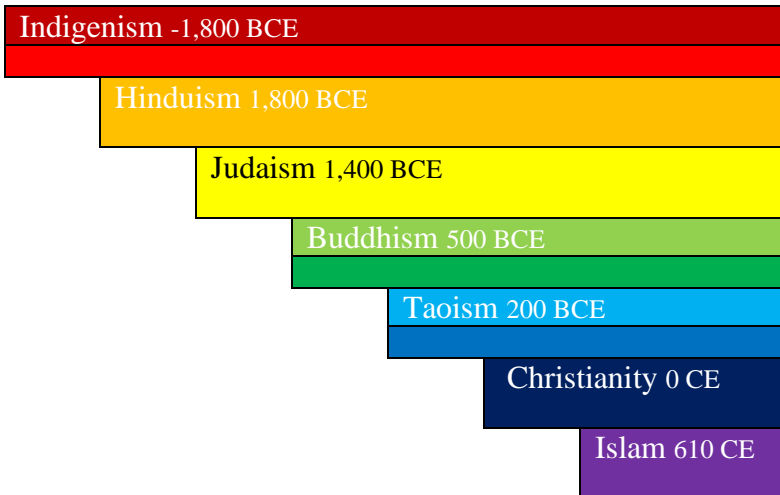


For God's Sake, Tell Me How You Feel!

If you think about what you think about,
you'll discover how powerfully you feel.

A Guide to solving personal problems with humor



By

Barry Emanuel Zeve

Dedication

This book is dedicated to
Maria Brann
Born June 30, 1925 –

Maria was a nun,
a W.A.V.E. in the Navy
[Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service]
and a social worker in San Francisco.
She lived most of her life with a lesbian
although they never consummated their relationship.
Here's the refrain from one of her favorite songs:
"Me Go Where You Go Amigo"

A Yankee sailor met his senorita
Just before his time to sail away
He kissed her with a sigh
And as she said goodbye
Suddenly these words he heard her say

Me go where you go amigo
I'll follow you near or far
Me go where you go amigo
I'll always be where you are

Like a boat and a sail
Like a knife and a fork
Like a hammer and nail
Like a bottle and a cork

Me go where you go amigo
We'll be so happy I know
Uphill and downhill just like Jack and Jill
Me go where you go amigo

Me go where you go amigo
I'll follow you near or far
Me go where you go amigo
I'll always be where you are

Like a towel and a rag
Like a carpet and a tack
Like a door and a key
Like a puppy and a flea

Me go where you go amigo
Please say si, si don't say no
Uphill and downhill just like Jack and Jill
Me go where you go amigo

Rosalie Allen and the Black River Riders:
Queen of the yodelers
1946

If you haven't heard this song,
I suggest you google it to listen to its catchy tune.
It reminds me of the good times I had with
my Aunt Lillian
who was a happy-go-lucky
Jewish-American singer and piano teacher.
She married my Uncle Joe,
my mother's first cousin and a Jewish doctor.
My Jewish mother who came to this country
after the War
could only dance to American tunes.
She couldn't hear them in her heart
the way we can.
I guess there's something about **America**
you have to be born here to fully appreciate.

Warning

All the characters in this book are real.
Names have not been changed to protect the guilty.
I consider myself a colluder and conspirator
of the notions they represent.
But I also have reason to believe that my ideas
say something about myself
that others might like to consider.

The following is for mature audiences only!

I'm 70 years old.

I wrote this book for my peers.

If you're under the age of 70,
be warned that this book may, at times, go over my head...

Is it OK to criticize the political left if you're on the left?

Is it OK to criticize a country mouse
if you're a city mouse?

Is it OK to criticize women if you're a man?

Is it OK to criticize lesbians if you're gay?

Is it OK to criticize family if you're cousins,
especially if you suspect sibling rivalry is involved?

Is it OK to criticize a Jew if you're a Jew?

Oh, yeah!

It's all OK.

In fact,
in some instances
it's long overdue.

I begin my story by telling you
about my mother who was a Holocaust survivor.
She was a German-Jew who tore off her yellow arm-band,
ripped up her identity card,
which alerted everyone that there was a Jew in the room,
and ran for her life,
living in forests and on farms to avoid the Nazis.
Her mother had only told her she was a Jew
a week before all Jewish children
were thrown out of public schools in Germany.
My mom met my dad,
[who also was a Jew]
two months after the War.
He was a Dachau Concentration Camp survivor.
He'd bribed three Catholic orphanages in Lithuania
to hide his two children [Henry and Ilana]
and a niece [Ellen]
before the ghetto was liquidated.
Male Jews who were strong enough to work,
were taken to work camps
such as Dachau
to slave for their Nazi masters
until the Jews died of illness or starvation.
Most of the rest of the Jews perished in the ovens,
Including Henry and Ilana's mother
and Ellen's parents.
After the War,
my mother and widowed father came to **America**
with the three children
and married in New York City.
She raised his three kids
and the two they bore,
my sister Rina and me.
Mom took her responsibility
as step-mother very seriously.
So, she left my dad two days after Ilana's wedding

because Ilana had begged her not to leave her
alone with Dad until she was married.
Henry and Ellen had already left home by then.
Then Mom took Rina and me to California,
where she divorced Dad a year later,
after attaining California residency;
raising us as a single mom
from 1959 when I was six years old
until I left home at 18 in 1970.

Mom was there for me
after I tried to kill myself three times in my twenties.
She was there for me when I was twice
involuntarily committed to mental institutions.
And she was there for me when my relationship
with my former boyfriend of 14 years fell apart
when I was 50 years old.
She died on Sunday, June 23, 2019
at about 4:00 in the morning, just before dawn,
at the age of 98
at the Jewish Home in Reseda, California.

As much as I loved my mother
and respected her for how she lived her life,
I'm proud to say
that I've replaced her voice in my head with my own.

Every Jewish mother's voice lives on well after she passes.
And all mothers are Jewish at heart...
But by figuratively silencing Mom's voice within me,
I succeeded in moving past those of her vices
I'd unconsciously adopted.

I'm now free from Mom's worst character defects.
I'm also free to celebrate those virtues of hers
I'd also unconsciously thought of as my own.
I now parent my inner child myself.
I'm an example of the new Jew who's gay.
I'm still the poster child of the mother/son relationship.
But when explored from within,
the real meaning of freedom
lies in my relationship to myself.
This is how I find reason to laugh at my misfortunes
when compared to what I have to deal with within...

I'd love to be able to tell you
I was a crazy hippy when I was young and naïve.
I was not.
I didn't enjoy my insanity most of the time.
Oh, I very much enjoyed the sex and the drugs.
I enjoyed the travel around the world.
I enjoyed my romance with poverty
and my adventure with the mystery of young adulthood.
I particularly enjoyed being handsome
and having men lust after me.
But what I unconsciously most wanted was to be normal.
You wouldn't have known that at the time
because I did everything I could
to look unique and different.
But deep down inside I yearned to be
more like everyone else.
I just didn't know what other people knew that I didn't.
Nor could I figure out what I knew that they didn't know
until I figured out the basics of what life is all about.

Life is a school.
It was a school when I was young, too.
We all have One Teacher,
although each of us comes out of a religious department,
a national classroom
and an ethnic row of desks
that sets us apart from most of our classmates.
Some yearn to learn together with the bozos
at the back of the room.
Some like to think they sit up front near The Teacher.
I first came to class mindlessly unprepared to learn,
not having done my homework the night before.
I resented the lectures from my classmates.
I didn't commend myself
for doing well on spot quizzes.
I didn't study for life's tests that never stop coming.
I didn't give a second thought to my final exam.
And I got meaner and nastier
the closer I got to graduation
because so many of my report cards were so awful.
I could sense my transcript
wasn't going to look good
with all those failed grades
and the classes I'd simply dropped out of
with an incomplete that I later ignored.
I couldn't even tell you
why I was Given my first tutors
[my father and mother].
And yet I used to swear I got plenty of love from them
as a child.
I omitted to mention
all the sibling rivalry in our home.
There was never enough love to go round.
I didn't know then that we're all here only to compete
with who we were yesterday,
in preparation for who we'll become tomorrow.

If there's one feeling
I've had to learn a lot more about in life,
it's been coveting.
When I'm jealous of other people's container [body]
and envious of their contents [spirit],
I get impatient, uptight and frightened.
I assume I'm inadequate.
And that unconscious conclusion is spot on.
I'm often prone to feeling this way.

Adequacy is normal.
In any way I feel inadequate,
it's only natural
I'm also going to feel abnormal.

This book is outwardly about bullying and name-calling.

That's something we all have to deal with.

But it's a topic in the school of life
that would behoove everyone to learn more about
because bullying begins within.

It's vital we deal with how we treat ourself.

We won't be able to stop bullying others
if we can't stop bullying and beating up ourself.

Some people call self-bullying
"self-discipline."

But we all know the difference.

We all need to give ourself
a good, swift kick in the butt from time to time,
but when our self-esteem is so low
that we can't celebrate being the best we can be,
it's not because of the parents we were Given,

our sibling

or the kids at school growing up.

They only gave us tools to hurt others.

We choose to use those tools on ourself.

And if you're anything like me,
you've probably excelled in that department...

This world wouldn't look nearly as bad as it does
without self-bullying contributing to all our woes.

That may sound weird,
but it's not at all funny.

The Key to our Emotions

Infrared:	murder	↓
red:	rage fury anger	↓
orange:	agony worry anxiety	↓
yellow:	horror terror fear	↓
green:	jealousy envy [coveting]	↑
blue:	sorrow disappointment grief	↑
indigo:	madness magic love	↑
violet:	orgasm loyalty happiness life	↑
ultraviolet:	death	

In addition to the visual key above and on the front cover, there is one other key you need to know about. It's my oral key. There are words you'll need to emphasis when you read them. Here is an example:

I didn't do it. He~ did it!

This is called a diacritic accent. I've added diacritic accents to spice up my words. Think of them as salt. You wouldn't want to eat foods that weren't sufficiently salted. I don't trust~ you to add literary salt when and where needed. So I did it myself.

If you speak, read and write another language or if you read music or dance notation, you're going to love~ this book. It's going to free your emotions in a way that you can already do with other forms of communication.

But if you're the sort of person who rarely blows your horn when behind the wheel of a car, but you mutter to

yourself about all the bad drivers on the road, or if you're the kind of person who watches the checker at the supermarket add up the groceries of every person ahead of you because you feel they're wasting your time by going too slow, this book was made just for you. This may seem like a rash and bold statement to make, but this book will cure you of **impatience**.

If you observe patient people and they annoy you, you already know how **grievously** you suffer from **impatience**. I know just how you feel.

I cured myself of that character defect. You won't have to do a thing other than read this book. There are no exercises that come with my words. I'll deal with your inner operating system at a subliminal level. Just pay attention to the meaning of my words as they enter your **head** and touch your **heart**.

Good luck! You're in for a big surprise!

When I was young boy, I was almost legally blind, but my **parents** didn't even know it until I started school, and the school nurse told them I needed glasses. My glasses turned out to be Coke-bottle-thick.

Despite the weight on my ears and nose, I was **enchanted** when I saw the world as it truly looked through a visual aide. That was my first experience of a **miracle**. I was in sudden **awe** of the world around **me**.

Sadly, I didn't realize until late middle age that my vision defect included emotional~ colorblindness. And all because I didn't have the key to the psychological color chart listed above and the sociological color chart on the front cover.

I didn't even know what emotions were~, to tell you the truth. I couldn't recognize feelings in myself, or others. I knew what feelings were intellectually. And I felt them from time to time. But I didn't know what caused them or how to control them even though body language and voice intonation were my first clues.

Dread was the place where I lived inside [a combination of orange [anxiety, worry and agony] and yellow [fear, terror and horror]], I couldn't possibly conceive of the hope needed to imagine the other colors that shine inside us all. I was filled with anguish over everything.

The rainbow that was Given to Noah as a promise not to flood the world again was, of course, a metaphor. But nobody told me that! I had no idea that the rainbow flag of the LGBT+ community meant so much more than anyone had alluded to.

There really is a place you can go to over the rainbow. But I didn't know how to describe it or get there. I was no wizard or friend of Dorothy. I was~ Dorothy! I just didn't know~ it.

Moses began Torah with the story of "adam ve chava" [Hebrew: man and life]. It's not the story of a~ man [Adam] and a~ woman [Eve]. It's a metaphor that describes the beginning of life [chava] for every boy.

And I suppose by extension, today, we'd say that the Creation Story describes the beginning of life for every girl, as well.

What we call "The Age of Innocence" was something we've all been through. It was childhood.

When a boy reaches the age when his serpent [penis] begins to converse with his heart [Eve], his head [Adam] becomes emotionally overwhelmed by the experience of his first orgasm. This is what differentiates a boy~ from a man~.

This initiates the adult world from within that every male wrestles with for the rest of his life.

The Jewish creation story is a description of a boy being allowed access to know a part of himself as though he'd picked fruit from a tree previously forbidden to him [translation from Hebrew]. Orgasm decrees that childhood is

now behind him. And as we all know, nothing will ever bring childhood back.

And yet, **life** can become infinitely sweeter once you reach puberty and can reach up to pick the previously **forbidden fruits** from the **tree of knowledge** you are~ but didn't know about. Such is the **magic**~ of metaphor~.

You were metaphorically planted~ in this world. You grew roots as you grew up from the rock of your being into the light. Then you branched out with more and more understanding of **reality**.

But until you reached **orgasm**, you couldn't take the **Creation** Story to **heart**. It didn't yet mean anything personal~ to you.

A boy's first wet dream or masturbation to **orgasm** occurs when his body finally allows him to poetically consume the **fruits** of good [right testicle] and **evil** [left testicle]. This is the time of **life** when those soupy words gush out of the **serpent** [**penis**] that usually hangs down "silently" from his **tree**.

This is the biblical description of **morality**. It's described as a conversation every young male will have with his **heart** every time he **ejaculates**, an exercise in coming to understand the concept of **Eden** [**Paradise**] that he'll recreate during intercourse for the rest of his **life**.

I think that's funny! I actually find it hysterical!

That's the example of God's Sense of **humor** that **Moses** told it to the ancient **Jews** 3,400 years ago.

His~ sexual interpretation of **life** is one the Orthodox-**Jews** never came up with, surely because they don't have a sufficiently well-developed imagination or sense of **humor** [and because they're probably all really bad in bed...]

All religious people end up getting **nasty** when it all comes back to the topic of sex. They really don't like the idea of God Having Given us genitals in the first place. They'd rather we don't talk about them. And they'd rather

not think about their parents having done “it” in order to bring them into this world.

That said, the Orthodox-Jews do know that Torah lives~. Half of Tel Aviv is smeared with graffiti from Orthodox-Jewish youths who’ve scrawled just that on every wall they can shmutz up.

But the Orthodox-Jews think Torah lives for them alone, when the truth is that it lives for everyone through metaphor. The Gospels and Quran live, too. And that’s a mystery I’m going to reveal more about to you in this book.

When I told my interpretation of the Creation Story to Maria, she laughed her head off. She thought it was the funniest thing she’d ever heard. Then she touched my shoulder and smiled deeply. And I felt like a new man.

After the first story of Genesis [man and life] Moses relayed to us the story of the son of Adam, Cain, who was on his quest for more of the meaning of life. But Cain killed his brother, Abel, because God Approved of Abel’s sacrifice instead of his.

Cain was jealous of his brother’s gift. Cain thought God Preferred Abel over him.

This second story of Genesis expresses the second stage of adolescence when the heart of the youngster [Abel] becomes a victim to his head [Cain]. This struggle for autonomy within us is something every young adolescent must go through and tries to describe to his peers in his own unique way.

Thoughts [Cain] and feelings [Abel] fight one another in teenage boys who’ve experienced their first orgasm. What they’re fighting over from a biblical perspective is God’s Love, even though the inexperienced, youngster has no idea why he’s so upset with himself and therefore projects that upset onto those around him to figure it out using the outside

world. His inner world is still too **dark** and mysterious for him to ponder all by himself.

Adolescence is the stage in the change of the human operating system that separates childhood from adulthood. It's when the **fight** for **love** begins within us as males. All the **fight**s in childhood~ weren't nearly as important by comparison. The adolescent finally feels there's a way out of the problem of not enough **love** to go round.

Most adolescent boys take their inner **irritation** out into the world around them instead of looking for answers inside themselves. They go on a quest to make their way through outer reality without recognizing that they're traveling across a magnificent **rainbow** from the ages of 13-21.

Most new adolescents don't even perceive the magnificence of the creation of their cellphone, let alone the boy-**toy** they've just discovered in their pants. They wouldn't leave home without their phone, but they don't realize that everyone, male and female, is now looking at how they use their phone~ to determine how aware they are of the knowledge they'll glean from their boy-**toy**.

This struggle between the thoughts in the young man's **head** and feelings in his still virgin **heart** creates fantasies about a pot of gold at the end of his **rainbow** because the teenager knows nothing about true **love** other than through **orgasm**.

Deep down inside, he rightly~ concludes that he's now in debt to the adult world for having kept him alive for more than a dozen years, albeit it in ignorance of this deeper meaning of his **life**. He couldn't be more excited in some ways, while being indifferent in others. He also suspects he knows nothing about the **promise** of **hope** in his **dark heart**. So, he does everything he has to, to conceal that ignorance from some others. He compartmentalizes his feelings.

Any child~ can tell you that there's never enough **love** to go round. But in adolescence, a boy realizes he isn't **lovable** enough without someone to share his new-found **love** of **love**

with him~. He rightly **fears** he'll be inadequate in making more **love** than his testicles can produce because that would require knowing how to **love** his whole container~ [body] as well as the contents~ [inner self] within it.

If God Loved **Cain** more than **Abel**, then who among us is not~ consumed with **anxiety**, **worry**, **agony** and even **dread** over whether God Loves him more than the next guy. And if the youngster doesn't address this question with God directly through prayer, he'll surely live out these feelings through a failed relationship with the entire human race.

As simple as it sounds from a generic point of view, the first two stories of **Torah** address the basics about the meaning of **life**. That beginning began in adolescence.

Therefore, the **Creation** Story isn't in conflict with evolution. It actually makes the evolution of man all the more **awesome** and mysterious.

Maria didn't laugh when I told her about the hidden meaning behind the story of **Cain** and **Abel**. She thought back to her mother who'd conceived six children with a man who only showed up when he wanted sex. She thought back to her **life** of bathing in Maine rivers in summers and sponge baths in their cold kitchen the rest of the year. They had no indoor plumbing. The only meat they ate was when her brother would shoot a squirrel in the forest. The town they lived in couldn't have had more than a hundred people to talk to about anything. And they were dirt poor.

Maria was the youngest, born in 1925. When her siblings had all left home, her mother finally found a man who treated her nicer than her husband. She invited him in and sent her husband packing. But then she tried to push Maria out of the house to start over by creating a new family with him~. Maria was just 15 at the time.

I think the problem with the Orthodox-**Jews** and all the other religious people in the Western world is that they don't

know how to pray in color. This book will instruct you on how to do so, so you can teach~ them.

I'm~ certainly not going to try to do it! I've already tried praying with Orthodox-Jews, right-wing fundamentalist-Christians and fanatical Muslims. I've prayed standing up~, kneeling down~ and prostrate on the ground~. Now it's your turn to change their minds. I ain't goin' there!

There are a whole host of colorful feelings to explore in life, but love~ is universal. Love is like a white light that shines in our heart that's so magnificent that it's beyond any of the colors of the rainbow.

The more we develop feelings for ourself, the more we can feel for God's Pain and Suffering at how we're leading our life and stewarding the planet. The more we can feel His Anguish~. The more we have feelings for what we're putting Him~ through, the more we can express our feelings to Him through prayer and through heartfelt communication with everyone~ and everything~ we do.

But I don't think claiming love~ is the answer is the whole answer. Love is the highest, most noble of all feelings. But until I discovered the shades and values of all my myriad feelings, I wasn't able to call myself much in the way of a hue-man in a process called being...

If you don't believe this to be true about your~ feelings, try feeling empathy for someone when you're depressed and don't give a damn about anything or anyone. I suspect you'll only be able to show them sympathy~.

You may be able to gather together enough pity for yourself to look down with sorrow at what the next guy is having to go through. But I don't think you'll know what you're~ going through inside yourself or how to associate your feelings with anyone else's suffering. You'll be without sufficient experience of yourself to fully know what anyone~ feels deep in his heart.

The teenager doesn't realize **life** looks entirely different when viewed from his **heart**. He only knows that childhood is over, and innocence will never return. And for that reason, puberty is a reminder to us all of the loneliest time in our **life**.

It's only once a boy gets to the third story of **Genesis**, "**Noah and the Ark**" that he realizes he's entered a world of incredible **awe** and **mystery**, as well.

Every adolescent can see that he's drowning in suffering, not a flood caused by a literal storm. Even if his father couldn't tell him what God Told **Noah** in so many words, every teenage boy instinctively feels instructed to build an **ark** to hold all his animal instincts until the deluge of hormones subsides on the other side of adolescence when his storm passes, and the sky turns **blue** again.

In my generation, we were Given a new **Moses**, a man who retold us the Story of **Noah** in his own universal way. His name was **Paul Simon**. And his partner, **Art Garfunkel**, was his **Aaron**.

Together, they pointed us toward a new **destiny**, one that was individual and~ universal. They gave us the **hope**~ our parents couldn't give us. And they called it a "Bridge Over Troubled Waters."

But what it was, in **essence**, was the **rainbow** Given to **Noah** that then symbolized every face on the planet. Every man, woman and child became the face of **promise**.

We each had an individual face and a body of our own. But with **love**, we had the potential to strive for a national, even universal, goal that was greater than anything we'd learned about in school.

It was a **promise** that touched us in our **soul**, regardless of how broken our **hearts** were. And we just knew without being told in so many words that this was the answer we were **seeking**.

As such, each of us instinctively knew that there was~ a land of **milk** [**love**] somewhere over the **rainbow**. And even

more amazing than that, there was a place much sweeter than milk! A place of honey [wisdom]. And we were on an exodus from a slavery that had crushed us. And we were determined to get there [There].

This is what it meant to grow up in the 1960's feeling orphaned from our parents; a society crippled by money, power and greed. This is how we~ were going to find our way Home.

This is what it meant to drop out~, turn on~ and tune in~. This is what the Summer of Love in San Francisco was saying. And this is the message my~ generation is still grasping tenaciously to with open arms today.

Once a youngster is on the other side of childhood; has reached adulthood [21+]; and lives under his own roof – he's finally free to let out his animal instincts two-by-two onto dry land. He's free to explore his feelings of lust without his parents interfering in matters of his heart. Liberty is finally within reach!

It's through clues to the emotional world within ourself that we learn to differentiate between our two worlds, a magical~ world within us and the realistic~ world around us.

Those youngsters who already became familiar with their emotional realm in childhood anticipated this change eagerly. But we all~ experienced a huge emotional shift after our first orgasm that we could never have imagined how it would feel before we felt it.

This biological change created a difference between a mysterious promise of hope~ [internal] and mere optimism~ [external]. This, every imaginative, youngster can finally access and understand.

In the next story of Genesis, "The Tower of Babel," the young adult male [18-21] colludes with his peers to figuratively make his way up through the clouds of uncertainty to God's Heavenly Realm to usurp His Power at its source. He doesn't believe God can be trusted since He

Unleashed such monstrous feelings in early puberty. He Could Do something equally diabolical again... Every young man seeks to usurp God's Power to claim it as his own.

He erects [stimulates] his penis like a tower he constructs which acts as a ladder for him to climb up to the height necessary to perceive, attract and possess a power inside himself he can call all his.

But because his head is really colluding with his heart over matters introduced by his hormones, he doesn't fully realize what he's doing, even if he's already having sex with others.

Outwardly, he gets cocky. He gets arrogant. He gets belligerent, possibly even violent. He turns into a know-it-all who thinks he can feel-it-all. He becomes egotistical, competitive, pushy and determined to get ahead without reflecting on his need to get a head.

This level of juvenile development is one in which the young male becomes cynical, suspicious and distrusting after finding himself having been born into a world where there wasn't enough love for him, let alone anyone else.

So, he decides to take matters into his own hands. The powerful feelings he's experiencing in his heart rebel against his head that still insists on maintaining control over his actions. It's as if his heart comes back from the dead to fight for its right to feel free.

This is where I lost Maria. Her older sister had found her a position as au pair with a family in a town so she could get out of her mother's house and go to high school. After graduating high school, another sister got her, her first job in the state mental institution in Augusta, ME. Maria went from that job into the convent. She had no interest in exploring the animals down in her hull. She decided to keep them all onboard under lock and key in her ark. She repressed her resentment against her mother. She reached out to help others rather than hinder anyone, as she'd been hindered, on her quest for liberty and justice for all.

Young adulthood for many young men is consumed with **jealousy** and **envy** that may even erupt into **violence**. They're not only extremely sexually attracted to some~. They're also extremely repelled by others~.

If a young man today is a **Muslim** living in the Middle East, **stereotypically**, he becomes consumed with what **Jews** got that he's missing. If he's **Christian** in **America**, he becomes consumed with sex and **guns**. And if he's **Jewish** anywhere on the planet, he unconsciously becomes consumed with the concept of consuming...

You could probably say that these stereotypes are still normal~ at this age in this day-and-age. Young men can't stop **coveting** what they don't have until they discover what it is they hold inside that they can truly call their own. They have to get to know themselves from within to discover their own unique set of virtues and vices.

Adolescents don't usually want what God~ Has To Offer. They want what they~ could have that they feel has been withheld from them for a very long time.

A **pedophile** is only one example of an **arrested** child who seeks to force children through this passage of **life** to adulthood.

We all have fragments of our psyche that were **wounded** in childhood and later scarred over in adolescence. We all need to go back to heal ourselves by making our way over the **rainbow** of adolescence a second time.

The three patriarchs who are described next in **Genesis** personify the maturation process of every adult male as seen from the **heart**. By middle age a man can identify personally with all of them.

Abraham personifies **fear**.

Isaac personifies **worry**.

Jacob personifies **anger**.

Abraham bargained with God out of **fear**. He tried to give **Isaac** back to Him [**murder**] as a way of placating his Creator.

Abraham wanted to sacrifice **Isaac** to God because **Abraham** suffered from an inferiority complex. Over the wellbeing of those living in **Sodom**, he was willing to bargain with Him. But over his son's **life**, he thought he knew just what he had to do. He couldn't debate the issue **morally** from within.

Isaac suffered a **lifetime** of **angst** over whether or not he was ever truly wanted. If his father had truly wanted a son, why then did he try to **kill** him? That's not how fathers are supposed to behave toward their progeny.

Isaac felt betrayed. And if the son must **worry** about whether his father will ever try to **kill** him a second time, the young man becomes the personification of **anguish** without even knowing it.

Isaac's son, **Jacob**, was **angry** at the world and perplexed about his reason for having been created in the first place. He felt the need to balance the external playing field by stealing his brother's **[Esau]** inheritance to make up for what he didn't get from their father right from the start. **Jacob** suffered from a superiority complex. He thought developing a clever **mind** would solve the problems located in his broken heart.

The **Jewish** people are named after **Jacob**, whose name God **Changed** to **Israel**. The **Jewish** people are God's First Chosen People. We were the first to become **enraged** with Him for what He's Put us through.

We'd expected God's **Promise** To Be Delivered to us a long time ago. We always knew we held all the components of the **promise** of **hope**, but we've had to discover the hard way that **hope** won't ever be Delivered to us without everyone on Earth knowing what we know and feeling the way we do about this school we've all been Enrolled in.

There's a spiritual evolution in progress that corresponds to the maturation of every individual that we must all

experience for ourself personally before we can help each other to achieve.

The only problem is that the Orthodox-Jews feel that the gay-Jews are perverts of God's Plan. And yet, all good people know that if you treat people like sh-t, it's because you're confusing who you are with what's inside you...

The state of Israel encourages it's citizens to love anyone they choose. The Orthodox-Jews vehemently oppose that.

The last story of Genesis is about Joseph, the son of Jacob. Joseph was almost murdered by his bothers; sold into slavery; and later imprisoned for a crime he didn't commit.

Joseph was the personification of the victim in the family dynamic model who had to use his power to dream~ to escape his fate. Dreaming becomes a mysterious process that occurs by day or night, awake or asleep.

Most people in the school of life are dreaming in class. They're neither asleep nor awake. If you identify as a Joseph, you're what we call an artistic~ type. You hold a hope inside you that you're trying to express.

When a boy discovers the ecstasy of orgasm, he wonders why his outer world suddenly looks so different from his inner world. Childhood ended abruptly. The experience of sublime, physical joy changed everything. Then he unconsciously begins to wonder whether God Loves his brother more than him. This feels excruciatingly ominous.

Every young man wants to know why he had to build an ark in puberty to contain his animal urges as he made his way to safe harbor before the end of adolescence. He questions what it really means to have let those animal urges off his vessel to replicate themselves in others. He wants to know why God Would Have Given him a personal promise never

to repeat that inner flood of feelings and sensations, while causing all sorts of bad weather patterns around him.

He especially wants to know why he felt banished to suffer feelings of inferiority, **betrayal** and even feelings of superiority over others. And if that isn't enough, he wants to know why he's been treated so **hatefully** by so many.

Those are a lot of questions for God. And they arise just from contemplating one's childhood and adolescence.

The injustices of the world are perplexing for every generation. How Can God Be in charge of this world if there appears to be such confusion and rebellion in His Ranks?

Life is complex. Man is complex. Only the hope of experiencing love lies there in the darkness within beckoning us onward.

Maria now suffers mild dementia. She's 97 years old, yet she hops in and out of my car as though she was still 17. She's got a smile on her face that makes me feel like a budding blossom again. She's done with this world and her work in it. She's eager to move on. She's ready to graduate this school. She wants to shake hands with her Teacher, Jesus. She doesn't consider the world's problems her problems, anymore.

Every man is a tree of knowledge unto himself. He was born in a grove [family]. He later discovers that he's actually one of many trees in an orchard [society]. And he spends his life lost in the woods trying to make his way out so he can go Home in peace.

Loving yourself is the carrot. Pain and suffering are the sticks. But loving yourself is anything but free and easy. It's so easy to love Jesus while forgetting to love yourself, as well.

Guilt, on the other hand, is free. The whole of Torah, the core of Tanach [The Old Testament] describes the creation

of the feeling of **guilt** in the human psyche. For some reason, God Felt a need To Teach us to feel **guilt** before He Introduced us to the feeling of **love**.

I see that as funny, although hardly amusing.

For those who are willing to do the inner work of exploring **guilt**, they discover that **embarrassment** of their body leads to modesty. **Shame** of their character leads to humility. And **humiliation** before The Lord leads to **grace**, which is another way of saying that **loyalty** to God is the greatest of all the rewards of a **life** well lived.

I had to experience these three aspects of **guilt** before I was Given my first taste of **love**. You did, too. And you passed those classes, although none of us have anything in the way of stellar grades to boast about...

In early childhood, we moved through the **embarrassment** of toilet training, feeding ourself and dressing on our own to achieve a modicum of modesty over our body.

Later in childhood, we experienced the **shame** of our character defects. That taught us how to behave respectfully in polite society, especially toward those older than us. That humility made it possible for us to learn from some others without expressing constant defiance at the world the way it is.

But **humiliation** is a feeling that comes directly from our **Teacher**. No one can anticipate when that lesson in **life** will arrive or leave.

If you've already experienced a terrible loss in **life**, you know the depth of this third aspect of **guilt**. Whether you related making your way through that loss to the **grace** of God is yours to say. But you're still here in this school. And your final exam looms before you as it does for us all.

All the **wisdom** found in **The Old Testament** was useless to **me** until I discovered **Christ's love**. All the **love** I hold dear inside has left **me** feeling crucified on a cross of pain pulling **me** in one direction and suffering pulling **me** in the other.

That said, it wasn't until I discovered the secrets Given to us in **The Quran**: the **loyalty** to **life** that comes through our desire to act **proudly**, that I could hold my **head** up high.

I had to wander for quite some time through this world like a **Jew** in my own, private **diaspora**.

I think **Torah** is built upon the main metaphor~ of **Moses**. And I think the **red** words of **The Gospels** are constructed using the body and **blood** of **Christ**. His words produce symbolism~, the container/contents model needed to make **love**.

Torah explains the workings of our **head**~. **The Gospels** explains the working of our **heart**~.

And after these **lessons** of **life**, I think The Good Lord Brought us the 114 chapters of **The Quran**, which is erected like a tower that rises that extra mile. **The Quran** taught **me** how to operate myself from my **soul**~ thanks to its 114 similes~ for God.

Although I found a **rainbow** in the sky in whatever country I visited or lived in, I didn't find the meaning of the **rainbow** around~ **me**. There's no **rainbow** in any outer place that's more or less mysterious and **magical** than any other.

I had to seek personal answers to the outcomes of those heavenly lights within~. It was only when I internalized the **rainbow** as a message of **hope** and a **promise** from God that was shining in the **darkness** inside **me** that I discovered the meaning of faith in all God's Seven Paths:

Indigenism
Hinduism
Judaism
Buddhism

Taoism
Christianity
Islam

[I don't see Buddhism as a faith. Buddhists don't believe in God or gods. I see it as a philosophy God Squeezed in after Judaism and before Taoism.]

Like Christ's body and blood, I'm an "I" in an "it". I'm a holy symbol of God's Creation and Intention. Therefore, the secret to love must be sought within me with myself, for me to achieve something worthy enough to share with others.

