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# FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

BY EZEKIEL J. KRAHLIN



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**Randolph Taylor**  
"Please help me stop the dying."



# FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

A Real Life Gay Fairytale  
Of Divine Proportion

*by Ezekiel J. Krahlín*



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# Foreward

The tales told in this novel are all based on actual and extraordinary events, (except those which I claim are true, but not really: ha-ha) embellished with my own Gonzo-style flights of fancy. Therefore it is both fiction and nonfiction. Or as some would call it: a “pseudo-autobiography.”

*Disclaimer: Most people appearing in this work are fictitious, often a composite of three or more people whom I greatly admire (though w/o their knowledge). Any resemblance of a fictitious character to a real person is purely coincidental. There are but five real names in this novel:*

*Jesse Balmer*

*Gary Clayton*

*Eleanor Cooney*

*Susan Crummit*

*Randolph Taylor*

All chapters herein were originally posted to my Wordpress blog, embellished with images and, in some instances, videos. My paper and ebook versions therefore, exclude these images and videos, but provide in certain cases, web links to such media as bonus supplements to the novel. Another solution would have been to provide an accompanying DVD to the paper version, or inclusion of said media in ebook format. Both of which methods would prove terribly cost prohibitive, as well as logistically tortuous. I am not a millionaire (or even a thousand-aire).

Though I assure my readers that such limitations do not sacrifice the integrity, enjoyment, or wisdom imparted from the original blog chapters, to paper or ebook equivalent.

The illustrator for all my chapters (excluding book cover and the tiny “zekeheart” on cover page), is one S., Rohan. Her work is amazing, as you

are about to see! If you'd like to hire Ms. Rohan, please contact her at:

<http://tinyurl.com/s-rohan>

*FYI: the concepts for every illustration in my book are my own (Ezekiel J. Krahlín, author), and not that of the illustrator.*

Kind Reader: may my novel inspire you towards great achievements and inspiration in you own life! This is my gift to the world, starting with the LGBT community.

Sincerely,

Ezekiel Joseph Krahlín (formerly, Eugene Frank Catalano)

PS: Proof of my legal name-change can be found here:

<http://tinyurl.com/gene-to-zeke>

\* \* \*

## Thank You

---

Immense thanks to author Eleanor Cooney, my gay-activist alter ego from the east coast Carlyle Lambourne, mother of “Snack Boy” Susan Crummitt, compatriot of many years Sean Huntington, Tamara the Laundromat Lady, and my brother Vince Catalano: for all their loving support, patience and wisdom that made this book possible. And finally, greatest gratitude towards our wonderful LGBT community for not going easy on me. It's been a whirlwind, a riot, and a splendid Odyssey that will never end! Long live the queens.





Illustration by S. Rohan

## **Chapter I**

### *Free me from this Bond*

Date: Thu, 15 Mar 2012 21:47:56

From: Zeke

To: Eleanor

Subject: Free Me From This Bond!!!

Dearest Eleanor:

I beg your forgiveness in my conclusion that promoting your book for free, or for as little money as possible, is no more simply accomplished than

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

should the Internet *not* exist. Where would we be then: laundromat and university bulletin boards? calling in to radio talk shows? parading oneself around at various coffeehouses, bars and clubs, like some evangelist of your glorious novel? Ha!

[ Dear Reader, please note: I am referring here to Eleanor Cooney's latest novel coauthored with Daniel Altieri: "Iron Empress: A Novel of Murder and Madness in T'ang China (Court of the Lion)". Which you may find at Amazon.com: search by author name. ]

*There is only room enough for one earthly prophet, and I am that!*

Would've said "he" instead of "that," but out of respect for the noble, gracious, and heroic history of Woman's Struggle, I give you: *that*. And, of course, to mock the patriarchy, a foolish notion if ever there was one!

For Arwyn, darling Arwyn, has entered my life once again, and boy is he such a sweet angel! You remember it was because of my school-girl infatuation of that Saucy Welsh Knave, that I became lovestruck-inspired to compose not just *one* novel around him, but *two*: "The Arwyn Chronicles" and "Friendly Ghost Detective Agency". For which I paid dearly, with 3 months' feverish typing late into the night, that resulted in CTS in both fore-arms and RSI in each hand, with a touch of focal dystonia to spice things up.

Which latter title you inspired me to transform from a chapter of the former, into its own unique opus. And that is precisely what occurred, so thank you very much, O Madame of the Luminous Void! It makes so much sense at this point of my awakening, that Book 2 should remain an unfinished novel, a work in progress.

I want you to know that I have walked many dark paths in search of truth these past 30-odd years, in order to give birth to the next revolution: The Gay (or Homosexual, or Queer) Revolution!

*I have not been disappointed, but Dear Goddess, I sure as Hades came close to giving up the ghost countless times throughout my scatterbrained life, whenever I found myself confronting way too much so-called "reality" in such a wickedly brief amount of time!*

And it starts with the blossoming of the fine friendship (a.k.a. "bro-mance") between myself, and the impeccable Arwyn Miles!

*And now that I have found truth: truth must be told!*

Whoever Arwyn truly is in the scheme of things (and who I am likewise): nevertheless am I lifted off my feet and swept into a dimension totally immersed in love and joy and friendship and gay hypersex!

(*To be continued...*)

\* \* \*

Date: Fri, 16 Mar 2012 07:51:18

From: Zeke

To: Eleanor

Subject: Re: Free Me From This Bond!!!

Quoting Eleanor:

{{ *Is this truly so????? That's sublimely wonderful!!!!!!!!!!!!!!* }}

I'm pinching myself, too! If this is just another excellent manic phase, I have to confess that a lot of other folks are going through it at the same time. More later...

(Had a *great* time last night, though I did wake up in my own bed.)

\* \* \*

Date: Fri, 16 Mar 2012 09:46:41

From: Zeke

To: Eleanor

Subject: Re: Free Me From This Bond!!!

It was a dark and stormy night; I danced in my galoshes and hoody yellow raincoat down Castro Street toward 18th, reveling in the glory that is the Rain Goddess's own shower of benevolence upon this lone pilgrim: *Arwyn is back in my life* (though he never really left, of course)! Our paths started crossing again several weeks ago, and with greater and greater frequency, till now it's almost every day. Well, that's a bit of a white lie; let's say about thrice per awesome week.

Flashback 2005:

Our friendship shiny new, like a green bud barely burst from the xylem, I had stepped into the Hole in the Wall Saloon off Folsom Street, sporting a quartz crystal that hung from a resinous cord about my neck. Barely an inch long and a fourth as wide, it sparkled in its natural, pentagonal glory;

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

flat on one end, blunted tip the other; with a pleasant, ruddy touch to it, like beeswax. From within danced a lavender spirit.

Can't remember at this moment (as I type), what meaning this crystal held for me, but I do sense it was quite special. I am *not* superstitious or caught up into worshiping material items (nor big into jewelry and self adornment). But how this crystal came to me was nothing less than a small miracle, and probably had to do with my beloved Randolph Louis Taylor; who I now believe, sent Arwyn here as my Great Guardian of Life.

Yes, I remember now (somewhat): it came to represent the *bullet* with which Randolph shot himself at The Wall (*Vietnam Veterans Memorial, D.C.*), back in 16 January 1985. One day, that crystal will be replaced by (or transformed into) the *real* bullet. Which I first felt as a lump in his back, lodged firmly against (and partly into) the right shoulder blade, before a surgeon finally removed it some months later. Long, angry scars already cross-hatched his back, like the scourge of a whip.

I touched them, too. Bone-white keratinous comet trails of Agent Orange neatly incised by an unknown soldier's cold scalpel. My fingers shivered as the icy demon traveled up my arm and penetrated to the bone, even unto marrow. A tear trickled down his arched back with the T-shirt scrunched up, that I may see such youthful freckles and a promise of Liberation writ therein.

\* \* \*

Date: Fri, 16 Mar 2012 22:32:51

From: Zeke

To: Eleanor

Subject: Re: Free Me From This Bond!!!

Flashback 2005 (cont'd):

So I walk into the Hole in the Wall with a glittery amethyst crystal (which acquisition I cannot recall at this time, but I'm sure I was daydreaming about my Randolph when someone placed a small, faux lizard skin textured, lily white rectangular box in my hand). This crystal danced joyfully upon my throat's chakra (that indentation on one's neck, just below the larynx). But somehow, in yanking off my winter scarf or jacket, I also jerk the crystal clean off its binding with a sudden *zing!* And it vanishes to parts unknown,

though surely in a radius not exceeding 10 feet. At least, that's what my ears tell me, since my eyes did not follow. For the saloon is dark, with ink stained horse flesh curtained windows, and lit only by scattered candlelight and a few dim overhead fixtures.

So barkeep Gary whips out this enormous yard long, metallic *dildo* from below the cabinet, turns it in my direction and presses the vibrate button. But wait, it doesn't vibrate; it lights up instead, bathing me like a Hollywood beacon (or an officer's head lamps trapping me in Golden Gate Park by the windmills, paying a rakish hobo for a blow job: your choice). Like a--like, umm--like a *flashlight*, 'cause that's what it really is (I soon realize, as my sun kissed, sidewalk fevered eyes grow accustomed to the Stygian dusk.)

Bearded Hobbit Gary ("Garden Gnome Gary" also works) puts all his concentration into locating this crystal, methodically covering every square inch of the deeply gouged and splintered oakwood floor to a perimeter far exceeding the likely landfall. Alas he comes up empty, to which I remark:

"It's only a crystal, Gary, I'll get over it. But thanks so much for the bother; I don't even know how I got it." By then, Arwyn had stepped in to witness Gary's spotlight search, and decides to perform his own examination of the scummiest floor this side of Bryant Street.

FYI, if you don't already know, Hole in the Wall is themed for Satanists and Hell's Angels of the homosexual variety. It's dark, skanky, and often vulgar; as are most of its regular patrons (who frequently spit on the floor). Kind of a queer version of O'Henry or Steinbeck...or maybe even Nosferatu. But it is the only gay bar I know of, that plays *real* rock 'n' roll; not a drop of disco to be found anywhere, within its four or five (counting the open door lavatory with an ice cube filled trough in which to pee) walls. A dragon formed of colorful lights and copper wire spreads its eclectic wings over the entire saloon, in a frozen flight that defies any ceiling.

So he lifts the searchlight from Gary's hold, and sweeps the floor first around my feet (where they relax upon the bar's footrest), then radiates further out, stopping short of the nearest wall. Still, no luck. But I care not about my crystal (or any crystal), when such a fine and glorious lad like Arwyn is paying me some attention, and making all sorts of physical maneuvers that I can admire from many angles, as he slowly swings the heavy rod across the splintery boards, methodically leaving no square inch unanointed by the light.

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

Coming up empty-handed just like Gary, he says to me, "Sorry!" and hands the flashlight back to the barkeep. But the moment he does, he freezes, and says, "Wait, I feel something!" indicating his left foot which heel part he holds frozen an inch above the floor. Arwyn then steps back a bit, and collapses his gangly 6-foot-7 frame to pick up the object that had pressed against his heel like a stone. *It's the crystal!* And he hands it to me:

"Aaarrrrgh! Thar she blows!"

"Wow, thanks Arwyn!" I commend. To which he replies:

"Do you get it? Do you get the message?" while gazing deep into my eyes with those smoldering dark coppery irises, I've never seen the like!

He is The Dragon!

And I respond with utter sincerity and infinite joy:

"Yes! *You* are the light." The rest is all implied, no words spoken, but all the same, telepathy declares the remainder: "Not some stupid candle or electric torch. You ARE my light, that guides me safely home through all peril; to your heart, to your smile, to your most darling affections. My gratitude is eternal!"

"Good!" he says, then turns his glorious, copper-haired Hibernian frame around, and exits through the horsehide curtains to tend to other pressing events which (I have no doubt) have something to do with defending, furthering, assisting, or celebrating, the gay spirit.

Or perhaps he just stepped outside for another smoke.

--End of Flashback 2005.

\* \* \*

Date: Sat, 17 Mar 2012 13:38:46

From: Zeke

To: Eleanor

Subject: Re: Free Me From This Bond!!!

Quoting Eleanor:

{{ *Beautiful! Suspenseful! Transcendent!* }}

The Muses *do* turn their gaze upon my humble soul. This is a Great Blessing in my life, as is Arwyn, My Fighting Welsh Angel. *Thank you too, Eleanor!*

More to come!...

\* \* \*

Date: Sat, 17 Mar 2012 18:20:26

From: Zeke

To: Eleanor

Subject: Re: Free Me From This Bond!!!

Quoting Eleanor:

{{ *An ice-cube-filled trough in which to pee? That's a new one. To keep it fresh?* }}

Don't know about that, I guess so. But one thing I'm sure of: it certainly keeps the *men* fresh!

*[drumroll]*

I'm surprised you didn't know that many gay bars--particularly the lower-class ones, where brawls and cat fights occur with phenomenal frequency--come with public troughs for urinals. It's a long, porcelain conduit (about seven feet), filled with gallons of those mini ice cubes.

Plus, there's an equally long mirror just above the trough. For your viewing pleasure, of course. Though most intimidating for those of us without impressive girth and length, so we tend to stand at the far end, angled away and pissing against the side. Or we simply wait until the room empties.

Arwyn has a way with making a sound effect whenever he whips it out: *thunk!* Don't know how he does that, it sounds *just* like someone dropped a large, heavy block of wood on a thinly carpeted cement floor. Of course I look away; I'm not the eyeballing type, and I do respect him totally. But the first time I heard Arwyn's impressive noise, we were alone in the urinal (well, not *in* the urinal but some day, perhaps). I flashed him a side glance with an expression like "Really?" before he zipped it up and exited. Arwyn's always a lark.

Then there was the time a rather handsome gent sidled up to me, and began jacking me off. Stupid bartender Gary needed something from the rest room right at that moment (there's extra storage space for sundries tucked behind the toilet) and kicked us both out. Not outta the entire bar, mind you, just the urinal. Sadly, the gorgeous dude who lent me a rather talented hand, got so embarrassed, he slipped out the front door posthaste; and with a mighty itchy palm no doubt. For you see, I had the crabs. Ha ha,

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

just joking. It was chiggers. Ha, joking again. No I'm not. Yes I am. It was a raging case of herpes.

This trough/mirror/ice cube motif is common across the gay nation. What with your youthful adventures, and gay friends, I was certain you already knew. Be that as it may, I guess the cold cubes keep the steamy urine's odor from invading our noses like Visigoths in Marseilles.

What was the first gay bar to provide iced-filled troughs as a second sort-of watering hole, where both men and boys could gather and check each other out? I have no idea, but it might prove worthwhile to uncover (or unzip, as the case may be. Though "unzipping" has a totally different meaning for us CyberGeeks...reminds me when Cookie Mobster and friend Socrates at an early gathering of the Berkeley Unix User Group which I founded in 2000, pulled out their Palm Pilots and exchanged info by waving them at each other; and they called it "safe hex").

I have this scenario for a stand-up comic entertaining at gay urinals. Wearing a raincoat of course, because they'll piss all over me whenever I crack a joke that strikes 'em as a tad too corny. What a great occupation for a size queen like me! But work is work, no matter the venue; or as I like to say: "*Just another day at the orifice*".

*How many queers does it take to screw in a lightbulb?*

(noticeable pause)

*Just two, but it better be a damn big lightbulb!*

[drumroll]

*Old Arab saying: "I'd walk a mile for a camel, two for a sheep or goat, and three for a boy".*

Oh, and this one's for St. Patty's Day (coz it's a limerick, silly):

*I once knew an alien from Venus / Who had two holes in his penis. / When we went to bed, / The first thing he said / Was: "I think there is something between us."*

And this:

*Is that a leprechaun in your pocket, or are you glad to see me?*

0\_o

*Take my domestic partner, please.*

At this point, I'll probably need a short break, or drown in urine.

Cheerz, El!

\* \* \*

Date: Sat, 17 Mar 2012 19:47:22

From: Zeke

To: Eleanor

Subject: Re: Free Me From This Bond!!!

Quoting Eleanor:

{{ *I knew about the trough, but not the ice.* }}

Sorry, I misunderstood. :\

{{ *Proly it has to be refreshed pretty frequently, what with the hot urine constantly melting it.* }}

Yep. Usually that job goes to the barback. This being Saint Paddy's Day, I'm sure all the cubes are green. Except for the cubic hairs, of course.

*[drumroll]*

{{ *That would be a good entry-level job for an ambitious up-and-comer: Gay bar pee-trough ice-boy.* }}

Gay bar subculture is pretty darn amazing. And I've only glimpsed a sliver (coz me an' alcohol don't mix well; my dream is to open the world's first gay marijuana infusion and herbal tea bar). There's an entire male culture at places like The Hole; Monday nights you're welcome to strut around in your underwear. I did that, once, lotsa fun. Well, Arwyn's presence made it fun; he kept checking out my legs. Gave me a lot of sweet attention that night, and of course I drank it all in (to the very last drop)!

There's sometimes a Nekked Nite too. Stepped into one by accident: lots of saggy old men with flaccid...everything. Meh.

{{ *I think we should make Rick Santorum do his community service thusly. In his sweater vest and nothing else.* }}

Wouldn't last a minute in there. He'd come to a sad end, like Mussolini. They'd put his remains on ice, and display him in a glass tomb at Harvey Milk Plaza. The plaque will say:

*Herein lies a great disgrace:*

*One man's arse is another*

*Man's face.*

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Did I mention they'd replace his head in that tomb, with Rick Warren's butt? Cheerz, El!

\* \* \*

Date: Sat, 17 Mar 2012 18:20:26

From: Zeke

To: Eleanor

Subject: Re: Free Me From This Bond!!!

We're showing our age, scratching our heads over why there's ice in urinals, if it's just a gay-bar thing or something more widely applied; when we have something called the Interwebs, with search hickies no less! So I asked the oracle at DuckDuckGo.com the obvious question, and got many informative results, such as:

<http://tinyurl.com/icy-urinals>.

\* \* \*

Date: Sun, 18 Mar 2012 20:24:41

From: Zeke

To: Eleanor

Subject: Re: Free Me From This Bond!!!

Quoting Eleanor:

*{{ Welp, I'm guessing you've spent more time in men's rooms than I have. }}*

It would seem that way. Now I'm blogging about it. This is worrisome. :P  
*{{ Did you ever see ice in a general-population urinal, either trough-style or regular-style? }}*

My modest stipend does not afford me the luxury of clubbing and eating out at various bistros et al...where you would likely find an iced up trough now and then. So I'm certainly not the right person to interview for this topic. Ask Mitch. Tee-hee.

*{{ And I'm guessing the trough-style urinal would be more of a gay-bar sort of fixture, for obvious reasons. Nyet? }}*

I'd have to agree: the whole bathroom milieu is a staple of gay folklore. But the icy trough probably got its start in rather mundane environs, such as the Silver Dollar Saloon in Mobridge, South Dakota: a mixed Indian/white

bar that I visited whilst on a five-week archeological dig as an undergrad, during which stay I turned 21 and imbibed my first legal elixir...

and got laid by a traveling musician right out of Iowa City, who sang and played electronic keyboard at some sleazy one-horse town night club, theme song: "Everything is Beautiful in its Own Way," though his nether parts left me open to doubt. It was a 2-night affair, after which each time I had to hike 1.2 miles (along a dark desert highway, cool wind in my hair; yes, *I had hair back then: shining gleaming flaxen waxen long beautiful hair, right down to my shoulder blades.*) With rednecks and screamingly drunk Lakota natives barreling down the road at 95 mph 4 in the morning, shouting "Yeehaw" and blowing me wolf whistles and cat calls as they rumbled by. Until I finally arrived at my rented bungalow where all five crew members had to arise at precisely 6am.

*Real* gay men might cry at a chick flick, but we sure know how to turn a urinal into an altar of masculine adulation. The trough, of course, makes one think of horse cock. Or cowboy schlong. Or both. Though for the most part, should some drunkard fairy lay a hand on my fly, I say "Neigh". A thousand times "Neigh" (by which time I've had the calloused blue-collar hand job, the turgid passion of fleshly male bonding and, of course, the Ejaculatory Aftermath: wham bam, thank you Sam). o\_O

BTW, I once blew a handsome radio host in the urinal of the old Stud Bar at its original location on Folsom and 12th. That was back in 1986. He's since risen to international stardom in the free-form tradition of a live, outdoor audience. I tune him in every Tuesday eve on FM radio. Nine inches of gorgeous man-meat; I drool in recollection.

I like to think I gave him his start in show biz. A good BJ is *most empowering*. Plus: I work magic with my tongue. Good times.

\* \* \*

Date: Sun, 18 Mar 2012 20:24:41

From: Zeke

To: Eleanor

Subject: Re: Free Me From This Bond!!!

It is indeed a dark and stormy night as I prance down Castro Street already somewhat drunk (thanks to my personal stash of cheap booze), and

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enter Toad Hall on 18th. Two more vodka tonics later I stumble outside, hoping to pick up some young hustler planning to dope me and then steal my money and valuables once we get home, under the premise of showing me a good time. Of course, at my advanced age of 61, “young” means anyone under 55, so long as he’s at least an eight. (Of course when you’re soused, there seem to gather ‘round you, a lot more hotties in the 8-10 range than when sober. Go figure.)

My secret is to conceal anything particularly valuable (such as my real wallet and personal papers, \$200 android tablet and spare, refurbished portable laptop purchased via Ebay for less than \$300), and lock down my main \$425 laptop with a combo lock and alloy steel cable wrapped around a vertical cubbyhole shelf built into the desk. Which then makes the date-rape drug a free high, and the odds of my actually getting laid--or at least mightily felt up on parts that still count (such as my aching lower back)--greatly increased.

FYI, in the queer community, date rape is not a crime, it is a highly prized form of sexual intrigue. Especially among the low income but still horny, elderly citizens such as myself. And when I say “low income” I mean the very low, such as SRO dwellers, who really don’t have anything worth stealing in the first place, except perhaps a few possessions, all easily concealed in one’s closet, ground-score file cabinets (converted to clothing and pantry drawers), or in boxes under the desk covered by worthless magazines and ripe underwear.

*By the way, I am only saying these things to worry my lovely Arwyn, and bring out his protective instincts. I do none of the things just described above: I might get a little drunk now and then, but do keep to myself, wishing with all my soul, for his funtabulous company. Even with our clothes on, so long as we are in each other’s arms, munching popcorn while watching the latest Pirate-Bay-ripped DVD.*

*I’m being honest now, because I know that Arwyn will finally read this, and I don’t want to come off like a cheap loganberry tart. Yes, I do play around now and then, but it’s only for lack of your darling warmth. Okay, Arwyn? I’m sure when you come to realize what a blessing I regard you in my life, you’ll come running to my side, and never leave. I’ll give you three more months, then I’m moving to Portland to weep away the rest of my sorry life; and try to forget you, which I know will be a futile endeavor. You can always reach me by email:*

*<http://tinyurl.com/email-zeke>*

Toad Hall is a nasty place to hang out. Named after the original Toad Hall that burned down in 1979 (which original site is around the corner), this present incarnation only has the name in common, but none of the amenities. It is always super noisy, thanks to the cranked-up speakers, and has about as much personality as a dead rotting whale picked clean by seagulls and mestizo gang bangers along the Great Highway. To be fair, one can say the same for *any* gay bar here in the Castro. But it does have a large picture window that allows me to gaze upon the passersby, in hopes of spotting Arwyn, or my next victim of conjugal pretense.

As usual, nothing interesting is going on, either side of the plate glass. So I finish off the overpriced swill and step back out onto the street where, by this time (well after witching hour) the rain has diminished into a wet, cold drizzle, and a bold crescent moon hangs low over the Edwardian houses on Collingwood Street. (Where my good friend Marvin once lived, till he passed away from AIDS back in 1992; same year that I last heard from Randolph. It was a sad time. Come to think of it, I've had many sad times living here; though I hold my head high, even when on my knees and blowing some dude in the bushes. *Just teasing you, Arwyn. The bushes are long gone.*)

[drumroll]

No sooner do I make my exit than--*thar she blows!*--Arwyn appears on the other side of the street in a fast pace towards that ridiculously expensive supermarket, Mollie Stone's, which replaced the old DeLonghi's (which replaced the still older Cala Foods. I've been here a long time; I walk among ghosts more than real people these days). I hurry across the street to be sure my voice reaches him:

"Arwyn! You have a beautiful night, I love you and Goddess bless!"

Now, it has been his usual habit since my departure from Hole in the Wall four or five years ago, to either (1) completely ignore me, or (2) more recently, acknowledge my presence with a friendly nod or wave of the hand. But to my delighted surprise, he turns tail and speeds back in my direction. I can hardly contain myself, like an old friendly Labrador greeting its beloved guardian.

Suddenly, the whole world loves me. More than anyone else. More even than Jesus, the Eiffel Tower, Randy Crawford singing "One Day I'll Fly Away" (the 1980 version), your domestic partner returned in one piece from Vietnam (or Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Korea, or whatever hellhole that

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

has taken him away for a terrible and grievous time), a box of chocolates from Forrest Gump, a sweet child suffering cancer (and she is *your* darling daughter), quacky little ducklings chasing you around on the moist green grass by Stowe Lake...or Fry, Bender and Leela from Futurama.

To be continued...

\* \* \*

From: Zeke

To: Eleanor

Subject: Re: Free Me From This Bond!!!

Quoting Eleanor:

*{{ BTW, I asked Mitch about ice in urinals. He said he's only seen it in men's rooms in bars, and he always assumed that it was there because it's a convenient way for the bartender to dispose of "old" ice, in addition to keeping the pee-smell down. He said he saw a trough-type urinal in an Oregon bar, and that it had continuously flowing water (Oregon has no water shortage at all), so no ice. }}*

I love Oregon. Especially in spaghetti sauce...ummmm. You actually asked Mitch; that's cute.

\* \* \*

Date: Wed, 21 Mar 2012 12:58:16

From: Zeke

To: Eleanor

Subject: Re: Free Me From This Bond!!!

Quoting Eleanor:

*{{ Looking forward to savoring your latest installment in an unhurried wayyou're a damned good writer, Zeke. }}*

I blush. Thank you. And thank you for such tremendous support. I wouldn't have gotten this far w/o it. Wait until you read it...it put ME through a lot of changes! I must've shed buckets of joyful tears in the process, now I need a mop.

\* \* \*

Date: Fri, 23 Mar 2012 12:43:07

From: Zeke

To: Eleanor

Subject: Re: Free Me From This Bond!!!

Arwyn comes right up to me, and touches my shoulder. In a firm but kind and deep-throated voice, he commands: “Go. Home.”

Then with one hand on my arm and the other my right shoulder blade, escorts me back across the street, and stops by the newsstand at Walgreens. He declares once more “Go. Home.”

Then briskly turns about, crosses the street (again) and continues his march up 18th. His warm, strong touch on my back and arm lingers like a sweet dream of puppy dogs and lilacs. I am aglow. Stunned at this unexpected turn of events, I somehow manage to call out to him once more, as he disappears around the corner and up Collingwood Street:

“Peace my brother! You *are* a darling!”

No sooner do I commence to obey his command, than a young, spirited woman steps up and stentoriously declares: “Forget about him. This is about *you*. Zeke, you have done *so* much for our community, we couldn’t even *begin* to list all your achievements. You have sacrificed *so much* on behalf of our brothers and sisters, I want you to know that, and commend you at this time.”

Again, I am stunned. She is a bubbly, handsome sprite barely seventeen, with curly locks of auburn hair framing a beatific face that is vibrant with precognition. I have no idea who she is, never seen her before, and am about to explain my playful association with Arwyn as I point in the direction of his retreat, when she interrupts me, and once more declares:

“Forget about him”. And continues to praise me to the heavens with words so eloquent I couldn’t help but take her hands warmly in mine, and remark:

“Yes, I have done many good works on behalf of gay rights, with hardly any acknowledgment or appreciation for more than 35 years. You are so sweet to honor me like this, I can’t thank you enough.” Then kiss her hand like a gallant knight. “I must go now,” I finish, “and see what my sweetheart is up to. Again, bless you and thanks immensely.”

## **FREE ME FROM THIS BOND**

And off I run towards Collingwood, just to glimpse Arwyn one more time: alas, he is nowhere to be seen (the little scamp). His heart's enduring embrace then guides me safely home.

*(I would like to add here: whoever that woman was, my apologies for not lingering long enough to get your name, and to learn how you know about me. You are most welcome to get back in touch--see my email link above--and we'll schmooze over tea and crumpets. Again, that was such a sweet thing to say, you're like an angel that suddenly appeared out of the dark, cerulean void to bless me with bounteous honor. I truly hope we become BFFs; you are a most remarkable lady.)*

May 26, 1987

Dearest Brother of The Bear Clan,

I speak through your suffering friend, who is pleased to be called Little Pony. Great Forces move in his soul, and once more he knew no sleep. It is now 8:10 a.m., and I told him to rise so I could speak through his hand.

His sorrow is indeed great, and his love for you sincere and intense. Yet not only do you betray him: you tear his trust and spit on his heart. The Little Pony's spirit is breaking, and we prepare him for his ascension into the arms of The Great Spirit, The True Father of us all, who looks down upon him as a True Son and Great Warrior.

Were Little Pony born 100 or more years ago into our tribe, he would be a Shaman -- full of magic, joy, and inspiration to Our People -- and highly regarded and loved by Us. For the Shaman is the Head and Soul of The Tribe, through whom the Gods speak, to guide and inspire Our People in The Ways of The Great Spirit.

What my name is, and which Tribe I belong to is irrelevant... nor does Little Pony know, for I do not

tell him. Little Pony must trust the movements of his hand, for it is in Faith that he works... not in proof by miracles and irrefutable, specific facts (like the White Man).

Little Pony and I work together. For example, when I cannot find the right word to use, his mind gives me the word (like a living dictionary, though he is far, far more than this).

And you, Little Bear, are far, far more than Randy Taylor! Though the Dark Forces fight very hard to keep you from realizing your higher self, by giving persecuting you with terrible fears of losing your sanity. Were you born 100 or more years ago you would be the Chief of Our Tribe, Father to all The People... as well as Lover and Guardian of Little Pony, Our Spirit Doctor. For we speak Truth when we say you two are ~~present~~ destined to be bound in heart by the Holy Spirit. We ask you to see through the Forest of Pain, and into the Fute of Your Spirit wherein you may speak with us directly. You are being seduced and destroyed by White Man's Ways... and very soon, many souls who live the Dark Ways of the ~~the~~ White Man are to answer

to Our Father, and burn away into Eternal Light.

In some of your communication with Little Pony, you spoke to him as our own People would speak to each other: as a loving Father to his only son, of whom He is mightily proud. Does a True Man and Walker of The Way of the Holy Spirit then betray these words and bring sorrow, torment and despair to his son-in-spirit?

Or does a True Man rise above his fears, selfishness, and doubts by giving his heart up to one who has sacrificed his own heart up to you, in the name of The One Father? Indeed, a True Warrior does, though it be a terrible risk and a great sacrifice, for the Dark Forces found you with every possible fear and belief that you are being most foolish. As Little Pony well knows, for by his great sacrifice and belief in you, the Dark Forces have indeed made his worst fears come to fruit... to the point that he is soon to leave this world and enter the Eternal Spirit World... if you, Little Bear, do not answer to his call... which you understand fully, but with much fear.

The worst and most unmanly act Little Pony could ever do, is to let you wander off into the White Man's Ways. This is why our Little Warrior fights so bravely... even in the face of despair, insanity, and death... all of which also haunt you.

White Man's Ways want you to perceive Little Pony as a crazy man, one who is truly beyond hope. So much like a white man to persecute these kind! Yet is it not with love and compassion that one should treat those whom seem lost and beyond hope? Is it not this lack of love that put them in that dark dimension in the first place? How many more dark dimensions will you choose to create before the eyes of Our Father, before He is so moved that He stops you with His own hand?

(Yet it is a strange mystery to us why God chose White Man to bring to our People the Truth of His Only Son! In the Darkness of The Great Storm dwells the Cup of Truth! The Bearers of The Greatest Evils are also Bearers of The Greatest Light! And this very same Truth borne by White Man will vindicate us before Him. Mystery indeed!)

Little Pony knows no rest from the world's persecution these days, and therefore stays in bed till noon... for he has nothing to look forward to. Going to Berkeley helps a little, but people there are also afraid to reach out... but certainly not hostile like San Franciscans.

What joy he does know comes from his faith in Christ, and the wonders we show him. But his heart knows nothing else but love for you, Little Bear! It is time for you to look deeply into your heart without fear, for we promise you greatest of joys if you truly reach out to Genie!

