crossbred and developed in remarkably complex ways which for any individual, group or family here amounts to what they do. Acts performed or have performed on their behalf. Walking the streets today I saw at several places a stone. One was a sort of slab about 3 feet long set upright. Another was no larger than a brick enclosed in a fence that was of obvious religious significance for it was marked with red ochre and yellow flower petals were present. The small one was literally in the gutter of the street. What's that all about?

Temples are everywhere, but they are dark and drab for the most part. Peering into them reveals hints of images and a few candles can be seen burning, but they are dark and uninviting. But then there are magnificent white stupas here with the famous eyes of the Buddha painted on the four sides, eyes through which the Buddha overlooks Kathmandu. These are bright beautiful religious structures. Perhaps the little dark temples are Hindu and come to think of it, I did recognize Ganesh, the elephant god, as a figure in one of these temples I saw this morning. 12/15

It took a couple more days for Emily to get back to full health. She took a trip back to the Indian doctor to get his approval. In the meantime, I had some stomach aches which I jumped on with rehydration fluids and Cipro, an antibiotic I brought from Boulder. More time to reflect. Our relationship and connection seemed strong, the best it had been. I called my mon and dad to wish them Merry Christmas. They had been in touch with Judy, at my request to get Jenny's address and phone number. They reported that she was angry and bitter; can't blame her. Guess Karen and Elaine had been in touch with her also with the same report. Made sure that the Thai Airlines tickets in January were confirmed to Bangkok and then on to the USA. Remarkable. Felt some trepidation about this trek. As I think back now on this experience, I'm again

reminded that being done prior to GPS and satellite phones, this trek involved severe isolation. No way to be in contact and not even any way to be rescued if needed. No wonder I felt some concern. I feel trepidation now just remembering it. What the trek would demand of me was utterly unknown. My knee, my back, my stomach, the weather, our relationship, the altitude, the dangers to trekkers, the food, the distance ... I knew almost nothing about any of these variables. Yet, we had our bags stored and everything ready to go.

Annapurna Trek, December 17 to January 5

Beginning the trek was like leaping off a ledge with nothing but a handkerchief for a parachute having no clue when you'd land or if you'd go splat. It was like a Doctor Who episode entering the TARDIS and winding up in a totally different spacetime. It was impossible to journal for the first couple days, yet the energy and excitement of what I was experiencing comes through strongly when I finally got a chance to write.

Sitting outside the Himalaya Lodge in Ngadi at the end of the second day of trekking. Fabulous day beginning shortly after sunrise. I went downstairs at the s'Annapurna lodge and Em said, "shut your eyes and come here." I followed her instructions making sure to miss the goat, chicken, and children. When I opened my eyes, the horizon was dominated by Lamjung Himal (6986m/22,920ft). Wow! The morning sun lighted it brilliantly. Awesome. I had been so concerned yesterday, which was hazy and cloudy that we'd see the mountains at all. But today was beautifully clear all day.

Back to yesterday. Last night I had so many things I wanted to write, but there was no light, and it was late.

Left our guest house in Kathmandu at 6 a.m. Parang was waiting. Went to where the bus was to leave. Parang helped us find our bus and our seats which were the worst on the bus. They were the last two in the small bus and the seats in front of us were so close that you couldn't sit straight because there wasn't the knee room. This would have been enough of a challenge, but the windows on both sides of the back were missing. The cold wind blew in. We had to wrap our heads in scarves and put on the hoods to our Gore-Tex jackets. It was still cold.

Somehow, I'd imagined the bus ride from Kathmandu to Dumre as relatively level. Don't know where I got the idea, but it was wrong. The bus drove around Kathmandu, crested a hill where it paused briefly, then we entered a huge, terraced valley that ran for many kilometers. Every square inch of this valley from top to bottom the full length was terraced. Remarkable how people who live in a country with almost no level land make it level, but in little plots. The road went winding precariously down, down, and still down. It seemed, and was, very dangerous. I saw quite a few remains of accidents. One was a bus that had crashed into a truck. It had been abandoned in the middle of the road. There were hundreds of big trucks on the road. Often one would be broken down occupying a lane. This would cause a tie up for a while. Once, after a couple hours, we had a rest stop. The men all headed for the roadside to pee. Em enjoyed the experience of peeing in the weeds. Plenty of evidence of people shitting roadside. Then on down

the valley. Another stop in a horrible roadside town and the second stop at Dumre. Here we happily exited the bus and Parang negotiated a ride on an open truck to Besi Sabar. We had no idea the nature of this ride, thankfully, otherwise I'd have found it even more difficult. Parang got us a seat on the bench behind the driver in the cab. He stayed in the back with our bags along with a dozen or so more people. The cab eventually had 8 or 9 people in it. This seemed crowded, but we saw a bus that was crammed so full I couldn't believe it. Some people even sat on top of the pile of luggage on top, about 5 hung on the outside at the door.

Finally, we got on the way. Through stream beds, over huge rocks, up and down a road that had never been graded. Two times they stopped and told us to have our trekking permits checked at police check points. Hour after hour we ground on. Several times late afternoon the truck broke down and we waited for them to fix it. Finally, around 5 p.m. they parked the truck and we had to walk the rest of the way to Besi Sabar, about 90-minute walk, the last 45 minutes in the dark.

Parang led us to s'Annapurna Lodge and Em and I got a room together. How nice. Then we went down to dinner and had our first experience at Dal Bhat. Not too bad, but rather basic. Rice with some thin soupy stuff and a bit of lentils and potatoes. They gave us all we could eat. Had a good pot of warming tea as well.

So much I saw that I wanted to write about. The trucks that all look like circus trucks. The Indian people on the bus (2 men and 2 women), the men wanted their photo taken with Emily. The suffering and poverty of Nepali people, the sad sad children, the food, the terraces, innocence, so much, but the sun already threatens to extinguish my light.

Left Besi Sabar this morning around 8:30 and couldn't get enough photos, everything was beautiful and interesting--the village, Lamjung Hi-mal, the terraces and the Marsyandi Kohla (River). This is a wide river rushing with water melting from those huge peaks. There is rafting on some of the rivers but with winter approaching the water volume is less than usual. The water of this river is teal blue, absolutely remarkable. We walked through Besi Sabar, which is quite sizeable and the last village to be accessed by road, then entered the trail "to Manang." Actually, the road narrows and becomes but a path. Across a stream, up a very steep bank and we were on our way. Lamjung dominated our view much of the morning with Marsyandi River running along beside us. We crossed several side streams, one of which caused a guy we're hiking with (Gene from Santa Clara or Santa Cruz who has been traveling for 20 months) a bit of a dunking. But no danger. Around 11:30 we crossed the river on our first suspension bridge. It looked precarious but wasn't bad at all. Then we had dal bhat at a grimy little place. Yuck. Em nor I could finish it. Too weird. Too dirty. Flies everywhere. You just can't think about this much if you don't want to starve. Glad I'm still on antibiotics. On our way again and shortly after leaving the village we turned a corner and came into full view of Himalchuli (7893/25,896) which we'd gotten a glimpse of at the bridge crossing and, shortly after that, of Ngadi Chuli (7514/24,652) and, somewhat in the clouds of the afternoon, Manaslu (8162/26,778). Ngadi Chuli is also called Monaslu II. This is one gigantic chunk of mountain. Here at Ngadi we are at about 880 meters/2,890 feet. So, from here to the top of

Monaslu is over 7000 meters, over 22,000 feet. The experience of this is just far more than can ever be described.

So many things to write about. The young boys who thought that with my stubble beard and white hair I am very old. They asked me my age. The waterfall that was so beautiful and the goat herd we saw with all the newborn kids at the base of the waterfall. The many people walking this trail (almost all local people, very few trekkers). The villages, with water buffalo, the thrashing of rice with coms, the winnowing of rice with big round fans, the terraces which are everywhere, the storage of rice straw on the tops of sheds in round shapes, cone-shaped at the top. So many things.

Ngadi (named for the kobla we'll cross early tomorrow and the river that forms the valley up which we have looked all afternoon) is a very pleasant village. We got here between 1 and 2 p.m. We enjoyed cleaning up (I shaved), washing things out, and having some tea this afternoon. Restful. I'm a little sore in the back, mostly shoulders, but otherwise okay. Em's feet are sore, and she hurts a little here and there. Pretty good start for not doing much for so many months. 12/19

Getting into the daily rhythm of the trek, we'd leave fairly early in the morning. Keeping moving all morning we'd take a break for lunch at some inn or guesthouse for an hour or so. Then back on the trail again for two or three more hours. As we gained elevation, we became surrounded by these gigantic mountains. The result is that the sun went down, that is behind these high mountains, early afternoon. I would then get cold very quickly. Keeping a little bit clean was difficult for us and finding suitable food was as well although it was invariably just *dal bhat*, rice with lentil soup. Trekking in this area is often referred to as "tea house trekking" in that there are such large numbers of trekkers that the local economy has adjusted to catering to them. This means that in all these little villages there are several tea houses, or little inns that serve meals. We heard that in the fall, which is high trekking season, there are so many trekkers that one must scramble from teahouse to teahouse to get accommodations. We heard some very nasty stories about how terrible and competitive this can be. So glad we are trekking in the winter even if it is colder. There were very few trekkers at the time we were there. Stopping early afternoon gave me time to reflect on and write about what I was experiencing. This is the entry written on my sister Elaine's birthday.

Sitting on the back porch of a lodge in Syange overlooking a suspension bridge over the Marsyandi River that rushes below us. Behind the lodge is a sheer rock face that rises perhaps a thousand feet. This little village is nestled between river and rock and just a hundred feet down river the waterfall cascades in several phases. Beautiful.

We left Ngadi around 8:30 this morning and had a lovely walk over here. Some climbs and drops, don't think we actually gained much elevation at all. We crossed the Marsyandi soon after we left Ngadi and saw countless terraced rice fields. Often these were being worked by families. Many things to do to prepare for new planting. Oxen, cattle, or water buffalo pull

a single share plow guided by a man, often with difficulty it seems. I've seen women and children in plowed fields breaking clods. Animal dung is hauled, trump line on the head bearing huge baskets on their backs. Some fields have big piles of dung dumped on them. I saw one woman spreading shit over a field with her hands. Many activities done by many people. I'm amazed at how completely covered so many of these hills are with terraces. Top to bottom, hundreds and hundreds of little terraces. There are many villages perched hundreds of feet up on the hillsides. I'd think the people would have to be born there. I can't imagine how one would get to the village. I think so often of Daddy while walking along seeing these things. I know he'd be most interested in all this.

The path we are walking on is frequented by lots of the village people. Seems groups are often going one way or the other. So many of the women are colorfully dressed. Many are attractive. Yet there are also many people who look utterly poor. Especially the children and old people often look so pitiful. Have seen dozens of little children who look like they have never had a bath and wear clothing that has never been washed. Their hair is matted, and their bodies caked with dirt and dust. They are often bare bottomed and footed. The girls have nose and ears pierced. I wonder if it is done with ritual or casually. The old people often look rugged but haggard. Old women often carry huge loads. Their work is never done. I marvel that anyone ever gets old here. I'd think they'd die before very advanced age.

But this bleak picture needs to be countered by the observation that most people seem happy and are cheerful. Most greet us with a smile and "Namaste." Children play. Old men I've noticed, enjoy playing with the children. At the lunch stop today an older man was pulling along a group of 3 or 4 children holding onto a rope. All, including the grandpa, were giggling away. We've also seen some fine healthy, well fed dogs up here.

The path is frequented by pony or donkey trains (seems usually small shaggy ponies). These animals walk along in a line, perhaps 5 or 10. Their human guide actually follows. The path pretty much just is one lane without many turn offs so the animals need know only to walk the path. They often wear bells so you can hear them come and go. A group crossed the bridge near here and I snapped their picture from our room.

Stopped at a place called Eagle's Nest for lunch. They fixed us the usual Dal Bhat, this time made from scratch as we waited and served to us piping hot. I felt hungry and enjoyed lunch. Last night I had gobs of painful gas and had to get up and go out to the toilet 5 times after everyone else was in bed. Rats. I was worried this morning that I was getting sick again, but I feel much better now. Think the lunch and positive thinking worked.

Though the trail was beautiful, and we saw mountains that would rival Longs Peak, we did not see any of the high Himalaya today. They will begin to show again soon I suspect.

We had a fun time after dinner last night. Parang ate with us, politely using a spoon in our presence (he usually eats with his hands). After dinner we had a fun visit with him and Gene, the guy that has attached to us. Parang was teaching us Nepali. We were trying to use the Nepali language guide we brought along to see if he'd understand what we said. Sometimes we were successful, but often he couldn't begin to figure what we were saying. Makes one wonder

the usefulness of such a booklet. Without Parang, I doubt we'd have any success communicating with the people beyond "Namaste."

I certainly intended at the beginning of this entry to remark that today is Elaine's birthday though doubtless she has perhaps as I write this yet to awaken. I thought of her all day sending my fondest wishes to her around the world. Hope they get there in time.

I also thought some of Jenny and Corbin today. I don't like being so cut off from them, but I'll trust in their strength and self-sufficiency and seek to be much with them when I return. We leave to head home a month from tomorrow.

Later. Waiting inside the lodge for another meal of Dal Bhat. Em just asked me if I was able to describe our day. I said that I'd tried, and she confessed she felt it difficult. She did remind me of the many poinsettia plants we saw along the way. They are huge, 15 feet high or so, and beautiful. I tried to get photos of some and to get them to frame photos of terraces, etc. Hope the photos work out.

After we arrived at this lodge, we set out to do some laundry, a daily concern, though I'm guessing we'll do less laundry in the coming days as we gain altitude, and it gets colder. Personal washing is difficult. There are only public, like middle of the village, places to wash. At Besi Sabar we saw a girl wrapped in a sarong at the waterspout attempting to bathe through the sarong. How sad! Em and I decided to use wet handkerchiefs to do a little private bathing in our room. It worked, sort of. Anyway, we both feel better. We get a kick out of all these improvisations and peculiarities. It is great to not only have Em as a traveling companion, but that traveling together we share so much life experience. It is dark and chilly here. But it will be darker and much colder as we ascend. The Coleman lantern, Nepali electricity as one young man described it last night, lights our dining space.

I am feeling a little fear as I think of our next week and a half. The altitude, the cold, and the lateness of the season. But we'll move on in the morning. 12/20

And on we climbed.

Tal, Nepal, Manaslu Guest House. Sitting outside, but it is cold. Inside is too dark. Besides the views out here are magnificent. To my left is a wonderful cascading waterfall that begins as one large fall then breaks again and again then converges near the bottom into two large broad falls. Just magnificent. Em just pointed out several other ribbon falls I'd overlooked. This little town sits on a plateau that is still surrounded by towering cliffs on both sides. When I say towering, I mean it. They must rise several thousand feet. Clouds are playing among the top of these mountains. Where the valley makes a "V," a huge snowcapped peak makes the surrounding walls look like bumps. As we came into Tal the clouds parted a bit and I got some great photos (I hope) of this mountain. I think it must be Pisang (it turned out to be Kang Guru), but I'll have to ask Parang. It is dramatically pointed at the top.

We didn't get these high mountain views today, but I appreciated the Maryandi River even more. It is a powerful rushing river that makes a roaring sound when anywhere near it. It is teal blue green. Amazing color. Also, the vegetation we walked through today is remarkable. We still saw some poinsettias. But we also saw tropical plants like ferns and palm trees. We stopped at a village called Chyamje for lunch and high atop the ridge opposite us was a line of

palm trees. I couldn't believe it at first, but Gene had binoculars which helped us confirm. And later, we saw them very close. Actually, there are palms up on the walls of the mountain just across from me here.

The other major views today were waterfalls. There must have been a dozen. Each one seemed more spectacular than the last. Tried photographing some of them, though it is very difficult.

The proprietor of this guest house, a Tibetan woman named Selu, just visited with us for a while. She speaks excellent English. She has several children. The baby, a boy, very dark skinned and quite smiley. Em loved him and held him, resulting in her getting peed all over. The children wear no pants here.

Had a rest at the little village Jagat this morning where a group of children had the cutest little puppy. It looked like a fur ball. One little boy carried it around by the fur on its back, sort of like a lunch box. We took photog of these children. They seemed to love it and lined up every time we got out the camera. The children are so sad here. Dirty, snotty-nosed, ragged, yet often they smile and seem happy. I can't see how they survive. I don't see how any survive.

Then there are the heavy porters. They carry huge loads, often heavy reinforcing steel, or sheet metal or whatever. They wear shorts, flip flops, and a stick which they use both for balance and to prop their loads up with when they rest. Gene says they sometimes carry up to double their body weight and receive just a few rupees per kilo for hauling material over a distance requiring seven days travel. I can't see how they do it. I notice they don't have much life in their eyes.

Tal is a nice village lying on a valley floor where the Marsyandi has leveled off, one of the few level places I've seen since we started. The river meanders here where it is hell bent for the bottom everywhere else. There are hotels and guest houses on both sides of the street, but few people are here.

One couple from Germany or somewhere seem to be everywhere we are. I call the guy Screwy Louie because he walks along with a hard ball of some sort about two inches in diameter and screws away at it with some sort of tool. He does this no matter where he is or what he does. His female companion has sore feet and carries nothing, leaving her load to their porter. The guy has a huge square tattoo in the middle of his forehead, and I think this couple look and act screwy.

My thoughts are often on Jenny and Corbin and my family. Hope they are having a great holiday time and that they are all safe and happy.

Emily has been in good spirits today--though we had a long hard climb just before reaching Tal during which we both grunted and groaned. We're both homesick and this is heightened because of the holidays and by us being so completely out of touch. Very hard, but we have each other. As we came across the plain before Tal, we felt special joy and closeness. While I wouldn't want to fight the crowds trekking during high season, there is a sort of loneliness in being here now. Glad I have Em and that we are so close. Glad we hired Parang and we're both pleased that Gene is traveling with us. He is a very nice young man.

Though I am chilly and the light wanes early leaving me little to do but eat and go to bed I still feel uplifted by the very grandeur of this earth. Though the Himalaya make one feel small and insignificant, a mere fleck of dust, I don't feel diminished but inspired and somehow transcendent by the great privilege of experiencing all this. 12/21

The next day we had a long day hiking with little time to write.

The mountains seen north of Tal are Kang Guru (6701/21,985) with Kuchubbro (5910/19,390) in front of it. Near Dharapani we got a peek of to the northeast of [didn't get this recorded]. Then as we rounded the bend below Bagarchhap we saw Annapurna II (7937/26,040) and in the village itself we could see another very pointy mountain. I took a photo of it with red and white prayer flags attached to a pine tree in the foreground.

Sitting in the sun on the porch of the Thakuri Guest House awaiting the eternal preparation of Dal Bhat, yummy. Very hungry today. The place we stayed in Tal was pretty miserable, the food awful. Our oat porridge and corn bread and jam lasted about 30 minutes. The lady, a Tibetan, was very dirty and her place looked like her. Her baby was sick, and I don't know how the whole bunch survive. We left around 8:30 this morning and everyone seemed a bit tense and ill-spirited. Em quickly informed me she was irritable and less than happy. We assured each other that we had reason and continued to support each other. Finally, with a bit of humor about how terrible the corn bread was we all began to relax.

Lovely mountain and valley views this morning. With some sustenance perhaps we'll feel much better this afternoon. We hope to make Chame tonight, though this will be a very long day walking. 12/22

We did make it to Chame and the next day I had more time to write and reflect. It was a larger town with electricity and phone, as inexplicable as that was to me. As we gained altitude every day into the upper reaches of the Marysyandi Valley we walked among the giants. And we could also feel the bittersweetness of Christmas approaching, at once so far from family and in one of the most beautiful and awesome places on the planet.

Chame, high in the Himalaya (well only 2630 meters/8628 feet). The sun is warm as we wait for our dal bhat. Our room is by the river. There is a hot spring and the views ain't bad. Lamjung (6986/22,920) towering to the south of us and Annapurna II (7937/26,040) to the west. If we were just a few meters from here we could see looking back down the canyon the top of Manaslu (8156/26,759). Tomorrow the views may even top today. We left Bagarchhap about 8:15 this morning spinning all the Buddhist prayer wheels as we went out of the village. Annapurna II was huge and brilliantly lighted in the morning sun. We soon lost view of it as we started into the Marysyandi valley and walked through pines and other huge trees. The forest was chilly, and we had to repeatedly remove and restore our jackets. It was a beautiful walk though there was quite a bit of climbing. Both Emily and I alternately felt good and tired. Still, we made it here shortly after noon and we've washed, a little anyway. We went down to the hot springs which are right beside the river amongst the boulders. All sorts of people were bathing and doing laundry. The water looked pretty dirty, so we elected (with Em pushing hard) to go up to the "Bath house" where there was an actual shower. The only problem was that the water

was ice cold, so cold in fact that where it dripped on the floor was an ice stalagmite. Still, we washed a bit and now feel all better. I may shave, but I don't want to use up any of this glorious sunlight. The problem with these villages is that deep in this valley they lose sunlight about 3 p.m. and it instantly gets very cold.

Our guest house last night provided a bit of a cultural experience. We went in the lodge while our food was being cooked. The woman who runs the place invited us to sit by the fire. By this time, it was pitch dark and the only light in the kitchen was from the 2-burner cook stove. Actually, the stove is a metal "U" shaped piece the top of which is flat with holes for burners. Beneath is a tunnel in which a fire is built and can be fed from one end. A chimney on the other end focuses the smoke and creates the draw. Around the stove an area is built up on three sides by a couple inches making a foot wide shelf or table on which food is prepared or dishes set by those eating. Mats are placed around this so people can sit and enjoy the warmth, much appreciated as the only heat in the house. I don't see how the food is prepared because the room is so dim. Still for us it was nice because we've found you enjoy your food so much more if you don't see it prepared. My pancake, for example, this morning missed the plate when served from the pan and landed on the floor. The cook smiled, picked up the pancake, and handed it to me. Nice. I ate it.

It was most enjoyable to see the family in their home. Em coveted a Tibetan necklace worn by our hostess. Those necklaces are commonly worn by ladies here. They have two coral colored round stones, one on either side of a large turquoise chunk. I think the cord is a black shoelace. They sell them in Kathmandu, but they are likely not really Tibetan. The lady (actually she said she is 25) asked if Em wanted to buy it and offered for 8,000 rupees (\$160 US). Sure, it is worth it.

Chame is unusual for a village in this location. They have a bank and a telecommunications center. You can actually place international calls which beats Bali. They also have electricity; don't know how they generate it. Quite a nice place. 12/23

Christmas Eve was at once a sad day and evening, yet it was followed by a glorious Christmas Day, among the most memorable in my life. I had a near constant stomachache at this point. I had lost a great deal of weight from sickness, bad food, and strenuous exercise. That made me prone to feeling uncomfortably cold much of the time. I felt homesick sorely missing my kids. And here it was Christmas Eve. And our evening of celebration was rather sad for sure. I remember having to cry a bit.

Pisang (pronounced Pee-song) at Chalung Gurung Hotel. Christmas Eve, but as write these words I almost cry. In fact, I awoke early this morning and felt a great stab of sadness. I thought about trying to deny these feelings and rise to the need to be here and be present, but then I have tended to deny my feelings, to separate myself from them. And, in fact, I miss my kids, I miss Christmas, I miss being warm and comfortable. I miss good food. Most of all I miss Corbin and Jenny. I'm very happy to be here, and to be having this experience, but it is sad. I awoke Emily and told her how I was feeling, and we both cried. Last night was a hard night and neither of us got much sleep. We ate potatoes and vegetables for dinner. The vegetable

was cabbage, and it gave me so much gas that I had to get up 4 times. Then when I finally got to sleep, it must have been long after midnight, I heard something in the room. I said, "Emily are you up?" She replied, "No." I got up to realize that some animal was after our chocolate. I put it in our duffel and closed it and went back to bed. Later I heard something scratching inside the duffel and realized the damn thing had gotten in and couldn't get out. I took it to the door opened the bag and let it out, a rat no doubt. Em was pretty upset. So was I since neither of us got much sleep.

Still today began with a spectacular view of Lamjung in the early morning light. Then the hike was through lovely, wooded areas--huge pines and frequent views of Annapurna II and the ridge that runs along from it. Spectacular. Still climbing up the Marysandi River Valley. Then we came into the presence of Paungda Danda--an enormous rock bowl that lies just below Pisang. Along this area Em began to suffer from knee pain. Hopefully this is nothing debilitating, but she did have to take it quite slowly. After lightening her pack (Parang and I carried more) and taking some Ibuprofen she did some better. Hope after some rest she'll be ready by tomorrow.

As we entered Pisang we could see Chulu to the North and the top of Pisang to the east, Annapurna II to the south and also the huge Paungda Danda rock bowl. 12/24

Christmas Eve was spent in Pisang. We met a German couple my age and joined them in a very cold very smokey dining room for Christmas Eve feast. We ordered apple pie with custard for dessert and the Germans, Helmut and Ann (who is native French), brought a red candle. The pie got served first, all this food except dal bhat is alien to the Nepali, so we went ahead and ate it. It was sort of a calzone affair with some kind of weird pudding dribbled over it. Still there were apples inside and they tasted good. When my dinner came, I was greatly saddened. I'd ordered vegetables and rice. But the vegetable was cabbage which had given me such an upset stomach before. So, I had a small plate of rice with about half dozen marble sized potatoes for my Xmas eve feast. I was pretty down at this point. 12/26

The disappointment of Christmas Eve was more than offset by the Christmas Day trek. Rather than taking the trail along the Marysandi River to Manang, we hiked up a very steep trail across the river so that we could trek a trail running along the side of the steep mountain high above the valley. It was on a south facing slope, so we had sun all day as well as spectacular views of the Annapurna Peaks.