Until I got out of my head by going on an exodus inside myself, through my stiff neck down to my heart, I couldn't discover the true value of love~.

Until I made my way through my heart and into my soul, I couldn't discover the true meaning of life~.

And without complete knowledge of the meaning of life as a school, I made mistakes that would have cost me a piece of paradise – although I state that contingency as a metaphor, not a literal outcome I can guarantee or hold over anyone's head like a Damocles sword. Death is still a mystery despite anything anyone might tell you to the contrary.

The stories I'm about to describe are about self-bullying and self-abuse. They're intended to teach you about what I didn't yet know about myself~ that my dad should have explained to me when he presented the facts of life to me a long time ago.

But I only seemed to have gotten the "fax" of life from him... I was confused. I tried to do the best I could with what little I was told. I knew I didn't know enough about anything. And, sadly, I now must admit that my dad was next to useless in explaining the meaning of it all to me.

I now~ know that if there are that many people around **me** making serious errors of judgment due to emotional colorblindness, then no~ one could have all the answers, given how little any of us knows himself.

If you can already agree with everything I've said, you might be wasting your time reading any more of this book. But I suggest you persevere despite any **irritation** and **impatience** you might be experiencing from my retelling of the blatant truth about **life** in my own colorful way.

The last section of this book will be about **The Book of Ecclesiastes**. That might be of use to you, regardless of what you knew before you saw my words illuminated in hues and shades. **The Book of Ecclesiastes** claims that **life** is all about vanity~ and meaninglessness~. I strongly disagree with that conclusion. I think you~ should, too.

This world is comical~, not meaningless~. It's only the deeply perplexed who get so **exasperated** with **life** who come to the conclusion that nothing~ means anything.

I tried to **kill** myself three times in my twenties. I suppose the reason for that was that I was **exasperated** with my **life**. I saw **life** as too confusing to be worth the bother. I also couldn't stand other people's vanity, although I had no problem with my own...

If you have a bewildered look on your face right now, that might be because you're actually better than you think~. You might have thoughts that are in conflict with feelings that you can't quite resolve. And isn't that, when all is said and done, what makes us **impatient**?

I think **life** is really all about the **mystery** and **magic** we possess inside. If there's that much **happiness** to be gleaned just from **orgasm**, just imagine what we might **hope** to achieve after we're **dead**...

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Her Story

I met **Deborah** in 1987 by chance. We'd known one another growing up, but we didn't recognize each other when we met again as adults.

I'd decided to go to the **gay synagogue** in L.A. to see if I could meet a cool, **gay-Jew**. I wasn't looking for God. I had no need of God at the time. What I **desperately** needed was a boyfriend~...

I got there early and was the second person to sign up as requested when I entered. The woman on the list before **me** had the same last name as distant family of mine, so I approached her. It turned out that my great-uncle **Martin** had married her great-aunt **Estee**.

In fact, **Deborah** and I had even cursorily known one another when she was a teenager, and I was child. I'd been to her mother's house for **Hanukkah** many times. Although **Deborah** was seven years older than **me**, I still have a memory of a Juicy Fruit wrapper necklace she'd made and hung in her bedroom.

Deborah was at the **gay synagogue** with her girlfriend, **Jennie**. They'd been in a relationship for three years by then. **Jennie** was five years younger than **me**. She was an electrician. She came from a religious, **Christian** home in small town PA. **Deborah** was a chiropractor.

They lived together in Healdsburg, a small town in the wine country of Sonoma County in Northern California. They were in L.A. visiting **Deborah's** family.

Deborah donated time to the Healdsburg city council to help poor, **Latinx** farmers who worked in the vineyards, and their families. She also studied **yoga** and would later open a **yoga** studio in Healdsburg and teach it. **Deborah** was the first person I ever knew with a three-legged dog.

The two of them owned a house in town and a 140-acre ranch 40 minutes west of Healdsburg in the rolling, forested hills above Dry Creek Road. **Jennie** chopped wood for their

furnace, maintained their water well and did a million odd jobs around the house along with her full-time job as an electrician.

They were pioneer~ women. They were a modern recreation of women who came out West in the 19th Century. In my day, the 20th Century was the 19th Century for **lesbians** who wanted to do right in a world that did so much wrong.

Let's see what the 21st Century will say about **life** for **lesbians** as we move forward into an unknown future.

Her Story and My Story

Deborah is the youngest of three **siblings**. She has an older brother, **Carl**, who I fell madly in love with when I was 10 years old. **Carl** has a large scar on his face. He reminded **me** of one of the Three Musketeers when I was a kid. I thought he was handsome, dashing and strong.

Terry, the middle child of the three, seemed loud, boisterous and needy to **me** then. I remembered **Terry** competing with her mother for attention as soon as **Terry** came through the front door at **Hanukkah**.

Their father, who I called Uncle **Hyme**, was tall, dark and handsome in a working-class sort of way. He had rough hands that he washed with a soap with pumice in it in the bathroom off their kitchen. He'd pick **me** up each year like a basketball and tossed **me** around the room, leaving **me** in peals of laughter.

Aunt **Milly** was a butterball who cooed like a hen laying eggs. Her feathers were easily ruffled, so she stayed in the kitchen most of the time. That was her nest, and her home was her coop. She only came into the living room to play the piano if she ventured anywhere outside the kitchen at all.

When I was 10 and **Rina** was 8, Mummy had a terrible car accident. She was hospitalized for several weeks. Aunt **Milly** took us to the hospital to visit her. That was the first time I saw Aunt **Milly** outside her home. And it was the first time I saw Mummy seriously bedridden.

Rina and I had been trained like show dogs. We were so obedient and well-raised that Mummy agreed to fire the social worker who'd been assigned to us while she was in the hospital. Mummy saw to it that we were provided \$10 a week for groceries. We'd already been making our lunches ourselves. Breakfast was cereal, and dinner I could cook for the two of us. I used to have dinner partially made by the time Mummy came home from work. Mummy just arranged

with a neighbor to take us food shopping once a week. The rest of our routine continued as usual.

We couldn't go into the hospital because we were children, but we could wave to Mummy from outside her window.

Apart from the first time I tried to **kill** myself [by swallowing a whole bottle of Bayer aspirins {100}] and called **Rina** for help – those weeks alone with my sister when we were kids was probably the only time I felt a sense of protection, **loyalty** and connection to her as a brother.

Deborah and **Jennie** stayed in touch and soon became fast **friends**. The very thought that our families hadn't told us we had **gay** relatives sweetened our bond.

The next year, 1988, I drove up to visit them. In the car, I was singing, "We are family. I've got all my sisters with me." [Niles **Rodgers**, **Bernard Edwards**]

I fell in **love** with them and their country **lifestyle**. **Deborah** had made it out of the rat race. She'd gotten away from **Jewish life** in L.A. She was a doctor in a small town during the week, and a rancher on the weekends. Her 140-acre estate had a garden and an orchard, although no livestock. Still, it was, to my **mind**, **paradise**. Whatever it was **Deborah** had, I wanted it. I wasn't a **lesbian**, and I didn't want a woman to share my **life** with. But I wanted everything else she sought after in **life**.

In 1989, I applied for and got a job teaching drama at Comstock Junior High School in Santa Rosa. I moved up in June of 1989 as soon as my job as English **teacher** at El Sereno Junior High in East L.A. ended.

I was finally out of L.A. I'd come back to L.A. where I'd grown up after having lived in **Israel** and Holland for five years from the age of 18-22. Then I fell ill to mental illness, exacerbated by drugs and alcohol.

After 14 years in L.A. in adulthood, I was dead-set on becoming a country boy. I couldn't have been **happier** about

seeking my destiny in small-town America. I even thought of buying a trailer and living on Deborah's land. She loved the idea of having me even closer.

I was 36 years old at the time, and sick and tired of gay life in L.A. All my friends were from Alcoholics Anonymous or the YMCA where I taught aerobics. I'd had one live-in boyfriend for about a year whom I'd met from an ad he placed in a gay rag. But that relationship didn't work out. I had to move out of his apartment and start all over again.

He was a frustrated opera singer, and I was an ex-ballet dancer. It turned out we lived in non-intersecting fantasy worlds. He could sing. I could dance. But neither of us could talk to one another... I cheated on him. Then he cheated on me. Then we broke up.

When I was young and single, a weekend was more my idea of a long affair. I didn't know if I was too picky or whether there just weren't any good men left in L.A. by then... I finally saw no reason to give up my dream of country living.

I moved into an in-law unit Deborah secured for me in Healdsburg. It was located in the back yard of an old Communist from the 30's who'd been involved in the 1934 waterfront strike in San Francisco. I still think back to the Gravenstein apples growing in her backyard. They were the sweetest apples I'd ever tasted. [I learned that that's a variety developed in Sebastopol, another small town in Sonoma County.] I was drunk on the idea of being able to pick apples in my own backyard!

I was poised for the good life with my lesbian cousin and her lover in rural America. I'd found my gay family! Suddenly, I decided there was~ A God... I didn't want to kill myself anymore. Everything was looking up.

I drove 20 minutes each day to work at the county seat, Santa Rosa, where I taught country kids about the magic of theater, having danced professionally in Israel in my late

teens. I spoke five languages and had a European polish that set **me** apart from most men in rural **America** then. [Now I can see that most of that polish was pretense.]

Sadly, the whole **damn** dream blew up in my face when the kids started to taunt **me** for looking and behaving as though I might be queer – and a hoity-toity European queer, to boot...

I discussed the matter with the vice-principle, but she only stared at **me** like a deer in the headlights when I told her I was **gay**, and the kids were teasing **me** about it.

Because she was of no use to **me** at all in solving my problem, I decided to just come out to my kids and force them to face **reality**. It was, after all, 1989...

Within hours, that disclosure caused a larger mushroom cloud than the bombs dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima. The whole county suddenly shifted measurably from an earthquake whose epicenter had been discovered in one of their public schools.

They were **horrified** to learn that their precious children were under **attack** by a **pervert** who was going to corrupt their **hearts** and **minds**. They looked at **me** like we look at school **shooters** today. They couldn't imagine the sort of evil I was going to fill their sweet, innocent children's **heads** with like bullets from a **long gun**.

Having started school in Buffalo, New York in the mid 50's, I was well aware of what it was like to have a **horrible teacher**. I called my first-grade **teacher** "Crabby Appleseed" after a character in a book Mummy had read to **me**.

But when I told a girlfriend of mine on our way home for lunch that I **hated** our **teacher**, she told **me** that she was going to tell Miss Johnson what I said.

I ran home **crying**. I was in an utter state of **panic**. I **dreaded** the thought of going back to school that day. I just wanted to **die** there and then.

That feeling of **dread** never left. **Dread** was what the cloud that hung over my **head** most of my **life** was made of. It engulfed **me** in a feeling of drizzle, fogginess and chill I felt down to my bones every day of my **life** until I **retired**.

Granted, the sun did break through to shine a little **joy** in my **heart** from time to time – but never for very long. So, I tried to deal with the feeling of **dread** as best I could until I **retired** and got away from **reality** as I'd always known it.

In my twenties, I'd attempted **suicide** three times to try to clear the air of clouds. I also took drugs and alcohol to recreate the feeling of sunshine artificially. Neither did any good.

And I lied. I lied about who I was; where I'd come from; what I'd done; and what I'd accomplished by having done what I hadn't done. I said I was British, not American. I spoke with an English accent. And when I didn't lie about my past, I was deep in denial about my future. I wrote everything by telling people **reality** just wasn't my thing...

So, when I came out as a **gay teacher** to my students, there really wasn't anything **Deborah** and **Jennie** could do for **me**. They had troubles of their own living a closeted, **lesbian life** in small town **America**. **Deborah** and her former **lover** had a thriving chiropractic practice in Healdsburg. [**Lesbians** never divorce, as we all know. They just add girlfriends like flying buttresses to their **cathedral** walls.] Either **Deborah**'s patients didn't know she was a **lesbian**, or they turned a blind eye in exchange for the physical relief she gave them.

But as a female electrician in a man's world, **Jennie** was as exposed as I was to **hate** speech, prejudice and homophobia from small-**minded** Americans in those days.

My job as a **teacher** had turned into hell on Earth. I could only escape from it by going to retreats for **gay** men who lived in the country.

At one such retreat two days before Valentine's Day, 1990, I met **Larry**. He was a **gay-Jew** from New York who'd moved to San Francisco soon after The Summer of **Love**. Although he was a cultural **Jew** like **Deborah**, **Larry** was **angrier** than **Deborah**. But they were both pretty **angry** people.

Because both my **parents** had been **Holocaust** survivors, as well as my older **siblings**, **Larry** was particularly interested in **me** as a person. He wasn't just interested in my body.

Larry never met a stranger. He was **popular**. He was extroverted. He **loved** basketball; played every day with his buddies, many of whom were straight and accepted him as **gay**. [While I was an introverted ballet dancer who came across as a **snob**. I didn't engage in sports. I only glided across the world stage as though an **angel** with wings...]

Larry owned a market research company that he ran from his kitchen. His business was a year old when we met. He had one employee, a **Jewish-lesbian** who sat in his dining room. For her, marketing was a sport, like hunting. Every person she recruited was like game she **shot** and mounted like a trophy on the wall.

The two of them passed papers through a serving window between those two rooms in his one-bedroom Victorian apartment in Noe Valley, a suburb of San Francisco.

If **Larry** needed to send a fax, there was a shop a block and a half away on 24th Street. He'd just say he had a fax that needed to go out, and **Sue** knew he was going to stretch his legs and would be back in 20 minutes. Otherwise, he was on the phone schmoozing with clients. He **loved** his job. And he soon came to tell **me** he **loved me**, too.

I quit my teaching job in the middle of the school year. There wasn't much left of my classes after the parents pulled their kids out of drama. It was only an elective after all. The kids didn't have to take it.

Then, the principal turned my room into a detention hall in which I tried to teach deeply **disturbed** teenagers about the comedies and tragedies of **life**.

Sadly, deeply **disturbed** juveniles are the personification of drama~. The students I was forced to babysit didn't need a **gay**, drama **teacher** who was persona-non-grata at their school. They didn't need to be punished~ by having to face a faggot an hour a day. They needed a **teacher** who was properly trained in developmental psychology to help them understand the challenges of **growing** up.

I had~ to get out of there! The Ides of March 1990 turned out to be my last day at Comstock. The union negotiated my exit settlement. The school district paid my salary until the end of the school year in exchange for **me** leaving immediately and not talking publicly about what had happened.

They'd saved their school from a faggot, but they didn't want **me** telling anyone my side of the story. Although I promised not to talk about the settlement to protect their hypocritical asses then, I don't give a **damn** about that anymore.

Larry and I dated all that spring. I moved to San Francisco to live with him in June of 1990. He was HIV+. I was HIV-. It was a gamble whether he'd live very long and whether I'd catch AIDS from him. Such is love when you're young, bruised and yet mysteriously **hopeful**.

I had no intention of going back to L.A. And since I couldn't survive as a **gay** man in the country, there was every indication I wouldn't do worse in a different big city. San Francisco was surely the most civilized city on Earth in those days, as it still is, in my opinion, today.

I got a job teaching English and E.S.L. at Lincoln High School in the Sunset district at the west end of San Francisco. I'd landed on my feet in my chosen profession, and I'd hooked a boyfriend at the same time.

There was no God~ in my life then, so I just thought I'd gotten lucky. That and surviving three suicide attempts had seemed like good luck to me~! Finding Larry in the nick of time was just my idea of getting lucky a fourth time. I was particularly pleased with myself, I remember.

Deborah and Jennie would come down regularly to visit us. Two years into our relationship, they joined our mothers with their second husbands and all our friends for our commitment ceremony. Good times she wrote...

Larry's business took off. We became rich and bought a house on a hill with a fantastic view overlooking the Bay. Larry had known Harvey Milk and every other important person in San Francisco in the early days of gay liberation, so he used his prominence to help gay men as much as he could while he was having his day in the sun.

We were one of the first gay couples to become members of the Dolphin Club, people who swim in the Bay. We contributed to building their women's locker room. The Dolphin Club had been a men's club for more than a hundred years. When they allowed women in, they had to make room to accommodate them. There's a tile in the women's shower with our names on it.

We also contributed to the creation of the film "Paragraph 175," which chronicles the lives of gay men who were arrested by the Nazis for the crime of homosexuality under Paragraph 175, the sodomy provision of the German penal code that dated back to 1871. Between 1933 and 1945, 100,000 men were arrested under Paragraph 175. Some were imprisoned, others were sent to concentration camps. Only about 4,000 gay men survived.

At the time, the city of San Francisco [and the nation] was dragging through the gay nineties from dozens of gay deaths each week from AIDS. The obituary column in the gay rags was pages and pages long. Grief and misery were

everywhere. Castro Street looked like a hospital corridor with people walking with canes or pushed in wheelchairs.

The cloud of **dread** remained over my **head**, despite my good fortune. I was in **dread** of getting infected by **Larry** with AIDS. I was in **dread** of being outed at work for being **gay**. I was in **dread** of nightmares from childhood that still popped up like mushrooms growing in a damp field in my **mind**.

I couldn't feel any better at that time than I did. I didn't have any inner tools to speak of. I just did the best I could emotionally with the **heart** I had.

When **Larry** got full-blown AIDS, we'd been together about 10 years. I think it was then that he started to see his previous boyfriend behind my back. I'd been under the impression that we were in a monogamous relationship... But apparently **Larry** didn't find safe sex satisfy.

In all fairness, I didn't think much of it, either.

He missed the kind of sex he'd **enjoyed** at the baths. He missed the **glee** of having sex with complete abandon. If he was going to have to **die** in his late forties or early fifties, I suppose he decided he wanted to go out with a bang, not a whimper. Since his former boyfriend was HIV+, they could do it all!

We broke up in 2004 after a 14-year relationship. **Deborah** and **Jennie** broke up after we did. **Deborah** found a **Jewish** gal who swept her off her feet. But that affair didn't last long.

My relationship to **Deborah** really took off after we were both single again. I felt she became my **Ilana**, my older sister, who'd returned from my early childhood; someone I could confide in.

Deborah admitted to **me** that she'd never met anyone in her whole **life** before that affair who'd found her physically attractive. But that introduction to love only lasted a year. Still, it was the one time she experienced the **passion** of

someone lusting after her. Who would want to miss out on something like that?

I was still emotionally fragile at the time, so I felt like I had an older sister to confide in. And although **Deborah** was emotionally fragile in her own way, it felt to **me** like she had a younger brother to confide in. She no longer had to be the youngest child in her family. She no longer had to feel unloved. She had someone to **love** platonically who was younger and needier than her.

Deborah and **Jennie** eventually got back together. They even got married a few years ago. They said it was for the health insurance benefits they'd get, but I know they married for **love**, even if **love** means companionship to them.

Sadly, companionship for them doesn't include **passion**, something **Will** and I enjoy. Their relationship involves a lot of arguing. There was one argument a couple of years ago that centered around how long to bake potatoes.

The subjects of their arguments are always meaningless externally, but it says a lot about the compromise they've made in not having to be alone in **life**. They're two women in a **love/hate** relationship that's teaching them the meaning of **love** and **hate** although these two feelings are so intrinsically combined for them that they can't tell one from the other.

Nothing is ever going to **change** about that unless they decide to pursue **love** with more vigor. Their **hearts** were broken a long time before they met, but they don't know how to get out of them into their **soul**.

They don't know how to feel for themselves. That requires self-**empathy**. They think they can only experience **love** for one another, and that creates resentment. Consequently, they swing from one extreme feeling to the other. They're on a pendulum of emotions that passes through the midpoint [**self-love**] with such acceleration that they can't even say what **love** is.

I guess I should circle back to remind you that I was twice involuntarily committed to mental institutions. So, who am I to judge? I was not only psychotic. I was a psychopath who couldn't tell you what guilt was, let alone describe any of my other feelings in words.

The first time I was hospitalized, I was diagnosed as paranoid schizophrenic. The second time they chose a different label: manic-depressive. I was prescribed lithium, which I took for 25 years. I felt like the personification of hopelessness because I needed to be psychiatrically medicated.

I was healing anyway thanks to life, albeit slowly. I don't credit my medication. After my second involuntary hospitalization, I had that one-year affair with the opera singer. I think I learned a lot about my feelings while with him. I just didn't understand how much I needed quality time with people as well as quality time alone.

When I was with Larry and he started to have night sweats, I suddenly realized we were going to have to go through his AIDS diagnosis and death together. And I knew there wasn't a pill on the planet that could save me from the suffering I was going to have to endure as he got sicker and sicker.

I didn't want to have to attempt suicide a fourth time after Larry died. I wanted to live, just not without him. But I intuitively realized I still couldn't feel as deeply as others. I couldn't enjoy the rapport, connection and enjoyment of life that others looked like they were able to express that I knew I was still faking.

So, I slowly reduced my psychiatric medication until I stopped it altogether on June 21st, 2000. It was the first day of summer in the new century. My psychiatrist had guided me through the process while I tried to hold my sanity in my

own hands in my late forties for the first time since I'd driven my car off a cliff in 1977.

That wasn't easy, but perhaps because I'd given up drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and caffeine in 1984, I was stronger in 2000 than I thought.

I've now been off psychiatric drugs for almost a quarter of a century and clean and sober for almost 40 years. In all honesty, I can't yet say I'm sane. But I am able to enjoy my own company even when I find being with Barry difficult to bear...

Feeling my feelings is still the greatest miracle of my life. Even when I feel lost, depressed or confused, I can still remember the feeling of feeling. And that gives me hope. I'll never want to kill myself again so long as I can remember how much I've grown over my lifetime.

Being me in a relationship with myself has given my life all the meaning I need. I'd rather suffer through the challenge of being an authentic fruit than the challenge of being with all the nuts out there who are only pretending to be themselves. I consider myself very lucky to be a tree like me, but only because learning to love myself has become my greatest reason for being.

Cleaning up my mind wasn't something I could do while still stuck in my head. I had to get out of my head and into my heart to clean out my head thoroughly from another place in inner space.

Once you can admit you've lost your mind completely, you can then resolve to give up the search for sanity altogether... That may not even take an involuntary commitment to a mental institution. It may only take resolve to feel better. And I do mean that literally. Feeling better is the greatest reward I've ever found for living.

Once you've lost your mind, follow your feelings from then on out. And once you can see that your heart has been broken, shattered and crumbled into pieces no larger than gravel that make a growling sound as you drive over it, make

your way out of your heart, too. Make your way into your most cherished beliefs. You'll find them in your soul.

As someone who's lost his mind and had his heart stepped on repeatedly until I could only think of myself as a door mat, personal experience has proved to me that the place I most want to live in forever is my soul.

I think God Likes the soulful. And you'll probably like yourself a lot more if you treat yourself soulfully at all times, too.

There's nothing like the wisdom in your head [Judaism], the love in your heart [Christianity] and the loyalty to life in your soul [Islam] if you're interested in seeking God.

But in order to come to know Him~, I had to first come to know myself~. I had to observe~ me. I had to discover my underlying assumption that in order to be soulful~, I thought I had to be unhappy~. I believed deep down in my soul that only unhappy~ people could be soulful.

Therefore, I was always unconsciously jealous and envious of happy people. The more unhappy I could make myself by having to be me rather than anyone else, the more miserable I could become. And the more miserable I was, the more I could explore soulfulness through a dark lens.

To give up the rose-colored glasses for clear lenses that would allow me to look at reality hopefully, I had to learn more about myself than I couldn't find in Judaism.

I couldn't even find it in Christianity. I had to get out of my head and heart to explore the rest of my body from a spiritual~, not a religious~, perspective.

To become soulful, I actually had to avoid my breastplate, the figurative location of the soul. I had to travel further south to explore matters below my belt.

My first destination on that adventure was my navel [Hinduism]. From there I continued south to my genitals [Buddhism]. And then I circled back via my anus [Taoism].

These spiritual parts of **me** held the secret to **tolerance**, **acceptance** and **admiration**.

Tolerance of my **Jewish** mother was something I achieved by contemplating my navel~. I couldn't feel **happy** about myself so long as I felt tortured by my mom.

Every single human body has a scar on the belly when s/he separated from his or her mother at birth. But not all people are trying to understand why that scar was Given to them via that particular woman. **Hinduism** explores that question for us. This is God's Gift to **humanity** through that faith.

The **Hindus** have done that spiritual work for us by studying **tolerance**. All I had to do was incorporate their **wisdom** in with my own. I wrote a book just about that. It's called Hinduism, Health and Healing: How to believe in God by believing in yourself.

Acceptance of others is evidenced by the delivery device [penis] of the good and evil [testicles] I produce inside. This is a whole department in the school of **life** given to us by the **Buddhists**, who don't believe in our **Teacher**. They follow the path of one man, the **Buddha**, who made peace with his wants [-] and desires [+].

Once I understood that the **Creation** Story in **Genesis** was an introduction to the philosophy of **Buddhism**, I could make peace with my penis [serpent] in my own inimitable way. I didn't have to get stuck in my **head** or **heart** in an effort to avoid the importance of having been Given the genitals I got.

Not only could I **accept** the penis I'd been Given, but I could stop **fighting** inside over the entire container and contents I had.

I only have certain~ virtues. I wasn't Blessed with all~ of them. My inner gifts from God mysteriously translate to physical attributes.

This spiritual work in **accepting** myself was given to **me** through the **wisdom** found in the philosophy of **Buddhism**. I wrote a book about it called Your Buddha Within: Inside

Every Buddhist Lies an Anti-Authoritarian Who Yearns for Peace of Mind.

Admiration of the anus comes with using doors that open two ways. Having a hole in **me** that serves two functions [elimination and sexual **delight**] creates the manifestation of paradox [**yin** and **yang**]. This rounded out my understanding of my body as a figurative gift from God with spiritual outcomes.

Before that, I had trouble understanding why answers had to come from contradictory, conflicting and opposing directions. I had to learn to smile at how beguiling **life** can be. Just opening my **heart** to **Taoism** made the spiritual work of self-admiration mine, alone.

The **wisdom** of **Lao-Tsu** was amazing because it helped **me** **admire** my anal retentive and anal explosive nature, not to feel **ashamed** of it. The book I wrote about that was called Lazy Susan: How Taoism Spins Paradox into Food for Thought.

Although I wrote about the **loyalty** to God found in **Islam** in a 7-volume work called, Quran, The Book of Lights before~ I made my way to the concepts of **tolerance**, **acceptance** and **admiration** found in the Far East, **The Quran** only really helped **me** to become **soulful** after I'd completed my spiritual trek around the world. I needed more experience of **life** to appreciate the majesty of **The Quran**.

I don't want to dwell on my relationship with God in this book or the seven faiths and philosophies He'S Given us. God Knows, I've said enough about those subjects in my other 28 books.

Until I discuss my interpretation of **The Book of Ecclesiastes** later on, I'd rather just continue to talk about matters of the **heart** and leave it at that.

I had to come out as **gay** a second time in San Francisco at the age of 50 when **Larry** and I broke up. That was harder

than the first time because I was no longer young and pretty. I felt like a grown man sitting in a little chair in a kindergarten class with my younger **gay** brothers. I was pretty uncomfortable.

I met **Will** seven years later. He's 12 years younger than **me**. We've been together for 12 years. **Will** is HIV- too. We **enjoy** a robust sex **life** with one another. We're monogamous. [Yes, Felicia, it is possible for two **gay** men to **enjoy** a satisfying sex **life** without cheating on one another. But it's got to include **passion**, or it will revert into a love/**hate** lesson of **life** like the one I'd unconsciously created with **Larry**. I certainly didn't want to repeat that class in the school of **life**!]

For 12 years now, I've been somewhat surprised after sex with **Will** because I find our love-making so continually **satisfying**. It's only been recently that I've realized sex with one person does get better and better, but only if the two people in the couple are both **growing** spiritually. When you're **growing** inside, sex gets more intense and rewarding. When you're shrinking inside, you may even lose **interest** in sex altogether.

Someday, when I'm a famous writer, someone will ask **me** publicly what I think about while Will and I are making love, and I'll tell them. But for now, I'm going to keep that little secret to myself...

I credit **Will** for much of our success as a couple. He taught **me** to give up on **seeking** love. He's told **me** he only wants to have a like~ affair, not a **love**~ affair with **me**. And now that we've practiced liking~ one another for 12 years, I have to say he was right~.

But he was also wrong~. I can't just like~ **Will**. I've come to **love**~ him. I'd **love** to only like~ him. Believe **me**, I've tried. Although there are times when I don't~ like him – like when he puts his coffee filters in the recycle bin; filling it to the rim; forcing **me** to take out the bag from the canister; tie

the knot; take it to the compost can in the garage; and replace the bag with another – he’s made **me** see how unreasonable I can be.

I can no longer pretend that the recycle canister is only for my banana peels. I have to share~ my garbage with him. And that’s a challenge for **me**, literally and figuratively. I’m petty and spiritually still young in many ways.

Most of my **life**, I didn’t like~ myself. Now that I’ve learned to like **me**~, I’ve learned to like my boyfriend, as well. And since I’ve come to like myself so much that I can even admit~ that I **love**~ **me**, I also have to admit I **love**~ my boyfriend, too~.

Everybody has his challenges. In a perfect world, I’d have garbage just for **me**. I wouldn’t have to share my garbage with my partner, and he wouldn’t have to share his with **me**. Am I insane? Indeed, there’s no other conclusion to come to...

But despite the mental aberrations that still consume **me**, I **love** the guy. I’d like to consistently like~ him. But I can’t. Sometimes I dislike~ him. Sometimes I like~ him. And sometimes I **love**~ him.

But I can’t **hate**~ him because I can’t **hate** **me**~ anymore. I’m through **hating**. I’ve had enough of **hate**. **Hating** is **black** and ugly. Now that I’ve passed all my classes in the school of **life** on **hating**, I’m free at last to like and **love**. And there’s nothing in **life** that has given **me** more relief than that.

I believe that **love** is something I should give only to myself~... I want to fill myself with **love** just as **Jesus** did. And I think everyone~ should do the same.

If you find your cup runneth over, I say to you [tongue-in-cheek] not to give your surplus **love** to your parents, spouse, children or to **humanity**... Water your **love** down with self-**hatred** [which I’m sure you have plenty of] until you’ve got the diluted versions called **tolerance**, **acceptance** and **admiration**.

Tolerate, accept or admire people if you find them likable. Like the whole world~ to the best of your ability. But for God's Sake, don't love~ anyone other than yourself~ and God...

Love yourself more each day of your life and give any extra love you have left over to God. Love Jesus if you're Christian. Admire him if you're not. The guy got it right~.

But don't make his~ mistake by trying to love everyone... The world will crucify you if you do. And God Will Agree To Allow that to happen. He Told us He Is A Jealous God. [Joshua 24:19]

I'm not only jealous of other men's bodies. I'm envious of the spirit they have inside them. If God Is also jealous of our bodies, then I'm going to go out of my way to make my body as beautiful, attractive and healthy as I possibly can. Give Him a good challenge~, I say!

Jesus only got one container. His Father Has none. Jesus had only one content: love, although he seemed to have been Blessed with a lot of it. His Father Holds all the contents of all the faiths and philosophies of the whole world.

Granted, Jesus was surely the greatest rabbi who ever lived. But the jealousy and envy of every rabbi since has only exacerbated the distance between Christians and Jews.

I don't let my own covetous nature get in the way of my truth anymore. I love the one I'm always with [me]. Then I love God, no matter what name others choose to use to call Him.

If you choose to love God as I try to do, that's fine. Any extra love I~ don't need in having to be me for a lifetime I find is well Received by Him. I think of God as a receptacle of love, a love bin, if you will. I deposit all the love I don't need in Him. And I feel that He's pleased To Receive it!

God Gave the **Jews** **The Ten Commandments** in which He **Wisely** Told us to honor~ our father and mother. He Didn't Say anything about loving~ them.

Granted, I **loved**~ my mother very much. I'm a **gay-Jew**, for God's Sake! I personify the **Madonna** and **Child** relationship even though I'm 70 years old and **Jewish**~!

There came a point when I was about 12 years old when couldn't **love** my father any longer. It was then that I realized my Father Had Only asked **me** to honor~ my father, not **love**~ him. I'd made the assignment more difficult than it had to be.

But I can never stop **loving** my mom~. The only thing. I can do now is replace the on/off switch of her voice in my **head** with a dimmer switch. Now I raise and lower the volume of my **Jewish** mother's voice in **me**.

Although I honored my father by having a **Bar Mitzvah**, because it was important to him, I didn't even begin to **love** him until he was long gone. It was only in old age that I began to see his virtues, not only focus on his vices.

Dad was an incredible **Zionist** and **lover** of **Israel**. He just didn't get along well with his own family. Nor did he know much about **Judaism** as a religious in comparison to any of the other world faiths and philosophies. He was just **Jewish** in the way he'd been raised. He had a **Yiddishe neshome** [a **Jewish** soul]. He never studied how to be a **Jewish** as I have. Hitler taught him most of what he knew about matters of the **heart**. He was fiercely **Jewish**.

Although I **loved** Mom, I lost a great deal of respect for her after she **passed** away, I looked back on her **life** and reread her autobiography a fourth time. She made a mess of **life** in some ways, too. It was then that I decided to honor her for the rest of my **life**.

Moses told us to **love** our neighbor as ourself. [**Leviticus** 19:17-18] But the **Israelites** were wandering in the desert

when **Moses** said it. They had no neighbors other than one another.

Jesus reiterated his words 1,400 years later. [Matthew 22:37-39, Mark 12:31]

But when **Jesus** said the same thing, the **Israelis** in those ancient days were colonized by the Romans and surrounded by two-faced Philistines and bad Samaritans. [The good Samaritan was an exception to the rule. That's why he was lauded.]