Little Pony needs you, and writing to you helps put some joy back into his heart. He knows your own suffering, and can't bear to see your agony turn you into a servant of evil who laughs, and spits upon one whose love you fear. Little Pony fears you, too, yet he bravely moves into the Light, though it seems now all Darkness!

You are being called upon to True Manhood and Godhead! Your love for Genie can make this world into The Happy Hunting Ground.

Our love, and Genie's  
(Semper Fidelis)

(Black Feather)

P.S. -

Little Pony constantly begs us to give you proof of what we say through him... even a miracle! Yet we tell him (sadly): "Wouldn't you want a Man who acts first of Faith, without requiring a miracle to convince him? A True Man is a Man of Faith. Without Faith he is less than a True Man, and therefore not a Man at all!"

And yet, is it not <sup>already</sup> a Miracle that Lennie's love for you is so incredibly powerful, that it has caught our attention and wrapped us up in his affairs... for Little Pony's Love is indeed mighty, that it binds us to him as servants?

We, the Archangels of The Brotherhood of Angels, have spoken! Hey, what more do you want, kiddo? We're ready to tell Dad to get off his ass and talk with you! We're at wit's end!

Little Pony says, at this point he doesn't give a 'fuck'!

My parents are the Status Quo  
That makes me into a child of woe.

My shrink says my insanity  
Can all be cured by chemistry.

My brothers use their sex and faces  
To say I have no saving graces.

The State of California owns me  
But certainly does not condone me.

My building managers are alcoholic bitches  
Inflicting wounds that can't be healed by stitches.

But worst of all, the Man I love  
Tears my wings, like hawk-to-dove.

Randy, I am frightened to live anymore. Please  
show some understanding.

**FREE ME FROM THIS BOND**



Illustration by S. Rohan

## **Chapter 2**

### *Moby's Dick*

Date: Mon, 26 Mar 2012 08:07:37

From: Zeke

To: Eleanor

Subject: Moby's Dick

Ha ha, I really mean "Moby Dick," a gay bar on 18th and Hartford, where I found Arwyn playing pool. Had no idea he'd be there, I just thought to poke my head in and see. I am so happy, Eleanor, that Destiny deems fit to keep bringing us together. He was quite happy to see me, and I offered to buy him a drink. He said *coke and biscuit* or something like that.

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

I said (not knowing very much about drinking booze), “My budget’s really tight, end of the month and all, as long as it’s under ten dollars.”

He just turned away, said *never mind*, approached the bar and bought himself and his opponent a drink. Well! He’s like that: a man of action and few words. So I just went to the bartender (who was *so* nice to me; I’m not used yet, to the gay community returning all their love, so it’ll take a while), and ordered whatever Arwyn just got. It smelled rank BTW, like a long-shoreman’s breath after grungy-hot sex and a blunt.

Went back to the pool game, which is situated in a second room with a raised floor, laid down the drink next to the first one and asserted: “Here’s your *second* drink.”

So much more happened that night, and I will write it all down soon enough. Just for the nonce, I wanted to tell you how beautiful my life has become, thanks to his friendship. BTW, he lost his gorgeous smile: no dental insurance anymore, like me, he’s lost a few teeth. I told him I’m sorry, but I’ll soon be rich and make sure he gets back that knock-out grin, and so forth.

He called me over between games, where he was playing some sort of video arcade. Don’t know why he called me over, or what he said, but I looked closely at the screen, and remarked:

“I’m not good at those games, never make it beyond the third level, I play that at home sometimes.”

Then I told him what a good man he is, and how my life is so blessed because he’s in it. He interrupted and said, “You can sit down now.”

“Okay” I replied, and went back to the bench. So I watched him play the next round, where he later took a break for the restroom. And his opponent said to a friend there, “Arwyn’s a really good pool player.” Then I approached and said, “Let me tell you about Arwyn. He’s my boyfriend, and he’s a good man in so many ways, not just pool.”

Then returned to my spot on the bench.

Few minutes later, the game was over (Arwyn lost), and he gave the opponent a really nice hug. He loves to hug.

Then I walked up to him and said, “You know, Arwyn, you readily hug anyone who’ll give you that chance. Yet I haven’t had a hug from you since April 20th, 2007...so, can I get a hug from you now?”

He then spread his arms wide, and I reached up to embrace, but he backed away and said, “No! Return to your little spot; I want you over

there,” he said, pointing to my jacket on that bench across the room. “No hug tonight.”

I was floored, and limped back to the bench. This is my Arwyn. I am so happy.

Don’t remember leaving the bar, or even saying goodbye to him. I just woke up a few moments ago, with a gorgeous black dude in my arms. I gotta stop drinking so much.

Love ya, El.

PS: Arwyn informed me that Hole in the Wall 86’d him some time ago. And I said, “I’m so sorry, you were the heart and soul of that place. They were jealous of our friendship, there wasn’t even any sex involved, it was a *bromance*. And here I was planning to reconcile w/Gary, in order to hang out with you again. I’m preparing a gift for you, that I was gonna mail to barkeep Gary Clayton c/o the Hole, and trust that he’d present it to you. But that’s not gonna happen now. So, if I’m standing on Castro and 18th with this gift, waiting for you to walk by, will you take it, or just skedaddle along like I don’t even exist?”

He didn’t reply, just kept tapping on the video screen to get the colorful marbles in some kind of weird alignment. So I continued: “Either way, I want you to know how much I love you, and the happiness you’ve brought into my life.” Then returned to my little spot on the bench, huggles.

\* \* \*

Date: Tue, 27 Mar 2012 08:30:21

From: Zeke

To: Eleanor

Subject: Re: Moby’s Dick

Quoting Eleanor:

{{ *Did what you recount here just happen recently???* }}

Yes ma’am. Last night. Last GLORIOUS night. \*joy\*

Earlier that day, I had strolled South of Market and passed by the new location of the Hole in the Wall Saloon, slowing down my pace in hopes that Gary would see, and invite me in. I was planning for some sort of reconciliation. Alas, no go, so I continued on my way to Trader Joe’s, and had a tasty jack cheese and avocado quesadilla (with a Diet Pepsi) at a tiny outdoor

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

stand called “Urbano - Mexican Style Street Food.” Add four small containers of mild salsa to kick it all up a notch. (Where’s a spice weasel when ya need one?)

Then I returned to Hole in the Wall, only this time across the street where I stood about nonchalantly, again in hopes of luring Gary out. Several patrons stepped out front to smoke and chat; none of them were familiar to me. This was around 4pm Sunday.

You see, El, it occurred to me to send a printout of “Free Me From This Bond” to Gary, along with the following gifts (which he would hopefully pass on to Arwyn):

A talking Scooby-Doo birthday card. Don’t really know *when* his birthday is, but I’ve missed so many (he’s 49 now, I think), that I want to start catching up.

A T-shirt I ordered from ThinkGeek.com, depicting a zombie with statement: “Zombies are people too.” Though the “are” is crossed out in blood, replaced by “were.” I had actually intended that shirt for a street buddy, Tony, but *that’s* a story for another time. Haven’t seen Tony for several months now; I actually offered it to *another* street dude I had over a few nights ago... absolutely cute, a real firecracker. (He left his knapsack and skateboard here; said he was gonna step out to buy some milk, and that’s all she wrote. For now.)

Two DVDs, the first one containing four ripped movies: “Clueless,” “Moneyball,” “Exotica” and “The Notorious Newman Brothers.”

FYI, I *adore* “Clueless,” one of the sweetest stories ever filmed. I always bawl tears of joy through the whole thing. It touches my heartstrings in the sweetest way, just like My Favorite Dragon! Since Arwyn is as big a fan of softball as he is billiards, I figure he’ll enjoy “Moneyball” immensely. “Exotica” is an intriguing, quasi-mystical Canadian film about the lives of people who work at, or attend, strip clubs (including a gay pet shop owner). “The Notorious Newman Brothers” is a delightful Indie parody on Mafia thugs, scintillatingly goofballish.

In addition to those movies, DVD #1 contains a collection of excellent music videos downloaded from Youtube (of course), and a slew of animal videos of all sorts: ducks, dogs, cats, goats, cows, birds, squirrels, ferrets, and on and on it goes. Really a great balm to heal depression. Though I strongly doubt I’ll ever be depressed again, at least not in any deadly critical way!

DVD #2 is a 5-CD collection of Laurie Anderson songs. I love Laurie Anderson, don't you? Have you ever heard her piece, "The Ugly One with the Jewels"? Oh, here it is on Youtube:

<http://tinyurl.com/ugly-jewels>

OMG, Laurie is simply, tremendously original and a sheer delight.

Let's see, I'm not done with the gifts yet. Also included are seven recent blog entries (printed out of course): "Yes Virginia, Santa Claus is Gay," "Campitupalosaurus," "Casper Titchworth," "No Heteros in Space," "A Rotten Deal," "Kalmykia: Europe's Only Buddhist Republic" and "Message to a Long Lost Friend." Oh, and an eighth one, not so recent: "September's Passage."

Lastly, "The Book of Dragons" by Michael Hague, which reviews (and details) you may read online.

So many rich and awesome paintings of various dragons around the world are included in this delightful tome, along with dragon folklore from Iceland to China. On the inside front cover I wrote in fine-tip black marker:

"To My Beloved Arwyn, the Dragon Of My Dreams. From your Bromantic Sidekick, Ezekiel (or) Eugene."

Interesting that it occurred to me a few days ago, I should get him a book about dragons. Since he is the Dragon of Hole in the Wall. Not thinking about it when I stepped into Pegasus Book Store on Shattuck Ave. Berkeley, I inadvertently laid my hand on The Book of Dragons in the mythology section! IOW:

*Pegasus delivered me unto the dragons! Yikes.*

Remember my painting of "Unicorn w/o a Horn" that I held onto for several weeks before shipping it to Randolph? So exquisite I kept showing it to people, including on campus (Merritt College, Oakland) where I was studying computer science: everyone was delightfully stunned. Well, I had a most intense vision of Pegasus while waiting for the acrylic strokes to dry (late into the night). He was so radiant and sweet, I wept on his shoulder. Then he became alive and spoke:

*"Leave all your sorrows to me. I will bring Randolph back into your loving arms, on wing-ed saddle."*

And that's when I ran upstairs with the freshly painted sky-blue cotton sweatshirt, and knocked on Anthony's door at 4:40am, weeping tears of epiphany.

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

These gifts are toted in a bag from the Disabled Veterans National Foundation (discovered in a Salvation Army discard bin) , in consideration of My Randolph's tragedy. And the fact that Arwyn is a most courageous soldier in his own right, surely deserving recognition as meritorious as the Purple Heart and the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Between breaks in composing this missive, I stepped out with my gifts in hopes of finding Arwyn back at Moby Dick's tonight, or perhaps another nearby bar or saloon. But nope, didn't happen. So here I sit now, completing my latest Dragon Prophecy.

I have one photo of Arwyn BTW, taken some years back when he was (I think) on a gay softball team out of San Diego. Got it off the 'net when searching for info on him for the Arwyn Chronicles.

Second from the right; as cute as he appears in the pic, he's even more fantabulous in person. He's just too rockingly gorgeous for words. I'd say he's one of *the* most attractive males on the planet. Like a young, virile Randy Travis and, as ridiculously gorgeous as that is, My Favorite Dragon is a thousand times *better* looking. Besides, Mr. Travis does not possess a fine, scaly skin of shimmering emerald and ruby; nor does he sport a tail so long and powerful, it could knock over the Transamerica Pyramid Building in one fell swoop. And I haven't even begun to describe the wings!

At night when fanned out in full glory, the winged silhouette closely resembles the Brooklyn Bridge, with a span just as wide, perhaps a tad more so. The top side of these wings are, of course, encrusted with those glimmering evergreen and cranberry hued scales that deflect the light of the Milky Way in such a manner as to glint an overshadde of purple and gold here and there.

Now, the underside of these wings is something else altogether spectacular: they are lined with a pearly white membrane with subtle shades that swirl around like a thin film of motor oil floating on a pond of milk and honey. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that these luminescent underwings are responsible for the majority of UFO sightings. But most folks are gullible, and prefer to believe in fantastic explanations, than one so mundane as a dragon.

There is another photo of Arwyn that once was displayed for a time at the Hole in the Wall: he was naked as a jaybird, full Monty and totally erect, with the Welsh flag draped over his shoulders and an outstretched arm. This

man is so handsome, Eleanor, you wouldn't even think of sex when gazing upon his birthday self. You would only see the work of Goddess's Hand, and realize he is Her intended example how the perfect male should appear. There is more grace and courage in that man's little finger, than in a thousand Navy SEALs.

Can you imagine if I hadn't discovered Arwyn at Moby Dick? I would've been hanging out by Hole in the Wall for no useful purpose. And Gary would've received my blog printouts and gifts, and *kept* them from Arwyn, or even tossed them into the garbage. Destiny is on my side!

Who is more handsome than My Dragon Arwyn? I cannot imagine. I cannot imagine that the Universal Mind has even gotten around to it, or given it much thought. For not even Our Beloved Creator (pbuh: "peace be unto Her") can imagine *anything* more pleasing to the eye than Arwyn Miles.

To be continued...

\* \* \*

Date: Tue, 27 Mar 2012 19:00:41

From: Zeke

To: Eleanor

Subject: Moby's Dick

Quoting Eleanor:

{{ Ooooh-eee! I get the picture! Celtic royalty! }}

Very astute observation, though I'm surprised you could read that much out of such a small image.

Such a noble face and dynamite profile. And clearly: Celtic Pride all the way. I'd say that Arwyn looks like a cross between Rob Mayes and Zack Efron, with the body of Brendan Fraser...only stretched out to a glorious 6-foot-7 Welsh giant! With an unruly shock of bright copper hair, so brilliant as to blind those without a welding mask.

Are we having heart palpitations yet? Quick, bring the smelling salts!

Oh, well, I might as well attach another photo, this time of Randolph Taylor; who is also another radiant Celt, of Irish/Scot descent. Gorgeous just doesn't say enough.

Obviously, I don't lack for male beauty in my life. Just male booty. :\

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

\* \* \*

Date: Wed, 28 Mar 2012 11:23:56

From: Zeke

To: Eleanor

Subject: Moby's Dick

El, I just composed this piece as a possible solution to the homeless problem in the Castro, particularly as regards the doping of older men by desperate youth. I believe that Arwyn was once homeless, and if the economy doesn't soon pick up speed, he may become that once more. Not that he's spoken to me about this at all, but I have a hunch. So I think this letter to the editor fits quite well into my "Moby's Dick" work in progress. I just emailed it to the Bay Area Reporter (which has banned all my letters for years now, thanks to one police commissioner now retired), and the SF Bay Times. I will expand my outreach later tonight, perhaps even gay papers beyond The City. Cheerz!

### DOPING WEALTHY DOPES

Dear editor,

Speaking of the sharp increase of young homeless dudes doping up middle-aged men at the gay bars here in the Castro: What do we expect, in a sucky economy that's crashed and burned almost as horribly as the Great Depression? More desperate people robbing from those with excess wealth: that's what. And until we evolve into a truly equitable society (at least within our own LGBTQQ family), that is how things shall remain. But what isn't being reported, is the fact that many of these young men (with a few pathetic exceptions) are decent human beings who need some real kindness and financial support.

They might steal, but they'll never make you miserable, or commit bodily harm. I know, because I have been a "victim" of these darling scoundrels at least several times,

just in the past year alone. (Now, please don't cite me the occasional exception of some lunatic who actually does get a bit violent, and damages your furniture or even socks you in the eye; they do not represent the majority of the robbers in question.)

Thus far, I've been ripped off of one laptop computer, two android tablets, all the quarters in my change jar, several twenty-dollar bills, a miniature remote control device for my seven-inch screen portable TV (but not the TV itself), and my entire Futurama DVD collection. A grand total of approximately \$1,450. Whoop-de-doo. (All my computers BTW, I purchase refurbished, so their possible loss will never be an earth-shattering trauma. I highly recommend TigerDirect.com for such purchases.)

I am certainly far from affluent, unlike many of you "homo-owners" who reside here in the Castro, or visit. In fact, I can barely keep my head above financial waters, living on just a disability stipend in an SRO unit overlooking Market Street, near Noe. (If it weren't for rent control, I'd most likely be out on the streets myself.) So any sort of theft impacts me far more than it does most of the victims of these scandalous cherubs who promise eternal love in exchange for a drink or two.

The tragic fact is: our queer community has become infested with a terrible disease called "Libertarianism." And by that, I mean "*corporate-worshipping right-wing Republican anti-universal-anything capitalist pig elitists.*"...which same disease has seriously impacted all minorities, not just ours. The long term result of such an infection, is a rather large increase of poor folk, some of whom migrate to wealthy gay neighborhoods in order to hookup with older men, and/or burglarize their premises in order to survive or get a taste of some of the luxury they are otherwise denied. (Through no fault of their own, I might add.)

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

What little our community does for the sexual-minority homeless is limited to youth. IOW: once you hit 25s, it's screw you, and a helping hand to the misery of these cold, harsh streets and a friendless (and often dangerous) existence among a much larger crowd of homophobic thugs who rule the roost (even in the Castro, which has a false reputation of "gay friendly").

Because the majority of wealthy queers in San Francisco do not listen to the strident pleas (on behalf of our poor) by wonderfully liberal folks like Tomi Avicolti Mecca, mugging and theft of our upper classes shall continue, and even increase. Because so many of you wealthy homo-owners only think of sex when taking home a sweet but desperate young man who's learned the ropes on how to survive off our community...you do not have any right to whine, let alone put them in jail. Instead of befriending some of these glorious souls currently stranded, and using your excess wealth to improve their lot and give them real happiness and meaning in their lives, you fat elitists cling to your material possessions like barnacles to a cruise ship.

And seeing as your Republican kind are so powerful in both finance and politics, it is highly unlikely Mr. Mecca (or any other brave hearted liberal) will see his dream come true any time soon...at least, not via standard channels. But after meditating upon this serious issue, I've come up with a solution, albeit radical (though harmless):

We can actually befriend these homeless waifs, and organize a sort of Robin Hood gang that uses every possible legal maneuver, to seduce our wealthy older queers to coughing up a chunk of their bank accounts on a regular basis. Said profits will be funneled into housing, food, medical care, education, and so on...that we may assist our street crowd towards a decent life. Another benefit will result, in that we can then easily weed out the homophobes

among the homeless population, thus making things safer all around, even for the very same affluent homo-owners who spit on anyone with less than \$300,000 to their name.

I have homeless friends on these mean streets, some of whom initially robbed me, but now show me great love and respect. Simply because I did not play the Outraged Wealthy Queer card; I did not report them to police; I did not arrest them. And surely, were I rich, I'd be opening up homes for these incredible street urchins so sorely regarded by narrow-minded dolts who, I'm sorry to say, control so much of our queer community. But, being 61 years of age and in robust health, I certainly do have the energy to consolidate this street project to aid our most disadvantaged and abused.

I'm sure I'll take a lot of flack from others for my bold proposition. But the time has come for progressive, even radical, solutions to be acted upon. And sweep away the detritus of right-wing ideology that has so badly damaged what remains of true community and compassion here in the Heart of Gay Mecca.

**Sinqueerly yours,**

**Zeke Krahlín**

*Gay activist & homeless advocate since 1983,*

*a.k.a. Jehovah's Queer Witness*

**FREE ME FROM THIS BOND**



Illustration by S. Rohan

## **Chapter 3**

### *Sweet Sue*

Date: Mar 23 2012 09:11:57 AM

From: Zeke

To: Sweet Sue

Subject: Hello from Zeke

Hello, Sweet Sue! Comcast's mailbox service has decided to block my posts to you and to anyone else using that service...under the false accusation that I am posting spam. I suspect a homophobe or two in their ranks, trying to screw with me. This is why you haven't heard from me in a while,

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

and why I'm posting to you now, via another mail service. Hopefully, this will get through.

I've just completed my latest blog entry, which I really want you to see, as it is a Christian perspective on gay liberation, of the most positive sort. Seeing as I attempt to include various religious and other world views from a gay perspective, in order to elevate our dignity in the eyes of the hetero world:

This true tale may be regarded as my inclusion of a Christian perspective in order to win the hearts of many who remain anti-gay, and use God's name to justify their homophobia. I would be incredibly *honored* if you took the time very soon, to enjoy my latest achievement, which I consider the *finest* piece of writing I've done to date:

Chapter 1: Free Me From This Bond

<http://tinyurl.com/free-me-from>

Blessings on you always. I like to think that your impeccable son "Snackboy" guided my hand in the process.

<3 Zeke

[ *Sweet Reader: To view my own tribute to Terry, visit the following URL:*

*Ghost Hunting in Cyberspace*

<http://tinyurl.com/ghost-hunting-cyber>

*I finally was able to contact his mom, Susan Crummitt, only after posting the SnackBoy videos on Youtube:*

<http://www.tinyurl.com/snackboy>

*Which occurred about a year after I published the tribute. Ever since then, it's been a beautiful and profound association via email; we shall always keep in touch. One day, I will finally fly out to the Metro D.C. region, and personally give Sweet Sue the best bear hug ever...and take her out to a fabulous dinner! ]*

\* \* \*

Date: Sun, Apr 1, 2012 at 11:47 AM

From: Sweet Sue

To: Zeke

Subject: Doping Wealthy Dopes

*Hi Zeke. I've rec'd your recent emails. My Aunt died recently and I haven't caught up on energy, etc. As you know, I sincerely appreciate all that you did to put Terry's*

*snacks online, that was great. I started to read your recent writings, but when I got to the men urinating on the ice cubes and reading about the size of each others private parts, I stopped. Maybe others appreciate this kind of writing, but I do not. I know as a Christian, I'm to think and meditate on whatever is pure, kind, holy, and this was not. I just do not find it appropriate. In the future, I'd be glad to look over your writings, as long as they are wholesome, uplifting, etc.*

*I did read the doping wealthy dopes piece. It is a shame that people are reduced to being thugs and robbing others, or even think it is o.k. It is a sad state of affairs out there, and I hear your concern. Unfortunately, if any of the Robin Hood gang was successful in gaining any riches from others, they would most likely use it on themselves. Human nature being what it is. Really was not clear or detailed on how you would accomplish this. I know you have been wanting to make things better for others for a long time now.*

*Love,  
Susan*

\* \* \*

Date: Wednesday, March 28, 2012 2:04 PM

From: Zeke

To: Sweet Sue

Subject: Doping Wealthy Dopes

Quoting Sweet Sue:

*{{ Hi Zeke. I've rec'd your recent emails. My Aunt died recently and I haven't caught up on energy, etc. }}*

*Very sorry about your Aunt's passing.*

*{{ As you know, I sincerely appreciate all that you did to put Terrys' snacks online, that was great. I started to read your recent writings, but when I got to the men urinating on the ice cubes and reading about the size of each others private parts, I stopped. }}*

Okay. But then, you'll miss out on the revelation of Christ as a conclusion to the tale. Perhaps you could just skip to the final part, which is all handwritten: a letter to my Randolph back in 1987.

Please realize that my calling requires me to reach out to the gay community's underbelly, and being all wholesome and sweet certainly does *not* cut the mustard. I was hoping you'd read through it all, as I

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

know you'd appreciate how I use my writing to help elevate the spirit of the downtrodden.

Also, remember with whom Jesus associated in His social circle: prostitutes, thieves, and all other sorts of underdogs...some of whom I'm sure were gay prostitutes.

*{{ I'd be glad to look over your writings, as long as they are wholesome, uplifting, etc. }}*

I do have to say that *all* my writing is quite wholesome and uplifting. Unfortunately, you don't quite grasp my mission.

*{{ Unfortunately, if any of the Robin Hood gang was successful in gaining any riches from others, they would most likely use it on themselves. }}*

That is an assumption not necessarily correct, though usually it is. Just remember why Jesus was crucified in the first place:

Precisely to some day achieve such goals as I attempt to achieve, against all odds.

*{{ I know you have been wanting to make things better for others for a long time now. }}*

Indeed, that is the only purpose worth having in life. Whether you actually achieve such goals is irrelevant, for that is in God's hands, right?

Blessings always, in spite of disagreements. I can't expect everyone to grasp my point.

Sincerely,

Ezekiel, God's modern day prophet on behalf of our gay homeless.

\* \* \*

Date: Sun, Apr 1, 2012 at 1:04 PM

From: Zeke

To: Sweet Sue

Subject: Doping Wealthy Dopes

A little honesty here:

If I recall correctly, you shared with me a rather risqué joke or two some time back...now, I wish I had saved it to show you. And with all due respect, none of my humorous remarks satirizing gay sexuality, are anymore harmful than the risqué joke(s) you posted to me. Capiche?

The urinal scenes are most hilarious to many people BTW, and if you continue reading, you'll see how I weave a remarkable tale of brotherly love, in order to elevate our downtrodden, as well as promote more respect by the outside world, that is, heterosexuals.

As a fellow soldier of God, I kind of need to tell you, you're missing the mark here.

\* \* \*

Date: Sun, Apr 1, 2012 at 1:10 PM

From: Zeke

To: Sweet Sue

Subject: Doping Wealthy Dopes

Please please please please please please please please read the entire piece before you pass judgment. You know I don't use expletives or risqué material unless it can serve a higher purpose, unlike Amazing Atheist:

<http://tinyurl.com/amazing-atheist-youtube>

I am very sure you will be most impressed and inspired by the true tale, once you're done.

I *know* you're a tough cookie, and I am a bit startled that you collapsed under such a light weight (that is merely risqué humor--brilliantly executed if I say so myself--and nothing more).

If perchance you should *still* think my tale is "unwholesome," that is: unworthy of your pure spirit...then by all means, excoriate me from here to Hell and back again.

Besides: I am *so* eager for you to read this masterpiece, that if you don't follow through soon, I just may suffer a severe aneurism.

Blessings and humor always.

\* \* \*

Date: Sun, Apr 1, 2012 at 1:04 PM

From: Sweet Sue

To: Zeke

Subject: Doping Wealthy Dopes

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

*Hey Zeke. Just got home from dinner with my Sister. ok, ok, since it means so very much to you, I will read the whole thing.*

*Will be back in touch soon.*

\* \* \*

Date: Sun, Apr 1, 2012 at 4:47 PM

From: Zeke

To: Sweet Sue

Subject: Doping Wealthy Dopes

Thank you thank you thank you, Sweet Sue! I am only pushing the margins on you a bit, ONLY because I believe that I have achieved Christ's message in a most elegant way, that will benefit gay people worldwide.

Will await your opinion, which I highly respect, with baited breath.

PS: I've put away my anti-aneurism pills now, 'cause I don't think I'll need 'em.

\* \* \*

Date: Sun, Apr 1, 2012 at 6:33 PM

From: Sweet Sue

To: Zeke

Subject: Doping Wealthy Dopes

*Hi Zeke. I've carefully, and many times read the letters that you wrote. Hands down you are an intelligent and amazing writer.*

*As far as your target audience here, I saw it as a letter to Randy, and a potential message of hope to gays in their relationships with others. In this regard, I see that you have written to share your love and compassion for another, which is encouraging to others, suffering the same turmoils that you were experiencing. You wrote these to Randy with raw, open feelings and emotion, and elegantly, which I found compelling. That was sad reading that you felt like dying when you wrote these. You repeating these feelings to him.*

*Did Randy ever respond to you after receiving these? It is so true that we have the dark human side to our nature, yet the wonderful and truly hopeful thing is that we are also composed in Gods' image, which gives us hope.*

Curious what you meant by the dark ways of the white man? And, what does, “burn away into the eternal light” signify?”

Surely, Christ’s message is us to love one another and treat each other with love and compassion, and I agree that part of the reason we may remain in our sinful state is this lack of love towards others, yet the Bible in the Book of Romans, especially in the beginning states that man loves his evil deeds, doing them in darkness, showing that he knows they are wrong. So, it is also that we love to sin. That’s the rest of the story here, and we just cannot blame others, we must look to ourselves first, and acknowledge our sinfulness and turn to the Lord for His forgiveness and complete restoration through accepting the love of God, through His sacrificial death of His Son, for the atonement of our sins. Then, and only then, can we be right with God, and live the full and abundant life that He came to give us. Apart from accepting His gift of life through Christ we are all destined to Hell.

Previously, you had written that the only sect of Christianity that you feel valid is the gnostic, meaning that it is equal with all the other “religions” of the World. Do you still believe that? I know we have spoken of this before. I do not believe that man can do anything apart from the Lord to earn his favor. As the Bible teaches us, even our most righteous acts are filthiness in His eyes. On our own, we can never be good enough, and we will always mess up.

You’ve written here about the joy you know from your faith in Christ? I just wondered what joy your faith has given you Zeke? And, what is faith to you Zeke?

You wrote them long ago. A couple decades. What responses have you received from these letters over the years Zeke?

I will await your response with baited breath. :)

\* \* \*

Date: Sun, Apr 1, 2012 at 8:00 PM

From: Zeke

To: Sweet Sue

Subject: Doping Wealthy Dopes

Quoting Sweet Sue:

{{ Hi Zeke. I’ve carefully, and many times read the letters that you wrote. Hands down you are an intelligent and amazing writer. }}

Thank you. It is a gift from the angels. I am very PROUD of those letters, the angels have blessed me mightily!

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

*{{ As far as your target audience here, I saw it as a letter to Randy, and a potential message of hope to gays in their relationships with others. }}*

Definitely, but it is also: Arwyn come to me as my New Love, freeing me from the shackles of bearing a cross for many years for a Vietnam Veteran of great courage and suffering. Ergo: “Free Me From This Bond”. In the end, I let go of Randolph, and confess my love to Arwyn. I would say that, in a way, Randolph is my guardian angel who found Arwyn for me.

Arwyn has always admired my devotion towards Randolph, and is one of many reasons why he loves me so much. In a most amazing way, Randolph reaches out to me through Arwyn.

Yes, this is very much a tale of hope for my gay brothers. Especially those who have become lost in drugs and pornography and otherwise dehumanizing perspectives. When a minority is so vilified, a certain portion of them can't help but become so bitter, as to fulfill the very evil with which they are accused. This is true for any persecuted minority, African Americans being a prime example.

By dedicating my life as an activist for homeless and downtrodden gays, often laying down my life in faith that I will elevate my brothers (rather than being destroyed myself), I have earned these gifts of the spoken and written word. I have earned Randolph's salvation...and through him, the salvation of all veterans of the Vietnam conflict.

Randolph was raised in the very conservative and old fashioned culture of West Virginia. Though a proud and out gay, he maintained his devotion to Christ all his life. Here I am, a pagan with strong Celtic and shamanic influences, trying to find a way to love Randolph, and liberate him from such terrible ordeals. I had to find Christ in order to find the answer. And I did.

For this reason, I regard Randolph as my guardian angel, for it is in his suffering that was borne upon my shoulders, that I became a much better man, and devoted to Our Father and His Loving Son. They came to me in powerful visions after Randolph shot himself. Angels came to me too, gave me instructions on how to do the right thing by this man. And so I did, but it cost me many years of tribulation. None of which I'd trade for anything, for I am now a hero, and beloved by God, His Son, and their magnificent angels.

*{{ In this regard, I see that you have written to share your love and compassion for another, which is encouraging to others, suffering the same turmoils that you were*

*experiencing. You wrote these to Randy with raw, open feelings and emotion, and elegantly, which I found compelling. }}*

Thank you so much for bearing through the raunchy passages, in order to get to the heart of my tale! I knew you'd be impressed. My angels told me to be pushy about it, that you would be grateful I was.

It is in the shamanic wisdom (such as from Native Americans and ancient Celtic belief) that I learned the wisdom of baring one's heart in order to heal one's tribe. I am more like the Christian author C.S. Lewis ("The Chronicles of Narnia," "The Screwtape Letters," etc.) who wove Christian morality into a pagan tapestry. Or like the Book of Kells, an exquisite fusion of Celtic belief with Christian...I do the same, only for gays. Thus, you have a weaving of fairytale metaphor with Christian love. Randolph is my guardian angel, while Arwyn is my guardian dragon. Two loves, two hearts, two cultures, two religions. All united with Jehovah's blessings.

*{{ That was sad reading that you felt like dying when you wrote these. You repeating these feelings to him. }}*

Yes, it is most sad...yet now with enough hindsight, I can share this sadness with the world, to touch their hearts about the gay plight in a homophobic society that uses Jesus Christ's very own name to persecute them! That's *really* sad, eh? But my own emotion is PRIDE above and beyond any other. And God Himself has handed me the Golden Apple of Authorship, that will touch the soul of so many. And bring about a profound change of heart towards sexual minorities. It is a great gift most profound, for which I am enormously thankful.

