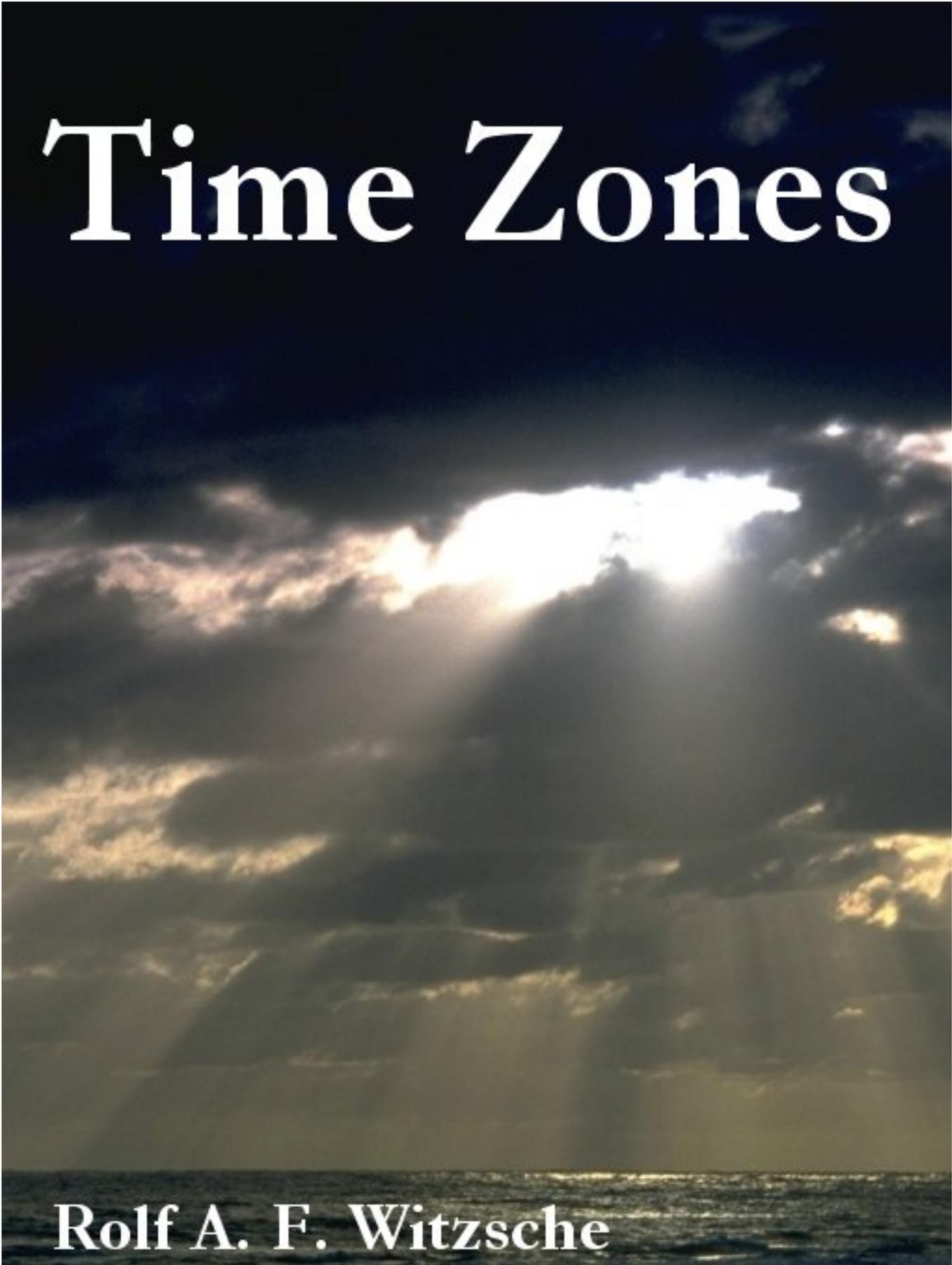


# Time Zones



Rolf A. F. Witzsche

Which distance is greater,  
the geographic distance that separates the continents and nations,  
or the distance heart to heart that separates humanity?  
Imagine a voyage across twelve time zones.

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**A fictional love story from a novel by Rolf A. F. Witzsche.**

The story is fiction. It is a healing story unfolding in the background to a love affair between three people in which many barriers are crossed. The story begins in Hawaii. When the world of tragedy from an accidental nuclear holocaust catches up with them, the three set sail on a voyage that takes them across twelve time zones to distant Russia, the home of one of the three. The time zones also stand analogous for the distance they cross between one-another and their cultural backgrounds.

The story, *Time Zones*, is a chapter from the novel, [Brighter than the Sun](#), by Rolf A. F. Witzsche.

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# Time Zones

"It is right that we should be driven by the wind," said Jennie. "When a storm comes up one feels alive! Then, all that one has within one, that one is, is weighed in a balance."

"Indeed, there's nothing trivial about the wind," Igor commented.

I agreed with them both, though I counted us lucky that we weren't in a full-blown storm.

By eight o'clock the overcast began to break up, patches of blue appeared, and an hour later, puffy, white, innocent clouds filled the sky as if the rain had never happened. Only the wind was still a bit strong. This posed a problem. We needed a day of calm, to put our 'ship' in order. The cabin was filled to the ceiling with everything we owned. The weather couldn't have been better for sailing. The sky was bright, the air brisk, warm, inviting, the ocean was stirred up into long waves that one could ride for extra speed. Except, speed wasn't what we needed. I was as sleepy as I had been after leaving Tofino. My eyelids were heavy. The brightness caused me to squint. I fell asleep at the helm. Sometimes Jennie roused me, sometimes the rocking of the boat did, sometimes Igor. Jennie and Igor kept themselves awake by working. The most urgent task was to clear a passage to the rear bunks, and to make some room in the galley. Eventually, Igor slept on a pile of clothing, bedding, dishes, and junk packed tightly together.

"This will take us weeks," I heard Jennie mutter and then call for help to move a box of canned food.

"Who cares about time?" I said. "We've got plenty of time for that later. Just make a passage to the bunks and to the stove if you can."

"That's easy for you to say," she shouted back against the noise of the wind. I'm sure she did her best. It wasn't until late afternoon that she had breakfast organized. The afternoon felt surprisingly short. We had decided to change shift every four hours. I think my initial shift was more like ten hours long. Still, in one way or another, we all got plenty of rest.

The cleanup project continued for days. Still, it had to be completed before we could make plans as to where we would go. For the time being we simply sailed with the eastern tradewinds. Without taking inventory of our food supplies, we had no idea of how long we could survive at sea.

We sailed west with the tradewinds for four days until the job was accomplished. At dinner that night, the big moment finally came to decide on a destination. The inventory had revealed that our supplies would carry us for at least fifteen weeks. We were provisioned to reach any place in the world without requiring any extra food.

Jennie suggested that Australia might be a good place to go. "Australia has plenty of room, no shortage of food," she said. Her plan was to stay there until we could go to Japan and be reunited. I, on the other hand, had China in mind. I wanted us to be close to Japan at all times.

Igor, however, suggested the most daring plan of them all, something way out that I had never considered as a practical possibility. He wanted us to sail through the Suez Canal to the Ukraine that was once a part of the Soviet Union and was still friendly to it. It was obvious we all had made our private plan. Now it was time to choose one of them. As we considered the possibilities, one at a time, the most important criteria were food and room to live. Our next concern was for the children. Would they be safe? One question about Russia came to mind. It grew in importance the longer we talked about it. Would we be able to continue our association in Russia, or would we be separated?

We decided to delay the decision until the next morning, with one more night to sleep on it so to speak. "What choice do we really have?" I asked Jennie in private after Igor had gone to bed.

"The most important factor is to find our families again," she said. "Anything else comes second."

I nodded.

We were talking outside in the dark. It was so dark that night that I could hardly see her standing next to me.

"Are you saying that our own personal lives no longer matter?" she added. "Is it right that we are duty bound to an endless slavery to our families?"

"It seems that way," I said. "This commitment makes us richer, Jennie! It is not slavery, is it?" She agreed.

In the morning, the final decision was quickly made. Jennie had called for a secret vote. There was unanimity on the first ballot. Igor's plan was selected. Igor explained that our voyage would take us to the Philippines, across the South China Sea, around the tip of Malaysia and the tip of Sumatra, across the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and up the Red Sea to the Suez Canal. From there we would cross the Mediterranean, the Aegean Sea, the Sea of Marmara, and via the Bosphorus, the Black Sea. At the northern end of the Black Sea was our destination, the city of Odessa. Igor said, the voyage would take us across twelve time zones and would last no more than thirteen weeks, probably much less.

It was a crazy plan, but the only plan that made sense. How else would we get Igor home? And without his father's help, what chance did we have to see Melanie and the children again? And without all this, how could we stay together and maintain our friendship? Indeed, Igor had figured it right, right from the beginning. The only aspect I had problems with, was that we actually had to live in Russia.

Sure, we had talked about the eventuality on the beach. I had admitted to Igor that I might like the idea. But those were just words, empty phrases easily spoken. It was theoretical then. But going there to live, possibly for the rest of our life, was a different story. What also bothered me, was the feeling that our association would more likely be threatened there, than be kept alive. Russia was known as a country of stern conventions. It would be difficult enough to justify our association in the liberal sphere of the West, but in Russia...!

I talked to Jennie about it at great length. The gulf between what we felt for each other, and what a traditional communist society might expect, appeared to be more than twelve time zones apart, that we had all to cross. "The thing that I can't accept," I said to Jennie the next evening, "is stepping backwards in time."

"Maybe it doesn't have to be a step backwards," she replied, sitting next to me in the dark. "Communism, if it still exists in people's feelings, doesn't have to touch us if we don't let it. I like to see the twelve time zones we have to cross, as steps ahead, not steps backwards in time."

The thought made me smile.

"It maybe challenging, going to Russia," she added, "like climbing eroded mountains of loose rock with slippery footholds. That can be exciting. One needs to beware of every crevice, test every ledge before standing on it, nothing can be taken for granted; but that doesn't sound like stepping backwards. It will make us better climbers. It will open doors to places that few people have ever been at."

Seen in this way, Igor's plan was undoubtedly the best one. Also there was plenty of food and room in Russia. So it was decided.

Our first stop along the way was to be Manila. Igor already had the necessary charts on board. He had been planning ahead, collecting whatever charts he could locate in the Harbormaster's storeroom. Igor said that Manila would be an important stop, especially for us. He said he would try telephoning his parents from there.

"Surely, your family must think you are dead," said Jennie, "it's been five weeks since they last heard from you."

"They wouldn't give up that soon," said Igor. "My father is aware of the upheavals that a large nuclear blast can cause. It is his job to know. In fact, he will be expecting my call."

I wished Igor luck.

It was easy sailing with the tradewinds. As the days passed, our concerns for the world receded. They were replaced more and more with the down to earth immediate concerns of dealing with each other. Perhaps it was selfish of us to allow this to happen. On the other hand, it could have been a deeply natural delayed response to a tragedy that had shaken the very meaning of being alive.

The rules on board were simple. As before, Igor volunteered for the early morning shift, from 2:00 AM to breakfast. He loved to see the sun come up. My shift at the helm was from evening to 2:00 AM. In the daytime it was Jennie's turn to watch over the boat. Usually the boat would fly by itself, being kept on course by the wind vane. An occasional lookout for other boats was usually all that was required.