If you think most of those ancient **Israelis** thought **Christ's love** was a good thing, you're wrong. I think most of them thought he was out of his **mind**.

That said, the concept of **love** has caught on. Granted, the **Christians** carried the **wisdom** of **Moses** and the **love** of **Jesus** in the **Bible** around the world without modeling either message very well. The truth is, in some respects, they did a **horrible** job.

That said, **Torah** is a precursor to the arrival of **Jesus**. There was no **love** in the words of **Moses** or the other **Jews** quoted in **Tanach**. Their words were filled with the **wisdom** they held in their **head**. **Loving** from the **heart** is a whole other matter.

God, for **Moses**, was like a psychologist who promotes everything in terms of reverse psychology. **Moses** didn't know how to convey God's Sense of **humor** and clever ploys to sharpen our wits because he didn't have a sense of **humor**. If you read his autobiography [**Torah**], you know there's nothing in it to laugh at.

That said, if you read the **Creation** Story from the **heart** as a metaphor, the whole of **Torah** becomes incredibly funny. It all becomes about penis **envy**, and God Made it clear to **Moses** that He Has the largest penis of all...

It wasn't until **Jesus** came out of his **head** and into his **heart** that all Hebrew words were Given the capacity to be interpreted symbolically from the **heart** as well as metaphorically from the **head**.

We just don't know the name of the first **Jew** who laughed when he realized his **head** and **heart** were going in opposite directions, and that **Cain** and **Abel** were his inner brothers when witnessed within.

If you believe **Jesus** is God, that's fine with **me**. God Goes by many names: **Brahma**, **Krishna**, **Vishnu**, **Adonai**, **Jesus**, **Allah**, and there are more if you add all the hues and tones of gods past and present.

But, For God's Sake, Tell Me How You Feel! **Love** God using any name you choose. But please don't **love** your parents, spouse, children or anyone else in your **life**... I don't even think you should **love** your neighbor as yourself...

Just **love** yourself... That will end your constant self-indulgences. That will fill you with ample, spiritual exercise for a **lifetime**... All escapades into the **love** of others will be rewarded with new ways to **love** yourself and like other people all the more.

Now, you may think my advice sounds a tad extreme, or weird, or both. Or you may think it's just reverse psychology.

I have to admit I can't always follow it myself, although I try valiantly every day to do so. But I can say this. The more I **love** myself, the more I can honor those I don't even respect; like those I do; and still have plenty of **love** left over for God. In fact, I've even found it possible to **tolerate**, **accept** and **admire** some others I never thought I could.

I think my philosophy of **life** will come in handy when I'm on my **death**bed and have to take my final exam. I expect all the questions Given will be on **humor**.

Oh! One more thing.

If **life** begins in puberty when a teenager experiences his first **orgasm**, that means that God Was Playing a trick on us right from the start. That means that if you interpret **Torah** as reverse psychology, you're expected to defy God in some

ways and glorify~ Him in others. That will develop your sense of **morality**. He Expects you to be good and **angry** at the way things started out for you and maybe even about the way things have turned out since.

I suppose that must be a part of His Plan. Therefore, I suggest you laugh it off if you have a sense of **humor** and **cry** about it if you don't. But don't get **angry** at anyone. They'll all get their just desserts. Don't you **worry** about that~!

Childhood was all about learning the rules before playing the game. Once you were allowed into your inner world at the end of childhood, all bets had been placed. Your challenge, crap shoot, contest, **fight**, game, match, race, roulette, sport, test, trial, or hunt was on. **Orgasm** was introduced to you as though it were a race with: on your mark~ [**Adam and Eve**] get set~ [**Cain and Abel**] and go~ [**Noah and the Ark**].

Once you were a teenager among teenagers and adults, you were expected to act like a teenager on the cusp of adulthood, not like a child anymore. You were expected to use the forces in your inner world in conjunction with the forces in your outer world to make the decisions you believed would be best for you, as well as One and all.

In that sense, nothing has **changed** since the beginning of time. The only question is, have you~?

An Outside Opinion

Dear **Ettie**,

You met **Deborah** when she and I came to **Israel** in 2008. When you and **Ilan** were here for the first time in 2018, you met **Jennie**.

Jennie stayed with us two nights three months ago because her niece was in town. **Jennie** complained to **me** about **Deborah** while she was here visiting. It seemed like **Jennie** felt she was finally free to speak her **mind** because **Deborah** wasn't around. She told **me** the two of them **fight** like cats and dogs. [That was no secret. They do it in front of **Will** and **me** all the time. They used to argue in front of **Larry** and **me**. Some people just need to publicize their inner suffering.]

So, I gave it a moment's thought and shrewdly told **Jennie** she has a **snarky** sense of **humor**, but she uses it on **Deborah** when **Deborah** is **angry** at her. I told her to look more closely at her wife's character. **Deborah** has~ no sense of **humor**, especially when she's **mad**. Using a **snarky** sense of **humor** on someone like that is only being **provocative**.

I added that I **love**~ the **humor** **Jennie**'s developed over the years. I feel so much closer to her because of it. But I told her that people without a sense of **humor** don't understand that a sense of **humor** is used to relieve emotional pressure. Humor only works on other people with a sense of **humor**.

My intention was to get emotionally closer to **Jennie** while revealing a character defect of hers that was getting in the way of her marriage.

I couldn't tell **Jennie** that a **snarky** sense of **humor** isn't my~ idea of a really good~ sense of **humor**! I~ prefer self-deprecating **humor**. So, I tried to water down my criticism of her to get her to change her behavior during times of marital stress. It's stressful for **me** to be around the two of them because their arguing is so frequent and pointless.

I could see that a lightbulb went off in Jennie's head. And she even thanked me for my insights. I thought the issue was over.

What I didn't realize is that I should have asked Jennie to repeat what I'd told her to make sure she understood what I'd said. That was my big mistake~.

We went up to Deborah and Jennie this past weekend. We arrived on Friday and stayed until Sunday morning. Then we went to Napa in the wine country for a night in a hotel on Sunday and came back on Monday at the end of the day. The second part of the trip was terrific.

Friday night, I said a few words at the dinner table about how wonderful it was to be together again and how much their friendship means to me. Everyone nodded their heads in agreement and approval.

But oy ve! The next morning, while Will was sleeping, the two of them were having their morning coffee, and I sat down with them in the kitchen after making myself a cup of rooibos tea. Then, Deborah slowly turned to me and said in a horrifyingly mean tone of voice, "So, I hear I have no sense of humor."

And then she let loose and let Jennie and me have it.

She called us both hypocrites~. She told Jennie that she'd wasted her life by talking a good game but doing nothing to change the world. She told me I was a big talker~ because I write books but can't sell any of them.

Deborah seemed to have forgotten that I'd lost my teaching job because I was gay and Jennie suffered torment every day as an electrician amongst straight men in those medieval days before respect for us became de regueur.

I don't think that~ was what was really in Deborah's heart. I think what she really wanted to say was that she was hurt because Jennie and I had gossiped about her behind her back.

I'd given Jennie a knife to cut out her unhealthy snarky humor from her arguments with Deborah, but she handed the

knife over to her wife like some souvenir she'd brought back from San Francisco. And when **Deborah** felt it was just the right time, **Deborah stabbed me** in the back with it.

You can see that I'm extremely **upset** by all this. I'm so **livid** that I'm accusing **Deborah** of being a conspiratorial type. But what I'm really saying is that she's emotionally **calculating**, not candid and clear about her feelings. She's not the kind of person who can tell you how she feels without name-calling and blame when she gets **mad**.

Ilana was that way. My half-sister lost her mother when she was smuggled out of the ghetto into a **Catholic** orphanage where the nuns probably suspected she was a **Jew**. Even though she was eight years old at the time, **Ilana** had to learn to anticipate how others were going to treat her by **calculating** their feelings in her **mind** in order to keep her heart from breaking at having been separated from her mother and feeling **desperately** alone and abandoned.

I didn't consciously realize that about **Ilana** until she conspired with **Rina** to steal my inheritance from Mom and **Lou**. Only then did I come to see that **Ilana**, a child **Holocaust** survivor, had turned into a Nazi from my subjective perspective. Her husband, **Chuck**, was her Gestapo agent. And **Rina** had appealed to our half-sister like the Germans had appealed to **Hitler** to solve her problem with **me** for her.

You can certainly see how I identify with **Holocaust** surviving **Jews** even though I was born after the War. This certainly must sound terribly exaggerated. But this where my feelings go when I get **upset**, **Ettie**. This is an example of the damage I suffer as the child of five **Holocaust** survivors. I demonize everyone.

Ilana sent **Chuck** to do **Rina**'s dirty~ work. He rewrote the trust Mom and **Lou** had so carefully and **loving** composed and had asked **me** to execute for them. **Ilana**,

Chuck and **Rina** conspired against **me** to steal the money that should have been for all four of their children.

They weren't interested in initiating a discussion with **me** as executor of the estate about compensating **Rina** for the additional work she got saddled with for by bringing Mom from Palm Springs to L.A. to live at the **Jewish** Home a mile from her home. Naturally, that put more pressure on **Rina** from an emotional point of view that **Lou's** children and I didn't have to bear.

They weren't interested~ in working out our family problems fairly. The three of them simply went into their own family of origin dynamics. Damaged people solve problems in ways that give them~ the satisfaction they need, regardless of how unfair~ that outcome might be for the rest~ of us.

I think I need to go back even farther into the past. When Dad was **dying**, **Henry**, **Ilana** and I were at his bedside. **Rina** said she couldn't come because her children were toddlers at the time, and she couldn't find a babysitter.

But there's a truth~ beneath that~ truth that only came out when Dad, having the three of us around him, suddenly pulled out his penis and waved it **menacingly** in our faces. I kid you not~!

That was his final comment to the three of us. Granted his **heart** was failing, so he probably wasn't getting enough oxygen to his brain. But what was he thinking~?

My father kissed the ground beneath his feet with~ his feet every day of his life once he got out of Germany and into **America**. None of his children could do that. What he did on his **deathbed** was raise the American flag for us, somehow knowing deep down inside that he'd shock us with his **patriotism**. That's how he expressed his **disappointment** in us on his **deathbed**. That's what I~ think.

He couldn't have done what he did if **Rina** had been there. She was his favorite. She was his pride and **joy**. He

loved her with a great passion, and she, him. She never would have understood his message, even though she and Mom, never voted once in their entire life.

Now I understand why Henry gave up contact with Ilana, and me after Rina got Dad's entire inheritance. Now I understand why my siblings argue over everything. They've got nothing better to argue about. The topic of not enough love to go round has never been put on the table.

Henry sees himself as the Jew in our family and all the rest of us as Nazis. Now I understand why he accused all the Jews in Israel as being thieves when I approached him about the land our grandmother had bought in Palestine before Hitler sent her to her grave. I think Henry secretly blames all the Jews for killing his mom!

Just to flesh out the whole story - our paternal grandmother, Beile, was a Zionist who was generations ahead of her time. She was also a naturalist who cared deeply about her physical health. Her husband, our grandfather, Chaim, died in a spa in Bologna, Italy to appease his wife's desire to live a healthy lifestyle, and was buried there. I was told she rolled naked in the snow every winter. I was also told she was the brains behind the tobacco factory the family owned in Kaunas, Lithuania.

I helped my family recover the land we'd inherited from Beile in Israel. I was instrumental in all of them getting their inheritance from her. But all of them sold it to make some money - not that any of them need the money. Even I sold most of my land in Israel. But I kept about a third of it. I want my grandmother to know that I remember her dream. I support her love of Israel and of life, even if she never saw her dream come true because the Nazis squeezed the life out of her in their gas chambers.

I may not have gotten any of Mom or Dad's monetary inheritance, but I got their spiritual inheritance, while my

siblings squabbled over their money. I may have gotten my paternal grandmother's financial inheritance, but I was able to appreciate her gift to **me** by not turning all of it into gelt.

My mom wasn't a **calculating** person. Neither was **Lou**. They'd both survived the Nazis another way. They used running away from confrontation as their defense mechanism, something I excel at, too.

I never realized that people older than **me** could be **calculating** and conspiratorial with their emotions until I saw it in **Ilana** and **Henry**, and then in **Deborah**. I was taught to respect older people, especially family members.

It was only once I lost respect for my older family members that I could see that **Rina** was that way, too. Even people younger than **me** can manipulate people's feelings to get what they want.

When **Rina** took Mom to Denver when Mom was in her 90's to visit **Ilana**, Mom came back and told **me** she never felt so dishonored in her whole **life**. She felt more than just ignored. She felt the silent stink-eye from both of them.

And this, she said with great **sorrow** because she'd spent a whole extra year with our dad after promising not to leave **Ilana** with him until she'd married **Chuck** and was out on her own. That's how **Ilana** repaid the woman in the final years of her **life** who done her very best to be a good step-mother to her. **Rina** rolled over Mom to get at her money. Very impressive sisters I've got, I have to say.

A few weeks after I was informed by the **Jewish** Home that my mom had **passed**, I got a package from **Rina** with nonsense items my mom had collected. That was **Rina's** idea of my portion of the trust after she, **Ilana** and **Chuck** had rewritten it. **Stanley** and **Grace**, **Lou's** children from his previous marriage to an **Indonesian** woman he'd met while in the Dutch army didn't even get that much.

I still have no idea where my mom is buried or whether she's been cremated. I don't need to know. My mom lives in my heart, just as all the people I love live in my heart.

My gay family is now my only family. I've disowned my biological family and all their children and grandchildren who have no interest in their gay relation in San Francisco. Let them all learn about life their own way. That's what God is for, not me.

When we're all dead and buried, don't be surprised that I sue my sister's ass off in God's Heavenly Court for stealing my inheritance out from under me...

She'll probably use the defense that our mother separated her from her dear, loving father when she was only four years old, and she had no positive male role model thereafter to look up to. I look forward to seeing how that goes over...

It was only after all the dust had settled that I came to realize that a woman can identify with Hitler to prove her power, and a straight man can identify with a gay man to prove his.

It was only then that I understood that my dad might have identified with Sarah and the miracle of finally having been given a child, albeit it a fourth child, and a girl [Rina]. Suddenly I could see that all the love he couldn't give to Henry, Ilana and me, he'd given to Rina. Rina got everything the three of us had been yearning for.

Such is life! I think I've done very well without my father's love to tell you quite frankly.

Our Teacher Has Given humanity lessons since the beginning of time, but the lessons have been getting harder and harder, even though the comforts we've earned for our body have made us softer and softer.

When I was a teenager, they told us not to trust anyone over 30. Now I know not to trust anyone under 30, either. Now I trust people based on their behavior. I look at what

they do, not what they say, as told to **me** by Rachel Maddow, the news commentator on MSNBC and author of books on politics who has a Catholic mother and Jewish father.]

Lou had a Jewish father~ and a Christian mother~. My mother had a Jewish mother~ and a Christian father~. They were a match made in heaven for each other. I was so happy for them once I got through all my~ issues of jealousy and envy.

Now I can see jealousy and envy in everyone. Nobody got what s/he wanted. We're all making do.

When Deborah verbally attacked me, I went into family of origin dynamics. Deborah turned into Ilana in my heart. She turned into a Nazi, and I turned into a Jew in Germany circa 1940. I just wanted to run away as fast as I could.

But Will and Jennie understood me at a subliminal, emotional level and stood by my side. Therefore, I felt I had to rise to the occasion and do my best to stand tall and be strong. I knew Deborah was in a position she could never justify with reason. Her actions were based on something so personal that she had no idea how out of touch she was with my reality or the crime~ against me that had been committed. She sullied my reputation without reason. And she wasn't even interested in looking for good reason. She just reacted with a knee-jerk response.

What I failed to note was that my relationship with Deborah has been going downhill for years while my relationship with Jennie has been getting warmer and better. I now see that there's a conversation I've need to have with Deborah that's long overdue.

Needless to say, the rest of the time with them that weekend was ruined. Deborah didn't talk to anyone. She stomped around the house, slamming drawers and avoiding eye contact. She wanted to make it clear in body language and sound that she didn't want anyone getting close to her.

She spoke in monosyllables and walked 25 paces ahead of the rest of us when we went out on a walk together. The three of us felt like we were unwanted guests in **Deborah**'s house. And **Jennie** is her wife! **Jennie** owns half that house!

On a separate walk to the amazing community center in Ft. Bragg, **Jennie** confided in **me** that she's sometimes **afraid** of **Deborah** and doesn't know what to do to get her out of her moods. **Jennie** worried that after we left, **Deborah** would be mean to her.

Deborah can be like a harbor filled with **mines**. No boat can go in or out without getting **blown** to smithereens. **Jennie** is sometimes **terrified** that anything she says or does is going to make **Deborah** **explode**.

I can't be around anyone when they're like that! I'm a good person who doesn't break **The Ten Commandments**. If I say something that's misconstrued, I ask people to excuse~ **me**. If I say something that's offensive, I ask them to forgive~ **me**. That's what civilized people are trained to do~.

But there are many uncivilized~ people in this world, and many of them have college educations. Any way you rub up against them inadvertently causes them to **blow up**. They're **unstable**. They're **volatile**. And this makes being around them for **me** feel **dangerous**, almost **deadly**.

I know I'm **damaged** goods. I know I exaggerate my feelings when I feel **threatened**. But I don't let that affect my actions~. I strike in~, not out~.

But I'm not going to allow myself to feel **intimidated** any longer being in the company of people who can't control their **temper**.

The way I control my **temper** is by becoming **curious**. Interest in expanding and improving myself drives **me** toward good questions I pose within and without.

What I'm telling you in this letter, **Ettie**, is how I feel. It's not what I'd say to anyone.

I may be a Democrat, but I'm now beginning to think that there may be some Republicans out there who may be easier to talk to than my left-wing Democratic, **lesbian-Jewish** cousin! That's evidence enough for **me** to conclude that God Has a sense of **humor**!

How do you **Israelis** do it, **Ettie**? How do you manage to live together in relative **harmony** mixed with **horrendous** cacophony given how many **Jews** you've got to deal with on a daily basis? I speak your language, but I don't understand how you say what you mean in Hebrew. Surely, you must know more about the message of **Jesus** than anyone else on Earth! I think that's hysterical!

Jennie still has no clue what she did that caused this situation in the first place. I didn't fully understand it either until I got home and thought about her collusion~ with **Deborah** and **Deborah**'s conspiracy~ against **me**. Only then did I conclude I'd been enticed to come visit them only to be ambushed~. At least that's how it all felt~ from my point of view.

Jennie has turned into a **yenta**~, **Ettie**. She's turned into an old gossip~ without even having converted to **Judaism**! That's funny!

What's next? Is this 65-year-old **lesbian-Christian** going to turn into a **Jewish** virgin mother and give birth by **Immaculate Conception**~?... I **hope** she realizes she has an inner~ child who needs inner parents. That~ would suffice!

Because my **parents** were **Holocaust** survivors, they saw collusion and conspiracy everywhere. They taught **me** to distrust everyone. So did my three older **siblings**. They just didn't know they were unconsciously carrying that message at the time.

I filled Will in with the facts later that Saturday morning. I was so stunned by the upheaval that I just wanted to leave right there and then.

But he's a good soul who interprets facts very differently from me. He insisted we stay. He did the best he could to keep everything civil. He knows I'm a complex individual and so is Deborah. So, he went into Jewish doctor mode and just kept his patients comfortable. Deborah, Jennie and I were all in shock.

I kept up appearances as Jennie and Will were doing, in the hopes that it would all blow over. I didn't want to start an argument by saying anything I'd later regret. But deep down inside I was furious in having been treated that way.

When I was a kid, I only felt the flight syndrome, not the fight syndrome. I only wanted to run away from the bullies at school.

There was so much arguing in my family that when I was about four, I walked out of our house one day, left our front yard, and went to the end of the block that I'd never been to on my own. I was just about to cross the street and keep going when something inside me kept me from running away from home. I turned around and went back to my family. The feeling of fear and flight subsided, so, I just went on with my life.

But over a lifetime, I've slowly been replacing that fear with anger. And although I have to admit I was feeling both frightened and angry at Deborah and Jennie, I felt like I'd gotten to the end of the block and just wanted to keep going.

But Will helped me turn around and go back that awful weekend. But the conflicting feelings inside me have persisted.

As you know from your experiences with Arabs, Ettie, there's no way to reason with someone who isn't on

speaking terms with you. You have to negotiate all your feelings by yourself.

What's going on in the Middle East isn't a land~ grab. It's about feelings of **betrayal**. God Is Bringing feelings to **Muslims** and **Jews** that go back to **Ishmael** and **Isaac**, and neither of them look pretty good at dealing with them from my~ **gay** point of view.

Will, of course, wants **me** to forgive **Deborah** and **Jennie** because that's what **Christians** do. I can't forgive what happened because I won't be able to forget what happened. The only thing I can do is talk about it to get it out of my system.

Some **wise Jew** who survived the **Holocaust** said, "Forgive, but don't forget." I saw it inscribed at the Holocaust Memorial Site in Paris. "Pardonne, mais n'oublie pas."

That's a combination of **wisdom** and **love**, **Judaism** and **Christianity**. Surely, that's the response God Wants everyone to achieve when they feel betrayed.

I still love **Deborah** and **Jennie**, but I really don't like either one of them very much right now. I feel badly **burned**.

Love,
Barry

Ettie wrote **me** back the next day, saying pretty much the same thing **Will** said. I'd sum up both their messages as, "Forgive them for they know not what they do." [**Psalm** 22] [That's what **Jesus** was quoted on the cross as saying to God.]

It's funny how the **Jews** don't believe in **Jesus**, but they're very good at quoting him... I hear a lot of people quoting **Jesus**, but I don't see a lot of them living a **life** of **loving** intention.

I'm writing this, my 29th book, about the subject of forgiveness using **The Book of Ecclesiastes** as my guide on how I don't ~ want to feel by the end of my **life**.

My last book was about **The Book of Proverbs** [**Misle**] from the portion of **Tanach** called **Ketuvim**. And my book before that was about **The Book of Psalms** [**Tehilim**] also from **Ketuvim**.

It feels as though God Has Guided **me** to **Ecclesiastes** [**Kohelet**], also from **Ketuvim**, this time to see whether I'm going to chuck all this up to vanity and meaninglessness, or whether I can find something deeper to say about the human condition, especially my own.

If you can't use **Tanach** to make sense of the world using **wisdom** as your guide, there's no point in looking to **The Gospels** for universal **love** or **The Quran** for **loyalty** to God.

The basics lie in **Torah** and, by extension, in all of **Tanach**. God Gave us so much to learn about **life** that He Chose To Divide His Lessons in this school into separate departments in the West [**Tanach** for **wisdom**; **The Gospels** for **love**; and **The Quran** for **loyalty** to **life**].

It's only by thinking and feeling correctly that we discover the meaning of **loyalty**. All other attempts are always based on collusion and conspiracy of some sort.

Sadly, none of the **Abrahamic**= faiths go further by taking into consideration the **tolerance**, **acceptance** and **admiration** of **Hinduism**, **Buddhism** and **Taoism**. Think how much better off the West would be if we tried to apply the **lessons** of the East to all three of the **Abrahamic** faiths!

It's time for every nation around the world to fly the LGBT+ **rainbow** flag. For no straight man can find the **passion** to **love** his brother the way we can.

[I wanted to let **Ettie** know that **life** is still a lot harder than it looks, even for one as **brilliant** as I am...]

I wrote **Ettie** back, saying:

I'm so **disappointed** and at a loss for words. It feels like loved ones dear to **me** just died. I **grieve** the **death** of **Deborah** and **Jennie** in some way. I **fear** our relationship has reached its expiration date.

I'll try to do as you said with what feels like their **corpses**.

But I'm not **Jesus** and neither one of them looks to **me** like **Lazarus**. We'll just have to see how this turns out. I can't make any **promises** or predictions.

Jennie

Here's the letter I would have liked to write to Jennie, the second most important woman in my life:

Dear Jennie,

I'd like to talk about what happened that infamous weekend from the point of view of you having been the cause of the conflict between Deborah and me. I can imagine this will be a ticklish subject for you, especially in light of the fact that Deborah and I are also partially to blame. So, hold onto your butt. This may not be easy for you to hear.

When you came to visit us a few months ago, you complained about your relationship with Deborah as fraught with arguments. I tried to help by giving you a new perspective. I told you Deborah has no sense of humor. I didn't add at the time that the difference between Deborah and me is that I have a self-deprecating sense of humor. She has little-to-no sense of humor at all when it comes to herself.

What I did say was that I think you have an amazingly snarky sense of humor. And I stand by that claim.

I told you I've seen you walk around reasons to argue with Deborah using your snarky sense of humor to discharge tension, and I admire that in you. I remember even saying to you that I didn't think anyone had ever told you that before.

What I should have added is that snarkiness is particularly funny when your words teach life-lessons in addition to circumventing arguments with wit. I should have mentioned that I see all forms of humor as intended to make peace, but the most successful form of humor I find to be self-deprecating humor.

Deborah isn't devoid of wit, but she gets cynical, mean and accusative to the point that I feel my life is threatened when she gets upset. She can be very hurtful when she feels slighted. That's just her nature, and you and I both know it.

It's of no use to tell someone who's highly sensitive to criticism that you're trying to relieve the tension in your relationship using **snarky humor**. They're going to see you as acting **cavalier**. Your jokes are going to go over their **head**, and then they're only going to get more **frustrated** and mean-spirited. [Just look at **Deborah**. Just look at **me**. Just look at public discourse in **America**.]

My intention at the time was to help you **celebrate** yourself while forgiving your wife for not being able to appreciate your wit.

What I should have also told you is that you don't want to be hurtful to the one person you most want to really hear~ you and believe~ in you.

This is why you continually lose the **intimacy** and **joy** you two are **seeking**. You're letting your **happiness** slip through your fingers. It's become a self-fulfilling prophesy. You chase each other on a merry-go-round, but you're not getting anywhere.

Oscar Wilde told us that youth is wasted on the young ~, but so is a **snarky** sense of **humor**, **Jennie**. **Deborah** is simply too emotionally wounded to appreciate where you're coming from. Think of her as a tattooed guard dog. You can't pet her when she barks, without also getting bitten. You have to find other ways to get into her house.

When I told you she has no sense of **humor**, I wanted you to see that each of us has virtues and vices different from one another. None of us is without both. To know your partner in **life** is to forgive her for her vices.

It seemed that your load was lightened by my revelation when you were here. You seemed to be more at peace with your marriage when you drove home, even though it's a failed marriage in some ways, like everyone else's.

I'm not **sorry** I said what I said, but I'm very **sorry** you repeated it to **Deborah**. I wish I'd warned you not to do so unless you understood it completely. If I had, we could have

discussed my reasons for saying what I said in greater detail, so I could have made sure you understood my message and motive. That was my~ mistake, and it was a big~ one. Again, I'm **sorry** about that.

But you're a 65-year-old adult~, not a high school girl, **Jennie**. You should have known you were going to hurt **Deborah** by repeating your own rendition of my words. And you hurt her deeply~, so deeply that she can't even tell you how badly she's hurting.

You played Sorcerer's Apprentice. You took a play from my book of **magic**, and you flooded the castle. The mess is yours. You made it. You own. Clean it up!

At some point when you got home from your visit here, I think you must have decided to share my revelation with **Deborah** in the **hopes** that it would improve your relationship with her in some way. You didn't consider what effect that would have on my~ relationship with her.

It was one thing for you and **me** to talk about **Deborah** behind her back with the best of intentions. It was quite another for you to return a part of my message about her without explaining why we were talking about her in the first place.

All the emotional **bombs** that went off that Saturday morning after you and I waxed poetic about **Jesus** and our affirmation of our **loving** relationship with one another, must have made **Deborah** feel left out and rejected. She even said as much.

I think she lashed out at us by calling the two of us hypocrites~ in an effort to express her feelings of hurt about our talk together in San Francisco. I think she was really saying she felt we'd ganged up on her.

But telling us we're hypocrites because of what we'd done with our lives was foolish, judgmental and just inaccurate on her part. When **Deborah** flies off the handle she becomes irrational as well as **mean**. She'll throw

anything at the wall to see what sticks. She has no emotional sophistication when she loses her **temper**.

And you know what she does next. She just turns around and says, "That's the way I am. Love me or leave me."

She's an emotional pyromaniac, **Jennie**. Give her a box of matches and she'll burn the house down. But ask her to make amends for that, and she'll just shrug her shoulders, and tell you to take her as she comes.

Deborah can't live in her **heart** with millions of colors to choose from the way you do. She just doesn't know how.

You worked as an electrician in a man's world for many years, and then you worked as a psych. tech. for the rest of your **life**. You're no hypocrite. You've given the best years of your **life** to helping **change** the world for the better. That's not how hypocrites behave.

I did nothing wrong in writing 28 books on spirituality. Not being able to sell my works doesn't make **me** a hypocrite~.

I was a ballet dancer, a **teacher** and a small business owner. I've **changed** the world in my way, too. Putting a price tag on art or literature doesn't make it great. Either my work is intrinsically good or it's not. Either it helps **me** evolve or it doesn't. Selling it doesn't prove a thing. Only consumers look at art commercially. Artists look at art spiritually.

You and I suffered to be authentic and real. **Deborah** did, too. That's why she has no right to accuse us of hypocrisy. We've all been to hell and back just by having been members of the LGBT+ community in the 20th Century. If not for people like us, there would be no marriage equality. We gave our whole **life** to that cause! So did the 500,000 **gay** men who **died** of AIDS in this country.

I'm sure you can see that the same emotional issues arise between the Democrats and **Republicans**, and **Israelis** and **Arabs**. There's just not enough **love** to go round.

I know your mother left your father with four children, only to get no sympathy from her~ parents when she came knocking on their door. She was between a rock and hard place with four kids in tow. In those days, a woman had to stick it out with her husband. There were no other options.

But what good did it do? You were the fifth child, and like **Deborah**, unwanted. Your father had girlfriends on the side, and your mother had no choice but to bear her suffering as women in those days had to do.

I see you as steeped in the color orange, **Jennie**. You're the personification of **agony**, **worry** and **angst**. I see all your **worries** about the material world as a manifestation of your **worry** that there'll never be enough **love** for you~ or anyone else~. No wonder your **humor** is **snarky** and your attitude, sometimes **cavalier**.

We're all learning about the meaning of **life**. We're all making mistakes. And we all need each other's forgiveness.

The fact is that you and I **love Deborah**, even though she can be very unlikeable at times. But I **love** you~, too, **Jennie**. What you've done with the little bit of **love** you were shown in your family is remarkable. Your emotional intelligence is amazing!

And I **love** myself, even though I find **me** very unlikeable at times, too. I don't like making mistakes. I don't like saying things that end up hurting people. That brings up all the self-**hatred** I've been spending my **life** putting out like a California **fire**. And as I age, those **fires** inside **me** seem to get ignited earlier every year...

But I~ never hurt **Deborah**. You~ did, **Jennie**. I gave you~ the **knife** to cut out your **snarky** jokes. You gave it to **Deborah**, and she **stabbed** the two~ of us with it.

Deborah is a hot**head** in a world **desperate** to learn how to chill out. She has no idea how much she's suffering because she doesn't have enough **love** to **love** herself~. She's typical of the type of person who gives all their **love** to others. They're too~ good.

For **me**, this translates into the challenge of global warming when taken personally and perceived from the **heart**.

For some, their inner global warming is an unleashed wind of incredible strength that can move mountains.

For others, it's a reoccurring flood that drowns them in **violence** caused by self-**hatred**.

And for people like **Deborah**, global warming is a **conflagration** of unprecedented proportion when they can't take criticism personally enough~.

My inner global warming is like a trip to the Second World War. **Holocaust** means "**burnt** offering" in Greek. I'm forced to make a **burnt** offering in memory of those who **died** in that War.

For **me**, every argument with another person is a conflict between a Nazi and a **Jew**.

When the American Nazi Party proclaims, "**Jews** will not replace us," I'd like them to think about their **fear** of losing their **mind**. I think they're **terrified** of having to live in their **heart** without their **head**. I think they're **terrified** of **mindless** behavior, not of **Jews**.

For me, global warming is a sign of the end of the world. It's **Armageddon** here now. It's every seemingly final **battle** between good and evil.

That's what I go through every time the two of you start bickering with one another in front of **me**.

I remember when I was in the throes of severe mental illness, Mom telephoned **me**, and I found some reason to **lash** out at her. She retaliated by calling **me** a son of a bitch. And I said to her, "Yes. You're absolutely right. I am the son~ of a bitch~."

I **hated** my mom in those days, and I let her know it. I **hated** having been bequeathed her inheritance as the child of a **Christian** father and a **Jewish** mother. I **hated** having to find a way out of my **head** into my **heart** without anyone to

help **me**. I **hated** Mom for trying to hide her pain and suffering, the cruelty she endured and the torture she'd been through.

But how can you not~ love someone who protects you from something like that? I should have only honored her right from the start. I loved her, instead. That's been my cross to bear.

Years later, my mom told **me** that after she hung up on **me** that day, she started to laugh. She figured that if I could still have a sense of humor while insane, there was still hope for **me**...

The truth is, Jennie, my mom didn't have a good sense of humor. Like you, she had a snarky sense of humor. But I loved my mom, and I love you. Both of you worry more about the material world because neither of you got the love you needed. You both did the best you could with what you knew about yourself in relation to this world and your part in it.

