

FREE



ASSOCIATION

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Chapter 1

The first room in the mortuary was darkened. You turned right and the body of a colleague was in a casket. There was a kneeler next to the body. It did not have a scrim or screen so I could see her within a short distance. I got down on my knees and crossed myself. We were almost nose to nose.

She had on a sweater and straight skirt along with bronzer on her face and hands. In life, she was a feminist with a great smile. She was finishing her PhD. Her town was just outside Cedar Rapids. In a patriarchal system, the men sit up front and the women were in the back seats. She died when a big truck piled into them. After a short prayer, I was fearful, and shaken.

I got up and turned around to walk to a seat. **There she was standing!** I did not know but she had a twin sister who had a very similar dress on. I was speechless. She quickly calmed me. I did not know that she was a twin,

and her sister guided me through a short path into a part of her life that I did not know.

I recall one lonely Saturday afternoon when I went to her town and searched for her grave a few years since she had died. However, my hopeful discovery did not happen. She was gone.

The morning of my 30th birthday was horrible. My wife suggested that I spend it without her. I drove all over Omaha looking for dead friends. They had died of auto accidents, drug overdoses, the war, and other untoward events. I found most of them and felt that it was an action best taken when you are no longer “young.” Thirty for me was hard. Growing old was not like growing wise. However later, the thirties would be okay. I don’t want to give you a dissertation on life, because the older I get the less that I know.

With each grave, I could recall when their body had been interned into a grave. I was hoping that it was a nest that the individual could feel that they made it. That they learned something and all the other bromides that folks use to deal with their own death.

Our youngest came home one day when we lived on Alma Drive. His brother, my wife and I were in the back of our home. He was screaming and crying. The little girl who lived across the street had told him that when he died, he would face hell. It would be a horrible existence that was grudgingly slow and terribly horrible.

She was an Evangelical and she had worked her black magic on him. We calmed him down. He said that he wanted to live in heaven and pushed his pudgy finger to the sky above our home. We told him about a good God and he seemed more settled. Our family was like a Unitarian church. Everyone has slightly different beliefs, but it was one that something good even among humans and that there was hope in this life and the one to come.

If you think that I am critical of Christianity, I am not. It is the hard right wing that comes from the south. I believe in Rabbi Jesus or Jesus Christ. The Bible is all about Jew-Jew interaction. Christian was division of Judaism.

Or, leave others alone. Just know that you must have some defense in this ragged society called America.

I had an amazing incident on the low road from Cedar Rapids to Iowa City. There is a dock now where back in 1972, I was standing on the shore and a thought hit me like a ton of bricks. Years ago, I lived in the area. We did not come to this area until 1978. So, I felt that all of this was unfamiliar. However, I was a young Roman Catholic priest and I was quite proud of my knowledge of the church. There was a young lady who became my assistant. One afternoon to dusk, we were near the river and I violated vows with this person. I fell down emotionally and was in total depression do to my act with her. I committed suicide.

In 2015, I was walking down our hallway upstairs and I lost my identity. Who was I? Where was I going? I got my cell phone out and called for an ambulance. I was placed in the emergency room and drifted into a coma. I had sepsis, galloping pneumonia, and a heart attack.

I found myself on the edge of the Cedar River. I was holding my right arm around my father-in-law who had died in 2002. All of us felt this beautiful calm with orange aura. A large moon shown down upon us I was heading toward something wonderful. I have never quite felt that

way before. Joy...bliss...and then I was yanked back. Non-threatening creatures put me outside the group. It was March and there was snow powder on the ground. I started choking and I was crying out for help. For 72 hours, I lay in a bed that my body was strapped to. In this world, a medical professional had put an incubator down my nose. I was choking. The incubator was filled with chemicals to save my life. My wife was encouraged to contact a local mortuary.

It did the job. Once it was out, I said “what did I do wrong?” So the idea of death is with me. A year later, I went to the park where I had watched heaven and agape. I walked over to a wooded cottage like building where I had called out for help. It was March and just a little bit of snow was on the ground. It seemed like a paradoxical contradiction. And so it goes.

Chapter 2

Iowa is an island in a sea of Red. It takes about 6 hours to cross the state on I-80. Most of the drive is rolling hills, creeks and trees a number of popular culture items have been written about the state. It is between the Missouri and the Mississippi. On the west side is about a third of the population and there are the awesome Bluffs, upward from there is the very pretty Sioux land. I-29 links the north- south direction. There you find the Loess Hills. There are few other places like it. The hills are composed of a special soil, earth, water, and other elements. It is so pretty and has a special coloring at dusk. It is in the “high plains.”