In the evenings, while Igor was sleeping, I spent many hours with Jennie on deck. On the colder nights we would huddle under a blanket, sharing each other's innermost thoughts. I also spent many hours alone with Igor. I had requested that he wake me whenever there was a sunrise worth seeing. He was only too glad to comply. We would sit on deck and talk for hours. His favorite topic, usually, was Jennie.

"Now that you're certain your wife and children are still alive, you're in a bind," he opened the conversation one morning. "Do you intend to drop your wife, now, and marry Jennie?" he asked bluntly. "I am well aware that you are deeply in love with Jennie. Or do you intend to drop Jennie and go back to your wife?"

"Marry Jennie!" I repeated, surprised. "I couldn't marry Jennie," I said in a firm manner. The question shocked me. Often, I was half-asleep when we looked at these sunrises, together. This

day was no exception. But this question jolted me. "If I should marry Jennie," I said to him, "I would lose them both. Sure I love Jennie, but I could never marry her, or anyone else. Loving Jennie has been good for me, even in respect to my feelings for Melanie. If Melanie were here today, I know, I would treat her much better than ever before."

Igor looked puzzled.

"I realize that doesn't make much sense," I said and smiled. "If one falls in love with another person, Igor, the whole world looks different. One automatically treats everyone with more respect and kindness. At least that is what I have noticed about myself since I've been together with Jennie. How can I pull back from this? Using marriage to gain ownership rights over a person is like someone cracking his whip, commanding his slaves. What happens to joy and happiness? If marriage means ownership of one another, then it becomes a wall that isolates one from the happiness of sharing life with the world? If marriage causes isolation, who needs it? Who would want it? In its isolation it opens the door to lust that becomes a prison, and stages a life ensnared by duties, boundaries, and demands of submission to codes until there is little joy left in it. It's absurd to believe that this marriage isolation can induce happiness. What a trip! If I married Jennie and were unhappy, she would have to see it as her fault and feel forced to correct it! The burden would be tremendous! I couldn't put such a burden on Jennie, or anyone else. Could you?"

Igor looked at me with a blank stare. Of course he didn't know what I was talking about. It had taken me a lifetime of patient effort to see through the myths. "There is no renewal of affection in a closed relationship," I tried to explain this. "What closes the door to the world also forces one to deny one's innermost feelings, which cannot truly be hemmed in. That's when a person gets into a bind, Igor. The myths associated with marriage demands force one to become blind to what life is as it is expressed throughout the world. Marriage, then, becomes a murderer. It becomes a power-structure that demands one to become dishonest, even to deny one's very soul to oneself and to others."

"Are you going to drop Jennie, then, and stay with your wife?" Igor repeated his question.

"Of course not! It isn't that simple, Igor! I would never do this," I said to him.

By then the brilliance of the rising sun, together with the fresh air, had fully wakened me.

"Why should I deny my feelings for Jennie because she is a woman and society dictates that there should never be more than one woman in a man's life?" I asked. "Society is wrong, Igor! Why should I care about those myths people have chosen to strangle themselves with? Why should I deny my feelings for anyone? What you suggest, Igor, is a gross form of self-denial. You would have me deny what I honestly feel. I feel what I feel, and I will not deny it! Those few months of being with Jennie have opened the door to my soul. How could I not acknowledge the touch of her gentleness that makes me feel warm inside? Why should I deny that I am touched by her openness that makes me more honest with myself, by her excitement with living that makes me feel more alive? Instead of denying it, I can't help but shout to the world that I cherish being with her, that I love to feel her response, that I treasure her smile. Why should I disavow that all of this exists, and that it feels wonderful? What would I gain by not allowing us to love one other?"

Igor still shook his head.

"The fact is, Igor, I couldn't drop anything anyway that's anchored deep within me. I could

pretend, perhaps, and lie to myself about it, and to the world. But I'm not willing to make this sacrifice. So, the only solution I can see, Igor, is to let the past catch up with the present. The present can't be reversed. A workman, who has put his hand on the plow and looks back, is not worth his hire. I must let our association stand. Jennie is my open door to breach the segregation of humanity!"

"Hey, you can't expect the past to catch up with the present. You can't expect to have the world bow to your wishes. Surely your wife will object."

I nodded in silence. After a while the thought came quite strongly that the world has already changed. "What Jennie and I mean to each other cannot be undone, nor would Melanie want to undo it. The world will change to accommodate us both, Igor. It already has changed. And it will change more. I also expect the war-creating isolation between nations to catch up with today's clamor for uniting with one another in a common effort to save what is left of humanity and our world. Yes, Igor, I expect a tremendous change in attitudes around the world."

Igor shrugged his shoulders; "I hope you are right."

I added nothing to that.

"OK, Paul! Let's assume you are right and the world will change," said Igor, "but for now, you must face the fact that you are a married man. You have responsibilities to your family that you cannot ignore."

"Now, what has this one got to do with the other?" I asked, sharply. "Who said that I wasn't going to honor my responsibilities anymore, nor Jennie hers? Why do you think we were struggling so hard to find our families again? We will honor our commitments and responsibilities. It will always be that way, because it comes from what we honestly feel from within. Love is what has been rooted in the depth of our being. I couldn't cut Melanie out from this place even if I wanted to. Our home will always be the dearest spot on earth, Igor, except that it will now become a focus for greater affection instead of being a circumference that would make it a prison for love that then can no longer flow freely. That's logical, isn't it?"

"Logical! My friend you're dreaming," said Igor, with a grin. "I should really do you a favor," he said, "I should take Jennie away from you!"

"Congratulations, now you're becoming honest! That's what you've been up to from the beginning," I grinned. "Except it wouldn't work, Igor. I don't own Jennie, neither do I, nor would I ever intend to own her. That notion has to stop that one person owns another. We can only envelop one another with love. In that out-flowing process we enrich one another. But we can never own one another."

Igor didn't look happy after that.

"How could I possibly give her to you, as you suggest I should, or you take her from me?" I asked him gently. "I don't control Jennie's life. I realize that you have deep feelings for Jennie and that hold yourself back on my account. That notion puts on the table the proposition that Jennie is somebody's property. Don't do this! Actually, I can't even tell you not to do that. You must find your association with her on your own terms and feel honest about it in your own heart. You don't require my approval to underwrite what you feel and what you love. Your own approval is all that should really matter. But it is tough to simply let one's love flow. I have no right to approve or disapprove what you should or should not feel in your heart. But

when strands of love meet, that's when the world becomes brighter. As far as I am concerned, I think there should be countless such strands, and it takes time, and effort, and honesty, to let them unfold. Besides, I've never regarded your affection for Jennie as a form of competition. I would have, if loving were a matter of exclusive rights. But it isn't that. So, what's there to compete against? Would one ray of sunshine compete with another? The fact is, I feel touched that you, like I, appreciate her, that we are both in love with the same woman. I think it's great, if that is really the case."

At this point our conversation ended. Igor didn't answer anymore. We sat quietly on deck for a while, Igor deep in thought, I silent. The sun had fully come up at this point. Its brilliance was blinding. It glittered on the surface of the water. It was painful, but lovely to see. I enjoyed especially its reflection on the water.

"Have you considered the possibility of Jennie having AIDS?" I wanted to say before returning to bed. "We all could have been infected during the rescue missions. People were wounded, bleeding."

I didn't say it. Saying it would have broken the silence that seemed to nourish him. Also, I would have said too much. So I left him alone with his thoughts whatever they were. I embraced him, briefly, and then went back to bed for a couple more hours while he remained on deck and kept watch.

It appears that I didn't underestimate him. He had breakfast ready when I got up. He was a changed man, polite, not shaken. However, he was no longer as exuberantly happy, either. He loved Jennie, but couldn't allow himself to get close to her. Maybe it was because he had indeed aimed at marrying her, at winning her exclusively for himself. No doubt he wanted to include her in his life, but it seemed he no longer knew how. I had become an obstacle in his path, and the more I became open to him, the greater an obstacle I appeared to be. I had closed the door to hope, so it seemed, while he couldn't see the door that I wanted to open.

I thought about how exuberant he had been when he got me up for the sunrise that morning. His face radiated with anticipation. Now he sat silently during breakfast, his head bowed, his gaze resting on the vast ocean surrounding us. I must have shattered all his hopes. Only once he smiled at me, briefly, shaking his head in disbelief. Still, I felt he was more gentle with Jennie, more genuine, rather than coercive.

As the days passed, his jokes, which Jennie and I always appreciated, became more sensitive than they ever were. He seemed to have a way with jokes like Jennie had with photography. Unfortunately they wouldn't stand up in re-telling. Divorced from the moment and the intimacy of the situation through which they were inspired, they become meaningless. But in spite of it all, he still didn't allow himself to be closer to Jennie.

The daily routine on board became similar to our previous voyage. Breakfast frequently lasted till noon, lunch was at three, and dinner quite late. Between breakfast and dinner, Igor would settle down for his traditional mid-day snooze. In the evenings we would stay up together until Igor would retire for his second sleep, prior to his early morning shift. With such a lazy routine, the days passed pleasantly.

One morning we sighted land. The sighting came precisely according to our calculations. It proved that our navigational skills were far better than we gave ourselves credit for. We were at the entrance of the Bay of Manila. This precise arrival was instantly interpreted as a cause for jubilation and celebration. We had circumnavigated the North end of the Philippines in a big sweep, and approached the Bay of Manila almost dead center. In a burst of excitement, Igor and I embraced each other to celebrate this most marvelous feat of navigation we had yet accomplished. It had been a struggle at times, to interpret our readings from the sextant. But all this was history when we sailed into the bay, three expert mariners, masters of our little tall-ship.

The stop in Manila was important for us as an opportunity to buy fruit, bread, vegetables, and to refill our fresh water tanks. Most of all it gave us the opportunity to place the much needed phone call to Igor's dad. Luckily we had found some Japanese money among the worthless stuff Igor had taken from the bank in Tofino. As it turned out, the purchasing of supplies was not a problem. The phone call, however, didn't work out at all. Since all business activities had stopped in the US, virtually all satellite communications systems were out of order, on which the Philippines relied.

Disappointed, we returned to the Mary Q, which turned out to be the greatest stroke of luck since our finding of the newspaper on Haleakala. When we came near enough to distinguish the Mary Q from other boats, we found two boys busily unloading our food supplies, and other items, including our sextant. Had the phone call gone through, we might have returned to a half-empty hull? As it was, we got every single item back. We even retained the crowbar that the boys had used to break in with. The scare they caused us, however, was more than enough to convince us to forgo other stops. We let the boys go, but not before we gave them some bread and some fruit for a meal. These two taught us a valuable lesson. We decided right there that we didn't really need to stop anywhere. Drinking water could be gathered by harvesting the torrents of rain that frequently washed over our boat. We had enough food, cooking fuel, even fruit, in cans, to last us to the end of the world. And whatever bread we required, we could bake ourselves.

Still shaking, but wiser, we said fare well to Manila and to the Philippines and set sail toward Singapore. At this point the South China Sea lay before us, the world's most famous waters in terms of being infested with pirates. We were scared every time we saw another boat on the horizon. But we were also lucky. We survived the crossing without the slightest incidence. Well, almost, that is.

I remembered reading about the captain of a sailboat, like ours, who boldly aimed dead center against a pirate ship's steel hull, to ram it. He was able to convince the pirates to leave. I certainly wouldn't have had the stomach for facing their guns in such a bluff. Something else happened, though, on the South China Sea that was less dangerous, but equally as exiting.