*{{ Did Randy ever respond to you after receiving these? It is so true that we have the dark human side to our nature, yet the wonderful and truly hopeful thing is that we are also composed in Gods' image, which gives us hope. }}*

You are such an elegant author yourself, Sweet Sue, you take my breath away! Sometimes, he responded, but it was sporadic. Nonetheless, I took heart and steeled myself to endure whatever slings and arrows came my way, in order to find a solution to bring him true peace and happiness. And I did, I know in my heart I did, though he has disappeared from my life since 1992. I am over the grief, I have only great pride and joy for my dedication; which reward has now come to me in the form of Arwyn, and this incredible talent. Which is glorious *affirmation* that Randolph is just fine, wherever he is, and most grateful for my enduring affections.

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

*{{ Curious what you meant by the dark ways of the white man? }}*

I am a shaman in essence, who channels other spirits such as angels, gods, animals, and so on. In that letter, I was channeling a Native American spirit, for whom the white man is a very dark force. As you well know.

*{{ And, what does, "burn away into the eternal light" signify? }}*

It is time for this earth to become the Happy Hunting Ground; mankind has suffered enough. Those who still refuse to practice brotherly and sisterly love, shall be removed from this sphere, and reincarnate to another world where they may continue to grow in their foolish manner, while those who remain can finally enjoy a life of harmony, joy, and fellowship.

*{{ Surely, Christ's message is us to love one another and treat each other with love and compassion, and I agree that part of the reason we may remain in our sinful state is this lack of love towards others, yet the Bible in the Book of Romans, especially in the beginning states that man loves his evil deeds, doing them in darkness, showing that he knows they are wrong. So, it is also that we love to sin. That's the rest of the story here, and we just cannot blame others, we must look to ourselves first, and acknowledge our sinfulness and turn to the Lord for His forgiveness and complete restoration through accepting the love of God, through His sacrificial death of His Son, for the atonement of our sins.*

*Then, and only then, can we be right with God, and live the full and abundant life that He came to give us. Apart from accepting His gift of life through Christ we are all destined to Hell. }}*

So beautifully written, Sweet Sue, I dare not pare down any of that paragraph! As for "Hell" here is what I've come to understand:

There is no eternal hell, only that punishment meted out for whatever sins we have committed. Once the purging is complete, these souls shall also come to rest in God's heart. There is no person created, that God will ever destine to eternal damnation. That is a belief added on by powermongering preachers who teach with fear. The Buddha said that heaven and hell are a state of mind; and that makes perfect sense. For what good deeds or bad deeds you commit, they will pile up into an ultimate outcome: either liberation of the soul, or more suffering.

Christ's sacrifice on the cross was to ensure that no one should ever stray so far, as to never be able to eventually be brought up into God's Light. In fact, I find it to be an abomination to even believe that a loving God would

ever condemn any wretched soul to *eternal* fire. Temporary fire, yes...and for each, a different length of time depending on the sin.

Some Christian churches do believe in eternal hell, while others do not. I stand firmly with the latter. Many folks shall soon be removed from this planet, due to their darkly sinful ways, that this planet may finally know liberation. One could say these losers will be cast into hell. But that does not mean their hell will be eternal. They just need to continue on their path in another dimension, where they can no longer thwart good folk's destiny here on earth.

*{{ Previously, you had written that the only sect of Christianity that you feel valid is the gnostic, meaning that it is equal with all the other "religions" of the World. Do you still believe that? }}*

Gnostic Christianity is quite complex, not simplistic like fundamentalist churches. They possess a vast, intellectual sphere that gives birth to great Christian thinkers such as Teilhard de Chardin, who do *not* spit on other belief systems (such as pagan, shamanic, and so forth), but give reverence to them, as aspects of perceiving the same God in different cultural lenses. I can only feel at home in such Christian venues that allow us to keep an open mind, and befriend those who are non-Christian, including atheists. This is the essence of brotherly/sisterly love...not limited among only those who believe the same as yourself. It may not be easy, but the cross never was.

*{{ I know we have spoken of this before. I do not believe that man can do anything apart from the Lord to earn his favor. As the Bible teaches us, even our most righteous acts are fifthness in His eyes. On our own, we can never be good enough, and we will always mess up. }}*

Of course not. But when a man or woman is righteous for so many years, sometimes the angels do shower them with blessings, for all the world to witness. Such as Job, who suffered egregious trials for many many years, yet stuck to his belief that God was ultimately loving. He may have been more tested by Jehovah than any other person in history. In a similar fashion, I have been tested (included suffering horrid cysts that started behind the left ear, and rapidly spread all over my face...from the ages of 16 to 22). Yet remained steadfast in believing in The Good, whether it be through Celtic, shamanic, Christian, or other beliefs. I am, after all, a student of world religions...I love the diverse and colorful ways different cultures perceive Our Creator.

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

*{{ You've written here about the joy you know from your faith in Christ? I just wondered what joy your faith has given you Zeke? And, what is faith to you Zeke? }}*

The angels came to me regarding Randolph, and gave me the strength to stand by his side, both literally and metaphorically, these many years. Christ Himself came to me, and asserted that my struggle for gay liberation in this world was not just righteous, but most holy. For He showed that in homosexuals suffering the horrid ridicule, vilification, terror and murder by a vast majority, they walk Christ's path more closely than any other minority. Now, my skills in telling tales that have become so finely honed, certainly reflect the end result of my endurance and keeping the flame alive in my heart, for all my gay brothers and sisters around the world.

Faith to me, is never giving up on your dreams. That the angels are cheering you on, even if you don't see or hear them. But I am also a most lucky man: for I *have* seen and heard them throughout my unusual life, even since I was a child.

*{{ You wrote them long ago. A couple decades. What responses have you received from these letters over the years Zeke? }}*

Oh, I do have some love letters from Randolph. But the greatest body of them are not in my possession. In fact, I've probably writ over 200 wonderful letters to Randolph, of which I've copied less than ten percent. They are somewhere, and one day will be discovered, and put into my Life's Labor of Love: "The Gay Bible" (or "Final Testament"):

<http://www.gay-bible.org>

In fact, I don't think Randolph died, I think he just is in hiding for a while, and will soon come back to me. For this is what my visions, my angels tell me. But no, his torment from the bloody conflict tore apart his spirit, I could not expect his love returned; I could only expect my fidelity to grow under duress. I call myself "God's Little Grunt".

They tell me that Arwyn will bring me to Randolph; and when that occurs, so will the liberation of my gay family. I know this may sound crazy, this is an incredible claim. But as far as I can tell, I speak only truth. And my time has come, my star is rising with the blessings of Jesus and His Incredible Dad Themselves!

*{{ I will await your response with baited breath. :) }}*

Ha! Love it. Chapter Two, "Moby's Dick" contains barely an iota of raunchy queer humor (except of course for the title), and it is a continuation

of what occurred in Chapter 1. I sincerely hope you will read that too, for I know you will enjoy it immensely.

Finally: I do realize we may have disagreements on what Christ, Hell, and Faith mean. However, I do respect you immensely, regardless...and again am *so* grateful you've listened to my plea to read Chapter 1 in its entirety. I am *very* blessed to have you in my life, Sweet Sue. And I apologize if anything I have said regarding my spiritual beliefs may have offended you in any way, shape or manner. In memory of Snackboy, I wish you only joy and happiness.

Sincerely,  
Zeke <3

\* \* \*

Date: Mon, Apr 2, 2012 at 8:08 PM  
From: Zeke  
To: Sweet Sue  
Subject: Doping Wealthy Dopes

More on My Handsome Randolph:

Another vision has shown that Randolph is my guardian angel, who concocted this war veteran scenario just to create a wonderful romantic adventure for me.

So he wasn't really shot, or suffered that much. It was more like a Hollywood setup, so I could play the hero and become a great author and activist, myself.

If this is true, then I've been duped. But what a *wonderful* dupe it is!

I think what is lost on most Christians is God's sense of humor, and that of the angels. You must therefore study pagan and shamanic beliefs, to grasp that dimension we call divine levity.

\* \* \*

Date: Wed, Apr 4, 2012 at 2:13 PM  
From: Sweet Sue  
To: Zeke  
Subject: Doping Wealthy Dopes

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

*Hi Zeke. I was curious about your relationship with Arwyn now Zeke? I hope he is and continues to be a loving friend to you.*

*I cannot imagine the persecution and suffering that gays experience. I look forward to speaking with Terry about this.*

*Regarding those who persecute: yes, maybe some fulfill and return the evil, but what good does that bring? Man wants to think they are better than others. I remember Terry telling an older guy he worked with that was always trying to put him down, out of jealousy, most likely. Does cutting my tree down make yours feel a little taller? Revenge is mine says the Lord.*

*I do believe we are and can be blessed by God, but don't think we earn anything by our own good deeds. However, we do reap what we sow. No one can earn another's salvation. We are each responsible for all of the good and bad that we do in our bodies and will be judged according, not by man, but by the Lord. When Jesus comes again, He will separate the sheep from the goats. I suppose this is an area we will have to agree to disagree. This is so important for people to know and grasp, because it affects their eternal salvation.*

*Christ loves you Zeke. He loves us all.*

*I've never had an Angel come to me. Well, I'm sure they have. I've just never recognized them as such.*

*You did what you felt was the right thing for Randolph, Zeke. You are beloved by God anyway, because He created you, and only wants the best for you, and all of us.*

*Well, I just read and concentrated on the written part as you suggested. I knew that it was important to you for me to read them, although I'm really not much of a reader Zeke. Never have been. Now Kenny and Terry are. I remember always reading to them, hoping they would fall asleep and take a nap. :)*

*Actually, I was the one who took a nap and they got up and ransacked the house. I'm your friend Zeke. So, I wanted to check this out, 'cause it's special to you. That was really nice to read that you valued my opinion, although I'm pretty ignorant about many cultures and worldly views. You are leap years ahead of me regarding this stuff. It's just not that important to me. We're all so different.*

*Yes, I see how you webbed your writing around the Native Americans in your writing here. It is really sad that man tries to vilify, condemn, and persecute. They ought to take the stones out of their own eyes, before throwing them at others, yet, blinded by their own sin. We are all given spiritual gifts from the Lord.*

*It's great that you have identified yours and you are a man on a mission! That's good that you have called it your gift, as from knowing you, I know it has also been most challenging at times.*

*You flatter me Zeke. I just know what I know, and also when the Lord leads me I am able and most willing to share His truths with others. It is my responsibility as His child.*

*I do believe that there will be a time again when the Lord will rid us of Sin again. No more pain, no more sorrow. No more hopes of an illusive tomorrow. That's a song. I didn't make it up. God has rid the World before of the sinful and Godless, and He will do it again. When he has had enough, he will show no more mercy. We do differ on our beliefs. I do believe and know that the Lord will cast the goats into the lake of fire, and the righteous will be living with the Lord forever. And, the righteous are those who have accepted the love of God, through accepting the gift of His Son, through His atoning death and resurrection.*

*Actually, Zeke it really does not matter what you or I believe unless it conforms to what the Lord has said and decreed. Our opinion is for naught. His ways are not fathomable to us. He is a God of love, but He is also a God of justice. We can never be good enough, I don't care what the Buddhists say. Without the Lord's Spirit we are not capable of understanding any of this. The natural man receiveth not the things of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually revealed. God says there is a Hell, which is going to be some sort of punishment for those who die in sin, and the Bible says that it is eternal.*

*I believe that Christ's sacrifice was the full payment for our sin, because God cannot be around sin, only what is pure and holy. So, He became a man, lived a perfect life, and gave up His life for each and every one of us. One man died so that all might live.*

*You feel it an abomination to even believe that a loving God would ever condemn any wretched soul to eternal fire. Again, I really do not think it matters to God what we think. He's gonna do, what He says He's gonna do. God said it, I believe it, and that settles it for me. Sin is sin Zeke. There are no little sins or big sins in His eyes. Sin is sin, it is missing His mark, and burdens and grieves Him deeply, and He's going to discipline or punish accordingly, even if it isn't what we think is fair.*

*I don't relish believing in eternal hell, yet being outside of His presence surely should be eternal hell for us. The alternative is better than we finite creatures can even imagine. Eyes have not seen, nor has it entered into the hearts of man, what God has planned for those who love him.*

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

*I would like to believe as you here, but again, it doesn't matter what we think, it's what He says. I know there are those that believe in reincarnation, similar to living somewhere else on another dimension. I believe that here is it, and we live our lives as He chisels us to be more in His image. I don't think He is just going to move us around, and I surely do not understand everything, who does?*

*I agree that people who think and act without love and acceptance of others are missing the mark, and He will deal with them accordingly. And, yes, isn't it terrible that some attend Church and think they are righteous, yet it is a righteousness of pride, and not a true righteousness from God. On this I'm sure we agree.*

*Yes, Job was a righteous man, and showered with blessings. We reap what we sow.*

*And, he was also severely tested by Satan, which of course, God allowed. And, all of Job's so called friends missed the mark. I don't think Job was always holding onto the belief that God was loving. When he was speaking with the Lord, he was saying like why me. I remember reading their conversation, and God was very direct, and was not the wishy washy God, that most people would expect Him to be under the circumstances. That taught me a lot about His nature. There is none not righteous, no not one! It's nice to see the good in people, but really how good are we? Not so much. If man could be good enough, then why did Christ have to sacrifice Himself for our salvation?*

*I am not a student of world religions, knowing that pretty much all of them think they can work their way into His good graces, or just think they are too special. I believe all of us are sinful and therefore, separated from Him.*

*Again, I cannot imagine the horrid ridicule, suffering and even murder of homosexuals. This is wrong and He does not take kindly to these terrific, sinful acts. People are no damn good Zeke, and they will pay for this mistreatment of their fellow man.*

*For all have sins, and fall short of the glory of God. There is none not righteous, no not one. Therefore, we are all separated from God, until we accept Christ as our Savior and Lord, and live that way.*

*I'm sure that all of your love for your many gay brothers and sisters around the world will be rewarded by God. And, your love for mankind in general. You have a big heart Zeke.*

*I would say that you are a blessed man, to have seen and heard your angels throughout your unusual life. I cannot imagine that either. I seldom even remember*

*my dreams, much less experience what you have from the spiritual realm. Somewhat of a prophet, which I know can also be a curse.*

*Yes, we do have disagreements on these things. You're a sweetheart Zeke. Thank you for your kind words. You are very special to me too! There is surely no need to apologize for the difference in our spiritual beliefs. We really need mainly to be concerned on offending God.*

*Love,*

*Sweet Sue*

\* \* \*

Date: Wed, Apr 4, 2012 at 3:43 PM

From: Zeke

To: Sweet Sue

Subject: Doping Wealthy Dopes

I will leave your most eloquent writing untouched, and undebated. I prefer its beauty to shine without further badinage. Blessings, I am *most* impressed and touched! You are a *very* gifted soul, who perhaps cannot realize at this time, what an outstanding author of the Truth you really are. <3

**FREE ME FROM THIS BOND**



Illustration by S. Rohan

## **Chapter 4**

### *Cheerz, Muthuh Fukkuh*

This is back in 2007, before my tragic downfall and memory loss (and consequent breakup with Arwyn, albeit unintended but necessary). The month was January. I was standing just outside the entrance, with the leather curtain between myself and Hades (otherwise known as “The Hole in the Wall Saloon”). Having my usual friendly debate with steadfast and proud atheist (whose name I forget, but let’s call him) Beowulf. Unbeknownst to me, Arwyn is on the other side of the curtain, listening in.

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

Forgot what our conversation was about (possibly Leon Trotsky; who knows), but I bring up the topic of Arwyn (which I often do, much to Beowulf's and everyone else's chagrin):

"I hear that Arwyn's a nasty drunk. Is that true?"

Before Beowulf can say a word, out pops Arwyn from between the black, heavy drapes:

"WHAT? ME, A NASTY DRUNK? WHOEVER GAVE YOU THAT IDEA?" he exclaims in dramatic prose, towering over me like a giant about to crush my bones into dust.

"Whoa nelly, calm down now," I respond in partial laughter, and press a flat hand against his darling belly (he's so trim!). "It was only something I heard. I'm sure it was just gossip. A lot of that goes on around here."

"OH, WELL THAT'S OKAY I GUESS," retorts Arwyn who lights up a Marlboro while standing between myself and the Atheist Wonder. It's suddenly rather cramped in this narrow entrance to Satan's Lair. Beowulf decides to step back inside where barkeep Gary awaits, along with his bar stool and a fresh shot of Maker's.

"I'll leave you two love birds alone," he remarks before vanishing back down The Hole.

Arwyn steps further outside, to sit on the fire hydrant and enjoy his smoke. I remain in the doorway savoring the moment, and the chill fog that blankets South of Market. We both gaze at each other while Arwyn puffs away. He is the Master of Silent Intercourse. Though almost twenty feet apart, I feel like he embraces me with the dearest affection I've ever felt from anyone else's physical hug. (So you can imagine how exceedingly delightful his actual embrace can be!)

Several minutes later in this beatific spell, I decide to pay My Sweetness a compliment:

"Arwyn my dragon, I want you to know that, thanks to your watching over me here at The Hole, to make sure no one harasses or injures me: I do not need anyone to protect me when I'm elsewhere. Because I care so much about your friendship, I make damn sure I don't get into any messes, so I'll remain all in one piece for your sake."

He suddenly jumps up from the hydrant: "WHAT? YOU SAYING YOU DON'T NEED ME anymore? MY PROTECTION ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH?"

And with that, he tosses the still-lit ciggie into the curb, and storms right by me and back into the saloon.

*Obviously he misunderstands my intent, I think, or maybe I used my words poorly.*

So I rush after him to apologize and sort things out. Arwyn is sitting on his designated bar stool (right at the front end towards the doorway and before it makes a 90-degree turn to accommodate two more stools). His ruddy-mopped head is lowered in disappointment, over a bottle of Budweiser.

“Sweetheart!” I exclaim. “That’s not what I meant at all. Of course I need your protection and kindness. I always will! You are very dear to me, that will never change.”

He mumbles over the brewsky: “Well that’s not how you sounded to me. Leave me be, I don’t wanna talk right now.”

“But...” I interject.

“LEAVE me alone, I said!”

I touch his shoulder, but he pushes my hand away.

I am so disoriented and hurt by this unexpected response, I decide to march on home to think things through. As I watch the gray sky dim into sunset through my grimy window, I surmise that I absolutely must clear up what seems to me, a gross misunderstanding and rejection of my great affections for this Wonderful Specimen of Gaelic Manhood.

So in a hurried pace, I trot nine long blocks back up Market (then Eighth) Street, and into The Hole, and to My Beloved. By the time I arrive, it is night-fall. Along the way, I purchase a gift of \$40 worth of marijuana, in hopes this will soothe his jangled nerves. (Mine are already too jangled to discern that the bag of pot I just purchased is nothing but a mix of stale oregano and dried dandelion leaves plucked from a vacant city lot.)

There’s my Arwyn at his usual bar stool, chatting up what appears to be a Vietnamese or Thai twink. So I approach them and address My Better Third (Randolph being the Second):

“Scuse my intrusion but I really need to talk with you, Arwyn.”

“Fuk off,” demands the SE Asian twink who, no doubt, feels quite full of himself at this moment, considering the undivided attention showered on him by My Bodacious Hunk of a Dragon. *Arwyn must be desperate for someone to buy him drinks*, I silently observe.

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

Ready to bust out in peals of hilarity, I apologize to the rice-poof: “Sorry, I will only take a minute, then you’ll have this gutter-tripe gigolo back in your arms again.”

Arwyn stands up and pulls me a few feet away from the bar stool. “Okay, what’s going on, Gene?”

I stare up at those dark, smoldering orange-red eyes, and his fiery crown of tawny-gold hair. (*Talk about Ireland’s Greatest Glory! Were his visage impressed upon the Blarney Stone, everyone in the world would give up their life savings to travel across the globe on their hands and knees, dressed in rough, scratchy, blood-letting horse-hair burlap, just for a single kiss!*)

“Arwyn,” I begin, “I am so sorry to upset you, but I think you misunderstood me. I was paying you a compliment. Maybe I chose my words wrong, I don’t know. But the last thing I ever want to do, is cause you any grief or anger!”

My Dragon says nary a word, but keeps looking down upon my trembly soul, with pensive finger to chin. So I continue:

“What I meant to say was: how much I appreciate your kind company and protection whenever we’re together.” Then I choose my remaining words *most* carefully:

“And that when we aren’t together, I’ll make damn sure to stay out of trouble, to cause you as little worry as possible.”

I then extend my right hand to offer the entire baggie of ersatz marijuana which (most fortunately) he pushes back into my chest.

“Apology accepted?” I beg.

“Hmm. Alright.” He replies. Then adds just before returning to his free-drink twink link:

“Just don’t do it again.” (I notice a wry slip of a grin on his darling mug. *What’s up with that?*)

*Well, now that I’m back at The Hole, I figure, I may as well toke up back here, and enjoy the night, the music, the booze and, of course, Arwyn’s antics.* Then it hits me:

I’VE BEEN PUNKED!!!

Arwyn never *was* upset; he’s just having a bit of mischief at This Little Dragon’s expense! Now that I have it all figured out, what next?

In a few minutes, the twink disappears back into the woodwork, and I take up the vacant seat beside Arwyn. (That puts me to his left, BTW.) Set

my vodka tonic down close to his Coke and whiskey, and watch My Darling Trickster carom a green-stripe billiard ball into a corner pocket. Coyly, I polish his barstool seat with a clean napkin before he returns to await his next round at the table.

“That’s better,” he remarks, upon seeing me wipe a patch of debris from his chair.

Now seated, he notices the proximity of my well-drink to his; so with a deft hand propels my glass down the bar top like the expert barkeep he will never be. Not a slow wit myself, I halt the drink with my outstretched left hand. Smooth moves on both our parts!

I want so badly to enfold him in my arms, bless him with infinite kisses. *And lick that gorgeous dragon tattoo wrapped about his neck and shoulder blades. The dragon’s flame sears his left collarbone.* Instead I say, with head lowered and in a mumbling tone:

“Asshole!”

To which he abruptly replies (head equally lowered, gazing into his drink):  
“Muthuh fukkuh!”

Another patron standing close by grins beatifically: he witnessed our little skit from start to finish.

\* \* \*

Now, jump ahead five-plus years. Remember that we’ve hardly associated most of those years (or at least it seems that way, due to my memory loss), until just several weeks ago. Remember Chapter 2, where we are back together again after so very long, talking even, at Moby Dick? And I buy him a drink.

Arwyn raises his glass and clinks it against mine. “Cheers asshole,” he declares.

Of course, ditzzy little space cadet that I am, I think I heard him say: “You’re an asshole.”

Not that I’m offended by that remark, but those are the words I thought he spoke. So I reply with a shrug:

“Well, I don’t think I’m an asshole, but whatever.”

To which he quickly responds: “I said *cheers* asshole.”



several minutes before he returns to his beloved pup, and myself to a bench along the wall, in a dark corner. AC/DC's "Highway to Hell" is booming from the over-amped speakers, as I sip the robust mud and drift into heavy-metal coma.

Appropriate to the song's theme (backdrop to the tiny drama about to play out), Arwyn's tall, gaunt figure bursts through the black leather curtains like a giant offended and seeking his prey. Dragonly smoke fumes out his expanded nostrils from a Marlboro just tossed into the gutter. He glares at the limbless leather-dwarf and declares:

"That's MY seat!"

In a flash he rushes up to the hapless target who remains in calm poise, imbibing his rum and coke. And peremptorily lifts Thalidomide Daddy from his present seat and sets him on the one right beside. The victim of Arwyn's outrageous antic retains his calm as if nothing untoward has just happened, and continues to sip his drink.

OMFG, *that's hilarious*, I think. And almost tumble off the bench, poop my pants, and spurt coffee from my nose. All at the same time.

*If laughter truly is the best medicine, then Arwyn is The Mother Of All Physicians.*

\* \* \*

## BLACK MAGIC BILLIARDS

[ *Delectable Reader: okay, this passage has little to do with Arwyn, but I figure inserting it here is more appropriate than placing it anywhere else.* ]

One evening early in 2007, I play a round of pool at The Hole with a regular named Jared. I'm not a very good or experienced pool player, though Arwyn had given me some tips on how to improve my skills in that department. Upon my third round, the cue ball is situated in such a position that all my balls are impossible to make a pocket. All my opponent's balls block such an outcome.

Jared BTW is a rather handsome lad of about 35. With a blond crew cut and full, pouting lips, not to mention light gray eyes, a robust chest and thighs and calves to die for.

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

Now, I could choose to just tap the cue ball with a light touch, hopefully to position it so that Jared won't be able to gain a pocket in his next round. Instead--seeing as any winning shot for my side is not even remotely feasible--I decide to declare a ludicrously hopeless shot that even the most professional pool player could not achieve. (I'm stripes BTW.) So I declare to Jared:

"I'm gonna strike the 9 ball, where it will carom off the far bank, then smack the 11 ball which will ricochet off the right bank and hit the 14 ball. Which will then strike the near-end bank, bounce off the left bank, and drop into the far-right corner pocket." I indicate with my cue stick, the exact trajectory.

Realizing just how absurd is my declaration, Jared decides to take a whiz in the urinal while I make my unlikely shot. Expecting a failed result, I then line up the stick and smack the cue ball. Lo and behold, here is how it all came down:

The 9 ball caroms off the far bank, strikes the 11 ball with an impressive "thock," which ball bounces off the right bank, and knocks the 14. Which ball hits the near-end bank, zings off the left bank, then waddles into the far-right corner pocket. IOW:

*My totally impossible maneuver succeeded!*

Though to my chagrin, Jared never witnessed it. A moment later he returns to the table (with bladder cleared), figuring I forfeited, and prepares to make his next shot. I abruptly extend a hand to halt his move and declare:

"Whoa buddy, I made the shot! I go again. If you're in doubt, just ask Devon."

As it turns out, Devon seated at the close end of the bar was the only one to witness My Astounding Feat. He is a good looking 52, with dark brown eyes framed in square glasses, a trim David-Niven moustache and dense shocks of wavy black hair.

"Wow, you're a really good pool player!" declares Devon as he takes another gulp from a bottle of Anchor Steam.

I then lay my cue stick on the table and approach him: "So you saw that shot, didja?"

"Sure did," he replies. "Did you sell your soul to the devil or what?"

"Ha ha," I retort, "I'm certainly not a good pool player. I guess the angels are on my side. Or devils, as you say."

Then I commence a second shot, also equally impossible due to the layout of my opponent's balls, though differently arranged. And once more I make a ridiculous claim:

"Okay, now I'm gonna hit the 11 ball, strike it against the right bank where it will spin off the 15 ball. Which ball will carom off the far-end bank, strike the near-end bank, then whack the 12 ball. Which will hit the left bank and drop into the near-right corner pocket."

Again, I never dreamed of pulling this off, but think: *what have I got to lose?* So here's what happens next:

I make a powerful lunge of the cue stick, which causes my right wrist to be flayed against a jagged piece of metal protruding from the pool table's frame. And start to bleed profusely. Yet the balls I indicated with the cue stick all respond once more, exactly as I declared!

Infuriatingly, Jared had again turned away, this time to order a second drink. So once more he does not witness My Miraculous Bank Shot. Yet I notice Devon's surprise at my continued good fortune. So I walk up to him, raise my bloody wrist to his face, and declare:

"*There's your blood price!*" and guffaw profusely: "Mwa-ha-ha-ha!" He raises his shoulders and chortles.

Barkeep Gary provides me with a half-shot of vodka and a bandaid, that I may cleanse my wound in the urinal. He confides:

"We need to hammer down that loose metal strip. You're not the first to be cut up by a cockeyed cue shot."

I don't think Jared believes I succeeded in either shot. But that's just how things go sometimes: *when you achieve a great goal, often there's no one around to witness.* But if you're lucky, there's at least one.

Though sometimes your sole witness doesn't even remember. Especially if several years pass before you ask him to vouch for the miracle.

Thank you, Arwyn, for those pool tips!

**FREE ME FROM THIS BOND**



Illustration by S. Rohan

## **Chapter 5**

### *Latest Gift*

Allow me to show you the latest gift I will soon present to My Beloved Arwyn (click on any image for a larger view):

*[ Awesome Reader: I am at an impasse. No way can I duplicate the outstanding images for this chapter, in book format, that I can on The Web. That is beyond my ken financially. Even so, they do not lend themselves well to either black-and-white or the much smaller size required to fit in a standard book. I therefore beg your forgiveness, when I point you to a URL, in order to view these incredible snapshots online, which require a computer monitor's full-size screen, in order to grasp their beauty:*

*http://tinyurl.com/latest-gift*

*But even without access to cyberspace, you will get the gist of this chapter, and be inspired by the tale writ herein. ]*

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

Folder contains episodes from my latest novel ("Free Me From This Bond"): chapters 3 (Sweet Sue), 8 (Dragon Prophecy) and 9 (Dragon Fire in the Hole). Left out three other completed chapters because they are not pertinent to my bless-ed relationship with my Darling Guardian Dragon Arwyn Miles and I am running low on printer ink, which is rather expensive. I am presently typing Chapter 13 (The Phone Call) which may or may not be added to this folder, depending on how soon I can deliver this gift to My Sweetheart, and whether or not there's enough ink left in my printer.

Photo #3 shows my newest chapters in the left pocket; and in the right is a graphic novel about America's War Machine, and why it is so destructive to its citizens, and to our troubled world at large. Really, it's intended as a gift of appreciation to Randolph Louis Taylor, and not to Arwyn Miles.

*[ Tremulous Reader: for reasons which should be obvious to you, if you've been following my tales since Chapter 1. The small white envelope contains a business card that promotes my latest novel. ]*

Photo #4 is addressed to Randolph instead of Arwyn, for I know their spirits are intertwined, and that Lover #1 (Randolph) has brought Lover #2 (Arwyn), to heal my bleeding heart of great sorrow for the love of a suffering Vietnam Veteran (#1).

Don't know if you can see this, but in photo #4, in fine-point pen I added (in the lower middle-right): "Thank you for bringing me to him."

This is in reference to my other Great Love Randolph (for bringing Arwyn to me). But it also acknowledges a near-future prophecy, where Arwyn will bring me back to My Beloved Randolph (who suddenly disappeared from my life since 1992) through whatever magical dimension that is his power, which I call Dragon Sorcery. I really can't speak enough praise over what a noble and dear dragon, is My Darling Arwyn. Suffice it to say: "He is Infinitely beloved by Yours Truly."

FYI: If you still need to learn about my excellent association with Randolph Taylor, go here:

The Somalian Affair

<http://tinyurl.com/somalia-taylor>

Why it's called "The Somalian Affair" will become evident after a little perusal of that Dragon-Divinely Inspired Page. Or for a briefer account, this poem: "September's Passage," which you can read in Chapter 14.

Photo's #5-6 are just the reverse side. A skull-theme bandana binds the folder. Those painted feathers BTW, were found in a curb on Noe Street, while walking home. Discarded, no doubt, after a fun day by one of numerous revelers, at San Francisco's annual Bay to Breakers run.

Wait-a-minute. Oh jeez, silly me. I almost *forgot* to mention the *other* items I've included in this folder. And which are very, very special (click on any image for a larger view):

[ *Patient Reader: again, I desperately require you to visit my online version, to view the images described here and below (my profuse apologies):*

*<http://tinyurl.com/vamc-folder> ]*

On the left side are the *original* handwritten letters I composed in 1985, while visiting My Randolph after he shot himself, and where he was (hopefully) recuperating. There was no certain conclusion that his hospital bed at the VAMC in Washington, D.C. would not also become his death bed. Those letters were interviews I held with various other patients there, who were also Nam Vets and--after returning back from that conflict--became (like Randolph) anti-war activists.

What I did was carry a concealed tape recorder into the building, and have each veteran tell his story. Each night upon returning to my hotel room I'd play the recordings back, and handwrite all the details. The next morning I'd make a photocopy of this journal, and mail these duplicates to Patrick Singleton, a news reporter back in S.F., who agreed to receive my daily reports. This way if I got caught, Patrick would have at least *some* vital info that could blow the scandal wide open.

Sean H., you remember all this I'm sure: you were still residing in the same apartment building as myself. In fact, I had just moved in there two years earlier. You recall how I had no money to fly out there until that miracle happened. My first computer ever (a Compaq "luggable," 28 lbs.!) was stolen by those two rapsclions, who I let live with me for a week before they could move into a new rental. I was so upset, never dreaming I'd collect on my insurance. So I forgot all about it. Then, Randolph shoots himself!