Just over on the Nebraska side, we lived in a winterized cabin at Cottonwood Marina. It had 4 tiny bedrooms, living room and a kitchen. Those who lived year around could appreciate the quiet. There were a ton of trees and

a trail that led to a pretty opening. Many nights, I would walk after work around the circle of cabins and just love the wild life. There were probably 20 families and we all had some knowledge of each other.

We wanted to stay on there, but the college that I was teaching at was slowly dying. So in February of 1978, I got a call that confirmed my feelings. I remember that spring paddling in a rubber boat around an inlet next to the marina. I was also hoping that I could teach in the future.

My oldest son would ride on the hood and I would drive about 5 miles an hour. It was sad to say good bye to the marina and the cabins overlooking the Missouri. I remember the last night and I dreamed of all kinds of relatives and friends waving good-bye to me. This part of my life was over and our family would be heading toward the eastern part of Iowa.

Iowa is generally ranked high on many things that people want and yet don't get in their life. Sinclair Lewis described in a number of his novels the life of "fly over" country of the mid west. Most in the center of the USA have a "second best" attitude. Roughly, we don't have

that huge mountain or pretty sea, but we sure have more than corn.

So we had a chance to live in the woods and the Missouri and I worked at a college that could fit in a Hollywood movie. Small little liberal arts colleges were dying because they taught few skills. To create the kind of environment that the 21st century, you need buildings filled with machines and computer technologies. Liberal arts colleges prepared most to go on to a university for graduate work.

Generally, I was an outsider in this small gemeinschaft society. I am a social democrat. That means that I favor a society that is capitalist at its base with public energy and banks. It is just left of the “welfare state” Most of the first world and especially Scandinavia has this type of system. It is democratic and can be voted out. So there in small spot just across from Iowa lived a Left winger.

Although I had long hair and jeans I really didn't qualify for that old word “hippie.” The school used me as a token to tell a perspective student that one lived not far from the campus and taught there.

Perhaps in Omaha or over to Iowa City there would be a riot, but I was not in any of them. I became accepted but there was something odd about me. Often on week-ends we went to my in-laws in Omaha. There were numerous twenty year olds, and there I could baby sit our kids and write articles.

Saturday night had a special line up of All in the Family, Mary Tyler Moore and the Bob Newhart show. The music was good and a few snuck up stairs and smoked dope. On Sunday afternoon, we headed back to the college. So we had the best of both. We thought this might last forever, but early in the 80's we were all disbanded and my father-in-law moved from a big old brick mansion to a tract house further out in the suburbs.

By that time, we had moved to Cedar Rapids and the surrounding area. We made 4 moves from our arrival. Each move, I was chasing after the cottage. My wife and I traded days and on my day off I went to all the lakes and parks in the region. Each little town had its own story. We were living in the "Great Lakes" portion of Iowa. It has 2/3rd of population and is much more moderate.

The culture had changed in the 80's and we were to see each other in cost-benefit terms. Reagan's had many dimensions and the big divide between the top 1% and the rest of us kept growing under him.

There are about 5 or 6 years that are a blur. We lived in a suburban tract in which there was a creek in back and a long green belt that circled the houses. At those times, I taught people who were broken by globalism. They were middle age and they lost their jobs. They were retraining and learning about something that would pay about half of what they made before. Capital can move anywhere and Labor cannot. Year after year, there was bad news on the door step. I cannot tell you how much I hated those times. However, the Right owned the culture and numerous billionaires were paraded as heroes. It was the rich and the famous. They screwed people in the day time on Wall Street and jammed cocaine up their nose at night. In the late 80's, there was a smolder of change.

At this time, more and more people began to gain a class consciousness. They knew the game, but followed the scheme. Non-Republicans were rodents. Conservatives

could grow America if tax cuts were given to the rich and they would create new high paying jobs for the rest. That is from Milton Friedman.

If there were problems, Reagan southernized the culture. I recall that I felt blue as lay in my bed and meditating during this time. Then I swooped up was sent into the dark sky and over to Omaha where my parents lived. My soul went through a small part of the garage into their dining room and over to a corner desk. There I saw a sword. Then I circled around the living room and headed back to Cedar Rapids.

I called my mother the next day and she was spooked. However, she did find a letter opener that was Oriental and had the description that I emphasized to her. The letter opener was in the form of a sword. She sent it to me and nothing more was said.