The weather was usually hot. We had more time than we knew what to do with. We had barely left Manila when we drifted back into our lazy routine of eating, sleeping, and exploring each other's innermost soul. One morning, after Igor had retired for his mid-day sleep, Jennie prepared herself a place on deck to sunbathe. She brought out a blanket, mattress, and pillows, and spread them out on the top of the main cabin. Then she stripped all her clothes off, standing right in front of me on top of the main cabin. I suppose it shouldn't have

meant anything special, seeing her naked. After all, we had been most intimate with each other that night on Maui and on other occasions thereafter. But it did feel exciting, seeing her naked. One doesn't seem to get used to that sort of thing.

I was at the wheel at the time. She grinned, and motioned me to keep her company under the sail. Our time on Maui came back to mind. I suppose; if it hadn't been for Igor finding the newspaper, the time we had on the islands might have never stopped. There had been something precious about this unity. In a way, it hadn't really stopped, certainly it hadn't in consciousness. Naturally, I joined her.

"I feel so wicked sunbathing in the nude," she grinned.

"But it feels wonderful to see you," I added. "And why should you feel wicked?" I asked. "Igor is asleep and who else could you possibly hurt with your wickedness?"

She looked at me; "God, I suppose. Jack would call it an offense unto God; wouldn't he?" Then she laughed.

"Maybe he wouldn't!" I replied.

"He would call it a sin, though," she grinned.

"And what does that mean?" I asked as I joined her under the sail just as naked as she was.

"Who would deny that sex is a ponderous subject?" I said to her. "It appears to be one of the great paradoxes of human existence. If one reads the Penthouse letters one will find it praised as the greatest thing under the stars. And if one reads books on evolution, one will have sexual desire explained as the end product of eons of natural selection, where proliferation enriches genetic development and increases the survival rate of the species. If one listens to a preacher, he will deny that even exists, except for the narrow window that is needed for procreation. With that, the preacher who defines the human being as the image of God, drags that image down to the level of an animal existence where sex exists exclusively for procreation and has no link to universal love. Thus we face paradoxes upon paradoxes." During those days on the deck of the Mary Q in the noonday sunshine, we put those paradoxes aside.

"Extraordinary sexual involvement may have been the corner stone of our existence today," said Jennie. "Human strains with lesser urges might have died out. And the other hand, one can read books on morals, written by the pure and white angels of society fighting prostitution. And finally, there is this thing call sin." She just shook her head.

Indeed, I felt there was something interesting and odd about the notion that sex is sin. I told Jennie so.

"Interesting?" she repeated. "You mean destructive! The very notion of sex being sin immediately closes the door towards any appreciation of a person's nature as a human being, and if you allow it only in marriage, then you reduce the human being to the status of a piece of property. Whoopy! So what is sin? The notion of sin itself is sin, isn't it?"

I suggested to her that the root meaning of the word is synonymous with mistake, or failure. "The mythological notions about sex and marriage are that failure of perception," I said. "Maybe that's what it is all about, Jennie? Maybe the wise men of old meant to warn humanity not to set their scope of mutual appreciation too narrow. They might have had the very opposite in mind of what is accepted today. Indeed, if one magnifies a specific aspect of living, and blows it up out of proportion to the rest, one would most certainly cheat oneself out of something else that is equally of great value." I think Jennie accepted this definition.

"But that's not how it is seen," she grinned. "In any case, I was right, then, wasn't I in what I said."

"Certainly, you were right, well almost," I replied, ginning back at her. "Mankind is inclined to make a mystery out of whatever it magnifies. So, the narrow view that is magnified is also mystified. Thereby, whatever is of substance becomes lost. The end result is, that we end up with essentially nothing."

She thought that this was an interesting way of looking at sex.

"I wonder if Jack would admit that?" she said, and grinned.

I shrugged my shoulders; "That's not really important to us, is it? What is important, is whether we will admit to ourselves that the whole myth has been further mystified through the addition of still more parameters. Why do we talk about love in such terms as, love 'within marriage,' or love 'outside of marriage?' These introduced modulations and distortions have twisted the image of sex in relationship to love something fierce over the ages, into something so fantastically abnormal that you now feel instinctively wicked for it."

"It's sad, isn't it?" she said.

"Sad!" I repeated. "It's absolutely tragic! Homes are torn apart, crimes are committed, people are killed over it; and these are the least of the tragedy. As a tradition bound person you tie yourself all up inside! You feel guilty, or empty, or frustrated. You feel everything except what is potentially there to be realized. This must be the most twisted, distorted, perverted, and abused facet of human existence. Not even communism has been so badly misconstrued."

"It's the great paradox of existence alright," Jennie grinned, "a wonderful world of confusion, hatred, jealousy, accusations. It's like a hockey game!" she said, and laughed.

"And now the puck stops here?" I added and I began to grin, too.

She nodded. "It has just stopped, hasn't it?" she said, still laughing. She found the correlation funny.

When she was serious again, she reached for my hand and placed it on her breast, and invited me to kiss her nipple. Jack came to mind. I remembered his enthusiasm at keeping the focus on the human aspect of humanity.

What unfolded here from this was something along that line and promised to be equally as vital. What came out of it was apparently quite different from our last time together, on Maui. It was freer. The appreciation had a different focus. It was richer.

After a while she began to talk again. "A normal wife would become enraged if she saw her husband with another woman. I certainly would have in the olden days. That's warfare, too, isn't it. But for me, I think, the puck really has stopped. The sex game is no more justifiable than the marriage game. Sexual appreciation is like breathing. It's simply a part of being alive. As is love."

I agreed. I felt a deep compassion for all to whom this world of appreciation was closed. Their needs were the same as mine and hers, and Igor's, too. I hugged Jennie tighter. The thought of a world so bound up in games that every door to the heart is closed appeared ugly to me.

"Can you imagine love without involving games?" I asked Jennie. "I mean as no one has ever seen it; pure, undistorted, natural, free, incomparable to anything, something which doesn't deny human nature but embraces it like the air one breathes, something which doesn't

hide nor inflate appreciation, but unites all that is good to enrich the experience of one's being?"

She didn't answer. Perhaps, she couldn't. Perhaps, no one could. Perhaps this kind of love didn't exist yet.

We didn't talk anymore after that. We lay down and looked into the sky. I had talked enough. I had an infinity of feelings to sort out. We looked at each other now and then in silence, with a gentle smile, with a caring touch. We embraced one another and shared each other's nature and being in the most intimate way.

During those hours her hair shone like stands of gold, it moved with the breeze. I noticed some seabirds in the sky. I traced their flight. I reasoned that we were close to an island. For the time being, however, there was no island to be seen. There was only sunshine and the wide open sea, and Jennie and I. She was a gem, a treat to behold, a bundle of life more beautiful than any flower or bird, an open door to experiencing the grandest of creation that outshines in 'brilliance' even of the sun. She felt beautiful to embrace - a dream of dreams. And now there was nothing between us except a deep peace that echoed from within everything I had felt for her before. There was no lust, shame, fear, nor romance, only a feeling of being totally free, of being at ease with each other under the sails that stood like giant white wings against the deep blue sky.

It seemed as if ages had passed before we got dressed again to wake Igor up. We needed Igor for a course correction. The island that we had expected was visible now. We were heading directly towards it. But it wasn't necessary to call Igor. As I went to look down into the cabin, to my surprise, I saw him leaning against the forward mast, compass in hand. I looked at Jennie, at him.

He began to grin. "You forgot that the forward bunk is immediately below the forward deck, right behind the main cabin!"

Jennie began to laugh.

After the required course correction was made, Igor went back inside and started to prepare lunch.

I hugged Jennie once more, briefly, and very tightly. Her breasts felt hot and her body lovely to touch. And in this tight embrace, there was no overlapping of identity, no trespassing into Melanie's realm. This distinctness, also, felt precious to me.

It soon became evident that he had over corrected our course and had to adjust the wind vane once more. Thus, for now, Igor and I swapped duties. He was the indisputable expert on wind vanes and loved teaching Jennie about it. And so, my morning with Jennie on deck had come to an end and was replaced with work in the galley.

The rest of the day was on the surface like any other day. But deep inside, things were not. Neither did our episode end here. The next day, the very same sequence repeated itself.

"How would you define love?" Jennie asked, as we were once more stretched out on top of the boat. "You asked the question yesterday," she added.

I shrugged my shoulders. "It can't be defined as the opposite to hate, because then you would see it in terms of hating." I shrugged my shoulders again.

"I know what it is," she grinned, "but I won't tell you! See if you can guess."

"It's not magic! And it isn't sex either," I said. I shook my head.

"Don't give up so soon! It was you who told me, you just didn't define it as such! Try again!" she said.

I thought for a moment, then shook my head again.

"Oh, I will tell you," she said. "It's so simple. The purest form of love is that which meets the human need, that nourishes, honors, extols, that refreshes the soul. Anything else is attachment, emotion. Love cannot be emotion. It must be alive in deeds, in errands of mercy, opening doors that emotions have shut. It's something that few people understand, that all carry in their heart, and that most people spare no effort to suppress."

By the time our meeting was over for the day, I felt, I knew what she meant. And this trend continued for many days. Each day I felt certain we wouldn't reach the same deep interchange that we had reached the day before. But I was wrong. There appeared to be no end to this unfoldment of the nature of this peace.

We spoke of attachments. They can't be love. Ties of attachment invoke bondage, not freedom, and bondage can't be love. We spoke about violence and sexual pleasures, and how the sternest, most restrictive, most religious countries are the most violent with profound punishments, 'nuclear holocausts,' chilling murder, cruel jealousies. We met on our rooftop to explore pleasures of the heart, not sensualism, which isn't possible anyway because one can't love with the senses. The senses can only confirm what the heart has accepted, and to this we had opened our doors as wide as anyone could.

In this fashion our meetings under the sail continued for days. Time and time again, her invitation was renewed. I shall never forget those bright and lazy hours of pleasures of the heart, love, and excitement, which constituted the most wonderful peace-workshop ever launched on the high seas. However, as it turned out, this workshop was a blessing beyond what we could imagine, a storeroom of riches that I needed later to draw on.

It wasn't until after we had sailed around the southern tip of Malaysia, that Igor began to wake me in the mornings to a series of exceptionally beautiful sunrises. Because of the heavy traffic through the Strait of Malacca, we sailed close to shore. The weather was calm. Often there was barely enough wind to fill the sails. An orange glow would appear over the shoreline, sometimes silhouetting a low range of mountains.

Igor was unusually quiet one morning. He didn't talk about Jennie anymore. Still, the way he acted was vaguely familiar.

After the fiery disc of the sun had appeared one morning, drawing a brilliant line over the water, he did mention Jennie briefly, saying that he loved her. He said it calmly, with his feet stretched out against the railing. This, too, was strange behavior for Igor. Also, he looked directly into the glaring sun as though this self-torture might stand as an excuse for not looking at me. This wasn't like Igor at all.

Eventually he started to talk. "Do you recall when I saw you both naked that day?" he said shyly.

I said that I remembered.

"Did you know that I felt terribly jealous, then?" he added. His voice became firm now. "I

felt jealous, Paul, as never before. But the problem isn't Jennie. I wanted you! Can you believe that?"

"Me! Why me, Igor? You're not in love with me, are you?"

"Why not, Paul?"

"Because..."

"Because of what? Is it because of social conventions, Paul?"

I shrugged my shoulders.

"It's either that, or you're terribly phony," said Igor quietly. He often used the word 'terribly' when something moved him deeply.

"But why me, Igor? Why me?" I asked, perplexed.

"Why not you? You're a lovely person, Paul! The truth is, I don't really know why I feel the way I feel about you. In fact I'm terribly embarrassed to talk about it. Can you realize what it took just to get the nerve to say it? It took ten days, Paul, ten days! I'm scared to talk about a thing like that, yet I had to say it."

