

ACCIDENTS

A LEGAL MISADVENTURE

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Accidents

A Legal Misadventure

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To Marilyn:
My wife, my support, my rock

*“When we are born,
we cry that we are come to this great stage of fools.”*

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

*“The devil speaks truth much oftener than he’s deemed.
He hath an ignorant audience.”*

—LORD BYRON BEING QUOTED BY
JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE IN
CONVERSATIONS WITH ECKERMANN

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Chapter I: The Beginning

Tall, lissome, rangy, she came into my life like a gorgeous flux of stardust in the tail sweep of a comet. Laura.

There was this arousing languor in your walk, this quintessence of graceful sensuality. All your movements radiated from the groin. I saw this lovely redhead with skin of alabaster cream. I was hysterical. I wanted her at once. But there was no chance for a quick conquest. She wanted a relationship, she was intelligent, she was interesting. This was a challenge beyond my limited coping skills.

“Limited coping skills” is the operative phrase. I am living alone at the beach. My law office is closed. The interminable greed of countless rapacious clients has exhausted me. The question “who am I?” now replacing “where is my next case coming from?” “Who am I?” leading to “I am not who I am.” I am sounding like Shakespeare’s Iago, but I am not a villain, just a pathetic burnout clinging tenaciously to the edge of oblivion.

I am living alone on the Old Malibu Beach Road located in the western extremity of Los Angeles. My apartment consists of a few spartan rooms resting on stilts plunged into the sand overlooking the Pacific Ocean. No place to go from here. Walk to the north and it's a dead-end. To the west is the roiling sea. To the south an unthinkable return to civilization.

All surrounding structures supported by piers sunk into the beach. Tides perpetually washing wildly below. Shivering rhythms radiating upward through trembling pilings. Overwhelming cascades of sound. Waves washing in with inundating roars, followed by susurrations of foam bursting into nacreous bubbles. Then everything suspended in a moment of breathless silence followed by endless repetitions of the same cycle.

Large white egrets jauntily chasing waves, stiletto beaks burrowing into foaming wakes. Dogs capering on wet sand. A quicksilver tableau. Everything etched with crystalline clarity, the plunge and weight of object against space in incandescent delineation. So much clarity that I've lost perspective.

I see a pebble and to me it's a Himalaya. A gopher hole becomes a giant chasm. My perceptions upended, I am embedded in a fog of antithesis. I am blinded by the clarity.

Everything has changed. I used to care but now I am dedicated to nothing. There is power in this, for dedication, even to nothing, remains a force even if it leads nowhere. St. Francis of Assisi says that a dedicated man can go anywhere and among any kind of men, even the worst kind, as long as there is nothing by which they can hold him. The world has lost its hold on me. My old conceptions are rotting away like the barnacled piers vibrating under my feet. My blurred past has faded into mists of silhouette, consigned to a shadow world, a twilight of retrospective chiaroscuro.

There are still tears for the past. I weep for everyone I've hurt, but the tears are now for me, not for them. I've shaken loose from the others and their constant demands. I'm slowly making my way, silently blooming in this roaring vacuum of terraqueous space.

I think of the past, trying to remember when things started coming together. Was it when Master Lee taught me how to shut down my mind? I will be talking about him and his diminutive karate studio incongruously sitting in a forest of commercial buildings. But no, it began much earlier. I had my first glimpse of the transcendental power of change long before Master Lee, when I was a little boy in military school.

Exiled unwillingly into an unfamiliar world of robotic

martinets, I felt the need to withdraw into a dreamscape and engrossed myself in Howard Pease adventure tales. Stories of men on wild seas, shipwrecked and wading ashore in distant archipelagoes. Men who touched land and encountered chilling drumbeats in the darkness. I see them again in my dreams, dead lichens clinging to their necks and arms, glistening verdigris splotching their skin. Men tracking through forested terrain, glaucous night pollens snowing down on their twisted faces. I see them falling to their knees, clinging to earth for dear life with a desperate, terrestrial, Antaeon gesture. Trying to hold onto the reality they had known before while holding back the primitive darkness taking them over. I, too, feel the darkness coming on and the irresistible metamorphosis it brings, the melting away in the encroaching void into which people stare and see only their own hideous reflections.

Laura, my mind keeps coming back to you. I still carry the faint smell of your flesh under my fingernails and the soft imprint of your gossamer hair on my cheeks, but these are just ephemeral lees I encounter in the darkness. I need more than vague hieroglyphics conjugated into half-articulated memories. I need to swell again between your legs and feel your undulating body writhing underneath me.

I should have been more articulate about my feelings, but would it have made a difference? Was not the slow mutation away from closeness inevitable? I remember the soft touch of your eyelashes combing through my pooling tears and the longing is unbearable. I tried to expose to you my vulnerability. I doled it out a little at a time, a taste here, a glimpse there, trying to keep my shaky balance while giving you what you demanded. I danced around your flame like a demented moth, but you kept demanding more, insisting that I was afraid to “open up” even though I tried to flow through the net of words that pulled us apart.