For some reason, we decided to make our little tract house into a cottage. We basically moved all the non-load bearing walls away. We had to put wall to wall mirrors face each other with a distance of twenty feet. We then ran a small fence or railing that divided two rooms. The fence ran into to one of the mirrors.

All of this was complimented by a skylight. The basement was fixed up and I remember watching the Doug Flutie pass with my father on a basement television. We sold the house in one afternoon and moved to a two story about six blocks away.

It had a big tree in front and the entire house had a mix of paneling and brick. We added a greater screen porch in the back. This was the first home for our dog Maxwell.

We added a pond and a wind mill in the back. My wife got a very big promotion and we moved to Apple Wood Hills. There are only 2 or 3 entrances to the development which is heavily wooded. There are so many animals running around the house. Both Wilson and later Benson would watch them. There would be wild turkey, mallards, and pretty deer. One had to stop the car as the Doe and Fawns crossed the street. At night, you could hear a train whistle around midnight. In the summer, there was music that came from an ice cream truck. We had a porch built in the back and one could sit there particularly at dusk.

Never got back to the cottage, but got close to it with this house. The den has a woodsy feel and the front

room has the ambience of the 1940's. There is a two sided fire place. One burns real wood, the other is electrified. The back of the house, three stories look upon the forest.

Back from where we came from, the little college closed in 2010. Most everyone was given 2 hours to leave the campus. For years, it remained empty. Finally, through the efforts of a number of alumni and others, the little campus has become a mixed use business park and numerous activities are held there.

Many noted that in the beginning of the refurbishment of the little school, there were books, and other oddities still there reflecting the time of the stoppage. Nothing had changed save the quiet dust.

The cottage that we lived in was flooded and destroyed, and a carnival-camping adventure park was created for RV's and a big marina where bands would play on week-ends. Most of the park was for those who came up from Omaha.

When we were there, it was small, private, and primitive. The change is an emotional attachment to something

that has now come to pass. The entire world is constantly changing very slightly and one of life's illusions is that constant change that is gradual means that it really stays the same. It doesn't.

The trees around our present house are probably 60 feet. The limb from one cracked under storm winds and fell on the house. A wood pecker tries to drive a hole in a certain section where the inside is the den.

It is that type of activity that most don't have and yet some want it on a vacation.

Iowa on the east side is really like the west coast of Wisconsin. It is Great Lakes country. There is the beautiful Lake McBride and Backbone Lake. After the flood of 2008, the downtown, New-Bo and Mount Trash more are really delightful. There is a zip-line. There are about 200 lakes across the state and there is a neat corridor between Cedar Rapids, and Iowa City. One can easily get to Cedar Falls and historic Dubuque. There are 4 continuous seasons. The Indian Creek Nature Center along with about 10 other places to visit makes it a nice life.

Lake Okoboji and Lake Rathbun make a nice mosaic. There are 10 state forests that are not state parks. There may be a few trails, but that is it and they are abundantly beautiful and bountiful. If you take the low road from Peosta, you can see jagged rocks at the end of a large cliff. Then there is a bench or two that looks on the Mississippi. You can see the west coast of Wisconsin.

I really like Minnesota far up north, but they really only have 2 seasons. That is winter and non-winter, so I will take the trade...

Chapter 3

Charlie B. loved to talk. We met in 62' at the Omaha University campus. I remember the date because as we came on campus, Peter Fonda and "Stormy" McDonald left for the coast. Henry had sent Peter to Omaha because he had a sister there, and he also another named Roger Dunbier to watch over "Stormy." His father was the president of Zenith Corporation.

All are dead. Fonda died recently and "Stormy" was killed by an intruder. Dunbier died back in 98' of natural causes.

Charlie loved to talk and when living hundreds of miles from my home in Nebraska, Charlie called to tell me all about the latest. He would ring me up around 3 PM on Friday afternoon and we could talk until very late.

Over the years, he had many accomplishments. He loved to travel and one of the perks of his job was to sell others on the University of Nebraska-Omaha's Conference Center. One of his sojourns ended in a country with a

nude beach. From his window, he could see many nudes. Fully clothed male tourist would go on to the beach to have their picture taken with an attractive young lady. He discovered an important experience. After about 5 days of nudity the excitement of it evaporates. So many nude baths around the world know it, most areas here in the states don't know.

At any rate, Charlie started smoking in junior high. He loved to smoke. He also drank, but alcohol and nicotine are not easy to disengage. He stopped drinking for 10 years, but smoking for him was his cheating love partner for the rest of his life.