"But why, Igor?" I repeated in disbelief, all the while knowing deep within that it was my own reaction that was unfounded, rather than his. He was honest to himself. I sensed that I wasn't.

"I don't know why I want you, Paul," he said quietly. "Maybe I need to feel some tangible proof that you're not just using me to get to your families again."

"Hey, we are not using you, Igor!" I said strongly, "I certainly don't, I respect you too much for that. You are my friend!"

He shook his head. "That's just part of the problem, Paul! I don't want to be respected. I've been respected for years. I have thousands of fans that respect me! I feel such a distance between everyone and myself. Don't respect me. Prove to me, that what you say, you also feel! Maybe I want to feel loved just for being myself. Maybe I need to feel this, especially from those who pretend to respect me, as a proof that shows that all this respect isn't phony; that I am worthy as a person, worthy to be loved."

"Hey, I do love you as a person, Igor, you know that!" I replied and leaned over and hugged him.

He glanced at me briefly; "Oh, really! Do you, Paul? How would I know that? I can see that you love Jennie! Anyone can see that! But me? Did you know that you have touched me only once in all the time we were together, when we hugged each other at the entrance to the Bay of Manila? Of course you had reason to love me that day. I was useful to you, wasn't I?"

"Now hold it, Igor! What in heaven's name do you want me to do?" I said almost mechanically, lost for a real answer.

"You should know that yourself, Paul," he replied without hesitation. I had tears in my eyes by then. "I can't do what you ask," I said, frustrated at myself.

"Why not?" he asked sharply, less patiently now. "It is really because of social convention? If it were, I could accept that, perhaps."

I didn't answer. I stood up and went towards the cabin entrance to go back to bed as though the whole conversation had been in bad taste and needed to be stopped. That really, was the opposite, though, of what I wanted to do. I was so deeply disturbed that I couldn't face myself.

"...Don't you realize, this is the main reason we're on this boat?" Igor added as I went inside.

I stopped at the door. "What do you mean?"

"Don't you see, Paul, all the military establishments in the world are male empires, macho cults. We are in the middle of this nightmare because it has been so damn difficult for a male to relate to any other male, except in power plays. We will all kill each other because we're so damn scared to love one another. Killing is easy, its honorable, you get medals for it, you don't have to deal with the complexities of loving man to man. And now, even you, are looking at me as if I were scum."

I nodded in disbelief. God, had I been blind all my life? I prided myself on being progressive, alert, liberal, intelligent. Now I was forced to acknowledge that I hadn't even begun to move in an honest direction.

"Now I can understand why the world builds more and more nuclear weapons," said Igor quietly. "If males can't relate to one another except through power-plays and phony respect, mankind has no choice but to resort to weapons in order to feel secure. What else is there to inspire trust?"

I couldn't answer Igor beyond that. I could only nod and whisper good night.

That night I cried new tears. Why couldn't I love him as he wanted me to? I was disappointed in myself. I was disappointed in my blockage to the love that I also felt.

I thought of monks, of ancient times, who had shut themselves into their monasteries and sworn an oath to keep eternal 'silence;' never to speak again, never to look at a woman again, never to gaze at the sky, the trees, and the world! Now I could feel for their anguish, their inability to correlate the wonders of life with the austere demands of an ill-perceived purity that they could not understand because it was itself total perversion. What must it have meant to a man to shut himself off from all that is good and beautiful, from life itself, in order to purify his soul so that he may experience the crown and glory of existence which turned out to be utter emptiness! Was I, too, following in their footsteps just as humanity had done in some measure ever since? I was confronted with a most reasonable demand to enlarge my definition of love. And, oh shame, I couldn't move!

I cried those tears, even though I wasn't certain if it was really sex that either he or I wanted. I simply didn't know. So it wasn't sex that I cried over. I had loved Jennie for many years before our first sexual contact took place, and she admitted later that she felt that love that couldn't find expression tearing on her soul, a love she couldn't respond to. Without this love unfolding freely in the background, sex would never have happened. I suddenly realized that Igor only said that he felt he ought to be loved. He said nothing about sex. I alone had made that connection. Perhaps it wasn't a question of needing sex, or that sex was merely like an inevitable consequence of accepting another's identity with total appreciation. He wanted more than sex. Indeed, between Jennie and I, sex had never been a game for orgasmic reactions. It had become the tip of a pyramid with a broad and square foundation. It had to do with pleasures of the heart.

I knew that the general homosexual scene was never one of extreme satisfaction. I also sensed that this was totally unrelated to what Igor was after. Igor was starved for love. He was looking for something substantial, something that would stand on its own merit, something rich and full of life. I remembered the first morning when we struggled and quarreled over the

navigation of the boat. Neither of us was prepared to accept the other, seriously. We weren't even prepared to accept ourselves at face value. We had to prove ourselves in contest with each other. If only it were possible to find a platform on which we could love each other for who we are. Shouldn't love be that platform on which we can feel secure, on which we can accept sex as a by-product if it had to be, instead of as an end in itself, which made no sense anyway?

I found no answers that night. Eventually, I fell asleep.

Breakfast was served late that day, at eleven o'clock. Igor hadn't dared to wake me sooner. It was a tense breakfast. Neither of us spoke a word. Thank God, Jennie didn't ask why.

The challenge I faced was to claim back for humanity what had been lost through centuries of restrictive convention. If anyone had suggested a day before that my greatest challenge would be to learn how to love, I would have laughed out loud. Now I was at a loss as to where to start. How does one love a person contrary to the weight of convention?

I could examine the way I loved Jennie. Perhaps there was a starting point in that. But how could this be translated into an attitude that both Igor and I could feel comfortable with and understand? I had to ask myself if what I honestly felt for Igor was love. And if not, why it wasn't. I soon realized that this approach, too, was invalid.

A newspaper article came to mind as I pondered. An elderly gentleman had handed a copy of it to me on during flight to India many years ago. He had come to the flightdeck and handed a copy to each one of the crew. The article was a hundred years old, from the late 1800s. It was totally centered on love. I had read it and laughed at it, and not understood one word. It was the account of what seemed like a miracle; I lie I thought. It was the story of a woman who was healed of partial paralysis. Her family had become destitute, her home a virtual hell. She decided to leave, never to return. That day she encountered a crowd of people coming from the railway station. She had never seen such a crowd in her small town before. She reasoned that they must have come for something important, so she followed as best as she could. She came to homestead just outside of town where the crowd had gathered around a house with a balcony from which a woman addressed the vast crowd of people who had come to hear her. Except, she was too far in the rear to hear a single word. She cried over this once again added disappointment that had become the way of her life. Still, she remained there and watched.

When the people were leaving she made her way back to town. It was there, on the way back as she was crossing the street, she noticed a team of horses approaching. She stood aside and watched. To her surprise she saw in the carriage that passed by, the same woman who had addressed the people from that balcony. She also saw that the woman noticed her. She wrote in that article that she had never seen such an outpouring of love in any human face as that of the woman, a love that enveloped her during these moments. She wrote that she suddenly realized, as the carriage receded from sight, that her paralysis was gone. With a great joy she returned to her home, where she found her home situation also healed.

As far as I could remember, that happened in a small town in New Hampshire. I had thrown the copy of the newspaper article away that day, but its substance apparently had not

faded. After all those years I finally realized that I knew nothing about love at all. Even Igor seemed to have noticed that. I left the breakfast table and went on deck to cry over my emptiness.

Perhaps love is like the sun, I reasoned. Its rays reflect the sun's own brilliance, and with it, it illumines the universe. I realized that our brilliance as human beings is our humanity. Our universal human Soul is our Sun. I suddenly realized that Igor was complaining that there was not sufficient sunshine on the boat. Perhaps this was the reason why he chose the early morning shift, perhaps without realizing it, hoping day after day for an unfolding dawn in the real world in which we lived, the world of love. I began to realize that what he had asked for wasn't about him at all. It was about me. I had become a sewer rat that was happy in the dark. If love is a light that flows forth from the riches of our humanity, from the One human Soul that we all share, then the object that we love is in us. The warmth is in the sun; and with our rays of warmth we touch one another. Our rays of sunshine then mingle and merge and do indeed illumine the world. Oh, if this could only be done universally!

I had to cry when I realized that I stood far from this world, this world of an outflowing love, and that I wasn't alone in my darkness. I had to cry for my own country for the same reason. America had been like me, an empty nation, a sewer rat that shunned the sunshine, and more than that. America and me had been like a black hole in space that draws everything into itself and calls that love. America had sucked in the substance of the world and issued threats in return. There hadn't even been enough love left to care for our sick, homeless, and wounded. We demanded the world to invest their living in us, and what the nations wouldn't give willingly we stole with the fist of war. Yes, Igor demanded that there be love once more, because a black hole is a dangerous place. It even drew from humanity a nuclear bomb with which America destroyed itself. Igor was right to cry out for us. This mustn't be allowed to happen on our ship. He had cried out to me, wake up, Paul! Wake up!

As it was, neither of us spoke a word to each other that day. The 'technology,' apparently, hadn't been developed yet. I had put my life on the line to rescue people. Now I couldn't even rescue myself. I had become a beggar and a coward. I had become like that woman, partially paralyzed. I needed to be touched by the same love that had healed her, and that love had to come from my own Soul. No greater challenge has ever been faced by anyone, so it seemed, than the challenge that I finally realized I could not avoid.

The next day was the turning point in our journey. We rounded the northern tip of Sumatra. The Indian Ocean lay before us, India to the West, and far in the distance, the Arabian Sea. I knew that once we left Indonesia, it would be weeks before we would reach the Gulf of Aden and see land again. Much of it promised to become a rough voyage, as the monsoon was about to change direction. And even once we crossed this stormy sea, we would still have a long way to go to the north, through the Red Sea, the Suez Canal, the Mediterranean, and a bunch of lesser seas after that. All considered, I felt it was imperative that the tensions between Igor and I be resolved before we left the sheltered regions of Sumatra and Malaysia. The Indian Ocean promised to be enough of a challenge without us adding another one. I also felt, that if we didn't tackle the challenge between us before we got

out there, we might never take it up again, and the loss would be unbearable. There was a potential in this opportunity that promised a new kind of freedom.

Igor sat quietly at the front of the boat as we sailed past the northernmost city of Sumatra, just below the island of Breueh. This wasn't his usual place. Usually he stayed at the helm. He was embarrassed, so it appeared. He didn't want to talk about any subject anymore. I felt no less rotten at not being able to respond to him. It was plain to see that we both needed to be more honest with ourselves.

Not surprisingly, a hyper-tense atmosphere had developed that even Jennie could not ignore. The thought came that it would have been infinitely easier to simply have sex with the man, if this could have resolved the situation. Except, it wouldn't have settled anything. Much more than a just a shallow solution was demanded. I felt urged to do something concrete to cause a change in the atmosphere between us, something down to earth, something simple and honest. I brought him a cup of coffee to the front of the boat, and sat down beside him. I had never done this before. He was leaning against the cabin window, watching the last of the Indonesian islands vanish into the distance. "What do you expect me to do?" I repeated the question I had once asked days ago.

He smiled. "I really don't know," he said. "That's a laugh, isn't it? The very thing that's so terribly important to me, I can't define. I really don't know what I want." Then he laughed, "... did you ever hear of an international chess champion being stumped by such a simple question? What do you want? All I know, Paul, is that I felt jealous seeing you intimately involved with Jennie. I felt as if I had no chance of getting close to either of you, as if I didn't belong."

I scratched my chin and pondered. "I wish I could help you, Igor."

