

Music That Just Ashes

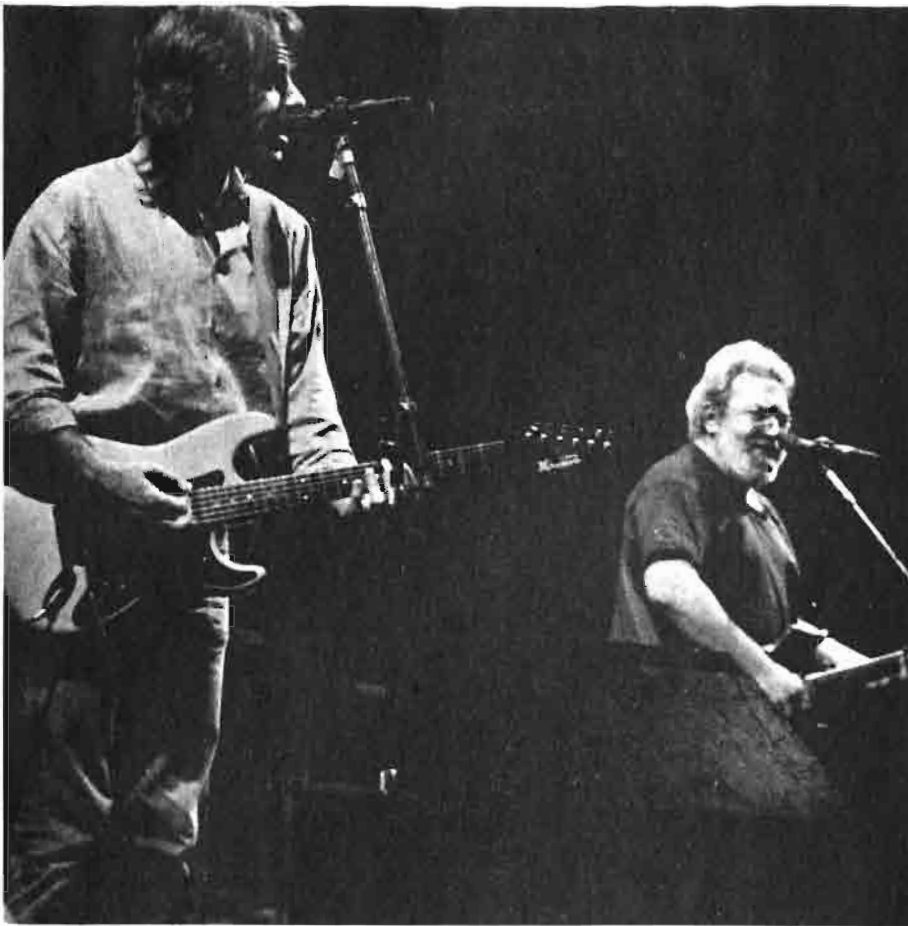
It was fall, 1977. The wind blew wildly across the campus. Trees bent over horizontally to the ground. Waves washed over the bridge in the little pond beneath my dormitory. I felt my arms seem to go through the glass window of my third floor suite. I jumped back catching my breath. I was still breathing hard from running full speed back home from the dining hall. I couldn't take it in there anymore. Too many people, the food too strangely colored to eat.

I heard music beckoning me from Eric's room. I slowly opened the door and peeked in. Unable to believe my eyes, I quickly shut the door. "Andy," I shouted to my friend, "You're not going to believe this. Eric is about two feet tall and looks like he's made of rubber." Andy walked to the door half-laughing, half-scared. Everything seemed wild and out of control. I had a reckless feeling deep down inside...but there was nothing I could do about it now. I was just beginning to get off.

All I could do was hang on and go with the flow. Andy opened the door and music came billowing out like a closet that's jam-packed with too much stuff. It surrounded us and led us in to the room like snakes to a snakecharmer. We each gravitated toward a bed. We were immediately in a trance. The bus came by and I got on. That's when it all began. There was Cowboy Neil at the wheel of the bus to never-ever land.

I couldn't keep my eyes open even if I tried. I sped through pictures in my mind. The music told the story as I looked deep inside myself. How did the musicians know what was going on inside me? Or was it just my taking identity with the words? It was all happening so fast, so real, I was in awe. The song ended and we all sat up and looked at each other with amazement, but before we could speak the next song began and off we went again into another dream.





For hours we went on and on, album after album. The whole time I was sure that we were all going through the same thing. Oh, how I wished it could always be this way! Exciting, new, stimulating, and prophetic. The musicians were prophetic. The Dead, the Doors...they seemed to understand.

I wanted to speak again if I could remember how. "Eric, Andy." Did I speak or did I just think? I'm not sure, I'll try again. "Eric, Andy, it's incredible."

Andy just nodded with a crazy stare in his eyes.

"Were you seeing what I was seeing?"

"I don't know. What did you see?"

"Well, it was kinda like...I can't explain it...it was...wow!" Andy and Eric were laughing.

I was a little sad. I wanted to communicate so I could share my experience with them but I couldn't do it. It was beyond words or beyond my trust to reveal. I wasn't sure. Slowly we began to talk to each other. Different fears and thoughts came and went but as we talked about them we learned.



The vibes were sweet and peaceful. We seemed in love with each other. Everyone had been humbled by the acid. No one understood what was going on. We were like children. Everything was new. We talked and rediscovered the universe around us. Only the here and now mattered or made any sense. This was the feeling I'd been looking for all my life. I felt like we were one...in unity...I never wanted to come down. Why can't we stay like this forever? Slowly, slowly the drug wore off. We were getting tired, and about fifteen hours later we crashed for a few hours.

I woke up and ran to Eric's room. He was hanging around, smoking joints and I asked him to go for a walk with me. Our hearts were still very tender towards one another like those who had gone through an intense experience together. But I could feel it fading slowly. I asked him why. We both knew somehow that our hearts should always be tender to each other and not just to each other but to everyone.

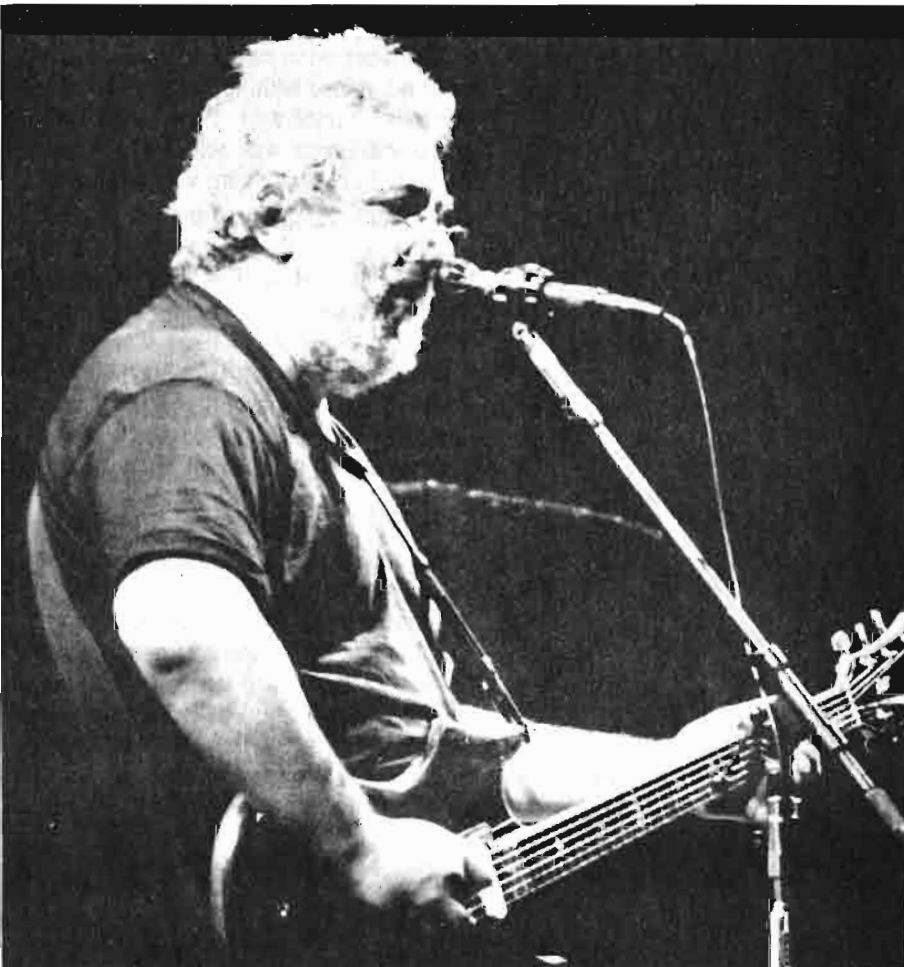


A day or two went by and classes began...Eric needed to study...As for me I couldn't stop thinking. I lay in bed and stared at the ceiling. I felt half-guilty for not doing my classwork and half-angry at how irrelevant college seemed to me. What intrigued me the most was what had happened to me the past day. I tried to sort out what I'd learned. I wondered how much more I would understand if I ate more of those little pieces of paper. Would they tell me who I am and why I exist, or what I should do with my life?

Why was Eric studying? Didn't he need someone to talk to? All our questions about hate, war, and greed (and the hate, war, and greed within ourselves)...and he's studying to be a teacher. I couldn't understand it. How do you teach if you don't know the answers to the most basic questions about your purpose in life? And if you did, wouldn't you just distract people from the real issue?

College seemed full of these kind of teachers. How will any person have true dignity or worth, if everything he is taught to do is disconnected from any true purpose or reason for existing? I could see why the more knowledge we gained, the more dangerous we became.

This was just the beginning of hundreds of trips. Most were much less exciting. Many were void of friends to talk to. And still, years later I'd lie in bed with the same questions. Time after time I'd suffer through the many different stages of a trip - getting off...my feelings out of control...recklessness...a few hours of oneness...mellowing out...then down.