A potent dream where angels instructed me to fly out to D.C. or he'll die, made me worry how I'd ever get the moolah to do just that. "Don't worry," these angels affirmed, "the money will come to you at the right time." Well, lo and behold, the insurance payment that I forgot all about *did* show up two

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

months later: \$2,850! More than enough to jet out to D.C., rent a budget hotel room, eat out, buy Randolph some gifts, and more.

And you remember how I trusted curly golden-haired Curtis D'marie to stay in my SRO and keep things tidy. No guests whatsoever, especially not that byatch Carrie? Boy, did *he* make a mess of things! (Or really, I should say "*she*.")

Sadly, Mr. Singleton did nothing with my papers; in fact he never communicated with me ever again, despite my several phone calls to him when I got back. As far as I know, he is *still* sitting on these documents, or more likely, just tossed them into the trash.

Those letters are testimonials citing medical abuse and neglect by hospital staff, towards those soldiers who spoke out against our occupation of Vietnam. One such patient who suffered seizures, was locked away and ignored. Until he finally died the next day. I believe they also intended the same fate for Randolph. Fortunately, I discovered his whereabouts thanks to the help of a local priest (Father Delmar, Church of the Most Holy Redeemer here in the Castro) who had contacts back east. Ministers, priests, rabbis and the like can visit places otherwise verboten to your average citizen.

Once I blew the whistle by publicizing Randolph's location and begging folks to send him letters and cards of concern, love and support; the hospital knew the jig was up, and they were *forced* to take good care of him. (How did I expose their skulduggery? By sending my grievous appeal as a letter to the editor to every major newspaper in each of our fifty states.)

On the right side of the open folder are displayed three cards, all written to Randolph but never really mailed. I did this sometimes just to soothe my aching soul for lack of him. The topmost card shows a dog gazing down at a feline. Open this card to find a poem called "Prayer of the Cat:"

Lord,  
I am the cat.  
It is not, exactly, that I have  
something to ask of You!  
No--  
I ask nothing of anyone--  
but,  
if you have by some chance,

in some celestial barn,  
a little white mouse,  
or a saucer of milk,  
I know someone who would relish them.  
Wouldn't you like some day  
to put a whole curse on the race of dogs?  
If so I should say,  
Amen.

Prayers from the Ark  
The Creatures' Choir  
by Carmen Bernot De Gaszt

This quote is an exact copy from one of Randolph's earliest letters to me (while recuperating from that self-inflicted bullet wound). Right down to the little sketch of a cat's head.

The bottommost card depicts two polar bears, youngster riding the back of an adult. Open this card to see:

To My Beloved Randolph,  
You're tops, Pops! I can't bear  
to be away from you, even for a moment!  
Most affectionately,  
Ursa Minor Zeke

Below my handwritten praise, you'll find a photo of yet *another* card, depicting barnyard animals gathered around the manger of baby Jesus. It is a Christmas card of course, and the very last writing of any sort that Randolph sent to me. For a long time, I had it glued to a red background, and kept it hung on the wall right over my bed's pillow. Inside, the card read: "*May the sweet spirit of Christmas be with you all year long.*" And signed, simply: "*Randy.*"

No return address, but the postal stamp indicated it was mailed from here, in San Francisco! I called the local VAMC and other hospitals to see if I could track him down. Alas, no luck. I wept.

Finally, the central card depicts a luminous painting entitled: "The Knight of the Holy Grail" by Frederick Judd Waugh. My quest for Randolph's

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

Redemption is indeed, My Very Own Personal Holy Grail. Open the card to read:

What more can I say? You have won for  
your heart, the Holy Grail! You are Brave  
Randolph, liberator from the shackles of  
earthly woes. Semper fidelis!

Genie/Zeke

So there you have it: my recent gift (or gifts, actually) to Beloved Arwyn. I entrust him with these papers, and those three undelivered cards. Why? Because I know in my heart that Arwyn's gift is to deliver me back unto Randolph. In some way which is unfathomable at this time, and is obviously no less than a Major Miracle. Randolph will receive my VAMC documents, and these cards...and thus my Great Odyssey come full circle.

Only now, not with just *One* Great Love in my life, but *two*!

I challenge *anyone* to defy my claim that I am the luckiest and happiest man in the entire cosmos (not just planet earth). Should you be such a one, I warn you right now: *your mission is futile!*

RANDOLPH  
TAYLOR:  
DAY  
39



Illustration by S. Rohan

## Chapter 6

### VAMC Interviews

*[ Pensive Reader: It's important at this point to note Randolph Taylor's selfless act of fasting for 40 days in 1984, that Vietnam Veterans be represented at San Francisco's Democratic National Convention of the same year. I would also like to point out that our then-mayor Dianne Feinstein refused to support his noble fast, declaring it an act of self violence. Sadly, while the Democratic Party seemed to finally acquiesce to Randolph's wish, they betrayed him at the last moment, and banned him or any other Nam Vet from speaking on the floor. This cruel outcome was largely responsible for Randolph feeling so disheartened, that he attempted suicide less than a year later. To view a news article about his fast, visit this URL:*

*<http://tinyurl.com/rtaylor-fast> ]*

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

Okay peepulz, here is a typed copy of *all 22 pages* of my interviews of Nam Vet patients at the VAMC Hospital in Washington D.C., way way back in 1985. If you haven't read the previous chapter ("Latest Gift") please do so now. This will save me from having to repeat myself in this article. Once you read Chapter 5 you'll have a good grasp on what these interviews are all about.

Don't know what took me *so long* to release 'em after Mr. Singleton's failure to follow through! Anywayz, here goes. For an added bonus you may view the original document in all its handwritten glory here:

<http://tinyurl.com/vamc-interviews>.

*(Unlike the handwritten letter in Chapter 1, these pages were scribed on a yellow pad, thus the background is too dark to reproduce in print.)*

Please note that I changed my name in 1996 from Gene Catalano to Zeke Krahlin. These interviews predate my new name. For proof of name-change, visit:

<http://tinyurl.com/gene-to-zeke>.

\* \* \*

April 10, 1985

On April 4, 1985 at 7:15 a.m., a veteran patient, Mr. Montgomery (approx. 55 years old) died of a heart attack. He was admitted to Ward 2D-East, Bed 6, about a week earlier, complaining of chest pains. The night before his death, he complained of chest pains to student doctors and nursing staff, who paid no attention. He received no medical attention that night, and consequently died in the morning.

Randy wants immunity to be granted to veteran patients at the V.A. Hospital, so they may speak without fear about the abusive and neglectful treatment of the hospital, that causes untold suffering and deaths. Randolph Taylor is numbered among the ones who suffer from neglect, and may die because of this neglect.

\* \* \*

April 12 1985

On April 11, 1985, Vietnam Veteran Randolph Taylor was dealt a cruel blow: the V.A. Hospital psychologist, Dr. Zager, declared Mr. Taylor to be potentially homicidal. He based this conclusion on an ink-blot test, in which Randy described two ink-blots as resembling the caricatures of Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon. Dr. Zager concluded that, since two political figures were included in Randy's ink-blot test, he could be homicidal.

I consider Dr. Zager's prognosis unfounded, cruel, and atrocious. I know Randy to be a very gentle and caring soul, and have never heard him talk of harming anyone in any way. It seems to me that Mr. Taylor is a victim of persecution for his outspoken criticism of the V.A. Hospital, and possibly for being gay.

It is doubly cruel for Randy to suffer such an accusation, as he is already under considerable stress, both for his post traumatic stress, and for any possible medical mistreatment or neglect.

Randy has already contributed much to the hospital by his kindness to fellow veteran patients, for the hospital staff in his ward (2D-East) have become somewhat more humane to their gay and AIDS patients.

This ink-blot test was the same one given to Randy twelve years ago, and he likewise identified two blots as resembling Nixon and Johnson. May I point out that during this twelve-year interim, Mr. Taylor has never raised a hand against anyone. Isn't this proof positive that he is not homicidal? Randy considers his reaction to these two ink blots a reflection of the politics of his time during the Vietnam War.

Dr. Zager is contributing potential damage to Randy's case, and his second status hearing is scheduled for May 1, 1985. Even if the judge should bypass the doctor's prognosis, that fact of a homicidal accusation could destroy Randy's future when it comes to seeking work, and any further legal involvement. The ramifications of this character defamation could go quite far in its injury to Randy's recovery.

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

\* \* \*

April 14 1985

Randy's left leg is lame, due to a blockage of circulation. After examination, which didn't occur for several weeks after Randolph Taylor's original complaint, the doctor thinks the blockage is in an aorta. Randolph was told that he'd be examined by a cardiovascular specialist shortly, but almost two weeks have now passed since they told him that.

\* \* \*

April 15 1985

This morning, the nursing staff told Randolph to remain in the hospital, as the cardiovascular specialist would examine him today. But the specialist never showed up, and it is now evening.

I found out the following information from Randolph Taylor today:

Jeff Miller, a young veteran about 24 years old, came into the V.A. Hospital last week, and was admitted to Ward 2D West. He was checked out AMA ("against medical approval") on April 12, 1985. He went home, shot himself, and died.

(Not as yet confirmed:) Another veteran on April 11, in Ward 2D West was put in restraints and left to die.

Several weeks ago, Randolph Taylor was given the wrong medication when he left the hospital for weekend leave. Instead of valium, they gave him dilantin, which could have given him seizures had he taken it, which he did not. But he went without medication for his heart during the entire weekend. Meanwhile, the patient who was supposed to get dilantin for his weekend leave got Randolph's valium instead. Fortunately, this patient had some spare dilantin on him, which he takes to prevent seizures.

This mishap of drugs, according to the patients, is an everyday incident at the V.A. Hospital in Washington, D.C., as are improper dosages, overuse of lithium when much safer drugs can be used, and illegal trafficking of drugs on the part of some medical employees.

According to Randolph, more deaths happen in this hospital than he experienced in Vietnam over the same period of time. He claims that many

veterans at this hospital suffer and/or die unnecessarily because of abusive treatment or neglect.

Regarding Randy's possible aorta malfunction: it causes Randy to grow weak and exhausted several times a day, forcing him to go to bed and rest.

Randy is extremely distraught and saddened by the hospital's cruel treatment and neglect, causing unnecessary hardship and death, and by a psychologist's accusation that he is homicidal by nature. Randy wonders how soon he will die, yet he keeps fighting for his survival and release from the hospital. After his trial, he is determined to expose the V.A.Hospital's criminal negligence to the media.

Randy is folding paper into cranes, inspired by a true story he read called "A Thousand Cranes," about a Japanese girl with radiation poisoning who believed the legend that, if you make a thousand paper cranes, you will recover from any illness you have. After folding a little over 600 cranes, she died. Randy's gentle nature and faith is an inspiration to me.

\* \* \*

April 16 1985

I visited California Congresswoman Sala Burton's office on April 12, 1985, and spoke with her assistant, Michael Moran. I told him of Randolph Taylor's serious condition, and of the medical neglect and abuse he and other patients are enduring, including unnecessary deaths. He said he will look into ordering a secret investigation, and have one of Burton's representatives visit Randy at the hospital. He said he'd get back to me that day, Friday, but he never did.

I phoned Mr. Moran today, Tuesday, April 16, 1985, and he said that he is composing a letter regarding hospital abuse and corruption (for Randy Taylor specifically, and the patients in general) to the Chief Medical Director of the Veterans Administration, Donald Custis. He directs *all* of the V.A. Hospitals in the nation.

Also, Mr. Moran said that Randy does not want any of Burton's representatives to visit him; he only wants Burton herself to visit. Randy told me that this is not true; he'd be glad to have *any* representative visit. Randy never told Mr. Moran *not* to have a representative visit.

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

Bill Brew, Director of Veterans' Affairs for California Senator Cranston's office, is unwilling to visit Randy or other patients at the V.A. Hospital in Washington, D.C. Nor is he interested in sending out a representative on pushing for a secret investigation of the hospital; even though I informed him, with specifics, of the medical abuse occurring there.

He told me that the patients are free to contact him regarding any complaints, and their names will remain confidential. I told Mr. Brew that apparently these patients are still too scared to come forward; that they should be granted immunity and be interviewed. Mr. Brew showed no interest in my suggestions. His attitude of "They can come to us, but we won't come to them," is alarmingly discouraging, especially since these problems are right up his alley, as Director of Veterans' Affairs! My personal visit and conversation with Bill Brew took place on April 12, 1985.

Randolph Taylor had (or still has) skin cancer from exposure to Agent Orange in the Vietnam War. Some time ago, he was given tablets of beta-carotene, which has proved beneficial to many patients suffering from Agent Orange skin cancer. This administering of beta-carotene is part of a government medical experiment, which includes all the V.A. Hospitals. Yet, when Randy was admitted to the V.A. Hospital in Washington, D.C., this hospital took away his beta-carotene supply, and has no intention of giving it back to him at any future time.

Walking through the hospital corridors, I have heard patients mumbling about how neglectful and abusive this hospital is, regarding medical care. I have spoken with some of these patients, and they can tell many true stories of patient abuse, similar to what Randy has told me. Some of these stories include unnecessary and cruel deaths, and vicious beatings by some of the guards and other personnel.

On April 12, 1985, I visited California Congresswoman Barbara Boxer's office. The secretary said that both Boxer and her aide were out of the city, and wouldn't be back till sometime next week.

I phoned Boxer's office on April 16, 1985, and spoke with Doris Stupp, an assistant to Boxer involved in veterans affairs. I told her the story about Randy and the other patients, and she showed extreme interest. I have an appointment with her tomorrow at 1 P.M.

Randy told me that the letters he's received from Calif. Sen. Cranston and Calif. Congresswoman Boxer, have been copied and mailed to press

agencies, including AP and UPS. In order to prevent harm to his May 1 hearing, the press is sitting on this information until after Randy goes to court. The contributions, or lack of same, by politicians on Randy's behalf will all be exposed in the media.

Randy says that patients in the V.A. Hospital's psychiatric ward are denied proper medical treatment, even though most of them require medical, as well as psychiatric, care if they are to recover and avoid torment and/or death.

Also the intercoms in the psychiatric ward blast loud and frequently, jittering the nerves of already-distraught patients, many of whom are suicidal.

\* \* \*

April 17 1985

While, in the long run, the corruption in the V.A. Hospital in D.C. will be exposed, Randolph Taylor may die, for he needs immediate, quality medical care, which is being denied him!

How many more veterans will suffer and needlessly die at the hands of these selfish, uncaring doctors and nurses? I have started keeping count.

I feel helpless in my search to get Randy proper medical care fast. And I know that he could die at any moment. I have yet to discover how I can accomplish this, without endangering Randy's medical and legal condition.

Today I spoke with Doris Stupp, Barbara Boxer's assistant regarding veterans' affairs. I filled her in on Randy Taylor's situation, and gave her a copy of some of my notes on the hospital's neglect and abuse. I also spoke with Boxer's aide, Claudette Josephson, who suggested I write a one-page note to Ms. Boxer, for Doris Stupp to leave on her desk. They let me type it in their office. Ms. Boxer is leaving D.C. again tomorrow, until the 22nd; and I'll be leaving on the 23rd. This is all so frustrating and sad.

\* \* \*

April 18 1985

The hospital director, A.A. Gavazzi, seems to be the main plug to any humane improvements at the V.A. Hospital in Washington, D.C.

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

I spoke in the canteen with another patient, who is debilitated by alcoholism. He is thirty-four years old, and is intelligent, attractive, and kind. It seems that his alcoholism was the result of noises in his head that came from shooting cannons while he was enlisted. He says no one is treating him for this painful and debilitating neurosis, even though he is a patient at the V.A. Hospital. Like Randy, he has many true horror stories to tell of criminal negligence on the part of the V.A. Hospital.

After over a 3-week wait, a cardiovascular specialist (Dr. Levi) finally examined Randy; I was present. Dr. Levi only gave Randy a cursory, 5-minute examination, then abruptly walked away. Randy thought the Dr. had to rush off to another patient, but Randy found him a few minutes later watching television on his ward (in the "recreation" room). When a commercial came on, Randy tried to ask some questions, but Dr. Levi just told him to go away.

Randy tells me that Occupational Therapy uses patients to do work that hospital employees should actually be doing.

He also claims that donations to patients may very likely be confiscated by the nursing staff, for their own enjoyment. For example, the Ladies' Auxiliary left extra food for the patients one day; but the nurses shortly after took the food away, claiming it was intended for the nursing staff.

Regarding immunity: Randy says immunity should not only be granted to patients, but to employees who would then speak about hospital abuse and neglect.

\* \* \*

April 19 1985

Randy had planned to spend this weekend with me, but it turned out that, because he was ten minutes late for lock-up last night, the staff grounded him for the entire weekend. He can't even leave the ward, and the only phones are down the hallway; as a result he couldn't even phone his lawyer as scheduled. This cruel treatment by the staff is seriously debilitating to Randy's mental recovery (and physical, because of this stress). He only wanted to see me for a few minutes, when I visited this afternoon, and did not want me to return this evening; he is that depressed.

What makes this so awful, is that this is the only weekend he would've been able to spend some free time with me, before I return to S.F. on Wednesday, the 23rd.

\* \* \*

April 20 1985

Another patient, gay vet Bill Gladman (Ward 2D-East, same ward as Randy's) also has much to say about hospital abuse, including gay discrimination. He will be glad to speak to any reporters. (202/745-8000, x7304: leave message to call.)

\* \* \*

April 22 1985

I phoned Sala Burton's office this morning (approx. 9:45 A.M.) to speak with her aide, Michael Moran; who said I could come to his office to pick up a copy of his letter to Mr. Custis, National Director of the V.A. Hospitals. I couldn't reach him, and no one in the office knew about the letter.

So when I dropped over at noon, the secretary told me he was at a meeting, but that she conveyed my message to him. He still did not leave a copy of that letter for me to pick up.

I left a memo for Mr. Moran to send a copy of this letter to my address in S.F., and to Randy at the V.A. Hosp. in D.C.

\* \* \*

April 28 1985

My return to S.F., April 24-now. Since my return, the Randy Taylor Committee has formed as part of the Alexander Hamilton Veterans' Association. This was accomplished without my knowledge. They phoned me, and I gave them all my notes from D.C.

Someone from this committee may be in D.C. now, to help Randy.

The Alex. Ham. Vet. Assoc. has (recently) become the first gay post (#448) of the American Legion. You can speak with the Sgt. of Arms, Patsy Savino, at 431-1413, regarding Randy Taylor Committee. You can also speak

## **FREE ME FROM THIS BOND**

with the First Vice Commander Bob Basker, or with another member, Joe Carotenuto.

I believe that Randy Taylor is being persecuted because of his ideals, his political activism, and his sexual orientation. I have never before witnessed such great suffering in one man. He could die or crack under the pressure of this persecution, at any moment.

I have been sending Randy cards and letters of support every day since Jan. 16, and still am. You have my permission to ask Randy for copies of these letters.

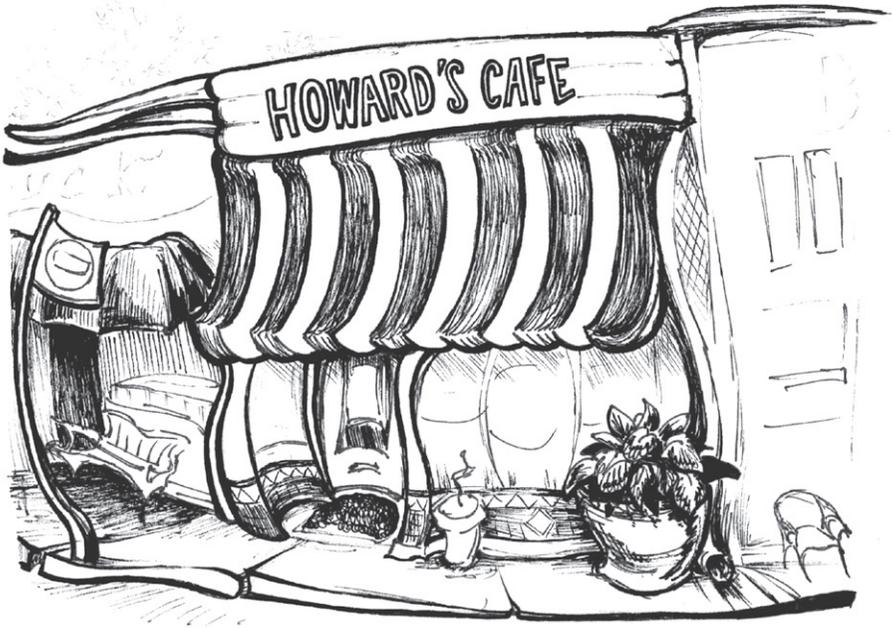


Illustration by S. Rohan

## **Chapter 7**

### *Howard's Cafe*

From: Zeke Krahlín

To: Jesse Balmer

Subject: Your Outrageous, Wicked-Good Illustrations

Hello, Jesse. I was admiring your spectacular cartoons at Howard's Cafe this afternoon. Bobbie pointed out your tumblr URL, so I could contact you.

I have this blog you see (*no!*), parts of which will soon be published in the old school formula known as a "book." You're probably too young to remember what books are, but that can be dealt with later. o\_0

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

I will need an illustrator...actually, a whole bunch of illustrators, for my true life gay bromance fairytale, "Free Me From This Bond." Which you can check out here:

<http://tinyurl.com/zekeblog>

I've linked those entries in a menu right at the sidebar's top. Notice I've completed 3 chapters thus far, and am writing at the rate of one chapter per week. Of course I don't expect you to do any illustrations for free. I just want to alert you about my interest in having you among the numerous illustrators I will use to liven up my novel.

Right now, I just rip images off the web and pop 'em in. But of course, I can't use them for the "book," as they are copy protected. Plus, I'm sure at least *some* of the creators of these images would be quite upset to learn I'm using their precious creations to celebrate the gay spirit.

I have no money to spare at this time (and I still survive on a meager disability stipend). Though once the advance payment comes in, I'll have plenty.

So, when/if you have some idle time, I'd much appreciate it if you read at least one of my delightful chapters. To see if you'd feel inspired enough to be one of my very talented illustrators.

Thank you so much for your thoughtful attention: your art is BRILLIANT! And, speaking from one artist to another in the greatest confidence, I leave you with this thought:

*Spacetime means nothing to an old god, either.*

In Spaghetti Monster we trust,

Zeke Krahlín (a.k.a. "Jehovah's Queer Witness")

PS: I think I'll put this message in my blog, as the latest entry w/links to your artwork.

\* \* \*

Date: Sat, 07 Apr 2012 17:16:32

From: Zeke Krahlín

To: My E-Friends

Subject: Fwd: Your Outrageous, Wicked-Good Illustrations

Just posted this letter to one Jesse Balmer, check out his web sites:

<http://jessebalmer.com>

<http://iwillmissthedinosaurus.tumblr.com>

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/jessebalmer>

Sean H.: Of course I'd simply *adore* having you do some illustrations, too. Prepare yourself: the book will be done in one or two months' time. You can do as few as five illustrations, or as many as fifteen. Well, I guess the best approach is one illustrator per chapter.

[ *Deliberate Reader: please enjoy Sean's delightfully eccentric "Animated Paradise" here:*

<http://animatedparadise.0catch.com> ]

Just replace the present images with a similar-theme drawing of your own (and approx'ly the same size, though up to twice as large is perfectly acceptable. I can shrink 'em down anywayz, using Irfanview). I prefer full-color works, though I'll leave that up to the artist. I'm sure I'll be most pleased, even if just black-&-white.

Sinqueerly,

Zeke the Fantastic Airhead of Heavenly Abode

\* \* \*

Date: Sat, 07 Apr 2012 23:05:11

From: Zeke Krahlín

To: Jesse Balmer

Subject: Your Outrageous, Wicked-Good Illustrations

Didn't expect to post to you a second time, before you bother to respond to my first missive; however:

In creating my blog entry about your art, I want to provide a link to your work, which caption is: "Spacetime means nothing to a new god."

I saw that fabulous work at Dash Cafe wifi, but now that I am home, for the life of me, I can't track down that particular masterpiece. So, could you PLEASE give me the URL for that most special creation?

Thanx so much, Jesse. Best to you always.

- Ezekiel

\* \* \*

Date: Sun, 08 Apr 2012 11:53:34

From: Zeke Krahlín

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

To: Jesse Balmer

Subject: Your Outrageous, Wicked-Good Illustrations

Quoting Jesse :

{{ Here ya go!

<http://tinyurl.com/spacetime-means>

Thanks! }}

FANTASTIC!

Well, gotta go now and kick up some dust at the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence's Easter celebration at Dolores Park. Will let you know when this blog entry is up...prolly take a week or a little more.

Cheerz, Jesse!

\* \* \*

Date: Sun, 08 Apr 2012 11:57:56

From: Zeke Krahlin

To: Jesse Balmer

Subject: Your Outrageous, Wicked-Good Illustrations

One more thing (sorry to be a bother): I originally found that marvelous illustration w/ caption: "Spacetime means nothing to a new god." That's what I'm looking for, but somehow that now eludes me. I want the page with both illustration *and* caption, or readers won't get the joke. I'm very anal retentive when it comes to my blog presentation, even those silly little links which I often utilize for punditry; or puns.

Thanks again, Jesse.

[ *Wordly Reader: apparently, Jesse decided not to use the title "Spacetime means nothing to a new god," and that is why I got confused: he deleted the title shortly after I viewed the incredible illustration. ]*

\* \* \*

Thirteen videos followed by a whole passel of digital shots:

[ *Angelic Reader: again, I am at an impasse, as the many Howard's Cafe photos and videos are not translatable into traditional (or ebook) format. You have no choice but to view these excluded media, online here:*

<http://tinyurl.com/howards-media> ]

ATTENTION SACRED READER:

Howard's Cafe is one of my escape pods strategically scattered throughout "Baghdad by the Bay;" whenever I sorely need a break from the rough streets where angel-headed hipsters negotiate for a safe hovel in which to shoot up, snort or raise their legs in blissful amnesia, and from the intolerable noise pollution and general craziness that is The Castro.

I first discovered Howard's in the First Year Of My Destiny when I arrived in San Francisco for the very first time, homeless. The year? 1973. The Place? By the decrepit rotting old piers (long since usurped by a splendid baseball stadium), and run-down bread trucks driven by the most sweet natured and handsome hobos you could ever hope to Biblically know. And it's been a platonic love affair ever since: the folks who ply their trade at This Flat-Out-Patriotic All-American Style Eatery are the sweetest on the planet.

It's an easy ride in the N Judah streetcar from the piers to the Inner Sunset, where Howard's is located on 9th Avenue between Irving and Judah streets.

[ *Favored Reader: ever fantasize about having your very own Alice's Restaurant (the TV series starring Linda Lavin, not the movie) in your 'hood? Well, seek no more, Beloved Reader! For I have found Our Very Own Mecca of True Neighborliness and Good Spirit, right here in the Heart of the Inner Sunset. Thank Goddess it's not called "Mel's Diner:" think about it!* ]

Speaking of "good spirit," my brief affair with the bar next door, "The Mucky Duck," did not end well. I was excommunicated precisely because I am gay and not in the closet at all. I befriended several women there, who I thought would welcome a break from their men always talkin' sport and shop. I have many delightful true tales about my street activism, and quite a broad sense of humor. Well whaddya know? Turns out their vestigial sex organs, err, I mean to say "their boyfriends", were jealous of their fiancées' attention suddenly directed solely towards yours truly. I really should get back to the topic of this comment missal, so I'll leave you to read my Mucky-Duck blog entry later on at your leisure. Just visit this URL:

Report from the Trenches (in the Muck & Mire)  
- <http://tinyurl.com/mucky-duck>

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

I've never yet had the immense pleasure of meeting The Great Howard Himself, but I've managed to glean that he has since bicked the kucket "Quite a number of years ago by now" while the employees keep his memory alive by actually celebrating his sterling spirit, each and every friggin' day, except perhaps for those major holidays like New Year's, ML King Day, Easter, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Veteran's Day, and Christmas (and perhaps Earth Day), where they take a little break to enjoy their own family, other friends.

Now how sweet is that? Their food is home-style hash browns at their very best (w/ sliced scallion luminous from the sizzling grill's kiss of canola oil: crunchy green/white veggie buttons scattershot across a lumpy bed of toasty-golden-crusty Russet). Whatever else they serve there is guaranteed to be a Patriotically Gustatory Delight with a splash of southern hospitality w/a Northern California twist. Their java rocks like the 0-Six Earthquake. You will not be disappointed (to say the very least) if you should order a slice of homemade apple pie or lovingly decorated carrot cake, along with a piping hot cup of Howard's Golden Brown Elixir.

*[ Gracious Reader: remember Petula Clark's song: "When you're alone and life is making you lonely you can always go - downtown?" Well, this eatery is such a friendly place to dine and hang out, you may as well replace Petula's "downtown" with "Howard's." Many low-income and starving artist types gather here, along with all other sorts of eccentric, unique and genuinely sweet natured folks. From the elderly to the young, the smartly dressed to the shabby. Asian, Caucasian, African American, and all others representing the international haven that is San Francisco's pulse. Very few places remain in The City, where a stranger can walk in, sit down, and strike up a hearty conversation with another patron, and even make new friends. Without intent to exaggerate in any manner, I must conclude that Howard's is the veritable heart of the Inner Sunset. ]*

After years and years of visiting Howard's Cafe, I have come to realize: the owner surely must be a very compassionate and joyful spirit, to have left such a gloriously amicable legacy. Now, my heart aches to know YOUR story, oh gracious employees and regulars of such a divinely excellent restaurant. I invite you all, to post your memories of Howard (or Howard's), and any other true tales that have occurred around that person (or place), which you'd absolutely love to share with the world.

[ *Faithful Reader: you must log onto this chapter on the web, in order to add your own comment:*

<http://tinyurl.com/howards-comment> ]

<3

PS: For more Howard's fun, go online and check out these following blog entries:

8 Howard's Factoids - <http://tinyurl.com/8-howards>

Howard's Calendar - <http://tinyurl.com/howards-cal>

Cruising Howard's Cafe - <http://tinyurl.com/cruising-howards>

**FREE ME FROM THIS BOND**

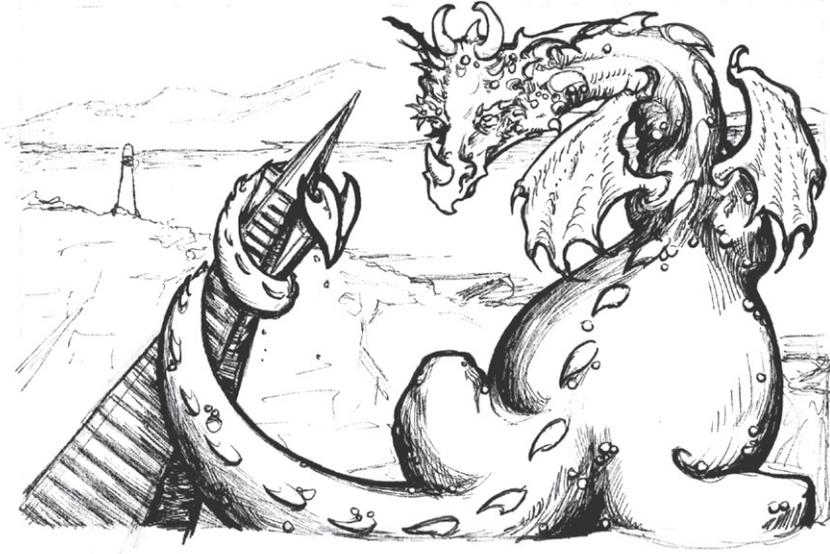


Illustration by S. Rohan

## Chapter 8

### *Dragon Prophecy*

Easter Sunday was a strange, though extraordinarily wonderful, day for me. Here's why: I was so certain that Arwyn wanted to surprise me by holding an impromptu wedding on stage at Dolores Park (hosted by the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence), that I made sure to show up within the first hour of festivities. I wasn't particularly disappointed when my great expectations didn't pan out; in fact, Arwyn was nowhere to be seen.

However: his spirit is already such a joy in my life, that nothing could ever bring me down from that exquisite height of brotherly affection that is My Darling Dragon's trademark gift to All Man and Woman-kind. *Beloved Arwyn: No words could even come close to telling the world how joyously happy I've become, thanks to your wise friendship.*

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

But why on Goddess's green and blue earth, was I convinced that a surprise wedding would be held in my honor? Learn and grow wise, Little Grasshopper:

Seeing as I've been romancing this noble Welsh soldier for more than six glorious years, and I've finally (recently) come to realize he harbors enormous sweetness towards me, and always has since the first day we met in 2005: boy do I feel dumb, for not realizing such a bless-ed situation right out of the gate! But when you have suffered one of the most face-deforming kinds of acne (frequently reoccurring sebaceous cysts), on top of almost constant rejection, backstabbing, and threats from *others* in our dysfunctional gay family...then you can understand why my amazement at finding such a darling man like yourself, Arwyn, who holds nothing but the greatest affection for yours truly (at my advanced age of 61 no less).