"I wish you would."

"You don't really have the right to make demands on me that I can't possibly fulfill," I replied very softly, as if I was afraid he would protest again.

Well, he didn't protest; "Yes, that's true, Paul," he said, "but remember, you are making equal demands on the governments of the world, aren't you? You're asking them to give up their military attitudes and deal with each other honestly, man to man."

"OK, that makes me a hypocrite, as you once suggested," I replied.

Igor didn't respond to that.

"It would make me a hypocrite if it was exclusively my fault that you don't feel loved," I added. "But is it really all my fault, Igor? I know that I love you. Maybe we are not talking about the same thing? Maybe I should have been more open? Maybe you should have been more open to me, sooner?" I put my arm around his shoulder. "It certainly is a lot easier to make a person feel insecure instead of secure," I added.

I told him how my younger brother and I had once treated our cousin when we were children. We would frequently drive into the country with our father to visit relatives that owned a farm. The little canvas-covered truck that we came in fascinated our cousin, as a farm boy. Often, before we left for home, our dad would give him a ride to the next town and back. We were about ten years old at the time. One day, things went wrong. I told Igor that I didn't remember anymore how it started, whether we drove in a different direction, or drove further

than usual before turning back. Our cousin became noticeably uneasy. "You guys are not going to take me with you to the city?" he asked. We immediately teased him. "Of course we are...!"

I explained to Igor that this was the worst thing we could have said. Our cousin became panic stricken and proceeded to climb over the tailgate. We held him back, tried to reason with him, we pulled him back inside the truck, but he escaped from us again and again and finally succeeded in climbing over the tailgate. In utter desperation my brother and I pounded against the small window in the back of the driver's cab, hoping to alert our dad or the driver, in order to stop the truck. We pounded as hard as we could, but got no reaction while the truck creaked and twisted on over the bumpy dirt road. We had seen our cousin fall. He rolled over several times, before he came to a rest. Fortunately he seemed not to be badly hurt. In time the truck stopped. What followed was a sad drive back to the farm. We never became close friends with our cousin during all the years that followed. We had done everything wrong that we possibly could.

"I did a similar thing once," said Igor. "When I worked in Kiev in the construction camp. The commissar invited me at times to his home. He was an excellent chess player, but he didn't tolerate political dissent. One day I couldn't help myself. That evening, over dinner, I made a single stupid remark about the 'Bureau.' We argued at first. I defended my position. Was that ever the wrong thing to do! It ruined the whole evening, dinner and all. In fact, I was even punished for it by not getting paid the next week. I still remember being quite hungry that week. I lived on dry bread, water and cheese, except for the free lunch that we all got at the camp."

"I went hungry several times myself," I said to Igor, "after I had spent all my money renting a car..."

Igor laughed. "I know exactly what you mean," he said.

In this fashion, Igor and I spent hours reminiscing on our disappointments and triumphs, our boyhood sex experiences, about lessons we had learned, dangers we had seen. It seemed we had a great deal in common. We talked until Jennie finally called us for dinner. We stood up and embraced each other. Jennie, naturally, noticed it. She had a big grin on her face as we entered the galley where the dinner was served. It seemed the ice was finally broken.

The effect of this little episode was not at all dramatic at first. I could tell, however, that our occasional quarrels over navigation procedures lessened, that a deeper friendship unfolded. We often sat together at the front of the boat after that, with our backs against the cabin window. We talked about Russia, the US, about flying large airliners, about chess tournaments, the old Soviet Navy that still existed under a new name, and all the many places Igor had been. Of course, there were plenty of jokes mixed into all this.

One morning, during sunrise, I voiced my reservations again about coming to live in Russia.

"Don't worry," he said, "it will be fine. I am sure I can get my father to find a nice position as a pilot for you. My father has far reaching connections through his work with the government. You may even get on as a captain with Aeroflot! Would you would like that?"

I shook my head; "I don't need half that much, Igor! I will be happy to have a place to live, where it is safe to have our families together, with a modest income to support ourselves."

"Ah, but you ask for too little, my friend," said Igor in a strong voice. "What you ask may be enough for you, but it certainly would not satisfy me. I will not be satisfied until you are both happy in our country, and I'll see to it that you get a chance."

I noticed tears in his eyes as he spoke. I had no words to reply. We embraced each other in silence. I felt his fingers pressing into my back.

Tears came gently that day. This was our first real sexual embrace.

It took many days after that, to reach the southern tip of India, and many days later, as we had suspected, we encountered strong northeasterly winds that stayed with us right across the Arabian Sea. The boat leaned heavily port side for hours. Unfortunately the wind could not be trusted at this time of year when the monsoon starts changing direction. Naturally, the sea was correspondingly rough.

Igor and Jennie and I worked together in those days, like a finely tuned team, all three of us. Igor and I adjusted the sails. Jennie was in charge of holding our course through the squalls. Naturally, there were frequent embraces when things got rough and we made it successfully through some tough moments. Igor looked beautiful under stress. He stood tall, strong, alert, his bushy hair resisting the wind. He also looked beautiful in embrace with Jennie. One could see his love for her. He also looked more beautiful to me.

He said he could detect a change in the wind by the way the clouds were shaped, and thus we got the boat prepared for it before the wind changed. At times he took the helm himself to trim the course according to the changing winds. I watched him. I marveled at his finely shaped hands as he worked the helm. In spite of his obvious strength his hands were gentle, smooth, unmarred. He gave me the wheel once. "Straight ahead," he shouted against the wind, just as a gust of spray enveloped us all.

Jennie, of course, was an equal member of the sailing team. I don't know how we ever got through those many nights. Everyone's help was almost constantly required on deck. Usually, at the very minimum, two persons were needed to keep the boat going, the third, theoretically had four hours off for rest and sleep. The shifts changed by rotation whenever it was possible to operate the boat with only two people. The worst times were at night.

It must have been the sheer intensity of constantly having to pay attention, which made this part of the voyage the finest of our whole journey. A sense of freedom was in the air. Things were happening fast, but we were in control. The winds weren't pushing us around, we were moving with them, harvesting them. We were the masters of the sea. I felt the same freedom toward Igor and Jennie. Nothing was forced between us anymore. Jennie once remarked on how lovely Igor and I looked together. "For the first time I feel totally free to be myself," she added when she said this, "being unattached yet in love with both of you." Actually she didn't just say it. She shouted it over the howling of the gusts.

This stormy period was also a time for strenuous action. When clouds hung low, the sea was gray, and the nights totally black, we held our own against the fury of the elements. Thus, there was never a crisis on board. Everyone knew what to do. Everyone carried 'his weight.' No one overslept. Once during a sudden squall it became necessary to wake Igor early. I disliked doing it. He slept soundly, quietly. I turned around and went back up on deck without waking him. "Let's try to make it by ourselves," I shouted to Jennie at the helm. I

vaguely remembered how Igor had handled the kind of situation before, how he trimmed the sails, the angle in which he approached the wind.

On our arrival at the Gulf of Aden, the sea was considerably calmer again. Thus, finally, long periods of sleep and rest were in order, a season for trusting the wind-vane. It wasn't until we were half way north on the Red Sea that everyone had fully recovered again.

From this point on, it became holiday time once more. The air was warmer, the water smooth. Our progress was hardly noticeable on some days. With weather like that, life on board mirrored our earlier days of lazy, pleasant times together. Only there was no tension now. Igor spoke a lot about his home in Russia. He was interesting to listen to. He had a way of making the strange and distant Russian world appear less and less ominous as the days went by. And with the tensions between Igor and myself out of the way, it became possible for Igor to get a great deal closer to Jennie, too. He was moving with his own wind now. This was evident in many ways. I could see it in their eyes, in the ease with which they now talked to each other, in the kind of gentleness that I hadn't noticed in Igor before.

One early morning, on the Great Bitter Lake of the Suez Canal system, I saw Igor and Jennie in a long and tight embrace. There was a great sense of freedom reflected in this scene, for them and for me. I enjoyed seeing their kiss.

Igor was high with excitement later that day, smiling, and full of vigor, full of jokes. He appeared to be the happiest man alive. He cooked breakfast for us, and lunch, and dinner. The next evening after we set out from Port Said into the Mediterranean, I noticed Jennie come out the cabin with Igor close behind her, both happy and smiling. I was repairing a loose stanchion at the time. It was about an hour before sunset. Igor grinned from ear to ear when he saw me, as if he had the greatest of all jokes just ready to roll out.

Well, it wasn't a joke that he had ready. It was a bottle of Henkell's finest. He announced that we had reached another turning point in our voyage and in our journey as human beings.

"And this in more ways than one!" I added.

"So let's celebrate the momentous occasion," he said. "We are now crossing into Europe, the old part of our world. I also know that we are ready for it, considering the many and by far larger crossings that we have all made toward each other."

I smiled, and agreed with him. We all had made our journey across ages and spaces to a point we never thought possible.

As might be expected, when living on a boat that is always in motion, our champagne bottle cork came out with a bang. Its sweet bubbly sprayed high into the air. Still, we rescued most of it. Moments later we stood at the bow and cheered one another with the remnant that we had harvested from the 'fountain,' and embraced one another. We toasted each other three times as three of the closest friends possible, in every respect.

We celebrated for many hours past sunset, right through the night by the glow of the lantern that came with the boat. I told Igor that when I saw him come out of the cabin all excited, toting another champagne bottle, and his other arm around Jennie, that he looked as though he was about to announce a wedding.

He grinned. "A month ago I would have gladly done that. But not now! It's too late for that. That kind of marriage is no longer a possible option. I'm already too deeply married that way

to my parental family back home, which I recognize, will strangle me with its involvement with state affairs, if I don't watch out. That kind of marriage is no longer an option for us. No is anything still smaller than that, a possibility from now on. We are already too deeply married to one another on the larger platform of universal love that anyone of us could step back again to something small and narrow that we've outgrown."

I asked him to explain what he meant by being strangled with his family's political marriage to the state. He laughed and began telling us about his father, one of the kindest and most considerate persons one could ever meet. "He'll go out of his way to the nth degree to help you, if you're in trouble. But on morality, he is the staunchest fundamentalist. His life is controlled by the rule of law, not the rule of love, which are often at opposite ends of the spectrum. Can you see how that can strangle a person? Everything is black or white to him, a perfect straight-line fellow who expects the whole world to toe the line that has been described and honored for countless ages. He demands this especially his family and members of his household."

I thought of AIDS, of Jennie, and of her being afraid at the possibility that she might be infected by it. If Igor was right. Not the slightest syllable of this must ever be mentioned. It would have the effect of a bombshell exploding.

"I think your father is a very poor man!" said Jennie, gently. "How is his own marriage then? Does he treat your mother well, Igor?"

"My mother is merely a privileged servant," Igor sighed. "He favors her from time to time with affection. But he has no idea what it is like to feel close to a person. He is like I was. He lives shut up in his black and white world, a very good man in every respect, though out of touch with reality. He doesn't even know that the real world exists, not as we have discovered it."

I took Jennie's arm and raised her cup of hot chocolate for a toast. "Let's drink to what we have found in each other," I proposed. "Let's drink to our riches."

"Let's drink to the sunshine we have in our heart, that makes our world bright," said Igor. We all drank to that.

"Do you remember singing a hymn in church," Jennie asked, "that 'God has ordained no other bands than united hearts and hands?'"

I said that I didn't.

"Anyway, let's make a solemn proclamation," she proposed, "to give the old myths about marriage that split people apart, no significance in our life!"