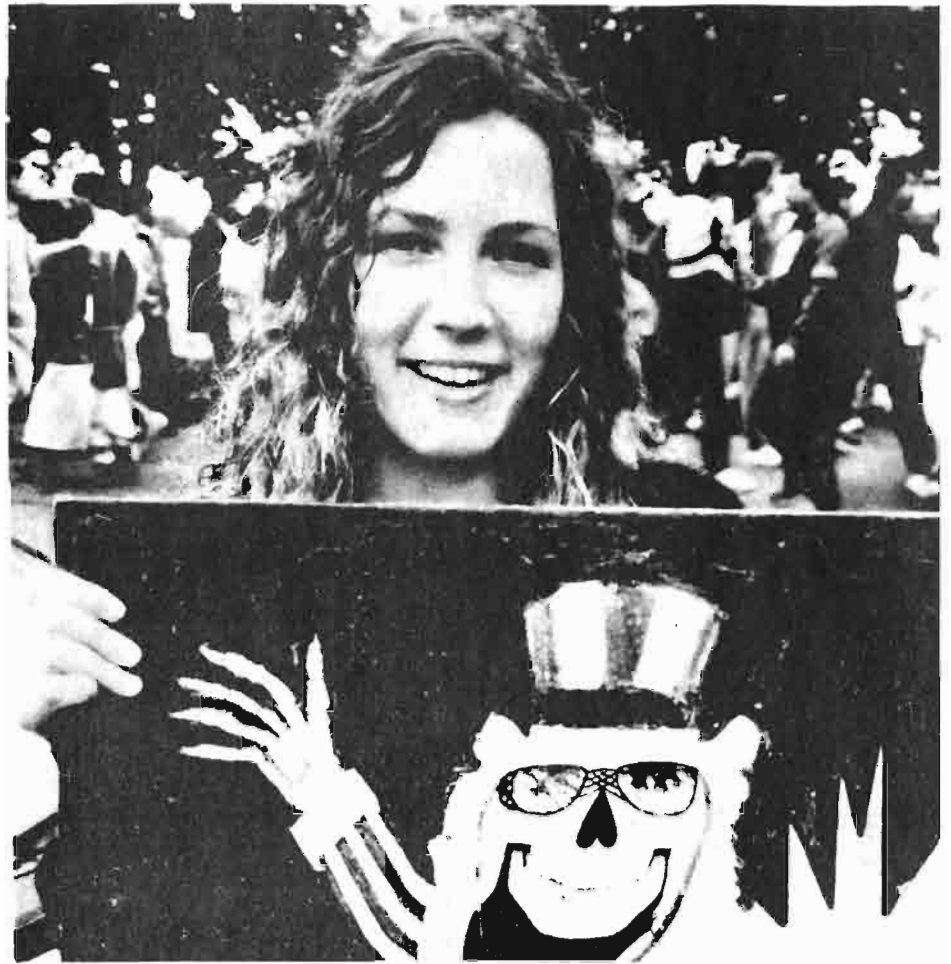


Eric and Andy went on to pursue their careers. I didn't even know them after awhile. I settled in with new friends. Together with them, or apart from them, I plowed through meditation, crystals, astral projection, and American Indian ways. We tried to maintain the oneness and sensitivity of heart without the drugs. Each new teaching led us to think we were about to find the secret. But again and again we'd run out of time and money and watch the cares of making a living scatter us in different directions.

Most of us kept listening to the Dead. We kept smoking and tripping when we felt we "needed an experience." Deep down inside we all knew that we were getting older. Questions like "who was I and why can't we live together in love" were being slowly and deceitfully replaced by questions like "how am I going to make a living with my art, my music, or my dancing."

One by one, we would admit to ourselves that "I'm getting older and I'm getting tired of living so wildly. I've got to do something with my life." Slowly, secretly, in each of our hearts the little flame of hope of understanding who we were was going out. Why we were alive and would we change the world was going out, too. What had once motivated us to seek was now being divided among a hundred other interests.

The way of the world, the selfish ambition, and the self-concern of looking after number one had entered into our hearts through broken relationships and the hard, cold realities of life. But it was not as if these hard, cold realities were something that just happened to us. We caused them. We brought them upon ourselves in many ways.





There is a great tendency in us to always see ourselves as holy truth-seekers, or deadheads, or kind ones, or lovers of peace. Somehow we forget all the other things we do in the meantime. It doesn't occur to us that perhaps we aren't worthy of knowing the truth or changing the world. Not unless we change ourselves first.

We were not loyal to one another. There were often alliances formed among us that left others out in the cold. Our sexual habits were far beyond our control. We peace-loving deadheads waged war with each other's feelings and our own consciences. We slept with those whom we knew deep down in our hearts we weren't in love with. Lying to myself again and again, I'd convince myself that I was in love to quiet my inner voice. Otherwise I would have to spend the night alone, tortured by my restless thoughts.

These relationships were like madmen swinging swords. They left scars wherever they touched flesh. Months later, just like "when the hunter gets captured by the game" I would find myself on the other end of the sword. I was the one then who "wasn't loved as much as I loved." I'd be left broken-hearted, unable to remember that when "I plant ice, I'm gonna harvest wind."

I walked the streets and concert halls of my life. I bled from wounds I'd received and inflicted on others along the way. Inwardly I would question what might happen if I gave up hope of finding a true purpose for my life. What would happen if I couldn't find people who lived together in love with others?

Inwardly...or outwardly, I can't remember. Desperately...I screamed, "God, help me." It was soon, very soon after that that I met Yahshua through his people. ■

Levi



LIFE
WITHOUT A SPIRIT
IS DRY-AS-DUST.
A SPIRIT
WITHOUT GOD
IS

ARE

"See that girl barefootin'
along, whistlin' and a
singin', she's a-carryin' on."
That's who I wanted to be.
Free. Free-spirited. Hair
flying in the wind, Indian
skirt billowing around me.
Uninhibited.

I wanted to be the girl in
the song, the one the
songwriter loved when he
wrote it. She was the one
every Deadhead wanted to
find and to have. Those
women in the songs were
great to be around. They

weren't the kind
who would bum your trip out
with petty problems.
Sugar Magnolia
was the perfect
Deadhead girl.

sugar

There was only **one** problem. I
wasn't like that. No matter how
hard I tried I couldn't live up to it.
After I heard the Dead with my
sisters, I started hanging around
with a group of Deadheads who
initiated me into the life. Everyday I
would go find them in the park, or
in the apartment where five or six
of them lived together. They
tripped, smoked, and lived like a
family.

Annie laid her head down in the roses. She had ribbons, ribbons, ribbons in her long, brown hair. She had rings on her fingers and bells on

delightful, she's got everything I need; takes the wheel when I'm seeing double, pays my ticket when I speed. She ca

her shoes; and I knew without asking she was into the blues. She wore scarlet begonias tucked into her curls, I knew right a -

magnolia

for air. She's got everything

way she was not like other girls.

Sugar Magnolia, blossoms blooming, heads all empty, and I don't care. Saw my baby down by the river; knew she'd have to come up soon

SWEET ANNE MARIE

The girlfriend of the most "Dedicated" guy was my image of the perfect Deadhead. She had long, brown, wavy hair, just the right clothes, and just the right jewelry. She even had a white van with a teardrop window in the back and a rose, a beautiful rose, painted on the side. I spent most of my time comparing myself to her. I would go home and try to dress the right way or look in the mirror and try to braid (or not braid) my hair the right way. I was never quite satisfied. I was fifteen years old and they were all much, much older. How would I ever catch up to them?

They had all been listening to the Dead and following them around for years. They knew the names of all the songs, all the band members, and all the albums. I had only just begun and really felt like a klutz around them. I was very careful not to say something stupid. They were all very nice to me and I really liked them, but I felt so different from them. They were so cool and I felt so unable to be myself.

I was weird. When I tripped I could never be like Sugar Magnolia. She seemed like she really had her thoughts together; she laughed at all the right times and had control over her expressions, keeping her face in order. I felt like my thoughts were uncool and strange.



SUGAR MAGNOLIA



Back then I tripped two or three times a week and got stoned every day. My parents didn't know what was going on with me, whether I was coming or going. I didn't care what they thought. I was totally motivated by my desire to fit in. I wanted to fit the image I looked up to. I wanted to be like my friend, and like the women in the songs.

I would do almost anything to be with the Deadheads, to trip with them, and to make them like me. I did many things I regretted later and was ashamed of. These only made my problems and my image of myself worse. The more I compared myself to others, the more miserable I became. Society's pressure on me made me try to be someone I could never be. No one could. No one could be like Sugar Magnolia. Her head was all empty, but my head was full. I was full of thoughts about life and why the world was the way it was. I wanted to get off this planet, out of the darkness and into flight, into light and colors and happiness. I was looking for freedom from the chains that kept me from being me. I hated myself. I wanted to be like someone else. I thought that if I did drugs, followed the Dead, and was with whoever I wanted to be with (or whoever wanted me) then I could escape society. I would be free from having to conform to a nine-to-five job and the soap opera reality of a house, two kids, a dog, and a white picket fence.



Halloween started early. I was tripping by nine in the morning. People in costumes were everywhere. I had never seen anything like it under the sun.

I hung out with a guy I had been with for a couple of weeks. I liked him a lot; he had long blonde hair and curls that reached down to his waist. He knew how to sew patches better than anyone else I knew. His jeans were a masterpiece of patchery. He seemed to be the truest hippie I had ever met. I thought we looked good together.

My boyfriend was one of the Deadheads in the group I hung out with. He and the girl I envied so much had rented a trailer together. I thought they were just good friends, but I guess I didn't understand about freedom very much. When night came, he left me to get off with her - the girl with the roses and the ribbons in her long brown hair.

My trip had started to wear off a little and I wasn't feeling too good. I had drunk too much and drinking always made me feel dark.

I became very insecure and thought about myself a lot. I tried to figure out why I wasn't his Sugar Magnolia. I guessed the reason he didn't want to be with me was because I wasn't spiritual enough, or that I wasn't dead enough. I sat on a railroad tie for a long, long time and thought about it while the effects of the alcohol started to take over my senses. I felt worthless, more worthless than a stone, even more worthless than a cigarette butt under a stone. I just didn't match up. I was never going to.

A taxi driver I knew took me to his trailer to sleep off the effects of my day. When the first light of morning came, I got up and left, feeling empty, alone, and robbed. My eyes were bloodshot. I could feel them. I found a joint, bought some cigarettes, and tried to forget my pain. The only thing left from the day before was a day-glo rainbow on my face that my friend with the long blonde hair and the well-sewn jeans had painted. It made it hard to forget.

I was under such a pressure to be a certain way. Being a hippie wasn't freedom for me. Maybe for some it was, but I just could not live up to it. I needed to find a place where there were other people like me - people who couldn't make it in society or in non-society.