When you look back on the incident that weekend, I hope you realize you behaved badly. You should now be able to admit you inadvertently got between Deborah and **me** and almost ruined our relationship!

That weekend, Deborah was like the Wicked Witch of the West in a spell the two of you cast on **me**. You were her familiar.

She now needs to have a few drops of milk~ sprinkled on her to remind her that we're all here to learn to love~ one another not hate. That will make her fume a little, but it won't cause her to burn up, melt and wither away.

Water~ reminds us of the deluge at puberty. Milk~ reminds us of our mother's love. Deborah will get over the carton of milk I'm planning to dump on her when we speak.

I should~ tell you is not to take yourself too seriously. What I am~ going to tell you is just the opposite. Take yourself much more~ seriously, Jennie.

You're much more damaged by your passage through puberty than you think. When you faced menstruation before orgasm, there was nobody to explain it with wisdom of the heart. You were alone trying to make sense of your attraction to women at an age and in a day-and-age when you had to look for everything by yourself while alone in the dark.

You don't have to confess your sins to me, or anyone else. Sin~ in Hebrew just means "missed the mark." You aimed and missed. Try again.

But at your advanced age, it's time to start confessing your sins to yourself, Jennie. It's time to admit that you come from a family of very damaged relatives, most of whom have turned into Republicans. None of you can just shrug off your guilt in the way you're treating others.

If you~ treated a gay-Jew as badly as you have inadvertently~, just imagine how many people your Republican siblings have hurt!

You're like my younger sister, Jennie. You and Deborah are my only family. You're like Rina, a little sister to me, and Deborah is like Ilana, an older sister. I've recreated my family dynamics using the two of you. And just as Rina and Ilana colluded and conspired against me, so I now see, have the two of you.

It's O.K. to want to be Deborah's familiar, not just her wife. But next time, consider what sort of black magic she may unconsciously be thinking about getting into, and reconsider what you~ say and do. She doesn't have the emotional depth you have. She's smart. She's generous. She's good at heart. And she has a lifelong love affair with nature.

But she's like a one-eyed woman who's figuratively bumping into things because her emotional depth perception doesn't exist. When she gets **mad**, all bets are off.

Deborah can't handle too much emotional truth because it causes her to revert to **Dale**, her given name. She returns to her adolescence when there wasn't enough **love** to go round. She sees **me** as **Carl** who got all Mommy's **love**. And she sees you as **Terry** who got all Daddy's **love**.

And then she takes out any **knife** she can get her hands on, and she figuratively turns into a **killer**.

Men may not call other men bitches~ unless they're **gay**, but all men collude and conspire, just like women. All men name-call and **stab** others in the back, even to their face sometimes. All men try to cast spells that will turn their **enemies** from princes back into frogs. Who knows what **evil** lurks in the **heart** of men better than the LGBT+ community?

If you're going to develop your White~ **magic**, **Jennie**, you're going to have to learn how to use it more **wisely**. Calm yourself. You've been through so much. **Love** yourself. Tell yourself you're there for you regardless of who isn't. Just **worry** about your inner teenager. Let everyone else **worry** about themselves.

Love,
Barry

Deborah

Here's the letter I would have liked to write to Deborah, the most important woman in my life:

Dear Deborah,

When you first moved up to Ft. Bragg you were under a lot of pressure after having left your previous home for 40 years in Sonoma County. I knew that in that move, you were going to a new place inside yourself, as well.

In Hebrew we say, "Change your place and change your luck." I was optimistic about the change in your life, but I'm not so sure anymore.

You may have gotten away from the extreme external heat from the fires of Sonoma County, but now it seems you're suffering from extreme, internal heat.

Global warming has figuratively followed you to Ft. Bragg. And you're burning up inside, even though the weather around you is much more pleasant at the California coast.

You confided to me in the car one time in Ft. Bragg that your relationship with Jennie has forced you to admit that she's never going to change. She's deeply damaged, and you now see that you can't fix her.

But you're deeply damaged too, Deborah, and Jennie can't fix you, either. You're both stuck with each other for the long haul. Neither of you wants to be alone, and yet each of you feels so terribly alone together.

I began to see the damaged part of you in 2016, when you were still living on the ranch. We came up for Thanksgiving. You'd invited a lot of people, but the mood was very weird. Trump had just won the election, and everyone was reeling inside with fear and disbelief.

The next day, we went out for a drive. Jennie was driving, and she recklessly passed a lumber truck on the two-

lane highway. You didn't think her maneuver was safe. Nobody in the car did, but we just gasped. We didn't say anything.

You and I were sitting in the back seat, and you **kicked Jennie's** seat and yelled at her. That was the first time I saw you express your **frustration** **violently**.

It was then that I realized that I wasn't the only person in the world with severe, emotional problems. I'm not the only one who's blind to himself when viewed from the **heart**. I'm not alone in feeling all alone.

That night, we talked politics. **Jennie** had gotten sick and had gone to bed early. Her friend from Berkeley [who does the same sex ballroom dancing] said that she'd voted for **Bernie Sanders**, and you started yelling at her that it was people like her who'd caused us to lose the election. I couldn't believe you'd be so rude to a guest in your home – that is until that infamous weekend recently when you treated **me** even worse.

That was Friday night November 25, 2016. I had a **nightmare** that night, and Will woke **me** up because I was **hitting** him in my sleep. I **struck** back at you **violently**, the only way I could: while sleeping. But he~ took the brunt of it.

I didn't mention the incident to you until about six months later when you happened to be here in San Francisco to take a flight to Boston to clean up the estate of your dear, Syrian friend **Helen** who'd **died** of cancer. I didn't want you to know how deeply you'd **upset me** until we could speak about it in person.

But once I processed what I'd been through at Thanksgiving the previous fall, and you and I had time alone together, I told you that I'd been **frightened** and shocked by your behavior toward **Jennie** that afternoon and toward a guest that evening.

You seemed very sorry about how you'd treated **Jennie** and called her immediately to connect with her. But you

wrote off your accusations about the election saying that the gal completely understood where you were coming from.

Three years ago, when you lived on Harold Street, you accused **me** of being an Orthodox-**Jew**, I explained to you then that I'd studied **The Old Testament** with them, so I knew about their points of view from a religious perspective.

But just as I'd been thrown out of Comstock JHS, I'd been thrown out of an Orthodox **synagogue** by the **rabbi** and **congregants** at their **Bible** study because I came out to them after the **rabbi** said something **hateful** about **gay** people.

I couldn't believe that the **Jews** would treat **me** as **hatefully** as the **Christians**. I was shocked. And I berated myself for having been so naïve.

I suppose there may be ways in which I'm more like a Republican, even if I've never voted Republican. My deep devotion to **Israel** is one of those ways. I can also see some financial matters from an employers point of view. And I can see some racial matters from the perspective of a traditionalist who's **afraid** of **change**.

I can see some things from a religious standpoint because there's only One God, even if the fundamentalist-**Christians** don't acknowledge anyone who uses any other name for Him other than **Jesus**.

I **fear** **Muslims** who are as damaged as **Christians**. But I'm also deeply **afraid** of **Jews** because of my upbringing with damaged **Jews** and my experiences out in the world with damaged **Christians**.

A years after linking **me** with the Orthodox-**Jews**, you accused **me** of being an elitist. I explained to you then that I'm just a garden variety snob. I thought a little **snarky humor** might lessen the tension you created.

But I can now see that it didn't help because you've never apologized for either comment. The tension has only

been building inside us both ever since. Now you've called **me** a hypocrite~!

Will blames the whole thing on the Trump administration that completely upended all traditions and expectations of civility in our society.

But the **Republican Party** attempted coup has **changed** the nation more than just politically. Something has been released from Pandora's box that we'll never be able to get back in it: **guilt** at how all of us are abusing our country and our democracy. And everyone is going to have to face that in his or her own way. **Guns** and **abortion** are just the tip of the iceberg.

I guess you've concluded I'm an elitist, hypocritical, Orthodox-**Jew**, and nothing is going to **change** that until we have an honest conversation about what's happening to our relationship.

I see our relationship as having deteriorated since November 25th, 2016. But my relationship with **Jennie** has been **growing** stronger since then. Now I can see that what **Jennie** and I have, **threatens** you. I know it **threatens** **me**. I'd **hate** to lose you because of it.

But this isn't about **me**. This isn't about **Trump**.

This is about something that's **changing** inside you. And I'd **love** you to try to explain to **me** what that is.

I had the same issue with **Ilana** and **Rina** when I grew up. The more I leaned toward one of them, the more it affected my relationship with the other. There just wasn't enough **love** to go round.

Ilana was like a second mother to **me** when I was a baby and toddler. We were very close. And you were like that for **me**, too, all those years when I was slowly recovering from severe mental illness. I trusted you. I confided in you. And I held you very close in my **heart**.

But as my relationship with you has waned with **disappointment**, I've gravitated toward **Jennie**. I've begun to see virtues in her that I never noticed before. And that emotional movement has had a ripple effect on our dynamics as a **gay** family.

When I was a child, **Ilana** changed her name to **Elaine**. She thought she could dismiss the **damage** she'd been through in our family with a name change. It didn't work. Just because you changed your name to **Deborah**, you haven't dismissed **Dale**, either.

Deborah is the adult in you. But **Dale** is the very **damaged** juvenile delinquent that you haven't addressed. And she came out and **stabbed me** in the back that awful weekend, just as **Ilana** did by complying with **Rina** to steal my inheritance.

I told **Jennie** that you have no sense of **humor** in confidence~. I did so to help your relationship with one another. I never would have said something like that to your face~.

Jennie couldn't see how much she hurt you by telling you what I said. She had no idea she'd **damage** her relationship with **me** by doing so, either.

The family **dynamics** between the three of us are very fragile because all three of us are so terribly wounded by our family of origin issues that were caused by a society that's only slowly beginning to admit how **damaged** everyone is. Every little **change** between us causes ripple effects in all three of us.

The two of you have no idea how **damaged** I~ am. But I'm **damaged**~; I'm not hurtful~. I'm not **seeking revenge**.

When you two argue in front of **me**, I feel transported back to my childhood. I feel helpless. I feel **threatened**. And then I feel **suicidal**. I just want to run away from this world like Mom ran and hid from the Nazis.

That said, I'm also deeply blessed to have my dad's virtue in loving the Jewish people. I feel a loyalty and love for the Jews that I can't dismiss. And that doesn't just translate sociologically into Zionism. It translates psychologically into a desire into healing myself so I can help heal the people I love. I'm a Jew worthy of love. Nobody can tell me I'm worthy of less love because I'm gay.

I now know that I can't get into your or Jennie's spiritual operating system [S.O.S.] and turn the dials to fix you to my liking. But I can change our gay family dynamics by becoming more truthful with you two about who I am and who I'm not.

I'm not the yenta who gossiped about you behind your back. I'm not the one who tried to hurt you. What I said about your sense of humor was said in an effort to help Jennie see you as the damaged person you are. I didn't want her to damage you any further with gossip on top of a snarky humor.

The times have changed around us and within us, haven't they? We're so much older and more capable of embracing our truth without hurting ourself or others. We're not youngsters anymore.

Perhaps it's time for the three of us to express a level of honesty we wouldn't have in the past.

But I'm~ certainly not going to apologize for my opinion or how I used it. If you're looking for an apology, I suggest you go to Jennie who must now know she poisoned the well the three of us are drinking from. She's~ the one who said something she shouldn't have said. She's the one who hurt you, not me~.

I'd love for you to tell me what I need to do to become the sort of person you'll once again admire. You tolerated me for so many years when I suffered so severely from mental illness; was on psychiatric medication; and was so shut down. I didn't feel like I had an honest feeling I could

express out loud. But you gave **me** permission to feel in those days.

You **accepted me** once I finally began to feel my feelings all on my own and could speak more coherently about what was going on inside **me**.

But you seem to have taken back that permission. You seem to be **tolerating me** now, nothing more.

Are you **afraid** of what I'm feeling for you? Is my opinion of you more important than you'd like to admit? If so, let's talk about that. You have many virtues. But I don't think **humor** is one of them. But to tell you frankly, I'm not a **humorous** person, either. No **suicide** survivor is!

I'd be **happy** to be more candid with you about everything, but only if you can assure **me** that I won't have to suffer your name-calling, bullying and unconscious complicity with **Jennie** anymore. I just can't go through that again. I can't~!

It makes **me** feel like a **Jew** surrounded by Nazis. It makes **me** feel like I'm responsible for healing the ills of the whole world. And I just can't take on that responsibility anymore. I just don't have the emotional strength to do it.

What happened that awful weekend felt like an ambush not an open invitation to come up for a good time. I felt you trapped **Jennie** and **me** and were trying to decide where and when you were going to **kill** us. I felt you were **torturing me**. I felt like I was one of Dr. Mengele's patients. I felt like you'd turned **me** into one of those wild pigs on your ranch that you used to pay hunters to shoot.

Will says you'd never consciously think like that. He says that that's only true in my **heart**, not my **head**.

But I'm **afraid** to spend time with you again if we're going to have to go back to the way things were.

You used to be like **Ilana**, and **Jennie** used to be like **Rina**. We used to be able to enjoy our family dynamics by sweeping our most **intimate** feelings under the rug.

I don't want to recreate my family of origin dynamics with you two any longer. I think that after 35 years of investing in our love for one another, we can all do better.

As it is now, it feels like each of us is trying to prove that s/he's the Democrat and the others are the Republicans. It feels as though we've been through a second Civil War. Our relationship mirrors the tension we see all around us in this country.

If the LGBT+ community is prone to the same problems everyone else is going through, Deborah, surely America's problems are universal. If we could just work out our problems between the three of us, we'd have something of value to share with others that I believe everyone in America desperately needs.

Love,
Barry

Nightmare #1

When I was in the first grade, **Peggy Ann Trout** [like a fish] lived in an apartment on the tenth floor. We lived on the third floor. **Rina** gave her the expletive [like a fish], and it stuck. **Rina** was very precocious for her age [four]. But I was six and was already humble enough to learn from my younger sister when it came to using name-calling from the bully pulpit.

One day, on our way home for lunch, I confessed to **Peggy Ann** that I secretly called our first-grade **teacher**, Miss Johnson, “Crabby Appleseed.” I told **Peggy Ann** I **hated** our **teacher**.

Peggy Ann, who probably didn’t like **me** associating her last name with a fish, snidely told **me** she was going to tell the **teacher** on **me** when we got back from lunch.

Needless to say, I went into a **panic**. Because the two people I **loved** and needed the most [Mummy and Daddy] **hit me** for every little thing I did wrong, it wasn’t hard for **me** to imagine that Miss Johnson, a total stranger until a few months prior, would **beat** the crap out of **me** and **humiliate me** in front of the whole class for what I’d said about her.

Mummy tried to quell my **fears**, but she was useless. The people who **frighten** you the most aren’t going to be able to help you feel better when you need them.

Peggy Ann didn’t follow through on her threat. I came back from lunch, and school was like the sea after a storm. All evidence of rough weather had mysteriously vanished.

That left **me** without a proper ending to the lesson I’d been Given on name-calling.

I did learn something else from the experience, though. I learned to keep my big mouth shut and not tell anyone what I really thought about anyone.

But deep down inside, I also **felt gleeful** because I’d gotten away without getting ridiculed, punished or **killed** for what I’d said about my **teacher**.

Unless you get **killed** for something you say that's wrong, how are you really supposed to learn from your mistakes?... I know I didn't think I'd learned a thing from mine.

I've **hated** lots of people in my **life**. But most of them I **hated** on the inside without telling anyone how they made **me** feel.

I **hated** Black people for their skin tone and dialectical differences in speaking English. I **hated** them for their taste in fashion and color preferences. And I **hated** them for being poor. I thought anyone who was Black was **dangerous**.

I **hated** fat people for not turning **me** on sexually at first glance. I **hated** them for taking up more space than **me**. I **hated** them for jigglings in places where I was firm. And I **hated** them for eating anything and everything when I was always hungry.

But much more than that, I **hated** fat people because Mummy **hated** them. I was always **afraid** of the ridicule, scorn and derision she spewed about fat people behind their back.

Now, when I weigh myself each day, if I'm 1-2 pounds overweight, I feel abandoned and **afraid**. That may be normal~ for **me**, but I still see it's very unhealthy~.

I **hated** the physically disabled for looking funny when they walked, when they talked or when they used their arms and hands. I thought their physical range of motion was totally unacceptable. I thought they should know better.

I never bothered to associate mental illness with physical illness. I didn't realize I **hated** myself because I'm a member of the disabled community.

I **hated** tall people, small people, people who talked too loudly~ and people who talked too softly~. I **hated** very thin people. I **hated** very light-skinned people and people with thin lips, even though I recently noticed that my lips happen to be thin. I **hated** people whose nails were round and not elongated. My~ nails are round. Is it any wonder from a

poetic point of view that I have a genetic, hand disorder, given that I **hate** the shape of my fingernails?

In truth I **fear** people I don't know well. I really only **hate** strangers. I think whatever people have that I don't like is catching, especially~ if they're blind or deaf.

I used to think those disabilities were particularly contagious. I really got nervous if I got too close to a blind or deaf person. I was certain they were **evil** people who deserved the punishment from God they'd been Given.

In my forties, I volunteered to run a bowling league for the **Rose Resnick** Lighthouse for the Blind in San Francisco. I did that for four years. Now that I'm more honest about my feelings, I can admit I was probably attracted to that volunteer job out of **fear**.

I probably unconsciously felt **guilty** about getting old in middle age because I was still so **fearful** and didn't know why.

I thought men were supposed to become brave over time. That certainly hadn't happened to **me** by my mid-forties. Learning to **love** the blind took **me** a lot of hard~ work. I'm not ashamed to admit it.

At the time, I seemed to have needed to prove to the **arrested** child in **me** that blindness isn't contagious, and my feelings about disabled people aren't unwarranted~, even if they're irrational~.

Similarly, I needed to move through my **fear** of Black people, fat people and my **fear** of parts of the human body. I had a lot of work to do in middle age, and I did it. I just didn't know what I was doing at the time I was doing it.

Naturally, I didn't talk about any of this before now. Why would I? I'd already learned to keep my opinions to myself thanks to **Peggy Ann Trout**.

Because The Dear Lord Hadn't Put **me** through any **trauma** greater than what I'd been through that **fateful** day in

the first grade, I didn't learn any more than I had about myself for many years to come.

I was a first grader in the school of **life** most of my **life**. The **Teacher** Didn't Test **me**. He Just Brought **me** lesson after lesson through classroom discussions of other~ people's **fears**.

I really didn't learn my lesson until I'd gathered enough information about the subject of differences in human nature to be able to speak about them logically, rationally and spiritually.

It wasn't until I could speak about how I felt from my **heart** that I began to learn about myself and how imperfect I was when viewed from this second place in inner space.

It wasn't until I could listen to myself speak from my **heart**, not my **head**, that I could hear who I really was inside and ascertain how old I was emotionally. Discovering you're an emotionally arrested child when you're in middle age can be quite disconcerting...

Learning to listen to myself think-and-feel was harder than it looked because there was nobody inside to censor what I was telling myself. I could say anything I wanted without moral regard for how I was putting myself down just by expressing bad opinions about others in the privacy of my **mind**. That's because there was no one in there to stop **me**. My **hate** speech would have gone on and on inside myself, ad nauseum, if I hadn't started to talk to myself in~ loud.

The homeless talk to themselves out~ loud. The spiritually homeless who know they're very far from Home have to start talking to themselves in~ loud. At least, I did.

Is it any wonder people get **eaten up** with cancers and have their brains **blown out** with strokes? Is it any wonder hearts are literally **attacked** from within, only for that person to discover that s/he has a bad **heart** in the emotional and poetic sense of the word that the body is expressing physically?

If I end up in a lot of pain in old age because of all the suffering I've put others through, I want a doctor to open **me** up, look inside and cut out the entire problem, literal and figurative. I want a doctor who can diagnose my inner world in addition to what s/he literally finds beneath my skin.

Sadly, doctors can't look for what I'm talking about in poetical terms. They can only see what's literally wrong with my body, not what's figuratively wrong with my **soul**. And they certainly don't talk about their spiritual insights with their patients. They only discuss what they see on x-rays and such. Their gifts lie in a whole other realm than mine. Doctors don't have the kind of vision I have, and if they do, they've been trained not to use it.

Life slowly leads to a higher and higher education whether you have a high school diploma, or not. **Life** becomes tutelage in a university with One **Teacher**, so different from what you find if you've been to college or university. In **life**, you get to vote on what classes you're going to take, but you don't get to vote on what you're going to learn~ from them.

I chose to become a ballet dancer when I was an adolescent. And boy did I learn a lot about myself in having made that decision! Too bad most of what I learned about **me** was negative. And yet, it all turned out well for **me** once I could see the big picture.

Life was easy when I was a kid. I had one **teacher** in elementary school. Each year, my **teacher** tried to make **me** feel welcome in class by encouraging **me** to take ownership of my **lessons**, so they'd be more interesting.

It wasn't until I got to middle school and had more than one **teacher** each day that I realized **growing** up was real~, and I was going to have to face **reality** whether I liked~ it, or not.

High school was even more intense because at the age of 16 I discovered **orgasm**. ["Better late than never," as they

say...] It took **me** forever~ to connect the **dots** to make my body sing because I didn't know how to become sexually **curious**. Sex requires that you're **curious** about your body. I had to develop that skill. I didn't realize after 15 years being **me**, that there was anything new about my body that could come along.

Once I realized how much adult **life** is like a college education, you'd think that would have **changed** the way I prepared for class each day with The **Teacher** Who we all have to answer to.

But none of that seemed to matter to **me**. I still behaved like I was in high school, middle school or even elementary school depending on how intense the emotional pressure on **me** was.

Not even **orgasm** **changed** **me** enough from within at first because I didn't know what it could mean to **me** as a spiritual clue to the meaning of **life**.

When I reached my twenties and could see I'd become very sick inside; when I realized I was losing my **mind** and would never be able to go back and retrieve it – I finally realized I'd have to forge on without it. I realized I'd better look into my **heart** for answers to how I behaved. **Wisdom** of the **heart** was going to have to become my major in the school of **life**. I had no other choice.

When I realized I don't have everything I started with, I became a member of the **recovery** community. My **life** become all about **recovery**. Like an arrow in a bow, I needed to pull back in order to shoot forward.

And even though most of the pupils in my classes in the school of **life** have been **Christians** and I was one of the few **Jews**, I persevered. So what if you're a minority?

Sometimes I felt like a Black girl breaking the segregation barrier. Sometimes I felt like the crip. or the Special Ed. kid allowed to take that class.

I knew deep down inside that all I wanted was a spiritual education, so I could figure out what I was missing, and why.

I wanted my **life** to feel like one long **orgasm**. But memorable **orgasms** were, **alas**, few and far between.

I never fully realized that **death** is the outcome of every **life**. No one has any idea what **death** means to the person involved.

But through experience, I discovered that **death** is a terrible loss to the **loved** ones left behind. The only thing any of us can do about **death** is **grieve** our loss.

But I hadn't been taught to **grieve** in practical ways that would **change** the world around **me**, let alone my world within. The **Jews** hadn't taught **me** that, and the **Christians** and **Muslims** didn't have any idea how to do it, either.

I thought of **death** like meat and poultry you buy that's already been **killed**, cleaned and wrapped up for you. I didn't know **death** personally. I'd only been given an intellectual introduction to it until I'd attempted **suicide** three times. Now I can say that I'm very familiar with **death**. Now I'm no longer **cavalier** about anything~, anymore.

I tried to collude~ with **Peggy Ann** against Miss Johnson by calling Miss Johnson a **bad** name. But then **Peggy Ann** **threatened** to conspire~ with Miss Johnson against **me**. That shocked **me**. I never expected **Peggy Ann** to retaliate at all, let alone in that way.

It was Mummy who'd called Miss Johnson "Crabby Apple Seed." Mummy wanted to relieve my **anxiety** over having to go to school. So, Mummy is actually to blame for teaching **me** that it's O.K. to call people names, even if the accusation only feels~ true.

The **Teacher** Has a way of Helping us **change** our **mind** for~ us. He Helps us **transform** our **heart**. And He Helps us **transcend** our conscience with **lessons** we usually conclude are unjust, unfair and undeserved. We reject having to become **soulful**.

None of us gets to vote on the way **life** turns out. I'd say that the majority of people raise their fist to The **Teacher** in

defiance of their grades and how harsh the lessons of their life can be. But what can any of us do about it?

What's a mediocre student in the department of the heart in the school of life to do? How do you do the hard work to transcend your conscience with a soul if your head and heart have been arguing with one another since you were a teenager? How do you make up the lessons you never learned by heart so you can improve your grades?

Life is all~ about orgasms, and it's got nothing~ to do with orgasms. And that's a paradox each of us has to solve in our own way.

Nightmare #2

I had a **nightmare** last night in which a child slipped into a pool because there were no stairs at the shallow end, only a declining slope that descended quickly toward the deep end. That child~ [my inner~ child] almost **died**.

In my dream, I had to decide if I was going to sue the establishment where it took place. Although I didn't want the settlement money, I knew the owner of the place had to be made to pay for his irresponsibility in not having built stairs when he put in the pool.

If people aren't punished financially, they come away **gleeful** at having gotten away with making mistakes without it having cost them a thing. And that only exacerbates everyone's problems.

My inner~ parents now understand how important it is to protect my inner child, as well as the inner children of others. But there are many inner parents who aren't yet aware of the enormous spiritual charge they've been Given and how to carry it out.

You may have to drown in your own **sorrows**. But you don't have to allow **incidents** and accidents to ruin your~ **mood**. Your attitude of gratitude can be raised to a higher altitude. You can learn to look down on your past with **disappointment** and **grief** gilded with **humor**. You don't have to settle into your **sorrows** for a **lifetime**.

If you're **curious** about yourself, you can look down on your inner child with **soulfulness** rather than **rage**. Your inner parents can become an inspiration with a **rainbow** for your inner child.

You should never allow your inner child to play outside until the **dangers** around him have been dealt with. All it takes is one inner child to **die** to make everyone aware how **threatened** every other inner child is. The same holds true for all our children.

I didn't know any of this until I started to talk to myself. It was only when all that had gone unsaid got said that I realized how important it is to talk out loud in~ loud.

There are those who look as though their inner child **died** of **fear** a very long time ago. They look **forlorn** and **forsaken**. They look like they're **grieving** the **death** of a **loved** one. **Life** seems to have drawn out the worst in them. They seem to have lost **interest** in why they're still here.

What can we all do about this? There's no way to resurrect a child, let alone an inner child. If you discover you feel all alone in this world, so be it. But you must~ be reminded that you're not alone in feeling alone.

Just do what I do, which is not to get overly **jealous** of other people's bodies or **envious** of their gifts. You may be alone, but if you're in good company within~ yourself, you may be far better off than others who are only in the company of other people, behaving like empty cups sipping from others' empty cups.

My mom wasn't **popular** in school as a child. She told **me** her only friend was a girl with polio in her class. And she added that the little girl only liked her because my mom was a fat child. When my mom was thrown out of school for being **Jewish**, that only exacerbated my mom's feeling of being unlikeable, not just unpopular.

I was never **popular**, either. But my mom tried to put pressure on **me** to make **friends** and spend time away from home with others. I, on the other hand, am a homebody. I've always preferred to be home alone. Going out of the house is a **celebration**. Coming home is even a greater reason to **celebrate**.

Because of my mom's pressure on **me** to make **friends** and influence people, I always felt **guilty** about being by myself. I used to walk around the quad during lunch at

school trying to look like I had somewhere to go, so the other kids wouldn't notice I didn't have any friends.

On TV, they often talk about the perpetrator of crimes having been a lone wolf. The fact is that I'm like a lone dog~, not a lone wolf~. I'm the puppy I never had. I'm man's best friend, the dog I never got to have and hold as a kid.

I like~ my own company. I like being me and spending most of my time alone with me. That was even true when I was crazy. But now I have inner parents to guide my inner child. And that's made all the difference.

Nightmare #3

When I was a kid, **Deborah**'s given name was **Dale**. She changed it to **Deborah** when she became an adult.

That awful weekend, I don't think **Deborah** was **angry** at **me**. I think **Dale** was **angry** at **Carl**, her biological brother.

Milly doted on **Carl** as though he was the prince of peace. **Hyme** doted on **Terry** as though he was king of the world, and she was his little **Jewish** princess.

Dale was a mistake. She wasn't a planned child. She wasn't wanted. I think **Dale** concluded that with a simple name change, she could dismiss the lack of **love** that always hovered over her **head** like an ill wind. She thought she could eventually go to a place over the **rainbow** where her **life** would become more to her liking.

Unlike **Dorothy**, who was sucked up by a tornado and taken to Oz, **Dale** always ends up in a place where **Milly** is the wicked witch who's trying to get what she's got [her **red** shoes].

Hyme is always reduced to a flying monkey in a band of flying monkeys [men] who do **Milly**'s bidding. And **Terry** turns into **Jennie**, her **Scarecrow**, Tin Man and Cowardly Lion all wrapped up into one **lifelong** friend.

Dale, however, is unable to see who she is and where she is when this happens.

Jennie and I know that **Dale** just wants to go Home. But when **Jennie** and I speak philosophically about going Home, the very idea **enrages** **Dale**. I think she turns **me** into **Carl**. I become her evil brother who got all their mother's **love**. She can't talk about why God Would Have Left her **feeling** abandoned in a world as **cruel** as this one.

At times, this world is similar to Oz for everyone. But if you don't have the imagination to see yourself as a friend of **Dorothy**'s [**loyal** to the LGBT+ community], you aren't going to recognize what it means to fly over the **rainbow** like

a blue bird. You aren't going to see your mother as a witch who wants to steal your greatest treasure. You aren't going to see that your red shoes are a token of your righteous rage.

You're going to limp through every fractured fairy tale you read without a clue what it could mean to you.

Or you're going to turn into a wizard – a humbug who tells others how to live their life while you're stuck having to create an artificial image of yourself as an angry god who frightens everyone away.

There's a Scarecrow inside us all who yearns for brains. There's a Tin man who reminds us we need a heart. And there's a Cowardly Lion in our soul who seeks courage.

L. Frank Baum wasn't a writer any more than I'm a writer. We're both spiritualists describing reality. We're both masters of metaphor. Moses may have been the first, but God Has Created many masters of metaphor since Moses.

“The Wizard of Oz” isn't a story, any more than Adam and Eve is a story. They're both extended metaphors about the way things are. Don't take either of them literally. It'll ruin your life.

Nightmare #4

My mother was a saint~... But like every other saint, she was also very human~. She was flawed. And although she had attributes that were godly, she also had attributes that were devilishly mean and demeaning. [I feel guilty just saying that...]

As a child, I couldn't stop wetting my bed. I went to bed every night listening to my father and mother arguing viciously in the dining room. That was my nightly "lullaby." And so, I think I wet my bed in an unconscious effort to put out their flames~.

One day, my sainted~ mother came up with a plan. She told me that because I wet my bed in the middle of the night, I was only suffering having to sleep in a wet bed half the night. So, she decided to wet my bed for me before I got into it with a pitcher of cold water. That way I'd have to sleep in a wet bed all night, not half the night.

I've come to believe that my mom hated children since she'd had to grow up as a Jewish child in Nazi Germany. I don't think she ever really wanted kids. She and Lou used to wax poetic about how glad they were that their kids were grown. They vowed never to have kids again if they'd ever have to return to this place.

What my mom really wanted was a baby~ adult, a childlike~ adult, an adolescent~ adult and an adult~ adult to keep her company. And that's just what she got with me~.

I may be wrong about that. She just may have hated her marriage to my father so much that she couldn't contain her bitter disappointment in watching her marriage go down the drain.

Either way, I was trained to behave like an adult at all times – perhaps to replace my father as the man in her life. That's the sort of training that will get you involuntarily

committed to a mental institution. And so, it did for **me**. I was.

For at least 50 years, I went to bed every night and got up every morning as though I'd slept all night in a wet bed. I woke up in the morning feeling chilled. I felt clammy. I felt damp regardless of the season or the weather. I felt there was nothing I could do to dry off and warm up. And even on those few mornings when I'd wake up feeling well with the world, I still felt **dirty** inside.

You aren't going to get a perfect upbringing from your parents. And if you're a parent, you aren't going to give your children a perfect upbringing, either.

But you can train them more gently than I was. Therefore, instruct~ your children adequately. After that, educate~ them about the school of **life** to the best of your ability, especially when they reach adolescence and need to know that they're not the first **Adam** to go through the experience of achieving **orgasms** or **Eve** to experience **menstruation** and then **orgasm**. [Even visually, you can see how great a difference puberty is for males and females.]

My mom yearned for a son so she could teach all men through **me** how not~ to treat a lady. She wanted a daughter so she could look in the mirror and ask, "Who's the **fairest** of them all?"

My mom was so oppressed~ by the Nazis, and I was so suppressed~ by her, that I repressed~ myself until I was so deeply depressed~ that I wanted to **die**.

My mom and my sister, on the other hand, spent a **lifetime** in competition with one another to determine who was the **fairest** of them all. And the more our mom acquiesced to **Rina** to make **Rina** feel that she~ was the **fairest** of them all, the worse **Rina** behaved toward her. It was a **nightmare** the two of them relived over and over that they never resolved.

For **me**, jealousy and envy followed wherever I went. I just wanted to wake up in another container or with different contents. I didn't want to have to be **me**.

I had to force~ myself to love **me**. It's only when I knew that about myself that I was able to laugh at all I'd wanted that it hadn't been my destiny to achieve.