Igor agreed. "That may be a difficult challenge in the presence of my father," he said, "who thrives on rules no matter how stupid they are, and on obedience to them. However, people like us should be able to find a way around that. No darkness can penetrate our home within anymore, in which we truly live!"

Jennie hugged him for this.

I raised my cup of hot chocolate as I had before.

"Wait!" said Igor. "What about your own marriage, Paul?" he asked me. "Do you think you can continue to make it work?"

I raised my glass higher for the toast. "It has always worked," I said, "and as I recall, it has worked the better, the less I have focused on it. Perhaps we weren't really married in the

conventional sense. A contract was made and then filed away in a closet. I am beginning to realize that we were living by and large as close friends, as much as this is possible between supposedly married people. Naturally, we will stay together and cherish each other as before, if not more so. I have no doubts about that. With more sunshine unfolding that world is bound to become even brighter than it ever had been. And why shouldn't we experience this growing brightness universally? I even think, that now, we might get back to the height of appreciation that brought us together in the first place."

"I hope you are not dreaming," said Igor.

"I'm looking forward to that," said Jennie. "In spite of my friendship with Melanie, there has always been an invisible wall between us," said Jennie as her smile faded. "Melanie never spoke about it, but I think she felt a bit envious when she realized that Paul had fallen in love with me. She probably felt threatened. She became defensive after a while. There was no light in what remained of the relationship between us, or warmth that could have been."

"Thank your lucky star that you didn't live in our house then," said Igor. "Under the 'order' imposed by my father your marriage would have been destroyed altogether, just for that!"

I looked at Jennie. She smiled. "I had no idea that there was any stress between you and Melanie?" I said.

She shook her head. "I wasn't aware of it myself at first. Melanie might not have been aware of it, either, at first. But all of that is history now. The opposite is about to unfold. I think Melanie will embrace us all in that new light. In time, this cannot be avoided. Igor's parents will become enveloped in this as well. Igor's whole house will become a palace of light."

We both embraced Jennie for this wonderful thought.

We stayed on deck this evening right through the night. Huddled closely together, we kept ourselves warm and continued talking until the sun came up. This new dawn marked a new era, but one that we knew would change nothing between us except to make our world still richer.

Igor raised himself up at the beginning of the sunrise and gazed into the brightness of the fiery globe that appeared over the horizon.

"When we reach our journey's end, we will face a new division between us for a period," he said sadly. "But that will only be superficial. For me, Russia is home. For you it is a New World. For my parents we represent a challenge from another world that they cannot yet see. I sincerely hope that you will learn to appreciate Russia as I do, that we can develop into a basis for bridging that gap."

"Will our association be officially challenged?" I asked him.

"I wouldn't be surprised," he said. "We will have to be wise."

"That may not be enough!" I countered. "We will have to be as precise in our dealings with each other as we had to be sailing this ship through the storms. We will also stand against the conventions themselves. If we are sensitive to your father's needs, we may even be able to reverse them, provided that we don't violate the laws of integrity. We've got to be right on the mark in everything. We can't afford to mess around. In fact we owe it to ourselves to do this. How else can we maintain a reasonable level of freedom from whatever is false, enslaving, or damaging to a person's identity? And we need to do this also for Russia! It is a fact that no one

lives in total isolation. The freedoms we claim, we claim for all mankind. We claim them for Russia, and for the world. It is time that people realize this and appreciate their importance."

Igor nodded. He didn't smile anymore. "You may be asking the impossible," he said. "It's a paradox to enter the Soviet Union with intentions like this. I can assure you, living in Russia won't be a holiday in this respect. It will be like war!"

I smiled at him. "That sounds wonderful, Igor! Then we can defeat what is wrong and backwards. Remember, Igor, the Soviet Union exists no more because no one had challenged it strongly enough to change and uplift itself. Even the Russia that you once knew exists no more. Everything has changed, and rarely for the better. Maybe a new type of war will be needed to stir up the pot, to let love come to the surface. That's been overdue for a long time."

Igor replied that he would be behind us all the way. I embraced him for it. We kissed each other. The power of our embrace filled me with gentleness. It was 'insane' what lay in this universal kiss. It was a kiss of life. The final leap had been made to be at one with humanity. We all shared this universal kiss.

Igor volunteered to stay on deck until mid morning. Jennie and I went below to sleep. The shift change was set for eleven-thirty-AM.

It was Igor's idea that we stop for a night in Greece. He said he needed to make inquiries about the entrance to the Marmara Sea. He told us that he knew someone on the islands who once belonged to the Greek Navy. He said that this person is a good friend. Jennie and I agreed to the stop.

So it happened, that on one brilliant morning the Mary Q entered a crescent shaped harbor at a fishing village near the foot of a mountain. It was the kind of place that one expects to see on travel posters, a collection of whitewashed houses, many built on a slope that had been terraced. Igor went straight to the harbor office to inquire about his friend, while Jennie and I stayed on board. We had temporarily tied the Mary Q to the nearest pier. The harbor was mostly empty that morning.

"The fishing fleet must be out for a catch!" remarked Jennie. She tried to start a conversation with some people on a boat next to us, to find out. But it didn't work. They couldn't understand each other.

When Igor returned, he was as excited as a little boy. "My friend still lives here!" he said. "His house is at the edge of town, up this hill." He pointed to a sixty-degree hillside. "His house has a windmill built on it. They told me at the office that we couldn't miss it. They also gave us permission to keep the Mary Q moored where it is. The fleet won't be in until noon tomorrow. Also we don't have to worry about theft. The Harbormaster said that in his harbor every boat is totally safe."

Still, we locked the Mary Q as securely as we could. The damage we had suffered in Manila had not been completely repaired, nor had the shock been forgotten. I must admit, I didn't feel comfortable leaving the boat.

"Just trust them," said Igor. "It will be all right, you'll see."

I looked back several times from the steep trail that led away from the harbor to the edge of the village. Far above the village, the mountain appeared to level off into a high plateau that might have been used for grazing.

The hard climb, even as far as Alexandros' house made it quite evident to me that we had been confined to the boat for ten consecutive weeks. None-the-less, apart from running out of breath, and a detraction along the way that cost us half an hour, we had no problems getting to the house with the windmill on top. Also, the detraction along the way turned out to be a pleasant one, it gave us a chance to rest. About two thirds the way up, we had come upon a small church, a whitewashed stone structure. In typical tourist fashion, Jennie and I sneaked inside to observe what was going on. Igor followed. To my surprise, a wedding was about to begin. Without saying a word, an usher bid us welcome. He was most gracious about it. So we stayed in the back and watched.

The ceremony was conducted entirely in Greek. Not one of us understood a word. The bride looked beautiful in her long wedding gown, white like the village houses, shrouded by a veil. The groom, a tall man with dark hair, clothed in a dark suite, stood by her side like in any western wedding.

I caught Jennie's eye. I had been looking at her to observe her reaction to the wedding. She smiled gently. I caught Igor's eye also. We were at one with each other. In a way, this ceremony seemed to hold a special meaning for me, not as a marriage ceremony, but as the opposite. For me it celebrated an attachment dissolved into love. The gentle feeling that had evolved between Jennie and I required no bond, no marriage. It made no demands, other than the demand to let it be. Thus, the marriage celebration that we witnessed became an un-marriage ceremony for me, since we had realized where the real marriage of humanity is constituted, that this ceremony might deny if it went into the old direction.

Our association could have easily become another marriage relationship too, with attachments and confinements. I became aware of that there, and celebrated that it hadn't become that. If Jennie hadn't been so profoundly moved at the Airport in Vancouver, it might well have become that. Indeed it started out as an attachment and a stranglehold, and the coral chain necklace nearly symbolized it. But it didn't come to that. She was too proud to be caught up in attachment to persons, systems, and relationships, and to anything, but her own nature as a human being. By the time the necklace was bought, this new move had already begun, by both of us. So it never came to represent an anchor chain around her neck, but an unbroken sequence of links of jewels, encircling the center of her identity.

This sentiment of freedom and of the dignity of the human being, appeared to be echoed in the words of the priest, though undoubtedly this was not what he talked about. The sound of his voice conveyed a feeling of reverence for the good and beautiful, the rights of men and woman acknowledged in freedom, honesty, loyalty, integrity, love. I wondered if he knew about the infinite complexities behind a union of hearts, the significance of un-marriage, the mental technology that forms a focal point for affection and furnishes freedom instead of walls and barriers. I thought of Melanie, and everything that had drawn us together, and I saw the same union of hearts reflected in it. It was all still there. It would exist forever, and come to light whenever honesty to oneself and each other caused the walls that would get between people, to be taken down. I looked at Jennie standing beside me, and smiled to myself.

The priest pronounced his words carefully. His words were filled with vitality and life, but they were a religious sermon born out of the accumulations of centuries of self-narrowing traditions. If this was the essence of what the wedding signified, I felt ashamed to witness it.

But maybe on this isolated paradise, life was less bound to the world's myths and narrow traditions. The whole village conveyed this feeling. The village was lively, clean, cared for, simple. It was the home of a hard working people. Patches of wild flowers grew in the rocky soil. The sermon was like a song that reflected the earth-bound rhythm of the island. But did it also reflect the aspirations of the sons and daughters of God holding in their grasp the freedom of human beings and the riches imbedded in the design of humanity? Those fishermen were a free people, but did they really know the meaning of freedom that is rich in love? Maybe the fishermen, more than the priest, knew the secrets whispered by the heart to the human consciousness.

The bridegroom's godfather, or relative, placed two wreaths of flowers linked to each other by a band, and blessed by the priest, on the couple's head. Then the priest continued the ceremony. The guests, many of them children, stood in reverent silence as two beautiful 'blossoms' in the prime of their life became enshrined within a mental power structure against which the world has been unable to protect itself throughout history.

I stood up and left quietly before the ceremony concluded. Jennie came too. We waited for Igor outside in the sunshine. When he returned we climbed higher up the steep trail towards the windmill at the edge of the village. Igor said that his friend Alexandros was a shoemaker. He said that his friend spoke only Greek and a few words of Russian. He said that they had met years earlier during a joint naval rescue operation and had stayed in touch via an occasional letter. He said that his friend was quite a character.

Alexandros was that, chubby, humorous, with a clear melodic voice. He received us most kindly, and with no little astonishment. He couldn't believe his eyes at seeing Igor. He barely recognized him at first.

After the usual introduction with kisses and embracing, we had lunch, Greek style, or at least in Alexandros' style. He told us that he wasn't married yet, and wouldn't be until his shoe-making business was more established. The meal consisted of mixed salads, course bread, and a rich measure of conversation during which we drank considerable quantities of his homemade wine. Later he took us to the top of his mountain, as he called it. He spoke of it in a hushed voice as if the mountain was holy. He brought up an old wartime story that sounded like ancient history, but not to him. His eyes were sparkling. There was a fire in them.

Getting to the top of the mountain was nothing to him, while to us, it was absolute torture. Still, the torture was worth it. The mountaintop was a marvelous place, quite flat. In some places it was covered with a sea of yellow flowers, wild grasses, some olive trees at the far end. He said that it had once been used for grazing, but this was long ago. At the end of the slightly sloped plateau, near some trees, he pointed out was a deep depression that would have cradled a lake were it not for a large split in the rocks. "The split goes deep, almost ten meters, it makes a good climbing chimney." Then he showed us a house nearby that German officers had started to build during the Second World War, the size of a mansion. The roof was missing, the floors had rotted in many places, but the important stone work was still intact. The house, of course, was connected with another war story.