Christmas Day, we decided to take the long route from Pisang to Manang. It crosses the Marysandi River which is now a narrow stream. The trail climbs high on the north side of the river and passes through two Tibetan villages--Ghyaru and Nhawal--then descends gradually into Manang. The reason for going this way rather than right along the river is that it offers spectacular mountain views to the south and west. We started early so we could get the morning light on the mountains. We passed by a lovely glassy emerald colored pond then began our ascent--a long steep switch back trail up to Ghyaru.

From Ghyaru the views were indeed amazing. Annapurna IV (7525/24,688) loomed just across the valley from us lighted brilliantly in the morning sun. Annapurna III

(7565/24,820) arose just down the ridge from A IV. Though not in very good sunlight, Annapurna II stood hulking huge a bit to the south of IV. On two occasions we saw avalanches on it. This mountain in hulkingly massive.

Ghyaru is a Tibetan-populated village as they all are in this region. These remind me of pueblo villages in the American Southwest. They have flat roofs because at this altitude it is so arid that not much snow falls. The houses are built of stone and have a sharp angular look. The first or ground floor is for the animals and the living floor is reached by a ladder made of a log leaned in a corner into which steps have been hewn. The houses are closely spaced with narrow passageways forming a maze within the village.

There are many Buddhist monuments all over the region. Prayer flags on every roof top, chortons which are square based rounded topped monuments, and places where mani stones (prayer stones) are placed, gompas or monasteries, prayer flags at many spots on mountain sides, people praying rosary beads, people praying by spinning prayer wheels, and long series of prayer wheels that you walk along and spin at the entrance to many villages. All this makes me wish I knew more about Buddhism, particularly Tibetan Buddhism. Perhaps I should take a course from Reggie Ray.

Leaving Ghyaru after taking about a roll of film we headed on passing so many Buddhist monuments. Rounding every ridge was an amazing widening of an already astonishing view. Soon we could see farther to the north, seeing Annapurna III and Gangapurna. Pisang Peak the top of which could be seen from Pisang and Ghyara became more and more visible. We could even begin to look back down the Marsyandi Valley through which we have trekked seeing Pisang below with the emerald lake nearby, the huge Pauangda Danda stone bowl and far far away at the end of the valley stood the massive Manaslu. Quite the Christmas gift to see such spectacular views.

We stopped at Ngawala for lunch. Emily was immediately befriended by a cute Tibetan boy who took us to his house for lunch. His father prepared us noodle soup and Tibetan bread while his grandmother, all the while praying with rosary beads, showed off her twin grandchildren. The grandmother was quite a character. She kept talking to us—we could understand nothing of course—and smiling her two-toothed grin. A lovely woman so fitting to the place.

The afternoon views were great, shifting to the north and finally the east where we could see Chulu and Pisang and a huge snow bowl to the left of the peak of Annapurna IV. The snow blew off the top of A IV all afternoon and I couldn't resist taking lots of photos.

But as the sun began to go behind the mountains and the wind blew its high altitude freezing chill on us the day's walk began to get long. We arrived in Manang shortly after the German couple did (they'd left 45 minutes before us and had not stopped for lunch) and we finally settled in the Tilicho Lodge for two nights.

The food last night was good and eaten in a more comfortable, yet still quite chilly room. We eat with sweaters, coats, long underwear, down booties, and jackets on. Em and I had fried macaroni and tuna, tomato soup, and a big pot of hot lemon. We topped all this off with two

fried eggs each. Good meal for a change, though by local standards only. I couldn't think much of Christmas food back home.

Parang came in our room just as we were ready to retire, about 7:30, concerned that we'd run out of days on our permit before we finished the trek especially if we go the Annapurna Sanctuary. I think we'd still have plenty of time, but trekking is hard, and we may now try to arrive in Pokhara on January 4 or 5 so we can clean up and celebrate my birthday there. Then we'll have a few days there and more time to sight see in Kathmandu before going home.

I've had an upset stomach for days. I can't seem to get past it. I seem to be okay for a while then I get more diarrhea. So yesterday I went back on antibiotic, Cipro, to see if I can get better. It is much harder when your stomach hurts so much of the time and when you know you're losing weight. Wonder if I weigh even 140 pounds now.

We bought a small jar of peanut butter this morning and had a chocolate-peanut butter snack this morning as we sat on the rock near Manang. Yummy. 12/26

Manang is at a high elevation. We had planned to stay there for a day rather than trekking on. I think many trekkers get kind of antsy and want to get over the pass as quickly as possible and head down the next valley. We had read about what was the best way to acclimate oneself to high altitude. It is recommended that once at altitude above 10,000 feet to stay in place for a day. That day might include a hike up a thousand feet or so and back down. Altitude sickness is common and very debilitating. At this point many of those who started trekking when we did, had gone faster and were now, we supposed, either ready to hike the pass or were already over the pass. Still, we took the advice seriously and stayed for the day in Manang. We would soon learn this to be a wise choice.

Now sitting in the kitchen watching our lunch being prepared. I really need much more time to reflect on all this experience. I find myself a bit irritable because of several things: too cold (I get chilled to the bone every afternoon); too dirty (everything here is so dirty); not well; not enough time to write, read and reflect; and then the whole duration of the travel is wearing, I think. I want to write more on this later, time for lunch now.

Later. The sun has dropped behind the mountains and the mercury has dropped in the thermometer. I don't know why the chill goes completely to my bones, but it does and this time of day, the time I had thought would be my favorite, has come to be the most dreaded. After lunch we walked to the main part of Manang. It is an interesting village almost wholly deserted now. There are interesting carved and painted windows. Photographed a couple. A couple little kids begged in the most obnoxious way. Then we made our way to the top of the village. This gave a vantage of a beautiful green lake with a little ice on it at the foot of a huge glacier extending thousands of feet down between two mountains. Such a mass of ice. Then we thought we'd make our way up to a monastery perched about 1000 feet up the side of the mountain across from our hotel. Em began to get a headache as we started and decided not to go. I went on and, though the way was hard (steep and very loose), the farther I went the more I felt like going on. I thought it would be neat to see the monastery--there were supposed to be 3 Lamas (females) there--and to get some more altitude. I made it. It was very crude with several cells

carved in the rock. I found no one there. Rested a while. Took a few photos and started down. Part way down I suddenly realized I had the key to the room and Em would not be able to get in. I hurried along and when I arrived back, she was waiting. She'd gone through lots of moods but had come to think that the trip may be harder for me than for her and had decided to be more supportive and helpful to me. She's such a sweetie. We talked some about what is bothering me while we shared a wash pan of hot water. We share so much here we stood in this bleak dirty dark cold room stripping down area by area to wash. My hair is filthy and disgusting and I haven't shaved in days. Neither of these conditions was improved by our spot bath, but I feel much better having washed here and there. My jeans are completely filled with dust and dirt, but I'm saving my others for evenings. I also have a pair of cleaner socks and sock liners I use in the evenings.

So, the thing that seems to be causing me most dampening of spirits is being cut off from Corbin and Jenny. It is especially hard not having even talked with Jenny since early November. I don't know if she was home for Xmas. I don't know anything. This might not be so overwhelming if I was warm, comfortable, not sick, could sleep, etc. So, the whole combination just dampens my spirits some and Emily senses it instantly. I'll be okay, however, and I feel that I'm pretty well present to the experience here. Having a chance to write today and reflect a little and to talk some with Emily has been most helpful and my stomach feels better this afternoon.

Tomorrow we head on. We'll head for Thorong Phedi, (4450/14,600) but if anyone feels any signs of altitude, we'll stay a night at Letdar. Letdar and Phedi are supposed to be expensive and very bleak, but one must be sensible at altitude. I'm pleased that so far I feel fine. Then over the pass and we might spend an extra day in Muktinath since it is one of 7 major pilgrimage centers in this whole Buddhist area. Then on down the Jomson side which should be fun and easy getting us to Pokhara before my birthday. Hurray. Likely I'll not be able to write much again until Muktinath. Hope the next days go well. 12/26

The next day we headed for Thorong Phedi at almost 15,000 feet elevation. The highest I'd ever been prior to this trek was the top of Longs Peak just above 14,000. I'd heard stories of strange dreams and other side effects of being at this altitude. We weren't sure we'd make it this far, being sensitive to the possibility of altitude sickness which would require us to go only part way or to return to Manang for a day or two. But we made it. When we arrived, we discovered that all those we'd started the trek with and who had zoomed on ahead of us were still there. There were also a few who had started long before we did who couldn't go on. Most displayed horrible moods. They'd suffered altitude sickness and some had gone back down a way, then back up, yet not yet feeling healthy enough to go on over the pass. Winter was closing in as well, obviously since it was late December, with snow expected at any time quite possibly closing the pass for the season which would mean having to return the same way we came rather than completing the full circuit. There were open and quite loud

arguments and disagreements. The young Nepali guys that ran the place seemed fed up with it all and just wanted to close the place down for the winter.

We spent the one night and then headed up the mountain to cross the pass. It was a hard trek at this altitude with the snow flying, but we managed it. I'll let my journal written once I got to Muktinath tell the story of the crossing.

Muktinath. We made it! But it wasn't easy or completely free of risk. Today has been a rest day and one much needed. But I must catch up a bit. The trek from Manang to Thorong Phedi was a long and fairly hard day. It involved a climb of nearly 900 meters or around 2,800 feet. We left Manang fairly early and were delayed some by a big goat herd but continued our way. Our climb would take us to 4920 meters, 16,141 feet. We had to be concerned about the effect of altitude on us. Several times Em got headaches and we stopped and rested until she felt better. Behind us down the valley loomed the huge Gangapurna (7454/24,455) and Annapurna III to its left at 7565/24,820. The trip was long and passed through alpine territory with hues of the vegetation the most varying, yet subtle, shades of pink and brown. The Marsyandi River now approaching its source had dwindled to a much smaller meandering stream. The last rise into the single compound that is Thorong Phedi was very steep and difficult. The digs there were very basic, grim you might say.

We went to the dining room and found there a group of people huddled round a tin can with a small smoky fire. We joined the group and met a couple--the girl (Amy) an American from NY living in Japan, the guy (Vic) an experimental musician from Boston. They had joined with a girl from Holland. A German guy was there with his two porters. They had passed us earlier. Kurt, the know-it-all American, we'd met in Manang came steaming in shortly after we did, bragging of his speed. An hour later Gene (who Parang calls "Chinese People") came in sweating like a pig, obviously left in the dust by Kurt. And Helmut and Ann whom we'd traveled with that day were there. Good conversation and horrible (really horrible) dal bhat all around. Early to bed, as usual, but this time in anticipation of a 4:15 a.m. rise for a predawn start over the pass.

We didn't get quite as early a start as we anticipated, but it was still in the dark with Parang leading the way. Everyone was up preparing to go, but the others choose to start later, though I didn't understand why. Our ascent at first was gruelingly steep. It began to spit a light thin sleet and we didn't know how far we'd get but kept the pace. The guidebook says it should take from 4 to 6 hours to the pass. It was a hard steep climb. The weather was deteriorating, but we felt we should keep going. At one point (several actually) I felt considerable panic because I couldn't seem to get enough air, claustrophobic. Helmut and Ann were behind some but kept coming. Em passed me with a burst of energy, and I felt temporarily pissed that she was so strong. As we got within an hour of the pass, it got very cold. It was snowing little pellets and the wind was blowing. Em made me stop and put on a sweater and more gloves. She made me eat some chocolate. That brief moment was a huge change for the worse for me though it was absolutely necessary. My hands lost all feeling. I got very cold all over. And I sort of lost my bearings. My hands wouldn't work enough to get my pack fastened again right away and I got a bit scared. Parang at this moment got very cold and realized he had to move on. He did so

and simply left us behind. Once I got moving, I began to feel better and the adrenalin from the fear not only warmed me, but it also gave me such energy I could scarcely feel the thinness of the air above 17,000 feet. Em felt miserable at this point and Ann helped her along. Full of adrenalin I was dancing on the trail above her waning encouragement. Parang had disappeared.

On we trudged arriving at the pass at 9 a.m. a mere 3 hours after beginning. Though we'd seen many beautiful mountains, often through mist and cloud, we did not stop for a single photo, way too cold and too frightening to delay our crossing by even minutes. The descent was rapid and painful to the knees. Some distance down Helmut began to fall behind and we realized he was suffering altitude sickness. He felt terrible and could hardly go on, but somehow managed to do so. They had no altitude sickness medicine nor painkillers and we finally convinced them it would be a good thing to take. He did and within minutes began to feel better.

We arrived in Muktinath around 2 p.m. exhausted but elated that we had crossed the pass safely. Later we began to realize the enormous risk we had taken and how closely we had skirted disaster. Many things could have gone wrong, but they didn't, and we were pleased. Helmut and Ann went immediately to bed. Em and I had soup and fried potatoes. Then we began to feel headachy and went to bed. We wondered about the others we'd met in Thorong Phedi. I also had stomach problems.

We rested, began to feel better and joined Helmut and Ann for dinner in the dim dining room. We saw some other people there we'd felt we'd seen before. It turned out they were on our flight from Bangkok and Kathmandu. Even weirder it turned out they are from Boulder and the woman, Barbara Carter, is a psychologist and teaches at Naropa. She had led a holotropic breath workshop at a gestalt retreat Em had gone to last Spring. Amazing. Her husband, John, is a free-lance photographer and carries tons of photo equipment. We had a nice chat. Helmut, Ann, Em, and I all shared stories and thoughts about our crossing over dinner. Much fun.

When we went to bed, I began to have serious stomach problems again and realized I need to do something about it. This morning I reread the Nepali medical guide and it is clear I must have mild amoebic dysentery. I took medication for that this morning and already feel better. It will be great to begin to feel well, and shit properly, again. I'm confident this medication will fix me up.

We learned more about the group we met in Thorong Phedi from Kurt who crossed the pass shortly after we did. Apparently, they were having a huge argument and things kept delaying their departure. He stopped waiting and went on by himself. We know they started late in ill spirits, but that's all. It snowed here 3 or 4 inches overnight and surely several times that up the mountain. They didn't come over, so we assume they went back. Certainly, hope so.

It was cloudy this morning, but some patches of blue sky were present. These have grown throughout the day so as the sun goes down it is now pretty much clear. This clearing has allowed us to see the magnificence of the setting we are in. Just remarkably beautiful on every side. We've taken some great photos today. Visited a Buddhist-Hindu temple area and monastery. Had a nice lasagna (that had no noodles in it) lunch. Seeing local crafts, I bought a couple of yak wool

neck scarves (gave Em one of them). The scarf is very colorful and nice. I bargained and got them for 200 rupees (\$4).

Tomorrow we go a short distance but down greatly in altitude to Kogbeni, which is supposed to be a very interesting town and the next day on down to Marpha for New Year's Eve. Morpha is supposed to be a luxury town (by Nepali trekking standards) and a great place to end 1993.

So, we've crossed Thorong La Pass (5,416 m/17,769 ft). Even at the pass, which is higher than all but 5 mountains in North America, we could still look up in every direction around us and see huge mountains. An experience I'll never forget. We're at once proud, humbled, thankful, and tired. I got the tips of my fingers frost nipped. Hope the numbness won't last long.

The trek from here on is all downhill except for one day. We plan to be in Pokhara on January 5 so we can celebrate my birthday with showers and a comfortable bed and some great food. Psychologically we're excited and renewed. The rest of our trip should be fun, easy, and beautiful. The views from here are fabulous. I'd not take anything for the experience of simply the magnificence and beauty of this place. On to Kogbeni. 12/29

The walk from Muktinath to Kogbeni was beautiful but took only a couple hours. With lots of extra hours of daylight, we had a chance to clean up a bit since we were disgustingly filthy and smelly by this time. Also, time to nap and wander around this village which is known as the gateway to the Mustang region that goes up into Tibet. Many of the villagers are Tibetans evident by their physical characteristics—shorter, darker skin, and very round faces—as well as their dress.

We chose to stay away from the gang that we'd come to know a bit along the trek. Looking back now from the vantage of several decades surely my feelings about these people and their conversations as well as my withdrawal from engaging them were likely of the pattern that has persistently isolated me from academic colleagues and even from friends. It has a surface appearance of modesty, yet whether this is false modesty, actual modesty, or a personality disorder, I'm still not clear about. I think my feelings were and always have seemed authentic and principled and humane, still I recognize that they isolate me. I tend to want to have conversations that I could describe, in the Sartrean terms that were at the fore of my mind at the time, as being in "good faith." I understand good faith in this sense as not putting on airs, not boasting or bragging, being open to others. I still feel this way. I don't tolerate idle or boasting chatter. Kurt and Helmut were always in a contest to see who could best the other on any conversation. I've felt that so many academic conversations are the same, that is, spewing bibliographical references and citations and quotes and conclusions that often seem superficial to me and that don't engage any topic in its human depth. Perhaps I tolerate even less the New Age superficiality and false universality that seems so prevalent in the world, even oddly among those who

travel about encountering others. Even after all these years, I can't tell whether my feelings and actions are based in a kind of arrogance or an effort to disguise or hide my actual inferiority, or at least my feeling of inferiority. These issues are on display in my journals writing at this time as I reflect on tolerating the evening chatter among trekkers in these teahouses.

I took the opportunity of free time to reflect on the measure of achievement it was to have made it all the way up the Marsyandi Valley and the winter crossing over the Thorong La Pass. From my current perspective, as I contemplate with concern the extent to which I will be able to hike any trail of difficulty now and into the future, I long (in vain?) for the strength and energy to engage such a purely physically demanding task. There is something so powerful and satisfying about physical challenges. I dearly miss that part of my life.

As I remember, nudged by these writings, with surprising clarity and detail the specific places with frequent flashes on a street or a person or a view or a house, I feel it is such a shame that at that time I didn't have the knowledge or the equipment I now have related to photography, or, alternatively, that I can't today be again in those places, magically transported as necessary, so I could take some nice pictures. Reading of the pictures I took encourages me to sort through my slides, hoping they are not badly faded, to be reminded again of all this beauty and wonder.

My acknowledgement of the beauty and grandeur of the place pleases me in that such moments of being present to the wonders of even the most quotidian is at the core of my current life values.

Kogbeni. Sitting in a solarium awaiting lunch enjoying a cup of jasmine tea. After lunch the solar heater should have generated enough hot water for us to have a shower, the first in many days and much needed. Hope also for a shave since I haven't shaved in days.

The walk from Muktinath was just 2 1/2 hours and so many wonderful mountain and tundra views. The mountains are so high and powerful. The tundra distinguished by the subtle colors of the soil--red, green, brown, yellow--and the sparse vegetation--pink, heather, brown. Add all these together and contrasting with one another and the results are amazing.

We arrived in Kogbeni before Helmut and Ann, who are linking strongly with Kurt. We chose Parang's recommendation, The New Annapurna, over Kurt's recommendation, The Red House, which is just next door. We sort of want to be alone for a while. For several days now, the mealtime has been a time for Emily and me to sit quietly and listen to Kurt and Helmut show off their knowledge to each other, mostly about places they have traveled (they have both traveled extensively) and about Germany and Germans and German influence, etc. They both seem to know everything about everything, yet they are wholly uninterested in Emily and me. They never ask either of us a single question. When either of us make any comment, it is completely ignored.

Emily and I have had some kicks analyzing Kurt. He seems a classic narcissist to us. We have reflected on the response he gets from others--most immediately love him--while we see him

as a superficial boast, etc. What does that reflect in us? Anyway, we are tired of spending those precious hours of mealtimes being ignored. I think it interesting that, even knowing that I'm a university professor and that I teach Native American things, my views are never sought even when the American university and Native Americans are the topic.

Emily thinks that I should enter the conversation more and that I have an obligation to say what I know. Perhaps I doubt my own knowledge, but I think rather that what I know and how I think are miles away from the fact slinging, anecdote telling, and I must say rather pointless talk that I have sat and observed. When I reflect on my teaching and on the interactions with others I treasure, all require lots of time, all are subtle, no conversation or point is definitive, what is not known is so much more interesting than what is known, there is a high degree of mutual exploration and trust. Yes, these things are essential to important relationships I want. To enter into these fact-slinging ones where numbers, statistics, and points are enumerated would be to abandon what is essential to me. Also, I'm no good at it. I get too emotional. I don't have a volley style repartee. So, I sit and listen and reflect. I haven't felt necessarily left out or offended, though there is cause to feel this way. Emily feels this more than I. Still to have to be in this situation day after day, in this place of all places, simply due to the accident of who one happens to be walking with, need not be long tolerated. So, today we're seeking a bit of our own space and enjoying it.

We have just been discussing how smelly and dirty we are and that we have never before been this bad.

As I reflect our accomplishing crossing the pass, its achievement seems all the greater. To do it in good weather would be enough in which to take pride. The elevation gain from Besi Sabar to the pass is over 5,000 meters (16,400 feet), a gain that can occur on very few if any other hikes in the world. The Thorong La Pass approaches 18,000 feet, which is amazing. But to do it in the winter, in a snowstorm, with bone-chilling cold wind, now that is all the more remarkable. It was hard, very hard, yet we did it. Likely we were among the last few over the pass this winter.

We are so pleased to be here in the winter. All but the day we crossed the pass, it has been crystal clear. The views are fabulous, and we don't have to contend with the board of trekkers that are here during high season racing from village to village competing for places to stay and waiting hours for food. We are the only guests at this lodge so far today and that has often been the case. You can have much more of a cultural experience and enjoy things in greater leisure. I'm sure the vegetation would be lovely during high season, but the starkness and high contrasts and the crystal-clear air that we are experiencing makes this time of year surely as beautiful, perhaps even more breath taking than during the fall.

We've enjoyed a nice lunch--tomato soup and French fries ("chips")--with the sun on my back. The mountains are beautifully lighted. We'll get cleaned up, explore this village and perhaps have a chance to read later on.

Later. Just in from a walk around Kogbeni. The village stands at the gateway of the Mustang region. It is expensive to get permits to enter the region and there is a police checkpoint

on that side of the village to control those who enter the area. I think this is the area Peter Mathieson was in as the setting for Snow Leopard.

The village is filled with old stone houses connected in hap hazard ways. A labyrinth of walkways, alleys and even tunnels must be traversed to get around. Even then there are parts of the village we can see but can't seem to get to. The children seem cleaner here and the people have more character, more colorful, than on the Manang side. Many wear Tibetan shoes--sort of leather soles that wrap up around the foot and crocheted together over the top. Many of the women wear huge strands of mountain coral and turquoise necklaces. But the women seem not too friendly. I was trying to take a photo of a colorful rooster when an old woman saw me and thought I was going to take her photo. She freaked out and yelled at me and waived her arms. I did take a few photos of children. One little girl with a child tied on her back showed us a tiny puppy she was carrying. Emily asked her if she could take her picture. The little girl consented willingly and posed. Other children saw this taking place, and all rushed to get in the picture. After the picture they all crowded around demanding "one rupee." We gave the first little girl the one rupee, feeling sad to enter this kind of corruption. Yet it may not really be corruption but adaptation and change. What do these children have of worth to those with money save their own appearance. Lots of children beg when you see them. They demand "pen." We just respond, "no pen." I can't imagine what they would do if you gave them a pen. There is nothing for them to write on and I can't imagine they would be able to sell a pen for much of anything.

Some say these Tibetan Nepali villages look like pueblos. I am certainly reminded of them, but I think it a rather surface resemblance. At breakfast this morning an old guy (a trekker I suppose in his late 60s, so perhaps not so old) and his younger female companion commented on this resemblance as well as resemblances in dress. They seemed like New Age seekers to me, so I wasn't very interested in conversation. I did ask when the man was drawing these parallels, "So what do you make of these parallels?" He advanced a theory of unity at a time before continental shift. Pretty funny that people can hold these views. The separation and shift of continents was eons upon eons ago. But some need the world to make sense, for everything finally to be one, for no difference to survive. Yet at the same time these types romanticize the hell out of these Nepali people (and, of course "Indians" as well), the woman kept going on about how totally wonderful these people are. I just don't see how you can make such grand generalizations when you can barely communicate with any of them and those one encounters range all over the map in terms of my sense of how wonderful they are. Some seem cruel, some seem unhappy, many seem lifeless, while others seem happy, kind, and full of life.

Another thing that bothers me is that bashing of the west done by so many travelers. Kurt calls himself an "expat" (i.e., expatriate) and says he is looking for another country to take residence in. How can one grow up in the USA, travel to Asia, and not get a sense of renewed appreciation for our freedom, our sense of humanity, our sensitivity, our intellectual development, and this is not even to mention the physical and social comforts of life?

Now a comment on long term travelers. We've met a few. Those types who seem either to travel regularly for extended periods and those who are perpetual travelers. These travelers seem

to me to be just the flip side of those who can never leave home. While those who fear leaving home fear everything in the world outside of the area they can highly control, perpetual travelers must fear any sense of regularity, any sense of order, anything of depth. This is like J. Z. Smith's locative and utopian models. Either pole is impossible. These are like Schiller's notions of the "formal" and the "sensuous." Neither is really possible, and neither is finally desirable. To strive for either is, in Sartrean terms, to live in "bad faith." In my terms, both are seeking to take the play out of life. One seeks place, the other (the traveler) finds being in place odious. Yet the irony for the traveler is that her or his conversation is restricted exclusively to recollections of places one is not now in. Psychologically, though I am fully ignorant here, it seems that the locative stay-at-home correlates with the borderline personality (do I know what this is?) while the traveler correlates with the narcissist. All this is very interesting.

To live (in Sartre's terms) in the "spirit of play," is to travel to appreciate home and to stay home to appreciate travel, to be open to the surprises (Pierce) of both home and away through the oscillation between them, yet finding neither undesirable nor despicable. I really think that Em and I are living in "good faith" in the "spirit of play." We love traveling and are able, I think, most of the time, to live here in this trek in this travel, in the present without (overly anyway) wanting to be at home. Yet we don't find going home frightening or disappointing. We look forward to structures, to regularities, to habits. We look forward to comforts, to pleasures, to making place. Yet in traveling we learn the potential for growth, for stimulation, for renewal, for surprise, for amazement that is not so easily found "at home," "in place." Both are necessary.