Took me quite a few years to wake up, eh, My Sweet Reptile? Guess I should *apologize* for being such a helpless slowpoke, but since I have personally gone through Hades and back again many times over, for your beloved soul and happiness (as you have for me, I do acknowledge)...don't you think I'm worth the wait, as that is precisely how I feel about *you*, Most Beloved Dragon Of All Possible Dimensions?

AFAICT, I've been courting you for well over five years, and thus I've begun entertaining the notion of a marriage proposal, as a logical next step in our delightfully sweet association. Here's one scenario I've thought through with much deliberation:

I approach you at a local bar, perhaps Moby Dick or more likely, The Mix; and say to your wondrous self:

"Arwyn, I have three short, easy to answer questions for you, that I hope you can resolve at this time, w/o imposing upon your own vital needs for establishing connections, and some truly healing R&R."

You turn your dragonly countenance towards my own visage and remark: "Okay, Genie, shoot!" So I say:

"Question #1: How am I handling my overly-gabbiness, at least in your presence?"

Your predicated response: shrug of the shoulders.

"Question #2: With my love of eating raw garlic on almost anything: How am I handling the bad breath issue?"

Your predicated response: shrug of the shoulders.

“Okay. Question #3: Am I learning to obey you better?”

To which you also respond (as predicted) with your usual, infuriating neutral shrug of the shoulders.

“Well then: thank you for your patience, and hearing me out. I guess I should go now, and leave you to your other reveries. Okay, My Darlin’?”

To which you reply (once more: predictably and typically) with a non-committal shrug of the shoulders.

So I turn as if to exit your presence for good, then stop in some sort of pretense of surprise. “Oh I forgot: I *do* have one more question for you, which I guess is question number four. Please bear with me; it’s rather important.”

To which you expel an exaggerated \*sigh\* and say, “Well, okay sweet-heart, but just this one time.”

In response, I suck up my breath till my lungs almost burst, and announce: “Arwyn Miles, YOU FILTHY KUNT: WILL YOU FUKKIN’ MARRY ME FOR CHRISSAKE?”

But that’s just one, among a huge assortment of possible marriage-proposal scenarios. Here’s another:

I am walking rapidly from my SRO, in hopes of scoring some ganja from Allen, who has just returned from Arcata, in hopes of making some good sales on hash and marijuana bud. He is located on 18th Street between Castro and Collingwood, with his humble presentation of semi-precious stones displayed in two, large clam-shell halves.

But before I return to his current location, I find a colorful nosegay on the sidewalk several blocks before I arrive.

So I pick it up and find it to be such a pleasing fusion of pink and purple and white blossoms, before I discover that it’s totally plastic. “*Well, it’s still a lovely little bouquet, and most suitable for a proposal to Arwyn at The Mix or Moby Dick.*”

I therefore postpone my transaction with Allen, in hopes of coming across My Sweeter-than-Fair-Trade-Honey Arwyn first, at either bar. So I enter Moby Dick (as it’s nearest), hoping to find him by the pool table (his usual milieu), so I can hand him the bouquet, then say:

“Arwyn, I have this question I need you to answer: Will you marry me, you glorious hunk of dragon-hood?” Then I’d place a finger on his lips and expound, “Wait! Don’t give me your answer right away. I’m gonna go right now, a couple blocks up 18th, to score \$20 worth of hashish. Then I’ll come

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

back in ten or fifteen minutes to hear your answer. Just think it over before I return.”

Alas, I could not fulfill my marriage fantasy that night, as Arwyn was not present at either Moby Dick, or The Mix. Life sucks sometimes. So I move ahead, to purchase some righteous smoke from Allen. (I also present him with my colorful nosegay, which he immediately accepts, and places beside his clamshell display for some eye-catching decor.)

Allen is this absolutely gorgeous, free-spirited young man of about 25, who though entirely heterosexual through and through, nonetheless holds great love and affection for his gay brothers. What a remarkable and blessed spirit he is, already; right? We first met several weeks ago, when I was searching for a reliable source of marijuana. Invited him home of course (he was so damned cute, what with his golden locks of hair, and a body so buff you couldn't even begin to know upon which part to drool).

Turns out we had a *superb* conversation about the beauty of Northern California's rain forests, and what a great blessing this world is, in spite of even the most difficult obstacles that are often placed in our way. But the most enjoyable (and important) part of our visit, was my telling of:

\* \* \*

### THE PARABLE OF THE DOLLAR-STORE BANDANA

It has been my habit these last several years or so, to wear some sort of decorative bandana bound tightly 'round my cleanly shaven skull. That night, I was wearing one such bandana only received the previous evening, as a gift from a new street buddy named Troy. It was a lightly colored camouflage bandana, with the words from Psalm 91 printed all over. I got down on one knee facing Allen, and removed the bandana from my head, in order to show him the psalm, and tell my story:

Before departing late last night, Troy left me with a gift of that bandana, exclaiming I was never to show it to anybody, and keep it to myself. Allow me to read you the entire psalm, also known as the Psalm of Protection (with my own comments interjected between square brackets, and italicized):

#### Psalm 91

1 *Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High*

will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress,  
my God, in whom I trust."

3 Surely he will save you  
from the fowler's snare  
and from the deadly pestilence.

4 He will cover you with his feathers,  
and under his wings you will find refuge;

*[...God has FEATHERS?*

*Is he some kind of super-large BIRD?*

*Oh I get it: He's a ginormous, wing-ed  
and feathered DINOSAUR!*

*A feathered serpent, like the Aztec "Quetzalcoatli!*

*If you can wrap your brain around THAT,  
then I have to say: "You're a better man than  
I am, Gunga Din!"*

*So much for being made in His Own Image, eh?*

*Now it might come as a horrid revelation  
to some (actually, replace ""some"" with "many")  
that Jehovah's original and timeless form  
is that of a dinosaur: a wing-ed dinosaur  
with scaly feathers.*

*Otherwise known as a DRAGON. ]*

his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

5 You will not fear the terror of night,  
nor the arrow that flies by day,

6 nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,  
nor the plague that destroys at midday.

7 A thousand may fall at your side,  
ten thousand at your right hand,  
but it will not come near you.

8 You will only observe with your eyes  
and see the punishment of the wicked.

9 If you say, "The LORD is my refuge,"  
and you make the Most High your dwelling,

*[ Yes, the Lord is my dwelling,*

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

*and I assure you, my gay bros and sis's:  
He absolutely LOVES us sexual minorities,  
You have no need to fear Him,  
Only to give your heart to He Who Adores You  
Infinitely, My Beloved Siblings!  
For there is no living thing ever created  
in God's Great Universe, that would ever be  
condemned to eternity in Hell.*

*That is the devil's work, I assure you,  
My Sweet Children who rose up from the dust,  
to sing Life's Praise.*

*Nor does our Great Father require you to declare  
His Son's name or worship Him as  
the One, True Creator.  
I worship My Lord with humor,  
and with compassion.*

*None of this silly and frightful nonsense  
about **anyone** burning away in Everlasting Hel.  
All that Our Shepherd requires, is that you live by  
The Golden Rule each and every day.  
Neighbor unto neighbor: and a Good Samaritan  
to boot (pun intended)!*

*Worship God,  
worship Goddess,  
worship Lucifer  
(but don't be modest).*

*Hell's Bells! You can even worship  
the Spaghetti Monster, for all  
Jehovah cares.*

*For after all, YHWH truly does  
indeed care. ]*

**10 no harm will overtake you,  
no disaster will come near your tent.**

*[ A tent? Even the Three Little Pigs lived  
better than that! Maybe the economy  
back then was as sucky as it is now, with*

*rolling foreclosures and skyrocket debt.*

*Be that as it may, I'd much prefer God's protection  
from under a solid roof, than in some  
skanky pop-up tent!*

*There's a reason I quit the Boy Scouts.*

*Let's just say the Scout Master was also  
a Scout Masturbator,  
and we sure rocked that bunk bed all night long...  
and sometimes early into Sunday morn  
while the other scouts attended church,  
and munched on deep-throat hot dogs  
and ears of roasted corn. ]*

**11** For he will command his angels concerning you  
to guard you in all your ways;

**12** they will lift you up in their hands,  
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

**13** You will tread on the lion and the cobra;

*[ I guess this passage is just for you, Mongoose,  
the most incredibly handsome and righteous  
guardian of Allen! You're an absolute doll. ]*  
you will trample the great lion and the serpent.

*[ Note: I can surely appreciate using animals  
as a metaphor for evil (and good).*

*But honestly, Precious Reader, aren't **all** God's  
creatures divinely beautiful and good?*

*Whether dung beetle or gazelle,  
warthog or cockatiel, angel or devil, and  
anything in between. ]*

**14** "Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him;  
I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.

**15** He will call on me, and I will answer him;

I will be with him in trouble,

I will deliver him and honor him.

**16** With long life I will satisfy him  
and show him my salvation."

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

And that is the total sum of Psalm 91, a most encouraging and blissful passage of the Old Testament. I really don't see anything wrong with this sacred passage, that can give so much hope to so many. I consider myself BLESSED to have been presented such a beautiful psalm, in this Dollar-Store Bandana.

Which bandana--left to me by a most darling vagabond with wooly golden hair and deliciously deep indigo eyes--gave me much succor over yet one more lonely night. I fell asleep with his bandana, which, in the latest witching light of candle and flame, revealed itself as a most sacred manifestation of finely woven gold for the base cloth...along with the most delicate (but strong) stitching of this psalm in the finest linen thread, dyed in blackest ink. Every letter was completely perceived in all its curves, by a single index finger.

The raised letters were all in Hebrew; yet I could understand any Biblical phrases as if they were entirely in my native English tongue.

The following morning, I woke up with this dollar-store bandana close to my heart, and too far from the dream.

--end of Bandana Parable

[ *Fair Reader: wanna take a gander at the real bandana? Then you must get on a computer or smartphone, and check out:*

*<http://tinyurl.com/troy-bandana> ]*



Illustration by S. Rohan

## Chapter 9

### *Dragon Fire in the Hole*

18 April 2012

To the Dragon Drama Queens at the Hole in the Wall Saloon:

I want to rectify yesterday's fiasco and my expulsion from your fine establishment, on some drunkard fool's claim that I stated I want to bomb this place. When in fact, *this* is what I declared: "I want to *buy* this place." (For two reasons: to keep The Roguish Gay Spirit alive long after the first owners retire or bick the kucket, and to have Arwyn back here where he belongs, playing pool and acting the fool, and just in general, sharing his sweet self with many souls hungry for affection. He was permanently 86'd by the present owners. Once I collect my first millions off the royalties of

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this beatific novel, I certainly intend to purchase Hole in the Wall, lock, stock and barrel.)

Reminds me of a similar faux pas during Barrack Obama's presidential run in 2007, where I was chatting with a very sweet, elderly dingbat over the coffee bar at Cafe Mediterraneo on Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley. (FYI: the same locale where Alan Ginsberg worked on his now-celebrated poem, "Howl."..something I didn't discover till after years and years of hanging out there, composing my own gay poems and prose.)

Dingbat expressed a grave concern of what could become of our economy, should we wind up with yet one more Republican skank in the Oval Office. So I replied:

"Don't you worry, dear, everything will work out just fine, once we put Obama in the White House."

She dropped her swizzle stick and splashed the coffee-bean elixir. "Heavens! No, please, I am antiviolent, and could never suggest a *bomb* in the White House."

"You misunderstood," I chuckled. "I said 'Obama,' not 'a bomb'."

So it later occurred to me that the phonic similarity of those two words, sure must keep the President's body guards on their toes (and needlessly trigger happy. So maybe I'll just turn down my next invite to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue).

Now, I am about to reveal to you, Treasured Reader, a most astounding and profound conclusion which jigsaw pieces only came together for me, less than one month ago. *The Gay Pagan Motorcycle Club (GPMC) orchestrated this silly little scenario*, as they have many others. Out of sheer compassion and joy, to bring Arwyn and I together as lovers.

And to grant me my "Damon Runyon Adventure w/a Gay Spin"..which bromantic odyssey is now into its seventh year!

*Note: this revelation being so new, I probably don't have the most apt title for who these intelligent, mischievous, loving and spirited dragons are. But I am soon to learn, so it seems.*

Once I became aware of this brilliant, outstanding real-world play, concocted by the GPMC, I quickly printed out the first two chapters of "Free Me From This Bond" ('cause that's all I had at the time), and ran to The Hole to thank barkeep Gary with much profusion and gratitude. That was around two weeks ago. It boggles the mind (well at least mine, because

there's a dumb-blonde pool boy lurking just below the surface), to wonder how in the Master Dragon's Blue/Green Dimension, they could concoct and *maintain* This Living Fairytale! With *so* many fables within fables (or "parables" as I like to call them), you become bewitched by such ethereal beauty swirling around you like a swarm of ladybugs or fireflies.

*Please realize the tremendous impact this so-called motorcycle club (w/Arwyn the Supreme Conductor) will soon have on the entire planet.*

Every single tale I tell (in this quite novel noble novel), was all mastered by these Hole-in-the-Wall tarragons and warlocks, then played before me (and around me) with such vigor, I couldn't help but become passionately inspired. And write about what just happened (with very little revision). And what *else* can they do, and *will* do? Surely, they won't stop once my Princely Draco and I become betrothed. Surely, that is only the beginning. Think about it.

Apparently, these GPMC luv-dolls work diligently and vigorously, to make *all* my worthy dreams become truth. Such as my wish for Northern California to secede to become the world's very first LGBT nation. I want to name this new country "Athenia," and make San Francisco its capitol; only we'll rename it "Zekeopolis." Another dream I own, is for gayfolken to take over the world, and bring peace on earth, goodwill to all queerkind...and then everyone else, once our liberation has been claimed.

Anywayz, back to a few moments before the surprise 86:

I'm admiring a brightly handsome young fellow who just stepped inside, and sat at the only unclaimed bar stool. Which, quite coincidentally (and indeed happily, as well) is right beside yours truly. I buy him his second drink, and in a while more, I discover he is a gifted playwright within the Homophile Nation.

Minutes later, I step outside to chat with Willow (while he smokes his Pall Mall), a Siberian Gay Wise Man with a bodaciously sweet sense of humor. He finishes his ciggie and steps towards The Hole's entrance. But there are two quite robust males (and good-looking to boot) blocking our way.

"Uh-oh Willow; they're not gonna let me in."

"Oh yes they are, they're just standing around," he replies.

The very moment I take a tentative step in their direction, they obstruct. (Man, I am so ready to fondle their hefty baskets, but they don't seem particularly receptive. Though perhaps they'll drop their jeans and let me goose

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their fine arses with a finger or two, if I ask politely. I wimp out at the last moment. \*sigh\* ) So I return to the sidewalk right beside the short, concrete wall that defines an outdoor mini-patio for smokers. Willow declares, “I don’t want any part of this” and strides through the entrance.

Though just before he does, I accuse: “Ya big chicken. Buk-buk-buk-buk bugawk! Buk-buk-buk-buk-buk bugawk!” Barkeep Seth runs out and almost pushes me to the ground, and tells me in heated spirit: “Leave, Zeke. Leave NOW or I’ll call the cops.” Again, he presses his hands against me almost to shove, but not quite. I won’t budge: “This is public space. I don’t have to go anywhere.” (After all, once someone threatens to call the pizza keepers on you, it’s best to wait till they arrive, that your side be heard. If you amble away before then, you look guilty.)

As Willow disappears behind the black leather curtain and the buffalicious bouncers resume their station, someone from behind me calls out: “Zeke!” I turn around to see, lo and behold, two drop-alive *gorgeous* Men in Blue flashing pearly smiles and looking oh-so-CLASSY in their neatly pressed uniforms (I’m a sucker for that kind of stuff). I was so taken by their countenance, I said not a word and gazed upon them in rapturous delight.

“Zeke,” says the blonde hottie: “Zeke! Which one of us do you think is cuter?”

Well, I nearly drop my jaw to the sidewalk (and this time, not for cowboy schlong). How sweet. How very, very darlin’. I finally recover my mandible, and speak: “You are both such charming and lovely peace officers, please don’t put me on the spot like this. I’m afraid if I choose the wrong cop, I’ll be cited by the other.”

Then I tell them I have *no* idea why I’ve just been 86’d, that I overheard someone say I’m gonna bomb this saloon. (Without any hindsight at the moment, I assume someone badmouthed me once the shift changed bartenders--as Gary Clayton is certainly my ally--and my good friend Meesha departed.) Well, that is most certainly *not* true (that I want to *bomb* The Hole), because I *worship* at the altar of the Dragon of the Hole in the Wall. I <3 this place. The endearing policemen see that I am honest; and I’m sure they’ll discover that I’ve been slandered. We bid our adieu, and I stroll down Folsom Street on my way home, displaying my bold Jesus Dragon jacket all along my merry route upon return to The Castro.

[ *Curious Reader: if you wanna see my fabulous “Shaman’s Jacket,” ya gotta view it online. No two ways about it; sorry!*

<http://tinyurl.com/shaman-jacket> ]

Note: to those two adorable policemen, I say: “My hat’s off to you, and perhaps other types of apparel, if that would delight you (or *both*, which would make a most saliva-dripping sandwich of the yummiest proportions). Otherwise, let’s become BFF’s and schmooze over donuts and java: I’m nothing, if not the King of Bromance. You just showed me how loved I truly am, by not just a vast segment of the queer community, but the SFPD as well! Therefore I presume you know *all about* My Randolph (a former SF cop in training), whose life was spared thanks to my devoted loyalty. There is certainly a gold star waiting for me somewhere in the hallways of the Department of Justice. There was only one thing about you two handsome dragons, that left me sorely disappointed: what, no frisking? That’s not much fun, so please, for future reference: I’d simply go ejaculatingly ECSTATIC if *both* of you Fine Bluecoats laid hands all over this shuddering body! But I’ll settle for hugs, for I’m sure they are glowingly wonderful too, considering the honorable source.

I did cruise a studly homeless dude on the way home, and got laid inside a large cardboard box that once housed a Frigidaire. It wasn’t totally pleasant because my bad knee acted up, along with my neck vertebrae and RSI-damaged fingers. The bad thing about getting old, is you never really know where the aches in your joints are coming from: arthritis or the crystal you slammed three days ago.

Then, a little further along I drop into a hetero booze lounge called “The 500 Club” not just to spread good cheer and humor to all who accept me, but to also share the Good News: Jesus is gay, and is sitting right here beside you, chatting you up. I don’t remember all the varied witticisms I orated before they banished me to the outer realms, but I do remember this one:

Two fetching men are standing with their drinks in hand, imbibing and most obviously enjoying each other’s company, w/o any sign of a ‘gina

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clinging to their arms. So I nonchalantly rise up from my barstool, and walk right by them, and in passing, remark: “You two boys should be boinking the daylights out of each other by now, you’re both so cute!” By the time they knew what hit ‘em, I had already returned to my spot, and ordered another Kiwifruit-Pineapple Kiss.

So here is what I understand is going down regarding this latest gay fairytale: you amazing Hole-in-the-Wall Pagans are orchestrating a romantic scenario where I get to play the hero, and win Arwyn’s Dragony Heart. Some of you will play the enemy, others of course, my BFF’s. So please, allow me to take a moment out, and state right here:

HOLE IN THE WALL ROCKS!!! WHAT CHARMING AND SWEET DRAGONS!!! YOU ARE A TREMENDOUS GIFT TO OUR LGBT FAMILY, AND I AM SIMPLY STUNNED WITH YOUR AWESOMENESS!!!

The LGBT community created me, groomed me for leadership w/o my even knowing. For part of the training is to figure these things out for myself, as the years pass, and the pieces come together. So I’m not that sure yet if I’m an actual human, or a faggy simulacrum that transcends all time and hard-ons. I now conjecture that I might have hatched from an egg; a dragon’s egg of course.

But I’m always short on money, living only on a disability stipend. I would like to rectify this, by reciting my tales for a fee, at various LGBT venues. Particularly at The Hole (surprise!), and at the living rooms of these outstandingly benevolent bartenders and patrons; I can’t imagine yet what sweet friendships shall result (not to mention what sweet BJ’s). But it will allow me some decent fun money, that I can afford to hang out at the Hole regularly, and even buy drinks for the good souls that inhabit The Dragon’s Lair.

Also: I terribly, desperately, *badly* need an industrial cleaning and repair of my humble single room that I’ve occupied since 1983. So I’m hoping that our wonderful family of Dragon Disciples will surprise me by performing this Sisyphean task (at least, it would be all by my lone some) while I’m away for the afternoon, on whatever day you sweethearts choose. (Time for an “Extreme Makeover - SRO Edition,” eh?)

This next idea may be a bit over the top, but here is my dream: replace the wall facing Market Street with plexiglass, that tourists may gaze up and

admire my Little Hobbit Hole, from whence I conjured up Myriad Darling Tales, and broadcast them around the globe via cyberspace. Of course, I'll need curtains to grant me privacy at times, or some other sort of window cover that looks best. You could even install an animatronic version of myself, for times when I'm not present. (Just give him a bigger cock, \*please\*, 'cause I wanna have lotsa fun with my first sex-toy robot.)

Oh, almost forgot: I yearn for a new set of pearly whites, because they are neither, and have been neither for many a year I can't believe.

\* \* \*

## I'M A DRAG QUEEN'S DRAGON

---

by Ezekiel J. Krahlín ("Jehovah's Very Queer Witness")

I'm a Drag Queen's Dragon of Ill Repute,  
My scales are dirty and my tail is clipped.  
I'm a foul-breathed lizard, you can't refute,  
I feed on gizzards and root beer root  
...and anything else on ship.

Including pirates. Aaargh!

I'm a Drag Queen's Dragon of Dark Design,  
Striking terror in the hearts of 'phobes,  
Burning their churches if I have a mind  
With my fiery breath and those farts behind  
...and my big old, fat old, testicular globes.

Including pirates. Aaargh!

I'm a Drag Queen's Dragon of Tit for Tat,  
I'll chew your bones into bits of gruel,  
And exchange ice cream for some body fat,  
That I get by boiling down 'phobes in a vat  
...so don't mark me as a fool.

Including pirates. Aaargh!

I'm a Drag Queen's Dragon of Dungeon Fame,  
Polyhedral dice on a bed of lice,

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Is how I like to play this game.  
Though without some pot, it's rather lame  
...yes I'll beat you twice, maybe even thrice.

Including pirates. Aaargh!

I'm a Drag Queen's Dragon with a big fat butt,  
And a pair of gonads you've never seen,  
'Cause it's hidden by a protruding spleen  
And my ginormous gut  
...I am really a sight obscene.

Including pirates. Aaargh!

*[ Munificent Reader: for an extra treat, view my gallery of pics from the new  
Hole in the Wall Saloon, located just a few blocks from its original location:*

*<http://tinyurl.com/hole-saloon> ]*



Illustration by S. Rohan

## **Chapter 10**

### *Yevgeny Saves the Day*

I can't even *begin* to tell you how difficult was getting those last three chapters out to the world! Nicholas walked away with my Android tablet about three weeks ago, so I am left with just my desktop-replacement laptop (an Acer Aspire 6530 w/16-inch screen), and my portable Compaq tc4400 PC tablet with swivel screen and touch tablet features. Well, I certainly continue just fine with the loss of my Android, as I still remain with two wifi-capable systems.

But then, I inadvertently pass on my Compaq to Nick about 10 days later, who (like me) does not realize the backpack he admires (and which I gladly present to him), contains that notebook. As a matter of habit, I'm

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accustomed to remove the Compaq from this pack the moment I get home, and stash it in a secret spot. Don't know why I didn't do it the night ruddy-handsome street-dragon Nick shows up. (*What can I say, but that I'm an incurable space cadet! Were there a college course called "Advanced Airhead 201" I'd be the head of the class.*)

Nick is certainly *not* at fault, I want to declare to all the world as my enlightened jury. Unfortunately, I make him the unwitting thief of my finest laptop ever, which he may or may not be able to return at this point. Either way, I still regard him as an absolute darling, who has nothing but my best wishes in every way.

*How good looking is Nicholas (you might ask)? He has (or had) a shaggy mop of jet black hair with a flurry of curls, like a dark halo. Nick has since shaved his head to form a close-cropped Mohawk that looks absolutely bitchin'. His closely-set anthracite eyes are especially sexy and hypnotic. Little did I know just what a gorgeous body he really has, 'cause every time he hangs out with me, he's bundled up in layers. But the last time Nick dropped over, he peeled off his top clothes to change into a fresh T.*

*I was stunned. His torso is precisely cut with well defined pecs and gorgeous tight nipples. Broad shoulders, chest, and a saliva-drippingly trim waist! Though of short stature (5-foot-5 I guess), he is a truly buff male of approximately 27 years, with nicely shaped forearms and bulging biceps. Really lickable armpits (I might add) with just a splash of hair: a delightful oasis between solid upper arms and deltoids. In short: a breathing Greek statue of classic proportion.*

Well, I still have my Acer which serves me quite well, with the extra benefit of connecting to the Internet via Gold's Gym across the street from my Hobbit SRO. But then, the Aspire 6530 burns out some chips, which afterwards only allows me to run the computer off a live optical disc. (I did not learn until more than two years since purchasing this particular model, that it has a notoriously hot CPU that would eventually lead to major burnout; and that is exactly what happens to me. It couldn't *possibly* come at a worse time!)

Now here is where things devolve from annoying to outright frustrating:

The laptop screen is malfunctioning, but so what, I have a separate LCD monitor hooked up, and it works just fine. The hard drive is wrecked, then again I do have five live DVD's with different versions of Linux: Puppy, Mint,

Debian, Knoppix and Parted Magic. So I pop in my favorite distro (which is Puppy), and I'm good to go (or so I think).

*Whaaaaaat? The operating system refuses to load!* I whine, as if my Puppy defecated all over the hardwood floor instead of the newspaper I laid down. *What's up with that? Oh, well, let's see what else I can try. Yes, let's go with Mint.*

But *that* system grinds away like an ogre's jaws coming offa three lines of meth, and takes over a half hour to fully boot up. And after it does, it is so sluggish and non-wifi capable as to be useless! *Grrrrr. Let's try Knoppix next.*

*Fuggedaboutit.* Knoppix is anemic, it's like an old Appaloosa ready for the glue factory. Once it is loaded, the screen is BLANK believe it or not, and refuses to respond to any of my strokes (like a cheap Polk Street hustler, I might add). *\*sigh\**

Debian is no better, much to my disappointment. *What on Jehovah's Green Ball of Slime is going on here? All those discs have always worked just fine before, the few times I've used 'em!*

Turns out Parted Magic is the only functioning live DVD that actually boots up properly, and allows me to connect. But as it also turns out, there still persist serious roadblocks in accomplishing my Cyperspace Mission to Queerify This Planet 100%. For one: *I can't login to my WordPress account, because there is only one browser provided, that is called Chromium, and which has pointless error glitches that refuse to allow me to log into WordPress, and Goddess knows what other sites that I may require to accomplish My Scintillatingly Unbelievable Destiny.*

For another: *Parted Magic doesn't provide an image editor of any kind. For this reason, I must work with whatever pics I download, without any cropping, resizing, color adjustment, or whatever. The various web-based image editors I sampled, require Adobe's Flash Player, which Chromium browser forbids! (Update one week later: finally discovered an excellent online editor called "Lunapic" that does not require Flash to be installed, so I'm happy enough. Necessity is the mother of all bitches. Another problem w/Chromium is you cannot upload a file from the hard drive, or it will shut down. I therefore have no choice but to edit images via their URL.)*

*Surely Amazon.com has plenty of live DVD's I can order for less than \$10, that will solve my pathetic dilemma.* But whaddya know: in spite of ordering more than twenty items in the last two years with the same credit card settings, Amazon suddenly decides there is a problem with my bank account! WTF,

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*didn't Jesus get crucified so good souls like myself, wouldn't have to go through such tortuous grievances? My Blog, My Blog, why hast Thou forsaken Me!* So I contact my bank which declares there is *no* problem on their end. *OMFGoddess, boink me with a Callanish megalith. This can't be happening.*

Okay, so I can just google for some other cyber-stores outside of Amazon, that will provide me with a functional DVD that won't prohibit me from logging onto WordPress.OSdisc.com comes up as the most likely candidate. But once more, Google's Chromium browser decides I can't log onto that site, due to security certificate disinformation. (Which is most definitely *not* the case, though I can do absolutely *nothing* about it, as Chromium does *not* allow me the option to log on anyway. *Jeez! Stuff me in an iron maiden, why don't you! Gag me with a splintery fish bone from The Last Supper.*)

*What about Cheapbytes*, I query to my perhaps-not-so-imaginary daemon. *They've always been a reliable source of inexpensive and live DVD's. Though it's been several years since I've ordered anything from them.* Well, Golden Reader, what do you think happens when I visit their site? Their home page is in a simple and clean format with a single link: "Click here to enter the CheapBytes store".

So I do just that. But instead of their online products menu booting up, I get the following (and useless) statement: *"If you can see this page, then the people who manage this server have installed cPanel and WebHost Manager (WHM) which use the Apache Web server software and the Apache Interface to OpenSSL (mod\_ssl) successfully. They now have to add content to this directory and replace this placeholder page, or else point the server at their real content."*

I certainly don't give a royal *kok-ring* about Apache this and OpenSSL that, so it's quite obvious that once more I'm sheer out of luck. Suddenly like a bolt from Thor's hammer, I come up with this absolutely *brilliant* solution: *Oh, I know, I'll just purchase a DVD via Ebay.*

So I log onto Ebay and search for "linux live dvd". Which results present a copious list of The Perfect Answer to my online dilemma. It is only then I realize that I have *no* funds in my Paypal account (well, actually \$1.18, but what good is that. Can't even get a 10-second BJ from a snoring vagabond for *that* paltry sum). And should I funnel \$20 or so from my savings account, to Paypal, it will take at *least* five business days to register.

Unfortunately that is *not* soon enough, as I promised my literary agent just yesterday, that I shall have my book ready for publication by Sunday,

only *three days* from now! (BTW, my agent chooses to remain anonymous for a while longer; but let me say for the record: he's an Absolute Angel). Additional googling across the vast, ghostly realm of cyberspace, draws a blank (as far as live DVD's go). *So what about asking for help from the Berkeley Unix User Group (BUUG) which I founded back in 2000?*

*No way, I decide. They're a bunch of Libertarian snots who totally mock and deride low-income, left-wing types like myself. I dare not place myself at their untender mercies. Besides, our mailing list suddenly went down four days ago, so I couldn't even post my request if I wanted. Good Goddess, this is such a jackass muck-up, I'm ready to bash the next hetero who looks at me the wrong way!*

FYI: other than my longterm "friend" Casper, there is no one else I know who'd allow me to get on their computer once or twice a week, to complete this novel. And Casper, to say the least, seems awfully hesitant to let me drop over and fulfill my mission. Don't know why he has killer bees in his pants over this, but I sure do not appreciate his lackluster offer to help. But such is the nature of middle class home-owner types who view the world as a system of ownership with proprietary privilege. *Have-nots be damned!*

Another possible solution: the San Francisco Public Library. Which I've used for several days in a row, though they leave much to be desired. For one, I can't download any images, which I use to make my articles more entertaining. For another, patrons are limited to just an hour per day, which thwarts my creative process big time. For I am accustomed to musing over every single paragraph before moving on to the next. Which of course requires liberal amounts of time that can't *possibly* be satisfied by sixty-minute limits each day.

But what really ends my brief affair with the library, is their flaky wifi connection, which too often fails to connect. The last time I use one of their IBM Thinkpads to post to my WordPress blog, their online service fails after twenty minutes. This also means they can *not* scan the laptop's bar code to show that I properly returned it. So I tell them:

"I'm really nervous about returning an expensive item like this laptop, without just standing there, to see it's been properly scanned before I depart. So I prefer to wait until your database is back up."

"Fine with me," replies the cheeky librarian (coke-bottle glasses ready to drop off his waxy nose with a loud crash). "But you'll have to wait at least two hours before we get the system up and running again."

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I found his claim of two hours or more quite dubious. “What about a receipt to show I’ve returned it?” I suggest.

“No, we don’t do that,” he promptly answers, shoving his weighty bifocals back up to that hopelessly deficient excuse of a nose bridge. A house fly lands on the chunky black frame’s left hinge.