Alexandros also told us that the German officers had planned to fill the chimney in the rocks with concrete, so that the depression would become a lake. He even showed us a cache of bags of cement and a large pile of sand that had apparently been flown in. The cement was

stored under a tin roof, but had become stone hard. The sand, however, was still useful. Alexandros told us that he hoped to finish the project some day.

The story sounded rather fantastic. It had all the makings of a great war-tale. I could envision the big four engine transports landing on the plateau, unloading sand, cement, stones, lumber. There appeared to have been a landing strip cut out of the natural terrain of the plateau. I wondered what influence the German officers must have had to be able to draw these kind of resources away from the German war effort. Or maybe it had all been a part of the war-effort, like a secret base for communications that was abandoned before it was completed.

Anyway, Alexandros was all exited when he showed us around. Igor asked him at one point if he really owned the plateau. Alexei, as he called him, shook his head, indicating that this would forever remain a dream.

"How much would it cost to buy the mountain?" Igor asked him. Alexei stretched his arms apart and pointed to the sky. Igor grinned in reply and reached into his body purse. He brought a bundle of Ruble notes out. He explained to Alexei that this was his prize money for winning the world championship, prior to coming to Hawaii where he won third price. He peeled a few bills off and gave the rest to him. "Would this be enough?" Alexei fell to his feet and cried, then gave the money back. But Igor refused it. He embraced Alexei. Some words were exchanged between them that Igor didn't translate. Finally, he announced that they agreed to be partners in this venture to own the mountain.

Now, as a partner, Alexei could accept the money with pride. I had the feeling, though, that he saw himself more as a custodian than a partner, as Igor translated. I could only guess at the nature of the debt that Igor owed to Alexei, for which he gave away a sum of money that few people on this island could earn in a lifetime.

"Hey, people, let's celebrate!" Alexei said on the way down, "I'm now part-owner of a mountain top!" he bragged. At Alexei's house, however, we had to rest more than anything else, drink more of his wine, and listen to more of his stories. Eventually, Igor couldn't handle anymore, and I don't mean just the wine. He was exhausted, and not just from the climbing. He was tired of translating everything that was said, as far as things were translatable. So we just sat there, rested and drank, and smiled at each other. Late the same evening Igor counter-invited Alexandros for a visit to the boat. We gave him an USA style supper of instant gourmet delight a-la-tin-can, which, incidentally, allowed us to enjoy our guest's visit uninterrupted. Indeed, he rather enjoyed our supper. He loved the corned beef with fresh cabbage and potatoes that Jennie had bought at the local market with Igor's Rubles while Igor was at the harbor office.

The night that followed took on a rather romantic flavor. The water shimmered with a thousand colors reflecting the lights of the houses and the darkened colors of the sunset. Sounds of laughter and dance filtered down from the hill where the wedding party was still in full swing. "It sounds like a true Russian celebration," said Igor to us, "so filled with singing and dancing..."

"And...Oozo, Oozo!" added his friend.

Igor replied something in Russian that, again, he didn't translate, that contained the word Oozo. Both men smiled at each other, and burst into laughter. Igor grinned at us, but didn't

comment on it.

We sailed away the next morning, after having served a western style breakfast to Alexandros. The fare consisted of pancakes with apple slices, topped with a flood of maple syrup, no doubt an unusual combination for someone living in a fishing village on a remote island in the Aegean Sea.

Our journey continued on a northerly course. The winds were light, progress slow. But who minded the lack of speed that made for a leisurely cruise through one of the finest sailing areas in the world? Alexandros was still on my mind, the friendly atmosphere of the village, the sound of the wedding celebration, and of course his way of saying "Ooooozo, Ooooozo."

In this manner we sailed North, enjoying the leisure of a great ocean cruise. Still, something bothered me. The closer we came, the uneasier I felt about Russia. We were about to enter a police state. In a police state one is married to the state. The Soviet State, though the name had changed, would own us to the last hair of our head.

As the days passed, the thought of entering a police state weighed more and more on my mind. Perhaps Jennie felt the same. It caused a growing silence between us, which contrasted with the carefree peace we had established for ourselves on the boat. On the boat we were safe. The peace we had established here was founded on an unwritten constitution that guaranteed each person the rights due to a human being, a noble constitution that no country on Earth could match.

Igor must have noticed our apprehension. One day, when I had brought some pillows out on deck, and had managed to let my thoughts drift without aim, or purpose, or direction, so that I fell asleep, I woke to Igor's humming the melody of a Russian folk song, the song of the Volga Boatmen. I joined in, quietly at first, from where I lay. Jennie too. It was a lovely, soft and sad melody. Eventually Jennie asked him if he knew the words to it, and if he could teach them to us. He nodded. Soon we were singing and laughing again, in the now cooler afternoon sunshine. He taught us also other songs, happy songs, some of which we were able to dance to while the Mary Q sailed quietly northward under a crystal sky.

One morning when Igor prepared breakfast, as he often did with his favorite apple pancakes, he was all smiles, whistling a tune. Whenever he managed to come near Jennie, he found an occasion for a quick kiss. Of course, being the resourceful 'choreographer' that he is, he came near to Jennie quite often that morning.

"Tell me what do you like best," he said to her while he served her the first pancake of a batch. "Do you like them with apple or blueberries inside? Or would you rather have fresh strawberries with whipped cream as a topping piled a mile high? And for dinner, do you love French Onion soup with roast beef, or would you prefer Russian Borscht perhaps?"

He bowed somewhat, waiting for her answer.

"I want to know everything that moves you," he continued. "I want to know what you think of, what music goes through your head when you get up in the morning, what kind of flowers you love in the spring. I would like to know what books you enjoy when you're lonely at night. Of course, that's a stupid remark since I don't know many American books. What I'm trying to say is this: I love you, Jennie! I love what you are, everything you are. I want to find

out what it is that makes you so precious to me!" He blushed slightly.

Jennie smiled, and blushed, too. "What if I'd never tell you?" she answered. "What if I tell you, you have to discover all this for yourself, in your own way?"

"Then I would reply that this would be the most exciting challenge I've ever faced," he answered. He was beaming from ear to ear as he disappeared into the galley.

"But for now," he called back from the inside, "for this morning, I hope you all love apple-pancakes!" He stuck his head out of the door, and added. "And you'd better say hmmm!"

Our days on the Aegean Sea were carefree, apart from my gnawing fear of Russia. Igor said that we were fortunate to have come that far without any major problem. Even now, the weather was calm and clear, exactly as we needed it, since the entrance to the Marmara Sea is narrow and sometimes hard to find. "But in weather like this, it will be a...!"

"It will be a cinch!" I helped him out.

He had fun with this word. It almost seemed that he would go to any length to be funny in order to soothe our fears of Russia.

As things turned out we wouldn't have missed the entrance to the Marmara Sea. We wouldn't have missed it even if it had been no wider than a hundred feet and shrouded by dense fog. Before we came close enough to recognize anything about the shoreline, a Turkish patrol boat intercepted us. The high-powered boat came directly toward us. When it drew alongside, Igor shouted a few words in Russian to the officers. Strangely, they saluted him and Jennie and I. Naturally, we returned the salute, whatever it might have meant. But instead of moving away the patrol boat stayed with us and escorted us to the entrance of the narrow waterway that led to the Marmara Sea and the city of Istanbul at the far end of it.

"Shall we go shopping in Istanbul?" Igor asked Jennie. "Would you like to buy silver, copper, or gold? Would you like silk dresses, scarves...?"

"Hey! Now you're being silly," said Jennie and kissed him.

"I'll buy you anything you like," he repeated his offer.

She smiled and blushed again, and shook her head.

As we approached Istanbul, another patrol boat met us. And as before, Igor spoke to them briefly in Russian. They saluted us and gave us escort part way through the Bosphorus, the famous gateway to the Black Sea.

Here, we faced our last 'ocean' and the end of our journey. A few days of sailing north, and we would be at our final destination, the city of Odessa.

For a while I was puzzled by the strange coincidences of the patrol boats guiding us at the very moment when we were in special need of navigational assistance. At one point I assumed that Igor had radioed ahead from Greece and arranged for them to meet us. I wasn't too concerned, therefore, that no other boat was treated in the same manner. I had in mind to ask him about it. But later, after we were on the Black Sea, I forgot all about it. It didn't seem important. This ancient land of minarets and mosques and endless sunshine had always been a mystery to me. The incidences with the patrol boats might have a logical connection with the strange customs of the land, or had something to do with Igor's earlier days when he had served in the Soviet Navy.

As the Turkish shoreline disappeared behind us, I thought about the coincidence once more, but the puzzle soon lost its importance. The old familiar atmosphere was re-established. We were alone in open waters, isolated from the world for as far as the eye could see.

Still, things were not totally the same. I started to think more and more, about Russia as the days passed. What would we find? How would we be met? How would we get to Russia at all, crossing the Ukraine without a passport? Also the nights became gradually colder as we sailed north, which added another facet of Russia. Soon the warm clothing was needed once more that we had brought from Alaska, that we had dragged half way around the world, almost unused.

As the days slipped by and all those things began to change, a sad feeling set in, a feeling of regret that we were near the end of the longest and most memorable holiday that any of us have ever had. The colder weather underlined this feeling. We had crossed twelve time zones on our journey from the 'paradise' in the Pacific that wasn't a paradise anymore. We had come a long way indeed. I could still picture Igor's face when he first proclaimed in Tofino that this old boat would take us any place in the world. Well, he was right, the Mary Q had come through the long trip without a scratch. Aboard 'ship,' as Igor still called it, things were just as they had been the first day we set sail. We had more room now. Most of our food had been eaten. But that was all that was different. We ourselves, however, had changed. The twelve time zones were like ages in time that we had crossed mentally into a new era.

One morning, while Jennie and I were alone, we talked about our prospects in Russia.

"What will happen to you?" I asked her. "Do you intend to stay with Igor? Do I lose you again? Or will we continue to remain close?"

She nodded, then shook her head. "It will be fun living with Igor. We both have much to contribute in support of each other. He will teach me to love Russia, and I'll share with him what I know about life and the world. We may raise my family together. I think we could have a fine association. Of course it won't be a marriage in the conventional sense." Here she began to laugh. "No Paul! We won't lose each other. We couldn't lose each other even if we tried, since we never owned each other in the first place. What has brought us together isn't something that can be lost. It isn't something artificial. The 'door' between us can never be closed since it has been opened by integrity. Things won't be the same even again as they had been before we began to build our New World in Hawaii. We lost each other once before in our life, the night after we first met, because we didn't know how to go forward. We won't repeat this again, I'm certain of it. In fact, I think we won't be able to stop moving forward, still."

"Those days we had together were beautiful. I will never forget them," I replied with a hug. "Can there really be more? Can we go further?"

She nodded; "We've grown. Why should we stop? We are ready to face the world, finally, and who knows what wonders will unfold as we do? It may be that we have barely begun to be alive again."

"Indeed," I said and smiled at her. "Can you remember our first night in Lahina, how shy I was and yet so bold in feasting at the wonders you presented?"

She nodded and smiled back at me. "This trying time won't repeat itself. I will treasure it as a part of growing up, as a landmark of where we have been. There is no need to re-build again

what is already solidly established between us. But our association can develop further as we boldly move ahead to greater challenges, to wherever our honesty will lead us. There is so much yet to be discovered about being alive and enveloped in love, so much to be explored, to be appreciated. I think we have really just begun, Paul, to let our adventure unfold. Whatever may happen, though, we mustn't stand still," she said and kissed me.

