

ECHOES IN THE UNIVERSE:

A Spiritual Memoir

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LEONARD GOODWIN

Mt. Juliet, Tennessee

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Dedication

To Gerri
Wife, Helper, Healer

and to the next generation
Cameron, Caleigh, Cullen, and Aaron

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Several poems in Acts 3, 4, 11, 12, 17 and 18 appeared in this author's earlier volume, *Journey Through Time*, 2000.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROLOGUE.....	1
ACT 1: IN THE BEGINNING.....	3
ACT 2: DOWN BUT NOT QUITE OUT.....	9
ACT 3: LIFE IS LOOKING UP.....	19
ACT 4: TRAVELS OF THE '36 DODGE.....	27
ACT 5: WAR COMES HOME.....	35
ACT 6: TEXAS SOJOURN.....	49
ACT 7: BACK NORTH.....	57
ACT 8: CHICAGO, BRANDEIS.....	63
ACT 9: DOCTORAL EFFORT.....	75
ACT 10: EARLHAM ADVENTURE.....	79
ACT 11: TO WASHINGTON DC.....	99
ACT 12: INDIA, PAKISTAN, KOREA TRANSIT.....	109
ACT 13: SOCIAL CHANGE.....	127
ACT 14: TO BROOKINGS INSTITUTION.....	133
ACT 15: TROUBLED TIMES.....	139
ACT 16: BROOKINGS FINALE.....	151
ACT 17: EXPERIMENT IN EDUCATION & FAMILY LIVING.....	157
ACT 18: ADVENTURES OF MAX.....	163
ACT 19: OVERLOAD.....	175
ACT 20: SPIRITUAL AWAKENING.....	185
ACT 21: EDUCATIONAL & RESEARCH RESULTS.....	191
ACT 22: SPIRITUAL CONTINUATION.....	197
ACT 23: TURNING POINT 1988.....	209
ACT 24: CALIFORNIA ADVENTURE.....	219
ACT 25: FAMILY AFFAIR.....	231
ACT 26: NEW HORIZONS.....	237

ACT 27: SPIRITUAL SURPRISE.....	247
ACT 28: CHANGE IN STATUS.....	255
ACT 29: MORE SPIRITUAL SURPRISES.....	259
ACT 30: HEART CRISIS.....	271
ACT 31: LIFE CONTINUES.....	287
ACT 32: ILLUMINATION.....	299
ACT 33: LAST DAYS ON THE MOUNTAIN.....	309
ACT 34: OFF WE GO AGAIN.....	315
ACT 35: FINAL MOVE.....	327
ACT 36: SPIRITUAL UPDATE & THE ROMAN PORTAL.....	331
EPILOGUE.....	347
NOTES.....	349

PROLOGUE

This volume recounts my adventures
in everyday living as
child, husband, father
teacher, social researcher
within the context of major social events
ranging from The Great Depression
World War II, the War On Poverty
to election of a Black President and
time beyond the Mayan calendar

It also recounts my adventures
in spiritual awareness
as I discover later in life
that I'm more than a physical body
and a transmitter of energy to the Earth
from the Sound Angel realm

The interplay of everyday experiences
with those in the spiritual realm
illustrates how challenges
orchestrated by Dark forces
—including for me, childhood traumas
and a near death heart attack—
can be welcomed and interwoven
with opportunities fostered by Light forces
to advance our creative development

*As we learn to welcome
all aspects of life
Storms and beauties of Nature
personal pleasures and strife
We'll find our human form
can do more than first appears
Our form can resonate and dance
to music of the spheres
Can dream of new creations
that benefit all beings*

*And broaden cosmic consciousness
beyond the bounds now seen*

This volume is a reminder
that each of us
is on a spiritual adventure
that's grounded in the Earth
and echoes in the Universe