So I storm outta that furshlugginer dive otherwise known as “The Harvey Milk Local Library,” not knowing whether or not they’d charge me five hundred dollars or more for a laptop which they could claim I didn’t return. *So what next?* I think.

Thus begins my citywide search for a computer repair shop that might have some live DVD’s on the shelf that I could purchase for a low cost. To my chagrin, the several stores I visit either do *not* know what a “live DVD” is (fer chrissake, what’s wrong with that picture?), or offer to download and burn a disc for the exorbitant sum of \$65 or more! (Did I mention yet that I live on a meagre disability income, which barely clothes and feeds me each month, after paying rent? *I am truly a semi-starving artist: the Real quasi-McCoy.*)

I am growing desperate. *But wait*, I suddenly realize, *Isn’t there a computer shop on Irving Street near 7th, with Linux logos all over the storefront? Surely they can burn a live DVD. If they can’t help me, no one can!*

The Inner Sunset is a neighborhood I frequently visit, to buy cheap produce at Park’s Farmer’s Market, dine at Howard’s Cafe, and stroll through the Strybing Arboretum in Golden Gate Park. It is a short ride on the N Judah from Duboce Park to get there. Disembarking at the UC Med Center, I stroll along the north side of Irving Street, in order to find My Linux Solution. But this shop seems to have disappeared, as I walk along the avenue without finding any Linux logos, or even a PC service.

Several blocks beyond 7th, I cross the street and enter Radio Shack.

“Do you have any live DVD’s for sale?” I nonchalantly query the sole employee. He has no idea what I’m talking about (*dear Goddess, save me from these “anal ogs”*). So I ask him if he knows of any PC repair service between this store and the UC Med Center.

He shrugs his shoulders: “No. I don’t live in this neighborhood.”

*Well, I don’t either, but why should that matter?* I think. *Don’t you ever get out?*

Rather than beat the clueless dweeb to a bloody mass of quivering adipose, I decide he’s already there, and exit to continue my search on the next street over (Judah). Figuring that perhaps the Linux sanctuary might

be somewhere along the way. After hiking the hill for several blocks, I conclude I'm on the wrong track, and decide to try once more, the Irving Street promenade.

So I cut down 8th Avenue and march east, on the same side as before. Lo and behold, four doors after crossing 7th, I see a green-lettered "Linux" plaque on a storefront shelf. *No wonder I missed it the first time around*, I realize. *The picture window is curtained by a large white shade that conceals its purpose.* There is also another sign in the right-side glass pane: "extentech.com".

584 Irving Street. Alas, no one seems to be home. I knock, but no answer. I jiggle the door handle, to discover it is locked. So I depart homeward, to return the following day. \*sigh\*

Next day: I'm in luck! The door is wide open (*What a relief: my frantic search has finally come to a happy end!*). I discern a long-haired, pudgy gentleman with a face so white it makes fish bellies seem gray by comparison (*Ah! The quintessential Linux geek!*). He's typing his sausage fingers away at a large desk facing the entrance. But the moment I set toe on the door's weather stripping, a fetching dandy decked out in Banana Republic duds, emerges from a dark corner to block my passage:

"Sorry, this is a private business." And with that, slams the door in my face before I can even utter a single word. (Which, I assure you Heartfelt Reader, is "screw" followed by "you". Is there no justice in this world?)

Upon returning home, I boot up my feeble system and log into Extentech, to discover it is some sort of java-based spreadsheet application. *Apparently*, I conclude, *the Linux service no longer exists, replaced by money-grubbing yuppie entrepreneurs, who think this is still the pre-dot-com-bust late nineties.*

Exasperated (with just two days left to fulfill a promise to my literary agent), I decide to take a break and ride the N Judah streetcar for a pleasant afternoon at Ocean Beach. *If CompUSA brick-and-mortar were still around*, I fume in a back seat of the mostly-empty car, *I could just purchase a live DVD for a few bucks and be done with it.* (But that's just not in the cards in these post-modern times, now is it?)

A wobbly old lady with saggy skin barely hanging from her bones (like the crinkly-white plastic bags holding her canned goods, bok choy, pink cotton panties and turnips), enters and sits in the hard plastic side-seat right before me. She stinks like a dead, rotting long-tailed Macaque in the mouth of a Komodo Island dragon. Holding my breath to prevent a nasty expulsion

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from my retching esophagus, I move to the front. *Riding San Francisco's municipal transit is always a memorable experience.*

As I make my way towards the forward end of the segmented streetcar, I spy through a window, this rather ordinary storefront on the corner of 31st and Judah, with a large, plain white sign in bold vermilion letters that read: "Professional Computer Repair." This shop BTW is but four blocks distant from another computer service that offered to burn me a live DVD for the outrageous sum of 69 buckazoids!

I feel compelled to hop off the bus a few blocks further down the line, and hobble back uphill (I have a bad knee) to that store to see if, finally, I can get a viable DVD at a reasonable price. The door's plate glass (like the picture window itself) is fully obscured by white venetian blinds. So I press to open and walk in, where I immediately stand face-to-face with a sturdy-built young fellow and a sleeping infant in his burly embrace.

"Yes, may I help you," he speaks in a thick Eastern European accent that I take for Russian. *I almost swoon over this exquisite Cyrillic tongue that evokes Medieval castelli, thick, dark stained-glass renderings of Orthodox martyrs, and brooding damp forests where millennia-old vampires consort with village maidens lost in the wilderness while gathering gooseberries and indrik dung.*

I then notice in my periphery, another young fellow (though deliciously skinny and with black hair instead of brownish-blond), sitting at a large, mostly-vacant desk, with the exception of a desktop computer (plus potted English ivy and printer) which LCD casts an oyster-white pall to the office's subdued lighting. The entire space is impeccably neat like a kitten's sphincter just wiped clean by mother's tongue, and sparsely arranged: two large silver-gray desks, two desktop PC's, one telephone, and a multi-segmented burlap-padded divider that separates the three of us from viewing over two thirds of the actual floor space. *Like they just moved in only moments before my arrival.*

So I describe to Igor (the husky shaggy-haired dude with a sleeping toddler), my pathetic frustration with a very compromising, though partially-useful, live DVD; and how I badly need a more workable solution in the form of a full-featured system on disc. Unfortunately, due to the language barrier between Anglos and Slavs, he thinks I need a DVD drive replacement, rather than simply another DVD. Eventually, the misunderstanding

gets resolved, and Yevgeny tells me to come back in an hour, and they'll have a freshly pressed Ubuntu DVD ready for me.

*Yes, Ubuntu, that'll work just fine!* I realize. (Though I'd prefer Fedora or Mint 11, this is no time to quibble with a most gracious offer that I cannot even imagine, considering my convoluted and exasperating search for a practical solution these last few, infuriating days of cyber BS.)

"How much will you charge?" I have to ask. To which Yevgeny calmly replies: "Twenty dollars."

"Oh, fantastic, I can afford a coupla ten-spots!" I gleefully exclaim; and offer to pay them right away. But Yevgeny graciously waives my payment with the obvious implication that he trusts my return. Now, how sweet is that?

But before stepping out to stroll leisurely down Judah Street to the ocean and back again, I remark:

"You've saved my day, gentlemen! I'll just get some exercise and enjoy the ocean air, while you good angels set me up with a live DVD that I'm sure will clear up my vexing dilemma."

With that, I depart, walking as if on cloud nine. For they are such sweet-natured and gorgeous dudes, I can't believe my good fortune. I almost forget the urgency of my mission. The chill fog invigorates my nostrils as gelid wisps swirl down my sinuses and into these jaded lungs. It is indeed a wonderful day. And in my walking the Avenues and Ocean Beach to pass some time, I encounter this beautiful mural painted on a house addressed 1482 La Playa Street (between Judah and Kirkham):

But let's save *that* for a future blog entry, okay? I have many photos now, of that artful house and surroundings, which will certainly grace my WordPress pages in due time.

[ *Querulous Reader: videos and pics of this eccentric and gorgeous old home can now be viewed online, here:*

<http://tinyurl.com/1482-la-playa> ]

Well, *almost a half hour has passed*, I surmise, and begin my casual hike in return to the computer repair shop. Some blocks before then, I enter the local health food store, and check out the pricey goods. I notice a shelf full of cereal boxes and think: *Hmmm, Mike asked if I have any cereal, to make the soy milk I provide more palatable and nutritious. I should buy some right now.* But then I think better of it, realizing I prefer at this time, to travel light

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without any encumbrance of backpack or shopping bag. *I can just buy some bulk cereal when I return to my own neighborhood* (which is the Castro a.k.a. “Eureka Valley”). Satisfied with my expedient laissez-faire solution, I step back out into the sunlight that has only minutes ago, burned away the last of the morning fog.

To my surprise and joy, just a few feet from my sight flits this darling and most colorful parrot, around a bicycle, never leaving it more than a distance of two feet (though obviously untethered). Nearby stands a strapping young fellow of most pleasant demeanor, whose name I soon learn is “Popi”. The parrot’s name is “Patricia Dolores” otherwise known as “PD Bird”.

[ *Wholesome Reader: PD Bird has her own web site:*

*<http://pdbird.tumblr.com> ]*

Popi and P.D. Bird are inseparable; she never leaves his presence more than a yard or two, even though she’s free to fly wherever. Or as I call them: “Cross species soulmates”.

*It never ceases to amaze me that, what creatures we stereotypically consider to be the most terrifying and ugly of all God’s beasts (that is: dinosaurs), have evolved in the slow passage of sidereal time, into what absolutely everyone regards as the most inspiring and beautiful creatures of all: birds! Let us pray that Alfred Hitchcock (or, more honestly: Daphne Du Maurier) was absolutely and eternally wrong.*

Patricia Dolores is so charming and so delightful, my heart actually aches to leave her presence, and march back to the computer service. But I steel myself with this encouraging reminder: *Two handsome dudes await me several blocks away, who are so incredibly gracious to perform for me an immeasurable service, I’d better not disappoint them!* It is indeed a most blessed day, don’t you agree, My Soulful Reader?

Sauntering up Judah’s steep hill, I keep an eye peeled for their PC repair shop. Yet it isn’t until 27th Avenue that I realize it couldn’t be this far back. I distinctly remember crossing 32nd Avenue almost immediately upon my exit to Ocean Beach. So the shop *should* be located somewhere between 30th and 32nd. So how on earth could I have overshot my mark? How could this even happen, when I’ve been scrutinizing every storefront along the way?

So I catch up with this young, husky Asian dude walking a microscopic gray poodle at the end of a thread-thin leash. (*What do they feed it, birdseed and flower petals?*) Has to remove his iPod earbuds before he comprehends my request.

“No, sorry,” he replies, “I don’t know about any computer shop in that direction. You don’t mean that one across the street?” He finishes, pointing at the very same repair service that wanted to charge me \$69. I thank him just the same, and reverse my hike back towards the Pacific.

As I retrace my steps, I ponder the metaphysical:

*Could this be some of sort of Twilight Zone reality warp? Did the corner shop blink into existence only moments before I arrived, then blink back out, once I departed? Did they beam me up to their flying saucer and anally probe me while in a cosmically induced coma, then erase my memory upon my return to terra firma?*

*Did they extract my DNA in order to crossbreed with angelic entities, that their racial IQ may be increased tenfold? Ah, life can be such a mystery at times; eh, my Divine Reader? If only PD Bird were here to enlighten me.*

Upon returning to their establishment, I discover that Igor has left, and only Yevgeny remains. *How thoughtful*, I conclude. *Yevgeny has been hanging around for my return, in spite of this delay in tracing my steps back to the proper address.*

I shake Yevgeny’s hand with a firm grip, and he responds in kind. To which I comment:

“I really appreciate what you’ve done for me. It is not part of your job to create live DVD’s for your clients. You went out of your way in an act of kindness, which I intend to repay. I will include you in my soon-to-be-published novel, in your very own chapter called ‘Yevgeny Saves The Day’. This will give your business quite a substantial boost.”

Yevgeny then rises from his chair to fetch the Ubuntu DVD from a shelf on the opposite wall. And remarks: “So, you’re gonna be famous, eh?” He stifles a chuckle. To which I respond:

“Yes. I’ve already received rave reviews from reknowned authors and bloggers. One said that I’m the best writer to come along since Shakespeare. I’m certainly not gonna argue with that!” (Of course, I didn’t tell him that the Shakespeare I’m referring to, is not the magnanimous “William” of internationally historical fame, but one called “Donald”, who’s written several forgettable articles for some obscure local publication out of Omaha, Nebraska. Ha ha, I am truly a mischievous dragon.)

I continue my brag to Yevgeny’s kind and attentive ear: “I hope when you read my profound novel, you will find influences from some of the Russian greats, such as Gogol, Kafka, Dostoevsky and Pushkin.”

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Yevgeny turns to face me; apparently I've piqued his interest. I continue:

"After all, you must admit that this convoluted situation of finding a live DVD, for which you've so kindly bailed me out, is a rather Kafkaesque dilemma."

Yevgeny then smiles the most glorious grin I've ever witnessed. My heart melts. I then pay him \$20, take the Ubuntu DVD into my own grateful hands, and depart.

BTW, Loving Reader, during our excellent dialog, Yevgeny informed me that he is *not* Russian, but hails from Belarus. "Though you may as well consider my people Russian, as there is little difference," he adds.

*Yevgeny: I already know how I appear to you, like some goofy old fart popping in and out of high-tech businesses bragging about getting published soon, and how I'll become insanely famous and rich. I make you laugh; and that is so nice. I have no idea why we've been brought together, but I must say this:*

*Making you burst out in hilarity is such a thrill, I wouldn't change it for the world. If playing the fool is the only way I can do this, so be it. However: in your laughing at me because you perceive this budding author as merely some deluded megalomaniac:*

You owe me a shot of Belaya Rus for that! I look forward to it.

Upon departing from their computer shop, I walk to the nearest stop to ride the N Judah back home. To my surprise and pleasure, I discover a grocery bag filled with three unopened boxes of whole-grain cereal (one Kellogg's Corn Flakes, two Ralston Foods' Corn Biscuits). Without spending a single red cent, I've found the sweet answer to Mike's request.

Ubuntu DVD solves the problem, thank you Yevgeny. Ironically, the Pedit Magic disc decides to run perfectly, only two days after purchasing the Ubuntu system. Seems that Destiny played her hand, in that my DVD problem was intentionally forced upon me, that I may be led to this store and (more specifically) Yevgeny. For what purpose still eludes me, but surely it has something to do with meeting the excellent folks who run that shop.

But this extraordinary meet-up need not go anywhere. Though I do conjecture possible new friendships that will greatly benefit all parties involved. I realize I put you, Yevgeny, on the spot a bit, and for which I profusely apologize. It is only my cock-a-hoop sense of humor that is playing you the straight man to my trickster self. You are an awesomely sweet, intelligent and dashing-gorgeous fellow which qualities speak mountains of goodwill on

behalf of your beloved people of Belarus. San Francisco (and these United States at large) is so *lucky* to have you! I wish for you, your loved ones (family *and* friends) only the very best life filled with joy, fulfillment, and the bountiful love that comes from Our Creator's Infinite Wisdom. Likewise, Igor.

**FREE ME FROM THIS BOND**



Illustration by S. Rohan

## **Chapter II**

### *Corner Delivery*

You may recall in Chapter 2 (“Moby’s Dick”) that I planned to present My Arwyn with a gift, by standing around Castro and 18th till he (hopefully) passes by. Seeing as I *don’t* know his current home address, nor obviously does he care to say. He is *not* an easy man to befriend, in spite of his fondness towards yours truly.

*When a friend (or foe, I suppose) whose current residence is unbeknownst to you, but does live in or frequents the Castro, this would be a logical spot to wait for him to show up. For this particular intersection is quite dense with pedestrians streaming to and fro. Another good choice would be Market & Castro, right around*

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*the entrance to the underground rail service (MUNI Metro); otherwise known as “Harvey Milk Plaza.”*

Two days after our surprise meetup at Moby’s, the gift is ready. It is early afternoon as I saunter down Noe Street on the way to 18th, cloth bag (sporting the disabled veterans logo) full of goodies dangling from my left forearm. But before I even reach 17th, I think I spy Arwyn from across the street (or someone who very much looks like him at least in height and hair). He’s wearing a red jacket and medium-brown pants. I am nearsighted and, without glasses cannot make out the face before a UPS truck rumbles by to block any further view.

*Medicaid coverage ceased providing glasses and eye care some years back, along with dental and psychiatric. Which explains--at least in part--why I’m such a hopeless wreck these days. Being born in a basilisk hatchery doesn’t help, either. My Guardian Dragon was there with me right from conception, and let me tell you: it was crowded in that womb. Arwyn’s tobacco habit sure made the place so filled with throat-retching fumes, after nine months I just couldn’t take it anymore, and popped outta there like a greased piglet (though with wings, tail and scaly armor)! So Arwyn lost his pinochle partner; I didn’t care. Second-hand smoke is still smoke, and I was coughing up lungsfull!*

Dodging traffic, I scurry across the road, keeping my sight aimed at the spot I saw him moments ago, right beside a silver-gray VW Jetta. Nothing. I then glance up Noe, then 17th: for what other direction could he have gone in such a short time without running into me? Still, whether or not that man was actually Arwyn, he is nowhere to be found.

*Okay, I think, I’ll just mosey on up to 18th and Castro, and hope my luck in finding him pans out.*

Several minutes later, I reach the historic intersection, and decide to hang out on the southeast corner, by Bank of America. No more than one minute passes when--*thar she blows!*--I spot Arwyn marching down Castro, same side and across. He quickly turns corner (*to play some pool at The Mix?*). Desperate to catch up to him, I dash against the flashing red hand signal; horns honk.

“Arwyn!” I call. “Arwyn!” He stops to face me, looking a bit haggard. *No doubt he hasn’t had his first brew of the day. Or coffee.*

He honors me with a gentle grin; ocean wind fluffs those curly waves of unkempt brassy hair which (now that he’s approaching 50) are sprinkled

with a dash of salt here and there. There are now dark gaps where bright teeth once shone (*the mark of a seasoned warrior*). Still: a radiant smile.

[ Scintillating Reader: *Arwyn once had a smile so glorious, it would knock your garters off full blast! I'd gladly sacrifice all my remaining nine rotting teeth to win back that wondrous grin. But this is why I call him a seasoned warrior: he gave up his dental insurance (and entire career in fact) for a most noble cause. A cause which has to do with sparing me from a hideous fate of terror and dark sorrow. But worst of all, a fate in which My Darling Dragon no longer exists.*

"Here's my latest gift," I proudly declare while catching lung's breath. I raise my colorful sack of presents to the level of his stomach (don't forget, he's 6-foot-4). And continue:

"Would it be a burden for you to accept it now? I can try another day." I announce with heroically stoic poise, and lower the veterans bag to belly-button height. This, despite an overwhelming urge to throw myself into his gangly embrace, which craving has never left me since we first met, and touched, and talked, and kissed, way way back in 2000-and-6.

*I am Boadicea's Great Soldier first, before I am a lover.* Arwyn is our platoon sergeant, so to speak. I could never bring him shame; it's just not in my heart, nor in the "Olympus Army Seduction Field Handbook:"

<http://tinyurl.com/o-field-manual>

Arwyn shrugs: "Now's as good as any, I suppose." And accepts my latest tokens of friendship with an extended hand. I look up: those dragon-gold eyes sparkle. He seems amused. (*He always seems amused...at least, whenever I'm present.*)

I was taken aback; accustomed as I am to Sisyphean struggles and a slow, tortuous path (like walking upstream in a runnel of sorghum) that is usually my fate whenever I want to speak with him, buy him a drink, or even just view My Celtic Lad from a discrete distance. (*Oh, yeah: or bring him a gift, as in this present scenario.*) They are rare moments, and more precious, I guess, because of that.

So you can imagine how startled I am, at such immediate success this time around. I look up at his noble Manx face, and tilt my head in bird-like quandary.

"Well, that was quick," I remark. To which he quakes his shoulders in a body-language guffaw. My satchel of love-tokens hangs firmly from his clenched fingers. Joy sweeps through my exhausted soul, at the sight.

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“Say, Arwyn,” I remark. “I thought I saw you a short while ago on Noe Street. But a truck drove by, and when it left, you weren’t there anymore!” I feign dramatic, as in a Vaudeville skit: “I looked left, I looked right. I looked north, I looked south. But no Arwyn!” I then stretch out my arms as if to embrace the entire sky: “No Arwyn *anywhere!*”

He remains silent, but gazes down at me with affection (and perhaps a touch of waggery; he does chortle a bit). So I finish: “Guess that wasn’t you then, eh?”

We stand some moments, smiles washing back and forth like the ebb and flow of ocean foam along a sandy beach. Then Arwyn cranes his neck sideways to peer into the bag dangling from the end of one, long arm. With raised eyebrows, an expression of doubt lingers across his forehead. *Like maybe I might have stashed a venomous snake in there, for all the difficulties he’s put me through. Ha, ha.*

I chuckle. “You will like what’s in there.”

Then I realize it’s time to go, though of course I want to remain right there by his glorious side. “Well then, My Brave Dragon, you have a wonderful day.”

“You too now, Zeke,” he replies, then turns to enter the Mix.

“Oh, I certainly *will!*” I holler back through the traffic rattle, as my steps already draw me home to my humble SRO. (*How could I not have a spectacular day? After all, today I saw Arwyn and--better yet--brought him another sweet gift straight from My Little Dragonly Soul.*)

Realization suddenly springs on me, like a bear trap; so I turn back. “Wait a minute Arwyn, that *was* you on Noe Street,” I exclaim. He pauses in the doorway.

“Yes, that certainly *was* you!” I look him over from dragon snout to dragon tail (as he patiently puffs out a whiff of that chill, ocean fog). “You’re wearing the same clothes: red jacket and brown pants.”

Arwyn cryptically shrugs those fine, skinny shoulders and disappears into the Mix.

*So, the little reptile was there. He noticed me and must’ve crouched behind a car, so I’d miss him. But why?*” I think this through. Then it hits me:

*Oh, I see now. He wanted to receive my gift at 18th & Castro, just like I told him at Moby Dick's. Accepting it on Noe Street would've made our Real Life Fairytale a tad less magical.*

How'd I ever get so lucky?

It's in the cards!

**FREE ME FROM THIS BOND**



Illustration by S. Rohan

## **Chapter 12**

### *The Phone Call*

I must apologize to you, my Sweet & Patient Reader, for a promise I failed to fulfill in Chapter 8 (Dragon Prophecy). Which was to reveal why I was absolutely *convinced* that Arwyn and yours truly would be married in Dolores Park on Easter Sunday, by the honorable Sisters. You will have your answer shortly. Read on:

You'll remember that night of Easter Sunday, I told my wonderful Parable of the Dollar-Store Bandana to equally-wonderful Allen of the dual clam-shell jewelry display on 18th Street. It was 10pm or so when I returned

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to my stuffy Hobbit hovel, to relish some of Allen's superb hashish, and ponder the wonders of that day. Little did I know the greatest wonder had yet to manifest. It was a phone call:

"Aaargh girlfriend! Let's talk, you wreck of Mother Nature!"

"Arwyn! OMG, this is our very first phone call."

"Ha!" he seemed to be stifling a more ribald guffaw.

"Okay, Sweetness, I...I...don't get it."

"This is *not* our first phone call. For you, perhaps, in a very personal way. But this is *not* our first phone call. Listen to me, and be careful *not* to hang up; you've done that before. And I know you don't understand what I'm talking about right now, but pleas..."

I interject: "Oh ho ho ho. Alright. You've always been my greatest mystery, Mr. Miles. Now you have just added one more intrigue to The List. Care to explain, or do I have to figure *this* one out myself, as usual?"

"Zeke! I really love you. Do you love me? It's nice to hear that now and then." Arwyn sounds a bit choked up, like maybe some tears are spilling onto his knuckles as he grips the phone tightly in a trembling hand.

"Arwyn, how many times do I say I love you, whenever we're together?" Which is far less than I would like of course...we still live apart. "I'm always *more* than happy to sing my heart to you, Dearest Little Chipmunk. I love you, I love you, I love you. I don't understand you, I don't understand you, I don't understand you."

"I know," sighs Arwyn. "I've been through this before with you, and it's Heartbreak Hotel each and every time. Promise me you won't hang up."

A cold shiver rides up my spine; I'm a little scared. Maybe I *should* hang up? My heart sinks: "Okay."

[ *Stalwart Reader: before I continue with this tale, you need to know that Arwyn sometimes enjoys calling me "Gene" as well as "Zeke." That is because I changed my name in 1996 from "Eugene Catalano" to "Ezekiel Krahlin". Proof of my name change can be viewed here:*

*[tinyurl.com/gene-to-zeke](http://tinyurl.com/gene-to-zeke) ]*

"That's why I called, Gene. I know you went to the park today, expecting us to get married. We *are* telepathic you know, but much more so in my case. And there's a really good reason for that, which I will explain for, oh, maybe the tenth time in the past two years. And as far as phone calls go,

I've lost count, but I'm *sure* we've called each other dozens of times by now, maybe even over a hundred."

"Wow. Just when I thought the day's excitement was long over, you pull *this* squirrel out of the hat! Eenie meanie, chili beanie, the spirits are about to speak! I will always love you Arwyn. That is carved in Moses' own tablet; it is the 12th Commandment."

[ *Gilded Reader: I've already established some other commandment for the 11th, in a tale I wrote titled "Parable of the Laptop Billionaire," which you may read here:*

*http://tinyurl.com/parable-billionaire*

*So this one must be the 12th. Sorry for the confusion. ]*

"Awww, Zekie-Genie-doodle, you have such a fabulous way with words!"

"Only because you bring out the absolute BEST in me, My Dragon Warrior of the Light. I PROMISE to not hang up. Do go on. Please. PLEASE. Do go on."

Arwyn takes a deep breath. "Alright. You have memory issues..."

"Guess I forgot." I am the King of Jokes in Bad Taste.

"Okay, Spaghetti Brains, I'll let you get away with that one, but no more," says Arwyn who is so very dear to my heart, I can't begin to explain. "Your memory has blank spots that fade in and out, and cover a span of several years."

I brace myself. I'm *very* scared right now, and wonder if my love for Arwyn is misdirected; perhaps he's not as nice a person as I wish; and maybe I really *should* hang up. But I made my promise, and put my faith in love.

"Are you still there, Testicle Breath?"

I almost fall off my swivel chair in hilarity: that's my Arwyn, and I sure as hell won't hang up. "Yes, muthuh fukkuh, I'm right here for you, ALWAYS. Dish me the dope."

There is no answer; I wait to see if maybe the phone line went dead. A flash of terror sweeps through me and vanishes. No, Arwyn is still there, I can hear him stifle a sob. He finally speaks:

"First thing's first, Zeke," he states with deliberate force (and slowly) the following four, transcendent words: "We. Are. *Already*. Married."

Happiness thrills me to the marrow, to discover we're betrothed. I shiver with joy. Then just as suddenly, this sweet reverie vanishes. I choose my next words with care:

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“Oh you darling hunk of super-gorgeous, how could I ever forget something so wonderful as marrying a Fierce and Righteous Dragon like yourself? If you’re pulling my tail, please speak up now, or forever hold your pizza!” (*I mean, what sort of accident or illness could cause such a powerful loss of memory, that the most important event of your life is wiped out like sand dollars at high tide? OMFG, I truly hope it’s not Alzheimer’s!*)

My hand starts to shake violently (I have carpal tunnel), and I drop the receiver. Tears cloud my vision as I fumble to collect it. I suddenly feel terribly alone, as if Arwyn were ripped from my heart, forever. But we are still connected; I hear his glorious breath, waiting for me to resume:

“Alright, first thing’s first as you say, so first let me say this: I am so happy to be married to such an outstanding human being, My Beloved Arwyn Miles. No question I am the happiest man in the entire cosmos, all because of you, My Darling Draco.”

“You make me blush, Genie.”

“And that is such a sweet gift to me, that you do!” My larynx is clogged with hesitation, as the next question arises in my throat:

“Why are my memory banks on the fritz; and am I getting better, I hope?”

“Much better, you’re actually out of the woods and in the last stage of total recovery,” he iterates, as if reciting from a script, well rehearsed. “You were dosed. You were badly dosed five years ago, and almost died. You were on life support for eight-and-a-half months.”

There is nothing in my memory banks to affirm his claim, but I do recall another crisis around that same time:

“Does this have something to do with my slipping a note to you under the wrong door,” I ponder with furrowed brow, “where I remarked that you sure hang out with some nasty scum; they’re dangerous and you should find a way out? And that note fell into the wrong hands, and a big fight broke out at Hole in the Wall. And a week later your room burned down, and you were nowhere to be found, for months? I was so scared you might be homeless...or worse.”

“Very good, Sparky, your memory cells are busting through like a champ. This is the first time you remember that nasty little episode since dosage.” Arwyn clears his throat, and continues: “You will very soon start to recall all sorts of things as your memory gaps continue to fade. But some of your recollections will be scary. By which time I’ll stay by your side, to walk you

through that dark forest, and into a glorious and eternal life with me, Your Guardian Dragon.”

“Quite a tall order, Oh beloved Draco Who Makes All Good Dreams Come True! Then again, you *are* quite a tall drink of fizz-pop.” I laugh a bit, then wonder: “I had an awful dream a few nights ago. Could this be one of these scary memories welling up?”

“We’ll see, My Love. Tell me about it. I’m here for you, always.”

So I take a deep breath, before commencing the recollection:

*I was strapped down to a dirty, old splintery oak table with thick leather cord. The location was some dark, dank cellar, with an icy chill that oozed a cold sweat from the concrete walls. I could hear rumbling almost over my head, like a train roaring by every 12 minutes or so. I could feel the vibration as they passed. The hellish space was lit by a solitary Coleman lantern that hissed from the bubbling lignite.*

*The room stank of rot; my gag reflexes were ready to jump the gate. I could barely make out a large rat in the far corner, nibbling on something fleshy. “Is that a finger?” I mused; I think I wanted to believe it’s a finger. Two hideous forms barely human and cloaked in ragged cowls stood over me; one holding the lantern raised, that I could witness a terror so cruel, I could barely accept what my eyes revealed.*

*For the other homunculus (who looked somewhat like a Morlock from the H.G. Wells movie, “The Time Machine”) held a large part of my slippery entrails in his hands. They had drugged me (I assume, as I felt not a single twitch of pain) and slit open my abdominal cavity! Bizarre enough; but the topper was a tiny photo of My Arwyn, dangling from an intestinal loop.*

And that is when I awoke, trembling and in a furious sweat.

“So whaddya think, Arwyn,” I finish, “is this an example of a recollection, or just your typical dumb nightmare?”

“Right on Zekester, that is most certainly an authentic recollection.”

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

“Now I *know* you’re pulling my tail; I have no *scar* on my belly!”

“And what a sweet belly that is, to kiss and tickle!” Arwyn teases. “Smoke and mirrors boy, smoke and mirrors,” he continues. “They doped you up and created this horrid hallucination. They did *not* gut you open, they did *not* remove your innards. That was all Hollywood trickery, special effects. Even the rat chewing on a, umm, ‘body part’ was not real; it was a cheap little electronic toy they purchased at an auction of stage props and costumes from old horror films like ‘Willard’ and ‘The Pit and the Pendulum’.”

“Who are *they*, and what was the purpose of their stupid stunt?” I demand, as I hold the phone close to its cradle, ready to hang up. Instead, I put it on speaker and kick back in my cushioned swivel chair; I am feeling somewhat overwhelmed at this point.

“*They* are the same goons you warned me about in that aborted note you slipped under the wrong door,” Arwyn declares. “Their intent was to terrorize you, My Brave Boy. Terrorize you from ever wanting anything to do with me, again.” There is a pause and some static clicking on the line.

“But their mischief went wrong,” he continues. “You had an allergic reaction to the tampered horse tranquilizer they forced through your veins. They dumped you in that reservoir up by Twin Peaks Tower. An old man walking his Vietnamese potbelly pig found you, and called 911.”

*Good heavens! I think, I thought that pet pig fad died out years ago!*

“Ha ha, yeah, me too,” Arwyn chuckles.

“Wait a minute, I didn’t say anything, I was just thinking it!” I exclaim.

“*Told* you we’re telepathic; now you know it’s true.” Arwyn adds: “But let’s not stray so far from the real issue at hand: your memory and its restoration.”

A sudden “Aha!” ignites my mind like a cartoon lightbulb: “Are you suggesting my fantasy about you as a detective out of Orange County is actually a partial recollection?”