What was it that I was looking for? I didn't exactly know. Now I do. Friends. I was looking for true friends who would live with me and bear with my problems and not turn away from me when I happened to make them suffer. And love. I wanted to be loved. That was why I did the things I did. I wanted to be accepted, not only accepted, but to be "in the family." Intimate. Trusted. I tried for years before I realized that the people I was striving to be like weren't "in" either. They felt the same way I did.

What we all needed were true friends. We needed true parents as well, since most of us didn't do too well with our own. We needed someone to take care of us when we were in trouble, someone to steer us straight when we went off. We needed direction for our lives. I didn't really want a relationship with every man who walked by, or to be like all the other girls. I just wanted a friend.

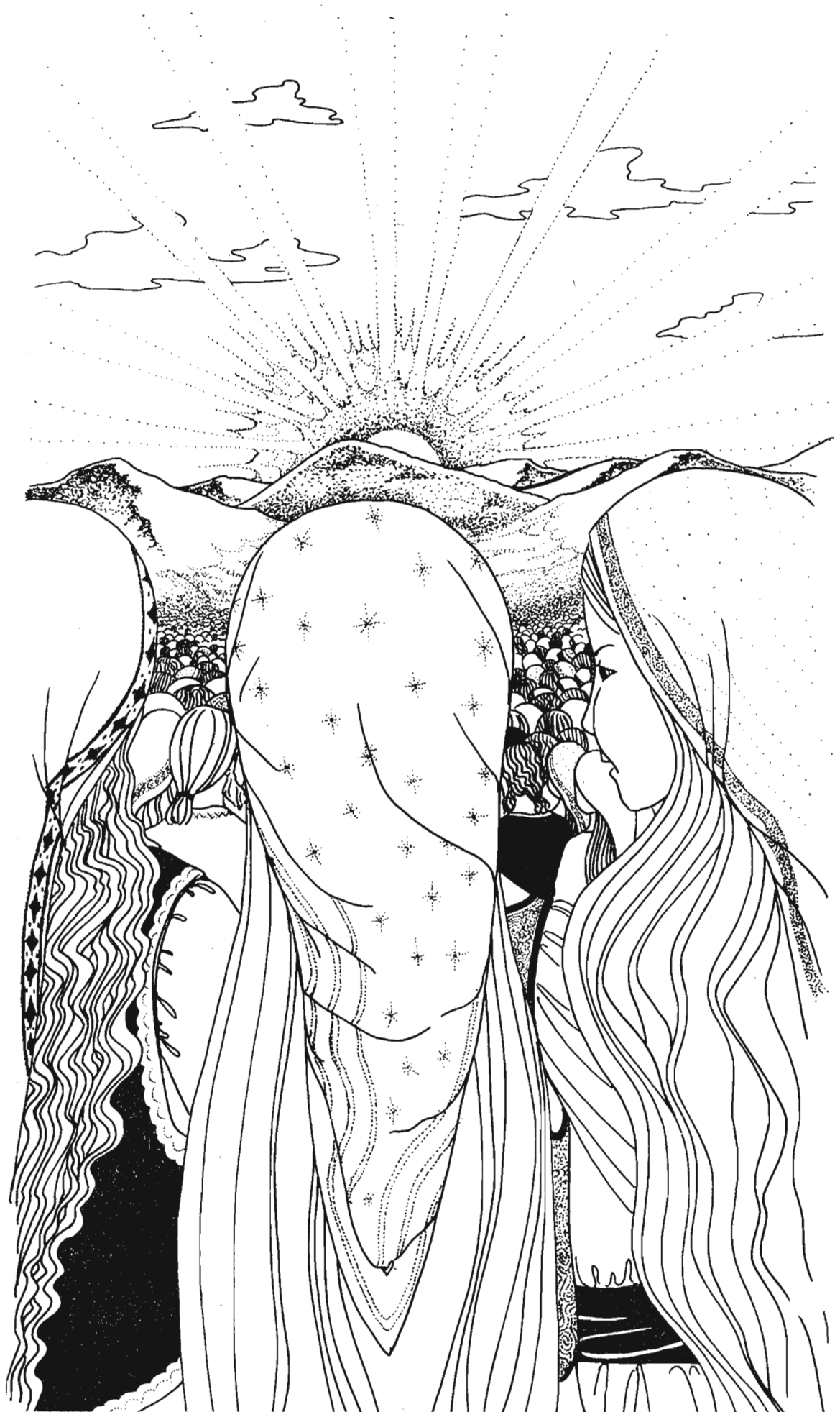


You've probably heard many people say, "I found it. I've discovered the true way." Christians say it the loudest, but so do the Buddhists, those who are into astral projection, and even those who just believe in pot and LSD. I tried all those things, but now I have found what my heart yearned for. I have found love. I have found peace. I live with 300 or more other people, who, though from different backgrounds, have felt the same way I did as I grew up.

I was drawn here. I never thought that there was any reality other than the one I knew. But by what might be called a coincidence, I found the truth.

The only way you will be able to find out and know if what I'm saying is true is to find me and talk to me. I will tell you all the details that are missing in this story. I would like to sit and talk with you for hours. My name is Margalit. Come and see me and talk to me. I have my life to share with you ■

Margalit



CRYIN' UP THE WIND



My ship was coming. Next month the tour began. I was getting excited, as always, because the tour meant fun. But it was more than just fun. There was more at stake for me because I was so unsatisfied with my life-in-between-tours. The Grateful Dead shows recharged me with a fresh enjoyment of life. Without this food I was afraid of getting stale and loosing touch with what life was all about.

I was going to school in New Paltz, New York, and working on the mountain. But whenever the Dead came around they were top priority.

John and I went to Ticketron with a pocket full of money and a smile on our face. Regardless of whether or not we got tickets we were destined for the shows but we were going to get tickets to as many shows as we could. Ahhh, it felt so good to spread our tickets in our hands and fan our faces with them. The ultimate party and our money and efforts had gained us an invitation.

Our trip to Augusta, Maine, was explosive. It was the peak of fall. We drove through an endless stream of colors all the way to Maine. Imagine rivers of living rainbows. All along the Interstate, the maple trees were burning with colors I had never seen before. Isn't it amazing how a little tab of LSD can seemingly set you free from all kinds of unseen prisons. Like the Dead sang, "It could be an illusion, but I might as well try, I might as well try."

When we got to Augusta, I was delighted to see a large parking lot full of Deadheads and a patch of woods in the middle of the parking lot with camp fires glowing. It was like an oasis in the desert. The Dead sang, "I was born in a desert, I was raised in a lions' den." Sometimes I felt like they were talking about me.

The Dead were like an oasis in the desert. There were always so many people around who had nothing better to do than to enjoy life together. I think there was something in all of us that knew there was

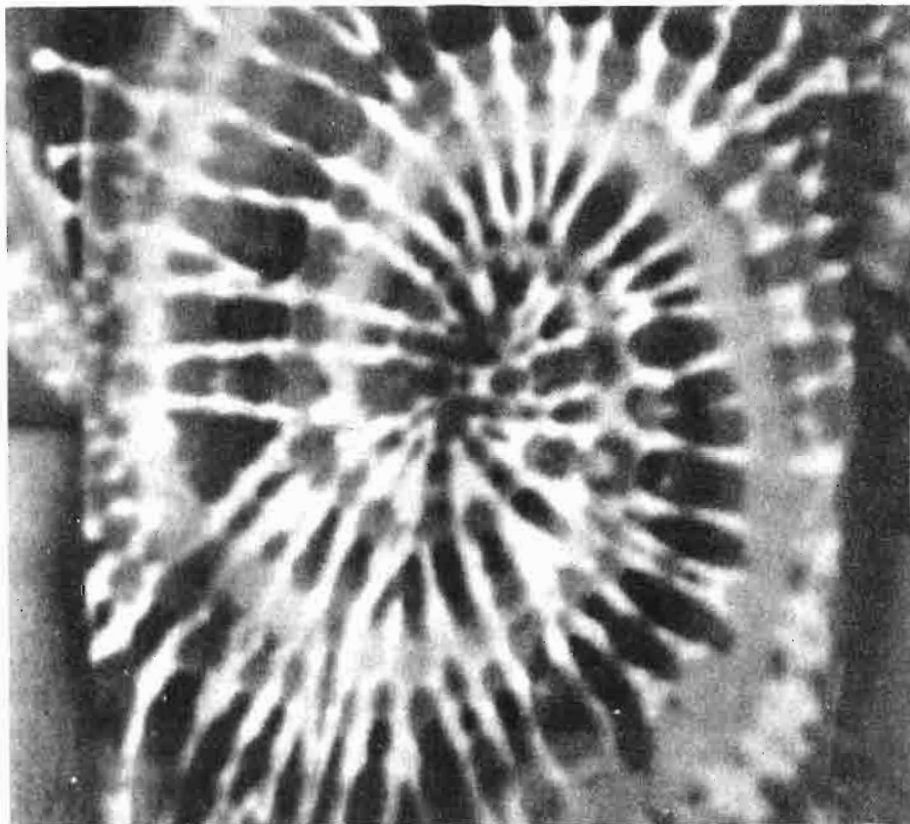
more to life than what we had seen. We could sense that life was never meant to be a drag, no, there was more to life than that. The Grateful Dead seemed to hint about a freer way of life but I guess it was easier for them than for me because when the whole experience was over the money was in their hands and I was looking for my next meal and a ride home.

The next morning we ate acid and french fries for breakfast and the day began with a fantastic trip into the realm of psychedelics. I set out on a quest to find a bathroom and I ended up inside the coliseum. One of the security guards asked me if I had any rolling papers and I gave him my whole pack. He said if I needed anything later, I could find him working at the door. So later, when I met two people who were desperate for a ticket I brought them to the guard I had met and he let them in. It always felt so good to be able to give people something they needed for free. I just wished I had more to give.

Life was so wonderful. We were free. Nothing could stop us now. It felt like we had found the meaning of life. One day at Philly, the Dead were playing "Scarlet Begonias" and we were dancing in the back of the building. In the midst of the music I could hear shuffling feet and voices whispering the words. I knew there was an understanding among the people there. An understanding beyond words. I was sure this was what life was all about.

Then, New York. At the end of the show the lights came on and I looked at all the brightly-colored people. An indescribable feeling arose inside me and I knew this was my people, my family. We had been through so much together over the years. Like the Dead sang, "Once in awhile you get shown the light in the strangest of places if you look at it right."