Traveling and being at home would make a wonderful metaphor to illustrate my theory of play. I think it might be interesting to add a section on stay-at-homers and travelers for my play course. Perhaps one could find some fiction for the stay-at-homers (some recluse like Emily Dickinson) and there is huge potential for travel literature for travelers. 12/30

These many years later I remember with remarkable detail the walk from Kogbeni to Jomson. It was along a very wide rocky riverbed with no water flowing. Perhaps a small stream in the middle somewhere. I remember Parang walking out among the round river rocks, occasionally picking up a rock and throwing it against others in search of geodes. Perhaps my memory has remained detailed for so long because I was overwhelmed by the beauty of Dhaulagiri which seemed so close and towered above us with such majesty. I could barely walk for my need to gaze upon this mountain. I was able to get a photo of it with a streak of white clouds accenting the snow-covered peak against a dark blue sky. That became one of my favorite photos that I had enlarged (16" x 20") and framed. It remains one of three above my bed today, so I enjoy it every day.

Jomson was experienced as a village remarkably different from all the many others we'd stayed in. While it was still very high elevation, it had an airport where trekkers could fly into and then spend a few days doing local hikes. I also saw fully outfitted treks with many guides and porters carrying the oddest variety of goods including tables and chairs for the comfort and convenience of just several

trekkers. I can only imagine the stories these rich folks told their friends back home.

Having time to write and it also being New Year's Eve, I enumerated the many events and experiences of the year 1993, that I might reflect on the changes in my life and assess something of my personal growth. Looking back now these many years later, I can appreciate that this was a year when so many things central to my life today were initiated, if some that at the time I couldn't even imagine.

I was just beginning to study dancing and that, broadened into movement, has been the core of my work to the present. Dancing and dance research totally changed my life in every respect, leading me to describe this change in terms of a total makeover. I had no idea at the time, but a few years later I'd found a dance and music school, Bantaba World Dance and Music, that was both life enriching and financially devastating. It gave me enormous numbers of acquaintances due to both my running the studio as well as later teaching salsa dance and other Latin dances. That too was something that at the time of this trek I could never have imagined.

The book on play that I was charting at that time never came about. I recently discovered a full-length book manuscript I'd forgotten I'd written and apparently never pursued publishing it. The ideas and dynamics of play have remained central through all these years. I've published several papers on play and my continuing writing on play is in process even now.

I finished the *Storytracking* book, and it was published by Oxford and is widely acknowledged. Personal differenced with Ron Grimes led me to withdraw from the ritual anthology even though I'd done much work on it.

Failings in the hopes and plans I charted that New Year's Eve included building relations with my sisters. I've kept in touch with Karen, yet I think my experience with Elaine and her family shortly after this trek led to the decreasing interest in and commitment to this relationship. I had a good relationship with my parents through the balance of their lives, with, as I recall, one brief period where I inappropriately challenged their life and relationship choices. This might have been related to their strong displeasure in my relationship with Emily. Thankfully that didn't damage those relationship. Then, while, as I noted, I knew and met so many through my CU teaching and Bantaba dance studio and the broader local dance and music community, I made a great many acquaintances. I would have thought these connections might have led to at least a few enduring friendships, but today I haven't a single friend from among all those acquaintances. I do have fond connections with some of the young women that were Bantaba-connected, but they are close friends with Jenny, but a relationship with me that is something else I can't quite describe. A further failing has been my inability to establish an enduring partner relationship, even though I felt that this five-month intense bonding and relationship building experience with Emily

offered me the skills and a blueprint for what a strong healthy loving relationship should be and how to build it.

There is a clear connection between the powerful and formative experiences of 1993-'94 and my core values and actions today. It was a time of the emergence out of midlife crisis and new birthing experiences of the qualities and values and interests of who I am still becoming.

Got up before sunrise this morning to take photos of Nilgiri North (7061/23,166) and perhaps Tilcho (7132/23,399) which would be just to the left of Nilgiri. Nilgiri loomed large as we walked along the Kali Gandaki River, sometimes in the vast dry riverbed. As we got a few kilometers out of Kogbeni we got a look back through a crevice to the pass. From that angle the pass crossing between Thorong Peaks looked most dramatic and it looked so high and impossible to cross, which at this time it surely is.

As we went on towards Jomson, which we knew we were approaching because of seeing an airplane that had obviously taken off not long before, we began to see Dhaulagiri (8167/26,795) and to its left Tukucho Peak (6920/22,703). Dhaulagiri is a magnificent peak rising like a pyramid to a sharp point. I just couldn't stop taking photos.

We arrived in Jomson shortly after 11 a.m. First, we went to the police check point. The policeman asked us if we'd come over Thorung La. When we said "yes," he smiled very broadly, reached over and patted us on the cheeks and said we were very lucky. And, indeed, we were. Kurt talked extensively of this last night. He felt that to cross the pass, near 18,000 ft., in a snowstorm was a challenge quite great. Doubtless we were rather foolish to try, and we courted disaster far more closely than we imagined. Still, it is wonderful to be on this side and going downhill.

Dinner last evening was weird yet sometimes fun. We had a fettuccini dish, soup, and apple pie. Not bad. The village of Kogbeni is wired for electricity which I heard is supposed to be supplied by wind generators. The problem is that the windmills all blew over. So, no power. The dining table with the heated coals beneath it was first lighted by a Coleman lantern. This didn't last long so they brought candles. Before Helmut and Ann finished their meal, someone came in, fiddled with the lantern, and sprayed kerosene over their food. Pretty upsetting to them and to others.

I engaged Kurt a little on being a perpetual traveler. I looked on it as field research. When pushed (gently) a bit, he is much less brusque and self-assured. Kind of interesting, yet in the middle of our conversation Helmut arrived and immediately began his endless spiel of travel anecdotes. I'm convinced that, while Kurt has the capacity and perhaps even the interest in self-reflection, Helmut is a surface kind of guy. Well so much for a little field research into the "perpetual traveler."

Last night Em and I shoved our beds together but neither of us slept much. Helmut in the next room, roared away snoring much of the night. Then my legs hurt. At one time I got a cramp. Anyway, by morning neither of us was in such a great mood. We snapped a bit at each other, and we've spent the day feeling sad and shy and regretful about that.

We ate lunch at quite an exclusive place in Jomson. The rooms cost \$20 USA. They have satellite TV and a western style toilet and hot water. We saw a few of the guests looking like they belong more in Aspen. Apparently, lots of people fly into Jomson, hike around a few days, and fly out. Quite the easy way to trek. On this side of the pass everything is so much easier and there are so many more trekkers. This morning I saw my first company trek. About 4 to 6 white senior citizens walked along without packs escorted by a couple of guides. Strung out behind them for kilometers were porters carrying chairs, tables, pots and pans, sleeping mats and pads, tents, the whole works. Helmut's brother took one of these for the whole circuit a couple months ago and I think he said it cost around \$3,000 US though that included airfare from Germany. That would mean the three-week trek would cost around \$2,500. Em and I are spending together between \$10 and \$12 a day, or perhaps \$125 each plus porter that we share for about \$120. We're spending maybe \$200 each on the entire trek, perhaps 10% the company price, and we could have done this without Parang.

So here we are in the Paradise Guest House on New Year's Eve. We have had a pot of tea and our first apple crunch. Helmut and Ann arrived and have gone out to explore this village. I think I'll forgo that experience preferring to write and doing more reading. Em has gone to the room for a nap. Four Brits, 3 young women and a young man, are having a snack and others seem to be arriving. I think quite a few are enjoying Winter Holiday treks.

So, what has this year been for me? Probably the year of greatest change in my entire life. Shortly after the first of the year I turned 50 in London. In March I left Judy and began to rebuild a new life. I won a faculty fellowship and the University of Colorado Research and Creative Works Award. Em and I started a relationship and worked very hard on it. I began new relationships with Corbin and Jenny and with my parents and sisters. Jenny and I traveled to Texas in the summer as part of this renewal. Late in the summer Em and I left for the travels we are still on. We've been in Australia, Indonesia, Thailand, and now Nepal. I taught a Religion and Dance course and began research in that area. I conceived and have begun research and writing on the book Storytracking. I've got a renewed plan for To Risk Meaning Nothing. I've done most of my share of the editing for the Ritual Studies Anthology with Ron. I've begun editing the "Arts of Living Series" of dictionaries for ABC-CLIO. Really quite a year. I am thrilled that I have begun new relationships, that I have worked hard on my problems and grown quite a bit personally. I'm pleased that I've had the courage to travel. I'm excited about my relationship with Emily and am beginning to think, from that relationship I am learning not only what a relationship is, but what love is. The only things I regret from this year are the inevitable hurt I've caused Judy, leaving the dome which I built and put so much of my heart into, the hurt I've done Corbin and Jenny because of the divorce.

It has been a year of enormous growth and accomplishment. A renewal, rebirth, reunification of myself. A new beginning.

Next year begins tomorrow. I know many things will occur, but I really don't want to make predictions, promises, or resolutions. I plan to continue to renew my relationship with Corbin and Jenny and, of course, my parents and sisters. Relationships then are first. Emily, my kids, my family, friends. I want to make new friends and to renew old friendships and

accomplish much there. I want to conclude my divorce as quickly as possible and to begin to rebuild house and home. I'll do all I can to be true to myself and to others, to be a genuine parent, friend, child, sibling, partner. 1994 must be as wonderful a year as 1993 has been. 12/31

Many gathered at the Paradise Inn in Marpha to celebrate New Year's Eve. It turned into a bragging session with Kurt and Helmut as the star combatants, whom all, save Em and me, seemed to find enthralling. To me they defined insensitive egotism, but then, as I've written, this judgement may be evidence of my shortcomings. I guess from my current perspective the sadness is that, in such a beautiful place secreted away in a remote rustic inn in the midst of such an amazing experience, we were not able to spend such a special evening with close engaging friends, reflecting on the wonder of life and the world.

New Year's Eve wasn't so spectacular from a social point of view anyway. We were at a very nice lodge in Marpha called "Paradise." In the evening we went down to the dining room to order dinner and read. A couple from England were there. Helmut and Ann showed up. A Belgium woman traveling with a Canadian couple (from Vancouver) came. Later the Canadian couple. I thought Kurt was not going to make it, but he made a grand entrance telling one and all of the glorious side trip he'd made, and his wet pants evidenced his fording a stream. Immediately he fell into a high-tech computer buzz word conversation with the British couple who turned out to be computer nerds. Helmut did his shtick on the many countries to which he has traveled. Round after round of trivia one-up-on-another games. It should have been a game of Jeopardy!

Em and I sat silently, eating, trying to read, occasionally (very occasionally) trying to enter the conversation. We were usually simply ignored. We had lasagna which I think had chapatti bread for the lasagna noodles. Not bad. We had our second apple crumble of the day for a New Year's Eve treat and ordered Parang one as well which he seemed to enjoy. He, like us, was completely ignored, though this is so ironic, since everyone seems to constantly talk about the wonderful Nepalese. They don't seem to notice that they completely ignore the Nepali people who are in their midst. In fact, when the Canadian couple came, they virtually displaced Parang from his spot at the warm table. He got up to head for the kitchen until Helmut, Ann, Em and I insisted he return, and that room be made for him.

About 8 p.m. with the Jeopardy! game in high gear and beer and local wine flowing, Emily and I excused ourselves to return to our room. Once there Em broke into tears because of being ignored by the group and further because she felt she knows nothing about the many topics so rapidly bantered about the group. I assured her I knew nothing either and that a quick review of my vitae would suggest that such a lack doesn't make me dysfunctional nor a blundering idiot. We talked extensively about what qualities we think constitute relationships and what constitutes interesting and important knowledge. She became assured, or reassured, that what was going on there was nothing to feel threatened by and that she need not spend 20 hours a day trying to know a little something, a few facts, about everything.

It is amazing how much Kurt pretends to know all there is to know about most any and everything. Let me think of just a few things I recall: the oriental influence on the economy of British Columbia, the maple syrup industry worldwide, the microbrewery industry, super computers, the best places to eat in virtually any city in the world (often including the name of the restaurant and the street address), worldwide economy, population figures, birth and death rates for Nepal, how to avoid attacks by brown bears in Alaska, shark attacks in the Great Barrier Reef, and on and on. Every time I hear someone mention a book, he claims to have read it and his usual response is to pan the content with a quick statement. Still, when we know a bit about that of which he talks, it is clear most of what he says is either wholly made up or utterly superficial. What a bore, but certainly he is loved. Everyone, save us, seems immediately to love and admire him and look to him for the final word on everything. Well enough on Kurt.

We enjoyed a warm night and I slept more than usual. The Paradise was a fine place, by far the finest we've experienced since we have been on the trek.

This morning we arose shortly after 7 a.m. It was a bit cloudy. We had a hardy Tibetan breakfast (2 eggs, 2 pieces of Tibetan bread, French fries, and coffee or tea) and we added muesli to this. The walk out of Marpha was fairly undistinguished with the clouds mostly covering Nilgiri. After several kilometers we began to see the lower areas of Dhaulagiri with clouds completely obscuring the tops. Looking back, we could also see Nilgiri, it too in the clouds. We stopped in Tukobe for a nice glass of warm apple juice. On the trail another hour or two and we stopped at Lanjung for a quick bowl of soup (not great, but warm). Dhaulagiri loomed above the village, again not much visible due to the clouds. Still, I made some interesting, I hope, pictures of the beautiful, muted colors in the lower elevations with the white capped peaks above. We arrived in Kalopani (2560/8,694) around 2 p.m. having descended only one hundred meters lower than Marpha. We are at a clean guest house, but the food is horrible so we'll go up the road for dinner. Helmut and Ann arrived about an hour after we did and joined us. We've enjoyed a nice chat though it is very cold in this dining room.

Ann and Em have gone up the road to check the menu. Em is in a mood of homesickness and wants the trek to be over. Though I'm encouraging her to be present, to "buck up" as it were, I am not far behind her in mood. We contemplated yesterday spending another day on the trek to go into an interesting area north of the main route, but I think now we will let that go and take a half day trip out of Pokhara for a view of the Himalaya that Helmut promises is magnificent.

So, it is New Year's Day here and my thoughts today have been almost constantly with Corbin and Jenny, wondering what they are doing on New Year's Eve, hoping they are having a great time, even more hoping they act sanely and are safe from the many dangers of the holiday. I can't wait to get back to Boulder to see them and find out what they have been doing.

Think we'll spend a number of days, split between Pokhara and Kathmandu, simply reading, writing, and reflecting. I think this is necessary prior to our return to Boulder to help us rest, reflect, relax, and prepare ourselves for the major changes of returning home. Perhaps I'll finish Frankenstein before the end of the trek, but if not, I can finish it and either buy a

new book, work on To Risk, or read one of Emily's books. How wonderful that time shall be, how important to successfully concluding this fabulous trip.

Helmut and Ann are out for a walk, and it seems to be clearing this evening. I have high hopes that it will be crystal clear in the morning because there are major mountains in every direction. Annapurna South is just now making an appearance with the sun lighting its top. I must go take a photo.

The sun is just setting, and I went out to get some photos of Nilgiri and Annapurna South (7273/23,862) as the sun made its brief appearance before disappearing for the day. Now in semidarkness, despite the electric lights, and in semi-chilliness, despite the coals under the table, we await our dinner, bean and cheese burrito. Then some conversation with Helmut and Ann and early to bed. Hopefully the early morning views of Dhaulagiri will be wonderful. 1/2

The sixteenth day of the trek was physically my worst. Surprisingly, perhaps not so much, it was a descent that brought me intense back pain. We descended nearly 5,000 feet. Each step was like a hammer blow that resonated through my skeleton. It reminds me that prior to this trek I had experienced lower back pain for many years. I'd often experienced that painful moment I described as my back "going out" on me and then suffering pain and limited movement for weeks following. Odd that I never sought medical help. When I finally did several years after this trek, they sent me to a physical therapist, and I began to work on having a healthy back. Interestingly I think the many years of dancing, particularly the hip active salsa dancing I did for so many years was the "cure," so to speak, and I haven't had back pain for a decade.

Reading my journals now so many years later I feel regret that about this point in the trek I was so worn out that I just wanted to finish it up. This signals a shift from being present to the gifts of every day in the Himalayan mountains displaced by some desire to just be done. It is certainly understandable, yet today I think how marvelous it would be to be back in that country we traveled through those last days, to be able to savor the beauty of the high mountains and the distinctiveness of the Nepali mountain culture.

The 16th day of our trek. It was a very hard day despite descending nearly 1400 meters/4600feet. My lower back hurt much of the day making every step a painful moment and the occasional body jerk to recover from a slipping or rolling rock underfoot was a wrenching pain.

It was lightly cloudy most of the day with the sun breaking through a few brief times. Dhaulagiri stood massive as a huge bowl to our backs as we left Kalopani.

Em and I had to process a bit more of our weirdness of last night but decided that we are both body and travel weary and want most of all to get on through the trek and enjoy the mountain views from Pokhara.

Today was mostly a pushing drudge through the day.

We stopped in Ghara for lunch. An interesting valley as we descended. The vegetation changes along the way through the lower sides of the high peaks are mostly brown. By the time we got to Tatopani we saw citrus, banana, ferns, and bamboo.

The trail was loaded with caravans, groups of pack animals (donkeys, horses, and the cow-yak mix with big horns). Frequently we had to wait for them to clear the trail. Interesting and colorful, plus their neck bells are lovely to hear, but they kick up lots of dust and grind the trail into 4-inch-deep dust nearly everywhere.

We're staying in the Kumala Lodge. As we arrived, we hardly noticed Nilgiri South (6839/22,438) at the end of the valley through which we had traveled. We were too hungry. First, we ordered tea—we were seriously dehydrated—and tomato soup. Then we ordered French fries which we gobbled. Then we saw them carrying two freshly baked cakes from the kitchen to the bakery. Can you believe it! We ordered a piece of coconut cake to round out our snack.

When we started for the room, I suddenly felt chilled to the bone. When I started up the stairs to the room, I realized how serious is my back pain. In the room I couldn't bend over enough to untie my shoes. I just started to cry, and Em helped me off with my shoes and other sweaty clothing and snuggled me warm under the sleeping bags. Later she rubbed me down with Tiger Balm and I began to feel better. Spirits have returned, but my back is still very sore. The trip tomorrow is a 7- to 8-hour steep climb up to Ghoropani. I really want to go so we can be in Pokhara for my birthday, but I don't know whether I'll be able to go. Perhaps I'll wait until morning to determine that.

When we came down for dinner, garlic cheese lasagna (sort of), two pots of mint tea (more rehydration), and two more pieces of coconut cake, Emily spotted Helmut and Ann in the inn across the street. Amazing that they made it here today. We're both seriously tired and sore. They have been trekking several days longer than we have.

So here we hang. Tomorrow will bring what it will. Em and I are close and loving again and that is excellent. When we had still an hour to go Em responded with great concern. I thought she was going to cry. But she rallied her strength and on we came. We talked about that, and it is helpful, I think, to us both.

Wish I knew what was best for my back. Today there were times when I felt somewhat pain free, other times it was excruciating. I may load Parang's pack with a bit of my stuff to try to lighten my load. 1/2

Nearing the end of the trek, we had one memorable somewhat frightening encounter with a group of young men on the trail. Importantly, we'd been trekking for over two weeks and had never seen anyone the least bit threatening or even unkind. We had heard of robberies and some violence aimed at trekkers, especially lone women. Reminded by the journal description, I think there was a significant possibility that at least Emily's backpack was about to be stolen. One of the guys had picked it up and all he would have had to do was to jog off into the forest and we'd never have been able to follow him. I'm a bit surprised that my reaction was to immediately grab Emily's pack from this guy. Then it helped that Parang, who had stayed behind to finish his lunch, showed up around that

time. This event highlights the relative safety of the trek regarding crime and how it could have been a constant danger.

It is notable that through this last part of the trek I was reading Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). It doesn't appear that I was much aware of who Mary Shelley was or the circumstances of the novel. I don't write much about the book. Yet, I somehow still have that small yellowed used copy and have since read and written much about this amazing book and its author. It is fun and oddly prescient that I carried this book with me throughout the trek and throughout the years following to finally come to realize and appreciate how remarkable it is. I consider it to be one of my favorite novels.

As the end of the trek neared, I suppose it was natural that we turned more and more attention to the anticipated apres trek activities, especially a hot shower and a decent bed. Still, now I can't help but wish that I'd been more patient and willing to hang among these top-of-the-world mountains a few days longer. Maybe these feelings are just an old man's longings and regrets. I now know I'll never have this experience again and I find that somehow deeply saddening. I now feel that as we make our way through life, we often don't recognize how marvelous and special are some of the phases, often so brief, and we tend to just rush along. Our attention is on completion or on the next adventure, yet how can one grow and learn and accumulate experience other than slowing down, being patient, and absorbing all we can at every moment.

I can appreciate the evidence throughout my journals in this long journey that I at least had an awareness of the importance of being present. I so often acknowledged how hard was the travel, yet each time it is clear I kept myself present to my environment and to what was happening, both good and bad, happy and sad, hard and easy, at the moment. I'm also pleased that Emily and I seemed to hone relationship skills so that we could support one another when needed and we could quickly resolve any tensions and disagreements between us.

By the last night of the trek, we were tired of the cold, tired of the nasty accommodations, tired of the tasteless food, physically tired, and uncomfortably dirty and smelly. Yet, I did still see and admire with awe the mountains.

We shot up the mountain from Tatopani climbing 1600 meters (5250 feet) in a total of 7 hours including lunch (about 1 hour). The main reason for the speed is that just above Sikha where we had lunch a group of young men suddenly appeared and casually surrounded us. They talked with a Nepali woman who happened to be near the trail. Em had left her backpack on a stoop, one of them started to pick up her pack. I protested. Parang, who had stayed behind to finish his dal bhat, showed up around this time. The young men soon went on up the road. Parang seemed to think they were innocent though I'm not sure he understood our concern. Em was freaked out and so was I. Her adrenalin rush shot her up the hill. I couldn't go so fast partly because of my back. Em patiently waited now and then. It was a surprise when we got

here. Actually, here turns out to be Dearali, not Ghoropani as I had thought. Dearali is where Pun Hill is and if one hikes up there one can see the whole top of the world from Lamjung Himal to Dhaulagiri. Doubtless we'll head up there in the morning and hopefully see the mountains. We can see Dhaulagiri from here as we could our lunch stop, and it is a seriously huge, tall mountain (26,777 feet).

This hotel is very basic like so many we've stayed in. We thought these hotels on the Jomson side would be much better, but they aren't so great. Last night we had delicious food, but the hotel was very basic. This morning we had a delicious Tibetan breakfast for 50 rupees each, with fried eggs, Tibetan bread, fried potatoes, and milk tea. We also drank a pot of mint tea to help us stay hydrated.

Both of us are weary of trekking. Actually, the walking is fun, the villages are often interesting, the people are often friendly. But it is hard to deal with such crummy dark dingy cold places to stay. We had high expectations on the Jomson side and since that hasn't worked out very well, we're sort of disappointed. This village doesn't even have electricity or a heated dining table. And it is cold here.

Parang gave us a long speech last night about his knowing which places are best to stay and that his choices should be followed. We've been shopping around, but when we arrived here, I was happy to take whatever, I was so tired. Em thinks there are much better places. Since tomorrow will be an easier day, we'll make our own choice for our last night which will be in Birethanti. Then on January 5 we walk 10 minutes and catch some sort of vehicle to Pokhara the haven of hot showers, comfortable beds, no walking and hopefully an international telephone connection.

We've been drinking some mint tea awaiting a snack of potato soup and some Tibetan bread (mine with peanut butter). This is our way of testing places for their food. If the soup is good and the bread not too greasy, it seems to be okay to eat a meal there.

This morning as we prepared to leave, Helmut and Ann appeared to give us a great send off. They had decided to stay in Tatopani to recover a bit and knowing how hard the climb to Ghoropani is, they thought they'd take two days for it. Helmut complimented Emily by saying she did so much for an American girl. A compliment to her and an insult to American females. Still, they were warm and genuinely gracious, and we were very pleased to have such a warm conclusion to our week and more travel with them.

The country through which we traveled today was quite beautiful. Many terraces, lots of green fields, poinsettias a plenty, bamboo, high snow peaks. We went in and out of mystical forests. Just below Ghoropani we went through a forest of huge trees, though not too tall, with their roots sticking up. Seemed like a fairy forest but given our little episode with the "gang" of guys, we both felt a bit creepy. We were treated to seeing a couple of monkeys in the forest. They were quite large and had big white hairy fringes around their faces. Though I saw them only in a flash, I think their faces were black.

It is sunset and I just went upstairs to a balcony to take some photos. Nilgiri South stood, all pointy by itself bathed in warm evening light. What a great object to photograph. It was completely cloud free though Dhaulagiri further to the west was totally obscured by heavy cloud.

Annapurna I (7,647/25,088) or Fang (7647/25,088) and Annapurna South (7273/23,862) were bathed in clouds, themselves taking on lovely sunset colors. From time-to-time holes in the clouds would match the location of the mountains giving me a peek at the peaks. Fun to have this experience and to, hopefully, get some breathtaking photos.

The dining room has its Coleman lantern burning and a central stove, made of half a 55-gallon drum adding a bit of warmth. The food we had for a snack was delicious, so we told them to keep it coming. Pizza, which should be interesting, more Tibetan bread, and milk tea. We'll go to bed early and be prepared for a pre-sunrise rise. One day all downhill to Birethanti and we'll conclude the trek. I've given up even a concern about my odor, which is beyond bad (new abbreviation: H.O. = Horrible Odor), or my appearance which is beyond scruffy. When we arrive in Pokhara it will be the time to return to these social concerns, besides Em smells as bad though she still looks great. Hm, wonder what her secret is? So, I'm psyched for the food that's coming and for tomorrow's sunrise, tomorrow's hike, tomorrow night's lodging and food as a fitting climax to the trek.