I nodded and embraced her and kissed her back. We didn't talk much after that. We made ourselves comfortable on some blankets, cuddled up to each other on the forward deck and looked into the bright blue sky. She grasped my hand and squeezed it slightly. It was warm. There was a world of meaning in this gesture. Volumes might have been written about it, a oneness based on reality, hope, life, and a need to give credit to everything we felt about our own existence.

The blue of the sky contrasted sharply with the white canvasses of our sails. We had traveled twelve time zones and there could have been no better scene to echo my feeling for the future than this scene of our sails contrasting against the sky which was of the same blue right around the world, even at the door-step of Russia. We were coming to a stranger world perhaps, than we had known, with customs and attitudes that would be challenging to us, but it was still a human world. And in this human world there was hope for a bright future since there is but one humanity, which unites us all.

The weather remained warm during the noon hours, though we had sailed North for quite a few days. Occasionally an old Russian Coast Guard aircraft came by. Its presence made it clear that we were infinitely distant now from the South Pacific or the South China Sea. We were facing our journey's end. A new land lay before us that was destined to become our home. Also, for the first time I felt ready for what we would face. How lucky we were, really, that we hadn't made this journey by jet. The dawn of a new epoch needs to unfold slowly.

It was two days after that, on a cloudless morning right after breakfast was served that a Ukraine Coast Guard cutter came steaming towards us. Igor jumped to his feet. "Hooray we've come home!" he exclaimed.

Jennie and I jumped to our feet and embraced him, pancake in hand, as we watched the cutter close in.

"We must be very near the shoreline," said Igor. He used the glasses to scan the horizon. Evidently, this was just an excuse. The approaching vessel drew his attention. Five minutes later the vessel was aligned with us port side, a short distance from us. Igor shouted something to them in Russian. They talked back to him via a megaphone. He threw a rope across to the Russian crew. One of them started to laugh as they pulled us closer. Then Igor began to laugh, too, and called out in plain English towards the Russian boat: "All right you guys, come on out!"

Here, as on queue, our children came running on deck, the little ones with their arms stretched out, followed by Melanie, followed by a well-dressed civilian gentleman, and a woman. "These are my parents," Igor explained; "Sergei and Laara Arenski."

Ah, now I understood what the Turkish patrols might have meant. They came out to meet us on Igor's father's request, to guide us through the narrow waterways, to get us safely

'home.' Igor must have called his father from Greece, with enough time to spare for his father to make arrangements to bring Melanie and the children from Japan to Russia. I also realized that finding the entrance to the Marmara Sea had been just an excuse for him to be able to stop in Greece. It was the best surprise that could have happened to both of us, me and Jennie. Jennie had tears in her eyes. We both hugged Igor for what he had done.

Indeed, it was a great joy to see Melanie and the children again! With a wink I excused myself from Igor's parents. His father winked back. It was a time for embracing, for tears, bear hugs and kisses, and countless "how are you", and "how have you been."

Eventually Igor's father suggested that some of the cutter's crew should sail the Mary Q into port.

"Sure," I said, "that's fine!" I said it without taking my eyes off Melanie and the children. Everyone looked well and beautiful.

On shore, Igor introduced us properly to his parents, who welcomed us as though we were part of their own family returning home from a long war. What a warm feeling this added to my image of Russia. His dad and I embraced one another. Someone also suggested that we should have lunch.

As we left the docks, I noticed the Mary Q entering the harbor. We stopped for a moment and watched her dock. Two security people tied her to her moorage. I turned back once more as we walked away and waved to our faithful old ship. Then we boarded the Army bus that Sergei had brought. The bus was dirty, primitive, with an utterly unfriendly atmosphere compared to the Mary Q.

On the way to lunch, Sergei told us that he would give us a quick tour through the city. Later, after lunch, he would take us to the airport for a specially arranged flight back to his ranch near Uralsk in Kazachskaja.

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The Lodging for the Rose  
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### A selection of love stories and stories about love

The primary focus is on the Principle of Universal Love in social relationships.



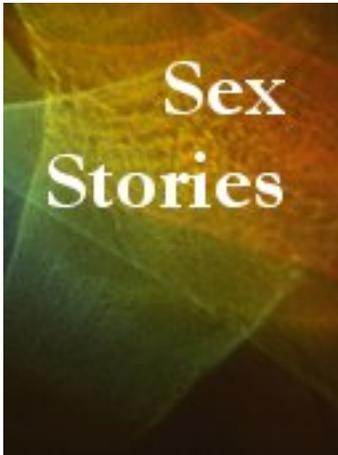
### Stories focused on healing

The focus for healing is wide-ranging, from bodily healing to the healing of perceptions, limitations, small-minded thinking, etc..



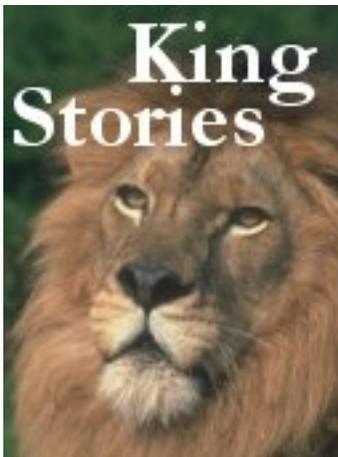
## War Stories

There are many types of wars being fought with the ferocity of lightning that flashes brilliantly until the driving energy is spent. Then peace resumes.



## Stories about sex

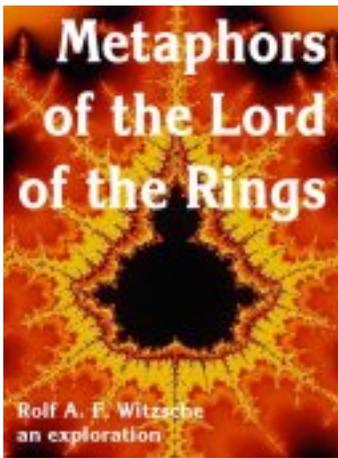
While the focus is on sex, the explorations focus on a passion for love in a higher sense than erotica, opening to the Principle of Universal Soul reflected in the brotherhood of all mankind as human beings.



## Oh, to be King for a day!

If we had the power to change the world, how would we change it? But don't we have that power already in our hand?

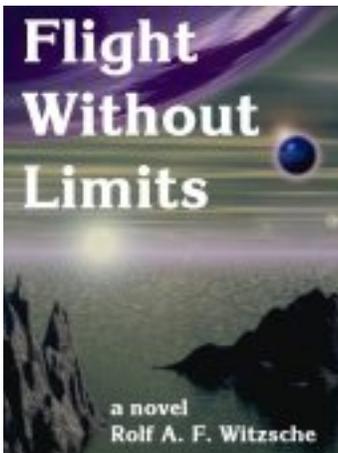
Political exploration



## The Lord of the Rings' Metaphors

It is a rare thing in literature that one finds a tale written a long time ago that is reflected in the present to such an extent, that it seems the writer had created a script for the future and the future has obeyed. Such a thing can be said about the story of J.R.R. Tolkien's mythical tale, The Lord of the Rings.

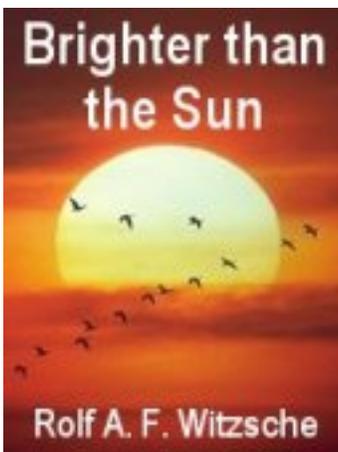
## Novels



## Flight Without Limits

(science fiction)

The novel is a science fiction work with a touch of reality. It is about a space voyage to Alpha Centauri, the nearest solar system to our own. But in metaphor, the novel is really about being able to move mentally without limits. Physically we may never be able to overcome all limits, but what would hinder us to break all limits mentally?

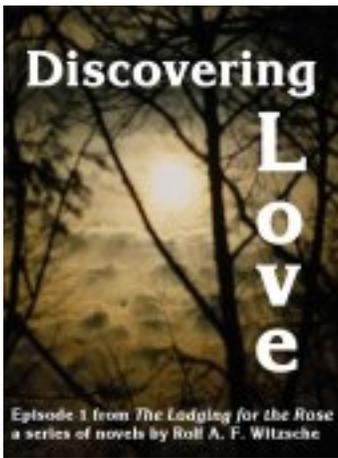


## Brighter than the Sun

(playing with nuclear matches)

This novel has two opposite centers. One reflects the tragic domain of our nuclear armed world, and the second the domain of spiritual freedom where old axioms become discredited and fall away while love unfolds its universal face. Will the latter prevail?

## The Lodging for the Rose a series of nine novels



### \* Episode 1 - [Discovering Love](#)

Here begins an epic story that spans eight novels. The subject is freedom powered by universal love, the largely unexplored 'country.' Few people have dared to cross its borders and travel its landscape.



### \* Episode 2A - [The Ice Age Challenge](#)

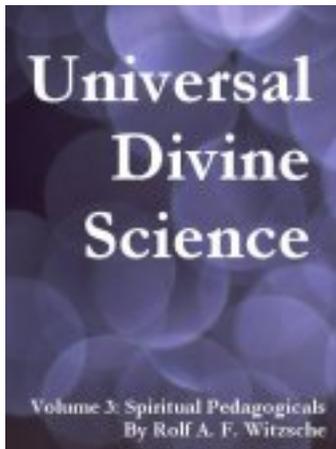
"The Ice Age Challenge" refers to the challenge that we face to create a new foundation for living when the coming Ice Age climate shuts down most of the world's agriculture. The resumption of the Ice Age could happen possibly 100 to 150 years from now. It may take that long to build the vast facilities that will be needed to feed the world from indoor agriculture. But is our love big enough that we can achieve the physically near impossible in order to assure a future for mankind beyond the space of our time? What limits would we put on the dimension of universal love? It appears we are in a triple race to meet all of these challenges. The big question is, do we have the skills to stay the course?



### \* Episode 2B - [Roses at Dawn in an Ice Age World](#)

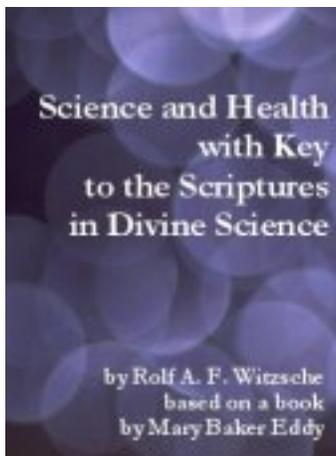
With the Ice Age resuming 100 to 150 years from now we are challenged to embrace the still rejected renaissance principle, the Principle of Universal Love, without which mankind may not survive. But will we be able to upgrade our human dimension sufficiently to accept the Principle of Universal Love and to reflect it in our daily living? God is Love, universal divine Principle. Do we dare to love universally in the social domain? Or do we pretend that the divine Principle of Universal Love doesn't apply there, especially when it comes to our personal loved ones and friends?

## Spirituality and Healing - research, exploration, pedagogicals



### [Universal Divine Science - Spiritual Pedagogicals](#)

Unknown to the world, Mary Baker Eddy created a scientific monument in the form of a vast pedagogical structure for the advance of universal Divine Science. The pedagogical structure is so large that she made all of her major works a part of it, and so far-reaching that it may have been a contributor to the rare period of nearly 50 years of peace in the world between 1866 and 1914



### [Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures in Divine Science](#)

A special Divine Science exploration of Mary Baker Eddy's book, **Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures**, in a unique presentation interwoven with editorial notes and research into Mary Baker Eddy's pedagogical structure for what she hinted may be termed Divine Science.

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