Life was youthful, flowing. Life took on new meaning with the Dead. Life was exciting, colorful, full of expectation and inspiration. We were young and without a care. But, like the Dead sang, "When life looks like easy street there is danger at your door."



Life had a darker side that we hadn't learned to deal with yet. In the Dead songs I found hints of a way to get through those times. It was then that the words seemed to communicate so much. Sometimes I wished there was a clearer message. One line might communicate ten different things to ten different people.

This confusion often lead me to a form of peace. I would just give up, trust the band, and let it all go like they said in "Franklin's Tower" - "If you get confused listen to the music play."

I was like a little child on a selfish and perpetual pursuit of happiness. If someone tried to tell me to do something I didn't like, I didn't do it. Even if it divided me from that person I was sure that I knew what was best for me.



It was peace but it was a shallow peace. It worked for me because I wasn't starving to death; I didn't have any children to feed, I wasn't being bombed or shot at, and I lived in a free country. I guess under these circumstances it's easy to give up all your worries. After all, what do you really have to worry about? But I did worry about the condition of mankind and how quickly forces could turn against me.

As the years went by the Grateful Dead began to satisfy me less and less. Yet it was the best thing I knew. It was the only home I had. Among the Grateful Dead was the only place I knew where we could all stay together. I think there was something deep in us, something that's in all human beings that knows we should live together and work towards a common cause. At least at the Grateful Dead we were all together enjoying ourselves.

I used to look down at the people I saw who seemed to be trapped in the system, as if I was above them because I had a freer lifestyle than they had. It was bad for me to think this way because it was their system that was feeding me. Without that system that we despised, we would have spent most of our time trying to grow food, make clothes, and find a place to keep warm and dry. Then we would have faced the problem of having to stick together when the work got hard.

I feel bad now that I wasn't more grateful then towards the people who made it possible for me to live my irresponsible lifestyle. I wish I could have had more compassion and understanding of where these fellow human beings of mine were coming from.

Here's the ironic thing. In my mind I was sure that I loved peace and unity, yet when it got down to giving up my own ideas of happiness to be a part of someone else's, my rebellion was exposed. When it came right down to it, I was the ultimate authority in my own life. I listened to my SELF above anyone else. So there really was no unity. My heart was far from others. I only respected people as much as they were good for me. I trusted the way I saw things more than the way other people saw them.

Then I met some people who knew more about unity than anyone I had ever met because they were living a life of unity. They said they were followers of Yahshua the Messiah. Yahshua knew more about unity than anyone who had ever lived. He never did anything on his own initiative but he always did what his Source told him. He didn't allow himself to be ruled by his own personal desires and opinions. He was free to love.

Yahshua never questioned his Father's authority. He knew the love of his Creator. That is true love, to be loyal to our Creator and to do His will. If everyone was doing the will of our Creator then the same harmony that's expressed in nature would be expressed among human beings. Yahshua said that if anyone was willing to do the will of God then they would know if his teaching was from God.

I followed these men I had met back to their Community and what I saw gave me more hope than I had ever imagined. I needed this hope so badly, especially since many things had happened over the past two years exposing how rotten my heart really was.

I knew I needed to be forgiven for my selfishness. I couldn't escape from it. Like a year before when I went to the New Year's shows in San Francisco. I couldn't afford to go but my grandparents who lived in Berkeley bought me a plane ticket because they wanted to see me.

The airplane arrived on the night of the first show. I wasn't planning to go but I had met a Deadhead on the plane. He was renting a car to go to the show and he offered me a ride. The only thing bad about it was that he had to leave right away.

When I got off the plane my relatives were there to meet me. These were people who cared about me, and who hadn't seen me for a long time. I hadn't been off the plane for more than a few minutes when I told them I wanted to go to the show. It must have hurt them but they said alright because they saw how much I wanted to go. I felt terrible but I was so selfish that I went in spite of them.





Then to top it all off I didn't even get into the show that night. I just stood on the sidewalk behind the coliseum and thought over and over about what a jerk I was.

Then after the last show I saw four people I had traveled with on the East coast. I knew they had spent a lot of time together and considered themselves family. But the truth came out that day.

The youngest girl among them didn't have a place to go or a way back home. The other three got very annoyed with her and made it all too clear she was on her own, even though she was just sixteen, 3000 miles away from home, and had no idea what to do. They left her alone and in tears because she was a burden to them, even though they had no other plans than to party as usual. The situation got resolved when she found a way home, but seeing all this happen made me feel awful.

I could write many more pages of things that happened to me that brought me to a point of despair. I was totally disillusioned about myself. I couldn't escape the reality of where I was at. I was guilty!

I felt so worthless. I wanted so badly to have hope but I felt so guilty. If someone had suggested that I should die, I would have known inside that they were right.

Once I had thought I was a warrior for love, peace, and unity but now I knew it was a fantasy. I was only a hindrance for anyone who was still fighting for these things. I had blown it. I couldn't change.

Of course I didn't let it show on the outside what was going on on the inside. But I never had joy anymore. I was insecure and almost all my trips were bad now. I couldn't even be alone anymore without being tormented by my conscience. I couldn't ignore it, even though I tried. I was totally miserable to the core of my being.

I ended up back on the east coast. I fled to the mountains one day because I was so frustrated. I ended up squatting at the edge of a cliff thinking how quickly I would be forgotten if I died. My friends would freak out for a day and my family would be upset for a year or so, but life would go on and my name would soon become a faint memory. I jumped up and ran because death was so real and I didn't want to die.

I ran and ran, watching the trees go by until I realized I couldn't run from myself. Then I sat down and cried. I didn't know who I was crying out to but I was writhing in torment. All I could do was cry out to the wind hoping my voice could be heard by someone who could help me. But the hope seemed so faint.

But Yahshua heard me and as fast as he could he sent men from his Community to bring me home. They didn't know who they were looking for but they knew there was a purpose for their being sent out.

When I saw them I was drawn to them. When I said hello they smiled at me. I could tell they were genuine in their desire to talk with me, but I figured it was because they didn't know me. But they did know me, even better than I knew myself. They had compassion for me because they had been just like me and Yahshua had forgiven them and given them a new life.

They lead me to the place where I could meet Yahshua. That place was the death of my old selfish life which I was glad to get rid of. I became a part of Yahshua's body here on earth. This is where his Spirit lives.

Now I'm not guilty anymore because Yahshua died for us all and took our guilt upon himself. He could do that because he wasn't guilty and he loves us. Now it doesn't matter how guilty you are because you can be forgiven and receive a new heart.

Now I don't live for myself anymore. I repented of that. Now I live to bring about Yahshua's kingdom on the earth where his love will prevail. Yahshua loves you and so do we. This might sound religious to you but it is more real than anything you've ever experienced. You can come live with us and see ■

Love, Aharon

WORRIES IN PARADISE

EDONIAN
W. Saturday, Vermont to Wednesday
LED AND ONE N



ONE KIL



"Paradise" was where we'd meet. Ricky and I headed down the rocky path to look for Gino. It looked like we were going to have the place all to ourselves. At lunch time, all the "heads" gathered there to hang out, eat, get stoned, and play hacky-sack; but now after school it would probably be deserted.

"Aren't any worries in Paradise," we'd say, but Gino had a few. He was thinking of dropping out of college and joining the army. That was crazy! We were all against it. Since his real mom went into a mental institution and his dad died of a heart attack, he'd been through some pretty grim times. I guess the pressure of the world was starting to get to him and the army was his way of bailing out.

There he was up ahead, smiling away or smirking. You couldn't really tell. His glasses were slightly tilted and his baseball cap curled up, but he was as good-humored and sensitive-hearted as always. He loved life to the fullest and was friends with everybody. But Ricky and I were his closest friends. We'd been through a lot together.

"Paradise" was deserted. We took our time making our plans and talked to Gino about the army. Then the three of us headed down to the boat house, a run-down place on the inlet in the middle of town. We had hidden a 16 foot outboard motorboat there. It had belonged to another good friend but now it was ours. He had ripped off Gino's pot crop and this was our payback. Although we didn't have any real proof, we strongly suspected him. We dumped his engine, painted the boat a different color, rearranged the look of it so it'd be less suspicious, and put another stolen motor on it.

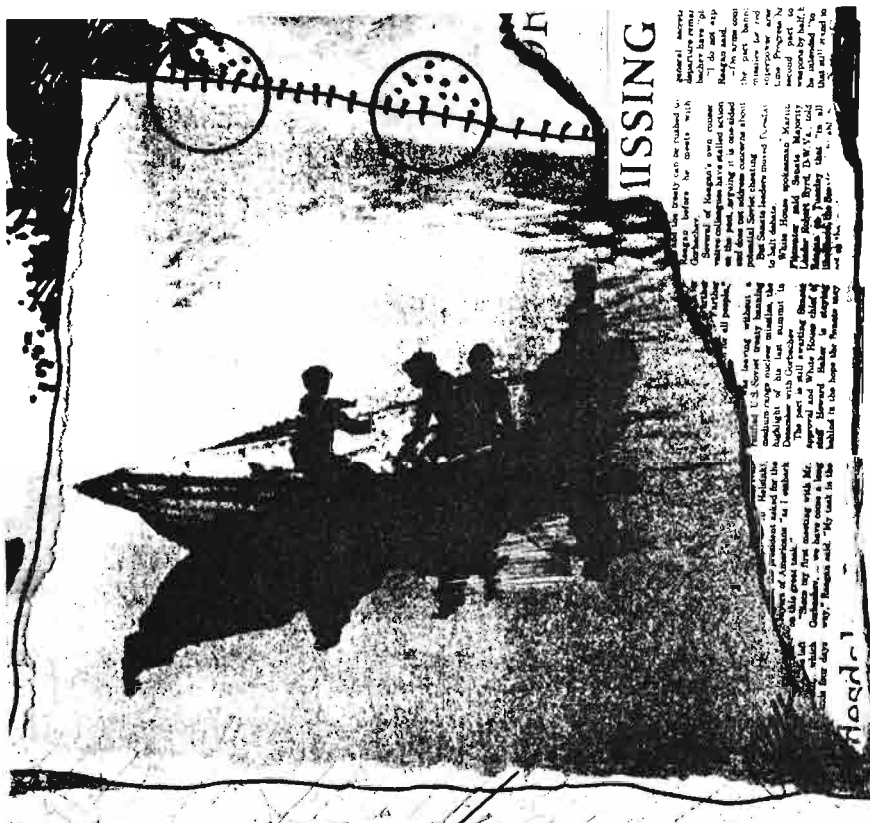
We got into the boat and I tried to start the motor. It wouldn't start so Ricky, who was a pretty stout person, also tried and failed. Then Gino tried, but it still wouldn't turn over. After getting really discouraged I decided to call Jack. I shot up the alley way and across the street to a pay phone at a smoke shop and candy store called "Herbs."