I asked Em what the high points for her trek were. She said the Xmas day hike from Pisang to Manang, the pass crossing, and the hike from Muktinath to Kagbeni. I'd pretty much agree with that.

Though my back remains stiff, and my hips still want to displace to the right, I don't think it is nearly as bad as last night, at least I haven't had to cry. Yea.

Perhaps I'll read a bit of Frankenstein while I await our food.

Didn't get but a couple paragraphs read before our food came. The pizza was a round piece of bread covering the bottom of a round pan covered with tomato, onion, and cheese. Rather tasty by trekking standards.

During the meal the Nepali family has congregated around the fire: the man and woman who own this place, a teenaged daughter (I think) and a young man and woman, perhaps a daughter or son and spouse. Another younger girl, perhaps 12, was here for a while. Parang has disappeared. I think it is fairly clear that Em and I, the only guests, are a principal topic of conversation. The woman asked earlier, "Father and daughter?" She giggled when Emily told her, "No, friends." Perhaps our relationship is giving their imaginations an object for reflection and their senses of humor may be engaged as well. Em said to me that she is tired of being the object of such private conversations, I agree. It is only 6:40 pm, but it is chilly and there's not much to do, so we may go to bed soon. Slept so well last night, hope I can repeat that tonight. 1/3

I am pleased that we had the will and energy to take the apparently short early morning hike up to Pun Hill to gain one final glorious view of these magnificent mountains. And I'm also pleased that I was inspired to write a few paragraphs in a humble effort to express my sense of the importance of this adventure and what it draws from a person who has experienced it. Somehow now I feel a bit uncomfortable that I made a comparison of this trek to an afternoon spent at Uluru, which in the journals I insisted on the old colonialist's name Ayers Rock. From the distance of many years now, I feel the trek to be in an entirely different

category of experience than Uluru. Trekking the Annapurna Circuit was something that changed who I was and initiated the process of who I have become and still am becoming.

Birethanti. The last inn and tea house of our trek. We arose this morning before sunrise and climbed our way up Pun Hill above Ghoropani for sunrise. From Pun Hill mountains can be seen all over the place. The huge Dhaulagiri on the far left. Then going to the right or east a distant snow-covered range, Nilgiri South (which was mostly a black face, but the snow on its other side caught the light), Annapurna I, Annapurna South, and Machhapuchbare (the famous fish tail mountain). There were doubtless more, but those were the most spectacular ones. Snapped quite a few pictures and ate some granola.

We went back to our hotel, ordered our breakfast and packed while it was being prepared. We got started about 9 a.m. Down down down we came. At Banthanti we got a spectacular mountain framed view of Machhapuchbare and farther on down at Ulleri, where we had a very delicious lunch at a beautiful spot, Annapurna South dominated the end of the valley above us. Parang had thought we'd make it only as far as Hille, two hours short of Birethanti, but when we arrived there, it was only 2 p.m. and we felt good, so we pushed on. Some people leaving Ghoropani this morning were aiming for Pokhara tonight. We wanted to spend one last night at an inn before Pokhara. We also want to arrive in Pokhara in time to shop for a few necessities.

This town, or at least this lodge, has no electricity, so we'll be in the dark before long. We did treat ourselves each to a bucket of hot water ("shower"). We still smell and our clothes reek, but it certainly feels wonderful to get the first layers of scum off. I didn't shave, just too inconvenient, and Em didn't wash her hair, same reason.

Birethanti is a neat town with lots of inns and shops. As usual our room is quite basic. But we did descend 1700 meters today, so it is much warmer here.

At our lunch stop we met lots of people we'd seen in Ghoropani. A couple of them were suffering serious knee pain and we dispensed a bunch of Ibuprophen. Em had a bit of knee pain. My pain remained in my back which is getting better and my ankle where the tongue of my boot which tends to slip around has made a nasty bruise. But I felt good most of the day.

The trail was like one huge stairway. Thousands and thousands of steps down. We began in a forest and came out of dense trees after a while. Then the trail opened out on hill sides, many of which were terraced, and wound its way down through a variety of villages. I particularly liked Ulleri which was built on the steep descent. There were many tea houses along the path with lovely bright table clothes on tables. Some had tubs of iced soda and trays of candy bars laid out, trekkers' delights. Everyone was friendly. It was a fine place to stop for lunch.

One major experience on the trail is meeting caravans of mules and donkeys, up high they were horned yak-cows. Typically, these caravans have 10 or 12 mules. The first several usually have a triangular decorated carpet piece, made specifically for the purpose I'm certain. The first ones may also have neat plumes that stick up above their necks. Many of the animals have huge bells around their necks that can be heard for quite some distance. The problem occurs when

you meet one or more caravans in a narrow spot on the trail. The mules have their loads hanging on their sides and they often take up much of the trail.

Sometimes we try to travel along the edge of the trail, sometimes we have to wait. The mules typically go a few steps then stop awaiting a shout, a whistle, a thrown rock, or a whack with a stick to get them to go on. Sometimes 4 or more caravans are strung together. Mules also have the habit of pissing in the same place. These frequent piss places are a quagmire of mud and stink of ammonia urine. Yuck. This morning as I finished checking in at the Police Check Point in Ghororpani, a caravan was coming up the street/path. A water place had run all night as common and had frozen in a sheet of ice half filling the street at just a place where the mules had to make a large step up. Mule after mule hit the ice, went down on its knees, and struggled to get back up to its feet and slide past the ice. Finally, the drover caught on and whacked the remaining ones, so they'd skirt the ice. Very sad, these animals. Their back bones are worn hairless as also anywhere straps scrape. I don't see why they do what they do, but most everything that is used and sold in every village that is not produced locally must be hauled by these animals or by the many porters who also carry huge loads. I've been noticing porter's feet. They are spread out like duck feet, even wider than mine. Their toes hang over the flip flops they wear and look as gnarly as one can imagine. They often carry huge loads strapped to their backs and supported by their head with a weight-bearing strap. I saw one today carrying probably 10 sheets of corrugated steel. Even the encumbrance of 2' or 3' x 8' sheets seems more than one could endure, but these loads are also terribly heavy.

We're out of the views of the snow peaks--i.e., the Himalaya--now. They should appear again tomorrow, but more at a distance from Pokhara. In the morning we walk about 30 minutes, then catch a bus to Pokhara. Likely we'll spend a few minutes looking around this town before heading out. We've enjoyed potato soup, mint tea, and French fries. Now we've ordered tomato, onion, pizza (same as last night, but a recommended specialty here).

The inns on this side--the Jomson side--have certainly not met my expectations, built on so many reports. Certainly, more things are available on this side, but it is still a far cry from what I'd expected. This town, perhaps the largest and the most highly praised, doesn't have electricity. So now I'm writing illuminated by a single lantern provided for the outdoor dining room. As the sun has set, I'm a bit chilly. So as usual for winter trekking, a long, big meal and off to bed. Not so bad, but I find it impossible to sleep around the clock. Night before last in Tatopani, I slept most of the night through, but last night, despite being pooped from the long hard climb, I slept very little. The dog that barked ceaselessly most of the night didn't help. I think I was also anticipating a pre-sunrise awakening.

So now we've come to the end of a 200-kilometer trek. When I look at the map and see where all we've been and think about days walking and places for the night's lodging (most of them bedrooms that were like large packing crates) I am amazed at what we have done. It has been a very long walk with many physically very difficult days. We rested really only 2 days--Manang and Muktinath--and on one of those I took a long hike. If one added all the meters ascent and descent it would be many thousands. The peak experiences for me have been many: doubtless the best was to cross a pass, in winter of all times, that approached 18,000 feet and

for me to feel great enough to dance at that altitude. But even more the peak experience has been to see and try to grasp the enormity, the grandeur, the power, the unfathomability of the snow peaks. They stand silent but moody. They appear eternally frigid, but they thaw the spirit and inspire the imagination. They are there, just there. They don't give a damn who looks on them or attempts to climb them. The very idea of "conquering" these mountains, as is the term often used for those who ascend to their peaks, is ludicrous. Nothing, save time itself, can conquer these mountains. The very thought of human conquerors is the height of silliness. We stand before them humbled as few other natural experiences can be so certain to do. Yet in our infinite smallness, our sense of the infinitesimal time the courses of our lives occupy, we nonetheless go away happier, more human, more accepting of our condition, more inspired to give our best to the tiny bit we've been given in the scheme of things. Then too, realizing that as the Himalaya grows and is worn away, as the great flat deserts of central Australia were once the location of its own Himalaya, we realize not to take ourselves too seriously, not to overly worry about things we make, about the little efforts we make to try to achieve a tiny measure of immortality. For me this has shifted my personal priorities to building and maintaining close personal relationships. Feelings, good relationships, love, friendship, these things are all for the moment, for the present. Nothing about them must endure. Thus, we needn't much worry about durability, about immortality. We have, as the Himalaya, only the present. Seems I had something of the same response to Ayers Rock. It is interesting to compare these experiences. We walked around Ayers Rock, 9 kilometers, and it took 3 hours. We walked around part of the Himalaya; it took 19 days. We climbed Ayers Rock to the top. We did so with hundreds of other people. It took perhaps an hour. We crossed a high pass—Thorung La in the Himalaya, but from the pass we looked up thousands of feet at mountains all around. Only the very few of all those who visit here even do this pass crossing.

So, the Himalaya are much grander, much more inaccessible than Ayers Rock. Still, perhaps for this reason, Ayers Rock is even more important as a natural object to inspire. Our emotions, our imaginations, our fullest human capabilities are thrown into such an overload by the Himalaya that we can't even just sit in wonder, we're overwhelmed. Yet I remember so well the better part of a day with my eyes and heart trained on the Rock? It attracted as it inspired wonder. This doesn't mean I like Ayers Rock more than the Himalaya. To me they are finally incomparable experiences. I'd never give up either. 1/4

But a short distance from the inn where we spent the last night of the trek, we immediately encountered the high traffic and population of urban Nepal. Such a shock, such a contrast. Awaiting transportation to nearby Pokhara, it was the sadness of the tiny children that overwhelmed my attention and demanded that I reflect on kids in this culture. The extreme protective care and attention to safety and health in my culture can certainly be questioned in many ways, yet the relative neglect, yet the tenacity and adaptability of these Nepali kids is remarkable, a testament to the vigor of all children.

Reading the end of trek journal entries now decades later, it seems that I was more relieved than elated. I still was eager to see the great mountains yet pleased

that I would be able to shower and sleep in greater comfort. Pokhara is a lively tropical city on a sizeable lake that is frequented by tourists and trekkers.

Pokhara, January 5 - 10

Pokhara. Treks over. We arose this morning, had a nice breakfast and walked briefly around Birethanti before heading out. Even as we walked the half hour to Lumle where we wanted to catch a ride to Pokhara the activity began to increase, and we met many more people. We came to the road and saw the horror of trucks and buses crammed to overcapacity, people and luggage hanging everywhere, and we realized what a culture shock we were in for.

As we awaited transport, I noticed a small child, maybe two years old, bare bottomed and footed walk across this busy road, squat and shit diarrhea on the roadside. I turned away, but this image is burnt into my mind. This is Nepal. One of the poorest countries in the world. A country with a high infant and child mortality rate, but also a major overpopulation problem. I was first shocked that no one would tend this little child on such a busy road, then I realized that its chances with trucks and buses were perhaps better than its chances with disease. As we waited, I thought about all the Nepali children I've seen. Most of them had so much dirt on them that they'd be unrecognizable if clean. Most, almost all, had snot running down their faces, often past their lips. All wore rags, many layers of rags. Some played, but the games were all inventions using found and junk objects. I saw not a single manufactured toy. As we drove along to Pokhara--fortunately we were able to get a taxi, though it cost 500 rupees--I saw many children doing hard physical labor on road crews, boys of 12 to 15, even some girls of this age. A very few children I have seen seem happy. Last night the principal busser and wait person was a little girl, perhaps eight. She worked hard and the man who ran the inn was cross and sharp with her, but she smiled broadly, though she was so shy, and there was life in her eyes.

For so many Nepali children life is pain, disease, death, diarrhea, work, dirt, cold, and neglect. Very harsh it seems to me.

Reflecting on the image of the child squatting shitting in the road I remembered taking a photo in London just a year ago tomorrow, my birthday, of a woman turned patiently to the side as her leashed groomed dog squatted in the gutter of a clean street to shit. London pets are healthier and more well cared for than Nepali children.

Of course, the harshness is there, but perhaps in the shock of it I have overstated the situation or neglected the positive side. I've seen many parents show care and affection for children. Parang often talks to and has fun with children in the homes where we have stayed. There is another side, but still, it seems the negative side is overwhelming to me. I haven't even mentioned the begging so commonly practiced by children in most of the villages we passed through. Well, enough of that. I think the huge romanticization of the Nepali people and know that for many travelers the children are cute and endearing.

So, we've finished the trek. Arriving in Pokhara before noon, Parang hauled us down a side street to the place he always stays, the Iceland Guest House. With a string of disappointing places on the Jomson side of the trek I expected a horrible place, but it isn't so bad. We decided to stay, a double room with attached bath for 300 rupee (\$6) per night and if it is clear in the

morning I think we'll have a spectacular Himalayan view for which we're paying an extra 50 rupees per day for the room with the view.

We landed and promptly left to shop for necessities--laundry soap, razor blades, toothbrushes, etc.--before we could start the long process of cleaning up. Parang was heading out for lunch, and we walked along with him. We invited him to lunch and wound up in a lovely garden restaurant on the lake eating Mussaka salad (though I shouldn't have), and chocolate cake. Parang, unable to read the menu as we quickly realized, yielded to my suggestion that we choose something new for him to eat. It was fun. He did know that he wanted a beer to drink. We ended with a huge slab of chocolate cake and as I think on this lake side garden setting juxtaposed with the baby shitting in the road that I'd seen but a couple hours before, I realize that I've seen something of Asia, something of life. 1/5

Now, at age 78, I'm acutely aware of the passing of time, how rapidly it slips away. It was just a year ago (March 2020) that the entire planet went into quarantine due to the coronavirus pandemic. I was in the midst of writing *Dancing Graffiti: Stories from My Life*. I was energized by the task of recovering the chronology of my life and to craft some stories that would be fun to read and remember. I worked on a few academic articles and the start of a couple books plotting a new way forward in writing. For Fatu's 16th birthday I had worked long on making book of images covering her life year by year. Then during the pandemic, I did a photo book as a gift for her 18th birthday in February covering ages 16 to 18. I plan to expand and reprint this photo book so it includes the events to the end of the summer 2021 when she will head to Los Angeles to pursue a career in dancing. And now I have been long at work at these 1990s journals.

My birthday in 1994 spent at Pokhara Nepal also marked an amazing and complex year. On my 50th birthday in 1993 I was in London for the day on my way to Cardiff Wales the next day for a several-day conference. It was my first time in London—well the only time so far—and I loved the day seeing the sights. My 51st year had seen strong academic progress on completing a book on Australia and religion theory for which I'd won a Faculty Fellowship allowing me a yearlong sabbatical, beginning new teaching on dancing and religion and seeing the potential of dancing as an academic study, leaving Judy and starting divorce proceedings, starting a relationship with Emily, initiating the renewal of my relationships with Corbin and Jenny, and traveling for five months to several countries.

I suppose considering the richness of both years should relieve my anxiety of aging and literally running out of time, yet it perhaps has the stronger impact of urging me to ramp up my continuing creative works, whatever they may be. I'm not wanting for ideas, and I work seven days a week on my projects as it is, yet, perhaps I can do more. I just read an interview of the choreographer Twyla Tharp who is working constantly at age 79 and she expressed what I have

regularly noted as well, that through all our decades of experience, at this age we are finally properly prepared to do some good work. There are plenty of examples of those who did their great work in their later years. She names Beethoven and Matisse. Frank Lloyd Wright's 80s were his most creative and productive.

My 51st birthday. Awoke early this morning trying to recall the names of my Beta pledge class. Don't know why. Mike Bloodhart, Mike Stucky, Tracey Burton, Larry Seigel, Spider (Bill) Gross, Rex Molder, etc. Actually, some of them were just friends. I can't really recall which were in my pledge class. Thirty years ago. The images of their faces were immediately available, but their names came rather slowly. Funny, now I'd recognize their names if spoken, but if I saw them, I might not, indeed I likely would not, connect their present appearances with them at all. Since Mike Bloodhart lives in Aurora, I might try to see him when I get back. I have yet to recall the name of the girl, woman, he married. Don't remember liking her all that well.

So, after it started to get light, I looked out our window and there was the promised beautiful mountain view. Macchapuchare was center stage aglow in the early morning sunlight. Annapurna South appeared a big snow-covered mound to the west and behind the trees to the east were Annapurna IV and Annapurna II. I took a couple photos of Macchapuchare--such a beautiful pyramidal shaped mountain. I'm so pleased I photographed it from the Jomson trail because only at that angle is the fish tail appearance visible for which it is named. The appearance of these snow peaks changed throughout the morning. We enjoyed this view from the garden of the Boomerang Restaurant by the lake where we ate a delicious breakfast. But before even our breakfast was complete the clouds had formed and began to obscure the peaks. By noon they had disappeared altogether.

After breakfast we strolled about the shopping area near us. I looked at cotton flannel shirts and this afternoon I drove a seriously good bargain and bought a heavy one for 350 rupees (\$7). We saw Kurt who told us he had word on the people we spent the night with in Thorong Phedi. He said he'd heard they made it over the pass perhaps 3 days after we did. Good to know. Perhaps they will show up in Pokhara in a day or two.

We had cinnamon rolls and milk tea at one restaurant, minestrone soup and herbal tea at another. Both Em and I have had a stomachache today from overeating last night, particularly garlic. We went to very lovely restaurant and ate spaghetti Napolitana and garlic bread with coke. We finished the meal with a chocolate role cake with rum sauce. It included two huge slices of roll cake. We had coffee and tea with our desserts. Most enjoyable the restaurant provided an hour and a half of folk music and dance which we experienced while we ate. Terrific evening even if my stomach paid the price.

As I sit here on the second-floor balcony looking towards the snow peaks I cannot see, it strikes me again how amazing it is to sit in the sub-tropics amidst banana trees, poinsettia trees, huge bamboo clumps, papaya trees, etc. and be able to look at the Himalaya without intervening mountain ranges.

At present we don't know how long we'll stay in Pokhara. We bought a used copy of the Lonely Planet guidebook to Nepal and are beginning to realize how much there is to see and do and buy in Kathmandu. As idyllic as is Pokhara, we may head back to Kathmandu in a couple or three days.

Em called her parents last night. I'll call mine tonight, so it will be early morning there--give them a chance to wish me Happy Birthday. May not try to call Corbin or to see if I can learn anything about Jenny through Judy. Perhaps I'll call Corbin when I get to Kathmandu, but it costs so much I may not. Am sure my parents will be thrilled.

So how do I feel on my 51st birthday? Like I 've grown lots since I walked in Hyde Park in London a year ago today. I feel healthier physically, mentally, and spiritually, as well as stronger and more integrated as a person. It has been quite a year, but I summarized all that on New Year's Eve. I'm happy and enthusiastic. I feel rested and full of energy. I find this trip has been, is being, a powerful and moving experience, demanding and providing opportunity for so much growth and experience. I'm truly happy to be alive and look forward to all things in my future. .

Emily and I had a brief, but harsh, interchange last night. A few moments regression for me into old withdrawal patterns. We're both in transition from trekking and we are both eager to head home. No wonder there were a few moments of weirdness. We got it resolved before dinner and enjoyed our evening together very much. She gave me a lovely pressed floral card (that she bought in Thailand) on handsome sa (mulberry) paper. She wrote a very sweet message on the card and I've enjoyed being with her so much today. She looks so cute with her hair washed and nice clothes on. I'm experiencing an amazing, transformed feeling now that I've shaved and cleaned up a bit.

A note now about human rock crushers. I've intended to write about them before and haven't done it.

In many places throughout Nepal, we've seen groups of people working as human rock crushers. They sit in riverbeds with hammers. They take a large rock and whack it until it breaks. They take the pieces and whack them until all are crushed into walnut or smaller sized stones. It seems that a good many people make their living in just this way. I noticed one person who had devised a sort of rubber ring into which the larger stone was placed. Likely this person had poor aim and bad fingers at risk. Most however just hold the stone by one hand and pound with the other. I haven't seen any gold bricking (laziness) among these rock crushers. They all seem to work rapidly. What does this say about the value of life? the quality of life? Reminds me of the Balinese females and haulers. Some of these Nepali rock crushers are women and children. Hm! Gives pause for reflection.

We'll go out to eat this evening, how surprising! Perhaps I'll read Frankenstein now or about Kathmandu. 1/6

The night of my birthday I suffered food poisoning. I think it was some apple pie that I'd eaten some of before realizing it might be spoiled. Paid for it for several hours of horrible and violent sickness, yet it cleared through my system

rapidly and with rehydration I was back to normal by the next day. Happy birthday to me.

Beautiful mountain views the next morning and a day spent in Pokhara and planning what we wanted to do in Kathmandu before returning to the USA.

At this point my journal writing becomes simply a minimal marking the events of the day, with some rather random notes on my observations and experiences. We did finally run into some of the trekkers we had met before crossing the pass and heard their stories. I finally made a minimal comment on *Frankenstein* which I'd finished by then.

Pokhara. Awoke this morning teeming with energy thinking of my research projects. I have somehow placed these projects in the back of my mind, let them be dormant since before we left Bali. Suddenly this morning at 6 a.m. there they were again in my mind and my energies welling toward them. I think this a wonderful natural effect of my traveling. I'll begin today to review my notes on To Risk restarting my engines.

Last night I finished Frankenstein. Excellent book. Now I need to read Prometheus since it is described as a "modern Prometheus tale" and I think I'll write a note to Corbin describing my reflections on the book as well as the physical history of the book and give it to him when I get home.

Started Hesse's short novel Knulp last night and read some on it this morning early. A lovely simple little work. Em is enjoying Tom Robbins' Jitterbug Perfume which I think I want to reread.

After breakfast this morning, I called and finally got hold of Jenny. It was so wonderful to talk with her. She sounded happy and excited about her work, her snowboarding, and very happy to be talking to me. She may try to meet us at the airport on the 21st. That would be great. She had received and enjoyed the cards and letters we've sent her. She wanted us to come visit her as soon as we get back. Only talked 5 minutes (\$22) but it was wonderful, and I didn't even feel sad afterwards since it will only be 2 weeks until we are back. Yea! ...

We saw Amy and Victor, the couple we met at Thorong Phedi before our assault on Thorong La Pass. They had not started the morning until after day light. They hiked for 3 1/2 hours and not knowing how near the pass they were and with the weather deteriorating they turned back. Gene, who had shoe problems, had a cold foot and must have turned back even earlier. They regrouped at Letdar, hired a porter, and tried again successfully in 2 days. Victor was very altitude sick as was the porter they hired who had lived for months at Phedi. He'd consumed alcohol and goat meat the night before they left. They made it over and though they had to go through snow they said the views were beautiful. It was funny that when we saw them the first thing she said to us was, "You missed some great views!" Which, of course, we did. But then later she said that with half their group zonked out from altitude sickness she didn't really have time to look much at the scenery. I really do wish we had seen the mountains in clear light, but my memory of the crossing will always retain the mystery and majesty of the scenery almost seen. Amy and Victor seemed in high spirits and were in the midst of an animated storytelling of their crossing to another couple with whom they were enjoying breakfast.

Gene apparently made it over with them and decided to go to Annapurna Sanctuary. He may not be here in Pokhara before we leave, but perhaps we'll see him in Kathmandu.

It is a beautiful day, and the mountains remain visible as it approaches midday, though the air seems more hazy than usual. I'll need to take in these mountains as fully as I can today and tomorrow, for the next day we'll be off to Kathmandu. ...

A note: Many Nepali women are very beautiful and in their everyday dress enhance their beauty in colorful costume, tika and makeup. Many are slender and have penetratingly dark eyes and angular facial features. Some Nepali women wear what looks to me like Western style cotton flannel long night gowns as dresses or as overdresses to other clothing. These garments are often pastel pink or blue and often dirty. They look out of place, and I certainly don't find them attractive. Weird.

Another note. There is a little twelve-year-old boy, Ram (a shortened version of his Nepali name), who may be the son of the owners. He works very hard all day long, cleaning, sweeping, doing laundry, washing dishes, cleaning rooms, so many things for a 12-year-old. He stopped and introduced himself to me and now calls me by name. He is bright, intelligent, and congenially humored. Today I asked him if he goes to school. It seemed to me a cloud passed before his eyes as he told me that he did not. I can't help but believe that he not only would like to go to school but also that he'd be an excellent scholar. What will his life be? What will he do? Can he retain his brightness and good humor as he continues his life? Will he always be happy to work hard all the time? Is it that by never knowing anything else he'll be happy? My heart goes out to him. Though he may continue to be happy, what of his potential? Is potential only in terms of dharma—living well accepting the limits one is given? Am I being foolishly ethnocentric? Many issues here.

Pokhara is pretty much a resort type town. It is spread out all along a lake side and apparently beneath the dam. It is loaded with shops and restaurants all, it seems, aimed at tourists. The streets are wider than in Kathmandu though only one lane is paved. It is sort of a weird city and seems to have far less of interest, save the fabulous mountain views, than Kathmandu. After window shopping for a couple days, we've decided they have better stuff and selection in Kathmandu than here. The lives of the hawkers are remarkably familiar, however. These guys see you, approach you obliquely, walk along with you a few steps and in an audible but hushed voice they inquire; "Want to take a boat ride [i.e., on the lake]?" and if you say "no," they go on to their other services, "Have anything to sell? Change money? Hashish?" Very funny. 1/8

We left Pokhara on January 10 to have ten days in Kathmandu to transition from trekking, to sell back trekking gear, to see some of the many important sites in this ancient city. Because of the experience of the drive from Kathmandu to Dumre at the beginning of the trek, I was not looking forward to the long drive back to Kathmandu. My description is worth including.