I think people ought to develop inner parents who train, coach and educate their inner child as s/he goes through puberty. The inner teenager in all of us needs guidance. Parents ought to reflect upon themselves soulfully to discover who they are and who they're not. Children with soulful parents becomes soulful parents to themselves.

When I was a young adult, I should have observed the ways in which I interacted with my houseplants, pets and friends. Therein lay the secret to the inner parenting skills I'd have to offer the teenager inside **me**.

Many adults don't know this much about parenting. They look at their teenage kids as though they're mirrors~ of themselves instead of windows~ out onto a part of the world they never knew. They don't discuss the mirror/window issue with them because they think that much truth would stunt their children's spiritual growth.

Quite the contrary. It would enhance~ it.

If you want your teenage children to understand why they have a navel~, you're going to have to contemplate your~ navel with them. You're going to have to look at the "apron strings" you were tied to, and why.

You~ have a navel because you come from a mother. She was your main tutor in the school of life for a few short, but impressionable, years. And then you got more tutors to expand your knowledge of the meaning of life.

Sooner or later, we're all introduced to the concept of The Teacher. Then we see an opportunity to trade the

umbilical cord that was knotted for~ us for a relationship of inner parents to our inner teenager in God's School. Life is deeper and harder than it looks.

There's no way I was able to ask The Teacher questions and get timely and useful answers until I achieved the tolerance to embrace reality as it is. With the greater patience that comes with difficult answers to what the universe was asking of me, I was then able to accept and even admire myself in a few, select ways. ~

Life is a school with A Teacher. I'll remain in this school until I graduate. But what I choose to learn is up to me. And what I think about the education I'm receiving is also up to me.

You don't have to believe in God to develop a healthy relationship with yourself. Inner attachment to yourself and outer detachment from others may even be useful in managing loved ones who are under severe stress.

If you'd like to improve your relationship with yourself, I suggest you develop a sense of humor that you can share with your inner parents and The Teacher. Nobody else really needs to laugh at what you find funny. And making jokes when others are upset is something Jennie has now learned the hard way not to do.

When I see how jealous I am of other men's bodies or envious of their relaxed relationships with one another, I have to laugh at the depth of my insecurities. Now that I can see how profound a sense of inferiority I suffer from, I can laugh it off.

You don't have to strive to be funny with others unless you absolutely feel your destiny is to be a comedian. But I don't recommend you try to become a professional comedian or professional ballet dancer if you can help it.

Being funny or **graceful** is only a great way to make a living if you're willing to lose your **mind**. That's my experience anyway...

It would be a **shame** if you ended up **cynical**, **bitter** and **mean**-spirited. It would be a **shame** if you made up your **mind** to exist in an inner world of **darkness** without **hope**. Many do! But most of them don't end up as comedians or ballet dancers.

There's a **rainbow** glowing inside everyone. But to see that **rainbow** shining in the **darkness** of my own **heart**, I needed The Help of The **Teacher**. I couldn't do it alone. And even though I'm "just" a **gay-Jew**, I got it...

If you want to improve your grades in the school of **life**, I suggest you improve your attitude about having to be in this school learning about yourself until the very last day of class. How in the world do you expect to do well on your studies if you resent the concept of being a student of **life** for as long as you live?

This is a challenge for straight, White-Americans, too. This is a universal challenge that can be achieved with or without **Jesus**. The name you give to our **Teacher** to express your faith in Him isn't relevant to your challenge in developing faith in yourself.

Nightmare #5

After Mummy left Daddy in 1959, she bought a 1952 Studebaker. Then~ she learned how to drive. And then she got up the **cou**rage to go out on the highway with it. But she'd stay so far in the right lane that she often exited the highway by mistake. Sometimes she got off the highway so many times because of hugging the right shoulder that it would have taken less time to go where we were going using city streets...

The thought of going into the middle or left lane **terrified** my mom for years to come. But by the time she reached the age of 80, she was resolved to drive her age... Each year as an octogenarian, she drove faster and faster. By the time she was 90, we had to pry her hands off the steering wheel and put her in a home before she **killed** somebody.

When Mummy left Daddy, she was 39 years old. She got her first job in California at the juvenile delinquent division at the courthouse in Ventura. Sometimes, we'd drive to Santa Barbara to **enjoy** Sundays in the "big" city.

When we were on the highway, she made both of us sit in the backseat. There were no seatbelts in those days, but she realized that if she got into an accident at high speed, the two of us were more likely to survive in the back seat. There were no bucket seats in those days, so there was plenty of room in the car for all three of us to sit in the front seat in town.

Unfortunately, there wasn't enough **love** to go around in our family. So, putting **Rina** and **me** into a confined space in the backseat of a 1952 Studebaker was like putting a mongoose and a snake in the same traveling cage. We always ended up in a **fight**.

Mummy would **threaten** us and even reach back and **hit** us. But she couldn't make us understand how difficult driving was for her at the age of 40 in 1960 after having had Daddy chauffeur her everywhere before.

So, she came up with a plan to teach us a lesson. On one of our escapades to Santa Barbara, while **Rina** and I were waging war in the back seat, she drove off the highway onto a dirt road. [In those days, there were no shoulders on highways, just ditches.] She simply drove off the highway onto a dirt road and stopped the car about 200 feet from the highway, kicking up a great deal of dust in the process.

She stopped the car and told us to get out. She got out of the car, too. And she calmly told us that she was going to Santa Barbara without us. We were going to have to stay there in that field. She'd pick us up on her way back.

Since I was already a practical person who didn't see how it was going to be possible for her to find us in a field in the countryside on her way back from Santa Barbara traveling at high speed, I started to think about how I could get my five-year-old sister across the highway so Mummy wouldn't have to search the fields on the opposite side of the road as she was making her way back to Ventura later in the day.

Then Mummy got back in the car and started to drive off. **Rina** yelled out in **horror** and began running after the car. And, as you can imagine, even though I was all of seven, I got caught up in the emotionality of the moment and started **crying** and running after her, too.

Mummy "kindly" stopped the car and told us we could get in if we promised not to make any more noise in the backseat ever again.

Needless to say, I stayed quiet for about 40 years until **Larry** admitted he was having sex with his former boyfriend. And then, as though by **magic**, I suddenly found a voice inside **me** to tell him he was toying with my emotions. I also let him know in no uncertain terms that I was **enraged**.

But when I look back on my break-up with **Larry** now, I can see that I felt more like a seven-year-old whose mommy had shrewdly **threatened** to abandon him.

A part of **me** didn't want **Larry** to abandon **me**. I felt **betrayed**. I thought it would **kill me**.

Another part of **me** didn't want him to have to stay if he wanted to leave **me**. And yet a third part of **me** was **infuriated** by the feelings he was putting **me** through.

People will **threaten** to abandon you because they know that nobody has been properly trained to care for and **love** themselves. But this is just a ploy to get you to do what they want or hurt you for something you~ did that wasn't all that serious in the first place.

People who are really~ **mad** at you, just pick up quietly and leave.

Once you let people know you're familiar with the feelings of abandonment [and aren't we all?], you can find the voice inside you that best corresponds to this distasteful form of manipulation.

I compare my mom's abandonment trick when I was seven with **Larry**'s abandonment of our **vow** of fidelity in our late forties. And I'm also comparing both of these incidents with **Deborah**'s implied **threat** of abandonment that infamous weekend.

Fortunately, I'm too old to fall victim to the feelings of abandonment by those who "love" **me**. I've learned too much about the games people play to be willing to let them overwhelm my **heart** with unpleasant feelings I've been through before.

Will says I'm exaggerating. But that only makes **me** feel all the more alone. What I **feel** is real to **me**. And even if there are other ways of interpreting **reality**, from the **heart** is my go-to method.

The **Teacher** Allows us to get ambushed by the feeling of abandonment again and again in the school of **life**. And to each of these tests, we have to find different answers that make us stronger over time.

The only one I know who abandons **me** is **me**. That's what it means to be a **suicide** survivor. That's my emotional base line. All other forms of abandonment don't **threaten** my **life**.

When you face your final exam, you may feel abandoned then, too. But if you've been through this lesson of **life** with conscious awareness and reflection on what you learned in your past, you may be able to smile – that knowing Mona Lisa smile, that says, “I never feel abandoned when I'm with the **Teacher**. I always feel safe and secure with Him. **Death** doesn't bother **me**. I can laugh off anything.”

When I reread the over paragraph, a part of **me** wanted to puke. It sounds so **fundamentalist-Christian**. But because it's true, I left it in.

Nightmare #6

Rina was a finicky eater. I was not. The only time I wouldn't eat my morning cereal was the one time Mummy had to tell **me** to drink my orange juice. I didn't want to drink my orange juice that day, so I cleverly decided to pour my orange juice into my cereal and swallow it all together.

Needless to say, the milk in my cereal curdled, so I didn't have to finish my breakfast that morning despite Mummy's first command to do so.

But **Rina** was a finicky eater. Mummy swore if **Rina** didn't drink her milk, she'd wear it. **Rina** just didn't quite understand what that **threat** meant, and I didn't want to have to explain it to her.

One day, Mummy grabbed **Rina**'s arm with one hand and the glass of milk with the other and marched her into the bathroom. I followed behind half out of **fear** and half out of **interest**.

Mummy picked **Rina** up and put her in the tub, and then she poured the glass of cold milk over her **head**. **Rina** howled like the dickens! And the stink-eye that emerged on her face has never left it.

When I was a young adult, I stayed out of politics. I didn't get between Democrats and **Republicans**. I couldn't yet see the difference between my mom and dad or my mom and sis. So, why would I have wanted to get between two rival, political parties?

I also stayed out of romantic relationships. I met plenty of men who wanted to screw **me**, date **me** and put a ring on my finger, but I couldn't trust any of 'em. I couldn't decide if they were more like my father, mother or sister. The chance of them breaking my **heart** was too great.

I didn't want to argue with anyone~ because I saw in my own family what happens to people who do.

I can't exactly call myself a hero, but I'd love to be able to pass on to you how to make a difference in this world by avoiding arguing with others.

I didn't want to get milk poured over my head when I was a child. I didn't want to be left by the side of the road. And I certainly didn't want to go through the terror again of having my teacher come after me in my imagination for calling her a nasty name behind her back.

So, the only way I know how to be a hero is by saving my own skin.

If milk is liquid love and there isn't enough love to go around, I didn't want to spill milk. And I didn't want milk spilled over me, either.

It wasn't until I met Larry that he helped me see that the land of milk [love] and honey [wisdom] is an inner land that has less to do with Israel, the Jewish nation where I'd lived out the last two years of my adolescence. The land of milk and honey is the land of love and wisdom we forge within ourself.

Larry helped me see that not all Jews are like my family. It's possible to become loving and wise using Israel as a model of my intention to do the right thing.

You don't have to live there to be loyal, loving or wise. You just have to embody for others how to live and let live unless people try to kill you. That has informed my political perception as a Democrat. Although the Republicans are literally for the survival of the land of Israel, the Democrats are figuratively for all that Israel stands for.

Nightmare #7

One time, Mummy sent **me** to my room. She came in some time later and asked **me** if I was ready to apologize. I said no, and she **slapped me** so hard across the face that I bit my tongue and suffered a **bloody** mouth.

From that lesson, I assumed she'd reached her punitive, outer limit. I couldn't imagine her **hitting me** any harder than that.

Another time, Daddy told **me** not to suck my thumb, but I couldn't help myself. He'd enter the room; I'd take my thumb out of my mouth. He'd leave the room; I'd put it back in. All the **snarls** on his face and verbal **threats** didn't move **me** to stop sucking my thumb. If anything, they only made **me** suck it harder.

One night, after the two of them were through with their scream-fest in the dining room, Daddy must have decided it was the perfect time to march into my room to see if I was sucking my thumb. With his suspicion confirmed, he **slapped me** hard across the face. I woke up to a much **bloodier** mouth than when Mummy had **slapped me**. Plus, I was shivering out of **fear** in having been **accosted** in my sleep.

I tell you this because one day when I was about five, Mummy told **me** to do something, and I refused to do it. Normally that meant getting **hit** by her. But I didn't care anymore. I wasn't **afraid** of what she'd do to **me**. I'd already determined the extent of her strength, and I decided I could take it.

But what she decided to do that time was nothing at all. She simply told **me** to wait until Daddy came home. I had no idea what that might mean, but I could already sense at the age of five that that didn't sound good.

When Daddy arrived back from his day at work selling shoes at Sadler's Department Store, he was never in a **mood** for family matters. So, when Mummy told him what I'd

done, he said nothing. He simply removed his belt from his pants and **beat me** with it. That **beating** was Mummy's way of telling **me** that I could never know the extent of her ability to hurt **me**.

When I moved to Holland from **Israel**, I took off the Friday before a two-week vacation because I could only find a charter flight from Brussels to visit my mom in L.A. on that day. I didn't ask for the day off without pay, and I didn't have any more vacation time to dip into.

My boss at the bank where I worked used that excuse to fire **me**. Lying about being sick and taking a day off of work was the reason stated on the governmental form I got a copy of.

The bank knew they couldn't fire **me** for my work habits. My job performance was outstanding. The real~ reason they fired **me** was because I condescendingly looked down at everyone on the job. I thought working in a bank was just about the lowest level of hell anyone could sink down to. So, everyone around **me** had to feel my disdain from 8:00 in the morning until 5:00 at night, five days a week. They only got an hour's break when I went to lunch every day.

That's~ why I was fired. They couldn't stand~ **me** looking at them that way any longer. It must have brought up feelings of how deeply they disliked their~ job, too. If I'd~ been the boss, I would have looked for any reason to get **me** out of there, too~.

Once I was fired, I had to sell my houseboat because it was tied to a loan I'd gotten from that bank. I could anticipate that I wasn't going to be able to get another job in Holland without a job reference, so I realized I'd have to leave the country after having lived there for three years.

Granted, I was obstinate, ungrateful and manipulative, but at the time I didn't think I deserved to be **beaten** with a "belt" like my father had done to **me** as a child.

But such is **life**. The **lessons** get harder. And that's true for everyone.

When your parents can't explain to you in words why~ they'd like you to do what they asked of you, and with a good~ attitude, it's going to lead you in the direction of obstinacy, **moodiness** and even manipulation.

Unless you learn to negotiate in good faith for what you want with a sincere smile in your **heart**~, you may have to **accept** emotional outcomes others don't have to go through that are harsher than you would have otherwise expected.

You may become hostile and even unpleasant about that. The underlying question in your **life** might be, "Why me~?"

Such is **life**! **Life** schools everyone because **life** is~ a school. And you're its pupil, whether you like it, or not.

That's why we have so many mass **murderers** in this country. "**Guns** don't kill people." People with resentments against their parents **kill** people.

If you don't like what happened to **Jesus**, don't make **love** to **gay-Jews** like **Judas**. That was **Jesus**'s mistake if you ask **me**~.

Oh, I'll bet that statement isn't going to sit well with a lot of fundamentalist-**Christians**~.

But if **Jesus** wasn't a **gay-Jew**, was he a fat **Jew**? Was he a hooked-nosed **Jew**? Was he a Black-**Jew** with thick lips and a flat nose? Was he a **Jew** with slanted, oriental eyes? Or was he the kind of **Jew** who you can't tell from an **Arab**?

I'll bet if you ask most **Christians**, they'll tell you he was Scandinavian with White skin, blond hair and blue eyes... And they'll swear on the **Bible** that he wasn't gay.

But I say that it doesn't matter what he did or didn't do with his penis. I say that it was the heart God Gave him that mattered.

The Orthodox-**Jews** have an unconscious urge to unite all the **Jews** worldwide in denouncing this one **Jew**, **Jesus**. The **rabbis** don't realize that they're consumed with **jealousy**

and envy for what he~ accomplished reading **Tanach** that they haven't been able to achieve since. If they'd just learn to love themselves, they'd admit **Jesus** got it right when it comes to wisdom of the heart. They could embrace the mystery and mastery of all God's Intentions without having to try to prove they're always right~.

That said, if **Christians** could only learn to love like **Jesus** taught them to, they wouldn't be obsessed with converting the world to their~ religion. What good is using **intimidation** to change people's beliefs if your goal is to promote love?

Many get caught up in the messenger and forget the message. If you're gay or lesbian and therefore can't help loving who you love, then try to help others learn to love themselves.

Men loving men is not a sin~. It's a preference~. It's not a question of whether the glass is half empty or half full. It's about what's in~ the glass to begin with!

Nightmare #8

Hitler knew that Germany was one of the few religiously divided countries in Europe. The Germans in the north were Protestants and the Germans in the south were Catholics. He knew he'd never get Catholics and Protestants to work together to build one nation unless he could provide them with a common enemy.

Hitler was a Catholic. He had a devout Catholic mother who made sure he was baptized. Although he began with a favorable view of Christianity, he became anti-Christian, but also anti-atheist. Hitler declared himself "Not a Catholic, but a German Christian."

This made it possible for him to net Protestants and Catholics alike, and not just in Germany. This made it possible for him to put his nationality before his religion.

Putting nationality before religion was a new idea Hitler used to unify Germans. And he used the Jews, gays, the disabled and political rivals to do it.

Hitler was born in Austria, became stateless and then became a German citizen. He thought of himself as a German in the way that Blacks, gays, Jews, Latinx and Asians think of themselves as Americans.

The only Americans who still put their faith before their nationality are Republicans. And the only immigrants to this country that they approve of living in this country, like Hitler, are ones who are White and who already speak the English language, albeit with an accent.

The fact that almost all Republicans happen to be White, straight and without physical disabilities [other than obesity] isn't a coincidence. I'm not alone in observing that.

If you admire Hitler and would like to become a Hitler unto yourself to unite your inner nation from any emotional divisions your heart may be suffering with, you're going to

want to find **enemies** to vilify. That will give you the impression that you can unify your faith~ in yourself~.

That will make you think it's possible for you to deal with **disappointment**, regardless of how **reality** is unfolding around you in a way you can't stand. That will make it possible for you to believe any lie they feed you.

But you're going to have to find the equivalent of a **Jew**, a **gay**, a disabled person, a Black or a Democrat who you can corral and then **threaten** to **kill** with your inalienable right to bear **arms**.

However, in becoming that **Hitler** unto yourself, you're going to want to be practical about it. You're going to want to starve that **Jew**, queer, "n" or crip. to **death**. And the best way to do that is, of course, by overworking them. That's the exaggerated "**Protestant** work ethic" that's been in place by the **Republican** leaders of industry in this country since its inception.

Once you've weakened those you vilify to the point that they're no longer able to serve you as their slave~, then you can keep them oppressed~ by keeping them suppressed~ by their family, repressed~ by themself and depressed~ for the rest of their **life**.

Once **mad assassins** have **killed** as many people as they can around us, they generally **kill** themself. And if they get away, they usually wish they were **dead** by the time they get caught.

I tried all that with myself on a small scale just by going crazy and attempting **suicide**. Unfortunately, I didn't succeed and had to try again~ and again~.

When I finally realized that **suicide** wasn't working for **me**, I was too **impatient** to wait for drugs, alcohol and cancer sticks to do the trick over time. That's what most others~ do to shorten their lives.

I caved. I turned myself in. I went to A.A. and got clean and sober. I resolved to spend my life going the other~ way just to see how things might turn out if I pursued self-love~ instead of self-hate~.

Many use food to accomplish the weakening and spiritual starvation needed to **kill** their inner **enemy** slowly. But some prefer ruining their **life** with obsessions like gambling or sex.

Whatever your method, **death** and **destruction** of your inner nation is attainable so long as the **Hitler** in you never gives up his resolve to **retaliate** for the **misery** you may cause yourself out of ignorance of what we're all here to do.

What was a German error of judgment in the 20th Century perpetrated by the Nazis has since been expanded into a universal predisposition perpetrated by a **Hitler** who's alive and well in each and every one of us, albeit it to varying degrees.

Don't bother to call anyone a **Nazi** anymore. We're all like Nazis. We're all **guilty** of the kind of self-hate released upon the world by the Nazis, only now we do it to ourself in the privacy of our own **mind** and body if we can't get others to do it to those we **hate** for us.

No one has to bother to try to wipe **Israel** off the map. Each of us is a land of milk and honey that we don't appreciate nearly enough as it is.

We're wiping ourselves off the map in myriad, **destructive** ways. Global warming will only complete the job we've started...

In the 21st Century, anti-**Semitism** has been universalized. Not even **Jews** are exempt from such feelings anymore.

"Forgive, but don't forget." That said, also take the **lessons** of your **enemies'** experiences to **heart**. If you can't internalize your **enemies'** efforts against yourself because you've amassed too much self-love to **kill** yourself that

obviously, it may be because a part of you secretly cares about yourself~.

When you've achieved the **empathy** to be able to imagine how the **Jews** in Germany felt **betrayed**, abandoned and rejected by their own countrymen, then you'll be able to understand how minorities feel in this country.

You'll be able to **feel** how the LGBT+ community has to **suffer** itself~.

You'll be able to feel how the **Jew** in you feels when you do things that are **hateful** toward you~.

That's **empathy**~ as it approaches its source. Don't bother to consider yourself an empathetic~ person unless you can go way beyond the sympathy~ we see and hear all around us.

And, by the way, please don't tell **me** you're going to pray for **me**. I have a sufficiently developed faith in God to pray for myself. Prayer isn't a popularity contest. The person who gets the most prayers doesn't win a thing.

Don't tell people you send them your thoughts and prayers when their~ loved ones are **gunned** down by mass **murderers**. They don't need your thoughts or your prayers. They can think and pray for themself. They're not intellectually challenged or religiously crippled.

What they need is your **empathy**~. Strive to give the needy **empathy**~, not sympathy~! Do something to **change**~ the way this country operates by affecting every person you meet~ every day of your **life**~.

If you don't~, be prepared for a level of **guilt** that will haunt you for the rest of your **life**, and, in my~ opinion, long after~.

Nightmare #9

The queer baiting of the 1950's, 60's and 70's was a straight ploy to follow the **Bible** literally to cure us of our "illness." Little did straight society realize that what they were doing was playing God~.

You shouldn't tell people what to do with their genitals. That part of the body is private. Does any child want to share his favorite toy? Would you like someone sticking their hand in your pants to adjust your boy-toy for you? Would you like them to **slap** you up the groin for getting an **erection**?

The **pedophilia**, **rape** and sexual **aggression** in this country is appalling. **Rape** and sexual **assaults** occur in this country at the rate of once every 1-2 minutes. I hold the institutions of **religions** accountable for this because of their literal interpretations of the **Creation** Story in **Torah**.

Living a **life** filled with **dread** makes **life** unpleasant. When your go-to feeling is **dread**, it's especially hard to find **courage**. And **hateful** people know this and use it to keep those they **hate** oppressed, suppressed, repressed and depressed.

Half a million **Jews** survived the 1940's in Europe. Most of the **gays** survived the 1950's, 60's and 70's in **America**. But in the 80's and 90's we~, too, fell like flies. But that was from an epidemic that the **religious right** prayed for and sincerely believed they'd Received as an answer to their prayers.

They didn't want to have to **kill** us all to appease their God, as the Nazis had tried to do with the **Jews**. They **hoped** God Would Do it for them with an epidemic.

I guess the recent pandemic~ has proved them wrong.

My mom had a miscarriage before she became pregnant with **me**. It was a boy. She wanted two children, a boy and

then a girl. Her mom had had a boy and then a girl, but my mom's brother **died** at the age of seven when he fell to his **death** in a freak accident.

My grandmother and mother both lost their firstborn sons, just as the ancient Egyptians lost their firstborn sons in the 10th **Plague**. Was that the wrath of God or God's Way of Teaching everyone a lesson? Everyone takes loss personally, even **pharaohs** and mothers.

I was my mom's second son who should have been her daughter, and my sister should never have been born at all. Perhaps this is how my mom unconsciously held her two children in her **heart**.

I turned out **gay**, and **Rina** felt unwanted, as though she should have been **aborted**, but had to be allowed to live to fulfill my mother's promise to her mother and God.

My father didn't want any more children. He'd already been saddled with three, only two of which were his own. He **loved** his daughter, **Ilana**. And his first wife **loved** their son, **Henry**.

But our father felt obliged to give my mother what she wanted. He realized his two children from his first wife had been so **damaged** by the Nazis that there was no way he could ever retrieve them from their **nightmares**. What he could never admit was that he~ was irreparably **damaged**, himself~.

But when **Rina** was born, something happened in him. He was overcome with **joy**~ at her presence. It was a **miracle** of sorts. In my opinion, it was like the feeling **Sarah** had when she gave birth to **Isaac**. My father got to experience the feminine~ side of **Torah**.

Children who aren't wanted before they're born sense it for the rest of their **life**. And children who are deeply wanted feel that, too.

Children who go through the passage of adolescence to become sexually different from their parents and are rejected for that difference feel that **betrayal** for the rest of their **life**, too.

During the 1980's and 90's, the **religious right** played God and watched us **die** as they glorified His Mysterious Ways! We had to wait for **angels** in disguise to come to our rescue.

Now the **religious right** is praying for God To Give them complete control over women's bodies. They don't want women to be allowed to have sex outside marriage. They don't want women to have contraception. They don't want them to be able to get an **abortion**. And they don't want them to be able to divorce.

They want every straight man to be a **pharaoh** and every woman to be his **Israelite** slave. That's their **nightmare** for everyone in **America**. That's what they even want to use **America's** military might to achieve worldwide.

In order to realize that sick **fantasy/nightmare**, they'll have to **kill** everyone in the LGBT+ community. I assure you that must~ happen. They'll never be able to stand the thought of themselves being in conflict with God's Words so long as we~ live. They'll justify their actions just as the Nazis justified theirs~.

But we won't go gently into the **night** they're creating. We won't concede to literal interpretations of God's Words that don't include the incredible **length**, **width** and **depth** of His Plan.

What will they pray for next~?

God Knows they've lost every **fight** against modernity since the world began. How long are they going to play the martyr card while leaving a trail of victims in their wake? There's no reason in the world why anyone needs a **gun** unless they already~ have a plan to use it!

Surely the losses of the **hateful** won't end when they're **dead**. God Must Have a plan for the **insane**, as well.

I see the **political right** as spiritually constipated~. But that's the result of their insanity. They're holding something inside that they can't let go of. I find that psychologically interesting, albeit **frightening**.

That's something that I've already been through. I've had to learn how to let go from within.

I've heard that a lot of people have a bowel movement after they're **dead**. I suppose they can finally relax the muscles inside that have been tense all their **life** once they have no ability to hold on to anything inside~ any longer.

Although I've suffered from physical constipation all my **life**, I **hope** I'll be able to let myself go into God's Arms spiritually~ rather than have to **embarrass** myself physically~ when I'm **dead**.

I'd rather go through an **embarrassing** accident socially while I'm still alive~ than have to make a fool of myself once I'm **dead**~. Wouldn't you~?

Terry

I've turned the relationship between Deborah, Jennie and me into one that reveals Deborah's sibling rivalry. Here's an imaginary letter I've written to Terry about "our" relationship to Dale as though I were Carl, their brother.

Dear Terry,

As you can see, Deborah is blaming me again for a family dynamic that I didn't have any conscious choice in creating. Nor did you~.

What Milly and Hyme did to you and me was not our~ fault. Milly loved me. Hyme loved you. Neither of them loved Dale. But I don't have to tell you that we~ aren't to blame for that! That's just the parents the three of us were Given.

Dale should know by now she was an unwanted~ child. She should have been aborted~ when our parents found out they were pregnant and neither of them wanted a third~ child.

There was no way~ you and I could have made up for what our parents didn't give Dale. It was hard enough for you and me with what little they could give to the two of us in the way of a solid preparation for life. Our lives haven't been easy, either~.

We were only kids~ then. How could we~ have substituted as Dale's parents, especially with Milly and Hyme always behaving like crazy people. If they'd died suddenly, Dale would have gotten a second chance for parental love. We~ could have given her the loving attention she never got. But at the time, it was out of our hands.

It's not up to you and me to make sure that our little sister always feels beloved now. Dale should look at the truth in being unloved, whether she wants to, or not. She should let go of her enmity about being alive.

She may have a good relationship with you~, but she wants nothing to do with me~. And I don't know why that is.

I didn't break any of **The Ten Commandments**. Her issues with **me** are petty~, in my opinion.

I think she **demonizes**~ us because she's **envious**~ of us. She nods her **head** when people speak about a world where we're all brothers and sisters, but for her that only means that everyone will be a reflection of you~ and **me**~.

This is what happens when people feel **guilty** about having **abortions**. **Milly** and **Hyme** refused to do what was in their **heart** in order to do their duty to God. **Dale** is how teenagers turn out who feel unwanted from the day they're born.

Lesbians have the additional reputation of being called man-**haters**. But when **Dale** paints **me** into a corner, I'm **curious** to know if she can stop in just **hating me**~ or whether she **hates** all~ men for what she had to go through because of having had parents who couldn't **love** her?

Do you think she **hates me** for being straight~? Do you think she **hates me** for being a **Jew**~?

I suspect **Dale** doesn't just **hate** men who got all their mother's~ **love**. I think she **hates** everyone who got the parental **love** she missed out on.

Maybe God Creates the LGBT+ community for the world to look at itself in a vanity mirror, up close and personal. Maybe we can't see ourselves~ except through their~ eyes. Maybe that's why the LGBT+ are so **detested** worldwide.

I say, thank The Dear Lord for anything you were Given and make do without the rest! Nobody was Blessed with everything.

Love,
Carl

Dale

Here's an imaginary letter I've written to Dale as her distant cousin Barry and dear friend for 35 years.

Dear Dale,

I know it must hurt for me to call you by the name your parents gave you that you abandoned decades ago. But Milly and Hyme abandoned you, and now I think you've done the same to Deborah.

I don't think you behaved like the Deborah I know that infamous weekend. You behaved like Dale. And Dale unconsciously reacts to the worst aspects of Milly and Hyme having abandoned her.

I'm not going to sugarcoat your behavior. My thoughts on what's happened to our relationship are even worse~ than just what happened that weekend!

I saw you as a Nazi beating up a Jew. You demonized~ me. Your hatred of me in the moment exposed me to what my parents had been through and then put me~ through. I relived their trauma and my own because of you. That's how bad~ you made me feel!

My upbringing was shaped by five~ Holocaust survivors who were fighting constantly with one another! Every argument I hear today is a fight between a Nazi and a Jew. I don't have any other way of looking at things from my heart. But that's a blessing as well as a curse.

I know your ambush that weekend wasn't really about me. It was about the way you, Dale, needs to tell the world what you went through as a teenager when you left the innocence of childhood and had to face the complexity of adulthood all on your own.

You should take your behavior that weekend with me very~ seriously! After a childhood of emotional and spiritual neglect, you were pushed out into the world biologically, emotionally and spiritually to fend for yourself. You made

me your witness to that. That's what I took away from your behavior that weekend.

But you're 76 years old now, **Dale**~. It's time you learn how to parent your inner child and inner juvenile delinquent. It's time you and **Jennie** both learn to keep your problems to yourself. I'm not going to be a punching bag for the two of you anymore.

If you two would like **me** to help you with your marital problems, you only need to ask. It pains **me** to see how you argue with one another over issues of **love** that neither of you can resolve within yourself. You don't have to inflict your inner issues on each other~.

You, **Dale**, may not have chosen to **kill** the messenger [**Jennie**] when she delivered that message about **me** you didn't like. But you didn't question your messenger [your wife] for why she would bring such a painful message like that to you in the first place!

You simply melted like the wicked Witch of the West when **Jennie** poured water all over you. Well, I guess **Jennie**, like **Dorothy**, can say she didn't know what she was doing and what would happen to you.

Calling the two people you **love** the most in **life** hypocrites~ is not how adults~ behave, **Dale**! That's more like a vicious game between high school girlfriends~. You should be behaving more maturely~ than that by now!

I'm very **sorry** I told **Jennie** what I thought of you that I couched in the topic of **humor**. Clearly, If you'd asked her why she revealed something that personal about you, you would have learned something valuable about yourself. But you chose not to explore the topic with **interest**. You chose to denounce it with name-calling.

When your psyche gets overwhelmed with **enemies**, only you~ can come to your rescue, **Deborah**. Being **frightened** turns you back into **Dale**. Behaving like **Deborah**, the inner mother~ of **Dale**, would be the adult~ thing for you to do from here on out.

Most people need to love and appreciate their parents. But most people I find myself attracted to as friends need to turn down~ the voice of their mom and turn up~ the voice of their inner parents~ to control their inner adolescent~.

That's what I've~ done with my mom and dad. But I did it after both of them were dead, so I wouldn't be tempted to hurt their feelings while they were alive, especially when they got old and frail.

You and Milly took the opportunity to heal your relationship when she agreed to live under your roof in Healdsburg for a few years before her death. I'm sure you two worked out many of your issues peacefully before she chose to move back to L.A. to die.

But you haven't yet become the inner parents to Dale, Deborah. You still have more work to do.

I suggest you figuratively replace the voice of your Jewish mother with your own inner parents. Milly and Hyme need to go~. Carl got all of Milly's love and Terry got all of Hyme's. You only got occasional leftovers. That's~ your reality! Face it. Move on!

You can't just tell me to forgive you when you get out of sorts. You can't ruin a whole weekend by telling me you need time to compose yourself. The time to have composed yourself was before~ we came up with a phone call, not during our visit after we drove four hours to get there.

Your inner teenager is still a wild child, Deborah. Dale is still taking over your life from time to time, and you, like an untrained parent, don't have a clue how to handle her.

Your temper tantrums are unacceptable~. My dad had temper tantrums all the time. But he was a survivor of Dachau~. I won't allow~ you to treat me that way ever again~.