He died a decade ago. I was able to talk to him over the phone, before he passed. I told him that I loved him and his eyes lit up. Then he moved into the ages. His last visit with us we remained on the back porch with the huge trees surrounding us. In a few hours, he smoked a pack of cigarettes and a six pack of beer. The two chemicals not only shortened his life, he really suffered many years before he died.

I have a grave yard filled with friends who were smokers. As you know the tobacco people are bastards and they will try any gimmick to get you hooked.

Where do we go from here? Profit for the few is embedded in the American Dream. This theme is everywhere and the super rich can have all they want. Those senatorial and congressional heads come from the South and Midwest which until recently were one party states. Right now, the Right is trying to close down as many places to vote to win elections.

Women are changing and I like it. However, it is difficult at this moment, because the new roles and the system are not quite in order.

How do you stop a guy from unwanted seduction? It is not be easy because men have a terrible time with libido. So why don't the females carry pepper gas. At 18, the social, psychological, and neurological forces make him miserable. Crime is mainly a male thing. We need social and technological strategies to slow him down. Women lie to survive. I wish they would take over. For both most of the 20th century and the 21st, children become stressors. Previous to that time, a lot kids meant a lot of

folks to work the farm. Later, the entire family would go to the factory.

On balance, men don't like to raise children. Imagine a Saturday morning that you can sleep through the day. Women are now feeling it too. They also find out that men are another child to raise.

To make matters worse, a very good study from Syracuse University discovered that 80% of the females don't like or want sex of some sort. Who can blame them? They are generally hit on. Further, the kids are pounding on the door to the master bedroom.

So the birthrate and marriage have come down and given the job outlook from outsourcing and artificial intelligence where will they all find good jobs?

One source suggests something like "co-parenting" The female has one child and lives with another female who has a child. The husbands "float" They come when called to fix things they do their work duty and then want sex. So there is a trade. This is still hard on the female. When two females sleep together, a "dead bed" emerges. Both

lose interest in their mates. I do not know an ideal arrangement for the American family.

In the mean time, the sexes have grown closer together. However, there needs to be a number of generations so that a number of different families emerge from complimentary need dual sex to social androgyny.

So how do you seduce a male to raise kids? You got to get a relaxant in him so that you can go to work. How do you get a good partner? I don't know. There are plenty of people and media to help the female and for that matter males can get help. Further, not enough is discussed about sexual outer course. Religion may not accept it, but there is not intercourse.

Charlie had a friend. He lost his first wife to her infidelity. As he was crossing a parking lot up pops a girl of his dreams. It is Kismet. They date and marry. Usually the stronger partner likes the other partner less. At any rate, Charlie's friend was completely devastated and nearly broke when he got his divorce attorney. His third wife was great. Why? Folks it is one of ths mysteries of life.

Charlie B. had discovered another experience. He became the head of a medical charity. It was a fraud. The money gathered would go straight to the top. They knew to spend some money on the families and research but that was about it. He finally took them to court. As this was happening, they set up another office. Charlie lost his medical insurance and to get an expensive medicine, he had to go to the hospital and then go through some medical procedures and get the medicine. After he ran out, he could not get a refill. He had to go back to the hospital and do the same thing again and again. Each time, he went back the cost was huge. To get help on an ongoing basis, he had to declare bankruptcy. So he would lie in pain and take anything to try to kill it. He did not want to sleep in the streets. The doctors? They didn't give a shit.

Chapter 4

I have been in three accidents in 60 years. Two I was driving and the third the driver was a foster son. The first I had only been driving for a few weeks and my little Ford Anglia (48') slid on wet bricks into another park car on the other side of the street. I was punished by having to tear apart the car and put new parts on. It was repainted and that was the first of the car accidents.

The second happened late at night and my foster son wanted to drive. He said that a friend had taught him to drive. The car was built in the late 70's and it was American made. It was a dog. My foster son began driving and the car had power steering. He started to swerve because he was not used to the steering mechanism. As we were driving, the next thing that I knew was that we were driving in someone's front yard.

The car was heading for a house and he must have hit the accelerator. Well we hit the front of the house. The front of the car was torn off. We hit a tree. Now the interior of the cabin was coming apart as we hit the second house.