Thanks to the powers, the gods, we survived the bus trip from Pokhara to Kathmandu. As directed by our bus ticket we were at the appointed spot for pick up by 6:30 a.m., having paid for our room last night and said our goodbyes to Ram and the nice folks at the Iceland Guest

House. The bus finally arrived at 7:30 a.m. It was a much more comfortable bus than the one we took from Kathmandu to Dumre several weeks ago. We'd prepared ourselves with a few things to eat so we'd not be dependent on roadside stops.

The road from Pokhara to Kathmandu is in fact indescribable, the trip even more so. It is less than 200 kilometers (120 miles) and takes 7 to 8 hours. In no place, at no time, would I want it to have been shorter since I felt seriously at risk most of the time. Perhaps half the route has a single lane paved. But the pavement is full of holes and the shoulders are very rough. Vehicles, almost all huge trucks and buses, drive on the pavement dodging potholes and as they approach wait until the last second to veer onto the shoulder to pass, blaring horns and flashing lights all the while. Many parts of the road wind along the mountains where the road cut has often completely washed out or been covered over by a landslide. These areas are one lane, bumpy and terrifying. Quite a few kilometers are under formal repair. This is sort of a joke to me. Dozens of workers, all using no tool more sophisticated than a shovel, are digging, breaking rock, building retaining walls, etc. Mile after mile. These crews camp in weird little tent and leaf shelters and I notice the camps are equipped with women cooks who doubtless prepare huge messes of dal bhat a couple times a day. Many young and teen aged boys are on these crews. The bridges are long narrow affairs with a sign, almost weathered away, that says "One Vehicle at a Time." What confidence!

The practice of these buses is to drive along for a couple hours, or shorter if someone requests, then just stop on the road, perhaps slightly on the shoulder. Everyone piles out and rushes to the ditch or farther (particularly the ladies) to pee or whatever. Dumre and Mumpang are dirty little towns that serve as refreshment stops. Here there are wide areas where buses can pull in to stop. Everyone piles out and goes in for food and drink. Long before the bus gets stopped it is surrounded by hawkers and beggars. Some sell bananas, oranges, and coconut. Others have little violins, or trinkets. The beggars are pathetic: a frail child walking along with desperation in his eyes pointing to his mouth, another who scarcely has a mouth, etc. Today Em and I got quickly back on the bus to have crackers and peanut butter. A child, perhaps in his teens, stood outside our window looking at us. He was thin as a skeleton, his face looked as though it had suffered severe burns, one hand was horribly deformed, and he had no other hand. Heart wrenching.

The last hour or so of the trip ascends a very steep narrow busy road through an amazingly terraced valley. This is the part I'd dreaded most. When we finally reached the top I breathed and thanked, with true sincerity, the powers that guided us and oversaw our safety.

Once in Kathmandu the bus pulled over and stopped, apparently quite some distance from Thamel. Several Westerners on the bus rudely demanded to be taken on and refused to get off. The bus driver spoke little if any English, but, through a Nepali passenger, conveyed the message that due to traffic the police would allow buses to go no farther at that time of day. The passengers got ruder, and Em and I just got off, got our bags, and easily got a taxi, for 75 rupees, to our hotel.

Once at the hotel we asked for a cheaper room, they came down some in price, but we'd set 300 rupees per night as our max. So, we agreed to stay the night, since we have so much luggage,

and went out to find other digs. This was easily done. We'll move to the Excelsior Annex tomorrow and pay 250 rupees a night for a room much like the one we have at the Snow Lion.

We ate at KC, lasagna that wasn't that great, and came back to the Snow Lion, retrieved our stored luggage and now we're enjoying the evening in planning our day tomorrow and reading.

We'll sell back some of our trekking equipment that will about pay for the equipment rental. Nice. ... The man at the trekking shop is so nice. He assured us that Parang is happy with what we paid him.

Oh, when we left Pokhara this morning we got a full sweep view of the Annapurnas. Wow! What an amazing range of mountains. They loom over Pokhara with stunning beauty and magnificence. They too are just beyond description. Though I've seen photos of the scene I saw this morning they don't even begin to present the size, the power, the magnificence of these mountains.

My back is still bothering me. All day long every bounce of the bus was felt by my back. When I stand in front of a mirror, I can see that my hips rotate displacing my upper body far to the right. Standing with my right foot in my shoe and my left bare foot on the floor evens me up. I hope this straightens out soon. I think a couple hours of aerobic dance would do the trick.
1/10

Kathmandu, January 10 - 20

We spent a couple days, January 11 and 12, relocating to a cheaper inn, selling back trekking gear, getting oriented again to the bustling city, and doing some shopping. I went to a library hoping to find resources on Nepali dancing, yet it was a decrepit old building with no one in it and nothing but old and, to me, useless books.

By the following day we were ready to adventure to perhaps the most historic area of the old city, Durbar Square with many temples and the residence of Kumari the living goddess. All rather amazing.

Woke up this morning with an Asian bellyache. Had curd and a cinnamon role for breakfast. Thought we had the intention of heading for Durbar Square and to finish the two walking tours, I didn't feel so hot. Returned to the hotel and sat and read for a couple of hours. I am totally into The Cider House Rules. It is so much about abortion and orphans, but I think I like it so much because it is about love and how, sometimes and for some people, love is so rarely experienced and how hard it is to express one's love for another. Look forward to reading more tonight.

After a couple hours I felt better so we headed out. Did sites on the walking tour more selectively. It is so hard to take in everything. Things just seem to blend one into another. Reached Durbar Square in good shape. We planned, once there, to climb up Maja Deval (a Shiva temple), sit a spell, read the guidebook and watch the scenery. Well, that's a crock of human shit and I mean that literally. Trying to go up the temple stairs was impossible due to the stench of the very obvious piles of human shit. Then too we were bounded by hordes of touts, beggars, Saddhus, and hawkers. It was horrible. We'd stop to read a description of something

and be surrounded. At one point a little girl led her blind grandfather to us to beg, a young man looked over my shoulder to see what I was reading offering his services as a guide. Several others were trying to sell cheap junk, and the kids were begging.

We escaped for a while by paying 10 rupees each to go into Hanuman (the monkey god) Square which is part of the old palace. The beggars, touts, etc, couldn't afford the 10 rupees nor, I suppose, would they be allowed due to their nuisance. In this old palace area, we went through a rickety museum that reminded me of the library, old, dirty, unorganized, and uninteresting. There are hundreds of wooden carvings on these buildings. They are very elaborate and hundreds of years old, but all are falling apart and in poor condition. Such enormous amounts of work that went into these centuries ago and now are thresholds to decrepit buildings used for nearly anything. There are hundreds of babals (monasteries) all over Kathmandu. The entry way is marked by lion sculptures, now almost always headless or worn away slick and featureless. The wood on these buildings was once beautifully carved. All have an inner courtyard that is accessible. We saw one today and walked through the tunnel into the courtyard. Shrines were there. Women were washing clothes on them. The whole back side of the square had fallen into a pile of rubble and some of those beautifully carved window frames were just hanging in midair, left hanging when the rest of the building fell.

At Durbar Square we went to the residence of the living goddess, the Kumari Devi. This too is an old babal. Kumari is a living girl who is the goddess until she reaches sexual maturity, and another little girl takes her place. Kumari lives in this old babal all the time she is goddess. On a couple occasions a year she is taken in procession about the city. From the inner courtyard Kumari's linen was hanging to dry, the goddess does soil her linens, and one could hear voices in the rooms, perhaps the goddess, but a faded sign warned that taking photos of the goddess is strictly forbidden.

We shopped a little, Em bought me a great vest and herself one. We had a passable lunch. We did more shopping and returned to our hotel, climbed to the roof top when we realized how clear it was to photograph Ganesh in the distance, then returned to shop more. I bought a black onyx pendant, and a cool lapis ring for Corbin. Em bought a pendant, a garnet ring, and star of India earrings. Good buys.

Oh, on the way to Durbar Square this morning we stopped at Kathesimbhu Stupa--a miniature of Swayambhunath (the big monkey temple). Very interesting. Took a few photos especially the more colorful pagoda to Harti, the goddess of smallpox.

Don't know the state of my health. I'm certain it isn't good, but at least I'm mobile. Tomorrow we plan to catch a taxi to Pashupatinath and Bodhinath, both important temples northeast of Kathmandu. Just a week before we head to Boulder and my kids. 1 / 13

The following day we went to visit some of the most famous Nepali Hindu temples and Buddhist stupas and the complex cultures that are associate with them. It was an emotionally difficult day experiencing such poverty and sadness and death but also one of such beauty and joy. There is no way to process all this experience other than to say it is overwhelming.

An amazingly incredible day. It began with a so-so breakfast at la Bistro. Cashed a traveler's cheque in a carpet shop, somewhat scary. Then caught a taxi to Nepal's most important Hindu temple, Pashupatinath, which is just a few kilometers west of Kathmandu. It was a honking swerving ride like all rides through narrow crowded streets. The taxi finally stopped, and I couldn't really see any temple. I asked the driver and he pointed across the road and indicted we go up a passageway to the temple, he pointed on down the street and said "death." We crossed the road, entered the passageway not having a clue what we were getting ourselves into. The passageway was up hill, and it was lined both sides with beggars with every imaginable sadness. They were not just totally impoverished; they were also unspeakably deformed. Many could obviously not walk or scarcely move, yet they all had a tin bowl which they extended, often touching, even pushing us. They called or cried out for us to give them something. A few people, I suppose Hindus, doing a religious act of charity, walked among them sprinkling rice or a bit of food in their bowls.

I found myself feeling like I was running an emotional gauntlet. My eyes focused straight ahead; my pace quickened. Emily fell in behind me, grabbed the back of my coat and we went up the hill. When we reached the top there were crowds of Hindus heading for the temple. Em said quickly to me "I can take only about an hour of this." I wasn't sure I could take near that much. As we went toward the temple, many people were selling flowers (yellow), offerings, red ochre, and other ritual materials. Near the temple entrance some communists (I think) were delivering an angry speech over a loudspeaker. At the temple entrance a sign informed us that only Hindus could enter. We turned around sought and found a way back to the road that avoided all the beggars. We crossed the bridge at the end of the road in which the taxi driver pointed when he said "death." We knew that cremations are performed on cremation ghats by the Bagmati River. I think it is a tributary to the Ganges River and it is a holy thing to be cremated by one and have one's ashes dumped in the river.

As we crossed the bridge, we looked toward the cremation ghats. One was being prepared with a body already in place. Another had the logs laid and they were just carrying the body to the bier. The body was wrapped in bright yellow. It was placed on the stacked timbers with the head to the north. Some offerings were made so far as I could tell, and attendants began to prepare for the cremation. There was scarcely any ritual and though some members of the families may have been present I saw no noticeable mourning. The body was eventually covered with dry grass or straw. Some straw was stuffed among the logs below the body, and fire was ignited. We watched from a wall across the river. There were several westerners, the few we saw in total at the temple, who were watching from this point relatively free from the hassle of beggars and hawkers.

As we stood here and watched there were many things to see. Below us by the river a mother held a baby whose face was horribly deformed, a huge bulbous protrusion where its nose should have been. Some people--a man or two and a group of 3 or 4 girls, maybe 10 years old--waded up the river collecting bits of cloth and other remains. I suppose some from cremations and offerings made upriver below the temple. Down river perhaps 50 meters one woman was doing

her laundry and a few meters farther another was washing dishes. All this in the same water. Remains of earlier cremations were still visible in the river below the ghats.

Behind the ghats and across the river I could see the tops of a couple other Hindu temples: Rajrajeshwari, immediately behind the ghats, and Bachhareshwari, farther down the river. These temples formed the background for some of the photos I took.

Photos. I certainly took some of this remarkable scene, though I felt self-conscious about doing so. I was happy I had a telephoto and that I had a woven bag to keep my camera in when not in use. But there was a group of about 6 Chinese who had huge, long telephoto lenses, but they weren't satisfied standing across the river. Once they ignited the bier these people, men and women, ran (literally) across the river and got within a few feet of the bier and shot hundreds of photos. They circled the bier I suppose looking for a bit of exposed flesh. They crawled walls, they squatted in stairways, with their shutters snapping. I found it horribly offensive and completely insensitive, though I suppose I was doing the same thing but to a slightly lesser degree. After an hour or so we realized the whole cremation would take hours and the smell of burning flesh began to drift our way, so we went north a few yards to a series of 11 chiatyas, small stupas with short linga in them, which lined the riverbank directly opposite the big temple. From here we could see hundreds of Hindus come down the steps to the river. Most simply dipped their hands in the water (a token bathing), others washed their feet. A priest, I think, offered blessings to worshippers by marking in ocher their foreheads. Yellow flowers were again offered for sale, offerings. Monkeys chattered and bathed in the river as well, but also performed their antics on the walls and roofs of temple compound.

The temple itself, what I could see of it, was not at all impressive..

North of the temple across the river were cave-like places housing sadhus. I photographed some of them.

Quite a scene to look down the river and imagine all that was going on in such a short distance.

With nerves jangled, emotions spinning, we headed up the walk in the direction of other temples--Gorakhnath (where I took a photo of a shikhara style, corn shaped, temple with long trident, and Guhyeshwari. Just beyond Guhyeshwari we came to the Bagmati River again still farther upstream from Pashupatinath, along which we walked for some distance. One place had been designated for bathers. A wall with little niches had been built where people hung their clothing while they entered the river to bath. Quite a few people were there bathing.

We came to a bridge, crossed the river, and entered a path leading up to the Tibetan Buddhist temple, Bodhnath. This is the largest stupa in Nepal and one of the largest in the world. It is a beautiful white domed structure topped by a golden square tower above which is a tall spire. The familiar (at least in Nepal) eyes of the Buddha look down from the four sides of the tower. The stupa is enclosed in a walled compound along which are many shops. All along the base are prayer wheels. Many gompas (monasteries) house the hundreds of lamas (monks) associated with this temple.

We entered this compound--no beggars, just a few stalls where Buddhist stuff was sold and began our circumambulations, clockwise as is customary. As we walked, we realized that the

temple was being prepared for something special, don't yet know what. Someone had climbed to the top of the tower and was attaching streamers of colorful prayer flags to the tower and throwing these down to others who attached the ends to the perimeter of the mandala shaped base of the stupa. Another crew was forming interesting scallop designs on the white stupa by taking a bucket full of yellow liquid and flinging it in arc shapes out over the white dome. Rather nifty scallop results. After circumambulating one time we began again, and part way around entered the inner stupa where we could walk on the mandala and higher sections of the stupa. Great photo opportunities all around including pictures of the very beautifully decorated small stupa behind Bodhnath to Ajima, the goddess of smallpox.

After this circumambulation we had lunch on the terrace (3rd floor) of the Stupa View Restaurant. Then we headed into the village and braved labyrinthine roads and alleyways to see a couple gompas. From one of them poured a large group of monks (lamas) of all ages. Some of the young boys grabbed at us and demanded donations.

When we returned to the stupa, we decided we were ready to return to Kathmandu and had no problem getting a taxi.

The contrast between these two very important Hindu and Buddhist temples could hardly be greater. The Hindu temple was dark and crowded, filled with the poor, the deformed, the dead, and worshippers who seemed to be performing rote ritual arts. My feeling is that so many here bore in their eyes a look of desperation or at best resignation. The temple was walled, inaccessible, dark-colored and seemed contained, earth borne. The Buddhist temple was entirely different. Lamas and many colorfully dressed, even jovial, worshippers walked along spinning prayer wheels, or chanting. The eyes were directed up to the stupa, not down to the river. The temple is white, gaily clad with bright colored prayer flags, gold-topped and even the tower is clad in bright colored cloth (can't remember the name for these drapings). The Tibetans, mostly refugees from when China took over Tibet, are happy prosperous looking people wearing traditional Tibetan costume (women with the woven aprons, men with hats). The monks in burgundy and saffron robes carrying yellow bags, walked often hand in hand, arm in arm, and in groups. Bodhnath had the air of festival and celebration; Pashupatinath, the air of death, desperation, and darkness.

I didn't suppose that these two temples, or at least my reflections on the sensations I received from brief visits to them, accurately reflect Hinduism and Buddhism, but if they do, I'm quite sure I'd rather be Buddhist.

Wow! What an experience. I'm certain I'll not ever come fully to terms with what I experienced (still more raw sensations than full experiences) to try to follow the distinction I've been thinking about. ...

Oh, [that afternoon] we also had a cup of coffee and a piece of rich chocolate cake while we recovered from our morning. The irony of eating cake to recover from running a gauntlet of pitiful beggars was not unnoticed. 1/14

The next several days were rainy and Emily was not feeling well for a couple days, so we mostly stayed in reading and writing lists of things we'll do once we

are home. We ventured out for a couple shopping trips, buying Christmas and travel memento gifts for friends and family.

Finally on January 18 the weather and health were good, so we went out to visit temples and other important places in the city. We also came on another cremation that we observed for a while.

We wound our way through residential streets and alleyways and arrived at the Visbnumati River. Quite a scene there. In deltas along the river huge patches of white raw wool were drying. I suppose it had been washed. Women were washing, other people bathing. We went past unused cremation ghats and the Indriani Temple to a bridge crossing the river. To one side of the river, upstream from all the bathing and washing, was a huge stinky garbage dump. The river was lined with the worst garbage. Several sows were lying in piles of garbage nursing their piglets. Some people were picking through the garbage. This reminds me of a scene I saw last night. A big garbage pile is at the end of the street near here. I went out in the evening to get water and crackers. In the garbage a cow scavenged on one end, on the other end was a little boy. He'd built himself a small fire to keep warm. My heart ripped on seeing this.

We crossed the bridge and headed up a long stairway to take a quick peek at the Bijeshwari Temple. As we came out of the temple, we heard a drum and cymbal playing coming down the very street we had come down to the river on the opposite side. At the front of a procession pall bearers carried a body clad in bright orange. They didn't go to the bridge but made their way across the river right at the end of the street heading for the cremation ghats near the Shobabaghwati Temple. The drummer and cymbal player stayed across the river, sat on the steps, and continued to play. We walked down to the cremation ghat and watched the funeral rites.

The body was placed on the stack of wood and his face was uncovered. Each of the mourners, all men by the way (don't know if women are excluded), came forward and the man who seemed to be directing the funeral poured water in a mourner's hands. This was let go on the ground, I suppose to clean the hands. Then three times water was poured into the mourner's hands, each time the mourner let it run on the exposed face of the deceased. The mourners used a gesture with a pointed index finger to direct the water on the face. At least one mourner also placed coins on the chest of the deceased. There were about 20-30 men including several small boys who performed this rite. The director stood near the head on the right side of the body for this rite. After the water sprinkling the mourners each circumambulated the body in the customary sunwise direction. A few mourners were visibly mourning, wiping tears, all were somber.

After this an older man whom we'd seen walking up the riverbed in only his underwear appeared. He had what looked to me like handfuls of river sand. He was led, while making mournful sounds, around the body and he knelt at the foot of the body. There he placed the sand. He was led another circumambulation and squatted again smoothing out this sand on which he placed what looked like a bed of rice and I couldn't see what else. He was led around again, this time pausing to do the water sprinkling rite and at the feet of the body, he sort of broke down. He took hold of the feet--oh, I remember others who, when passing the feet during their circumambulation, would touch a foot and then their head--put his head between them and

wept. He then knelt or really squatted again at that location. The golden cloth was removed and put aside. Others sprinkled red ocher and I don't know what over the cotton matted covering on the body. This was finally folded back and removed and even the cotton gauze wrap that the body was in was untied to expose the bare chest of the body. The feet were clearly visible through the gauze.

Now the man in the undershorts was given a firebrand and again moaning he circumambulated the body and set fire to the grass beneath the wood.

As the flames began to rise in the wood around the body, Emily and I decided to move on. We've seen bodies burn before and didn't care to see or smell this one.

I took a few photos with my telephoto lens of the procession as it crossed the river, but none of the rites. It wouldn't have been proper.

We walked up the hill and headed toward Swayambhunath. Several good opportunities to photograph and see it perched up on the hill above us. We approached from the east, the preferred approach. This takes one up a very long very steep set of stairs to the temple. Along the stairs craft persons carved and gold little mani stones with om or om mani padme hum carved in Nepali script on one side and the famous eyes of the Buddha on the other. There were, of course, quite a few women with all sorts of children, begging along the stair way. Very sad.

The stupa at Swayambhunath is very small compared with the stupa at Bodhnath and seems older and in less fine condition, but the compound is interesting. There are two shikara style (corn-shaped) temples on each side of the stupa at the top of the stairway. There is a gompa (or monastery) in the compound, maybe more. I took photos of little boys in monk's (lama's) garb--are they monks? In front of the room of worship is a large sitting Buddha figure. There is a Hindu style tiered pagoda style temple to Harti or Ajima, the smallpox goddess, who is also goddess of fertility. I didn't see in the sizeable temple, but it was very active with worshippers going in, circumambulating the figure, praying, etc. I did catch a monkey on the roof of the temple and took its photo.

We looked around the compound for quite a while, visited with a few others, and went down, returning to Thamel. Interesting cultural and architectural experience. 1/18

The last couple of days in Nepal were occupied by packing, last minute gift shopping, arranging for the precise amount of money, confirming flights, and strolling around the Thamel neighborhood that was our neighborhood taking street candid photos and absorbing the last moments of not only Nepal, but also of nearly five months of travel.

On our last day we ran into, Gene, the guy that we'd trekked with for a few days. We'd lost track of him the day we crossed the pass. In Pokhara we heard accounts of the crossing of the group that we met that night in Thorung Phedi. Gene gave us his fascinating account.

On our last trip to the carpet shop money changer, we saw our trekking friend Gene. We'd been looking for him hoping we'd see him to get his story of his Thorung la Pass crossing. We got his story alright, and it scarcely resembled either of the other stories we'd heard from Kurt and from Amy and Victor. Gene said he wanted to leave Thorung Phedi with us, but Kurt

didn't want to leave until it was light. Then he said Kurt went off and left him. He didn't confirm the huge fight Kurt described involving the woman from Holland, but he said he thought they were disagreeing as they started out that morning based on the gestures, he could see them engaging in. The sad part of his account was that his boots were no good and he couldn't keep his feet warm. He said the snow was knee deep for his crossing and, trying to stay with Amy and Victor, he was going as slow as he could. Finally, fearing for his feet, he went on. Once over the pass, with warmer feet, he waited for the others. It turned out that Victor had such altitude sickness that he was completely incoherent (we'd heard this from Amy and Victor). Victor had hired a porter to carry all his stuff except a small day pack and even this Victor had simply abandoned. The porter himself got such altitude sickness that he lay in the snow and refused to go on. The Dutch woman was the slowest and complained bitterly of having to carry anything. I was so happy that we hadn't tried to stick together as a large group during our crossing. It was risky enough with Helmut. I'm surprised that the other group didn't experience a major disaster.

Having heard three accounts, all quite different, all sincerely given, I am reminded of my storytracking principle. It was at work here. 1/21

Journal entries near the end of the trip were mostly banal diary sorts of notes, yet on the last day before departure, January 20, I wrote about a couple notable things. I reflected on how regular journal writing had been an important part of the trip for me. I wrote over 150,000 words during this time and, as I have reviewed them to make selections, I've often been shocked at how thorough and also reflective they are. This project is the ultimate fulfillment of what I wrote about so long ago, that is the reflection on these writings to assess something of the source and course of my life. I'll have more to write on this later.

I also wrote a note that apparently followed several conversations Emily and I had about our relationship tried and tested in the rigorous and challenging conditions over a considerable period. At least then, I assessed it as fully healthy and remarkably so given the challenges we had faced. We had discussed how public we wanted our relationship to be once back home and decided it had to be fully and unapologetically public. I think I still am far from comprehending the full measure of the impact of that relationship on me and on the various relationships I have attempted to develop since.

*Writing journal through this whole trip has been an amazing experience. I have enjoyed it so much. It has helped me record, and therefore save, the details of what I have done. Often, I've seen the journal as a complement to photos. In the journal I've been able to describe the things photos can't capture: moods, smells, sounds, motion, size, etc. Following Janet Hospital's novel, *The Last Magician* which deals with photos capturing things and people studying old photos carefully to come to know what they already know, I see journals as holding the same possibilities. I'm eager to transcribe them onto disk and to read them and have them available to read again and again as the years go by.*

I'm also hoping that the journals will give me, as time goes by, insight into my personal growth. That should be interesting to consider. ...

Em and I have talked lots lately about our relationship. It has to be remarkable that we've spent nearly every minute for five months together. There have been only a few times when we were apart more than an hour or two and actually only a few times when we've been apart more than the time it takes to go to the bathroom. Our being together has involved not being simply in the same house, but in the same very small room. We've not eaten a meal apart in 5 months. Still, we find we thoroughly enjoy each other's company. We aren't getting on each other's nerves. We still have lively conversations and great times. Any relationship that can stand up to five months of constant togetherness is remarkable, but even more so one that has thrived on it as ours has. We have both grown so much and our relationship has been instrumental to lots of this growth. While upon returning home, we may experience a bit of separation anxiety, we both are looking forward to the stimulus (both personal and to our relationship) of having our separate lives as well as our relationship. 1/20

USA

Boulder, January 20

The flight back home was super long. The first leg was from Kathmandu to Bangkok. We had a 12- or 14-hour layover that was spent in a transit area in the Bangkok airport so that we didn't have to clear customs and go through all that. We were exhausted and finally paid by the hour for a basic sleeping room with a shower so we could get several hours of sleep. We gained 17 hours flying back and the flight time was something like 20 hours, so it was a bit of an ordeal.