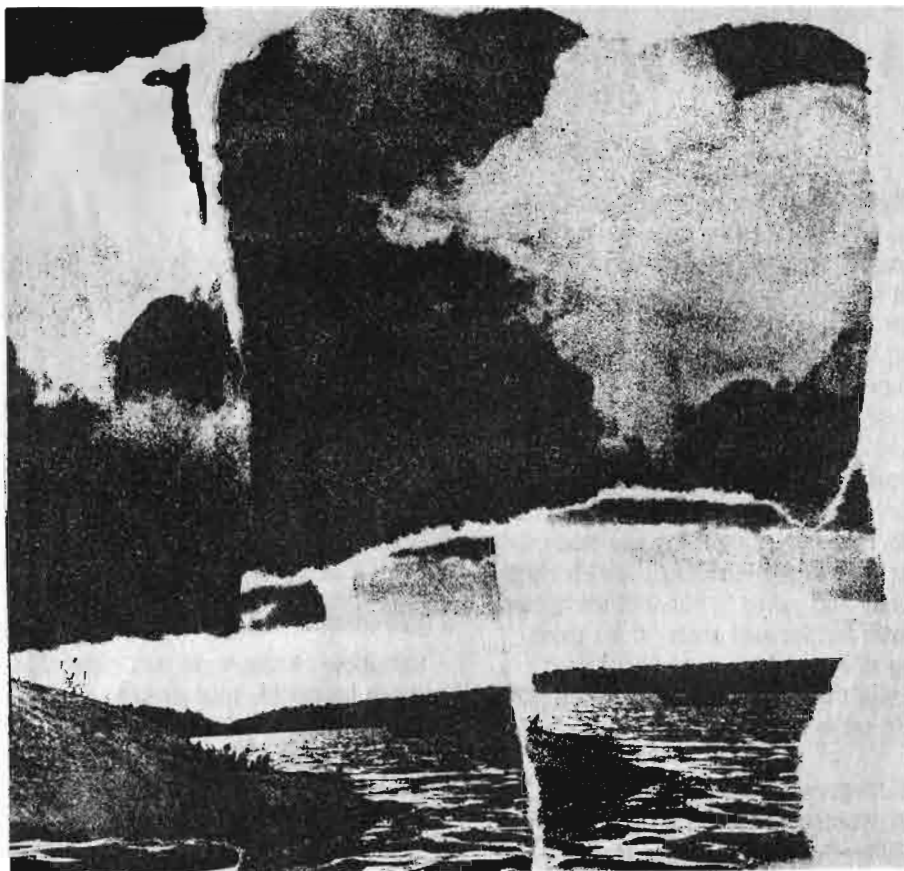
Jack was in his twenties. We all liked him a lot because he could make any situation light and funny. He was a character. It's kinda hard to explain. If you knew him as I did, you'd see he had a kind heart.

When I told him our predicament he said he'd come help us with the boat. He also liked our plan.

It didn't take him long to get the motor started. We were overjoyed. We backed out of the boat house, turned, and cruised up the channel. I hadn't a single worry holding me back. I told Mom earlier I was going fishing, so she wouldn't worry about me. She constantly did so, even though I was seventeen and could take care of myself.

Man, what a day! I could hardly believe the weather. It was beautiful out. The sun was shining, the sky was clear, and the water was a brilliant blue. It was even fairly warm for November. I loved Skaneateles Lake. To me it was the prettiest lake in all the world.





We had brought some provisions to help us spend the time. We puttered about, laughing, getting stoned, and drinking a bottle of wine. Finally it was time to head down the lake. Although it was 18 miles long, we weren't planning to go that far. The prime spots were a lot closer than that. As we sped down to them, the sun began to slowly sink. The cover of night was starting to come down around us.

The east shore line was just ahead and we slowed down so we wouldn't make much noise. The lake was calm and we crept in till we spied our first target. We steered into the shoreline and ran aground. Slowly we got out and ascended a flight of stairs. At the top we finished off the bottle of wine and smoked a little more pot. We stared around at our surroundings and listened to the sounds coming off the lake. A V of Canadian geese were honking and banking away.

All around the camp were woods. They sheltered us from the road, quite a distance away. We were on a high spot, too; the camp had been set on a little cliff so we had a bird's eye view of the lake and the surrounding properties. It was an excellent spot.

We could see and hear any approaching danger. If someone came by water, we could escape by land, and if the police came on foot, we could take off by boat. We'd be gone in a flash and there were thousands of places along the lake to hide.

On the front porch was a cardboard warning, signed by the Sheriff's department. We tore it down, crumpled it into a small ball, and tossed it away. We knew we had nothing to worry about. The summer residents were all gone and the police rarely patrolled the camps. Who cared anyway? We could easily escape.

We smashed a window, climbed in, and looted and rampaged the place with a fury and excitement that's hard to explain. It was as if I was getting high off of it. It was a rebellion that felt so good because I hated the law and the system. I felt as if I was putting one over on it. To me, it was a real blow to the law and authority I hated.

After we finished with that camp, we loaded our boat and went on to the next, and the next, and so on. Each time we broke in, it was as violent and destructive as the last. We didn't stop until the boat was filled. We were overjoyed at what we had gotten and what we were going to do with our newly-found treasures. Somehow it felt good to rip people off. It was a high for me and nothing more. I didn't need any of the stuff I took. It was just for the thrill and for some easy money.

We realized it was getting late. We decided to head back to town. As we started out, the wind seemed to be picking up a bit. It was no real surprise. It usually did that at night so we didn't pay any attention to it.

Normally it would have taken us a little less than an hour to get back, but since we had such a heavy load, it would take us much longer tonight. We pushed the boat into the water and climbed in. We headed toward the middle of the lake in order to avoid hitting any boat moorings which dotted the shore line all the way down to the end of the lake. We were afraid if we hit one it would wreck the prop on the boat's engine. By this time it was really dark and the wind had picked up more. It was starting to make the water a little rough.

As time went on, the wind blew even harder and harder. Some good-sized waves splashed over the front of the boat. I was up front, Ricky and Gino sat in the middle, and Jack drove the boat. Our loot was stashed between the seats in a large space where we had taken out one of the seats. Everything was pretty well-balanced, but the wind and waves continued to increase and rock us. I became concerned because the waves were easily splashing water over the bow. I would have gotten really wet had it not been for Ricky and I switching places. I asked Jack if I could drive and he said yes. We all switched places very carefully so we wouldn't rock the boat. The extra weight made it unstable.

I finally got to the back of the boat, took hold of the throttle, and immediately felt the pull of the waves. It was difficult to steer properly because of our weight. The force of the waves pulled us along, too, because we were going in the same direction as they were. It was like surfing. When we reached the peak of a wave, we would slide down the front of it like a surfer.

As we rode further down the lake, the waves picked up even more. Slowly I turned the boat toward shore. We were all still pretty excited about what we had done. We laughed at how crime **did** pay. We felt like pirates sneaking in and raiding, and then escaping in our boat.

All of a sudden a huge wave came up and we plowed right into it. The wave broke over the front of the boat and caused it to plunge deep into the icy cold water like a submarine. In a few short seconds we were totally submerged. Immediately I turned the motor off. Everything was quiet for a few seconds; all we heard was the wind and the waves. It felt like a dream. It didn't seem as if what was happening was real. Then it hit. Terror and fear came rushing in like cold water. I looked around and noticed that we were practically in the middle of the lake.

Debris floated around us. The wind blew and icy waves like walls of water came rolling in on top of us. We all began to yell, but it was in vain. We were too far out and the wind and waves muffled our cries for help. I realized we would surely die if we stayed near the boat. I screamed out that we should swim to the east shore which was the closest. I untied my sneakers and slipped them off. I took off my jacket and began to look around for something that would float.

I saw something that looked like a life preserver floating nearby and I grabbed for it. Before I realized that it was a pair of waders, I was entangled in them. I desperately reached back and grabbed a boat cushion, got untangled, and started swimming toward shore. The cold seemed to seep deep into me like death itself.

While I swam away, I heard Jack, Gino, and Rick scream for help and yell my name. The thought of dying alone terrified me even more than drowning. I swam back to be with them. If I was going to die I wanted to die with somebody else and not alone. When I reached the boat I saw Gino swimming around the bow and Jack was clinging to the motor. He was trying to stay out of the icy water. It looked as black as death. The reflection of the sky made the water dark and foreboding. I swam close to Ricky and yelled to him and the others to swim for the east shore. If we were going to live we'd have to swim for it. We didn't have long before hypothermia would set in.

I turned away from my friends and began swimming toward a distant light on shore. For a short time, Ricky and I shouted encouragements like, "We'll make it!" and "Come on, we can do it!" But soon the cold kept us from saying anything. We had to save all our energy and swim for our lives. Then the darkness and waves separated us. Once again I was alone facing death.

Suddenly a horrifying sound filled the night. Jack was following behind us, but was having some sort of difficulty. His screams were terrifying. Fear gripped me as I listened to him yelling that he couldn't swim anymore. He began to yell my name and scream desperately. Thoughts ran through my head. I couldn't turn back. I just couldn't. I would surely die if I did. I can't, I can't help him. I can't, I've got to keep on swimming.

I listened to him scream and cry my name over and over until suddenly, it stopped. It became quiet once more. I might have freaked out at that point. I can't remember what I was going through. I might have felt like crying, but I couldn't. Everything was quiet except for a few distant cries from Gino. Apparently he had chosen to stay near the boat. Gino's cries for help stopped soon after Jack's. I hadn't heard Ricky's voice either for a long time. I wondered what had become of him, too.



Somehow I knew there was more of a purpose for my life than drowning in a lake. I just felt it inside. I didn't know what it was. Somehow I just knew I had a purpose in life. I looked up and began to pray and make all sorts of promises to God. I knew I was supposed to serve him somehow and to do something that would make a difference in life. I just wanted to live. After that I felt at peace. I even happened to look up and see a shooting star streak across the sky. The shore line was closer now; so close I could make out the tree line. I knew for sure I would make it.

