

# Moving to France

by Jim Gold

A louse bit his fingertip as Neanderthal Dan walked along Nohome Road, heading for his cave dwelling high in Minusland.

What could save him from Great Down feeling? On the other hand, should he be saved? Why bother in the first place?

Mama Neanderthal rolled down from her bed high in the Andes. In a flower-perfumed voice bred from years of plant gathering, she asked him, “Where are you going, my child?”

“I’m feeling down, Mama. I’m lost. I’ll walk on Nohome Road until I find myself.”

“My darling, no need to cringe. Down is often a good place to be. And not as bad as it looks. After all, down is the prelude to up. A decent, healthy descent eventually leads to a lovely ascent. Down is the way to go up. Twin trails in disguise, Janus-faced directions foretelling a new year. Descend far enough, and you’ll reach Ascent Trail.”

Neanderthal Dan scratched his head, pulled a louse from his hair, and, in awe replied, “I will consider your words, Mama. What does Papa Neanderthal say?”

“Papa is asleep in his cave. He doesn’t do directions.”

“But he likes hunting. He must have something to say about place and purpose.”

“That’s true. But he has a masculine approach. Your father believes in infinite rising. In his view, this comes only after beating the ups and downs, conquering conflicts and moving beyond them.”

“Has he ever done that?”

“Oh, yes, he did it years ago. These days, though, after hunting, he sleeps most of the time.”

“Sleeps?”

“Well, not exactly sleep. It seems like he’s asleep, but actually it’s not a real sleep.

Most of the time he sits or lies in his cave, performing Neanderthal meditation.”

“Is that a performing art?”

“Yes, but he only does it for Ha Shemovar, our Neanderthal Antler god.”

“I thought he only loved deer. You mean he worships something above the trees?”

“Yes, but it’s a secret. He doesn’t want our Neanderthal brethren to know.”

“What about our Neaderthal sisters?”

“There are no sisters, only brethren. Sisters belong to our brethren.”

“Aha. Very Neanderthal. Nice to know. Are all Neanderthals are earthbound?”

“At the moment, yes. But your father hopes to change that. Through the power of Antler meditation, he wants to point all Neanderthals to a higher reality. One day we will all hunt on the Reindeer Road together.”

“That is a worthy cause. I’m proud of Papa.” Neanderthal Dan scratched his head. After removing a few more lice, he asked, “Is there any way I can help?”

“Of course. Remember how near-sighted you used to be? Well, we gave you that pair of Neomilleniun glasses as a day birth present. Through them you said you saw chickens and piece of the future. The glasses also helped you penetrate the illusion of travel on Nohome Road. You felt free and whole when you wore them. That’s what Antler meditation is all about. So wear your glasses. They help a lot.”

“But, Ma, I enjoy illusions.”

“I know you do.”

“I wouldn’t be a Neanderthal without them.”

“That’s true. But some day we plan to move to a cave in France.”

“France? Where is that?”

“In a dream of the future.”

“Thanks, Ma.”

from Carlos the Cloud

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