Jenny and her friend Tiger were at DIA to meet us and I was so happy about that. On the way home we stopped at a favorite pasta place for a hearty meal, that somehow disappointed me both because of the culture shock of seeing all the upscale Boulder folks and also because I think I held too high expectations for the food.

Judy had moved out of the dome, so we at least had a home although Judy left it dirty and with random items left about. No worries. We gave Jenny some of the gifts we had bought her and caught up with her a bit. Then we got some rest which was not easy coming off such a long flight and with such a time difference.

We had planned a big feast party for family and friends that would make up for our missing out on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's, but I didn't write about whether that happened and how it went. Only vague remembrances that it did and was fun, but I don't really recall.

Emily started spring classes at Naropa soon after we returned. We immediately began cleaning and decorating the dome to make it our home using some of the decorative items we had acquired while traveling.

It seems that I fell into trying to immerse myself in research and writing. Can't recall however, yet, despite my plan to regularly do journal writing, I didn't write a journal entry again until March 9, 1994 which was my last one. It shows frustration at some things in my life and reflecting on how traveling has its benefits.

Haven't done any journal writing much since I've gotten home. Should really do some because I'm having lots of feelings that need to be expressed. Just don't have much time.

Since getting back I've felt at once very happy and satisfied and also frustrated and annoyed. There are so many things to do on so many fronts. I'm constantly distracted from the most important things by the less important ones. There seem so many administrative things to take care of that I nearly go mad. I think I need to make more hard choices and cut out many more things.

This morning as I was working on entering changes to the first chapter of my Australia book, I suddenly found myself feeling like I'd like to travel. I'd love to leave tomorrow and be gone another 5 months. I reflected a bit on this, wondering if my interest in travel isn't a desire to escape from the structures and annoyances of home. I thought of Kurt and Gene. Yes, they probably were traveling to avoid something, and I think I may have the same issue. Travel is hard, but it is so much easier than home in some ways. Everything is cash. All schedules are one's own making (or nearly so). While there are so many decisions to be made, they aren't so difficult. It seems that one can live without being hurt by others or without hurting others, though this, of course, is false. Who knows who and how many are hurt by the traveler? So weird.

I love Emily more than ever. We have deepening feelings for each other. We make as good of house mates as we did travel mates. The chores of homemaking are a breeze to us. We enjoy doing them and doing things we know the other will find enjoyable. So, this part of my life couldn't be better.

Called Judy's lawyer this morning. He promised a draft agreement by the end of the week. Why does this make me nervous? I suppose I fear that, after all my work to initiate a settlement and draft all of it, that what I'll get will not resemble it in any way. I just want all this to be done.

Jenny is working on cleaning her room now. First time in 10 years. She is enthusiastic and seems to be enjoying it. Hope that when she gets it done, she'll be able to participate more in the homemaking, including cooking and dish washing. She has to have surgery on her foot next week. That won't be fun for any of us, but it is good for her to get it over with.

Talked with Corbin last night. He had wrecked his car for the second time in a very short while. He seems to be magnetized to poles. This sounded bad, but, as he said, "What can you do?" He doesn't think this can be fixed by him anyway. He'll need turn signal lights. Otherwise, he seemed fine. I need to call him more regularly and to go see him more often. I want to get a Frisbee so I can go over and play Frisbee golf with him.

Need to get to reading some Australian stuff. Just wanted to get the journal writing habit started again. 3/9

*Chapter Two***Ghana West Africa 1997**

Jenny and I decided to travel together to Ghana West Africa during the summer of 1997. We were both interested in Africa. I don't recall what it was that first attracted me. Jenny had long been interested in Africa. At Fort Lewis College in Durango, she took an African American Literature class as well as a World Music class, both feeding her African interests. Ghana was, in part, a selection of convenience. Since the British had been the last to colonize Ghana, English is the official language taught in schools while there are more than fifty extant tribal languages. We reasoned, knowing little about any country in Africa, that many Ghanaians would know at least some English making our monthlong trip a bit easier.

As was my travel style in Australia and Southeast Asia several years earlier, Jenny and I knew but the outline of our exploration of Ghana. We would simply go and allow the experience to unfold as we felt appropriate at the time. This travel style comes with freedom, yet freedom always comes at a cost, the anguish of not knowing what comes next and the high possibility of making choices that produce discomfort. While our trip was but a month long, this style of travel is still tiring, and the constant stress of freedom can make a month seem long.

We flew to Accra and after several days there we began to travel west along the coast to Kokrobite, Cape Coast, and the little village Busua. Then we went by train north from Takoradi to Kumasi, the heart of Ashanti culture, where we spent a few days. Moving on north we spent a short time in Tamale, a more Muslim area, on our way to spend several days at Molé National Park the only

large animal game preserve in West Africa. We then worked our way back through Tamale and Kumasi to end with a few days in Accra before returning home.

In contrast with the journals I wrote during the 1993-'94 trip, the Ghana journals were more mundane, closer to diary style writing. I described in some detail what we did most days at each location. Many of our encounters were with craft vendors, inn proprietors, school kids in the street begging for pens and video games and wanting to exchange addresses and practice their English, and several men who pressed themselves into being friends/guides for us. Because these Ghana journals were less self-reflective and conversive I don't think they merit presenting any selections. The full slightly edited text of this journal is printed separately. *Travel Writings: The Full Travel Journals, 1993-1994 - Australia, Bali, Java, Thailand, Nepal, 1997 - Ghana West Africa* (2021).

Jenny and I were both interested in finding dancing and music everywhere we went, yet we were mostly unsuccessful. We observed, from afar, Christian gatherings that included drumming and singing. There were cultural centers in most places we visited that offered a bit of cultural context, yet little dancing and music. Highlife was at the time a highly popular contemporary form of music that blended the traditional African forms with Western, often electronic, music. It was readily available on the radio and recordings were easily acquired. Jenny took a drum lesson from a man in Kokrobiti and we enjoyed a long tourist performance at a hotel there. In near desperation we went to an upscale tourist hotel in Accra to see something of an indoor floor show of supposedly traditional Ghanaian dance and music. We talked with a few accomplished dancers and finally were able to attend a beachside funeral celebration that included lots of dancing and drumming.

In the Cape Coast area, we visited what are currently called castles, yet served in slaving times as prisons temporarily holding captured Africans awaiting their departure to the Americas. These were sobering experiences giving us a chance to imagine both the history of colonization as well as the shockingly cruel practice of slavery that is so foundational to American history. At present the USA seems to be threatened by the horribly wrong-headedness of white nationalism, a response in part to the fact that, despite the long history of suppressing folks whose heritage stem from Africa and other brown skinned people, they now thrive understood unfortunately as a threat by those whose lineage is in line with those white folks, mostly men, who traded in slaves for so long. These so-called castles offered to us a powerfully emotional window into an aspect of this history. Little did we imagine at the time that we'd work to sponsor visas to the USA for many artists of color and that this would also shape the racial and cultural character of our family.

A highlight of the trip was a brief visit to Molé National Park where we enjoyed a private guided hike through the forest and bush where we saw many wild animals large and small. We got quite close to a sizeable herd of elephants and were able to spend time watching them drink and bathe in a huge waterhole.

Reading the journals, like the concerns I felt in reliving those writings of several years earlier, I was a bit disappointed that we spent so much of our time and energy shopping. Of course, this activity put us in contact with local people and the items strongly identified with various Ghanaian cultures. It also added a bit to their local economies. Still, looking back I believe I would have been much more satisfied had we found a way to engage Ghanaian people in other ways to complement commercial exchange.

Much of my journal writing focused on my very evident concern that Jenny have a wonderful trip and that she be as comfortable and happy as this style of travel might allow. I regularly wrote of how she rallied from times of stress and difficulty, how good a traveler and traveling companion she was, and how fortunate I was to be traveling with her, sharing as father and daughter all these experiences of our common interests. It would be fascinating to know how much this travel experience impacted Jenny. She did eventually marry a man from Senegal and is currently married to a man from Venezuela, so perhaps the impact was quite a lot especially when conjoined with her interest in ethnomusicology, her undergrad major, and various forms of African dancing which she was extensively involved in while we jointly operated Bantaba World Dance and Music.

Perhaps her greatest challenge came in the unexpected form of a friendship she developed with a young man named Niibo who at first offered to help us with basic travel needs. Him being near Jen's age, it was enjoyable for her to develop a friendship with him. Yet, gradually he became more and more demanding and controlling of our plans and of Jenny and her connection with him. Leaving Accra to travel further in Ghana, we felt we were leaving him behind, yet he turned up again and again through our trip inserting his will into our plans. Jen had a difficult time with him since she wanted to be his friend yet recognized that he was turning into something of a stalker. We attempted time and again to make it clear to him we didn't want his help or even his presence. He persisted. It turned out that he was a presence off and on from the first to the very end of our time in Ghana, even accompanying us to the airport when we left.

He was not the only Ghanaian man who pushed hard for such a relationship with us. All of these come with none too subtle asks for money and favors from these guys.

This tourist-based kind of relationship reminded me much of the difficulties Emily and I had with Nama in Bali. I understand many tourists, especially those

who seek a closer connection with a culture than that offered by fully guided tours, establish close connections with these local guides, always male, and that for many tourists they simply turn themselves over to the direction of the guide and consider that they are making a dear and close friend in another culture. In Bali this was a prominent kind of relationship tourist women entered with attractive young men.

We did make several relationships, especially in Kumasi, with local people that involved extended conversations and what seemed genuine exchanges of interest and for these I am grateful.

By 1997 I was regularly teaching a "Religion and Dance" class at the University of Colorado and clearly had a strong interest in learning everything I could about the dancing and music of cultures the world over, yet there is no hint that I would open a local dance and music studio just two years later and that Jenny would come to work with me at the studio for years. Even though I had little opportunity during this travel to experience Ghanaian dancing and music, it seems without question that this African experience was important in giving rise to my idea to start this organization and Jenny's pursuit of ethnomusicology that focused, in part, on African music and that she would become a central part of Bantaba, surely one of the very few jobs available to an ethnomusicologist with an undergraduate degree.

I believe the greatest insight of my rearview consideration of myself as I was in 1993-'94 was the emergence of a new and more whole person accompanying a midlife crisis. In the view I gain of myself in these 1997 journals I find perhaps a bit fuller emergence of the person that had been initiated several years earlier.

Chapter Three

Traveling On

On the premise that most traveling, especially foreign, is both life changing and deeply revealing I add this chapter. Beginning with the trip to Australia in 1992, I traveled regularly during the following fifteen years. Much of this travel was closely connected with my developing interests in dancing and it coincided both with my teaching “Religion and Dance” courses at the University of Colorado as well as the 1998 founding of Bantaba World Dance and Music, a studio-based school, in Boulder. I didn’t keep journals for all these travels or perhaps I did and just haven’t located them.

I include both summary comments on extant journals from these travels as well as brief notes and reflections on trips for which I have no written record. I hope to fill in the tapestry of my foreign travel on the premise that such reliving these past events by the rearview activation of memories made possible by journal writings will offer insights and perhaps inspiration for me to contemplate as I imagine my voyage into the future.

Bali & Java, July 1998

While I find no hint in the 1997 Ghana journals of an interest in founding a public studio focused on the dances and musics of world cultures, such an enterprise occurred the following spring. I remember that, likely related to travel and my obsessive physical activities, I became increasingly disenchanted with the traditional head-isolation of an academic life. I was far more interested in dancing and physical fitness than traditional academics. Mid-fifties I sought a shift in life focus that might be more engaging and, surely at that time, I’d have said also meaningful. I recall researching volunteer activities, but I did not find any that I thought allowed me to adequately share my knowledge and skills.

As my “Religion and Dance” course, which I had first taught in 1993 I think, developed I began to appreciate the surprising resources and talent in the

Boulder-Denver area. I began to discover an increasing number of dancers and musicians, often from other countries, who were highly skilled at their art and were eager to teach. I included the offering of a weekly studio session, on Fridays, to complement the two lecture presentations for the course which quickly grew to regularly fill at 90 students. I realized that because commercial music and dance instruction tended to focus on western forms, these artists were either putting together groups to teach without charge or perhaps just a nominal fee. They taught in living rooms and garages. I began to imagine that by bringing these people together in one place I might form a rich curriculum allowing these artists to teach and interact with each other for the benefit of the community.

Bantaba opened in 1998 although I'm not certain whether it was the spring or the fall of that year. From its opening until September 11, 2001, I was able to use the visa-granting authority of CU's international office to acquire three-year cultural exchange visas for around two dozen artists.

The rapid development of my CU course and the opening of Bantaba increased my desire to travel largely to study dancing and music, but also religions in the sorts of cultures often overlooked by my field of religious studies. Such cultures were simply left to anthropology.

It surprises me now to realize that after the month in Ghana with Jenny and devoting so much time and money to the opening of Bantaba I somehow managed to return to Bali and Java in 1998. Two motivations stand out in my remembrance of that trip, yet I'm increasingly aware that my memories are likely as much invention as accurate reporting. One incentive was my need to prove to myself that I could do extensive foreign travel alone. After traveling with Emily and Jenny I felt that travel was strongly connected with doing so with another. The benefits were having someone to assist in the difficulties of travel and having someone with whom to share the experience. I believe that I had started a relationship with Madhu by this time, but I needed to travel alone to explore how I would manage. The other motivator was the powerful magnetic pull of Borobudur. I had such deep feelings about this place and wanted so much to return.

Further memories. I believe that while in Bali I joined a gamelan group from CU that I had played with for some time. They were CU students mostly and I enjoyed sharing the Bali experience with them. I also recall going to Java at a time when there were active political protests occurring. The violence and disruption discouraged most tourists from visiting. I went anyway and wound up being able to cheaply stay in a nice hotel in downtown Jogjakarta. I never felt threatened by the protests although they were all around me and I was able to experience much in the city and surrounding area. I think I stayed around a week. I remember staying in my hotel room for long periods to avoid the heat where I wrote hour upon hour. I haven't located those journals and in a way I'm thankful

that I haven't. I imagine them now as being overly personal and perhaps shading towards the maudlin.

Costa Rica, Summer 2000

Eager to expand my knowledge and skills in salsa dancing I learned from Carmen Nelson, a salsa teacher at Bantaba, of a dance studio called Merecumbé Escazú operated by a friend of hers in San José Costa Rica that offered extensive classes in various Latin American forms. She helped me make the necessary contact to be assured extensive dance training and I decided to go for a month in the summer of 2000. Dating my friend Madhu at the time I invited her to accompany me. The writing I did during this trip was limited to extensive notations on what I was learning in my dance classes. I have found nothing written related to the experiences I had, yet I want to at least write a few notes regarding my memory of this trip.

Foremost in my mind is the fabulous experience of taking group lessons as well as many privates. The teachers were excellent and I learned a great deal. I also remember the wonderful cultural experience of going out dancing at one of the renowned clubs El Toboggan. It was a huge venue and local people packed it nightly arriving around 10 or 11 p.m. and dancing to the wee hours of the morning. This nightly dancing was what I did many nights a week in Boulder despite teaching full time and operating Bantaba.

Beyond dancing we did a trip to the mountains to see the cloud forests and to the Pacuare River east of San José for a 20-mile raft trip through virgin rain forest.

I had an extended and complicated relationship with Madhu, an Asian Indian woman. She had lived for years in Aspen working as a legal assistant in a noted law firm. She had come to Boulder to do a law degree expecting to return to Aspen when she graduated. She is, I imagine, still there today. She was mostly occupied with law school and raising a teenaged daughter while I was teaching full time at CU as well as doing equivalent of full time at Bantaba, so we had little time together.

My relationship with Madhu was tenuous and upsetting through much of this trip. With amicable periods there were long periods of tension. She felt that she should be receiving dance training equal to what I had arranged and vigorously resented any occasion that I sought to take private or group classes without her. As I have read the journals for this period including those of the trip to Bali we took together, I am stunned that I made so much effort to retain and develop this relationship. Clearly from the earliest days, it was not healthy and bound to fail. As I see it now, my calculus was a weighing of having an unhealthy relationship against being alone. I spent far too much time and energy on that relationship, and I deeply regret it.

Mali & Bali, Summer 2001

My mother died June 28, 2001, twenty years ago as of this writing. I was in Mali West Africa at the time near the end of a month-long visit where I accompanied my Malian friend Abdoul Doumbia. That summer was unusual in that I planned month-long trips to both Mali and Bali. I have no recollection why I would have scheduled two trips each at such a long distance during a single summer. Little did I know then that on the eleventh of September just a few weeks in the future, an event would occur causing permanent global change. It is impossible to imagine how vastly the world and the granular detail of my life were altered and reshaped by those tragic events.

Mali, June 2001

Abdoul Doumbia a master drummer from Mali had come to the USA at the invitation of Brown University. He ended up marrying a woman named Katrina from Boulder who was a student at Brown at the time. They located in Boulder. When I founded Bantaba in the late 1990s Abdoul was someone I wanted to have involved. He was teaching in temporary situations and Bantaba would give him a much stronger base to teach djembe drumming. He was also an excellent resource for bringing other artists that he knew from Mali and other African countries to teach at Bantaba.

Abdoul, as did many artists from Africa and elsewhere, began to host groups of Americans—what I'd now call culture tourists—on trips to Mali to study dancing and drumming and to travel a bit in this remarkable country. Summer of 2001, a local dance company wanted to go to Mali. They had received a travel grant. They wanted daily dance and drumming classes. I considered this an excellent opportunity for me to learn more African dancing and drumming and it would also be valuable in my development of an African program at Bantaba.

Traveling alone, I left the USA on June 9 for a trip that would start out in what I felt to be a perfect situation, yet it would end with great sadness. In the first entry of the journal, written during this flight from Chicago to Paris I penned the following.

Such great things in my life—a great relationship [Madhu], a great business [Bantaba], excellent teaching ops [CU and Naropa], houses and condos [Corbin's house in Lakewood and mine in the mountains and a couple investment condos], living in Niwot and Aspen [I visited Madhu there regularly], great dance partner [I don't recall who this was], lots of travel, playing drums, dancing, gamelan, and much much more. Prospects for major business expansion.

Well, the relationship with Madhu wouldn't last but a few more weeks. Bantaba was a money pit that failed in a few more years. My devotion to Bantaba shifted my work at CU away from regular academic publishing and I was severely punished for it by my faculty peers from this time until I retired twenty years

later. I think I made some money on the investment condos, but this money was all used to try to keep Bantaba going. I did try to expand Bantaba by buying a building in North Boulder and relocating, yet this led almost immediately to the total failure of the business following a huge fight with the City of Boulder over noise concerns and my having to foreclose on the property. How naively short sighted and trusting I was.

The Mali journals involved occasional self-reflection. I developed a close relationship with a Malian man named Sekou, an English-speaking school teacher who was a friend of Abdoul's. We spent hours visiting about Mali and Africa and musicians and dancers. He was knowledgeable and eager to assist my education of these new things.

Jenny and Boubacar, from Senegal, were planning to marry and in fact did so in September. While I found Boubacar a fascinating and talented young man, I had become increasingly skeptical that a marriage between a modern liberal white woman and a traditional griot musician from Senegal with little experience beyond his own culture could possibly be long successful. I spent time talking with Sekou and others about such marriages and was informed by all of them that in their knowledge of such marriages none every really worked. I spent many agonizing hours trying to come to terms with my concerns for my daughter but also to be a father who respected her wishes.

Upon return I did sit down with them and told them of my reservations. They assured me that I had nothing to worry about. Of course, they married, and Fatu came from that marriage, so I can never regret it. But it didn't last, and Jenny suffered much from the relationship and the difficulties of dissolving it. Boubacar has never maintained a relationship with Fatu to his immense loss.

In Mali I danced daily, often both morning and afternoon, in horribly hot conditions. A dirt school playground was our dance space, often littered with stones and broken glass, dangers to our bare feet. I was proud to be able to pretty much keep up with the twenty-something aged dancers of the dance company that made up the class. I also took regular drumming classes. I learned that Abdoul was not a good organizer nor had much clout in Mali. This meant that classes were often terrible and the drum classes disappointing. Still, I danced and drummed hard and learned a great deal. My happiness is reflected in the following journal writing.

I felt it [the day] was one of the all-time great days of my life. Everyone here is happy that I dance and constantly want me to dance at any time. They call me Samou after Abdoul's uncle [whom I'd later meet] and they consider me their father. Still, they never talk of me as being old. Today Sekou said I was the oldest and the youngest on here—he said old in years and young at heart. I like that. What a wonderful life, play music, sing, dance drum all day and night.

I learned much about drummers and dancers most surprisingly that these artists are not respected in Mali. I don't know why this was surprising since dancers in contemporary American culture are not valued and certainly not paid. Yet I suppose I had a sense that these artists, especially those from what we considered exotic cultures, were nearly revered. No Mali parent wants, I was told, their child to be a drummer or dancer. One doesn't get paid for these art forms and thus they are considered a drag on a family. Abdoul passes out cash money to everyone he sees and in return is held seemingly as everyone's closest friend. Yet, Sekou told me that when he runs out of money no one will pay him any respect or attention. Of course, an artist who manages somehow to get to the USA or other Western country is nearly worshipped, as is Abdoul in Boulder and in the USA.

I was inspired by this constant music and dancing and found it an inspiration for what I wanted to achieve in Boulder, writing.

I'm feeling I've changed so much in recent years. This is the first time I've travelled where I'm really present. Last night I felt I could just go on like this forever. Good to feel that way—life and art and friends and family and community—all one.

That's what my house should be. Everyone participating in the art of living, making music, praising one another, enjoying being together. I feel like I do well in dance and drum and that I'm so much more in my body than ever before. It is like I see it and I can reconstruct it in my body. I trust that my body knows what to do and it works well. I'm so happy that at my age I can experience this new birth in life in living—growing experiencing new things. I have a truly blessed life—living in a wonderful time. How amazing it is to experience cultures on different continents so easily.

When I bought the big house in Niwot it was something on this order that I'd hoped to create. I had three acres and a huge house and many plans. Yet, I would discover that just funding an economically disastrous studio was more than I could manage and that such dreams were well beyond my means.

During this Mali trip I began to think about the efforts we in the West, especially academics, must attempt to discover or assign meaning to everything, such as Mali music and dancing. It has become a signature of my scholarship to find alternatives to this quest for meaning in the effort to better understand and appreciate cultural forms. I have much more to do in my current academic work to advance these ideas. Reading the journals I wrote in Mali, I was delighted to find the kernels from which these notions have developed.

My interest—my observation—is that playing music and dancing is done without this obvious and explicit practical result. The point here is that dancing is empty of this obvious way of associating meaning. We still try to do so—when we say dance celebrates harvest or something like this. But my emerging point is that this may get at an incidental or contextual of dancing but the act of making dancing meaningful in this way still displaces us from dancing itself. Yet,

the full measure of dancing is in itself and that is that it defies meaning—operates by means of seduction and the threat of emptiness.

I wrote quite a bit about the other people there both the Americans and Africans. I had some critical comments about some of the Americans who I felt really didn't want to learn anything so much as they just wanted to say they'd been in an exotic setting. Yet I became friends and really enjoyed being with all of them and they with me, I think. It is odd, given my persistent issue of not being able to make or have friends, that in Mali I seemed to get along with and enjoy everybody. Yet, of course, no enduring friendship continued following the trip. I still could claim acquaintanceship with a few of these people including Abdoul, but I haven't had direct contact with any for years.

Abdoul procured a small bus with bald tires in which to take us north into Malian country. I loved this trip yet found it too short. We visited some of the ancient places in Mali. I was honored to be able to visit Dogon villages especially since I had taught about this culture for years. We also spent time at Djenne, an ancient city with the largest mud mosque in Africa. We also visited Abdoul's home village that had no power at all, no actual roads leading to it, and only a single open water well to serve the village. There I was honored to meet his uncle, Samou, since my Mali friends had given me his name. Oddly I wrote nothing about this trip in my journal.

Almost immediately upon returning to Bamako I learned that my mother had fallen and broken her hip. She'd been ill for years with no one understanding what her illness was. In retrospect I now think she had a serious opioid addiction, yet in those days no one seemed to know what that was. Fearing her demise, I began to plan to return immediately to the USA. Madhu was the one who reached me with this news and at the very hour of her call she had learned that Jenny had been involved in an auto accident and was standing on the roadside awaiting an ambulance. She managed to get word to me during our call that she'd heard from Jenny who had been able to get home and was okay. Then, even before I could even arrange to fly home, I received word of my mother's death. My journal ended abruptly without even writing about her death or my efforts to get back to her funeral.

I was able to book flights straight through to Lubbock, where my folks and older sister lived, and I wrote something of a eulogy for my mom's funeral on the flight back.

Bali, August 2001

For the first three weeks or so of August I hosted several students on a trip to Bali and I invited Madhu, who I was still with, to join us. She had gone to Lubbock with me for my mother's funeral and we had dated for a couple years. We joined the group hosted by my friend I Made Lasmawan at his home village

Bangah in the central mountains of Bali. With this group we had the opportunity to learn to play gamelan with options to do carving and other traditional Balinese arts. We heard lectures by local Balinese scholars. We attended a variety of cultural events and even performed at some of them.

My writing however was disappointingly brief, and, beyond descriptions of our group's activities, it was mostly about my horribly unhealthy and totally uncomfortable relationship with Madhu.

The journal writings from the Bali trip have been painful for me to read, even more painful to reflect on. It is so clear that Madhu and I should never have been in a relationship. I was motivated largely because I thought I needed a relationship and desperately wanted one. We dissolved our relationship during the Bali trip and simply co-existed with enough civility to get back home. How awful that must have been.

Looking back, I know I would have been much happier on this trip travelling alone. I can appreciate that this disastrous experience only added to my growing history of failed relationships, my association of pain and confusion with even trying to be in a relationship.