The shore got closer and closer. I heard a voice say, "Chris, you can stand." I put my hands down and felt the bottom. It was pretty rocky. I looked up and saw Ricky. I tried to stand, but I couldn't. I stumbled onto the shore. Rick asked me what was wrong, but I didn't know. He then helped me to a house that was about 10 yards away.

Ricky and I began to pound desperately on the glass doors. An old lady came. We screamed at her that we needed help and that our two friends were still out on the lake. She said that she was just an old lady and couldn't help us. Just then her daughter came to the door and let us in. I immediately went to the phone and called the fire department. They couldn't understand what I was saying. I became really cold. Before that I think I was just numb. I stripped down to my underwear and then fell against a wall in total exhaustion and hypothermia.

Soon after that, firemen came and filled the house. Policemen also were there and asked Ricky all sorts of questions. I didn't say a word. I just watched things. People covered me up and put me in an ambulance.

I arrived at the hospital and was rushed into a room. They placed me in a bed, and covered me with hot blankets. They watched my heart rate on a machine and kept taking my temperature.

I lay there on the table with hardly any feelings or emotions. I thought about becoming a big hero. If Gino and Jack died, people would always remember the great tragedy. I also owed Gino twenty dollars. If he died, I wouldn't owe him any money.



Some police detectives came in and started asking me about the accident. I told them we had been out fishing. We hit an extremely large wave and the boat went through it and sank.

Soon after that, they rolled Gino in on a stretcher. By then, I was pretty well back to normal. They placed me in a wheel chair and my dad wheeled me over to see Gino's sister. She was in the waiting room, crying. I just looked at her and said "I'm sorry." She said she was thankful that I made it out alive. In the room next to us they were frantically working on Gino, hoping to revive him. They hoped they'd be able to save him. They thought that maybe the icy water had slowed his system down and that his brain had survived without much oxygen.

My dad drove me home. My legs were in pain because I had thawed out. I lay on the living room couch and stared at the TV, not saying anything. I didn't have any emotions whatsoever. I don't even remember any thoughts coming to me. My dad left the room and my mom came in. She immediately started in on me. How could I have done such a thing? She went on and on about how I was responsible. Finally I retaliated with a few harsh words and she went upstairs. I felt so angry at her. I was badly hurt by what she said. I felt that she might be right. After that my dad came in and I told him what mom had said. He said she was just very upset and worried.

Suddenly the phone rang. My dad left the room. He came back a few minutes later weeping. I knew it. Gino was dead. I had no emotions. Finally I made my way upstairs to my room and fell asleep.

In the morning I went into the bathroom with a radio and turned on the news. Sure enough, it was the main story. A newscaster blared out about the tragedy that had occurred the night before, "...one dead, one missing, two made it to shore alive." When I heard it, it struck me so hard that it felt like it killed me. I finally realized that two of my best friends were dead. The night before at the hospital I could have at least prayed for Gino and Jack, but instead I thought of myself, my sick selfish attitude, my own gain, and greediness. I felt I had given up on my friends for being a big hero and a 20 dollar bill. I cried so deeply after realizing my sins. I hated myself for my wickedness. I hated the thought that two of my friends were gone and I was left behind to face the world with a guilt that I couldn't bear.

My heart broke. I screamed and cried. How I hated myself for the evil thoughts I had had! I felt I could have somehow saved their lives. There must have been some way I could have saved them. At least I could have prayed for them. If only I had prayed for them, they might still be alive.

I turned the channel and cranked the tunes. How I missed them already. A part of me had died with them in the water that night. I remember looking up and praying ever so deeply and intensely for God to save my life. I knew I had a purpose. I was alive, but I didn't know why.

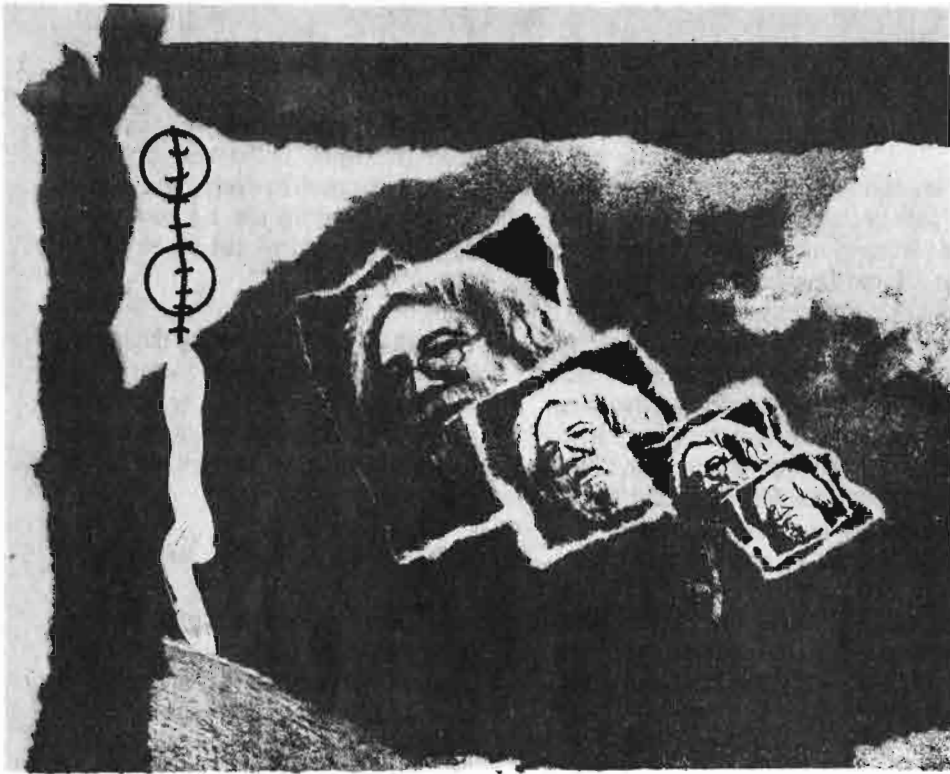
"I hated myself for the evil thoughts I had had the night before. I kept these thoughts secret for years. From that day on my life drastically got worse. I ended up getting arrested for what we had done.

I buried my friend Gino under a big pine tree next to his father; a place where he once said he wanted to be buried when he died. Jack was never found. They searched for days through snow storms and rough water until they finally gave up. (Some said he was alive and in Florida, escaping the law for some prior crimes he had committed.) I couldn't be around Ricky anymore because of the pain we went through together. We became distant for awhile, and the law did their best to keep us apart.

I plunged into drugs and alcohol. I was driven to know the truth about why I was created, why I was spared, and why my friends died. The pain and guilt I felt became unbearable at times. I put my faith in many things - witchcraft, music, sex, and relationships. They always fell apart.

Four years later, I finally turned back to the God I knew had saved my life on the lake that windy November night. I cried out in desperation and loneliness, my heart grieving for his help once again. I finally realized that I loved him deeply inside my heart and that the only way I would ever be redeemed in his eyes would be that I'd have to die for him. I looked up with tears in my eyes and guilt in my conscience. I said, "I don't know you or your son but I give my life to you. I want to die for you." Somehow I knew it was the only way I could be saved.

After that I began to follow the Grateful Dead. I went to Rochester and then to Foxboro.



I tripped on the way up from Syracuse and was just coming down when I got there. It was a smoky, hazy night. I showed up with a couple bags and about fifty dollars that I had schemed off my parents a few days earlier. Once again I was searching for a home, looking for my chance to escape from society. My mind raced. It might be near. "Maybe you'll find direction, around some corner where it's been waiting to meet you... Don't you let that deal go down, wait until that deal comes round." True love and a real home full of joy, love and unity might be right around the corner. "Is there such a place?" I asked myself.

It was hard coming down. Everyone looked ghostly. They all had such hollow looks in their eyes. A desperate, lonely sorrow walked around with me. It was painful to see the beautiful children of the Dead starting to fade away. It was like walking among the starving, like walking where people were hungering for life.

I met a girl from my home town. She was tripping and said with a sigh, "I wish I could sleep. I don't know if I should take another trip." She'd always been loving and good-natured, but now she looked lost and weary. We walked around and she answered my questions about what she had been doing for the last couple months. Finally, I

remembered my friend's car where we had some sodas and a bit of food. I told her she could sleep there if she wanted to. On the way to the car, we got separated in the crowd. Once again I was on my own.

I hated being alone. Even with thousands of people around, I was still desperately lonely. I was hoping for a lucky break. I was looking for a way out of the system, out of the rotten way the world had become. What I saw while walking around broke my heart. The crowd I loved and felt at home with seemed so hostile and greedy. People didn't have time to talk to anyone. All they wanted to do was to make money and to sell this or that. Once you bought something, they went on their way. They didn't care about you as a person. They didn't want to know what you felt about life. It seemed so strange to find that at a Dead show.

Deadheads don't like the way the world is. A spirit of love, peace, and unity can't be found in the world. The only place I ever found anything like that spirit was at the Dead shows. But tonight even that spirit was being crushed. Were the true children of the Dead fading away, heading back into the system? Had they given up the struggle? Had they lost the battle? Were we going to let the children die and the earth be destroyed?

When I got to my friend's car, I lay down. I was heartbroken and more confused than ever. I fell asleep on the trunk to the sound of exploding fireworks, people talking, and trippers walking by. By morning I felt better, but I still couldn't forget what I had seen the night before. Suddenly I felt a big thud on my head and sat up quickly. Several people around the car were surprised. They had thought the sleeping bag was empty.

To my amazement, there was the girl I knew. She was hanging out with some guys. I offered them all some sodas and they took them happily. They offered me some herb but I refused. I wanted to stay straight at this show. At Rochester I had smoked and had gotten really confused.

Remembering Rochester got me started thinking about the Dead. For a year I hadn't gone to see them. "Will they still remember me?" I wondered. They must be able to, I thought. No one else yells like me. No one else could yell in tune like me. When Bob Weir looks over to the right side of the stage, he'll be astonished. There I'll be, dancing as always close to the stage. The band will surely know that I am back. The friend of the devil, the lost sailor, the modern day Samson, the long distance runner would be there helping the band walk on Shakedown Street, yelling, dancing, and trying to make everybody's trip as wild and as beautiful as possible. I wanted everyone to experience the spirit of the Dead and hear the band play their best.