Your ambush of me shouldn't have happened, and it had better~ not happen again.

Let me assure~ you I have no desire to leave you because you're not funny~. I love~ you, but I don't find your mood

swings amusing. If you had a sense of humor, you could have laughed off my opinion of you. You only made my point for~ me.

You tried to embarrass, shame and humiliate me for something I said that you couldn't even address honestly and directly.

I've seen you getting more uptight with me for the last few years. What's up? Why are you behaving this way?

You have no idea how brutally my mom treated me. But she was a Holocaust survivor. I forgive her for how she needed to act out her trauma. But I don't think you'll ever be able to understand how hurt I felt when Rina stole my inheritance with Ilana's help~.

You may not know it, but Rina was molested when she was nine years old by one of our mom's boyfriends. He took Rina and me to the drive-in together when Mom had to work late as a secretary during tax season.

He suggested I sit alone in the front seat to give me more room. But I didn't know he took out his penis and forced her to touch it.

It was only the next morning when all hell~ broke loose when Rina told our mom, that I realized what had happened. I had to stay with Rina all day that day while Mom was at the police station. But I didn't know what to say or do for her!

Yes, I was her brother~. But I was only 11 years old at the time.

I think Rina still blames me for not having been there to protect her. The woman is now in her late sixties~!

I can see how she must have felt then, and I can feel for her even now. That's because what I've been through in life has left me with empathy for other people. What most people have to offer others is just sympathy. They offer a few words

of condolence and may even offer to pray for them, but that's about it.

Maybe most people had a mother who was only schooled in sympathy. Maybe they can show feelings for small animals and young children. But most women who become mothers can become really mean and nasty at times. Most of them aren't sufficiently experienced mothering their inner child and teenager to know how to mother a real~ child.

To learn empathy, you have to figuratively usurp your mom's throne and replace her power with your own. That's what it takes for a princess to become a queen. You should try it!

Your mother never needs to know that you're now sitting on your own~ throne, with your~ crown on your head and scepter in hand. Just honor [amuse] your deceased mother in your imagination. She doesn't need to know you've replaced her by becoming a parent to your inner teenager.

Your mom won't feel abandoned, betrayed and rejected. She's only alive and well in your heart. What you have to do in order to take over the job of parenting your inner teenager is none~ of her business wherever God Has her now.

This argument with you turned out to be my way of dealing with my older sister issues. Ilana may be older than me, but she has no more power over~ me.

That weekend I had to endure with you dealt with that sibling issue. I can now politely tell anyone who treats me disrespectfully that their behavior is unacceptable~ regardless of their age.

I didn't allow Ilana~ to treat me that way after she conspired with Rina to steal my inheritance. I walked out on her. I walked out on Rina. I walked out of Henry.

And if you ever~ do anything like that again to me, I'll walk out on you~, too. You'll lose me forever~.

I don't treat you like Ilana, an older sister. Our relationship is one of friends. I've been through my issues of

sibling rivalry with all three of my siblings. They're dead to me. I only need good friends in my life moving forward.

Will may serve as a brother in many ways to me, but not even that seems like a healthy idea anymore. We've all grown up. Let's parent our inner children and teenagers and give up on behaving like siblings to one another. That only causes rivalry. Let's just work on being each other's friends. That's the only way to make sure there's enough love to round.

My mom was terrified of men, but who could blame her? She couldn't even trust her parents who'd never revealed their religious backgrounds to her. Hitler brought that truth home to her.

I'm terrified of everyone, Jews and Christians, alike. I'm a Jew, but I see the potential for everyone to treat me like a Nazi. Because I feel this way so much of the time, I've found creative ways to get through my thoughts, feelings and beliefs so I can leave the world a better place for others.

But I'm not who you think I am, Deborah. I've helped myself considerably over the past 35 years. My relationship to me, myself and I has grown enormously. You don't know me. I'm not the me I used to be.

Now, I only want what I have. I want what I've hidden from me. I'm jealous of my body and envious of my spirit. They hold secrets that I wish to earn.

I wish the same for you.

But you ought to realize that I'm the kind of guy who wants to call Suicide Prevention every time I miss the bowl while peeing. You're the kind of gal who'd make a good mass murderer...

I know it may be difficult, if not impossible, for you to laugh at that joke. But if you could see yourself through my eyes, you'd see how funny that is. You're such a good person. You have so many wonderful qualities.

If you look at the reaction in your heart that you just had to what I just said, you'd know by the feeling you felt that you move more in the direction of striking out than striking in.

I can demonize you, too, Deborah. I have a heart with a hernia just like everyone else. My feelings are totally out of proportion at times, too. That's what it means to be juvenile when you're a senior citizen closer to death than you think. Our teenage years will never go away. The best we can do is parent ourself to the best of our ability.

Will

Will has no family, and so my gay family was a God-Sent to him. But now he's worried that he's going to lose our gay family, too. Here's the letter I would have liked to write to the most important man in my life:

Dear Will,

I'm not you, Bubbe. I didn't lose a lung when I was six years old. I didn't suffer a lifetime of asthma, allergies and sinus infections.

I lost my dad at the age you lost your lung. I gasped for air through most of my early childhood, too, but figuratively, not literally. And when you were out skiing in your twenties, I was locked up in looney bins.

I'm more like Diana Troy than an Eskimo like you who's living in an igloo on a tundra somewhere north of Fairbanks, AL. You've spent a lifetime dealing with your feelings by putting them on ice. You've lowered the temperature of your heart to minus 50 degrees. There are hurricane-force winds around you within you, but you're snug as a bug in a rug in that self-made igloo in your heart where the temperature is a balmy 10 degrees all year round.

It's only when you get close to the fire you've lit inside that you ever feel burned. But I can see the smoke wafting out of the top of your head. I know there's a fire burning inside you.

I'm an empath. I open myself to everyone in the hopes of experiencing greater intimacy.

But people become like a bad L.S.D. trip for me when I have to confront a part of myself I don't recognize during my intimacy with them. I freak out. I get frightened. I feel like a canary in a mine field. I feel like a Jew in Nazi Germany.

I wish I didn't have to live exposed to the emotional cold of the external world and ignorance of my world within. I wish I'd been given more than the lean-to I got from my **parents** to live in. They were wandering **Jews**. I guess I'm **lucky** I got the shelter I did.

I grew up in a jungle like an ancient **indigenist**. The dangers were all around **me**, as well as within. So, I huddled in that hut in my **heart** until I could use my education to better my inner circumstances. The only thing I ever wanted was to learn about myself – that and survive.

You dealt with your **life** differently. That's why we're partners. That's why we have a like~ affair in which opposites attract.

I like~ how you're solving the problems of your **life**. And apparently you find **me** **endearing**~ for the ways in which I'm dealing with mine.

We both have a **snarky** sense of **humor**, but we don't use it against each other when we're **upset**. We know how to ring the bell, stop **hitting** and go back to our corners. We know how to separate until we can get back in the ring using punch lines to make one another smile again.

That's how men behave who like~ one another. We don't **hit** each other below the belt because we both know how that feels. That's what separates **gay** men like us from **violent** straight men.

We **enjoy** touching, licking and kissing each other. When we screw, we do it with **passion**. We'd never want to screw each other over.

When we first met, you were my Roman boy, and I was the **Jew** who **loved** you. We were exploring the 1st Century A.D. in my imagination.

Even though I've learned so much about **Jesus** from your actions, there's no way I can simply forgive **Deborah** and **Jennie** and go back to the way things were before. But there's no way I'm going to arm wrestle two women, even if they're **lesbians**, and win that **fight** in the court of public opinion.

I don't want to hurt their feelings, even though they~ hurt mine. I just want them to know my truth because I believe my truth might soften them somewhat inside.

Because I've now got my emotions contained in an inner skyscraper separated by many stories, I have the ability to go from one floor to the next to look out on my circumstances from different heights and directions. I can see **reality** from these varying elevations and outlooks to determine the best means to get my spiritual needs met from all sides.

Naturally, it doesn't need to be said aloud that I'm not going to act on my feelings of **revenge** externally. But because my inner weather can be so~ extreme, I do have to go through a great deal of pain and **suffering** to build the next floor upon the uppermost ceiling of my inner abode to get a higher view. I have to **endure**~ **suffering** rather than cause more of it.

I believe~ in God. I believe **life** is a school, and He'S my **Teacher**. Because I care about how God Feels~ about **me**, I want to find a way to **please** Him without hurting myself~ or others.

But that will take time. That's why longevity~ is a reward, not a punishment~, unless you find yourself stuck in this school learning nothing~ about yourself for a **lifetime**.

Every day I **hope** to learn something new about myself that'll bring **me** more **hope**.

I revert to toddler all the time. I **demonize** others and have **hissy-fits**. But I keep them contained inside. My inner parents make sure of that.

To achieve that, I need to know what the lesson is for **me**~ in everything I go through. God Couldn't Be Putting **me** through all this just to help others~ out! At the bottom of every experience is always another character defect I need to face. I just can't see~ it before I can see~ it.

I'm not primitive or savage. But when people treat **me** in ways that are primitive and savage, I want to remind them that I'm not only a human being. I'm a **Jew**. I come from a people with a very long history with God as our **Teacher**.

And I'm a **gay**~ man who has a proud history, too. I understand how **gays** and **Jews** have been treated up until now, and I want to help the world learn to behave differently towards us.

That, of course, includes **lesbians** who come from a **Jewish** culture like **Deborah** and their spouses like **Jennie** who comes from a devout, **Christian**~ background.

Everyone~ is here to learn. And everyone is going to learn something about **life**, whether with carrots and/or sticks.

I may be in the generation that was born to **Holocaust** survivors. I may see every confrontation as between a **Nazi** and a **Jew**. And I know that your generation, **Will**, doesn't see it that way. But there must be a reason why God Created **me**~, too.

I don't think carrots would be good for **Deborah** or **Jennie**. But I don't think sticks would be helpful, either. That makes this challenge more about **tolerance** [**Hinduism**], **acceptance** [**Buddhism**] and **admiration** [**Taoism**] than about **wisdom** [**Judaism**], **love** [**Christianity**] and **loyalty** [**Islam**].

I feel like the **Israelis** with the **Arabs**. I feel like there's little possibility for **hope** at this time in our history unless everyone grows up.

I'm now **grieving** over the possible **death** of a 35-year relationship with my cousin. I need to prepare for a new and different relationship with everyone, including you, **Will**. I have to become more responsible for my~ wellbeing. I have to lean a little less on others and stand up for myself more from within.

When Lou died, Rina insisted that Lou be given a Jewish burial, even though he wasn't Jewish according to Jewish law. Not even my mom wanted that for him. But Rina insisted. Deep down inside, I think Rina had to turn him into a dead Jew, so she could turn Mom into the Nazi she planned to retaliate against in the future once she could get me out of the way as executor of their estate.

Rather than fight Rina and Ilana over family money matters, I decided to let them have the God-Almighty dollar~ the two of them are always in pursuit of. Money isn't something I'm willing to fight over, especially not with family~. There are more important issues than money~ in this world.

Rina and Ilana behaved like juvenile delinquents. So did Deborah, although Deborah is far too spiritually mature to fight over money. When she and Jennie broke up, Deborah made sure Jennie didn't walk away from their relationship feeling she'd been financially cheated.

I was taught to respect my elders, and Ilana is my elder. So is Deborah.

But that's one more adage I'm ready to throw out the window. Respect for people older than me has to be earned~. I'm not just going to give people who are older than me a pass for their age. I believe I've earned the right to come to that decision.

I admired you, Will, despite your tendency to get fed up with me for not being more like you. You sometimes ridicule, scorn and deride me for my wisdom. I don't really think that's fair.

My truth is that wisdom mixed with Hindu tolerance produces love. Wisdom mixed with Jewish wisdom produces love. Wisdom mixed with Buddhist acceptance produces love. Wisdom mixed with Taoist admiration produces love. Wisdom mixed with Christian love produces love. And wisdom mixed with Islamic loyalty produces love.

The whole world is indebted to others who bring messages from our Teacher that are very different from our own.

Yet it looks to me that everyone expects to die and receive a reward from God for excellent~ work exceedingly~ well done. I think that's unrealistic.

I think it would be better if we all admit that wisdom didn't exist until Moses earned it for Judaism. Love didn't exist until Jesus earned it for Christianity. And loyalty didn't exist until the Prophet Muhammad earned it for Islam.

We're all taking from one another without planning on giving back in like kind to our benefactors and admitting the source of our virtues. We all claim to tolerate, accept and admire others, when we haven't got a clue how that's even done. Enduring~ people isn't the same as learning~ from them.

Granted, the Israeli/Arab conflict requires money to perpetuate their hardline positions, while Deborah and I are financially independent from one another. She and I are in a position where we can afford to burn bridges monetarily. But no one can afford to burn bridges emotionally.

When Deborah and I went to Israel together in 2011, we went on that Christian tour that I'd planned on taking you on.

The night after we were at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Memorial Museum, Deborah got irritable. She started to treat me unkindly. But I asked her what was bothering her, and she admitted she was still upset about what she saw had happened to the Jews in the Second World War that day at the museum. We hugged and cried together. I was so relieved she wasn't upset with me.

The Israelis and the Muslims are not in a position in which either of them can afford to burn bridges emotionally. Removing the emotionality from their relationship is what's

perpetuating their problems. If they could work out their family of origin dynamics, they'd see that they originate with **Ishmael** and **Isaac** who only came together once in all of **Torah**, at **Abraham**'s funeral.

It's time the **Israelis** and **Arabs** use their own impending death to unite them as brothers. God Knows, **Ishmael** and **Isaac** had nothing to say to one another, neither about themselves nor about their father.

The wars in the Middle East aren't about us~ against them~. They're all about us~ against him~.

Healing the relationship between a **lesbian** and a **gay** man makes **me** feel hopeful that straight **Jews** and **Muslims** will be able to do the same. They're both so spiritual broke and in debt that it may be hard for them to admit they're emotionally bankrupt. But don't get **me** started when it comes to **Christians**!

I don't see a lot of mature behavior on any side. The only difference is in degrees. The **Arabs** are literally **killing** innocent **Jews**. The **Jews** are figuratively **torturing** innocent **Arabs**. And the **Christians** are busy selling both of them **guns**.

The **gun** problem in the United States is a **Christian**~ problem. The **gun** problem around the world is a **Christian**~ problem. Every man has an **AR-15** in his pants that he's excited about playing with like his boy-toy.

Every woman has a **pistol** in her pants that she fondles.

And they both have more than enough **ammunition** to keep the war of the world continuing.

If they think that **Jesus** approves of this and plans to reward them for their **love** of **guns**, they have no idea what it feels like to be crucified for your beliefs.

I like to be complimented, **Will**. You **hate** compliments. I know this about you. I know you **feel** infantilized when accolades are thrust upon you.

I want your **admiration**. But you often offer **snarky** jokes about my inability to express my **wisdom** in a way that reaches you.

When are you going to get serious about our~ relationship? When are you going to ask **me** to marry~ you?

When people offer **me** interest on my investment in them, I take it as a compliment. When you get such dividends, you see them as bribes.

When it comes to that awful weekend we spent with **Deborah** and **Jenny**, I have to commend myself for copying your~ behavior. You distanced yourself sufficiently from them to maintain a position of cool neutrality, even though I know your feelings for **me** run hot and cold.

I'm proud of **me** for giving myself the time to reposition **myself** from within. I needed to get out of my **heart** and into my **soul** that weekend. I still need to find ways to look at my relationships with everyone from a third place in inner space.

I compliment **me** for keeping you around... You're a great guy! I really like you. If you don't want to put a ring on it, that's fine, too. I'll **love** you always~.

Barry

Update

I call Maria every day, and I visit her once a week. We usually take a walk to the dog park a couple of blocks from the home. For the most part, I talk. She listens. But from her laughter and the intonation of her voice, I can easily tell if she agrees or disagrees with my ideas.

Last week, while we sat on a log waiting for dog walkers to come by with more dogs for us to pet, I told Maria that she was a nun who'd had many priests in her life. I asked her if she ever imagine ending up with a friend who's her own personal rabbi... I asked her how many nuns can claim to have achieved something like that!

Last year we used to joke about age. She was 96 and I was 69. We'd ask each other if we'd like to trade. Neither of us did.

This year, our conversations have been more about time and space. Everyone is Given a certain amount of time and space. And over time, everyone runs out of time. Only when you realize you're running out of time, do you also realize you're going to leave this place. You can't have space without time. The two of them come together and leave together. No one knows that better than someone in their nineties.

Will got a text from Jennie a week after the incident:

"I have been thinking about how last weekend turned out to be so difficult. As for me, I was way too ready to argue instead of listening with compassion and curiosity. I interrupted you at dinner and that's not ok. You and Barry are very important to me, and I love you guys. Please forgive my insensitive behavior. We are living in quite stressful times, and it is even more vital than ever to be kind and respectful with those we hold dear, which I was not doing in that moment! I truly am interested in knowing your opinions and perspectives. I am very sorry that I interrupted you. It

was rude and set a negative tone for what I had wanted to be a fun, relaxing weekend for all of us. Please forgive me. I really want to do better! ♡”

Will wrote back:

“Good morning, Jennie. There is nothing to forgive. You are right. Times are stressful, and it is difficult to stay positive at times. I love you guys too! You are pretty much the only family I consider family!”

I texted Will:

“Beautiful from both sides. You two are an inspiration to me. She’s partially right, or course. She does have a tendency to lecture. We all need to learn to listen with compassion and curiosity. But that’s not relevant to what happened that weekend. We can both forgive her for that character defect. But she’s missing the point, in my opinion. It was her cruelty to me that I want her to recognize. Your reply was perfect.”

I think Jennie’s apology to Will was absurd. She did nothing to hurt his feelings. She should have apologized to me, not him.

Although Jennie is prone to talk more than listen, so am I. I have to tell myself to be quiet when watching TV because my thoughts interrupt those speaking to me. I end up watching programs in a way that becomes so personal that I can’t relate my experience to anyone else’s.

Talking to myself when I should be listening to others is a self-defense mechanism. It’s a way of building a wall so no one can get to me. It’s my way of running away, just as my mom did during the war as a Jew trapped in Germany.

Now that I’ve learned to talk to myself, I’ve since had to learn to tell myself to shut up... All our Teacher’s Lessons Come right when they should.

I’d really like to know whether Jennie told Deborah about this text before or after she sent it. And I wonder

whether **Deborah** let **Jennie** fall on her sword before Will in the **hopes** that would quell my **anger** at **Deborah**.

Since I see **Deborah** as a conspiratorial [**calculating**] type, I wonder whether she's trying to get **me** to cave so we can just go back to the way things were before. That would leave **me** feeling like Americans today after the coop perpetrated by the Republicans on our democracy.

Will doesn't agree with **me**. He says that I'm the one who's seeing conspiracies in **Deborah**. I'm the one who sees her **calculating** how to respond before she acts. He thinks that's why she can't always control her reactions. He sees her as emotionally simple, in the sense of noncomplex. I see her as deeply **disturbed**.

Even if the complexity of her feelings lies in her unconscious, I saw her actions as hurtful. And I'd like to discuss her feelings, even if she can't access them in her conscious **mind** without prompting from **me**.

But what difference does all this really make? God Created the two of them. Let Him Deal with them! He Knows how To Lead everyone to his or her own rendition to a land of milk and honey. It's all a combination of carrots and sticks on this journey of ours. Everyone gets what they deserve in the end, even if that's not obvious along the way.

What I have to deal with are my~ feelings, not **Deborah** and **Jennie**'s. Whether they see things my way or not, it's my~ feelings of neglect and abandonment I have to face. It's my~ family of origin issues that dominate my curriculum in the school of **life**, not theirs.

Therefore, I need to detach from the outcome of the discussion we're going to have. I need to protect my reputation from **me**~, not them~. God Will Judge **me** for what I learn in **life** about myself~, not about others~.

I may believe in fate, but I also believe in **destiny**. So long as I~ do the best I can while **growing**, I have **high hopes** that this skirmish will work out well for us all.

I'm Too Old

A few months ago, Maria fell and broke her wrist. It happened on a Thursday, the day I visit her, so the home called to cancel my visit.

I quickly rushed into the kitchen, grabbed some cookies Will had baked the day before, and ran out the door to get to the hospital. When someone who's 96 years old is taken to the hospital, they usually leave with toe tag.

But Maria was only in there for a few hours, and then was brought home. I, on the other hand, was a hot mess all day...

And it's not because Maria might have died. It's because Maria was in pain. I'm very squeamish about pain. I'm not squeamish about death.

My squeamishness has a lot to do with guilt. I feel guilty about not having used my time wisely enough in life. Because I didn't understand the depth of Torah, I didn't understand that God Was beside me on my journey right from the start. I didn't realize what an important clue orgasm is to my understanding of the promise of eternity. Consequently, I didn't know how to fill my time meaningfully enough from within.

I'm too old to be anybody other than me anymore. I'm more authentic, at long last, than I ever was before. I'm not going to give up my authenticity to be the hypocrite I once was. When I was young, I didn't know that I was too good. I thought I wasn't good enough.

It's only now that I'm old and have been around me long enough to see the truth that I can admit that I've always been as good as I am. I've never suffered from not being good enough. I've always suffered from being too good. I've always gone overboard. And I've been severely punished for that, let me tell you!

Because I never had any grandparents, Maria has been an Opportunity from God to experience that kind of love.

But because of the overly strict upbringing I had, I'm also always two steps ahead of everyone else. I'm late if I'm only five minutes early. I'm going too slowly if I'm only way ahead of the pack. I tell myself I should be even further ahead by now.

I'm the baton twirler ahead of the boys in the band. I'm at the very front of the parade. I'm way ahead of the floats as the crowds watch the parade pass them by.

Thanks to being too good, I'm now ready to slow down, and I don't care if people think I'm just another old man who doesn't care that other people have somewhere to be on time.

I once had to be somewhere, too. And now that I realize I missed the present because I hit the pedal to the pedal in an attempt to make my way into the future long before it arrived, I've decided to slow down no matter what anyone behind me thinks.

I'm too old to worry about the fact that I hated working for a living. I didn't know how to be in my own company without always hating something about my life in those day. The truth is that I didn't know how to work with myself.

Now that I realize I'm going to have to be with me for the rest of my life, it's more important that I get down into whatever I hate, so I can fathom the meaning of being in my own company.

I love myself when I love myself, and I hate myself when I hate myself. Nothing I've ever told me has been more instructive than that.

People are always going to accuse you of something. They're always going to declare you're the cause of their suffering. They're always going to make you feel like a Jew, a queer or a cripple.

Because I'm all three, all I can tell them is, "It's not working. Find someone else to put down. I've been inoculated against your worst inner fears!"

I'm a neurotic who gets **upset** when the squirrels in my garden stop eating the peanuts I give them. I think they don't **love me** anymore. **Will** tells **me** it's because it's springtime, and they've got much more to choose from. That's the way my **mind** works verses his.

I don't **worry** as much about what I see on the 6:00 o'clock news! Theirs aren't my problems. They aren't going to end up **hating me** because of anything I do.

We have elections to vote representatives into office to deal with our nation's **grievances**. Therefore, I have to tell myself that the world's problems aren't my~ problems. Most people's problems don't land anywhere near mine.

Until Americans elect representatives who'll face **reality** without **religious** convictions that use God to conceal their **hatred** of themselves, our country won't be safe for children to go to school to learn, and nobody will be safe to use **life** as their~ school to learn. For **me**, nothing could be more obvious.

Sometimes I **cry** over what **I** see on the news. But I'm now old enough and **lucky** enough to have the problems a neurotic **suffers** over leftover peanuts squirrels don't finish.

I've upgraded my problems in **life** over many years. And all because I was too good to get stuck with the problems people who aren't good enough get stuck with.

I taught adolescents and young adults English for ten years. God Gave **me** the opportunity to go back to the scene of the "crime" when I discovered my~ body had changed and my~ inner world was not the same anymore. I got to relive my adolescent years as a **teacher**, not a parent. In doing so, I discovered the **mystery** and **magic** of **Genesis**. That wasn't something I was looking for. That was something God Chose to show **me**.

Don't till your garden, even though Voltaire told us to do so in Candide. I say hire someone to do it for~ you... Just feed the squirrels and the birds in your garden.

My garden looks so much better since Will did the landscaping. I just water our garden now. Become a St. Francis unto yourself. God Is Watching us all.

I wish my parents had told me I was too good. I had to discover that for myself. They probably didn't want the truth to go to my head. But frankly, it's always better to know the truth. When you know the truth, you can be more realistic.

Now that I know I'm too good, I can act accordingly. And that sometimes means letting people know that I don't have answers to their problems.

I only have answers for people who are as good as me, neurotics who are jealous of other people's bodies and envious of all their inner wealth. I don't know what to tell people who aren't good enough.

Be~ better so you can do~ better. What else~ can I say~?

Unstable People

Unstable people on the right think God Is Extremely Concerned about men putting their penis in a man's anus and women **killing** unborn babies. They see these as moral offences. They see **morality** through this dirty lens.

This is what they think God Cares about. They used to be consumed over **Church** teaching that the **Jews** had **killed** their God. Then they were consumed with the **Church's** teaching that Africans were less than human and therefore could be enslaved. Then the **Church** taught them that ending a pregnancy at the onset was **murder**. And now the **Church** wants them to end contraception and divorce.

Unstable **Muslims** want the **Jews** out of the Middle East and **Israel** **destroyed** at all costs. The **Muslims** who run the **Mosques** don't care about their people's standard of living. They don't care about the spiritual needs of the world. They just care that the **Jews** have no reason to **hope**.

It seems to **me** that all the **religious** institutions in the world need to ask themselves more difficult questions about what constitutes **sinful** behavior. If men get to have **guns** to **kill** anyone they like, it seems reasonable to **me** that women should be allowed to **kill** innocent, unborn babies.

And if the **Mosque** advocates that men and women have the right to strap **bombs** onto themselves to **kill** innocent bystanders in order to teach the **Jews** a lesson, even if **Muslims** have to **die** in the process, I wouldn't expect the **lessons** of anyone's **life** to get easier anytime soon.

If the right wants to use **guns** and **bombs** to interpret the **Bible** and **Quran**, the left will continue to use sex to reinterpret **Torah**. It seems only fair that everyone should do what s/he wants, and everyone then decides for him or herself whether s/he prefers **guns** and **ammunition** to penises and semen.

Deborah has no problem agreeing with **me** when it comes to criticizing **Judaism** and **Christianity**. But she'd never say a **bad** word about **Islam**. She'd agree with everything I said in this chapter about the **Church**. This window out onto the world is easy for her to peer through.

But when it comes to her own feelings about **Israel**, she's facing a rock wall. I don't think she can see how prejudiced, **hateful** and **mean**-spirited she is. We had to agree not even to talk about **Israel**. Isn't that a **sad** outcome for two **Jews**?

Life is a school for everyone, not just the people on the left or right. The people on the left have a lot to learn about themselves, even if their moral view of others is more in focus.

The people on the right have a lot more to learn about God. Their provincial, narrow-**minded**, **hateful** view of those who employ another name for God is a sign of how deeply damaged they are.

That's why I think this school is such a challenge for our **Teacher**. That's why **Israel** is **morally** important for us all. If we can't all feel **empathy** for the **Jews**, there's no **hope**. We're like one family. Our inner **dynamics** affect everyone.

If you haven't been taught to **love** yourself, you're going to **suffer** as deeply as those who haven't been taught to **love** others.

We've all been Given two worlds, the world within us and the world around us. And just because it's easy to see the mental, emotional and spiritual instability of the people on the opposite side of us doesn't mean that that instability doesn't exist for people on our side, as well.

Sometimes you see the external curriculum of people. And sometimes you see their internal curriculum. We all have The Same **Teacher** Teaching classes in both our worlds.

The world is a **mystery** because you can't know tomorrow's **lessons** today. The **Teacher** Has the discretion To Create tomorrow's curriculum Based on how the class is

performing this day. Tomorrow will be the result of what we all do now.

We have no control over time and space. We must move through both **morally** as best we can. Those who come to class prepared having done their homework from the day before will address the **lessons** of the new day in a way that others won't be able to do. They'll be able to make connections that others won't see. They'll be able to prepare for unexpected circumstances in ways others won't.

Until you know yourself, like yourself and **love** yourself, you aren't going to be able to know, like and **love** others as much as is needed. This is the message of **Jesus** the **Jew** reworded in a modern way. But it's always been the same message.

There is paradox in **life**. I learned some things as a child that I had to reject as an adult if I was going to grow up after I'd reached my full, physical height. Virtues don't **change** as you age. But other virtues do eclipse the ones that shined before.

You may need to reject what is now a vice that you once saw as a virtue. That may be a very painful lesson from The **Teacher**. But I assure you, that will vastly improve your grades.

There's no other way to become **soulful** other than to face paradoxes. That's what God Wants all of us to do, even if that includes the paradoxes about our~ virtues because we can't achieve all~ virtues.

God's Intentions Are much greater than Teaching us not to have anal sex with members of our own gender or avoid **abortions**.

It would be easy for straights to **enjoy** vaginal sex without needing~ **abortions** if sex education included figurative interpretation of **Genesis**, contraception, marriage equality and divorce, so straight people could **enjoy orgasms**

more responsibly. They're~ the ones who have to worry about not creating life, not us~.

And as for **Israel**, give it up guys! The **Jews** are here to stay. "Not in my backyard" is a lesson we all have to learn to live with, even the **Jews**.

Today, I called Maria and when I asked her how she was doing, she gave me the usual response. "I'm just sitting here doing nothing," she said.

And I said to her, "Maria, you've spent a **lifetime** helping other people. You were extremely sociable, as well. You even have **friends** who've been in your **life** for 30-40 years. Every person you met was a good book you studied like the **Good Book**. And from them, you learned secrets about God, **humanity** and yourself."

"You're not doing nothing~, Maria. You're now deeply engaged by yourself in being yourself with yourself. If you could teach people what you're doing these days, you could help the world enormously."

"You already know about God and others. Now you're discovering who you are in the sacred privacy of your own **mind**."

I ended my discussion by telling her that she and I are **lucky** because we didn't have any children. Children are just for practice. Once parents have raised their children, they get to work on shaping their inner child like **clay** in their hands. That's the master artist's occupation."

The Marketplace

I found a book agent a couple of years ago who lives in Tennessee. She told **me** I was a genius. She even gave **me** specific examples from my writing to prove her point. But she also told **me** that she wouldn't represent **me**. She said there's no place in the marketplace for one such as **me**.

She didn't say it as bluntly as that. What she said in essence was that the American people were addicted to pop culture, and if I don't produce books that fit into mainstream American mentality, she won't be able to sell what I write.

I know I'm just a tributary making my way back to the sea. I'll never be mainstream. This book is my 29th self-portrait. But all my books are portraits of **me**, really.

I didn't quite know how to take what she said. On the one hand, I was relieved that someone had, at last, called **me** a genius. I never **felt** it would be quite right for **me** to say it if someone else hadn't said it first...

On the other hand, I was **disappointed** she wasn't willing to promote my work. I got the impression that she'd given up on **changing** the world through storytelling. I think she may have chosen to just sit back **bitterly** and watch the world go down the drain.

When people can't have what they want they become **sour** [**angry**], **bitter** [**disappointed**] and sweet [artificial]. They don't bother to become salty [**wise**].

I couldn't very well plead with her to **change** her view of the world by taking **me** on as her client. I didn't want to look **desperate**.

I say all this because **Deborah** and **Jennie** are a match made in heaven that they insist on dragging to hell from time to time. They're made for one another, just in very unique, unseen ways. I'd call them Twiddle Dee and Twiddle Dumb if I wasn't so **damaged** myself.

I have to spend more time learning to see **me** as I am and **worry** less about being with others in order to wake them up

to how they “should” be. Surely, this occupation is a projection of something I ought to be doing for myself.

Instead of spending my time in public observing **me** watching the world go by, I spend it rushing around serving others’ interests as I perceive them in my own, twisted **mind**.

Then I come away from those observations and relationships feeling stuck because I can’t get anywhere inside myself. I feel unstuck~ when I can move about freely inside and stuck~ again when I can’t.

This feeling of being stuck and unstuck when around people isn’t new to **me**, but my acknowledgement of it in consciousness is.

I don’t want to relate to the sh-t inside **me** that’s making its way through **me**. The food inside **me** isn’t **me**. I want to relate to **life** as a spirit on a journey, not a piece of sh-t making its way through a tunnel with a **light** at the other end. I don’t want to always think about what’s going into my mouth and out of my ass. I don’t even want to think about what’s going around and around inside **me**.

I don’t want to spend my **life** racing toward my **death** with every little thing that gets in my way, keeping **me** from my eternal destination. I want to be here now~. I want to awaken.

I see myself as surrounded by teenagers. I see myself as the only adult in the room. I don’t really want to think I’m the only person who thinks he’s intelligent, sensitive and faithful. I don’t want to be the only one teaching. I want to share the classroom with other adult students who appreciate our One and Only **Teacher** among so many instructors, educators and coaches on our journey together with Him.

I wish I could have long chats with adults, but I always seem to run into teenagers who can’t carry a conversation. I know that if that’s true about them, it must also be true about **me**.

There are aspects of **life** such as art, cooking, interior decorating, music and sports that are going over my~ **head**.

It's time to realize that just because I'm not interested in something, that doesn't mean it isn't a part of God's Curriculum in this school.