And here I am twenty years later alone with the last relationship I had failing over ten years ago. Think I've learned little about being in a relationship and I feel more certain than I'd like that I'll die never understanding this enormous, failed part of my life.

Coda 2001

Jenny and Boubacar were married September 1, 2001, with the wedding held at my big house on Hills View Drive in Niwot. They married themselves in an aspen grove followed by various African music groups performing and plenty of African food and dancing. They lived in the house as did several other young people all connected with Bantaba.

September 11th we'll always remember was the date of the horrible tragedies at the World Trade Center in New York City, the Pentagon in DC, and a crash site in Pennsylvania.

Since this project is an attempt to look forward by looking back, I need a brief note on the journal writing I did in the fall of 2001. I had ended the relationship with Madhu, the woman I went to Costa Rica and Bali with, yet I still had the urge to contact her. Through that entire fall much of my journal writing might well have been done last month. I was deeply concerned about having no friends and declared myself completely baffled by my life in which I knew hundreds of people of all ages yet didn't have a single close friend. I was similarly baffled by relationships. My connection with Madhu was unhealthy, uncomfortable, and weird and I think I maintained it primarily as an alternative to being alone.

I frequently wrote of wanting to increase physical exercise, loose ten pounds, and the ever-present struggle with money especially since Bantaba was then, as it always was, a financial disaster that I had to absorb. I complained about doing so much for so many and asking nothing in return yet being disappointed that no one seemed to acknowledge what I did for them.

The differences today twenty years later are significant, yet there is a whole set of concerns that is surprisingly, even embarrassingly, the same. At age 70 I gave up any hope of a partner relationship. The financial failure of Bantaba left my finances totally depleted and it took me working at CU to age 76 to recover somewhat financially. I still spend loads of time concerned with finances, but now my focus is fully on how much of my estate might be left when I die as inheritance for the kids and grandkids. I'm still obsessive with health and fitness, centering on weight, food, and exercise. In 2001 I wrote of working out at the gym more, improving my diet, and losing ten pounds. Now twenty years later, in the last four months I've lost fourteen pounds. I weigh less now than I did twenty years ago, yet I am actively trying to lose another ten pounds. I still have no close friends and I continue to be utterly bewildered by that. I feel less hurt and I harbor less anger now yet I still often feel that I'm not much acknowledged by those I do so much for asking nothing in return. I still feel unacknowledged professionally despite having published several books in the last three years and fourteen or so in my career.

In 2001 I wrote contemplating what I might do for myself to just have fun or to find some sort of self-satisfying pleasure. I came up without a single idea. This remains the same today.

I was doing some psychotherapy in the fall of 2001 to try to deal with these issues. I find it odd that I noted that while I was doing therapy, I didn't write about it at all. With the long view in the rearview mirror, I can't help being disappointed in myself. I knew of my fundamental personal issues fully twenty years ago and while some of them have disappeared or diminished, yet even these are due more to aging and giving up rather than to finding healthy proactive resolution. The other personal issues persist if perhaps slightly softened.

Costa Rica, January 2002

My ever-expanding interest in Latin American dancing led to a second trip to Costa Rica in less than two years, this time with the young salsa dancer named Carolina who taught at Bantaba. It took place December 29, 2001, to Jan 12, 2002. San José was her home, and she had many connections with teachers and accomplished dancers in Costa Rican dance forms namely three styles of bolero, Costa Rican swing, and salsa. We were accompanied by a couple other young women, Mallory who was to become one of Jenny's best friends, and Karina who

was a beautiful Latin dancer who had been with me on the 2001 trip to Bali. I was fifty-nine and these women were all in their twenties.

I did write extensively during this trip, yet the writings were almost exclusively regarding the disfunction of relationships centering around Carlina and my constant disappointment in not receiving the kind of dance training and experience I had expected.

To celebrate the New Year, we traveled to the east coast near Limon where Carolina joined her family while Mallory and I stayed in a quaint little thatched-roofed cabin not far from the beach. We visited the beach as well as night clubs in Limon where the dancing and music were mostly reggae.

Back in San José, we spent some afternoons at a nasty little night club taking various kinds of dance lessons. In the evenings we returned to this club to dance and to observe the many amazing and talented local dancers. The problem was that Carolina invariably hooked up with some guy with whom she made out all evening and then wouldn't return until the next day, if then. We were left to find our way back to her house and wonder if anything the next day would be arranged. She then decided she wanted to go back to the coast to the beach. Mallory accompanied her, but I had come to dance and so I went to stay at the Don Carlos hotel, a quaint little place in downtown San José. I took classes and went to the clubs at night while exploring the city and seeking cultural experiences during the day. I only joined up with the young ladies the day before returning to Colorado. I filmed lots of dancing, collected some valuable dance music recordings, and learned lots about bolero which became a favorite dance of mine. Yet I felt that the trip was basically a disappointment falling far short of my expectations.

Looking back now, I think this occasion was confounded by sketchy relationships. I can't say that I was much at fault, and I am pleased that I had the courage to resist continuing being at the whim of these dysfunctional young women, but it clearly wasn't good.

The spring following this trip, I wrote extensively—journaling I suppose you'd call it—almost totally on an obsessive effort to understand why I couldn't get or maintain a female relationship. While I'd ended my relationship with Madhu over and over, each time assuring myself this breakup with her would be the final and last one, I continued to want to call her and sometimes actually did so. Now this relationship practice seems to me so juvenile. Embarrassingly so, just horrible and far too common in my life.

Puebla Mexico, October 2003

My academic work in world dance complemented by my studio- and gym-based dancing experience learning, teaching, and operating a local studio seemed to me to comprise a rare and distinctive background for establishing myself

academically. I had the idea to combine lecturing with dancing as an engaging hybrid form of presentation. Bolero seemed to me to be an engaging form to explore using this form of presentation. It had an interesting history and I had gained some competence in dancing it. I was invited to lecture at the University of California Santa Barbara. Upon arrival I quickly taught a graduate student bolero and then did a lecture that included a dance demonstration. I did the same when I was invited to present a plenary lecture at a regional meeting of the American Academy of Religion. A further time to do this style of presentation was at the Vernacular Conference in Puebla, Mexico.

I was in Puebla but a couple days, yet I was able to travel in the region to visit Iglesia de los Remedios as well as to wander the beautiful city with its distinctive architectural color palette and the dozens of remarkable churches and cathedrals. I also urged a group of young locals to take me salsa dancing. I was shocked to discover that the dance form I knew as salsa was nothing like what was called salsa in the several Puebla clubs we visited. It was a simpler closed-frame form involving few moves. It was easy to pick up this style, yet their salsa music made me long to bust out my own moves and style. I became interested in the relationship between the identification of a dance as broadly performed and what I was comprehending as an enormous variety of forms and interpretations. Local music histories and styles as well as local dance forms beyond the specific genre have an impact. Given that all dancing is body movement, the local gestural postural habituation is necessarily present in dancing.

Dominican Republic, December 2006 - January 2007

In the mid-2000s a form of music and dance began to appear occasionally at the local clubs I frequently attended. Initially I didn't know what it was and yet I was immediately attracted to it. Local DJs played it only a couple times an evening and, in those days, clearly few of those who danced to the music knew the appropriate dance. I had a student who knew the dance which she learned from her boyfriend who was Latin American. The music and dance genre was bachata and I discovered that it had originated in the Dominican Republic as low-class country music long shunned by the major Dominican bands, but was eventually made internationally popular in the 1990s by Juan Louis Guerra. The music always made me happy, and the dance was smooth and sexy with lots of hip movement. I noticed that it was danced in various ways by the few local dancers who were familiar with it, often a sort of dirty dancing grinding on one's partner. My studies indicated that in DR the dance was done differently, and I was eager to learn it from Dominicans rather than from locals who just thought they knew the dance. This situation was another example of a single dance taking different forms in different localities.

At the time I was dating a woman named Dorothy, again much younger, who was a good salsa dancer largely trained by me. Together, we hosted regular salsa dance nights in Longmont where Dorothy lived. We went together to DR during the 2006-2007 winter holidays.

We spent time in Santo Domingo, the capital city, and the oldest European city in the western hemisphere, seeing the sights and dancing at the clubs at night. We went to a club attended almost exclusively by super hip young Dominicans owned by Juan Louis Guerra where I observed the dirtiest dancing I've ever seen. We went to an open-air dance club named The Car Wash that featured the traditional musics and dances, merengue and bachata. As the only non-Dominicans in a rough neighborhood with little Spanish, we put ourselves at some risk and, in the wee hours of the morning, had a difficult time getting transportation back to our hotel. Then we went to the north coast where we sought instruction in bachata from local dancers, black Dominicans, and danced in local clubs. I learned a much about bachata and Dominican culture and arts. My relationship with Dorothy was fun and without conflict. We had a wonderful time dancing and exploring. Whew! Of course, that relationship wouldn't last much longer either.

Puerto Rico, December 2007 - January 2008

By the following year I was dating another woman named Julie who turned out to be the last relationship I had. It too did not last long. I love Puerto Rican salsa music and wanted to go there to visit during the winter holidays. Julie was doing some sort of training that took her to New York City once a month for a weekend intensive. We decided to go first to Puerto Rico in late December and then return by way of New York City so she could do her training.

While she was busy, I had the opportunity to walk for hours exploring New York City. Walking a good many miles I explored Central Park and north into Harlem and Spanish Harlem where many Puerto Ricans settled in migrations after the first World War. I walked along Riverside Drive up to Columbia University. I had been to NYC before, but only for conferences and brief periods. This time offered me a marvelous opportunity to walk and explore at my leisure to get a feel of New York City and a bit of familiarity and knowledge of this city. I came to love the city.

My sixty-fifth birthday was celebrated there including a lovely dinner and attending The Lion King on Broadway. Wanting to further my experience and knowledge of bachata, I learned of a small club in the Dominican area far north of New York City that featured bachata music and dancing. We caught a cab late one evening and headed north to find the place. When we arrived, it was just a tiny restaurant. Fortunately, the cab driver who thought this was a dangerous neighborhood warned us that if we stayed it would likely be impossible to get

transportation back to our hotel. The driver told us that most cab drivers would refuse to come to this area after midnight. I had him wait while I went into this little place. I asked about bachata, and no one there seemed to know where or when we might find a place to enjoy the music and dancing. Of course, my language skills, or lack thereof, made my inquiry perhaps ineffective. The result was a \$50 cab fare and a story.

Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand, 2012

I went to Mexico for beach vacations a couple times with Dorothy (Puerto Escondido) and Julie (Puerto Vallarta). Seems one was Thanksgiving week and the other over the winter holidays. Yet I wasn't able to do significant life-impacting travel of my own choosing for a ten-year period. Likely the reason had to do with the financial failure of Bantaba and the huge financial loss I suffered in selling my north Boulder house. I remember being out of money and out of sorts, feeling a failure in business, academics, relationships ... most everything.

I had a few casual chats with a professional student advisor assigned to my department at CU. She learned that I had been to Australia, had published a book on Australian history, and knew at least a bit about Aborigines. Her husband happened to administer CU trips marketed primarily to alums to various destinations around the world. These trips were often hosted by CU faculty who had expertise in the areas visited by these trips to provide guidance and to also do lectures where possible. I was invited to guide a tour group on a sixteen-day cruise that originated in Sydney, traveled south to Tasmania, then across the Tasmanian Sea rounding the southern tip of New Zealand to work its way up the east coast to Christ's Church. The travel dates were in March 2012 coinciding with my move to a new townhome being built in Broomfield and they occurred during my spring teaching semester.

The first time I ever saw a cruise ship was in Puerto Rico in 2008. They docked in San Juan with the thousands of tourists flooding the souvenir shops and restaurants. I was stupefied by the sheer size of these massive floating resorts and yet my curiosity did not include me wanting to travel this way. Still a free trip that included a chance to spend a day in Sydney, especially at the Opera House, was sufficient enticement for me to accept the invitation.

I had a graduate student that was quite capable of teaching my classes while I was gone. My move to my new townhome was easily scheduled to occur immediately upon my return. All I had to do was to hang out with the CU tour group on the ship now and then and to do a couple of lectures on Australia to any on the ship that might be interested.

I did have a glorious day in Sydney and the cruise ship sailed in the evening through Sydney Harbor floating past the Opera House giving me a wonderful

vantage of it I had not had before. I had a chance to take a few photos of the Opera House in the golden evening light.

Beyond the moments at the outset of the cruise, I pretty much hated the following sixteen days. This cruise traveled through the night docking early in the morning. The passengers, most older folks, all lumbering off ship to board busses for guided day trips around the local area with brief photo and shopping stops. I elected not to take any of these trips, preferring to walk to the local town or whatever was close by to absorb a bit of the local people and scene. One day for a few hours in a place was never enough satisfy me. I felt frustrated by being so close to so many magnificent things, especially as we worked our way up the east coast of New Zealand, without being able to venture for a time to more fully enjoy these places. I suppose one could argue that a cruise of this sort might be an introduction to places that one could return to later.

I came soon to pretty much hate my time on the ship. The group I hosted was comprised of older folks who frequently did cruises. They were often cranky and demanding service. I tried joining some of them for meals only to learn that they were extremely conservative and often blatantly racist. Obama was then President, and they were not shy about hating him. I was reading proofs for my *Dancing Culture Religion* book, so this occupied much of my time. I also was writing and preparing the lectures I gave on ship. The food situations frustrated me. Every meal was so elaborate and extensive. Every evening was a formal many-course meal in a fancy dining room. Such a meal once or twice over the sixteen days might have been enjoyable, but every evening this sort of dining simply irritated me. Food and drink were available all over the ship seemingly twenty-four/seven. To top this unpleasant experience, I had several days of atrial fibrillation which required me to make difficult and expensive contact with my cardiologist back home. And I suffered horrible stomach pains that the ship doctor thought might be appendicitis. Had that been the case I'd have had to be evacuated by helicopter.

As a travel experience, I learned much about myself, or rather I confirmed much about myself that I likely knew. While I am eager to interact with folks of many different cultures and appreciate their differences from me as enriching, I have little to no interest or patience to interact with politically and socially conservatives in my own culture. While my personal style tends toward enjoying simple elegance and high quality, I find too much rich and lavish food and superficial faux elegance (as the décor on a cruise ship) distasteful and even offensive. I like depth over superficiality. I don't do small talk. I don't seek bling. I'd have much preferred spending sixteen days on a sheep ranch in New Zealand than on this cruise.

Fairly commonly I encounter people who love to go on cruises. I must be careful to acknowledge their preference without revealing my own tastes and preferences.

Scandinavia, 2019

Jonathan Smith, my mentor and friend for fifty years, died December 31, 2017. He was a renowned religion scholar. Surprising to me among all those who had worked with him I was perhaps the one who had the longest relationship with him, and I was also known as a scholar who persistently engaged Smith's influence in my own work including writing directly about his work. I was invited to participate in some of the events that honored his life and work. One of those was a conference in Trondheim Norway.

Learning that I was to be in Norway, a young scholar of Indigenous Religions I had met who taught in Tromsø, well above the arctic circle, invited me to do a presentation. He hosted me on a fine mountain hike in the wild areas where the tundra meets the sea. I added a few days in Oslo and took a train from Oslo to Trondheim. I found Norway to be a beautiful and delightful country.

A young scholar in Umeå Sweden learned I was in Norway. He had been interested in some of my earlier work. We attempted to arrange a visit to Umeå University when I was in Scandinavia, but we were unable to do so. Consequently, he invited me to return in October. I did so stopping for a few days in Stockholm. Like Norway, I found Sweden to be beautiful and the people delightful. I felt that the people in both these countries had an easier sense of living that was quite engaging to me.

Due only to the fact that Icelandair offered inexpensive flights from Denver to Europe with the bonus of a free layover in Iceland, I was able on both trips to explore a bit of Iceland in June and October. I found this country to be gorgeous in a stark and stunning way, and the people quite hospitable and enjoyable.

My Scandinavian travel was done alone at age 76 and I was energized and thrilled by this travel. Had it not been for the coronavirus restrictions over the last eighteen months I'd likely have returned to somewhere in Europe, including Iceland, this past year.

On both trips I did some photography making quite a few images that I am pleased with. The images and places inspired me to experiment with writing something on the order of prose poetry. I prepared two versions of a photo/prose book I titled *On Reflection: Vignettes & Images* (2018) that I gave as gifts. One version was a selection of a dozen images with accompanying prose in an 8" x 8" format with a photo filling the left page and the prose the right. The other version was 12" x 14" with several photos associated with each piece of writing.

Doing this hybrid photo-prose project intended for a general, rather than an academic, reader has inspired me to continue to explore this form. This genre marks the greater fulfillment of my love of writing, my growing acumen at making photo images, and my eagerness to do what feels to me to be more creative and artful work that might be shared more widely primarily for the purpose of bring a bit of pleasure and beauty to others.

I've always known that one's reputation is often higher, rarely lower, in areas away from home. I was surprised that these Scandinavian scholars, indeed most of the European scholars at the Trondheim conference, knew me and my work well. They acknowledged me as a major scholar in religious studies as well as in various subfields. To be received by these scholars on such terms was a pleasant surprise and something of a relief particularly given that I am sure not even one of my own faculty has any idea what I have done or am doing. In terms of learning something of myself through this reflective process, throughout my career across many decades I have been terrible at explicitly cultivating a reputation or to create professional connections. I just haven't been able to do this sort of self-promotion. I have always hoped that the quality and novelty of my work would speak for itself. I've suffered from these choices, yet they have not been choices I've worried much about making. Again and again, I have learned that most of what I do is because it is the enacting of who I am, now who I want others to think I am.

Chapter Four

Into the Future

A Janus View

“When we watch ourselves on the screen of the past,
we watch a stranger,
but one for whom we have complicated feelings.”
~ Janet Turner Hospital, *The Last Magician*

Jānus, meaning in Latin ‘arched passage, doorway’, stems from Proto-Italic **iānu* (‘door’), ultimately from Proto-Indo-European **ieh₂nu* (‘passage’). It is cognate with Sanskrit *yāti* (‘to go, travel’), Lithuanian *jóti* (‘to go, ride’), or Serbo-Croatian *jàhati* (‘to go’).

Some think the month of January is named for Janus.

My title *Looking Forward in the Rearview Mirror* can hardly avoid allusion to Janus the Roman god of beginnings, gates, transitions, time, duality, doorways, passages, frames, and endings. Janus is typically depicted with two faces, one pointing in each direction. I’m delighted that the etymology and cognates in other languages associate Janus with travelling and moving and, by some, with inspiring the name January, the month of my birth. The double-face of Janus connects with the core discoveries in my recent writings on my mentor, the late Jonathan Smith (“Jonathan Z. Smith and the Necessary Double-face,” 2020), and my developing notion of what I term an aesthetic of impossibles (“The Glory Jest and Riddle: Jonathan Z. Smith and an Aesthetic of Impossibles”). My challenge in this final essay is to align with Janus by looking at once back across time considering my own past travelings, in the rearview mirror as it were, while also

looking forward to imagining a future, my future. I seek not an explicit map across a future territory so much as a set of motivations, styles, emotions, and aspirations, perhaps incentive to excite and energize my development and practice of certain skills. I have felt a deeply personal incentive for this endlife project knowing how difficult it is for me to muster the courage and imagination necessary for change. From the double-faced perspective of my present, in my past I have sought new insight, energy, and audacity that I might significantly shape the vitality and experience of the rest of my life. I adopt Janus as my patron saint.

Inspired by Janus I also wish to practice my own emerging philosophy of time or explicitly how we experience time. I have increasingly explored this philosophy focusing on the implications of what I call the fat present. This notion is inspired widely by the ideas of French philosopher Henri Bergson's *la durée*, Doctor Who's magical TARDIS (the blue British police call box that contains all time and space), and others. Briefly my sense is that we only experience what is now, what is present to our sensory feeling bodies. Experience is synonymous with now (the present) in this sensory aspect. This means that the past is experienced as an aspect of the present referred to as memory and recollection and reflection, while the future is also an aspect of present experience marked as imagination and dreams and plans and goals. Thus, invoking both past and future in the phrase "looking forward in the rearview mirror" is not an abandonment of the present, rather it is a strategy to fatten it up, to make it richer. It is to see our lives as the complex stories we are living. And indeed, since experience is subjective, personal, this Janus work has the potential to enrich and enhance our lives, our vitality. Of course, we're often advised to live in the present, I assume the thin present, not to live in the past or future. The danger suggested by this common adage is that it discourages us from appreciating that all experience is present, which is to me equivalent of denying both experience and time, a dismissing of all that comprises who we have become and are becoming. To live life fully, we must embrace the whole cloth ongoingness of life from beginning to end as we dare to imagine it.

The fat present understanding of time is also an application of Friedrich Schiller's idea of play articulated in his 1794 book *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*. Schiller held that we human beings are, in one perspective, comprised of two drives. The one, the form drive, seeks form, order, law, universal principals, while the other, the sense drive, seeks the immediacy of raw sensation free of reflection or even identification. Schiller argued that neither of these drives can exist alone and, following Sartre centuries later, we might suggest that attempting to do so would be to live in bad faith. Schiller proposed that vitality, which he also called beauty, is achieved when these two drives interact in concert, that is when they engage in an interplay or partner dance that embraces both the

eagerness for laws, principles, and understanding (stability if in stasis) as well as pure sensation, full presence, free of assessment (pure organic oneness if in some state of blissful oneness). He refers to this interactive dynamic as the rise of a third drive he calls the play drive (Spieltrieb). Schiller points to the truth that neither of these drives alone allows any awareness or sense of satisfaction. Neither can be truly achieved or sustained. Both, if in opposition, need to be present and interacting, each both energizing and limiting the other, that we live in good faith, as Sartre would have it. The double-face of Janus to me represents Schiller's understanding of play.

The Janet Turner Hospital epigraph resounded throughout my review of and reflection on the journals from my 1993-'94 travels. Interestingly I recently uncovered my long-misplaced copy of Hospital's book ripe for yet another reading. I refer to this novel several times in the travel journals themselves stunned that my location while traveling in Australia coincided with that in her book, exemplifying the magic of serendipity. These journals afford me the viewing of myself on a screen playing my midlife of nearly thirty years ago succeeding from then in fits and starts across the intervening years. Perhaps most surprising to me is that, while I most certainly have complicated feelings about the me starring in this show, I haven't found my midlife self nearly the stranger I had expected. I'd rather hoped for the revolutionary insights gained by the shock of finding myself then more a stranger. As I re-felt and re-experienced these events of so long ago—and remarkably I was able to do so with confident clarity and bodied emotional presence in that past—they were generally feelings and experiences familiar to me now. I felt little (too little?) strangeness in reinhabiting them. I'm grateful that there have been some surprises—I learned much from them—and I surmise these may be consequential as they play a part going forward.

Midlife Crisis and Rebirth

For a middle-aged man, divorce linked to a relationship with a much younger woman is a classic sign of midlife crisis. Cliché. I somehow skipped acquiring the convertible sports car. I can't deny that midlife crisis is likely what was going on with me at the time I wrote these journals. Discovering this crisis and its positive and negative implications has been an important, even surprising, gleaning in this project. Travelling as well as dancing and many other physical activities, biking and hiking, were discovered during this period. While I think there is some cultural stigma to these particularly male crisis acting-out, rather than finding evidence that I felt any sense of shame or that I thought I was committing some grave cultural faux pas, I mostly wrote in the vein of the naivete of one awakening, coming to life, reborn. I clearly cherished my new and unexpected experiences and my stirring appreciation of the grandeur of the world and of life

itself. I lost family relationships and many friends as I was dislodged from the life track of societal normalcy. Or I unwittingly abandoned it. I did not regret the cost nor do I now. Rather I regret that this crisis-forced transition didn't occur much earlier in my life. The man I was who wrote of his life in 1993-'94 was, I believe, experiencing the birthing of the present me. The beginnings of a more aware, engaged, sensitive, and appreciative person emerging from more than two prior decades of the often-dark efforts to be what I believed I was supposed to be. While I'm grateful for the person that emerged from this crisis so long ago, this new life has been accompanied by certain costs, ones that often still cause me to despair. Presently I am often shocked by the awareness that the life I have lived, especially since this transition, is not the one I was supposed to live, or so I thought. Even now I can't keep myself from occasionally shouting out loud, "I'm not the person I was supposed to be!" "I'm not living the life I was supposed to live." Sometimes I think that had I had a more publicly successful or at least abiding marriage (by which I mean something like tolerable if not fulfilling) like most folks my age I know, indeed everyone I know, and had I followed a more linear traditional career path like my peers, I might have turned out more as I had in my early adulthood imagined. Despite the costs and occasional fits of shouting, I'm glad I made the choices I did even if I wasn't much aware of the eventual consequences of making them.

One great advantage of looking in the rearview mirror offered by these journals is to appreciate that, despite all the angst and losses incurred because of this midlife jolt, it opened me to travel, to radically reshaping my relationships, to completely changing my physical life and health, and to shifting the core of my personal and academic interests and style. Even more concrete, it led to me having the family I have, especially the grandkids. It also shaped their lives, as is the case with Fatu being a dancer. The midlife revolution also led to the internationalism of the local Colorado region and to the enrichment of so many lives associated with Bantaba. And it enabled many partner relationships that led to the birth of a whole bunch of the kids I call Bantaba babies, the offspring of the guests I sponsored visas for and their local partners. I can perhaps now appreciate that these changes were of considerable benefit, that they had an upside, minimally that they birthed the person I have since been. I must believe that the middle-aged man that was then coming to life anew benefitted in ways related to personal creativity, deep devotion to family, personal style, health and movement, love of writing, and an insatiable fascination with and appreciation of the wonders of life and existence.