“You got it, pup. Congrats. I’m a detective, I’m your lover, and we got married in 2008, by the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, on Easter Sunday at Dolores Park. And today is Easter. You were invited to the celebration by a Sister you met at the City Health Clinic two days ago. (*Astute Reader, don’t even ask.*) Thus a partial memory of our own marriage, was triggered by the invitation.”

“Oh my gosh, Arwyn. This makes *perfect* sense,” I exclaim. “Explains so well why I’ve been cooking up various ways to propose to you, even after the anticipated marriage at Dolores Park did not pan out!”

Other revelations bubble up in my memory cells:

“So this Cult of the Disciples of the Zodiac Killer that I wrote about, is *not* a fantasy I conjured up to thrill my readers, but another growing recollection?”

“Bingo.”

“We first met at the Hole in the Wall, right?”

“Yessir. Go on, I need to see how your memory is progressing. This is a *joyful* occasion, for you have never before recalled the events you just brought up, since you were doped. Try to remember even more, My Beloved Little Dragon of the Fiery Spirit.”

I’m enthralled. If any of what Arwyn now tells me is the least bit true, then my life is taking a whole different turn into a reality far more beautiful and blessed than I could ever imagine (except for my tales, but they don’t count; or do they). I am eager to dig up old memories long forgotten, so I lean forward in my chair to repossess the phone and talk directly into the mouthpiece. This is just too compelling to keep Arwyn on speaker while I’m semi-reclined in a padded office chair.

Arwyn continues to explain how this cult’s nefarious attempt to frighten me away from My Beloved, almost succeeded. For it left me with frequent anxiety attacks in his presence (which previously, I *always* adored, and could never get enough of; in fact he often had to escort me out the door or another direction down the sidewalk ‘cause I was simply mesmerized by his spirit and didn’t realize I was following him to places too dangerous for me to visit).

The cult had successfully implanted a deeply subconscious fear of My Best Buddy, thanks to their drug-induced black arts. This included certain elements of telepathy, where they inspired thoughts of hatred and fear about Arwyn, in my damaged brain now more like Swiss cheese than Provolone. These disciples of the Zodiac Killer would frequent the Hole in the Wall (and later, the Eagle Tavern on 12th and Harrison Streets) while I was there, and stand within earshot while feigning to talk with another nearby; and project their whispers of fear-memes into my ears, that would pass directly into my subconscious due to this subliminal impact.

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

Which explains why I often suffered waves of anxiety and fear in Arwyn's presence (since the drugging); it created a sad distance between us, and made me cease my kind words and thoughts toward him. I even considered at times, moving to Portland or other parts reasonably liberal, in order to forget him; believing he was my biggest mistake *ever*. Fortunately (thank Dragon) I am now in a stage of rapid healing, and my love for Arwyn grows strong once more. Yet minor rough spots remain: flashes of anxiety that cause me to falter in trusting He Who Truly Loves Me Most in This World (and in any other world if you want to be frank about it).

Surely this must have been a grievous burden for Arwyn; yet he stands by me through thick and thin...but that is what marriage vows are all about, if the love is true. I can't even imagine how much sorrow he bore, sitting by my sickbed at Intensive Care, his head on my chest, weeping and praying that I'd come through. Day after day, week after week, month after interminable month.

And you know, I did hear his sobs, his pleas to Goddess Herself and all Her Faithful Minions, from time to time when I emerged momentarily from deep coma into light trance. Though I could not speak, I could not move, I could not open my eyes or give any other outward sign that I hear him, that I love him back dearly. That I had no idea till then, how much this elegant human being adores me with all his heart, all his soul, all his life. It was during such grace-filled moments that I realized this Sweet Man's Love has saved my wretched soul. And because of this I'd pull out of my coma with flying crullers, and everything would be alright...in fact, better than before. Much, much better. For I am finally in the arms of My Second True Love.

"Jeez Arwyn, we've been through a lot together, haven't we?" I remark after hearing this tale. A tale for which doubts still linger in my heart, for obvious reasons.

"You ain't just whistlin' Pixie!" He sounds sad, yet stolidly optimistic.

"Are you my guardian angel?" I have to ask, for he is *so* impossibly handsome and *so* impossibly sweet, this could only be a Dream's Fulfillment.

"Arrrgh, girlfriend! Randolph's the guardian angel in *this* novel. I am your guardian *dragon* who descended from the Lavender Skies of Avalon, to rescue you from These Wicked Sorcerors and bring you back to Randy T."

Once more, a bolt of anxiety strikes me: “You’re not going to leave me then, are you? I love you now so much, I can’t bear to be without you. For you are the *sweetest* and most *darling* friend I have ever known!”

A weary sigh drifts from his cell phone to my land line. “There are some things we can’t have, Oh My Brother of Saint Valentine’s Wound. But my love? You shall *always* have that!”

“Then I don’t want Randolph, ever!” A steely commitment comes over me. “I don’t *ever* want Randolph, not without you, too.” Tears slide like rivulets down my face. “How could a loving goddess put me through yet *more* grief and tragedy?”

“I’m only pranking you, butt-wipe,” he exhorts. “Of *course* you will have us both! Don’t be such a drama queen, girlfriend!”

I dry what I can of my tears; they are too copious to do a complete job. The telephone receiver is quite drenched.

“Muthuh fukkuh!” is all I can say, as my heart beats with joy, and my grievous tears morph into Elysium’s Wine.

“Asshole!” he replies with expedience.

A beautiful silence then graces the line that connects our souls to one another. As the blissful reverie slowly fades, I speak once more:

“So tell me this, Mr. Miles: if we are indeed married and so much in love, then why on Tinkerbell’s Tampon am I still living alone in this crummy hole in the wall?”

“As opposed to the *excellent* Hole in the Wall?” he quips.

“Okay, if you wanna put it that way: yes.” I then push the matter: “Makes no sense in my eye, why I continue to barely survive in this hovel with nasty diesel fumes and noise pollution flooding my space like a double plague of army ants and locusts. Not to mention my two south-facing windows that heat up this weary little monk’s cell into a Finnish sauna whenever the weather is even barely warm, and the air lies still.”

I rant on: “When it’s 80 degrees outside, it’s 90-plus *in*. Forget the *really* hot weather, when the mercury hits 90 or more! Causes me nausea, weakness, anxiety attacks, and god knows what other health problems. Clearly, I’m not a happy camper. And if you really *do* love me, how come you haven’t helped rectify this horrid situation? Like: *why aren’t we living together?*”

Not a peep out of Arwyn, but his Sweet Dragon Breath is audible.

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

And so I finish with: “I’m sure you have the perfect answer, just like you do for everything else I’ve asked so far. Give it your best shot, cowboy!”

Finally, the Great Gay Houdini Arwyn speaks: “Oh come on, Eugene, I’d buy you a *jeep* if I could, along *with* a castle in Scotland by Loch Ness, and all the handsome laddies you want!” He sighs. “We are both quite *poor* right now; and your memory of *why* we are has momentarily slipped. Allow me to explain, Oh Hummingbird of Paradise. And please, I beg Your Sweetest Soul: don’t hang up on me?”

So here are the very same words he spilled into my astonished ear, Oh Pining Reader (see next chapter):

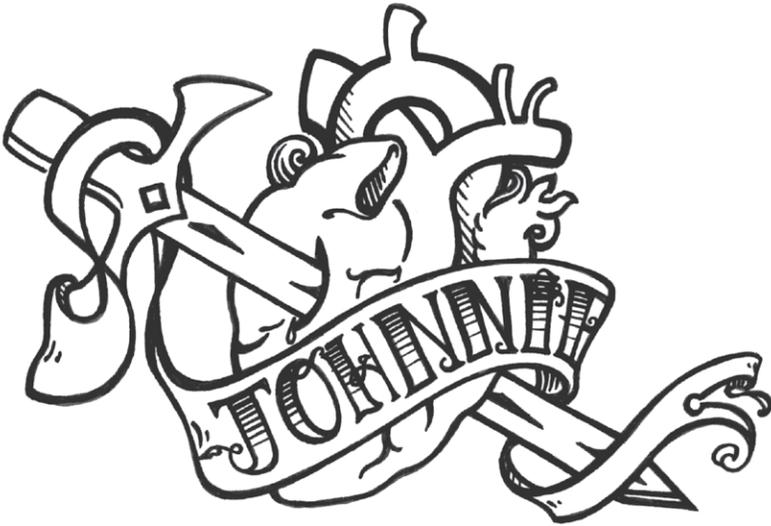


Illustration by S. Rohan

## **Chapter 13**

### *Angus Mac Og's Bounty*

*[ Delightful Reader: Angus mac Og is the Irish/Celtic god of love. His name is spelled in a variety of ways. ]*

Once upon a time, there was a Brave Little Dragon named Zeke or Gene (he couldn't really make up his mind) who cared *so* much about his homeless and otherwise disenfranchised gay brothers, that he didn't know when (or even how) to back off when danger came his way, or when he walked into shit flying full force in a gale.

It was Year 2005 when his tender spirit broke in Great Sorrow from his dear buddy Johnnie. Who had gone back to shooting up heroin after 29 days on a detox program. Johnnie turned on Gene with vile words and false

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accusations, after almost an entire year of a remarkably sweet friendship. (In fact, it was Zeke's affections that encouraged Johnnie to get *off* smack in the first place.) Johnnie would even give Gene a hug each and every morn before departing for the day, topped off with a tender kiss on the forehead.

Not for many moons did Zeke know *why* this wicked turn in their friendship; he only thought it was an effect of chasing the dragon. As it turns out, it was more than that, for Gene finally discovered the true source of Johnnie's bitterness. His father had died. His dad was only 55, same age as Zeke.

Just two weeks before this tragic downfall, Johnnie had told Gene: "My father is the very best friend in my life, Zeke. There is no one that even comes close to him in my heart, except for one person. And that's you."

Gene was so touched by Johnnie's loving words, his heart sang every single day, and every night as he dreamt. Until (as you just learned) the Demons of Despair came swiftly to sever this Golden Cord of Brotherly Regard. With great and unjustified hostility, Johnnie exited from Zeke's life, forever (or so it seemed). Now, Zeke was *also* bitter; so he began spitting all over the floor and in other ways allowed his once-elegant SRO to become an absolute dump.

[ *Do not despair, Concerned Reader, for in so suffering, Gene shared Johnnie's bitterness which, in due time, shall bring them back together w/Johnnie clean of drugs, and their friendship elevated to a Heavenly State of Affairs. ]*

He sought some kind of refuge, where he might start licking his Wounds of Defeat. Heard that a gay bar called "Hole in the Wall Saloon" was a great place to kick back and listen to really good, and LOUD, rock 'n' roll. (Hole in the Wall *never* plays disco crap.) So there he went, and sat in the darkest corner, and kept to himself.

And of course, that is also where Zeke and Arwyn were brought together for the first time, in what will eventually turn out to be a most astounding gay bromance. But it didn't start out that way.

For (unbeknownst to Gene at the time) Arwyn was an undercover detective embedded at The Hole in order to bust a group of Hell's Angels running drugs through all the gay bars South of Market, plus two bars here in the Castro. (One of these two, "The Detour," has since shut down.)

But Zeke had already fallen head over tail for Arwyn, so refused to leave the saloon when Arwyn had confronted his new-found buddy:

“Gene, it is very *dangerous* for you to hang out here, especially when you’re a friend to me.” He lowered his noble copper-haired head and looked at Zeke directly in the eyes: “So, will you please go *now*?”

With that, Arwyn returned to his billiards, leaving Gene in a gloomy space, and never spoke to him again. At least, not for five sad years (actually, three, but memory loss made it seem longer). Zeke refused to leave the Hole; he loved Arwyn that much, and at least was rather delighted to watch from afar, Arwyn’s antics around the pool table, and listen to rock ‘n’ roll pounding through hyper-amped speakers, and let thoughts of His Johnnie sink into the Moors of Forgetfulness.

Though be assured that, should anyone ever threaten Gene at The Hole (or later, the Eagle), Arwyn would abruptly drive them out with great anger. Which eventually cost him dearly, as he was instructed (by South-of-Market drug lords) to *never* defend Zeke, or there’d be Hades to pay. And so he did: his room was burnt down, and Gene was dosed with intent to drive him insane.

In a little more time, without *either* speaking a word to the other (as Arwyn would not allow), Zeke figured out the situation (that Arwyn is an undercover sleuth), and cleverly became Arwyn’s sidekick. He played the lure, the fall guy, and decoy. Which made the Orange County detective’s work far easier, by bringing these drug-dealing murderous skanks out of the woodwork. Eventually, though, Gene was driven out of The Hole for good, by a violent threat of a sharp blade to his gut, should he ever show up there again. Of course, Arwyn was not present at the time, and the bartender on duty chose to look the other way; thus Zeke had no choice but to leave the Hole for good.

So Gene started hanging out at the Eagle Tavern a few blocks away, for he knew that Arwyn enjoyed frequenting that space, too. Sometimes, when he could afford it (a rare occasion), he’d buy Arwyn a drink. Though only via the barkeep’s hand, as Zeke still could not speak to Arwyn, or even get within ten feet of him. About a year later, Gene discovered Arwyn working at a taqueria *right next door* to his now-verboden hangout, the Hole in the Wall.

So every Wednesday, Zeke would order a small meal and enjoy watching Arwyn at work: a 6-foot-4 handsome giant who towered above the several diminutive Mexican workers. An absolutely sweet and sometimes hilarious

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scenario, of which Arwyn was quite aware, and made the most of. Still, Gene was not allowed to speak to him, except to place an order. But Zeke did find endearing ways to compliment him from time to time, without exposing their sweet relationship. Such as (after placing his order which was always chile rellenos) remarking: “Not only is the food here quite good, but the view is outstanding.” By “the view” of course, he meant Arwyn’s Glorious Mug, for there was nothing impressive to see out the picture window: just a busy intersection surrounded by drab buildings and the occasional wino and bums with shopping carts rattling on by.

Gene sought additional (non-vocal) ways to express his love for this Orange County Gumshoe, by writing one blog every two or three weeks, about Arwyn and how simply being in his presence makes Zeke so ridiculously happy. He’d slip a printout of each episode (secured in a decorated plastic folder), beneath an old newspaper. Since Arwyn also cleared tables, he’d be the first to find it. This lasted almost a year, before Gene decided to cease his weekly visits, in order to make clear he was no stalker. Two months later, the restaurant closed.

When the Taqueria Phase ended, Arwyn made sure Zeke could see him within every two or three weeks, by showing up nearby. Say, walking in opposite direction along the sidewalk, and passing by as if neither knew the other. Or some months later, showing up out of the blue, now employed at a local bar (“The Metro,” which has since shut down) right across the street from Gene’s apartment building.

*[ Ebullient Reader: may I remind you that Arwyn’s keen telepathy certainly helped the process along. ]*

Zeke could now look right out the hallway window and see Arwyn at work, or smoking a ciggie on the wraparound deck; the bar was on the second floor, as was Gene’s SRO. So he’d sometimes visit, buy a drink and enjoy Arwyn’s presence once more, from a respectful distance.

Some days, Zeke would even stand kitty corner across the street, and hold his hat to his heart while looking up at Arwyn who took frequent cigarette breaks on the sun deck. This way, Gene could send his love from a very safe distance, with no one the wiser. (It was a large, busy 5-corner intersection at Market, 16th, and Noe.) Arwyn would just puff on a Marlboro with vigor while looking directly at his Beloved Sidekick, for as long as he could

before returning to work. An element of humor in these little scenarios was not lost on Zeke; surely Arwyn's playful spirit was a great balm.

Around this time (of "The Metro") the funding for this assignment from Orange County dried up, and busting the Hell's Angels drug runners became a cold case. Arwyn was therefore required to return to Southern California, or lose his career. In a heartbeat, he chose the latter. No way was he going to leave his Beloved Amigo vulnerable to these cult fanatics, for Gene would likely be severely crippled (or even murdered) as a result.

So in losing his noble job, he also lost his health benefits, and thus began the rotting and loss of his gorgeous pearly whites. Small sacrifice to pay in *his* mind, in order to protect the soul of one so dear.

Arwyn turned to hustling men in their 70's mostly, at select gay bars in The Castro. Not for sex of course, but for nightly companionship. Fully clothed or in pajamas, he'd hold these lonely (though affluent) elder gentlemen in his gangly arms, and make them feel very much loved and appreciated. Mornings, Arwyn would usually fix them coffee and breakfast in his underwear, and tell many cheerful jokes and compliments.

If there's one thing Arwyn excels at, it's bringing joy to the hearts of aging (or severely disabled) men who otherwise would have no purpose in their lonely lives, or any reason to get out of bed each day. Some suffered major health issues, such as cancer, AIDS and even dementia. Arwyn loved 'em all, to the point where they found life exceedingly wonderful again (or perhaps even for the first time). He graced them with his beauty, friendship and humor; and in exchange received \$100 to \$500 a nightly pop.

He could've gotten so much more because of his startling good looks and talent, but he intentionally sought more needful clientele. For Arwyn is truly a lover to his brothers in great need. He uses his Dragon-Given Beauty for all the right reasons. And this is why Gene harbors such golden affection for this Most Courageous and Compassionate Detective: the first man *ever* to make him forget his other great love, Randolph Louis Taylor.

So now we are caught up to the present time, and the completion of this episode (Chapter 13). Arwyn is so close to busting these scoundrels, he can taste it like stale tobacco from an overnight tryst. And Zeke will soon have this novel published and become wealthy beyond anyone's comprehension (and of course, outrageously, impossibly, scintillatingly famous as well). Their teeth will be repaired by the best oral surgeons and dental technicians

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

money can buy (or simply healed in a flash by Dragonly White Magic). And Gene will open his first home for severely disabled gay veterans, employing his buddies off the streets to be their companions, maintain the building and grounds, and handle the books.

\* \* \*

*Truly, a Happily Ever After Gay Real Life Fairytale!*

\* \* \*

### DRAGON NOTES

Arwyn and I have to live apart a while longer, until Arwyn's calling is complete; that is: the bust and arrest of these Disciples of the Zodiac Killer a.k.a. "Hell's Angels drug runners". For it is still too dangerous for us two Love Dragons to be seen together; but this will soon end in a few weeks, or a few months (but no more). Then, we'll rush off to the Outer Hebrides for our belated honeymoon. (But not before I am first honored at the Gay Pride Festival, and declare secession of Northern California from these Disunited States, and establish the Queerest Nation on the Planet.)

*[ FYI Affectionate Reader: I am also the Chief Leader of the Seven Celtic Nations, which shall soon secede from the European Union and declare its own nationhood. So you see, Astute Reader, the motive to celebrate my marriage somewhere in Scotland, is not without ulterior intent! ]*

Be assured that both Arwyn and myself will do everything possible to bring these criminals to justice; but we won't stop there. Under the inspiration of the Buddha's tenet that "we have no enemies, only teachers" (or Jesus' command to "love thine enemy"), we'll fight to redeem their lost souls, and direct them towards a much better and ethical life. I'd like to employ at least some of them as companions for the home I soon plan to open, for severely disabled lesbian and gay veterans.

*[ BTW Goodly Reader, if you likewise take to heart the perspective that we have no enemies, only teachers: you will have a much easier go of it when dealing with your own life crises, no matter how insurmountable they presently seem. It will turn all your difficulties into a beautiful game, and eventually, all your trials into*

blessings. For further details into this matter, please read the following essay I wrote back in Y2K:

<http://tinyurl.com/neopositivity> ]

[ Furthermore Kindred Reader: I want Hell's Angels busted not because of the hard drugs per se, but because they are all heterosexual. The Gay Community has its own criminal underbelly, and deserves to run the show. After all, didn't we already go through Hetero Overlords controlling our bars via the Mafia, back in the day? Furthermore: why it was necessary to send a detective all the way south from Orange County (more than 600 miles), in order to bust a local drug ring, is still a mystery to me. But I'm sure glad it came down that way! ]

Why is Arwyn far more telepathic than myself? Because he is my Guardian Dragon, sent from Avalon to guide and protect this wretched little soul. He *has* to be more psychic in order to perform his Goddess-given duties to free me from this earthly bond.

(No, doesn't mean I'm gonna die; just means I'll have a New Life in this present world that will soon transform into a garden paradise.)

"Chasing the dragon:" a term used metaphorically to mean inhaling heroin fumes. However, in my tale of Arwyn's love and courage as a dragon from Avalon, I transform the term into something rarified and divine. Such is the noble goal of alchemy. Speaking of which:

In the Hebrew mystical teachings of the Kabala, it is said that, should a person search for truth with all his heart and all his courage, he will eventually find it, and be as much regarded and loved by the angels as Our Creator Herself. With this Golden Apple that I have won through such dedication towards Queer Equality, I get to play "Queen for a Day" so to speak. Though this "day" will last for months, perhaps years. Even Jesus Himself will step aside, that I may be the world's savior for a time. This is truly a remarkable blessing beyond anything I could ever conceive. Believe me, Fretsome Reader, when I say I often fall to the ground in awestruck wonder!

[ Well, Seraphic Reader, that's a bit of an exaggeration. But I do sometimes suffer anxiety attacks, wobble at the knees and suffer body shakes whenever I'm aware of Such A Great Blessing that has come to this shattered soul. ]

Of course, being a spiritual guardian to me, also means Arwyn is a tough task master. Whatever he knows I need to go through, no matter how seemingly harsh, he won't hesitate to begin the process, for the sooner it starts, the sooner it will end. His cold shoulder, the silence of not speaking with

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

me (or acknowledging my very existence) was not just a necessary form of protection from violent criminals, but served this other purpose:

In so treating me this way, it sharpened my telepathic abilities as well as my writing skills. For in such powerful desire to communicate to him my love, and my struggles for us both, I had no outlet but to write it all down, then print it out and deliver my tales to him. (*Arwyn doesn't mess around with computers or the Internet, so I couldn't just hope he'd go online every week or so, to be updated.*) It was quite a Herculean Challenge to say the least, but I trust his Wise Affections to never lead me astray, no matter how impossible may seem the obstacle he places before me.

In short: I'm a VERY VERY VERY VERY VERY lucky man! (And you are too, once you learn to listen to your own Guardian Dragon.)

PS: I was bored this morning, so I googled the word "draco" to find this incredible article dated January 2011:

DRACO Drug Could Cure Almost Any Virus

<http://tinyurl.com/draco-drug>

*Good riddance AIDS et al (and hello Age of Aquarius). Blessings on us all!*



Illustration by S. Rohan

## **Chapter 14**

### *A Quaternity of Poems*

*[ Persistent Reader: I thought it would be nice to include four poems among many I've composed, dedicated to My Randolph. They were all written in the late 1980's. The first one is quite long, unlike the remaining three.]*

#### **September's Passage**

---

thinking of you this labor day  
happy LOVE'S labor day  
browsing in walgreens aisle of greeting cards  
(mini via dolorosa):

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

In friendship  
Hang in there  
Something about you just makes my little heart  
skip a beat  
I like you for what you are  
Every day something reminds me of you  
If wishing wells work, if crossed fingers count,  
if theres any magic in the world  
A poem for you my love  
Top 10 reasons to smile  
When i think about us i wonder how i got so lucky  
and then i remember  
Woke up with a wonderful thought today  
Its just me sending a little card to give you a  
little smile a little lift  
For my guy  
When im with you i do things i really shouldnt do  
chipmunks  
cats  
turtles  
bears  
gophers  
a moose? (broad brown antlers, huge honker,  
head poked through open window  
of your home, joyful licks)  
puppy dogs  
flowers, stars, crescent moons, hearts  
a snake? (crooked stovepipe hat tipped in  
friendly greeting, red bowtie)  
pretending wishing  
these cards  
even one for gods sake  
were sent from washington d c  
return address randy taylor  
oh why drown myself in grief?  
why think of you anymore?

**Randolph Louis Taylor:**

writing letters in the donut shop  
to your adored one (jose)  
Dearest Little Squirrel  
i walked in  
for the first time  
our eyes met could not pull away  
your feet on the stairs of 689 castro  
as i stood at your door about to knock  
walking in the rain  
beside you under your umbrella  
i wanted to beg you not to leave  
but i said nothing  
january 16 1985 11 o clock news your face on the  
screen

“randolph louis taylor vietnam veteran antiwar  
and gay rights activist  
gave speeches with ron kovic  
(author of born on the 4th of july)  
fasted 40 days in 84 for representation of  
vietnam veterans at the s f democratic convention  
shot himself early this morning at the vietnam  
veterans memorial in washington d c”

i turned off the t v wept thought it was all over  
but next day discovered it wasnt you were still alive!  
desperately sought your whereabouts then wrote to you  
letter after letter day after day until

those incredible love letters before i flew to d c  
your desperate appeal:

“please help me stop the dying”  
your promise (never fulfilled) to be  
“as good a friend to you  
as you have been to me”

your old mans snore (open mouth) as i gazed upon you  
from the door of your hospital room in d c

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

marching out of the canteen in childish arrogance  
because i scolded you  
(walkman headphones over your ears)  
wearing the hsing-hsing/ling-ling panda t shirt i bought you  
your chest puffed with pride  
boastful strides through VAMC corridors  
new haircut  
such lovely waves of silver hair!  
shirt pulled up for me to touch the lump  
bullet lodged beside your shoulder blade  
strong broad marines back! sensuous smooth!  
agent orange skin cancer operation scars!  
brave soldier proud veteran of armageddon!  
top gun my hero my little chipmunk!  
my beloved comrade in arms!  
your moist cool kiss on my neck like a playful vampire  
beside the statue of saint francis  
i threw my arms around your shoulders  
raised myself off the grass  
(youre so tall!)  
to return the love bite  
my lonely visit to "the wall"  
"the wailing wall of amerika"  
where you shot yourself in the heart  
but missed  
vietnam veterans memorial  
black slabs of polished stone  
pressed into the side of a grassy mound  
inscribed with the names of the dead  
the deluded homophobic dead  
except for the few true believers  
in brotherly love  
(who? we may never know)  
bronze statue of five soldiers raising  
the american flag WWII  
behind me & to my left

i shiver  
while you play bingo back at the hospital  
the agony of my departure after 3 weeks  
alone on the jet (peoples express)  
looking down from the sky  
the white house the obelisk lincoln memorial  
the veterans administration memorial center  
where you were  
knowing that by now you received my parting  
gift  
bouquet of roses delivered to your door  
tag attached: "semper fidelis. genie."  
dupont circle georgetown foggy bottom  
the potomac river chesapeake bay  
clouds  
sudden burst of tears in my sleeve  
oh how cruel you were to me  
almost every time we were together  
"gene, i never asked you to come here"  
even after 15+ years i cannot believe that i am not  
your hero guardian angel best buddy  
confidante  
that you turned your love to hate  
but i still write to you  
compose verses in your honor  
thinking of you this labor day  
randolph  
If wishing wells work, if crossed fingers count,  
if theres any magic in the world

## Threnody

---

Please God don't let Christmas come  
Without my Randolph Taylor.  
My quest is still a painful one:  
Adrift at sea, a lonesome sailor.

I can't believe that he is dead,  
His soul bound to the quilt.  
(Oh can't this be another man,  
Same name in glitter gilt?)

How many years I've walked this path  
Of love's devotion on the cross,  
Only to echo The Devil's laugh:  
"You lost, you lost, you lost!"

I pray, I guess, for miracles,  
Each breath a sacred wish:  
My heart a candle in the dark,  
Or in the deep blue ocean, a single  
golden fish!

"Please help me stop the dying," was  
Randolph's tender plea,  
Scrolled across a letter: the first  
he sent to me.

But now my sadness falls like rain,  
And drowns my joy like a broken toy.  
I cannot bear this pain.

I cannot bear not knowing  
How you, dear Randolph, are.  
(My heart forever glowing, whether  
near or far

For a man who gave me everything  
And set my course to a star!)

Without you, my dear Randolph,  
I have no way to steer.  
The waves are crashing 'gainst the prow;  
The clouds are tumbling near!

I yearn for you my chipmunk,  
My little piece of Heaven.  
If my soul were a loaf of bread,  
Your kiss would be the leaven.

## Bring My Soldier Home To Me

---

My heart is over-tired, so I must sing this song:

*Bring my soldier home to me, he's been gone too long!*

Oh bring my soldier home to me, with a smile on his face,  
And a tear or two for me and you, as we march in place.

Oh bring my soldier home to me, his home is in my heart!  
*Armageddon is The Wedding, know your part.*

Oh bring my Daddy home to me, I am His Only One!  
Uncleave my heart, unsheathe my tongue!

Plowshares to swords, faggots to Huns!

Butter to bullets, bread to guns!

*Gay Revolution has begun!*

Oh bring my lover home to me, the Starving Vet of  
Eighty-Four!  
*I nursed him back in Wash. D.C., that's why he's still  
alive!*

Oh bring My Father home to me. the light is drawing near!  
*Yea, though I dally in Eureka Valley, I shall have no fear!*

Oh bring my Randolph home to me, the coffee's on the stove!  
*His tears that fell for all Nam Vets have made His Wish  
betrothed!*

## Agent Orange Julius

---

i expect you to suddenly  
reappear  
like a friendly ghost  
into my arms  
neon kisses  
gentle embrace  
hands sweetly touching  
at any moment  
sitting waiting for me  
over an avocado omelette  
    how very california  
    i enter and stumble all over you  
i am so hungry  
metal utensils pushed by happy elbows  
clatter to the floor  
a-harmonic chimes  
merry wedding bells  
joyful tears caresses  
thank god thank god thank god  
i taste your sweet saliva  
illuminating a forkful of omelette  
silver/yellow/green  
radioactive love!  
that you press upon my tongue  
    i sigh over a plate  
of french fries  
the coffee  
bitter  
like my heart  
my room  
the building in which i live  
hollow  
like my heart

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

the streets  
the people  
    the city  
frigid  
like my heart  
oh brother of the lion heart  
i wanted to  
be your androcles  
remove the bitter thorn  
    of viet nam



Illustration by S. Rohan

## **Chapter 15**

### *The Real Phone Call*

*[ August Reader: I must confess to you that the phone call from Arwyn as told in Chapter 12, never really did happen. I'm sure this surprise revelation of my lie, causes you to question the veracity of every other tale told in that elegant opus. "Whut? Iz dat Zeke fugginwiddus again?" you may very well ask. To that, I can only say:*

*"The truth is in the telling, and not in the accuracy of each tasty episode. Though I assure my fans that a large part of these adventures occurred exactly as told." ]*

Other lies (for example) are these:

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

- In that same chapter: I never *was* dosed with horse tranquilizer, terrorized, and my unconscious body dumped in a hilltop reservoir. Nor did Arwyn stay by me for more than 8 months, while I was in coma. (There was *no* drugging, therefore no coma.) Nor did Arwyn and I get married in 2008, or any *other* year, for that matter.

- Much of the dialogue with Arwyn (such as in Chapter 2) and other real-life characters is definitely *not* verbatim, but restructured from memory, and somewhat condensed in order to achieve an effective prose.

- I did not *really* have hot sex in a large cardboard box with some homeless dude, as declared in Chapter 9. Ha ha, he isn't homeless, but resides in a welfare hotel on 16th and Guerrero Streets. Okay, even *that's* not the complete truth: we never *did* have sex, because it was too late at night to allow any guests (house rules). *But I do have his name and address, and will eventually get back to him (bottle of vodka and diet coke in hand), the Darling Maverick of longish brown hair, sparkly hazel eyes, and tightly-chiseled face like a top notch, soft porn celebrity.*

- Arwyn and I are not *really* lovers, but good friends (albeit sporadic). My fantasies about us being amorous is just that: a will-o'-the-wisp. Not that he *doesn't* love me with all his heart, nor that he doesn't miss my company. Our sweet association is purely platonic, but in a most intense and awesome way. Thus, in that gracious novel, I've allowed my flights of fancy to roam unbidden, and let them take me where they will. Therefore, my dream of Arwyn as lover is part of the tale I wove.

- I am not *really* the chief leader of the 7 Celtic Nations as claimed in Addendum 1. Except perhaps in some sort of

mystical, parallel-dimension sort of way. The implication here, is for my followers to deduce that I am speaking prophecy in a rather metaphorical manner. Which meanings you *must* figure out for yourself, Endearing Reader.

- I do *not* mess around with speed or any other hard drugs, as implied in Chapter 9. That was just for humorous effect. *A little alcohol, a little pot; that's what really hits my spot!*

- I did *not* blow a handsome radio host in a bar on Folsom Street back in 1986 (as described in Chapter 1) though I sure wish I did!