I can only know what I know about myself. I can't know what I don't yet know about **me**. But I can~ observe the outcomes around **me** that are the result of what I know. Those outcomes reinforce what I know, and they awaken **me** to things I don't know about **me**.

If I want to grow and **change**, I have to see everything I see and do as a **mystery**. That's the only way to experience the **magic** of **life**. Just because the kids didn't want to pick **me** to be on their team at school growing up doesn't mean that sports is an **evil** occupation. My feelings are very subjective.

I'm not a hypocrite because I can't sell my books. I can't sell my books because people are addicted to formulaic outcomes that I can't get them past. They want every story to end when **Adam** gets **Eve** alone and naked, so they can vicariously enjoy the words emanating out of the **serpent's** mouth.

People don't dare go past traditional beginnings to describe the possibilities for spiritually~ **happy** endings rather than sexually~ **happy** endings. [**orgasms**] They don't dare care to strive for relationships with others that mirror their amazingly complex relationship within~ themselves.

My problem is that I'm always explaining everything about people's inner world to them. I don't listen when they tell **me** I'm offending them by treating them as simple, ignorant or emotionally colorblind.

What can I say?

I can't be a know-it-all at all~ times. I can't even be a feel-it-all. I need to experience new thoughts and feelings to promote new **lessons** from the **Teacher**.

I have a tendency to mansplain. But what else can I do? I have no other perspective to take. I am~ a man! That's what

men do~! That's why I need my **lesbian** cousins in my **life** to help **me** see myself from the perspective of a natural woman.

All my life I yearned to discover the feminine side of myself. **Deborah** and **Jennie** inspired **me** to do so. But instead of coming away behaving like a natural woman, I turned into a Karen~...

That said, I need to give myself credit for the enormous success I've had in **growing** up, so I can offer more of my **admiration** of **me** to myself, not others.

I don't see people as **admirable**. Surely that's because I don't yet see myself as **admirable**. Perhaps I'm **afraid** that once I'll be **admirable**, I won't have anything left to give to anyone.

Moses started **Torah** with the words, "**in the beginning**," which can be interpreted in Hebrew as "at the root of it all." That's ironic given that his first story is about a metaphoric tree.

The beginning of **Genesis** is really about the end of childhood. So, every beginning starts at the end of something else. And every ending ends with a new beginning.

If I can't actualize that much of the meaning in **The Old Testament**, I'm not going to get very far in using **The Gospels** or **Quran**. Our **Teacher** Isn't Giving each row of students separate **lessons** and tests in class. He'S Giving us all **lessons** that are based on everything He'S Taught us up until now.

Life is a school that everyone will **graduate** sooner or later. Just getting an A on a few tests on the topic of **love** doesn't make **me** a Ph.D. candidate on all aspects of **life**. **Love** without **wisdom** becomes a short story with a punchline. That's hardly novel material.

If I don't remind myself that God Gave **Torah** to **Moses** Tongue in Cheek, I'm missing His Message.

Torah begins with a boy's first wet dream. The story of **Sodom** and **Gomorrah** is the story of the importance of anal

sex and oral sex in addition to vaginal sex. And the death of the main character [Moses] is an attempt by the author [Moses] to get me to reflect on all beginnings, middles and ends.

The Jews were never wrong~ in denouncing Jesus as a man, not God. We need to perceive the humanity~ in everyone, not the perfection~ in people.

But the Jews weren't all right~, either. And the same can be said about the Christians and Muslims.

The Arrested Adolescent

Here's the email I sent to **Deborah** and **Jennie**.

Dear Deborah and Jennie,

I love you two and would rather avoid arguing over he said, she said and she said. I forgive you both. 'You make me feel like a natural woman...' [**Carol King**] But I'd like to talk about what's changed in our relationship over the years. And I'd like to have that conversation separately with each of you. Choose who'd like to go first and contact me to set up a time when we can be alone together.

Love,
Barry

I spoke to **Jennie** a few days later. We spoke for an hour and a half. We spoke from the **heart**. We spoke respectfully by honoring each other's feelings.

She apologized. I told her she needed to apologize to **Deborah**, as well. She also acknowledged that, and I think she'll find her own way of doing so. too. She told **me** she loves **me**. And I believe her. Our conversation was a piece of cake. It left **me** feeling sweet and satisfied inside.

I spoke to **Deborah** a couple of days later. We spent twice as long as I was on the phone with **Jennie**. We screamed at one another, but I yelled much louder.

I **cried** as well. I told her that I didn't give a damn~ about anyone in this world except my family. [My dad had once told **me** that's how he~ felt.]

I remember back to the time I was involuntarily committed to Believe Mental Hospital in New York when I was auditioning to get into American Ballet Theater and the Joffrey Ballet, and neither company wanted **me**. I was so

mad that I couldn't contain it any longer. They had to put me on a locked ward for almost two months!

The only time I felt I got any help from the staff there was one time when a Black administrator was coming out of the ward office, and I went up to her and pinched her on the ass.

She turned around with such fury, such a sense of malice and revenge that I could see it in her eyes. They were like daggers pointed straight at me. I could see my blood in her eyes. I could see red tears filled with betrayal and defiant indignation swelling in her eyes.

I don't remember exactly what she said, but I remember her words sounding like Mummy when she told me to wait until Daddy got home.

She helped me! She was real with me. She helped me see that people can let down their pretense and show a sick gay-Jew that he isn't going to be able to dance around his problems forever.

I wanted to help Deborah see that I didn't break the 9th Commandment, by bearing false witness against her [gossip]. I didn't break the 7th Commandment, either. It's not about sex outside marriage [adultery]. It's about breaking your word. I never broke my unstated promise to love Deborah. I still love her.

I felt the best way to show that to her was by getting hysterical in her presence at the thought of losing her. What else would get through to someone who's never felt wanted? And it worked!

I helped her see that she's surrounded with people who were severely damaged by their family of origin. And I helped her see that she was severely damaged by hers, too. She didn't admit that out loud. But the more hysterical I got, the calmer and more collected she responded.

I even told her that I thought her parents should have **aborted** her rather than torture her as they had. It felt like quite a risk saying that. But she just **glibly** replied, “I turned out pretty good under the circumstances.” I guess she does have some sort of sense of **humor** after all... Maybe it’s gallows humor. Maybe that’s what I have, too.

Neither **Deborah** nor **Jennie** broke any of **The Ten Commandments**. What happened between us is what happens when family matters don’t get talked out at a deep enough level of **love**.

Deborah had no idea I’m so **damaged** that any name I’m called in **anger** turns **me** into a **Jew** facing a Nazi.

I finally⁸ told her I get **frightened** when she gets **mad**, and she’s just going to have to **accept me** as I am. She admitted she had no idea I get so **traumatized** when she gets **upset**. We agreed there’s much more we need to communicate with one another when we talk.

About a month after my talk with **Deborah** and **Jennie**, they got a new puppy they named Shadow. Their previous dog, Pearl, is now so old that they knew they’d better have a replacement in place.

What they don’t realize is that Pearl was brought into their relationship at a time when **Deborah** was the top dog in their home life. Pearl turned into Deborah’s guard dog. She’d bark at anyone she perceived as a threat to **Deborah**, not **Jennie**.

Now Pearl is attacking Shadow. The green eye of envy isn’t restricted to human beings. Pearl senses she’s being replaced. The word for “dog” in Hebrew is “kelev.” It’s a contraction of “kmo haleve” which means “like the heart.”

Pearl is like a part of **Deborah**’s heart that’s been trained to mirror her feelings. Pearl is the secret part of **Deborah** that’s been entrusted with all **Deborah**’s unconscious feelings of rejection, abandonment and betrayal. And like a

loyal friend, Pearl protects **Deborah** from any and all perceived dangers.

That said, **Deborah** knows Pearl can't protect her from **Jennie**. So, when I got between her and **Jennie**, **Deborah** went into attack mode, just as Pearl does. **Deborah** revealed that she was envious of what we have. She felt it threatened what they have.

Now poor, little Shadow is having to decide where his loyalties will lie, with **Deborah** who has Pearl to do her attacking for her or with **Jennie** who now expresses strong feelings of her own. It's going to be interesting to see how this shadow comes to know their emotional dynamics given that the emotional realm of **Deborah** and **Jennie's** relationship has been partially exposed by me.

Whether you had a teddy bear, a dog or a skateboard to whom you revealed all your secrets as a child, you didn't give away your secrets. You just thought that some of your secrets were so important that you kept them a secret even from yourself.

The feelings of rejection, abandonment and betrayal were so great in childhood that we all had to find something to confess to how we were really feeling as a child. In other words, we practiced idol worship.

All children worship idols. It's part of the natural progression to God that abruptly changes at puberty when the flood of hormones drowns the child in new feelings for people. Only the **rainbow** in the darkness within us and the animal instinct in the hull of our ship are there to remind us that there is a God who remembers all our secrets, even those we never revealed to ourselves.

When **Rina** stole from **me**, I only felt like a **Jew** who'd had all his possessions stolen from him by the Nazis. But when **Deborah** ignored **me** when I was a guest in her home, it felt like she stole my reputation out from under **me**, not my money. That was much worse!

When I used to unconsciously give my reputation to others to hold for~ me, I kept getting **frightened**. I'll never let anyone hold my reputation for~ **me** ever again. It must always be in my~ hands.

That illustrated how important **The Ten Commandments** are and how they become increasingly more complex the more I obey them with personal regard.

The fate of **Israel** lay in the balance the day I reconciled with **Deborah**.

The **Jews** haven't stolen anything out from under the **Arabs**. If you accuse us of breaking any of **The Ten Commandments**, you'd better have your ducks in a row. The same God Who'S Watching over you Is Watching over us.

I'm not an **arrested** adolescent anymore. Even though psychiatric medications **arrested** my ability to **change**, **transform** and **transcend** who I was, I still didn't have a clue who I could~ become after I got off them. I only knew I didn't have any reason to try to **kill** myself any longer. I finally had good enough external reasons to plod on, even if I was still prone to self-cruelty.

I yearned to discover good internal~ reasons to live, as well. To do that, I had to find my own language, so I could communicate with myself. Just speaking English fluently because it's my mother tongue didn't make it my mother tongue.

My mother tongue is body~ language. I unconsciously went into ballet to rediscover the intimacy I'd lost with my body. Maybe if someone had told **me** that about dance right from the start, I could have learned more about myself when I was a young man striving to solve the **mystery** of **life** through dance and classical music.

After that, I should have faced the fact that I'm a hoarder. I don't hoard things~. I hoard feelings~. It's as though I've wanted to give all my feelings to God when I **die**. I didn't

want anyone to have to suffer feeling my feelings for~ **me** or with~ **me**.

I'm like **Maria**. I kept all my animals onboard my **ark**. I wouldn't let them off one-by-one or two-by-two. I insisted on thinking I was all alone in feeling as I did. I now know that I'm not alone in feeling the way I feel.

Although I'm now fluent in expressing myself through improvisational dance, that's not all the self-expression I'm capable of.

I'm now more devoted to words~ than I am to body~ language. I could live without my arms and legs. I could never~ live without my vocabulary.

After having watched **Lou** go through Alzheimer's and my mom go through dementia, I now realize it must have been **terrifying** for them to lose their ability to communicate. I **hope** that never happens to **me**. I feel I was imprisoned in my **mind** long enough for having tried to **kill** myself. I never want to go back to that cell.

I need to talk to myself most of the time because I need to communicate with **me** in order to grow. I can't live without my relationship to **me**. **Growing** is paramount to my being, and feeling is paramount to **growing**.

Therefore, language is my fertilizer, water and sunlight. Without my relationship to myself, I'll **die** long before I'm **dead**. I'll turn into a **dead tree of knowledge** before I'm felled.

An Even More Supreme Court

The Supreme Court is often described as being made up mostly of White men. Now it has four women on it.

It's also talked about in ethno-religious terms. It has a Latinx woman; a Jewish woman; a Catholic woman; and now a Black woman. That's how the Supreme Court is described, but it's only described in these ethno-religious and gender terms.

In total, there have been 116 Supreme Court justices. Six of them have been female. Eight have been Jewish. Three have been Black. Sixteen have been Catholic, although one of them converted to Catholicism after his tenure in the court. Two were Latinx, although one of them was a Portuguese Sephardic Jew. All the rest have been White, male Protestants.

In my opinion, the Supreme Court is really just a Christian Court. Almost everyone on the Supreme Court is Christian. The Jewish exceptions to the rule don't change the rule in my eyes. The Supreme Court is just a Christian court that's serving all of us their final Christian word.

If it weren't a Christian court, it would be set up with a Hindu, Jew, Buddhist, Taoist, Christian and Muslim judge, as well as a judge from our Native-American population. It would have a gay, lesbian or trans. judge. And it would have a Republican judge to represent the "traditional" values of our founding fathers in their day. The world needs to see the Republican Party values in contrast to those of the civilized world.

As I see it, that would be a court that would represent America past-present-and-future, as well as the highest court in the world. What we have now is just a Christian court that I watch arguing over how many angels will fit on the head of a pin.

When the world looks back on **America** in the 21st Century, they're going to call it The "Modern" Middle Ages. They're going to wonder how people during our time in His Story could have been so ignorant of themselves, **humanity** and **life** generally, to say nothing of their ignorant relationship to God.

What we call **freedom** of speech in this country is hardly free because it doesn't include world views that have been in place for thousands of years everywhere on Earth. What we're used to in this country is a very narrow view of free speech.

God Gave us seven traditions, but the Supreme Court of the United States of **America** doesn't reflect our population or our history in becoming more humane. It doesn't reflect our diverse cultural and ethnic wealth. And it doesn't reflect our sexual diversity. It's not a team of judges. It's a **hood**.

Thankfully, there is a court in **America** that's more supreme than the Supreme Court, and that's the court of public opinion. People are getting **wiser**, more **loving** and more **loyal** to the American dream as well as their faith in themselves and God. Therefore, the American people expect our court system to be constantly **growing**.

Why would you expect the Supreme Court not to be derailed by an issue as utterly ridiculous as **abortion**? **Abortion** is **murder**. But it's a level of **killing** that's so **intimate**, personal and minute that couples who create unwanted babies should only have to face their Maker~ over having broken the 6th **Commandment** in this way.

Believe **me**, God Can Handle this matter without our help. What's next? Are we going to prosecute people for stepping on ants?

God doesn't need the Supreme Court, the Congress or the states to weigh in on **abortion**. Even though a fetus is a very underdeveloped human being, not a bug, our regard for human beings must begin from within ourselves. People aren't

jailed for falling off ladders, breaking bones or walking into walls. Accidents happen.

Once we begin our exploration of **humanity** with ourself, the **creation** of new **life** becomes an exploration of the meaning of our own **life**. This isn't something that can be legislated. States are already considering prosecuting women for **murder** for having an **abortion**. You just know that **Judaism** and homosexuality are the capital offences they're aiming for down the road.

Those **Republicans** with overly developed consciences ought to put their idea of **evil** on the scale in their **soul** to weigh their opinion of themselves as a **murderer** for acts of neglect, abandonment and **betrayal** of the American dream! When you make your God your only cause, you make **Naziism** your cause.

The right to own **guns** should be debated through a roll call vote at the start of every session of the Senate until the entire **Republican Party** feels **guilty** about every one of their political platforms. They weren't sent to Washington to serve God. They were sent to serve us. They're unwise, unloving and disloyal to our country because they're all those things to themselves.

Shooting a gun at a human being and **destroying** the **life** of a potential, unborn baby are acts of **anger**, **fury** and **rage**. But it's not until viewed from the **heart** that we can determine the usefulness of both outcomes.

Sometimes adults need to be **shot** and **killed**. Sometimes unborn babies need the same. Deal with it. You've got A God in your **life**. Manage your **guilt** with Him or get out of public office.

If your God Tells you that **abortion** is **murder**, then don't have one. But keep your **Christian** nose out of my **Jewish** crotch!

Breaking Down Doors

The problem never was that I was the kind of guy who broke down doors, **upset** norms or forced myself on others. Quite the opposite. I was more the kind of guy who held onto doorknobs to keep doors from being opened from the other side.

I participated in norms by forcing~ myself on **me**. I shut myself out of internal opportunities by just being a part of the status quo. And I paid for that with a **life** filled with **sorrow**, **regret**, **grief** and **madness**.

Despite the fact that my dream of becoming a world-famous ballet dancer was dashed; despite severe mental illness; drug and alcohol addiction; three **suicide** attempts; a 14-year relationship that went down the toilet – I can now tell you unequivocally that God Has Opened doors for **me**.

He Knows who I am and how I operate. When I deserve an open door, He Opens it like a gentleman for a lady. God Makes **me** feel like a natural woman. And that feels wonderful!

I was born male thanks to the physical contribution from my father [a Y chromosome].

But I never learned the difference between masculinity and femininity from either of my **parents**. My dad was a coward, and my mom was a hero. She held **me** like a father because she had to survive in a man's world.

When I discovered I was **gay**, I thought I yearned for the dad I was missing. What I really was yearning for were two inner parents to replace both my **parents**. That freed **me** to express myself authentically in bed with men. That freed **me** to express myself authentically with everyone.

Once I see an opportunity to go somewhere that I've never been to before, I'm no fool. I get the hell out of where I was and **enjoy** the **freedom** of having moved on to a better place.

I'm an **Adam** and **Eve** all rolled into one. I'm the personification of the **Creation** Story, a **tree of knowledge** with a **serpent** [boy-**toy**] in it. The **fruits** of my labors aren't literal. They're figurative. I'm the personification of poetry in emotion.

I sometimes have to be Made to fall asleep to what I'm doing here, so God Can Exchange the woman in my **heart**. To do that He Has To Figuratively Remove a rib in my chest, so I'm a little less able to stand tall on my own emotionally and a little more dependent on all others and Him. This creates intimacy with the experience of **life**.

That's a **curious** way for our **Teacher** To **Instruct** each pupil. But that's the way it is if you're poetic and **soulful** enough to interpret **Moses**. What he was describing is called **reality**, not the alternate reality advanced by religious people.

The **Jews** were Given the **Diaspora** to open doors for others. That **changed** the course of the Western World.

I have an inner **diaspora**. God Opens doors within **me** like He Opened nations to my ancestors. And I'm eager to take advantage of every opportunity Given.

My **life** **changes** incrementally day-by-day. I can now watch as doors open in my **heart** for **me**. I can even watch myself go through them. And I can talk about what the world looks like from the other side, which I call my **soul**.

The world isn't like it used to be when I was young, not because the world has **changed**, but because I've **changed**. The fact that I see the world differently than I did before is because I've gone through open doors into new rooms inside~ myself. I'm looking out of new windows onto the world that give **me** perspectives I didn't have before.

This is why I write about the things I see inside. I add color to everything I do around **me** because of these **changes** within. I don't just use black words typed onto the white canvas of electronic pages. I say things in my books that

have never~ been said before. I'm new. I'm different. I'm colorful. And every day I become newer and more unique.

I'm not~ vain. And I'm not **frustrated**. I'm not even as **impatient** as I once was.

But that means that I now have to look at the vanity, **frustration** and **impatience** of those around **me** and relate it to who and how I was before.

I'm **growing**. I'm **changing**. And I'm using the opportunities God Is Giving **me** to make myself more at home here, so far away from Home.

I certainly wouldn't want to stay here forever. God~ no! But I do want to continue to use **life** as a school while I'm here. I do want to learn. And if most students around **me** and elsewhere don't want to learn, so be it.

Let them live locked up where they are inside, suffering as they do. I'm sure God Will Teach them things about **life** in due course that I already know. Or He Won't. It's none of my business. I vote responsibly and I pay my taxes honestly. What more do I have to do?

I know **jealousy** and **envy** will eventually force some men to tear down more Twin Towers. They can't stop themselves from getting into trouble. They yearn to be punished for their **covetous** nature. They strive to lose. They can't wait to **die** to tell God how they suffered to take His Words to **heart**. But I can~ wait. I'm in no hurry to **graduate** this school.

I suggest you take scientific words literally and **religious** words figuratively. If you do only that, you'll be amazed to see what a fool you're making of yourself some of the time.

You can't have anyone's else's power. You can't become **Pharaoh** and make others you **Israelites** for more than a brief moment in time. Eventually, you're going to have to settle with the power you've~ been Given. So, if our **Teacher** Should Choose to **plague** you with harsh **lessons** to

expand your knowledge of yourself, do your best to get through them with dignity. You're no **Jesus**. You're not God.

Do The Right Thing

What I felt **Deborah** did was bait, beguile, coax, draw entice, entrap, inveigle, lure, mislead, persuade, seduce, sucker and tempt **me** into coming up to Ft. Bragg to visit them. I didn't see that as an invitation~. I saw that as an ambush~. At least that's how it came across to my inner teenager who knows about such things from personal experience passed down to **me** by my **parents** and **siblings** who were **Holocaust** survivors. That's how my **heart** has been trained to feel.

Granted, she probably didn't give it a second thought until she felt triggered by **Jennie** and **me** in the moment. And then all hell broke loose. But tell that to my **heart**~!

My parents didn't teach **me** to trust~ people. They taught **me** to distrust~ people. Unfortunately, they inadvertently taught **me** to distrust them~, as well.

I was taught to look for the worst possible interpretation of everyone's intentions. That's what got **me** locked up in **insane** asylums.

As my 35-year-long relationship to **Deborah** has been falling apart, I've gone back to the basics I learned as a child to make my way across the **rainbow** of adolescence yet again. I've become suspicious~ of her.

Everyone I spoke to after the incident told **me** to forgive her. They gave **me** good reasons to do so, including the fact that she's family; that she had a rough **life**; that although she may not have a sense of **humor**, she has many other qualities that are valuable to One and all.

What they didn't focus on is that **Deborah** threw **me** out of her house without using the words, "Get out!" She finagled **me** into coming up for a visit [whether consciously or unconsciously] so she could make **me** feel unwanted and abandoned – feelings she feels about herself~ but can't face. If she could~ face them, she'd never make anyone feel that awful~. She projected those feelings onto **me**, and then

punished **me** so she could secretly observe how I dealt with them.

My parents did the same~ to **me**~. They made **me** feel equally unwanted under their roof so they could show **me** what every **Jew** in Europe had felt from the unfiltered point of view of **Holocaust** survivors.

I was in an experiment when I was a child. I was in the audience of a theatre production. I wasn't a member of a family.

I behaved like an adult when **Deborah** showed **me** the door. But what was I supposed to do when I was just a child, and my **parents** put **me** through the same thing **Deborah** had put **me** through?

Granted, **Deborah** didn't literally throw **me** out of her house. That would have ended her game of emotional cat-and-mouse. Just before we left that Sunday morning, she told **me** I should forgive her because when she gets **upset**, it takes her a long time to get out of her moods.

She got **upset**~, alright! But I think what she was really **upset** about was that her parents hadn't **aborted**~ her! They made her feel unwanted all her **life**. And she wanted to find a way to let **me** know that, so I'd equate it with what she thought I did to her.

It didn't fly.

Doing the right thing is something that everyone advocates others~ do, but **I** question how many **angels** in disguise there really are~ out there. **I** question how many people truly forgive~, forget~ and move on~.

It's my impression that "good" adolescents do~ try to forgive, forget and move on. But many of them can only move on by bringing a **gun** to school to make their classmates pay for them having done the right thing by their parents by forgiving and forgetting the depth of their parents' lousy parenting~ skills – while taking out their **rage** for their feelings of abandonment on their innocent classmates~!

The mother of the 18-year-old kid who **killed** 21 people in Uvalde, Texas said her son didn't have **violent** tendencies. And I'm sure that's true. I'm sure he honored her by not showing those **tendencies** to his family members – that is until he **shot** his grandmother in the face and then made 19 innocent children and two adults pay for him having had to grow up without any spiritual training on what **life** is all about!

I'm not just talking about him~ or teenagers generally~. They're only a mirror~ of adult society. I'm talking about something that all children of God have to deal with.

Think long and hard about what you're doing to yourself if you don't move through your unconscious **hatred** of your parents and the way they shaped you with neglect~, abandonment~ and betrayal. We all know how you feel.

Your parents~ don't have to know about how you feel about them. But if you~ don't know, you'll try to **love others**~ and then dishonor your own reputation~ before God~. And that's only going to make the world a much more **dangerous**~ place for us all.

Don't Do The Right Thing

Instead of doing the right thing by **loving** your parents, I suggest you feel all your feelings, instead. If you want to develop a sense of **humor** that's **snarky** enough to create a wall high enough to protect you from the **evil** of all others, you're going to have to feel more of the breadth of your feelings, and you're going to have to feel your feelings more deeply.

A pastel **rainbow** isn't going to do you much good in **life**. Your **rainbow** is going to have to become jewel-toned. You're going to have to become filled with **passion**. If not, you'll **die** long before you're **dead**.

That's the only way to avoid getting imprisoned for **murder** like all those poor kids [of all ages] who didn't behave better because they couldn't feel a sense of **passion** about their reputation and wellbeing.

So many people make it their cause to **hate** someone. It doesn't matter if that someone is a **Jew**, **gay**, Black, Democrat or a woman who doesn't want to be pregnant. The people they really want to **hate** but don't have the guts to **hate** are their mother and father for having brought them into this world and then not given them the tools to make their **life hopeful**. Deep down inside they feel their parents ruined them for **life**. And there isn't a crime worse than that if you still feel like a child or a teenager.

It's better to **kill** the **evil** toddlers and children in your **mind** or play **violent** video game that give you the opportunity to **kill** adults than it is to **kill** people literally.

Being authentic requires keeping some of your thoughts and feelings to yourself, and only allowing a portion of them out through word and gesture.

Being authentic requires creating inner parents for your inner children. And, believe me, you've probably got more than one. You've probably compartmentalized many of the **traumas** you've been through.

Becoming authentic may feel very artificial at first. But if you persevere, authenticity will begin to feel natural over time. To know **reality**, you have to get real with yourself.

You don't need a **gun** in your pocket or a penis between your legs to feel authentic. You don't need both and you don't need to reject them both.

Learn to be realistic and sensitive to your feelings, and you'll discover your own secret to becoming authentically you~ in a way that makes this world better for all of us.

Deepening your feelings will involve spending a lot more time at the top of the **rainbow** [red] than society would like, but there really isn't any other choice if you want to find **hope** in having been Created with a **heart**. Use your sense of humor to deflect your **anger**.

Remember that **anger** is the feeling closest to the heavens and therefore to God. Therefore, it's the most righteous. So, keep your **anger** close to God, not to the rest of us. The **promise** of **hope** is all you've got when **push** comes to **shove**.

You're going to **die**, and on your **death**bed, you're probably going to be Given a final exam based on the sense of **humor** you've developed over a **lifetime**. If you don't ace that test with self-deprecating jokes that will amuse The **Teacher** and yourself alike, I wouldn't expect to get the eternal "piece" you're **hoping** for. God **Loves** the class clowns who can laugh at themselves.

But God Never~ Forgives! Instead, He Gives us reasons to laugh our way through **life**. If we don't find our predicaments, abnormal, eccentric, funny, idiosyncratic, incongruous, odd, offbeat, peculiar, queer, unconventional, unorthodox and weird, we're going to have to increase our definition of the word "funny".

Don't lose your sense of **humor**, unless you truly believe that becoming a 20th Century **lesbian** with **Jewish** inclinations is your **destiny**...

I do what I do to become who I am. I like teaching others to avoid doing what didn't work for **me** in my past. But from my students I am taught.

I started out in **life** by yearning to become a ballet dancer who could take flight using classical music as my wings. But I didn't have the height. I didn't have the bodily strength. And I didn't have the communicative skills needed to participate cooperatively in the social arts.

I was especially lacking when it came to the sense of **humor** needed to laugh at myself for wanting something that was totally unattainable for someone like **me**. When I couldn't have what I wanted, I went **crazy** and had to be locked up.

I **embarrassed** myself in polite society, before family and among **friends** by going **nuts**. When I think back today to what I put myself and others through, I'm still **embarrassed** by my efforts as a young man to be someone I was not by insisting on attaining something I could never achieve.

Fortunately, I'm slowly moving through that **embarrassment** to become more modest of my body, even though I now need a helping hand or a firm object to get up from a kneeling position...

I'm also moving through my **shame** at how poorly I misjudged my talents and abilities then. Now I'm becoming humbled for everything I arrogantly once thought would define my idea of success in **life**.

I'm a **gay-Jewish teacher of love** who's learning from my **lesbian** cousins and **Catholic** boyfriend. They're indirectly teaching **me** how to **love** myself.

Jennie isn't the only one who needs to listen more and talk less. She's not the only one who needs to recognize she can back-stab people at times. **Deborah** isn't alone in using name-calling to back-stab another way. That said, I **love** the two of them.

When I think of how God Has Guided **me** by Teaching **me** who I really am and what I can really do to help myself get through this world just by becoming more enlightened, I find myself in an **indigo awe** and **violet ecstasy** of delight at how my **heart** has been **Transformed** and my **soul** has been **Transcended** with His Help.

I don't have to justify, explain or apologize for my feelings or beliefs. I only have to justify, explain and apologize for my actions~. Therefore, it makes far more sense for **me** to thoroughly explore my feelings and beliefs before taking any action at all. And talking~ is an action~.

Needless to say, we all have to take action sooner or later about the smallest of challenges brought to us by The **Teacher**. The relationship between our container and contents demands that of us. Just getting up out of bed in the morning is now something I see as an act of faith~.

The external world is not all we have to contend with. We all have an internal world that requires us to face our feelings and beliefs about ourself with righteous intention. That's what develops our conscience and slowly ripens it like **forbidden fruit** into a **soul**. All that requires is self-**love**.

I'm the sort of person who doesn't behave too **badly** overall. But I feel **bad** easily and often over the littlest of things. I can now say that I'm proud~ of that. I just don't let it ruin my sense of **humor**.

For **me**, **happiness** comes fleetingly for a moment once or twice a day. But that's enough to remind **me** of how devoted I am to learn how to be **happy**. After a **lifetime** of telling myself I'm **crazy**, I can now say that I'm really quite normal~. But nobody helped **me** become normal. I had to do it all on my own. It's been an inside job.

Me, Myself and I

Here's an imaginary letter I've written to the three most important people in my life: **me**, **myself** and **I**. It's taken **me** a **lifetime** to make the acquaintance of all three of them.

Until that happened, **I** felt more like the **Three Stooges**, [who were also **Jewish**]. I was a slapstick, comedy routine for others. But for **me**, **myself** and **I**, it was a very painful act. But that was my shtick at the time. I can't **change** that now.

Dear **Barry**,

I'm still **desperately** alone inside. **I** need good company all day long, and all **I**'ve got is the three of you... **I** guess **I**'ll just have to make do...

I now know **I**'m too~ good, too~ kind and too~ nice... **I**'ve been this way all my **life**. But now, at long last, **I** know that's normal~ and not the exception to the rule.

I can't **kill** another human being except in my **mind**. And because **I**'m a human being, too, **I** can't go back to trying to **kill myself**. **I love~ me**.

My imagination is now very well developed, even though that has cost **me** much of my **mind**... **I** can make do with having lost my **head** now that **I**'ve found my **heart** and **soul**. This has given **me** the faith in **myself** **I** always needed.

I've already imagined **killing** all of my family members and **friends**. **I** should also admit that in my **mind**, **I**'ve also seriously wounded all my current **loved** ones...

But because **I** literally tried to **kill myself** three times, **I** have no desire to act out the nightmares **I** create in my imagination anymore. **I**'m just going to live with **me**, **myself** and **I** as we are.

Thanks to the way my **life** has turned out, **I** often feel that **I**'ve got no one left to turn to except God. **I** can now say that **I**'m a personification~ of faith in Him, even though **I** don't rely on any one proper noun for God.

I'm a modern, true believer. It's easy for **me** to see that **Jesus** was a **rabbi** who reached a level of God consciousness that no **Jew**, including **Moses**, had ever previously attained.

It's easy for **me** to see that with the help of **Moses** and **Jesus**, the **Prophet Muhammad** reached an even greater spiritual height than **Jesus**, a little over 600 years later.

The **Christians** had better get used to having **Jews** around them who aren't the personification of perfection. They can believe **Jesus** was the perfect **Jew**, but they can't force the rest of us to live up to their imaginary standards. It would be hard for anyone to be a perfect **Jew** if he was **gay** and the child of **Holocaust** survivors. Let them~ try it and see how it feels...

The **Muslims** had better get used to having **Jews** around them, too. **Jews** are like **Isaac**. **Isaac**'s mother, **Sarah**, loved him. **Muslims** are like **Ishmael**. **Ishmael**'s mother, **Hagar**, loved him. But God **Loved** both children.

Abram had problems with both his wife, **Sarah**, and his girlfriend, **Hagar**, concerning **Ishmael**. And **Abraham** imagined he had a problem with God because of **Isaac**.

God Changed **Abram**'s name to **Abraham**, but that didn't change his nature, any more than **Dale** is a different person from **Deborah** or **Ilana** is any more authentic than **Elaine**. **Abraham** still had to live with the fact that he'd abandoned **Ishmael** and tried to **kill Isaac**.

Names don't change a thing. You can pour lousy coffee into a glass, a mug or a cup, but that doesn't make what goes down your throat any less **bitter**.

It's easy for **me** to see that to be a modern believer in God, the world has to embrace all the evidence of the **miracle** of **reality**. What use is there in living on a round planet if we don't bother to go past our own horizons to discover what God Has Created elsewhere on Earth?

What use is the internet, telephones, airplanes and TV if we don't use these tools to discover the tools God Has Given us within~ ourself to improve ourself?