I realized that I couldn't get high at this show, not even one toke. If I had a bowl or a joint I might mess up my opportunity to receive the message or person who would give me directions home. It must be real close, I thought. I'd given a lot to get to this concert. If it didn't happen at this show, I'd go on to Philadelphia. If it didn't happen there, I'd go to the next. I'd keep going until I found what I was looking for.

Since I didn't want to get high, the group around the car left. Once again I was all alone. I sat on the car and waited. I watched people walk by and talked to some of them. I wanted to be friendly, but everybody was too busy to talk for long. It seemed like everyone was more interested in selling things and tripping than getting close to one another.

Morning was depressing. The same spirit that was in the crowd the night before was still around. Its influence was overwhelming. How I longed for a true home and someone to take me away from the pain and suffering I felt. It was almost unbearable. My heart and my mind felt like they were going to explode.

About that time a woman came by asking for donations. If I contributed, she'd give me a Dead sticker or some kind of hat. "What's it for?" I asked. "For needy children." "No, thanks," I said and then blurted out, "I'm a needy child." After that someone else came by passing out papers, **Dylan and To The Deadheads.**

I leafed through it and liked the pictures. I thought they'd look good on my wall at home. Oh no, I remembered. I don't have a wall. I had just gotten kicked out for the umpteenth time. I threw the papers in the trunk and went back watching people as they walked by. I wanted to talk to someone who knew how I was feeling. Anybody. I didn't care who. I just needed a break.

A little bit later two more people came by and asked, "Did you get a freepaper?" It seemed peculiar that it was happening again. Maybe it was for a purpose. It must be more than a coincidence. When I said, "Yes," they began to walk away. I asked, "Do you print these yourself?" and one man said, "Yes." He began to tell me about his commune. Maybe this was what I'd been looking for the last year or two. I didn't want to let them out of my reach.

He began to walk away. I asked, "Can I walk with you?" "Yes," he said. As we walked, we talked about the things I had been thinking. He, too, mentioned the world and how corrupt it was. It was wonderful to hear someone else talk about the same things. He said, "We are all sick of the world system. We're going to start communes wherever we can and become a new nation of people. You can come home and live with us."

"I've got my bags packed. I'm ready to leave," I said.

"Let's get them and we'll go," he said.

As I grabbed my bags, I saw one of my friends sitting on the car. "I won't be back," I said. "Don't worry about me." He didn't say anything. He just looked bewildered.

We walked to a large bus where some of his friends were standing. I told them about the night before and what I felt. I was crying. Tears poured down my face. I was sorrowful about the world and the scene at Foxboro. After years of drugs, false hopes, and dreams, I finally saw how blind I was. All around me was a system filled with injustice and destruction. It seemed like I was being pulled from one world to another. I liked the life that was being offered, so it was easy to let myself be pulled. I felt like a drowning child. I held up my outstretched hands and they grabbed me and pulled me up. My life was about to be saved and I was grateful.

Someone asked me if I was hungry. Hesitantly, I said "yes." A woman brought me some lunch. How I loved these people! They were the answer to my prayers.

Many nights, stoned and alone, I had prayed for a home and a family that would understand me. I wanted someone who would listen to my problems and who would heal my broken heart. God had heard my prayers. I wanted to know him and now I do. I love him and live with his children. They found me. They filled my darkness full of light. They filled my heart with their lives. I had truly been brought home.

I was a lost sheep. I had no shepherd. Now I am in the sheepfold with the Shepherd and a family.

If you need a home and a family, if you are searching desperately and can't find one, if you hate doing drugs but can't stop, then this is for you. If you ever wished you had something better to do, if you've been looking for a new life, or freedom from the bondage you're under - then this is for you. Whether you love your Creator, or feel he's out of reach and impossible to see, whether you hate the injustice, corruption and greed of the world-system or not, or whether you need direction to a new pure life or just simply "answers," this is for you. It's not just a fantasy. It isn't for only a couple hours or a day. It is for eternity. I wish you could come and be a part of this. It is the greatest family on earth. We're the truest grateful dead there are.

Chris

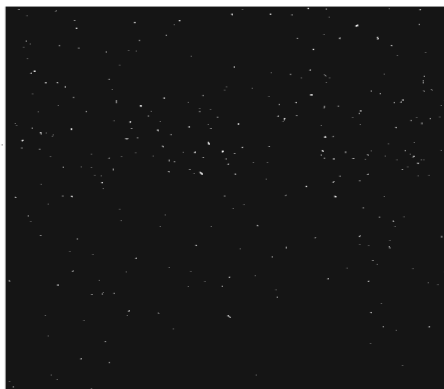


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JAIL

One day, you wake up in jail. It's the darkest, blackest, gloomiest jail you've ever seen in your whole life. You can't imagine how they built cells where no light can creep in. It's so dark you can't even see your feet...or your hands...or even the tip of your nose. The pitch-black room cuts off any chance for you to see what kind of shape you're in. You might as well not even have a body, you think, 'cause you can't tell if it's even there.

You try to feel around, but your hands



are chained. When you try to move your toes, they're chained, too; so tightly, they can't even wiggle when your brain commands them to. It's the same way with your head and neck. They've got it pinioned in some sort of headlock. Maybe you're strait-jacketed. Or maybe they've drugged you up with a sedative that makes you feel limp like a bowl of mush or a wet rag. They might have given you an injection in the base of your spine, a powerful nerve block, and you're as good as paralyzed until it wears off.

There's really nothing to do except to wait for the effects of that stupid stuff to go away. You fight back an overwhelming surge of panic and settle down to think. You figure the best thing to do is to try and cry out for help. "Help! Let me out of here!" you scream. Your voice travels about as far as your lips and gets drowned in a silence so thick you can hear a pin drop. Must be sound-proof cells. You know it's your voice, though. You've known the sound of it ever since you were a little kid. Even if no one else can hear it, you do.

Church Street, on your way to the music school and Fred the Panhandler hits you up for a quarter. He hits you up whenever he sees you. Never mind other people, he always seems to find you. Maybe that's why your heart burns against him so, 'cause he always puts you on the spot. Or maybe it's 'cause his skin is black and he's on welfare, and the state is giving him more money for doing nothing than you get for working.

Solitary confinement is pretty solitary, you note. You wonder what you can do to get yourself out of your predicament. You don't like the lonely feeling that's settled down on your guts like a bunch of crows on a newly-seeded field. You want someone to talk to in the worst way, but all there is, is yourself, and you'd give your eyeteeth for a way to shake off that nagging voice that tells you, you're never going to get out of there.

You start to think about your recent past and in a split second a couple of numbing incidents pop up immediately. The memory of them is as perfectly clear to you as the very day they happened. You're walking up

Whatever reason, you tell him 'no' and an angry train of curses follow. You just let them fly and all your pent-up rage gets released on Fred. He's hurt; you can tell. You know he's taken it before, but you've stripped his dignity away and humiliated him in a way no human should. Your pangs of conscience at the time are washed away by a flood of reasons and the whole scene gets filed away until this day, this moment, when you're alone with your thoughts. The pain feels so fresh and keen, you wish you could say something to make it right. But you can't. And it simmers in your memory like a little sterno flame.



trees. Four guys from the sub base in New London pull over and crowd in to make room for you. They're all stoned and they're getting even more wasted on the biggest hunk of hash you've ever seen in your whole life. It's as least as big as your thumb nail and twice as thick as the end of one of your fingers. You join in, everything's great... then someone fumbles the piece as he shaves off some for another round. You join them in searching and you're the first to find it on one of the floor mats. Almost unconsciously it slips from your fingers into the top of one of your boots.



Then there's the time you ripped off those guys in the car. This incident follows hard on the heels of what happened with Fred. You're hitching out to Hammonasset on a beautiful fall day, to hike on the beach, and wander around the salt-water marshes, the dunes, the old houses, and the scraggly

You continue to help them look, you poke around the floor mats, you reach under the front seat, you even check the crack between the cushions. It's not there. And when your exit comes up, you leave them at the ramp, still searching high and low for the missing hash that you know you'll get a beating for if they ever catch on. Why you remember it today and not back then seems a little strange to you. But, you figure that it's just another case when doper's greed got the better of you.



It struck every time the bowl was empty or the last bit of the roach had gone out. You knew the typical scene: a circle of friends, the camaraderie around the pipe, the other guys settling down in comfortable listening positions; "Europe '72" comes on. And there you are, sitting beside them with a stupid grin on your face. You want more. Of course, you want more. You're never satisfied until you're zonked out of your mind.

The knot tightens in your stomach. "Is that all?" you ask yourself. "Aren't we going to do another?" You sit there for ages, trying to think up a way to hint at doing more without getting totally rejected. Finally you think of it, the perfect way to plant the suggestion. And you're as happy inside as a little child opening Christmas presents under the tree. And yet you know you're always stingier when it comes to doing your own stash; it's always easier when it is someone else's. It makes you a little hot under the collar to think about the way you were, way back then. Yet there's nothing you can do, to get rid of that memory.



What you'd do to get high! What you'd do to find dope! It was like a fever that made your eye glisten with a false lustre, your cheeks flush with deceitful color, your muscles twitch with unnatural activity, and your nerves throb with restless desire. That fever had such a grip on you, it couldn't be quenched. You felt such a slave to it. Time and time again you tried to shake it off. But somehow you couldn't. You always felt so empty inside and there was never anything to fill that emptiness gnawing away at your guts. Today when you think about it, it nibbles a little bit and worms away. You feel about as vital as a man who can't shake the cold chills and the fever heat of his malaria.

There are other things popping up, in quick succession, dogging your steps like a bloodhound after an escaped criminal. Things besides dope that your heart panted after and coveted. There were your best friend's girlfriend, another man's wife, your buddy's best clothes, or someone else's car. There were jealousies and envyings and rivalries. There were rip-offs and shop-liftings and cheatings. You could stay in any one category for hours and never exhaust it. And after that, your mind flips back once again to the old thing about Fred the Panhandler and the guys with the hash. Another endless cycle begins and you play it through again like you would a Bach fugue, with a hundred or a thousand new twists to the old theme.

It's hard to face up to some of the things you did, hard to look into the darkness all around and know that it's penetrating into your innermost parts bit by bit. Or that it had been doing that all along for years.