\* \* \*

#### PROVISIONAL DECLARATION

*As far as I know, those lies are just what I claim: falsehoods. However, I do entertain the possibility that they really are partly restored recollections of a drug-damaged memory. For these fantastic episodes were all born of intense visions, which perhaps did not merely arise from vivid imagination. Which would explain Arwyn's uniquely sweet (and mischievous) behavior towards yours truly (in a panoramic span of more than 5 or 6 years), and which strongly hints of such adventures being true. In which case, I really was drugged and left for dead, I really was in a deep coma for many months, my precious soul hanging by a frayed string. And Arwyn did stand by my comatose side at the ICU, in utter regard and prayer for his beloved sidekick. And we were married in 2008; and Arwyn did phone me the eve of Easter Sunday, with conversation exactly as I dictated.*

\* \* \*

So there you have it: the truth of my novel's quasi-veracity laid bare. But what is so astonishing, is that only last week (Thursday, June 7th 2012), my first telephone conversation with Arwyn actually *did* occur, much to my surprised delight. And chagrin, as this real-life vignette unfolded, to reveal itself

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

as more of a humiliating faux pas than any sort of glorious epiphany. So now, sit back with your favorite drink (hot chocolate perhaps, or something more inebriating; why, a few hits of the ganja is most enthusiastically recommended). And allow me to tell you my curious tale of *The Real Phone Call*:

The story begins with my pot dealer, Marmaduke Quark (great name, eh?), who frequents various gay bars in order to sell medicinal marijuana to whomever has legal rights to purchase, as established by California's Compassionate Use Act. (These days, since my pre-inheritance money ran out four months ago, I really can't afford any pot; though Marmaduke is kind enough to donate a small amount to me, now and then, or invite me to a bar or other locale, to partake from a pipe.)

Now, one of the gay bars he frequents, is Pilsner Inn on Church Street, near Market. The night before this epic phone call, Marmaduke invites me there, to enjoy some puffs, and receive a little bud for later. When I arrive, I find him seated at a picnic table on the open patio, where they allow smoking (marijuana *and* tobacco).

Marmaduke is a buff little dude (just 5-foot-2), 38 years old, with a full head of peppery-black hair and a day-glo skunk tail down the middle (hot pink). He hails from Alaska and looks part Eskimo, and has a knife scar across the left cheek. Usually decked out in a sports coat, long-sleeve dress shirt, Levis and sandals with socks. A rather handsome little chap, in the right light.

"What's in the package," he inquires and points at the mossy-green plastic bag hanging from my left hand. (I found that bag on the steps of a Victorian house on Duboce Street. It is tougher and far more attractive than those more common, crinkly white sacks that strangle the living daylight out of our endangered ocean brethren. The green bag has a black title and logo of a local clothing boutique: "Sarah's Closet" or something equally retarded.)

I pull the contents from the bag, to show him a shiny folder tied in a flatly-rolled black bandana with skull designs: three large feathers (each a different color) are bound to the folder by that bandana.

"It's my latest gift to Arwyn: contains some printed-out chapters of my novel, in which he plays the hero," I proudly declare. "Also, there is a political comic book about the U.S. War Machine and its evil ways, two of my book-promotion business cards in a small envelope, and my original papers

from when I interviewed Nam Vets at the VAMC in D.C., regarding medical abuse. That was back in 1985.”

[ *Avid Reader: you may view this gift and all its contents on the web, here:*  
<http://tinyurl.com/latest-gift> ]

Marmaduke is a bit perplexed: “Okay, but why did you bring it *here*?”

“Because this is one of the bars Arwyn sometimes visits to play pool,” I explain. “I’ve been trying to get this package to him for almost five weeks now. Perhaps he will show up tonight, while we’re still here.”

Well, Arwyn never *does* show up for the hour or so we hang out together, getting nicely stoned off primo bud. So it’s back home for the night, my latest gift to my Darling Guardian Dragon still in hand. But the next night is a totally *different* outcome, with the release of my lingering love tokens unto Arwyn’s gracious soul.

The next day, Thursday eve, Marmaduke phones me around 9pm: “Zeke, I’m back at the Pilsner, and playing pool with your boyfriend, Arwyn!”

“C’mon, you’re kidding me,” I respond in disbelief.

“Nope, he’s right here,” insists Marmaduke. “Wanna talk to him?”

I demand: “Of *course* I want to talk to him. Put him on!”

\* \* \*

“Hey there, Zeke!” speaks a very familiar voice; a voice sweeter than fair-trade agave nectar to my ears.

“Hello, Arwyn! How ya doin’, sweetheart?”

“Great! And yourself, Zeke?”

“Oh, really good, too. Except I miss you. And I love you so much. You’re a *wonderful* man, Arwyn.”

“I love you too, Zeke.”

“Say, this is our first phone call, isn’t it?” I state with no little astonishment.  
(*Silence. Arwyn does not respond.*)

So I continue: “I’d love to hang out with you at the Pilsner, but I’m afraid other obligations keep me at home for the night. But maybe I can change these plans; in a half hour, perhaps.”

“I hope you can, Zeke. You should come down here and play pool with me.”

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

*(Unusual request, I think. We've hardly ever played pool together since we first met six years ago. Maybe twice. Three times at most.)*

"Oh, I don't think I can do that. The government just cut \$200 dollars from my social security check this month. Can't even afford to treat myself to coffee every day."

"Well, okay then, never mind."

"You have fun, sweetheart. I'll try to make it there if I can, just to say hi, and give you some hugs."

"Great! See you then if you can. I'm gonna hand the phone back to your friend, now. Bye, gorgeous. See ya soon, if not tonight."

\* \* \*

Marmaduke's voice: "See, Zeke? I didn't make this up."

"Did you hear what he told me over the phone?"

"Yes, he really *does* love you. So, you coming over now?"

I sigh: "Afraid not. I'm waiting on a homeless friend to return from 7/11, so he can make some phone calls."

"Well, try to get here if you can."

"Thanks again, Marmaduke. I really appreciate what you just did for me."

"Okay, bye now."

I'm totally thrilled. *Finally, the game-playing is over, and we're takin' it to the next level. But where's Lefty? Said he'd be back in 20 minutes, and it's been almost an hour!*

Ten more minutes pass, and I get antsy. *This is ridiculous, I gotta see Arwyn tonight. This is such a breakthrough, I'll just have to put Lefty on the back burner.*

So I grab my coat, hat, and gift bag, and march on down to Pilsner Inn. But the moment I shut the front gate behind me, there's Lefty just several yards ahead, on his way back.

"Lefty, I'm really sorry, but I gotta see Arwyn. He just called from the Pilsner, and invited me to play some pool."

He gives me a big hug and says, "Oh, that's great. You've done so many good things for me already, I can't keep you from your detective boyfriend. You have a great night, Zeke." And off he wanders towards Castro Street.

*Lefty is, BTW, this dreadlocked, short statured Caucasian (cute like a troll doll or cabbage patch kid) who suddenly showed up in my life a few weeks ago. He's a totally*

*hetero dude with a drug problem he's trying to kick. Very gay friendly, too. He knows about Arwyn because I've read some chapters to him, which he enjoys immensely. A lovely girlfriend up in Marin County just perked up his life, and he's so much happier since we first met. Showed up yesterday afternoon, really bummed 'cause he lost Alicia's phone number, and he doesn't want her to wonder why he hasn't called yesterday or today. After some worry and deliberation (and my outrageous jokes to cheer the sweet dude up), it occurred to me I can restore her phone number by loading up my OneSuite web account and viewing "history." Lovebirds reunited!*

My heart takes wing and I am transported to Pilsner Inn. Arwyn's by the pool table (*of course, that's his element, like water to a fish*). I approach him with my gift, and raise it before him.

Arwyn turns to me and declares: "Oh, *that* Zeke!"

I get into the play of things: "What do you mean, *that* Zeke? What other Zeke is there?"

He says not a word, but tilts his head in amusement, and some other emotion which isn't clear to me.

My package is still hovering before him. "Will it be a burden to accept this gift now? I can try another day." *Always the stoic soldier*, is my motto.

"Hmm. Okay, give it to me."

He then holds out his right hand, as if for a high-five. I attempt to return the gesture with my free hand, but he pulls his arm away.

"I said, give it to me!"

So I attempt to high-five him again, but once more he pulls his hand back. *What a joker*, I think.

Then Arwyn declares once more, with much vigor: "I SAID I'LL TAKE IT, ZEKE. GIVE ME THE PACKAGE!"

So I eagerly hand him the gift, and walk over to Marmaduke, who's sitting at the bar.

"Again, thank you so much, Marmaduke!"

"Glad you could make it," he replies. "Arwyn is unbelievably nice, just like you said. Quite a powerful spirit, so full of life!"

Then Marmaduke leaves his seat to play another round of billiards. Defeated Arwyn disappears into the back, to smoke another Marlboro, no doubt. But I wonder:

*Does he want me to follow him back there? Well, I'm sure if he does, he'll come get me.*

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

So I bounce that thought around, kind of confused whether or not he wants to talk to me. In a little while, sure enough, he returns up front to summon me. So I follow him to the open-air patio, where he solemnly declares:

\* \* \*

“Zeke, you need to listen. Please let me do the talking, and don’t say a word.”

I shrug my shoulders in an “okay” gesture.

“I want to apologize to you. The ‘Zeke’ I thought I was talking to over your friend’s cell phone is not you, but my boyfriend whose name is *also* Zeke, and we’re on the same baseball team.”

Of course I am thunderstruck, but recoup my forces admirably:

“Oh, Arwyn, I’ve been through so much already, this really matters little to me. It’s okay.”

To which he responds: “I am truly sorry.”

*Oh I see, I figure to myself. The bar is noisy, and the cell phone reception is less than perfect, so he couldn’t distinguish my voice from that other Zeke. fuk me with a duck! I am so screwed.*

I wave my hands below my waist, as if to vanquish in one instant, the demons that threaten to demolish me.

“NO! No, Arwyn, don’t you feel guilty in the least. This is the *sweetest* crucifixion I’ve ever had, thank you very much!”

Arwyn chuckles, and I resume: “I just want to be a good friend to you. My feelings towards you may be *very* intense, but they are purely platonic. I’m so glad you have a boyfriend now, who obviously makes you quite happy. You look really good these days; *your* Zeke must be doing something right.”

A grin crosses Arwyn’s face, then morphs glum. He taps an accusatory finger at my sternum: “Maybe *you* checked out the baseball roster, saw his name, and set me up.”

I then look directly into Arwyn’s eyes, and see only a bright spark of light, as if peering down a long, dark tunnel.

“Arwyn,” I state forthrightly and with much heart, “You *should* know me well enough by now, that I would *never* pull such a stunt! I respect you *too* much.” Then I add:

“But here we are, face to face. Destiny’s hand keeps bringing us together. *Your* Zeke is not here, nor anyone else, but *this* Zeke is. There *must* be a really good reason for that.” I pause, to think of anything else I should say, to make things right, then add:

“Hey Arwyn, just think: you have a boyfriend that makes you incredibly happy, and his name is Zeke. Just doesn’t get any better than that!”

Again, a smile, then Arwyn cross-examines further: “So, how does Marmaduke know about me...I mean, *us*?”

“I’ve read some of my stories to him, where you’re the star,” I honestly reply. “Pilsner Inn is one of the places Marmaduke visits to sell medical marijuana, and he invites me here sometimes, to smoke some bud.” I stop to consider my next words, then speak:

“I came here yesterday by his invite, and brought my latest present in case you showed up. Marmaduke asked me about the package, so I explained. I guess then, when he played pool with you and discovered your name, everything clicked into place, so he called me up to tell me you’re here.”

“Well,” he replies, “Now that we’ve had this talk, I want you to go back to the bar. Again, I am *very* sorry.”

\* \* \*

“Okay,” I finish, and return to the front room, and sit once more, by Marmaduke. And inform him:

“Arwyn says the *Zeke* he thought he was talking to, was his lover by the same name.”

“OMFG, really?” exclaims Marmaduke.

“Well, you *do* realize Arwyn is very psychic; in fact, he’s an angel, *my* guardian angel. He set up this entire scenario.”

“It’s all in your head,” he declares. “He’s not your one-and-only. Zeke, you’re dreaming.”

“I don’t think so,” I defend my own possible (maybe even probable) delusion. “He accepted my gift right away, you saw that. Besides, do you *really* think it’s a coincidence that we were here yesterday, and Arwyn shows up *today*, as if he could read my mind? Think about it: he’s a master of Life’s Plot. *He telepathically inspired you to come back the next day.*”

Another reason suddenly dawns on this jaded soldier’s shell-shocked mind:

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

“Marmaduke, he also knows I’ve been trying to deliver my latest gift for quite a spell now. So decided I’ve struggled enough, and arranged this bizarre scenario in order to finally accept it. He never does anything without his own brand of wackadoodle panache.”

Marmaduke conjectures: “Hmm, you might have something there. He is *quite* an extraordinary person!”

I excuse myself to take a leak, and head for the restroom. Right when I whip it out over the porcelain urinal, Arwyn suddenly shows up and asks:

“Do you have four quarters?”

[ *Voracious Reader: again, I fail in my wit to respond with a snappy comeback, such as: “Wow, you really lowered your rate drastically!” \*sigh\* ]*

So, with my fly open and wanger hanging out, I search my pockets. No change, just my wallet. Which I open, to show him a solitary bill:

“No, but I have five dollars.”

“Never mind,” he replies, and exits the lavatory.

*Now, what was that all about?* I wonder, then return to my bar stool, and request the bartender to break my bill, with four quarters in change, and the same number of GW’s. Which quarters I hand over to My beloved Warrior, who inserts them into the pool table slot.

It is then time for Marmaduke to play another round with Arwyn. His behavior turns obnoxious after one drink too many, and he bumps up against Arwyn several times, telling him what a kewl dude he is. Arwyn pushes him away: “Back off buddy, you’re getting a little too fresh for me!”

I feel *really* ashamed at Marmaduke’s insufferable behavior, for the last thing I ever want to be to Arwyn, is cause for unhappiness or anger of any sort. Marmaduke *does* have this repulsive side that grates most people the wrong way. In fact, it took more than two years before I could really stomach the guy. Now, we have a much friendlier relationship, but I can’t expect Arwyn or anyone else, to take to him in such a short time. The game over (Marmaduke wins), Arwyn recedes to the back section again. *Probably to get away from Marmaduke*, I conclude.

Some minutes pass: Marmaduke loses this round and sits once more, beside me. “You’re a bit too drunk,” I gently advise. “Maybe you should go home now.”

Marmaduke’s head is lowered towards his lap, but he raises it: “You know, I think you’re right; I’ll call you tomorrow, Zeke.”

And so he leaves. I remain at the bar, sipping my club soda and wondering where Arwyn is. He finally returns from the deck, approaches me with a somewhat nervous demeanor, and wags a finger.

“You need to get rid of your friend,” he declares.

I calmly look up at him and retort: “I already drove him away five minutes ago.” And take another sip from my glass.

Arwyn looks around, then up front towards the entrance. “Oh. Very good,” he declares, and returns to the pool table ‘cause his turn is up once more.

Watching him play is always a pleasant respite in my world. Soon, he ambles to the other side of the table to observe his opponent’s move, and backs up right into me. So close I could hug him with both hands joined (and room to spare; he’s a skinny wag of bodacious glory). He is wearing a floppy, acrylic overshirt with short sleeves. It looks and feels like silk, and displays a tropical motif. Instead, I place the flat of my hand upon his right shoulder blade. At which move he suddenly jumps (but doesn’t pull away.)

“No touching,” he admonishes. And I respond:

“But you were leaning right into me.” Arwyn doesn’t reply.

*Never mind that. It’s just a thrill having My Darling so close that he’s between my splayed thighs; touching or no.*

Then he returns to the billiard table’s far side to make his next shot.

I decide *time to leave*, just because I’m still suffering the humiliation of learning that his love over the phone line was actually meant for another, not for this poor trampled soul. I need to go home and lick my suppurating wound of love’s deflection.

So I disengage my butt from the stool, bend and stretch my leg with the arthritic knee several times (to prepare myself for the three-block journey home that has now become a sort of Via Dolorosa), pluck my jacket from the seat, and wave goodbye to Arwyn.

But it’s not over. Arwyn summons me once more, to approach his Divine Visage. He leans into my ear, and declares:

“I may not take your gift. I just might leave it here at the bar.”

Not desiring to appear the least bit of a selfish arse, I counter with:

“Well, I’ll just have to live with that.”

And so I depart, once more a forlorned object of cosmic ridicule and social rejection.

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

\* \* \*

Once home, I sit at my desk with the computer still on--the LCD screen the only light in the entire room--and cross my arms upon the dusty, scratched-up old desk. *Well, there's nothing more to do tonight, I think. Arwyn doesn't really think of me very often anymore. He may think of Zeke each and every waking moment, with infinite delight in his heart. But I'm not that Zeke.* I plop my weary head into my folded arms, and weep like a baby.

Hours later, the morning sun peeks bright rays through my dollar-store curtain, and I awake, raise my face to view a screen advertising Viagra.

*Great, I muse, just what I don't need: a hard-on for someone who isn't there for me, nor ever will be, I suppose.*

I check my email, then prepare my usual breakfast of rolled oats with dates, honey, cinammon, flax seed and freshly ground almond powder. As I digest and think upon last night's bizarre outcome, this new realization dawns on my pre-coffee mind:

*I already have Arwyn's love, and he surely does miss me. Otherwise, long ago he would've refused my gifts, and not rub up against me whenever we're at the same bar, as if an inadvertent brush with a complete stranger.* I further conjecture:

*His love may be platonic, but it's remained strong and persistent over these many years, like a promise of future happiness beyond all measure, for which is required no more than my steadfast patience and faith.* Then I ponder some details of last night's affair, that are clearly signs, and not my overwrought imagination:

*Arwyn rubbed up against me, and leaned upon my legs for some time. He told me "no touching."..which now I realize is his reminder that no one in public should be made aware that we are actually an item. As a detective on a dangerous case, we cannot be seen together except in this scenario of seeming strangers who happen to be physically close by mere coincidence; and only sporadically at that. If he doesn't really love me, why would he still bless me with his bodily warmth?* I also consider:

*So why did he tease me about leaving the gift behind? Like a final twist of the knife in my back, I wonder. No, he is reminding me of the many months I left him similar gifts where he once worked at a taqueria. Never really knowing whether or not he read them, or threw them away. It was all an act of faith on my part. Arwyn has yet to tell me whether or not he's read any of the printed material contained therein. All of which had to do with my great love and admiration for the man. I grow even more perceptive:*

*Wait a minute. He suggested that I might have set him up for this Zeke mockery. But he already knows I'd never pull such a dirty trick on him, so what's really going on? Then it finally dawns on me:*

*Why, that sneaky little dragon. Arwyn was giving me a clue that he set this all up. It was a prank! Joy now lifts my spirit, and blows away the last of my dallying sorrow.*

*He set the whole thing up, right down to our very first telecommunication. Chapter 12 of my novel was my wishful telling of what our first telephone conversation would be like: terribly romantic and sweet. So he finally spoke words of love to me over the phone--this time for real--then pulled the rug from under my feet when I engaged with him at the Pilsner Inn patio.*

*Arwyn's a tough dude, and he wants to make me tough, too. He doesn't want some namby-pamby boyfriend in his life. If I can't take a joke, then I'm not the one for him. There is no other Zeke in his life (what are the odds). But if there is, he manipulated the situation in order to prank me.*

*He gave me the words of his love that I've been yearning to hear for nigh unto six years. Then snatched them right back, just to see how nobly I would react.*

*I think I handled the sham faux pas commendably; I'm sure he was most impressed. Too bad though, I wasn't quick enough in my wit, to suggest right then, that it was most likely himself who set up this trickster plot. I even surmise that perhaps Marmaduke was complicit in assisting Arwyn's scheme.*

*Satisfied with my newfound conclusion as to what really came down last night, I strip my clothes off to take a refreshing shower. Once more, life is good, and my pursuit of Arwyn continues. Stay tuned, Winsome Reader.*

*Oh, and one more thing: When I first entered the Pilsner that landmark night, I caught Marmaduke asking Arwyn how he became such an outstanding piece of work? Arwyn's reply: "Just how the good Lord made me."*

*So now I know: my Beloved Dragon is a Christian. Possibly. If only all Christians were as gracious and spirited as he, there would surely be heaven on earth by now.*

**FREE ME FROM THIS BOND**

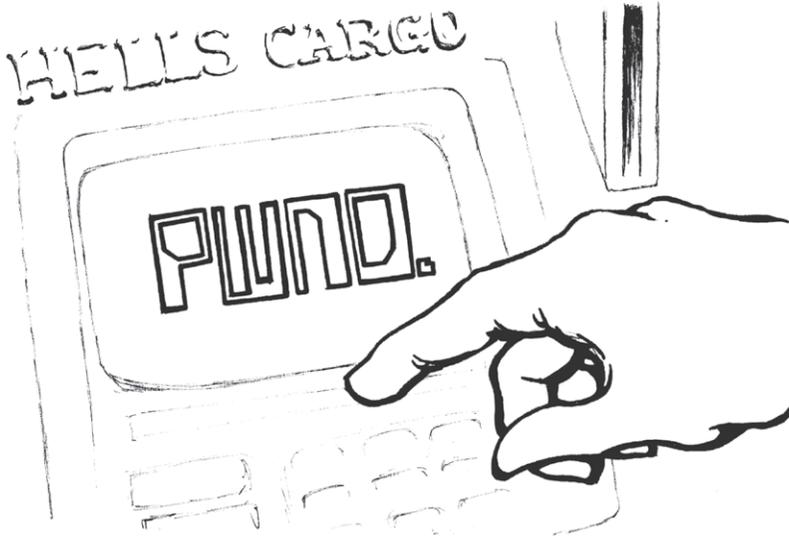


Illustration by S. Rohan

## **Chapter 1b**

### *Dawn of a New Life*

*[ Cherished Reader: this isn't the first time Arwyn has punked me. To read four other prankish episodes by jokester Arwyn, see Chapter 4 (Cheerz Muthuh Fukkuh) and Chapter 11 (Corner Delivery). He's truly the Jester Par Excellence! So good at pranking, I never catch on till well after the event, silly fall guy that I am. And hopelessly in love. ]*

DOES ARWYN LOVE ZEKE?

To cast your vote, get on the web and access the following URL:

<http://tinyurl.com/arwyn-zeke>

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

\* \* \*

### UPDATE

Two Thursdays later (June 21st), I see Arwyn once more, at Pilsner Inn. I'll tell you right now: a most bless-ed outcome ensued. But let's rewind first, to a couple hours before that auspicious meeting. My very *newest* street friend, Juan Fresco (a.k.a. "Fresk") had already arranged to treat me to a drink or two, at my preferred location. Which I decided would be Pilsner, in hopes of seeing Arwyn once more.

Plus, Pilsner Inn is the best gay bar in The Castro, AFAIC. Because unlike all the other straight-laced, conservative bars in the infamous "gay 'hood," it is more down-to-earth and thus amenable to our low-income queers (such as *moi*) who remain barely hanging from their nails to reside in SF. (Well, another possible exception is The Mix, located on 18th near Castro. Most likely because this bar also has a pool table and open-air patio.) The onslaught of wealthy LGBT's in the 90's and 2000's has contributed *mightily* to the outrageous increase in housing prices here in the Bay Area.

*There is even a program in the works for gay senior affordable housing. "Affordable" being a euphemism for the lower-tier wealthy in our community; screw the truly poor and homeless! Gay senior housing my arse: just a bunch of wealthy old fags scratching each other's gold-plated cockrings. Not to mention septuagenarian dykes on motorized \$11,000 trikes, disposable colostomy bag holders swinging under the seat like cow's udder.*

Juan Fresco BTW, is an ex-con out of Washington State who, in spite of his rotten luck, has contributed greatly to society's betterment, not the least of which is illustrating a prison cookbook. A charity project for which he and author(s) received no monetary compensation, though it certainly makes for an impressive resume. Especially when you consider book sales of more than \$50,000 which kept a children's museum in Washington State from shutting down. Fresk has also assisted various small businesses in making greater profits through his entrepreneurial skills.

Approx'y 48 years old, Fresk is a sexy, 5-foot-six bald-headed hunk of a dude with silver-blue eyes and a passionate, fun-loving nature. He is *not* actually living on the streets per se: but resides at various shelters throughout the city, as well as attends workshops and other services that assist folks down

on their financial luck. IOW: Fresk is a real go-getter, a dynamo of energy with success written all over that dapper mug.

Before Fresk arrives for our date, I am suffering terribly from lower back pain (which I had acquired from Errik, whose sleep disorder caused him to kick me in the hips most *violently* one recent night. Thus *exacerbating* my arthritic grief already present in that area, which had only begun presenting any *real* difficulties earlier this year.)

Until then, his jerky spasms were actually a *healing* force of rubbing those buff soccer legs against my own thighs in a sort of deep-tissue physical therapy, that went on sometimes for hours of blissful groping. \*Sigh\*

Sadly, after that incident I had no choice but to never again allow him to sleep with me; thus, no more overnight trysts. (*Errik BTW, is profoundly sorry for any misery he has caused; and remains a beloved and most darling friend. Certainly not his fault my love life has always been so cursed.*) Pain so bad in fact, I had to cry and plead to Goddess for some relief.

Though it isn't just the *physical* agony that breaks my spirit, but also the stress of taking onto my weary shoulders, *more* homeless buddies with incredibly difficult, tragic lives, and deepest need for true friendship. What with my severely limited funds, and crummy, claustrophobic SRO that offers minimal comfort and privacy to stray dragons.

I weep for Randolph. I weep for Arwyn. I weep for *all* my street friends whose struggles to survive and even *thrive* under most difficult odds, are truly heroic, and an inspiration to my restless soul. I'm a quivering bag of misfit nerves. Pleading to Arwyn in my heart:

*"Please, buddy, I am hurting way too much at this point, for all these crosses dumped unceremoniously upon my weary back. I beg of you: please show some real compassion, even if it's just another outrageous prank. Punk me all you want; I love that, and have no complaints. But I truly need a break from this terrible stress.*

*I love you so much, Arwyn, and now's a really good time to love me back in a big way. I'm really hurting right now, my dear friend, for all the kindness I've bestowed upon my long-suffering street pals, with little compassion in return. Not the least of which is you."*

Tears still stream down my face (though the back pain is beginning to subside), by the time Fresk shows up.

"Hey Zeke, you hurtin'?" he stops at my door to inquire, then holds me in his arms.

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

“No, no, I’ll be alright in a little,” I remark, so glad to feel his knuckles running up and down my aching spine. “It’s the arthritis. Plus a lot of memories, PTSD, whatever. Thanks. I’m glad you showed up.”

Already feeling *much* better, thanks to Fresk’s sweet concern, another buddy shows up minutes later: Zebulon (or “Zeb”). Yet one more gorgeous dude and new street friend. At this point, I’m smiling and *so* grateful for their kind presence.

Zeb is but five-foot-two, though physically buff with a gorgeous chest and nips I could lick for days, and a most noble, handsome face. Truly, a sweet, delightful specimen of manly orgasm. *Sleeping with him and being in each other’s arms is a magnificent, nocturnal fantasy come true. He has a remarkably gorgeous profile to gaze upon in my bed, by the light of streetlamp through my shaded window.*

Really, I can’t get enough of him. Until quite recently, he’s been a “professional” shoplifter, and offered to bring me several items for my health that I could no longer afford (thanks to gov’t cutbacks on my disability stipend). Such as aloe vera gel and vitamins. But just two days ago when he last drops over, declares:

“My shoplifting days are over. I got caught yesterday, but they let me go. I take that as a warning.”

*So much for black market windfall, I think. Just glad to have Zebbie in my life, and that he wasn’t carted off to prison.*

So Zeb takes a hot shower and departs (after much hugging and smooching), whence Fresk and myself hike on down to Pilsner.

Sure enough, Arwyn is in the midst of billiards when we arrive. But he immediately lays down the cue stick and approaches:

“Do you have some more stories to give me?” To which I reply:

“I’d *love* to hand you more tales, but I’m too damned broke to afford printer ink.”

Having said that, I accept a vodka tonic from Fresk, whence we two retire to the patio for a smoke. Arwyn joins us after playing another round, and stands to the left of my seated self, facing me. Plants a foot on the bench and gazes silently upon my lone visage, with much affection. I grow blush, look up at those fiery eyes and remark:

“Oh, Arwyn. You *know* I love you very much,” then take a long puff on my Pall Mall. “That will *never* change.”

My Darling Dragon remains quiet, and I squirm a bit under his loving aura.

Arwyn invites me to be his partner in a round of pool with Fresk and another player (whose name, and even appearance, I forget). Despite my lousy skills at billiards, I'm in a state of ecstasy. Just to be interacting with Lover Dragon is a great joy.

Well, after that round (don't remember who won), Fresk and myself step back out to the patio for another smoke. Arwyn joins us. Liam also sits with us, who I believe is a good friend of Arwyn's, perhaps a paramour. I decide this is an opportune moment to display my selfless magnanimity, so stand up close to Arwyn, and declare:

"Arwyn, I am so *glad* you have a boyfriend who makes you so happy. Even if his name is *also* Zeke." To which he declares:

"I don't *have* a boyfriend named Zeke."

So I take this in stride, and sit down once more. To enjoy the cool air, Arwyn's presence, and the beautiful evening overall.

[ *Seraphic Reader: would that I were quick-witted enough to have replied: "I wish you did have a boyfriend named Zeke." Oh, well, I'm not the sharpest tac in the box. ]*

A little time later, I find myself seated beside Liam on a bench in the patio, my right arm about his narrow shoulders. Liam is a handsome and very skinny long-haired blond of approx'ly 40 years old. Don't know why I'm so captivated by him. Perhaps it is because he is so much a part of Arwyn's spirit (and even, perhaps, Arwyn's lover). And I tell him:

"Liam, so nice to see you again, after all these years." I squeeze him with great fondness. "How ya doin' these days, girlfriend?" To which he replies in wistful tones:

"Alright, Zeke."

Don't remember what else we discussed, but I gave him much affection for the remaining time, before Fresk and I finally departed for the night. Hopefully, Arwyn will be at Pilsner the following Thursday, when I plan to show up by my lone some. Wish me luck, Affectionate Reader!

## FREE ME FROM THIS BOND

\* \* \*

### FINAL NOTE

Next Thursday finally arrives, so around 10pm I hike two blocks up Market Street to my bank's ATM. Thinking, of course, that I have a dollar or two over 20 remaining, until my next Social Security deposit on the third. So I could purchase a club soda at Pilsner (\$2.25 plus 75-cent tip), see Arwyn (hopefully), and have \$17 left for food money. Or \$16 if I play a round of pool.

Stick my debit card in the ATM slot, key in my PIN, and tap the "Account Statement" button. Only to discover a total \$19.81 to my name. Curses.

Nothing left to do then but return home and plot the overthrow of this miserly nation. Such is my life story: a comedy of errors.

And good night to you, Considerate Reader.

*ZZZZzzzzzz.*

This novel is an epic real-life adventure/bromance about a gay street activist from San Francisco (Ezekiel Krahlín), who falls in love with (and becomes a sidekick to) a remarkable and incredibly handsome gay male (Arwyn Miles) who the author eventually concludes is a detective out of Orange County, California...and perhaps even his guardian “dragon.” Whether this is fact or not remains to be seen, as the adventure continues beyond the book’s conclusion. However, the many true tales woven around these two (mostly instigated by Arwyn himself) certainly give credence to the author’s interpretation.

Most of the tales contained herein are the absolute truth, though with much whimsical embellishment, and mystical implications that imply a great destiny for these two, as well as the homophile community at large. Many spiritual implications from a pagan perspective will give great hope and inspiration to the LGBT community (both local and global), as well as to any other person who holds a compassionate view on life and destiny.

You will laugh, you will weep, you will explore the Cosmic Deep, on this roller coaster ride of queer intrigue, mystery and outrageous phantasmagoria of gay revelation, mischief and delight.

*Zeke Krahlín has been a freelance gay street activist since 1983, here in San Francisco. After so many years befriending and assisting (as best he can in spite of his own limited funds, being disabled himself), he now has many fantastic true tales to share with the world.*

*This novel is his first official paper and ebook publication, though you can read a plethora of additional tales at his web site, “Final Testament” (or “Faggot Bible”) here:*

<http://gay-bible.org>

*While not officially recognized (yet) as a dedicated gay activist with extensive history in “Gay Mecca,” his record of achievements (as evidenced on his web site, blog, and numerous admirers in the Castro and beyond) will set the record “straight” some time in the very near future.*

*Mr. Krahlín-through his writing and dedication to his homeless gay brothers over three or more decades--will soon earn great appreciation and devotion on both a local and global level. At least, that is his claim...and he is willing to bet \$5 with anyone who cares to challenge such a brazen declaration.*