We were still alive as we quickly got out of the car as it might explode. It did not. I was not sure what to do because my foster fellow didn't have a learner's permit. So I took the blame. I was able to do the drills that the police required and I had not been drinking. It was about this time that our sons did not want any more foster sons. We had 6 people in a little 30 by 20 tract house. Additionally, one dog and two cats were under the roof. What happened also was the discovery that if I dropped just one medication, I felt fantastic. The medication was Lithium. It was the miracle drug of the 80's. I also had one of the worst and richest psychiatrists in the region. All of his patients were doped up. Further, the medication blunted my blood sugar problems. So I almost lost my job.

After that, I was able to function. I lost a lot of weight and felt great. Teaching became easier and the

publications and grants vastly improved. If I could give the psychiatrist a gift when he died and I would like to urinate on his grave. I am not supposed to say that so we'll pretend that I didn't.

The third accident I am not sure what happened. However, I was driving a small "smart car." I was hit by a big sedan. The first thing that I saw was my Uncle Bill who had died in 1983. Then came fog followed by the knowledge the right front of the big sedan was next to me on the right side. Fearing another blow up, I hit the button holding the safety belt. It quickly released and I was able jump out of the car.

Then I went over to the other driver who was still in shock and got him out of his car. A third party indicated that the accident was my fault. The citation was 200 dollars. I was taken to the hospital by ambulance. I spent a number of days at home and in bed. I hurt all over the top half of my body.

I no longer drive a car.

Chapter 5

On November 22, 1962, four friends left a party and headed for a late night snack. This was at the edge of the city and the driver may have decided to race a train. They had already eaten so the time of night, the alcohol (?) and the food create a sleepy hypoglycemia. Many get this after a big Thanksgiving dinner. Many get sleepy and disoriented. The car drove right into the train and the bodies of my 4 friends were thrown asunder. All around them were open fields so when hunters came on the scene later a few parts of each of the 4 had to be located. Then they were assembled and a few mortuaries picked up the remains.

I got a call from a fraternity brother about 9 AM. It was Thanksgiving vacation so no one met that day, but gathered that night at a friend's house. All of the dead were handsome people. The newspaper had pictures and the intricate details of what might have happen.

By Monday, one could see all the bodies. It was the last days of the open casket. One of the dead was my big brother in the fraternity He was extremely handsome. I recall when he stopped by our home my mother had a room full of middle age females. The room stopped in terms of conversation. All eyes were on him.

On the other hand, during the accident his face was ripped off and the mortician created a new face for him and a hair piece. His face was colored pink with artificial eyes.

I recall seeing a fraternity brother sitting in the car with his face in his hands. My big brother was in the worst of the body destruction. The heavy scrim did not help much.

The other three looked better, but one can imagine how much funerals are improved if the casket is shut and a picture of them is on the top.

Now this is real human tragedy.

Deep in your soul, don't you feel that the rich will find various places that are geographically isolated and able to support them? Perhaps, they can double up in out of

the way plantations so the majority of us can't get in. So if there really is a global crisis, they may survive.

Further, heavy flooding, drought parches land, continuous rain or extreme change in weather cannot help. This also includes slaughtering trees that absorb the toxicants. Whatever is going on, don't count on the current administration (Trump) to do anything about it.

Hard Right publications describe scenarios where the red can surround big blue cities and kill us. Most blue houses don't have guns let alone semi-automatics. Most of the world has hardliner Left wing, to Right wing dictators. I don't know who will be our leader, but our salvation might be the military, police, and related. They fill the streets of the Blues and sustain order. Hopefully, that order allows for a free press. The police may not want the democracy that we have. However those big corporations need the Blues to buy their products and work for them is still needed. Or, the order may be a democratic fascism. That means 1 and ½ parties in ritual like fashion have elections where the dictator always wins. It could also mean that there most newspapers that are tabloids for the government and on page three

women who are naked. The social media may be able to be shut down or change in such a way that only government websites are available. Democratic fascism means that there is plenty of porn, sports, and problems of other countries in the press. Further, your favorite Rock and Country bands play for just a few dollars. Dog fights and bloody extremes may also be a choice. The churches of those government backed are packed on the Sabbath.

What is your favorite drug that numbs the pain and gets you high? However, you are ready with another drug to go to work. Work camps and a bundle of prisons can also help the system.

Your most favorite time may be the nude news. It will be more entertainment. One can only hope that what we get is subject to change in some far away time. Hope is illusive, but there is still an existence of it. How much would you trade not to have a civil war and a police enforced peace? I will take it. The police force is quadrupled and many walk a beat and neighbor. They are loaded with semi-automatics.

Is happiness a warm gun?

Or maybe, there really are Good vibrations and Strawberry Fields. That is on my head stone located just over the Iowa border in Forest Lawn cemetery.

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