And yet, you search for times when you still had some innocence left, before it slipped out of your grasp like a handful of sand through your fingers. Your eyes turn back to a time long ago, before you became cynical and unconcerned and indifferent; back before the public school system got ahold of you and regimented you into its citizenry. Lust and covetousness for the best of everything and whatever money can buy were bred into your little heart, year by year. They told you the sky was the limit to all your greedy desires. But once you started to acquire the possessions you longed for, it only bred new desires within you for more. The worm of discontent gnawed at your peace and all your unsatisfied desires tossed you to and fro like the waves of the restless sea. Your conscience continually cried out for some authority, any authority in your barren life, and inside lodged a pain of a hunger that could not find any satisfaction.

Under the pressure of work and social life and the lure of cheap pleasures, you lost the wonder of your earlier years. You could no longer appreciate a walk in a field or in the woods or by the ocean unless you had someone with you. Your intense joy at the freshness of the dawning day or the glory of the many-colored sunset wasn't savored unless you were high. You lost your sense of wonder for the majesty of mountains and clouds, the infinity of sky and sea, the perfection of flowers or the sight of a young animal in its earliest moments. Instead, a restless desire for excitement took its place and all your purity was robbed, channeled into a lust for sports, recreation, drugs, and other pleasures. Now you can't produce those feelings again. You are empty.



In the end, your innocence was sacrificed for other goals, other pleasures, and other pursuits. All that remained was the melancholy longing for a paradise lost. A sorrow filled you and you looked at all your wasted opportunities and wondered why you lived the way you lived.

Little do you know that in the next cell over is a vet who's playing back his whole scenario, watching it run in reverse before his eyes. He's seeing the little zinging pieces of metal fly out of a guy's chest and wing their way back to his rifle. The man he just shot stands up again and he and his buddies take their rifles back to camp, hand them in, and others pack them away, crate by crate. They're all shipped back overseas by boats and planes and taken to big factories where women disassemble them. Funny, he thinks, it's women who are chosen to do this special, careful work.

The pieces are all sent off to huge, roaring furnaces and all the little parts get melted down into one great molten mass. As it cools, railroad trains line up nearby and take the crushed ore off to the most distant parts of the country. Far away from man or beast, in lonely, remote places, men bury the trainloads far beneath the ground where no one will ever find them or use them ever again.



Also your friendships became more demanding and painful. To know others in a deeper way claimed your whole-hearted loyalty and commitment, your watchfulness and care. Much time and effort were required to increase in them. In the end, it cut deeply at the root of your self-centered life. A lot of relationships died from neglect. The tragedy of these embittered you and when you tried again, you tried more cautiously. Next time your defenses were up and your heart stayed guarded.

And all around you, for miles and miles in every direction, other men lie tucked away in the folds of darkness. Like you, their thoughts busily race over the nagging past, and their mind's eye examines every detail of the misdeeds that brought their innocence to an end. Each knows his own agony of mind and each hears his own excuses over and over again. Each goes back through his own experience. Go back through yours.



Go back to a time when the North Woods were pristine and alive, before the greed of men chopped them down and destroyed the giant trees year after year. Go back to the mountains before the miners appeared, back to a time when streams were unsluiced or valleys filled with mud. Go even further back before the plains belonged to the government. There you'll see herds of buffalo, cropping slowly windward, great shaggy beasts darkening the plains. Ride through just one herd. It'll take you all day to do it.

Watch oak trees shrink into acorns and wildflower seeds return on the wind to their source. Gold-seekers return East and railroads uproot track mile by mile. Ten thousand settlers all leave the newly-opened Oklahoma territory in one day. Greed runs backward and the ravaged New World springs back to newness.

Millions of acres of hardwood and white pine take root again. Chestnuts and walnuts burnt for charcoal, chopped up for firewood, and laid in the mud for road beds, again sway in the wind. Golden plovers again fill the skies and passenger pigeons roost in the woods.



Go back to a land of canebrakes, bluegrass, wild grains, and salt licks. West of the Cumberlands, a thousand animals might be glimpsed there in one lucky moment. Push your way back through the mountains, back to the fertile valleys of the Mohican, Western Massachusetts, and Connecticut. Go back to a time when deer browsed on lush meadowlands in unconcerned droves, when the land was a riot of color and sound...when turkeys gobbled and squirrels barked and waterfowl took flight with thunderous wings at the approach of men...when the skies were darkened for hours with flocks of birds and when grapes hung over the banks of rivers. When men returned home at nightfall, their pant legs and the bellies of the horses were stained red from the scarlet beds of strawberries and ground fruits they had trampled through.

Go all the way back to when Henry Hudson's crew on the **Half Moon** were disarmed by the fragrance of the New Jersey shore; when others sailing further up the coast occasionally sailed through beds of floating flowers. Verrazano smelled the cedars of the East Coast a hundred leagues out, and Raleigh's colonists scented what they thought was a garden. The heavy odor of forests and fields greeted all who first came to the New World.

Sail back to Europe, bloodied by its wars and religions. Go back through the years to when Christianity was young. There, most of the early followers were led astray by a spiritless form of the life Yahshua led. Go back to him, the seed, the beginning of it all; to the most tender, compassionate, and caring friend you could ever find. Had you been there, you would have loved him. Had you heard him, you would have listened. Had you been in jail, he would have gotten you out.

But men quickly forgot how he was and what he taught. It was too hard and they wanted something easier. So that was what they got: a religion called 'Jesus' and no way to touch his heart. That's what came over to the New World. It wasn't his spirit that came. His spirit didn't hate the Indians, or the wilderness, or the laws of his father. His spirit didn't lead men to be greedy or selfish. And his spirit didn't make the New World waste and void.

His spirit would never leave you alone. Or in jail. Or dead. He would give you life and take you home. His people have gone before you and made ready those homes. They are in communes. They are near.

YAHSHUA

They followed him around from town to town, everywhere he would go. They loved him, or at least they thought they did. One thing for sure, they couldn't live without him.

They were the inner circle: a dozen or so men, a handful of women. But they weren't the strong, the self-reliant, the shrewd power seekers jockeying for position. No, they were poor. They had been kicked around. They needed a friend, someone they could trust, who would always tell them the truth.

And he did, too. He told everybody the truth. And when people didn't want to hear the truth, he would tell them a story and let them figure the truth out for themselves. Some people really got riled up at what he said, but he didn't let it get him down. Some people, those who were really into the system, hated him enough to kill him. But he still didn't let it get him down.

And that's why they - the inner circle - needed him. He had life. He was full to the brim with joy. He didn't just party for a while and burn out. His joy went on and on and on and on... It was obvious that he loved them. Yes, them! The misfits, the ragamuffins, people who everybody else was ashamed of, people who were ashamed of themselves. He gathered them around and talked to them, filled them full of vision, and made them feel like they were somebody. He wouldn't just talk about the good times. He made the good times happen. He even made the hard times good.

And they would sing. Even when they were so down they didn't know which way was up, they'd sing. He'd make them sing! He wouldn't let them get into themselves and go under. He was really a friend.

But one thing would get him down. Well, not down, really, but sometimes he would just cry. When he saw all the people scattered and divided, and hurting, and afraid - he'd cry.

He wanted so much to gather all the little ones together - and keep them together - little ones like you and me. Sometimes people would just flock to see him and he couldn't bring himself to send them home. He would get right down there with them. Thousands of them. He didn't want to **send** them home, he wanted to **bring** them home. He wanted home to be right there. He wanted love to be their home.

But he would cry because the system had got them so programmed and so leveled out that they **wouldn't** stay. They'd always go back to the same dead old life, working their job, taking care of their own space, but so cut off from one another and so helpless....

He wanted a fire to break out on the earth. A fire that would burn in the people's hearts and burn out their greed and selfishness and dullness - a pure white-hot love for one another. And he was one hundred percent devoted to it happening. So even when he cried, he didn't get hopeless. He wouldn't give up. He **knew** it would happen.

But then the system started to close in on him. They wanted to smash him. Even one of the inner circle betrayed him, told them right where to find him and when to take him. And the rest of his "close friends," when the heat was on, they took off running. Nobody stood with him. All of a sudden, they split, trying to save their own necks. Some friends!

But that's not how he saw it. He didn't even get bitter. He **knew** them. He knew all about them. He even knew they were going to desert him. It didn't matter. He forgave them. Can you believe it? He **forgave** them! He loved them to the end.

Oh the system crushed him, all right. All the evil in the human heart was focused on him that day. They killed him. But they couldn't kill his spirit.

And before they knew it, his body wasn't dead anymore, either. That spirit of love that he had overcome death. Love is stronger than death. He came back from the dead to tell his friends that he forgave them. They hadn't been true friends before, but he **made** them his friends. His forgiveness made them loyal to him forever.

We know this man. His love has won us, too. We are followers of this man, Yahshua, just like the inner circle was back in the beginning. We need his life. We want to see all his little ones brought home. We don't care what it costs. We don't have anything better to do. We want the tribes to be gathered. We want love to fill the earth. We **know** it's going to happen.

We want you to be part of it, too. ■

WHO WE ARE

We used to be desperately lonely, even though most of us had a lot of friends. Some of us were successful in what we did, and some of us were failures beyond hope. We came from everywhere and we have done everything trying to make sense out of our lives. But no matter what we did, we were left feeling dirty inside. We were scarred deeply from the effects of mistrust and hurtful relationships. We strove for acceptance, money, and whatever else could give us comfort. Some of us had dreams of a better life, but most of us had given up the struggle, settling instead for compromise and consent to "the way things are." We were lost, scattered, without direction, doing our own thing.

Then we heard a voice that spoke to us right where we were, exposing the emptiness of our lives. This voice matched up fully to the longing of our hearts. Somehow a lifetime of being unable to trust was shattered by this voice of hope. It came from a people who had their dirty con-

science washed clean. They had a clean slate and an absolutely new life. This new life they eagerly offered to all who wanted it.

So now we have a life together. We no longer have to be separated by race, education, appearance, position, status, or where we came from. Instead our days are filled with seeking not only our own welfare, but also the welfare of others. This new life has given us the power to care.

We hate the war, strife, hatred, starvation, murder, injustice, greed, and selfishness that is leading the whole world to destruction. We want to see all of this come to an end. But we are convinced that the demonstration of our new life together is what will bring about the end of this age. We want many, many more people to hear the voice of hope we've heard, to come and see the life. This life we speak of in this pamphlet is what you were born for. Your whole life you have been trying to find it. We are thrilled to be able to invite you to come and see that it's real.

HOW TO REACH US

Our addresses and phone numbers are listed below. Feel free to call or come see us anytime, day or night. Our homes are open to you for a day or to stay.

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