ACT 1: IN THE BEGINNING

A Hard Landing

I entered this world
at the Brooklyn Jewish Hospital
two weeks before
the great stock market crash
of October 1929
Father was employed as a civil engineer
helping draw plans
for New York structures
such as the Chrysler
and Empire State buildings
Mother was a full time housewife
looking after my four year old sister
and me
As the Great Depression spread
building slowed
engineering jobs began to evaporate

I was experiencing
a medical problem:
my legs were bowing
At three years old
my parents were alarmed
Mother took me
to the free Public Clinic
at Bellevue Hospital in Manhattan
for examination

We'd leave early in the morning
travel by subway
receive a numbered card
wait till afternoon to be called
I had much time to observe
other children

with various disabilities
There was the boy
a few years older than me
with no legs
perched on a wheeled wooden board
he could propel
by pushing the wooden block
held in each hand
against the floor
He sailed around
the waiting room
having a great time
greeting everyone with good cheer
which struck me
as very brave

After many visits
tests, x-rays
doctors found no cause
for the bowing of my legs
classified my condition
as Vitamin D resistant Ricketts
recommended corrective surgery
(Years later my condition was identified
as a rare genetic bone disorder
the treatment for which is:
do nothing, let the body readjust)

Doctors convinced mother and father
that surgery would straighten my legs
and since my case was interesting
would be free of charge
I was not informed
about any of these matters

Hospital Trauma

On a cold, cloudy winter day

in February 1933
at age three plus 4 months

My favorite aunt
came to take me out
on what I presumed
was a pleasure trip

Instead
we took the subway
to Bellevue Hospital

The dull brick buildings
looked grimly foreboding
in the grey light

A memory of crossing a covered walk
between two buildings
looking down on the yard below
containing the remains
of blackened snow

Then, *Nothing*

The next vague memory
was awakening
in a metal frame bed
in a large ward with 20 or 30
similar beds
lined up in rows

I was in a body cast
above my hips
Both legs had been broken
and re-set
after bone removal
above the knee

I seemed to be screaming
in terror
as nurses
in starched white caps and uniforms
held me down
placed a pillow
over my face

to muffle the cries
that were disturbing
the entire ward

(It was years
before fear of suffocation
and phobic reaction to white uniforms
subsided)

My parents had thought to visit
immediately after the operation
But Scarlet Fever
broke out on the ward
and it was quarantined

When I received by mail a toy
or stuffed animal from home
nurses took it away
placed it in a large cardboard box
in the center of the ward

They'd distribute
the contents of the box
to those children best behaved
I received nothing

Two months later
just before quarantine was lifted
nurses warned us
to say nothing about the large box
When my parents finally visited
and asked about the toys
they'd sent
I kept silent
very silent

Removal of my cast
was painful
exposing the boils
that had developed
underneath

which burned
 when washed with alcohol
 Re-learning how to walk
 imposed further difficulty
 especially as I was fitted
 with leg braces that were supposed
 to help straighten my bones
 but were an encumbrance

I distinctly remember a breakfast tray
 that held an unappetizing bowl of
 cooked cereal
 and a bright orange-frosted cupcake
 I reached for the cupcake
 but was stopped by the nurse
 and told the cereal must be eaten first
 I made a firm decision:
 Not to cooperate
 with these people
 any longer
 Refused all food
 ready to end my earthly adventure
 But that eventuality was forestalled
 by departure from the ward

Hospital Departure

I was seated at a small table
 near the ward entrance
 when mother arrived
 to take me home
 As she passed by
 I tried to call out
 but no sound emerged
 from my constricted throat
 She went to my bed
 saw it was empty
 turned around

finally spied me
at the table
Her first words were
Why didn't you call to me
I could have gone home
without you
She then tried to help
me up and walk
with the leg braces
I rejected her offer
having decided
not to trust anyone else
for help
Neither mother, father, sister
nor my aunt
ever inquired
of my hospital experience
and I never volunteered information
that seemed unwanted

After several months
the leg braces were discarded
as father could see they
seriously distorted my walk
affecting my hips and spine
and failed to stop further bowing
which eventually ceased on its own
But other challenges
were in the offing