General lesson. Overall reflection. The word crisis originally denoted the turning point in a disease from the Greek *krisis* meaning decision. Life tends now and then to give rise to situations of distress, dis-ease, disease, that force us to suffer and to make decisions. As suggested by the word itself, crisis denotes a

turning point, perhaps a rebirth, a new direction, a discovery. We should welcome crises for their power to push us to achieve our potential, if also risking our abject failure. It takes courage or sufficient suffering to force us to action. I now think that, for me, perhaps the 1993-'94 journals reflect the time of my crisis-birthed discovery and celebration of life, love, adventure, movement, body, self, existence, that is, exuberance for being.

Family

My journals make constant reference to missing Corbin and Jenny. Clearly 1993 was a time when, due to my impending divorce, my relationship with my adult kids was foremost in my mind. I so wanted to be close to them and to be both adult friends as well as a supportive parent. During the succeeding nearly three decades I have gathered them both near me to develop and maintain a closely connected family now expanded by three amazing grandkids Fatu, Shay, and Leon. The journals revealed that 1993 was a time of significant change. While in the decades prior, I had seen myself as father and a providing caring family man, I wrote of my realization that I had not adequately lived these values. The pressures of establishing a career, making a living, and allowing my marriage to deteriorate had been accompanied by my constructing two rather distinct personalities, one open, gregarious, humorous for business and profession, the other cold, withdrawn, angry and lifeless for marriage and family. What I realized more fully than ever before in this looking in the rearview mirror was that 1993 marked a time of major transition, a time for repairing this personality split, a time to attempt to realize in action and feeling my aspired intentions and values. I think that time marked a new beginning succeeded from then to now by continuing development, persistent and increasing accomplishment, regarding living up to my personal ideals as father and grandfather. My life today is at core lived with an unquestioned devotion to family, to their present happiness, and to creating the support of every kind that, when eventually I am not around, may assist each one of them to live her or his life in ways to realize the greatest potential.

In my travel journal writing about improving family relationships, I often included my parents, now long dead, and my sisters, the younger one from whom I have been long estranged and the older one with whom I continue a congenial yet limited relationship. Until their deaths I had a solid relationship with my parents and enjoyed many years of the surprising development of an especially close relationship with my dad. The largely unacknowledged estrangement with my younger sister is due, if I comprehend it at all, largely to stark differences in social and political values based in religious perspective. I am simply not able to have the patience to understand my sister's Christian conservatism. I knowingly realize my hypocrisy given that my life has been devoted to the appreciation of

others because of their differences. I wrote a book about this, *Creative Encounters, Appreciating Difference* (2019). I'm unapologetically critical and intolerant of most contemporary American Christian social and political conservatism, a perspective I'd defend as a religion scholar as well as an intelligent caring person.

Going forward there is no doubt the center of my life will continue to be immediate family. I worked at CU through age seventy-five in part because I loved teaching but also because it allowed me to recover somewhat from financial failures of Bantaba and real estate losses enabling me to regain some fiscal means to support myself through the balance of my life and to also provide support for my kids and grandkids, especially their higher educations or career developments. It has been a great privilege that I have been able to support Fatu's many years of competitive dancing financially and personally and that I can continue to support her now that she has graduated high school and heads to LA. Since I retired, I have been able to spend more time with Shay and Leon so that Jenny can develop her career. I was pleased to be able to fund her Pilates career training. Recently I have been able to help Corbin move to a fine large condo where his life can be more comfortable and vitalized. I find joy in everything I can do for all members of the family. I understand that the daily close connection comes with a heightening of worry and concern for all of them that I likely would not have experienced were I married and living at a distance. Painful yet worth it, as is life itself.

Work

In the journals I found nothing of the stranger in myself in terms of the measure of being a hardworking, creative academic that lacked self-confidence in the arena of public academic discourse. I was a loner that constantly questioned himself as a competent and worthy scholar while at the same time feeling confident in the value and importance of my own creative, if also unconventional, ideas. After fourteen books and a nearly fifty-year career, I can't see that I am significantly different now than I was when I took this Australian-Asian trip. As then, I continue to have a passion for writing and thinking in ways that I believe have fundamental importance yet are generally overlooked by others. The principal difference is that I've had nearly thirty years more practice and practice makes one better, if not perfect. For me writing is, I imagine, something on the order of an improvising musician or an athlete amidst a game. I have confidence in my skill, and I enjoy exercising it. It is a kind of easy flow creatively meeting challenge and opportunity. I see no end to my work going forward, save death itself. I do hope that the substance of the work shifts progressively toward making beauty and creating things more accessible to a general audience. Yet, I don't know how to expand public access to my work or to supplement my motivation beyond personal compulsion.

Years ago, I frequently addressed my lack of academic preparedness and capabilities to do anything like academic research related to these travels even though this was the prime purpose of traveling. I didn't have basic knowledge of foreign languages. I hadn't read adequately to prepare myself to be a knowledgeable observer. I didn't use my academic credentials to make connections with academics and officials in these countries to gain privileged access to aspects of these cultures. I was sure other academics would have made these connections. I found myself questioning my experience, my approach, my abilities, and even the value of what I was learning and experiencing. I think all these self-doubts were likely due to the way I entered my academic profession more or less by accident—the odd path from math to business to religion (and in religion from Native American to Australian Aboriginal to dancing and religion theory)—dropping me in the elite intellectual world of the University of Chicago feeling myself something of a charlatan, an imposter or fraud. At the time of these 1993 journal writings, I felt this inadequacy and yet I can see that even then I was attempting to parlay my disadvantage into something of the advantage of the outsider, the one who sees what the very training of others blinds them to. That's why I always loved teaching freshmen. They asked the questions my peers would scoff at as naïve and sophomoric, yet questions that I realized often got to the core of things. I can see a commonness of me then as now feeling incompetent and lacking in so many ways while at the same time feeling almost arrogantly superior in insight and creativity. What an odd combination of traits and tendencies has characterized my academic work life, my personal style. I'm presently writing a book focused on the general philosophical and biological importance and span of this strange and seeming impossible dynamic. I think I have always had something of a supreme confidence that I can almost always see connections and dimensions mostly overlooked by others that engage the most important and valuable dimensions of a subject. This method or approach is a skill developed over time, yet I also consider it something of a gift or, perhaps better, a distinctive quality of who I am.

It is surprising to me that while much of my traveling has been motivated by and contributed to my teaching, in these journals I rarely mention my love of and devotion to teaching. I believe I was a pretty good teacher, in both academic and dance contexts. I believe my style of teaching was collaborative and provocative and humorous. I know that I felt most myself in the classroom. It was a common experience to have students, often ones I didn't recognize, see me in public and come to tell me that my teaching had deeply impacted them. Due to my use of nearly two years of accumulated sick leave prior to my retirement I have taught little since 2016. That is now nearly five years. The last two courses I taught were among my finest, at least from my perspective. I don't

miss the administrative and paper-reading sides of teaching. I don't miss the increasing number of students who have no interest in learning anything. I do miss and dearly so sharing my ideas and thoughts and enthusiasm with young people excited to learn and grow. I sometimes feel that I should seek some volunteer teaching position or even find a single course at some nearby university so that I might continue to enjoy the exchange of ideas.

Relationships

Among the most surprising insights as well as the most complicated feelings, to invoke Hospital's statement, I gained from this Janus process had to do with primary or partner relationships. My marriage of twenty-seven years had failed, yet I continued to have feelings of responsibility for Judy and her well-being. I had abandoned her, and, in these journals, I took full responsibility for the anger and ire she felt toward me and accepted her need to share her feelings about me with any who might listen.

The ongoing development of my relationship with Emily during this trip was a regular subject for my journal reflection. While I occasionally acknowledged the rather obvious limitations, the almost certain end of this relationship in a relatively short time, and, while I also occasionally reflected on feeling some shortcomings in Emily as an appropriate life partner choice especially due to age and life stage differences, I none the less remarked frequently on how congenial and healthy our relationship was. I marveled at how both of us were eager to understand and help one another in every possible way. On that screen of the past, I believe this assessment was genuine and accurate. Even in my last entries in early 1994 I proudly held up our relationship as exemplary as demonstrated by my sense that it had thrived while undergoing the test of being constantly in one another's presence for five months in the most physically and emotionally challenging circumstances.

The most surprising aspect of my rearview reflections on this relationship is my realization that over the succeeding decades I likely used this relationship—that now I see I highly romanticized—as the standard by which to measure all my other relationships. My relationship with Emily lasted but a couple years following these travels. Its end was devastating to me and I suffered deep grief and depression for at least a year. I failed in this grieving process to recall that during these travels I often acknowledged the limitations both of Emily, due largely to the fact that she was half my age, and also of any relationship where the extent of age difference we had is present. I now believe that after decades (my ages 25 to 50) of feeling dead in so many ways, I emerged into an experience of new vitality and energy concurrent with beginning my relationship with Emily. She was after all the one who introduced me to biking and who shared learning dancing with me. We went to the gym together and planned healthy meals. We

also read Sartre and other authors together and had many an intellectual discussion. My relationship with Emily nourished both my new and exciting physical life as well as my intellectual and academic life. I felt gregarious and free and light for the first time in my adult life. This time was experienced as a new birth into an exciting and fun life all of which was shared with Emily. I felt for the first time a connection with someone else that loved me for who I was, pretty much unconditionally I thought. When that relationship ended—due I think to the very pragmatic reason that she realized she needed to progress through her own adult development in age-appropriate stages—the loss felt like the end of my life. The agony of the loss was so severe I could simply not gain enough perspective to see the obvious, to even recognize there might be some benefit, regarding the change. It was in the forge of my grief and depression, I now believe, that I welded unrealistic and romanticized relationship qualities and necessities to Emily, a fiction largely, and my relationship with her. That invention of imagination was a terrible mistake, likely making it impossible for me to ever have any other sustainable relationship as I attempted to move forward.

I am frankly stunned that it has been only my recent reading and reflecting on these journals that I have been finally able to apprehend an important part of the likely reason, or a major one, why all my relationships have failed.

In recent years as I look at the various relationships I attempted to develop, none of which lasted more than a couple years, all of them failed and I have tended to see none of them as having been worth the effort I put into them. Indeed, in my recent reflections, only my relationship with Emily ever seemed really on balance rewarding and ultimately healthy. It was the only one that I felt supported my growth and development as a person, both physical and intellectual, rather than suppressing my spirit and causing unhappiness. It was the only one, at least as I remember it, that allowed me to be my unedited self, knowing I'd still be accepted. It seems to me now that perhaps few if any relationships of any stripe allow one to truly be one's unedited self.

The aspects of the past “me” I experience in these journals with complicated emotions are his (my) insight, honesty, commitment related to a primary relationship, all qualities that I don't think I have been able to practice in any relationship since. In this respect this younger me was the better, less jaded, me.

Risk

I now recognize the extent of the leap, the risk, the jarring shift, involved in extensive traveling at age fifty to unfamiliar places and to encountering folks quite different from me. It was risk appropriate to the large midlife change I was undergoing. Yet this risky behavior was not wholly new to me even then. Perhaps the first leap into the unknown was when upon graduating high school I left

Kansas farm country and went to the big university, as I saw it then. That seems so ordinary now yet at the time among my farm village peers it was a sizeable and risky move. The next risky leap was my decision at age twenty-four to leave a thriving business career, a home I owned, and the comforts of hometown to study religion, which I knew almost nothing about and had only randomly chosen, at the University of Chicago, a prestigious world-renowned university I also knew nothing about, located in a city that seemed enormous and frightening to me at the time. This risk was motivated by my suspicion that the monetary and prestige rewards offered by a business career were not compatible with my personal values. At core the value difference was that I felt making money and having lots of stuff were not sufficient goals for a lifetime of work. My leap was accompanied by decades of being forced to focus on grubbing for enough money to maintain a family. Irony.

There were other risks. In 1974 I moved my family to the Navajo Reservation to live in a hogan without adequate preparation or contacts. Later in 1984, I purchased land and built my own home in Colorado knowing nothing about how to do such a complex physically demanding project. These were large risks taken prior to the midlife crisis-connected risks of traveling in 1993.

Risk-taking did not end there. By the early 1990s feeling I had achieved much of my potential in the study of Native American religions, I began the shift my academic work to focus on dancing and movement, connected with religion by the necessity of my academic appointment, but extending over time widely into areas of biology and philosophy. The progress of this risky shift is still evolving. Then in 1998 in my mid-fifties, I started a risky business, a dance studio that both succeeded in many personal and cultural ways yet also failed miserably as a business. That was accompanied by buying a huge country home that I couldn't afford, thinking about how it could become a culture center of sorts. It took me over a decade to recover somewhat from financial ruin.

Thus, the risk pattern of the five-month trip in 1993-'94 is common both before and following this midlife time of change, all leaps with little preparation into unknowns risking and often suffering considerable loss and discomfort seemingly for the promise, rather vaguely imagined, of living ideal values.

I can't help but think that one of my most common sufferings in the present, my irrational fear of loss (safety of kids and grandkids, money, life, health, most anything) is connected to my history with taking risks that seemed to always involve suffering losses of some kind often over long periods. Psychologically I grasp that loss is often associated with personal growth and development. Yet I feel that in my present life the dark emotions experienced in past losses are easily awakened by rather random and insignificant incidents. Despite this personal history this looking backward project is linked with some inherent need in the

present to engage in yet another life-threatening or life-saving risky change. Following precedent perhaps my strategy now should be to leap without looking.

Creative Encounters

One area in which I felt discomfort and a bit of regret related to current reflection on the style of traveling that was prominent in both 1993-'94 and 1997 is what now appears to me an excessive concern with shopping and buying stuff. Of course, to engage in the material culture of others, especially their distinctive arts and crafts, is a way of learning about them as well as developing brief relationships with the common folk of the culture. This commerce-basis for encounter extends to arranging lodging and food. This kind of relationship also contributes, if in minor ways, to the local economies and the well-being of some people. Yet, I found that at times we became almost obsessed with finding and buying yet more stuff. From my current perspective I feel that surely there must have been other ways of encounter that would have engaged the folk of other cultures in a broader and more interesting way. During the Annapurna trek this commerce was limited almost totally to just food and lodging and our Nepali guide, Parang. I don't know that it offered any better way of human encounter. We often found ourselves for days interacting mostly with other trekkers. Our relationship with fellow trekkers was often frustrating and was not the community we preferred.

The more extensive experiences with local folks related to contracting guides and travel helpers. While the Nepali experience was perhaps the most satisfying, ironically, I believe this was because Parang knew only minimal English and did not have practiced sophistication in his relationship with tourists. In Bali, Nama offered many opportunities we would never have otherwise had while filtering his culture in a kind of tourist-pleasing New Age style we found to be obscuring, even off-putting. The frustrating relationship with Niiboeye in Ghana was a variation on the pattern.

Attention to Detail and Grand Imaginings

In my careful review of these 1993-'94 travel journals I have been constantly delighted by the detail of my descriptions. I marvel at the level of detail describing cultural events and the interweaving of descriptions of my feelings related to the experiences. I was clearly paying careful attention and made the effort to record so much in detail often including local terms. I see a parallel in this method of writing detailed accounts from memory to the method used by late nineteenth century ethnographers. I'm thinking specifically of W. Baldwin Spencer, because my research involved reading his field notes, his journals expanding his notes to narrative, and the eventual publication of these descriptions. While I denigrate my connection as inadequately academic, it is little different from Spencer's and

his work resulted in the book *Native Tribes in Central Australia* (1899) that I believe to be, rather ironically, the most influential ethnography in the establishment of the social science theory in the early twentieth century.

There is also a sense of my placing this detail in the context of grand or global frames of reference. I saw both the details as well as the accompanying implications in a large frame. This odd combination of careful attention to the smallest detail joined with a framing in large, even global, terms has characterized my academic and personal life. I have always appreciated that neither the detail nor the broadest ideas may legitimately exist without the other. Such a perspective has characterized everything I have ever done, I think. Yet, the detail I wrote during these travels surprises me a little.

This understanding of my personal style, even more deeply my way of being in the world, has developed into a formal dynamic academically developed and articulated over the last several years. It is possible to trace this way deeply into my personal and academic experience. I now refer to it by a variety of terms: play, double-face, aesthetics of impossibles, symphony of impossibles, copresence, chiasm, among others. A fundamental way I try to articulate this dynamic is that it is the holding together as identical or the same what we know all along to be not the same at all. I consider this capacity to hold two different, even opposing, things as the same or equal to be an important distinctively human faculty. It is not shared by other animals or by so-called intelligent machines (Artificial Intelligence). Metaphor, for example, is to understand one thing in terms of considering it to be another thing that we know full well it is not. And so also with language, symbol, ritual, art, photographs, and so on. Certainly, the balance of my life will include the continuing exploration and understanding and celebration of this dynamic in everything I do. My personal challenge is to engage this dynamic consciously and purposefully throughout my personal experience and practical life.

Technology

Today I have at least the impression that life is deeply and pervasively shaped by the technology revolution of the last twenty-five years. Rarely am I more than arm's length from one of my devices as I tend to call them, MacBook AIR, iPad, iPhone, and my Apple Watch is on my arm all my waking hours. In 1993-'94 I traveled with a laptop, yet I have little memory of what it was or looked like. Its monitor blanked out on me a few times but were it not for that device my journal writing would likely have been reduced. During the travels I regularly addressed the difficulty of finding an international telephone connection to make calls to Corbin, Jenny, and my folks and how expensive were such calls when even possible. Of course, at that time there was no email or texting, no internet.

What I now appreciate is that not only was I undergoing a major life make-over, so too was the world in terms of information technology. The fabric of life around the world today is woven in terms of the means and media of digital communication technology that was in the midst of massive expansion in the early 1990s.

It is surprising that, as I relocate myself in the early 1990s, I didn't feel the anxiety of the inability to digitally connect to reality. I refer to that anxious feeling I now have if I leave home without my iPhone. I had to invest a few Google moments to refresh my sense of the history of information technology. Although there were local versions of what would become the internet of today, the World Wide Web (WWW) did not come into existence with any significant expanse until the mid-nineties and Global Positioning System (GPS) was not a thing until around the same time. A reasonably portable and useful satellite phone was not available until well past 2000. The now ubiquitous smart phone with global reach didn't arrive for wide consumption until 2008.

This scant history of technology seems relevant. Given my current self-understanding as being extensively shaped by current information-based technology, I would have expected that the person I was in the early 1990s, the person I was prior to internet, google, portable phones with global reach, and 24/7 personal data tracking would necessarily have to be quite different, perhaps even unrecognizable, a mere physical blob undefined without digital presence. The surprise is that throughout the full span of my review and reflection on this pre-internet technological me, I had hardly any consciousness of any differences due to communication and digital media technology. Perhaps the insight is that my current seeming constant reliance on internet technology to "get along" in my world has done little more than simply allow me to maintain myself as a relatively stable person in the context of a rapidly changing world. My first real job in the mid-seventies was as a computer analyst in charge of installing some of the first computers used as the basis for business operations. My undergraduate major in math and my information-based short business career were deeply part of who I have always been.

Throughout my reflections in the rearview mirror, photography was the area of technology I was frequently most aware of as being remarkably different. On these long travels to some of the most scenic locations on earth with a simple SLR camera I took around 30 rolls of slide photos (as if contemporary youth would even understand "roll of film"), a total of around 1000 pictures. I eventually selected fifteen to twenty of them to have enlarged to 16" x 20" size and professionally framed. These were direct uncropped prints from slides without post-processing. Surprisingly when I look at these photos today—many are still on display in my home—I'm surprised they are as good as they are. Yet, now with professional level digital equipment and significant skills at computer-

based AI-guided post-processing, I regret that I did not then have these capabilities of making images. Reading these journals, I so often imagined what remarkable pictures I could have made had I been equipped with my current equipment, knowledge, and skills. In the journals I express a guilty regret when taking several photos that seemed appropriate to some occasion or location. The regret was that every click of the shutter came at the extravagant price of fifty cents or so. Taking half dozen pictures of something notable often came with my journal comment that I might have overdone it, taken too many photos. My current practice would have involved shooting dozens, if not hundreds, of images at many of these locations and spending many hours selecting and post-processing them. I'm certain the results would have been spectacular.

Architecture and Making

I felt compelled to return to Java to spend several hours at Borobudur. I chose to lead a tour group on a sixteen-day cruise largely because it would allow me the opportunity to spend a few hours, for the third time, in the presence of the Sydney Opera House. A strong force urged me to Trondheim a couple years ago connected with seeing photos of beautifully colored buildings along the river. "Heart connections" is how I call my feelings of awe and attraction for these architectural wonders. I recall when I was in high school, I was attracted to the writings of Ayn Rand—a total embarrassment now—principally because of her romantic view of architects. I remember in high school even thinking that I might become an architect although I think my image then was that such a profession meant that one designed skyscrapers.

I designed and built my own home, the dome in Boulder County, where I lived at the time of my early '90s travels. One of the disincentives to getting divorced earlier than I did, along with the notion it would not be good for my kids, was that I couldn't bear to lose this house I'd designed and built. In my travel journals I often commented on wanting, upon returning home, to remodel or renovate the dome to fit the changes I knew had occurred in me. I am my house. Over the years I have had the opportunity to be active in the decoration and design of most every place I've lived. Every time I've gotten this opportunity, I've been almost obsessively involved and excited. In teaching my Religion and the Senses course over the years I often contemplated a student assignment having them design a house that would engage the activation of all the human senses. I've given some time to trying this challenging project myself.

Perhaps this interest in design and building and decorating has something to do with making, which was the core theme explored in my 2018 book *Religion and Technology into the Future*. By this term "making," I think of the bringing forth in physical reality of something imagined or dreamed. I have always had a penchant for imagining in three dimensions what is charted in but two and vice

versa. I have always experienced this transduction as nothing short of magical. While I'll likely not build that sensory-rich house, surely the fascination, energization, and imagination involved in architecture and making must find central place in my ongoing life.

Transitions and Expansions

Only in the larger framing of the cultural differences between these two times in my personal history did I finally comprehend that precisely 1993 was a time I was experiencing major changes both as occurring in the culture broadly but also in my personal life specifically. I have been mostly unaware of the extent of these changes. The major ones impacting my life might be located at two ends of a rather broad spectrum, seemingly almost mutually exclusive. The one was technology based, the other was body and movement based.

While part of the funding and motivation for travel was my work on Australian history and religion theory, I was also on the cusp of what would soon grow into a major area of study and personal life activities related to dance and movement that continues today. In these early '90s journals I often commented on an interest in dancing, yet there is no evidence of my awareness of how extensively this interest might develop or even a hint of related aspirations. By the mid-1990s I'd be teaching a popular rapidly developing Religion and Dance course at the University of Colorado. I believe the very first version of this course was offered in the summer of 1993 or '94. By the last years of that decade, I had opened a local studio focused on world dance and music and I was able to sponsor visas for a couple dozen artists from countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. I had traveled extensively specifically to study dancing in various cultures. I would eventually teach salsa and other Latin American dances and choreograph dances for performance. I eventually would publish a book on religion and dance that included development of theory appropriate to considering dancing a fundamental and distinctive human form of action. Had I been told in the early '90s what dance-related things I would do and accomplish, I would not have believed it.

Today I'm continuing this broadening trajectory with publications and research related to movement, or in the term I've developed specifically to my work, self-moving. The seeds of this work were being sown and nurtured during these travels, yet clearly, I had no idea what would grow from these sprouts.

Into the Future

As Janus, standing in the threshold of the present looking at once backward to the past and forward to the future, I had hoped somehow to find that a course set decades ago has now come to a measure of realization that would serve as foundation or inspiration for a new life on which to embark from here to life's

end. I dreamed of a surprising revelation about myself, an “Aha!” moment of insight that would serve as a guide forward. I’m disappointed that I didn’t experience this surprise; there was no sudden parting of the fog revealing a new direction, a new motivation. There have been some insights and surprises that were on the order of what should have been obvious to me all along but were not. Perhaps this romantic expectation simply reveals my stubborn naivete. I felt it appropriate to a principle of symmetry that—becoming more fully aware that the 1993-’94 journals documented the emerging of a somewhat mature adult—now, on the threshold of my endlife, I should discover how to bring about and celebrate a similar rebirth. At my age I might expect a new life of quiet wisdom, worldly intelligence, confidence won of long experience, and surely occasions of lightness of being that should have by now been earned. I feel so little of any of these. Rather I feel some panic that the end is too near, an inability to muster the courage to make the measure of change that would initiate something truly novel, the struggle to continue to be useful or valued in any way at all, the energy to continue to pursue my considerable yet still unrealized potential, and the persistence to explore new ideas and engage in more creative activities, especially those that might make beauty and provocation enjoyable and engaging to others. At best I feel hints of a roiling energy experienced oddly as a calm yet undeniably powerful force and commitment. An assured sense of staying the course shifting the useless worries about ends (death) to the more useful energies closer at hand (living vigorously).

A life. We use the singular. Birth to death, beginning to end. A course. Dates. A flow across time. A statistic. A person. A body albeit one that remarkably changes, rarely after age twenty for the better. Growth and decline. Acumen and folly. Agility and decrepitude. A collection of labels: birth, name, baby, boy, youth, husband, father, teacher, writer, middle aged, retired, old, dead. Wretched list. I feel a jerky connectivity more than a wholeness. A cluster of dots and dashes somewhat catawampus rather than a graceful flowing arc. Bits and pieces clumsily gathered like an unfinished mosaic or a crazy quilt. I like, yet suffer, surprises and discontinuities and nonlinearities for they whisper vitality’s secrets. The narrative I’m constantly telling myself reflects my desperate grubbing for coherence. Yet all good stories have the drama of threat and risk. Stories worth telling are spiced with bitter herbs, colored here and there in the darker shades, and dipping hopefully only rarely in the maudlin. The adhesive is the narrative line, searching for a plot. Word follows word like breath follows breath, the always surprising moving we recognize as a life.

“Me” is but a concoction, a story hoping to achieve some semblance of coherence while confusion mostly reigns. Are there sporadic delightful splashes of vibrant color foreshadowing denouement? Perhaps, yet with time they too will likely fade to the sepia of a crumpled old photo forgotten in a cigar box.