I am reading a book entitled “Prophets of New India,” written by Romain Rolland. Henry Miller, the great writer, recommended it in his treatise “The Books In My Life.” In it, a spiritual giant from India named Vivekananda says life is “the tendency of the unfoldment and development of a being under circumstances tending to press it down.” Now I have embraced this wisdom as my personal declaration of independence.

I am drawn to individuals who defiantly eschew categorization. My friends Rich and The Fatman, who will be part of this story, hide themselves under the radar, so to speak, dancing carefully around the compartmentalization of others. Their psyches are forced into

bizarre, marginal worlds that belie common standards of classification. They function behind a veneer of false impressions that blur how outré they really are. The system ‘presses them down’ with its mandated false reality which they never forget is adventitious bullshit. They balance themselves over the paradox and are drawn to me because I embrace their awareness. Master Lee understands this need for clarity. He knows he can’t evaluate a man unless he spars with him. His only friends are those whose character he can decipher through the act of combat. There is no ambiguity in his standard for authenticity. He has reduced life to its lowest common denominator not unlike my friend Henry Miller, who proclaimed in *Tropic Of Cancer*: “I have no money, no resources, no hopes. I am the happiest man alive.” No more “borrowed robes” for him. No more false reality.

Even though I am lost in these musings, Laura, I am still thinking of you as I stare into a restive, indigo sea churning outside my window. The refrigerator has stopped humming, accentuating the silence of my contemplations. A relentless fly drones around my head, its shrill whine orchestrating the unchanging cadence of my breathing. I am wondering: if ecstasy is offered to me again, am I ready for it? Perhaps now I’m ready for anything, ready to soak up everything that comes

my way, like the lovely girls Richie brings down to the beach for me to devour.

Yes, Richie, you brought Laura down to me, another offering to a friend whose withdrawal you found so endlessly amusing. I was pleased to amuse you because you kept rewarding me with an unending supply of sexual provender. I gladly became your jester by the shore, relief from the harsh intensity of your litigious existence. Yes, my friend, I was pleased to dance for you until you brought down Laura, and then everything changed.

I am lying on my living room floor, squinting involuntarily into the streaming laser beam of intense light swimming through the double glass doors leading to the beach. The sun is beginning to set and I am thinking of how alone I am and of the distances between the stars and their invisibility in the daytime. Of the invisibility of loneliness even though feeling it while holding Laura in my arms and of the spaces that expand between us intruding into our closeness.

Laura, how little I understood you. After a month of courtship you agreed to accompany me to Solvang, a sleepy little Danish settlement snuggled inland a few miles from the Santa Barbara coastline. It was to be just for dinner. It was a very cold winter night. Just in case things went my way, I reserved a room in a small motel

and told the concierge to turn on the heating system in advance of our arrival.

Yes, we end up at the motel. We enter the room and are immediately engulfed in its warmth. You fall into my arms. You tell me how cool I am. I'm feeling for the first time the unmistakable frisson of your sexual longings. In a breathless frenzy, we are suddenly lying on the bed nude wrapped in each others' arms. We talk about closeness and inseparability and I gently enter your glistening red muff. I am suddenly aware of your sound. I can never forget it. A rush of air from parted lips, a metaphysical exhalation, as it were, that suffuses the room with enchantment. It haunts me still as I write these words.

We fall asleep in each others' arms. The next morning I awaken and you greet me with hyperborean glaciality. The entire drive home you hardly look at me. As we enter Los Angeles, you finally speak: "I don't want you to ever bring up what happened between us in Solvang." You are enveloped in an armored penumbra of impenetrable remoteness. I take you home and for days you refuse to take my calls. And now the outside world is intruding. Even as I remain in this state of disquieting upheaval, Richie is not letting up. He is calling me constantly, demanding a report on Laura. I am avoiding him. He suspects that I have feelings for her.

Richie is getting very angry at my avoidance. For years, it has been my wont to go to dinner with him after he sets me up with a date. During the meal he will ply me with questions about my sexual activities in general and any new date in particular. Since I rarely get laid unless he fixes me up or brings ladies to my place at the beach, I am usually happy to answer his questions. This time I am not responding.

Our tacit understanding has been that if he introduced me to the girl about whom he is inquiring, and I get lucky, I must give him a description of the sexual event. He will not be brushed off with a mere overview. He demands a full elaboration of the minutiae. If I deign to provide him with details, his focus becomes so intense that it is palpable. To him, the woman is always the enemy. If she resists my advances, she is a cunt, a bitch. If I feel romantic about her he is disgusted with me because I am weak. If I describe progress in the seduction, he throws short right and left jabs into the air. If I mount the girl, his imaginary opponent is down for the count and his face is suffused with victory. The threat is over. To him, sex is always mortal combat, and the more emotional detachment I show the more respect I get. Now he's hunting me down offering a bribe of dinner at my favorite restaurant.