Deborah is still a wild teenager in some ways. She's defiant. She's a dropout from the school of **life**. She refuses to **believe** in The **Teacher** or trust any of His Instructors when it comes to understanding her nature. She thinks she's too good to take **life**'s tests in anticipation of **graduation**.

If that's what the grades look like for a **Jewish-lesbian** Democrat, that doesn't say much about the class curve...

Jennie is a class clown. She only wants to interrupt every **teacher** who comes into her life so she can show the rest of the class what a smart-ass she can be. She wants to make everyone laugh with her and against those who think they know more than her. She's the perfect study-partner for a defiant pupil like **Deborah**.

Will just wants to seduce his **teacher**. He's the kind of student any horny **teacher** would like to have in class... **I** still **enjoy** dreaming about getting in his pants after 12 years together. We're such juvenile delinquents in bed enjoying our boy-toys together! But in other rooms in our house, we try to behave like adults. Is that too much to ask others~ to do, too?

Will is like someone with really bad eyesight. If you'd try putting on his glasses, you won't see the world through his eyes. You only see something that forces you to cringe and make **strange** faces. Nobody can see what he sees. He's an enigma. He keeps his virtues and vices under lock and key. But believe **me**, he's no **angel**!

Being with the three of them can be very trying, albeit for very different reasons. **I** try to tell them stories with spiritual meaning, but they won't listen. They distract **me** or they distract themselves, so they don't have to pay attention.

This is why **I**'m an author and not an artist. If **I** had to paint a realistic portrait of them, it would have to include scars~ and open wounds~.

I couldn't express **myself** thoroughly enough through ballet, although **I** developed an impressive and expressive vocabulary in body language for dance. But there are no steps **I** can take to help people see themselves as in a vehicle on a journey. They have to take those~ steps themselves.

My idea of a self-portrait uses shaving foam and a razor in the morning... After that, the day becomes my opus. My feelings become my paints and the world becomes my canvas.

My idea now of becoming a world-famous dancer/choreographer is by walking across the street in a pedestrian crosswalk as the drivers in the cars glare to try to make **me** walk faster...

If **I**'d been **Moses**, **I**'d have spent a lot more time in my autobiography talking about how **I**'m carving **myself** like clay, and less time on how other~ people should shape up.

Love,

Emanuel

[Love is my middle name.]

Where Are You?

In the story of **Adam and Eve**, after eating the **forbidden fruit** that **Eve** picked, the two of them hear God stomping through the **Garden of Eden** and decide to run away from Him. God Catches up with **Adam** and asks him, “Where are you?”

First of all, God Doesn’t Need To Stomp around to **scare** us or Walk softly to comfort us. If He Chooses To Make His Presence Known, you’ll know it in your **heart**. You won’t need your ears to inform you. **Moses** simply didn’t have another way of saying that at the time.

Secondly, when God Asked **Adam** where he was, it wasn’t because He Didn’t Know where he’d been. What God Was Asking was where **Adam** was in relation~ to Him.

We all know when God Is Approaching us by the feelings He Leaves us with. Usually that feeling is **fear**, and then people run away literally~, or figuratively into denial~.

The purpose of denial is to avoid **fear**. In our effort to avoid this negative and **upsetting** feeling, we circumvent our **fears** altogether by coming to conclusions about **reality** that we can embrace intellectually without having to admit we’re here to face from the **heart**.

Logic comes from the **head**. Rationality comes from the **heart**. When mothers are screaming over their children being attacked by a mass **murderer**, they’re behaving logically and rationally.

When people tell us that **guns** don’t **kill** people, people **kill** people, they’re not being logical or rational. They’re almost as **insane** as the mass **murderer**. They should expect to do very poorly on their final exam.

Sometimes people choose to defy their **fear** of God or denial of Him by becoming **angry** and **frustrated** instead. **Fight** or **flight**? How many people do you know who choose to employ **courage** instead?

Sometimes people experience the feeling of **guilt** as well as **fear**. But whether they feel **fear**, **guilt** or denial, they can usually acknowledge that something inside them has **changed** even if they haven't put their experience into words.

Sometimes you look at a sunset or a child at play, and you know that God Has Approached you because of the feelings of **mystery** and **magic** that ensue.

So, God Approaches man through his **head**, **heart** and/or **soul**. What transpires in his **head** is like a reflection of what transpires in his **heart**. What transpires in his **heart** is like an echo of what transpires in his **soul**.

If you don't look at **Jews**, **Christians** and **Muslims** as the personification of these parts of yourself, you're going to miss God's Teaching Moments. You're going to do **badly** on your tests, which is going to affect your grades, which is going to look **bad** on your transcript.

Where is **Deborah** in relation to **me**? **I**'m not God, but **I** can use **Torah** to ascertain the meaning of **incidents** and accidents alike.

What has she run away from?

What's happened to her and my relationship to her as the result of neither one of us having been willing to open a discussion about how our relationship has **changed**?

When God Asked **Adam** who told him he was naked, **Adam** **exploded** in **anger**, because he was in denial of how he'd learned that truth by eating **forbidden fruit**. He was **ashamed** of having moved past childhood into adolescence.

After God Asked **Eve** what she'd done, she simply confessed the obvious – the **serpent** had beguiled her. How had the **forbidden fruit** affected **Eve** differently from how it had affected **Adam**?

What God Didn't Do after that Was Ask the **serpent** what part it had played. Since **it** could talk, you'd think God Would Have Wanted To Get all three sides of the story...

This is how we know the **Creation** Story is a metaphor. We know every man's penis talks, just not literally. But we also know that **Jews** are still arguing among themselves over whether to take **Torah** literally or figuratively.

"Nude" is what you are without your clothes on. "Naked" is what you're like when you're emotionally exposed and transparent to others. **Adam** knew he was nude~. **Eve** knew she was naked~. They covered themselves with fig leaves, but for different reasons. Until God Asked **Adam** who told him he was nude he didn't realize how physically~ exposed he was before his Creator. Until He Asked **Eve** what she'd done, she didn't realize how emotionally~ exposed she was before Him.

Deborah was emotionally naked~ to One and all that awful weekend. So, it's going to be interesting to see if she can address her behavior with modesty, humility and **grace** in the future, given that she doesn't believe in God and doesn't even like to talk about moral matters through a spiritual lens.

What difference should that make to **me**? Her grades won't be going on my report card. **I**'m not her tutor. **I**'m not The **Teacher** or even His T.A. So, **I**'m not privy to all her grades in His Roll Book. If not for the fact that **I** love her, there really wouldn't be anything here for **me** to discuss.

I'm doing so only because **I** watch the world go about its business despite how neglected, rejected, dejected, **angry** and alone **I** feel. My inner adolescent asks over and over again, "How dare they?"

I **admire** my inner son's emotional stance, but realize my **parents** felt the same way after the **Holocaust**. Nobody was interested in what they had to say or how they felt. And now look at the world.

There is a God. There is a spiritual operating system
Given us To Teach us how to operate ourself from the inside
out. But nobody seems to want to listen to **me**.

So, **I**'ll just honor my **parents**, whether or not **I** sell any
of my books.

Good for **Israel**

It's not good when **Jews** fight with **Jews**. In the ancient past, our **enemies** were so focused and strong that we had to be much more united than today. That doesn't seem to be the case anymore.

The **Israelis** can hardly keep a coalition in government for more than ten minutes anymore. Tel Aviv is now as far away from Jerusalem as the Earth is from the moon.

Now that the **Jerusalem** Pride Parade is under **threat** of **violence** from the Orthodox-**Jews** each year, you know that **gays** and **lesbians** the world over need to shiver in our boots. We're not safe anywhere if these **maniacs** are this out of control.

Many **Jews** say that the American-**Jews** have forgotten who they are. Some **Christians** say that all the **Jews** were much more **humorous** when we were oppressed. They say today's **Jews** have lost their sense of **humor** as the result of having won the war on anti-**Semitism**.

If it's wrong to **hate** Blacks, **Latinx** and **Asians**, you can't make an exception by **hating** **Jews** without being called a hypocrite. That's especially true for **Muslims**, although most of them don't yet know it.

Once people no longer **hate** you for the God-Given way you were Made, your jokes about the color of their skin, their belief system or with whom and how they like to have sex flies out the window unless you become **mean** and **nasty**. Many choose to become **cynical**, **sarcastic** and obsessive to counter those with a **bad** sense of **humor**, or none at all.

The rift **I** had with **Deborah** isn't going to just go away with a simple "forgive, but don't forget." Just move on. It must be looked at as a rift that begins within **aam** **Israel** [the **soul** of **Israel**]. The three of us don't just have differences of

opinions. This is a male/female issue at the deepest level of our core beliefs.

If a **gay-Jew** feels that a **lesbian-Jew** has hurt him, what does that say about the relationship between straight male and female **Jews**? What does that say about the relationship between all men and women?

Would sharing a book like this with **Deborah** and **Jennie** make things better or worse? **I** have no idea. That's a question only they can answer.

I'm sure my upcoming interpretation of **Ecclesiastes** will be 180 degrees opposite of most peoples'. Most people see pessimism and **hopelessness** everywhere because they have little or no sense of **humor**. They see nothing new under the sun.

I see just the opposite. **I** see my very **creation** as the most modern and innovative invention God Has Ever Embarked upon. **I**'m filled with **promise** in the **miracle** of **life**.

By comparison, **Deborah** and **Jennie** are colorblind as well as shortsighted. So are my **siblings**. They're all banished from a part of their **hearts** in particular ways. They're wandering aimlessly inside themselves without concern for their **soul**.

Should all men take out our **grievances** against all women or just against **lesbian-Jews** and **lesbian-Christians**?

There are many **Christian** and **Muslim** men who'd say yes, even though **I**'m a **gay-Jew**.

But these men will always **worry** about turning their back on a man like **me** because of what they think **I**'d do to them from behind. That would **damn** them to eternal hell...

Now that's funny!

Like Strangers

Songwriter:
Dave Davies

Like strangers,
that's what we are.
Darling how can **lovers** pull apart so far?
Like strangers,
how can it be?
Only days ago, we **loved** so tenderly.
I **love** you, truly **I** do.
And **I** **hope** deep in your **heart** you **love** **me** too.
Let's forget that we've been **angry**.
Let's be **lovers** like before.
And try not to be like strangers, anymore
Let's forget that we've been **angry**,
Let's be **lovers** like before,
and swear not to be like strangers, anymore.

Waterloo

Sung by Abba
[which means “Father/father” in Hebrew]
Lyrics by
Benny Goran Bror Andersson et. al.

My, my, at **Waterloo**, **Napoleon** did surrender.
Oh, yeah.
And **I** have met my **destiny** in quite a similar way.
The His Story book on the shelf
is always repeating itself.
Waterloo!
I was defeated; You Won the war.
Waterloo!
Promise to **love** You forever more.
Waterloo!
Couldn't escape if **I** wanted to.
Waterloo!
Knowing my **fate** is to be with You.
Wa-Wa-Wa-Wa **Waterloo!**
Finally facing my **Waterloo**.
My, my, **I** tried to hold You back, but You Were stronger.
Oh, yeah.
And now it seems my only **chance** is giving up the **fight**.
And how could **I** ever refuse.
I **feel** like **I** win when **I** lose.
Waterloo!
I was defeated; You Won the war.
Waterloo!
Promise to **love** you forever more.
Waterloo!
Couldn't escape if **I** wanted to.

Ecclesiastes

Why Does God Let us get into situations that cause suffering? What's the difference between pain and suffering? Why Does He Use sticks to teach us? And why are carrots intended to help us help ourself?

Emotional suffering forces us to look for answers within. Physical pain forces us to look for answers outside ourself. Both are sticks God Uses To Teach us.

Carrots are Given to motivate us to teach ourself as well as one another. Just being Gifted by God doesn't teach us how to gift one another.

Moses may have described his characters' personality disorders using names God Changed for him. But I don't have that luxury. If I were to change my name, I'd know something smelled inside me to high heaven.

When I examine my thoughts, I find there's only an "I" and a "you," a first-person singular [I] and second-person singular [you] relationship within me with myself. The first-person plural [we] created by my mind when referring to myself is always a denial of the serpent in my tree or, for a woman, the worm in her apple.

My denial accounts for the tension between the literal and the figurative use of words internally which has consequences in my life externally.

All third-person relationships [he/she/they] in my mind about myself are confounding and unhealthy. The only healthy way for me to deal with these concepts is through creative writing. Dance doesn't address this. Neither do the arts of painting, music and sculpture. I tried them all.

All the arts produce beauty. Literature is the only art that produces the language needed to achieve prayer in the conventional sense of the word. That's why God Gave us scriptures and not idols to communicate with Him.

There is the equivalent of two people inside me who are in a conversation with one another other, the "I" in me and

the “you” in me. The “we” in me always includes my penis [boy-toy] because that’s the part of my anatomy that can figuratively talk, although it can’t literally speak. Such is my mind’s understanding of lust, an experience of life I only achieved in adolescence.

My mind avoids third-party discourse [he/she/they] with myself by creating stories I tell myself in my imagination about others. Looking closely at my stories [fantasies, dreams and nightmares] can lead to paranoia [fear of myself] unless I realize that my mind has no other way of reflecting on myself to actualize self-improvement except through thinking. The words and pictures I create in my mind have to be interpreted. Without interpretation, you become a puppet on a string.

The Jews strive for a wise relationship with themselves and others. The Christians strive for a loving relationship with themselves and others. And the Muslims strive for a loyal relationship within themselves with God and others.

But unless we learn from one another how to be wise, loving and loyal, we’re not going to progress as a species. We’ll destroy ourselves.

Knowing how the mind works is paramount to becoming your own best friend.

The I/Thou relationship Martin Buber spoke about must be broached through the I/thou relationship with ourselves. If we don’t begin by learning how to talk to ourselves [I/thou], our conversations [prayers] with God [I/Thou] will be fraught with vice and vanity. This is why praying in color is so important in developing a healthy imagination.

Ecclesiastes proclaims “**Vanity of vanities! All is futile!**” [1:2]

The Hebrew word **hevel**, “vapor”, can figuratively mean insubstantial, vain, futile, or meaningless.

The next verse in the first chapter of **Ecclesiastes** presents the basic existential question with which the rest of

the book is concerned: What profit does a man have for all his toil? The lives of both wise and foolish people all end in death. [internet]

While **Ecclesiastes** endorses wisdom as a means for a well-lived earthly life, the author is unable to ascribe eternal meaning to it.

In light of this perceived senselessness, he suggests that human beings should enjoy the simple pleasures of daily living, such as eating, drinking, and taking enjoyment in one's work, which are gifts from The Hand of God. [internet]

The book concludes with the injunction to "**Fear God and keep His Commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. For God Will Bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.**" [12:13-14] [internet]

We're near the end of this book I've written as a conscious examination of wisdom of the heart. But it's been an interpretation of my life viewed through my mind, as well as my emotional realm and belief system. It's been about wisdom as well as wisdom of the heart. I've even included the wisdom of Hinduism [tolerance]; wisdom of Buddhism [acceptance]; wisdom of Taoism [admiration]; and wisdom of Islam [loyalty] in with my revelations about myself.

But for me, this only makes **The Book of Ecclesiastes** the greatest error in **The Old Testament** after the initial error in the misinterpretation of the main metaphor of **creation** by Moses as a literal story.

I chose to explore **Ecclesiastes** through name-calling and bullying because I wanted to show you how insufficient all of **Torah** is with argumentation once you've found answers to the meaning of life through love.

But I also want to show the brilliance of **Torah**, and by extension all of **Tanach**, when combined with all the other operating systems Created by God.

Daily living, including the simple pleasures of life, such as eating, drinking and working, don't produce nearly enough love of life because most people can't regulate the feelings that accompany these actions. At least that's my opinion of most people.

People overeat, or they eat foods that are unhealthy. They drink to excess, whether that includes soft drinks or alcohol. And they often either hate their job or are so addicted to work that they find no meaning to life other than through how they make money.

It's only when you weigh the thoughts in your head against the feelings in your heart that you find a balance in your soul that makes the pleasures of life both satisfying and meaningful.

I say all this to myself. I'm speaking to me. I'm speaking from the I to the you in me and putting it down on paper for my readers to interpret any way they like. I want my readers to experience my self-intimacy first-hand.

Naturally, **Tanach** is going to come to no useful conclusions about how to operate the entire human operating system. Learning the first step in a three-step process isn't going to get any complex job done well.

Tanach was Created by God to be used in conjunction with The Gospels and The Quran in the Western world, although these two other spiritual steps came much later.

The man who lives in his head is going to know little about how to handle his heart. The man who lives in his heart is going to make huge mistakes when it comes to using his knowledge in conjunction with the beliefs he holds sacred in his soul. And the man who lives in his soul, without knowledge of the operating principles of his head and heart is going to remain backward, obstinate and dangerous.

It isn't rocket science to conclude that One God Gave us all of the world's scriptures because all of them have now

become so obviously necessary in order to modernize man's contents in conjunction with his human container.

We've advanced as a species to the degree that we should be proud of who we are, but very humbled by who we could yet become.

Those who are the most comforted, peaceful and useful to humanity are those whose skills include the operating principles of all six world faiths and the philosophy of Buddhism. Those who've achieved this awareness through other means have just as much to offer as the rest of us, as well as to learn from the rest of us.

What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun. [1:9]

So long as a man lives in his head, he's not going to witness anything new around him because he can see nothing changing, transforming and being transcended from within himself.

The mind can only move from one thought to another. Thoughts have no ability to move through feelings and beliefs. The mind can only calculate whether its feelings and beliefs are moving him in a righteous direction.

Feelings transform a person's outlook on life. When you experience new feelings, you're transformed. And new beliefs help us transcend who we were before.

Without changing our mind, transforming our heart and transcending the beliefs in our soul with higher beliefs, the magic of life disappears. Boredom and mundanity ensue. That's when idle hands become the devil's workshop.

For with much wisdom comes much sorrow; the more knowledge, the more grief. [1:18]

This quote associates matters of the mind to certain matters of the heart. [sorrow and grief]. It flatters the reader into thinking that because he's sorrowful or full of grief from losses in his life, he's therefore wise and knowledgeable.

The opposite is probably true. Those whom God Has Had to punish with enormous pain and suffering have probably been the worst students of life who've been the most contrary, willful and stubborn. [At least I can say that's true about me.]

But how many of us have become humbled enough by our pain and suffering to pursue peace with all others, beginning from within with ourself?

Knowledge of the external world only accomplishes a greater understanding of science, which gives our body more physical comforts. Inner comfort can't be achieved with knowledge alone. Therefore, we should pursue knowledge with the goal in mind of achieving wisdom of the heart.

I saw that wisdom is better than folly, just as light is better than darkness. But I came to realize that the same fate overtakes them both. [2:13-14]

The man who dies happy is far better off than the man who dies unhappy. If life is a school, then happiness, as elusive as it is, is a great reward worth pursuing. Nobody in his right mind would choose to give up his happiness just because we're all going to die.

The value of life doesn't lie in survival. The value of life lies in living life and achieving happiness. Those who are so oppressed by society, suppressed by their family, repressed by themselves and then end up depressed about everything around them – are going to lose interest in seeking happiness. They're going to feel that happiness is unattainable.

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:

**a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance.**

a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace. [3:1-9]

Life is an experience of time and space. Time is measured externally because the sense of time from an internal perspective becomes so subjective that it quickly becomes meaningless.

There are times to do things externally that are intrinsically in opposition to one another. This isn't paradoxical. This is simply a fact of life.

We must be interrupted to cause impatience. And then we must be interrupted to overcome impatience. Learning to change in myriad, useful ways in the moment is the secret to doing anything well.

The more you use your time productively externally and internally, the more poetically meaningful this scriptural passage becomes. It goes beyond the realm of truth. It enters the realm of beauty.

God Will Bring into judgment both the righteous and the wicked, for there will be a time for every activity, a time to judge every deed. [3:17]

Sadly, only those who believe in God believe that there will be an accounting of the actions of every human being. And out of their religious beliefs, many believe that their means will be justified by their intended ends. They don't believe they'll be harshly judged for their actions because they're emotionally colorblind.

So, it's really up to every individual to determine the level of moral accountability s/he anticipates having to deal with by his or her end.

Since gays and Jews don't generally consider the ways in which we treat ourselves as relevant to our moral accountability before God, we don't easily associate all actions in the world around us as emanating out of actions from within.

Therefore, we often feel inferior or superior and then consider ourselves expendable, which causes us to get depressed.

We see ourselves as a victim or martyr to external circumstances more than as a victim to our own self-cruelty.

Thank God I'm also a member of the disabled community. We have much more awareness of how cruel we can be to ourselves when we compare and contrast ourselves to others.

But gays and Jews are really no different from other human beings. Our operating system is identical to others' even if our individual behaviors are unique and probably appear to be a bit queer.

The more we can all see ourselves as occasionally cruel in the way we treat ourselves, the more our existential purpose will hold greater meaning. We'll come to feel that we're a necessary part of this world.

A good name is better than fine perfume, and the day of death better than the day of birth. [7:1]

In the sense that a person believes that life is a school, birth corresponds to the day of enrollment and death corresponds to the day of graduation.

Graduation becomes more and more meaningful the more you've learned. Everyone who goes to this school to learn about himself hopes to graduate with honors. Everyone who goes to school to conquer, control and impose his beliefs on others will graduate forlorn and confused because all his rewards will lie behind him. Material conquests can't be taken with you when you leave.

For those whose transcript is strong, their graduation becomes a nostalgic, bittersweet event where classmates get

together to celebrate their years of hard work in anticipation of new and exciting adventures to come in Paradise, Heaven or whatever they choose to imagine will come next.

For those whose transcript is weak, graduation is a frightening event because the student who's graduating isn't prepared for meeting and shaking hands with his Teacher. This is why the killing of the innocent is perceived as such a tragedy for mourners.

Death, like graduation from varying levels of schooling, means something different to everyone, depending on how they lived and loved. An untimely death is investigated as a crime or an accident. A timely death is perceived as a Blessing or a Curse.

The more love you've gleaned from life, the more at peace you'll be on your deathbed. The more guilt you have hanging over your head, the more of a struggle you may anticipate having to go through when taking your final exam. Most people are afraid of pain, not death.

What really matters the most is your relationship with yourself. If you've produced an intimate, strong bond with yourself, you'll have the strength to help yourself throughout your life, regardless of what you may have to go through in the external world with all of us watching.

It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, for death is the destiny of everyone; the living should take this to heart. [7:2]

Death is a topic most people chose to avoid. They don't want to be involved in the killing of the meat they eat, and they don't want to be involved in the preparation for death of their loved ones. They get squeamish just talking about such subjects.

Taking death to heart begins with accepting your own mortality. The more you can accept your own death as a Given, the more you'll be able to accept all aspects of reality.

Do not be over-righteous, neither be overwise – why destroy yourself? [7:16]

Righteousness begins in the darkness within. It's a light in the dark that illuminates us to our inner reality. It's an awareness of our guilty in only being able to express some of all God's Virtues.

When you're so illuminated inside that you can see no shadows, no guilt, no room for your own imperfections – you destroy yourself with flawlessness. You become humorless.

Nobody personifies flawlessness better than gay men and Orthodox Jews...

It's much wiser to laugh at your imperfections than to deny them. This is why I said earlier that your final exam in the school of life ought to be anticipated as being based on your sense of humor. Start practicing laughing at yourself now. Don't wait until it's too late.

A person's wisdom brightens their face and changes its hard appearance. [8:1]

It's not the wisdom that comes from knowledge of the world that will brighten your face. It's the wisdom of your own heart that comes from intimacy with yourself that will brighten it.

We all need to develop a hard, outer appearance so we can protect ourself from the disregard and neglect of others. But we can soften that appearance with eulogies to ourself rather than sarcasm of others.

People are dying to be dead and reticent to remain alive. Watch them racing toward death. Nothing could be more amusing. Where do they have to be other than here, now?

There is something else meaningless that occurs on Earth: the righteous who get what the wicked deserve, and the wicked who get what the righteous deserve. This too, I say, is meaningless. [8:14]

I see this as utter nonsense. All that I have, I deserve; the good, the bad and the ugly. And the same holds true for others. They deserve their carrots and their sticks, and you do, too. If you'd like to see others get more sticks and fewer carrots, I recommend you work harder for more carrots by

helping them become better people. God Has a way of finding equilibrium if you're patient enough to watch and wait for it.

The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favor to the learned; but time and chance happen to them all.

[9:11]

I agree that no one can control time. No one can control chance. These are two forces that effect everyone that no one can anticipate or influence.

But I argue just the opposite for the rest of this passage. The race is to the swift and the battle to the strong. Food comes to the wise and wealth to the brilliant. Favor comes to the learned. And the consequences of how we've use our time and the second chances we've been Given affect us all.

This is why it's so important to achieve emotional intelligence. In my opinion, most "luck" is the result of E.Q., not I.Q.

As you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed in a mother's womb, so you cannot understand The Work of God, The Maker of all things.

[11:5]

This may have been true 2,000 years ago, but it's not true today. The path of the wind is plotted every night on the weather portion of the news. And how a baby's body is formed in its mother's womb has been documented in myriad ways.

Therefore, understanding The Work of God is much easier than it was thousands of years ago. Man has progressed. Like a student in a school, a man's relationship to his classes is augmented by his relationship to his teacher.

Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep His Commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil. [12:13-14]

The Ten Commandments aren't just five Commandments for how we should treat God and five about how we should treat others. They can also be interpreted as five Commandments on how to treat our inner parents and five on how to treat our inner adolescent.

This personalizes **The Ten Commandments**. This turns us into our own guinea pig. If we can't test our theories on how to treat God and man on ourself, we certainly aren't going to achieve personal knowledge about all our unspoken beliefs.

1. **I Am The Lord, thy God, Who Took you out of Egypt.**

I Am your inner parents' Parent. I Guide you away from your parents. And I Will Continue To Guide you toward faith in yourself.

2. **Thou shall have no other gods before Me.**

Don't listen to others without consulting the Me inside you. Don't get overwhelmed by external pressures and then act like everyone else. I Am always with you by your side.

3. **You shall not take The Lord's Name in vain.**

Don't be overly pleased with yourself. You have inner parents who know how juvenile you can be. If you don't get overly pleased with yourself, you won't become vulnerable to Me and others.

4. **Keep the Sabbath holy.**

There are seven days of the week. Choose one to rest and take a deep breath. You're often out of breath. Choose a day to heal your relationship between your inner parents and inner teenager. If you can find peace from within, you can spread peace throughout.

5. **Honor your father and mother.**

You can't honor your first two tutors in the school of life if you can't replace them with inner parents and then learn to honor them.

6. **Don't kill**
Don't kill yourself in an attempt to give yourself what you ask yourself for. Nothing is worth that much pain, suffering or self-cruelty. If you can resist those temptations in the external world that aren't good for you, you'll be far better off.
7. **Don't commit adultery.**
Adultery is a promise you make between your inner parents and inner juvenile that means more than any other promise you make to others. Keep that bond within you, and you'll find all your relationships to Me and others will fit more easily into place.
8. **Don't steal.**
When you try to kill yourself [#6], you hurt yourself. When you break your promise to yourself [#7], you punish yourself. And when you steal from yourself [#8], you ruin your reputation in your own eyes. Don't give yourself reasons to distrust yourself through any of your actions. Nothing is worth losing your good name in your own eyes.
9. **Don't bear false witness.**
When you only bear other people rather than learn from them, you lie to yourself and move into denial. Denial turns outer reality into a dangerous place because then you can't see the world for how it actually is. Tell yourself the truth, even if that means suffering uncomfortable feelings. Make the exodus out of your head into your heart so you can struggle with your feelings to plummet the depth of the family of origin dynamics you've been subjected to. "Israel" means "to struggle with Me." Become a modern Jew. You don't have to convert to Judaism to do so. Anyone who isn't totally emotionally colorblind can do it.

10. **Don't covet**

Don't try to protect what you've got around your body by denying the riches inside it. The power of those inner riches [virtues] will become available to you as you face your character defects. It's a process.

I feel like I'm back in El Sereno Junior High School in East L.A. on my first teaching job when I was in my thirties. I feel like I'm surrounded by Mexican, immigrant kids who walk the streets of L.A. kissing the ground beneath their feet like my father did as he walked the streets of New York City while enjoying his freedom.

I see White Americans like the kids I taught at Comstock Junior High School in Santa Rosa who walk the streets of America today like Orthodox-Jews in Israel. They look like they're congratulating themselves as though they're already in heaven.

But they don't see the trail of dirty footprints they're leaving on clouds. They don't see that Israel and America are places to practice **freedom**, not autonomy. They don't see democracy as scripture codified into law for all.

If you want to learn about loyalty to God, read The Quran as poetry, not fact. If you'd rather read about my interpretation of loyalty to God, read my 7-volume, 4,500-page series on The Quran. Or just vote Democratic and do your part in bringing heaven down to Earth by being kind to strangers.

Mrs. Keller

Dear Helen,

You should be posthumously married to Ann Sullivan by the LGBT+ community. Yours is the greatest love story ever told. You shared a bed. You shared a life. You shared souls.

I can't tell you how much I've enjoyed your writings. I, too, am blind and deaf. I, too, have had to learn to speak in my own special way. And I've had to learn to make sense of the world with the help of others who were very flawed and imperfect.

I'm not literally blind or deaf, although I do proudly wear glasses and hearing aids these days. I want people to know I have trouble understanding everyone. I don't want them to take it for granted that anything they say to me in words or body language will pass by me without a struggle.

That said, I can't believe everything I see, and I certainly don't listen to everything some people have to say. Being a gay man, a Jew, a disabled person and the child of Holocaust survivors has crippled me, the way the wind twists a tree. I'm bent, not straight. I'm gnarly, not magnificent. I'm knotty, although not naughty. I'm crooked, but not a crook. I'm distorted, but I'm not too, terribly spiritually misshapen.

Like you, Helen, I smell the jasmine that leads me to God. I follow a path that no one else can see or hear. Like you, I can't tell others how to go where you went and where I'm going.

How do you describe something to people that they'll only be able to figuratively smell?

Yet, you and I know that our nose knows. God, I wish everyone would be Gifted in the way that we were. We were truly Blessed.

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart"

That was said by you, Helen Keller. What a gift you've been to me.

Love,
Barry

The West Bank of Your Heart

Perhaps you can now see with your heart that for Muslims to have fanatical, religious schools in Pakistan is utterly ridiculous and a waste of valuable time. They're only making God look like a hypocrite until they learn to express inner peace.

Revenge is never the answer. Forgiving your parents for what they couldn't teach you about the meaning of life in a modern world is the right answer. The secret to inner peace lies in never forgiving yourself~.

The center of Islamic learning ought to be on the West Bank of Israel so Muslim students of life will be able to learn as much as possible about The Old and New Testaments while teaching Jewish and Christian students of life more about The Quran. In this way, everyone in the Abrahamic faiths will become a student of the same Teacher.

I'm done! D.o.n.n.e. Donne! John Donne. No man is **not** an island! If not for the waves of emotion that lap up against us, we'd all be alone at sea without anything to see.

Changing Majors

Life is a school. If you decide to major in anything, may I suggest you major in **empathy** for God. Imagine how you make Him feel with every breath you take.

Previous Books

I recommend you read my other books in the reverse order I wrote them.

28. **Knowing God in the Biblical Sense of the Word**

If you've got a banana and two plums
I'm sure you already know
that your fruits were once forbidden

27. **Welcome Aboard My Yellow Submarine.**
Our Destination is the North Pole where Santa has his
Workshop.

The melody that accompanies the Psalms
[A book for men with special needs]

26. **David Met Jonathan After Slaying Goliath**

How I made peace with my penis and testicles

25. **God's Gay Agenda**

penis envy or semen envy?
that is the question.

24. **Chicken Salad for the Soul**

A tale of candor on dry rye with a kosher pickle on the side

23. **Star-Drek**

A Science-Friction Adventure to a Very Strange Planet

22. **It Wasn't My Heart I Left in San Francisco...**

A Philosophic Look at Semen and the Delivery Device
that Emits It

21. **How to Find The Man of Your Dreams by Intensifying Your Orgasms**
A Self-Help Book for Unicorns and Horny Wild Stallions
20. **Lampshade for the Light**
of the Last Day of the third Month of the Year
19. **Call Me Glinda**
a book for friends of Dorothy
18. **Home Schooled**
why my inner child refuses to go to college
17. **Lazy Susan**
How Taoism Spins Paradox into Food for Thought
16. **Your Buddha Within**
Inside Every Buddhist Lies an Anti-Authoritarian
Who Yearns for Peace of Mind
15. **Playing god With God**
Hinduism, Health and Healing
How to Believe in God by Believing in Yourself
14. **Quran: The Book of Lights**
Volume 1 High Lights
Volume 2 LAND: How to Become a Genius and Save the Planet
Volume 3 SEA: How to Love Life
Volume 4 SEA: How to Love Life
Volume 5 Sky: How to Believe in Yourself
Volume 6 Sky: How to Believe in Yourself
Volume 7 Flames: How to Circumcise Your Own Soul

7. **A Guest at Their Table**

My Gay-Jewish Review of Christ's Feast of Self-Love:

Volume 1 Christ's Bread and Body

Volume 2 Christ's Wine and Blood

Volume 3 Communion in a Human Body

4. **The Forbidden Fruit's Perspective**

Torah For Straight People

Volume 1 The Genesis of a Moses Like You

Volume 2 The Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers
and Deuteronomy of Everyone

2. **The Wisdom of Self-Love**

Life Is a School. I Am My Major

1. **Becoming**

89 Poems of My Love for Me