

Entering Fresh

Tuesday, August 22, 2000

Hero at Home

I have to go to the motor vehicle bureau in Englewood today to register my Toyota. I absolutely hate doing this. I can't stand dealing with the bureaucracy, any bureaucracy.

On tour I am a leader – and hero. Why not continue being a leader and hero at home? Why not continue this attitude?

It is unmanly to act like a wimp before the motor vehicle bureau's bureaucracy. Use the "tour leader as hero" approach.

Thursday, August 24, 2000

A sudden sadness lid falls on me. Why now? People were formerly lids. They put lids on me. Now I am expanding, thinking of them differently, as motivators for me to do my best.

Why am I feeling these awful feelings? Is it because I made an expansive leap into the laps of others? Is it because I am opening up to people ever further?

Do I really need others in order to do my best? If this is so, it gives others a whole new meaning. It makes me very dependent upon them to grow, expand, and become my best. Scary, indeed. No wonder I'm nervous, laying down lids, making myself sad.

I just made a frightening leap into the arms of others.

I send the yogic energy I feel out into the belly and hearts of others.

This means that others are (always) intimately involved in my heart and mind.

Can I afford to let them in?

Or have they always been there anyway (as part of the One) but I just haven't "noticed?"

On feeling the kundalini energy in the lower chakras:

Even saying "Fuck 'em!" and "Shove it right up!" is a recognition of others.

Others are needed in order to fuck 'em and shove it right up.

Even shouting "Kill, kill, kill!" is a recognition of others.

Others are everywhere. There is no getting rid of them. They are a part of me.

They are even there when I am alone. I just don't recognize them.

How are others included when I do push-ups?

They are part of the Universal shoulder.

As I exercise each body part I realize they are also the body parts of others.

Perhaps I am even exercising someone else's body.

Does that mean my anus and testicles belong to someone else too?

Suppose I saw my body as someone else's. What would happen to me?

Suppose I saw my body as every body, as all bodies (as in Everybody and All Bodies). What then?

Thinking about the above makes me feel sad and empty. Is it due to an expansion? Or is it a kind of belated mourning for the end of my tour?

I've finished all my desk work, and most home work related to my tour. I'm ready to enter the New Jersey world. The tour is now really over. I'm ready to move

on.

But to what? I'm at a temporary loss.

Maybe that's what my panic was about last night. A breathless claustrophobia.
No more structure. I'm falling into emptiness.

Friday, August 25, 2000

If I've gotten to the point where I can play my pieces on the guitar, then what am I practicing for?

If I'm not practicing to improve, then what am I practicing for?

Should I be learning something new on the guitar? If I don't, won't I stagnate? I must do something new.

What?

Improvise? Compose? Learn new pieces? All of the above?

Where do I go from here?

I have to go somewhere or die.

Saturday, August 26, 2000

The ultimate purpose of my guitar playing is to break through and see God.

It is the purpose of my tours as well

It is the ultimate purpose of my life.

But it is so often forgotten in the details.

I'm at the edge of panic. My artistic soul is being drowned by thousands of tours. My mind is being pushed back and forth, down and under.

All I can think about is tours. I am haunted by them. Should I do all of them? How can I do it? Should I give up some of them? How can I do it?

My mind is on the run. Out of control.

Should I go to Scandinavia? I want to get it out of my system. Also, by not going, I am taking the easy way out. The main thing I'm afraid of about doing all these tours is all the hard work. When will I be home? Worse, what will happen to my artistic career and my developing life as an artist? The pure and beautiful quiet self that I love is being submerged under a deluge of shit, tours, and details.

Maybe I'll leave out Romania. I can do it next year. Maybe I'll add a Macedonian extension tour (Skopje and Ohrid) to Bulgaria for next August.

Tossed and turned. Claustrophobic and exhausted under the mountain-of-tours blanket. No wonder I can't breathe.

I've momentarily lost my way. What about my art? What about writing, guitar, study, language, and beauty?

It's 2:30 in the afternoon, and I've got a slight headache. I'm mad. I'm just so mad now. But I don't know who or what I'm mad at.

Well, maybe I do. Maybe it's because I've been just so snowed under and pushed around by "events," or rather by my monkey brain that has just been jumping from tour to tour, tape to tape, dance to dance, book to book. Since I've come back from Bulgaria my brain has not given me a moment's peace. I've been on an endless treadmill.

Finally, today I said, no more tours, no more dances, no more nothing. I'm just playing the guitar, hours on end, and perhaps writing. And I'll do that for the next few days, or even weeks. I don't care what happens to my business.

I need to remember my values. I've lost or forgotten them during the past week. I've been pushed off base. Where the fuck did I go? What the hell was wrong with me? It's as if I was attacked by a bug that drilled its way through my ear and into my brain and just drove me absolutely crazy. Sleepless night and days; endless running around in circles and over straight lines.

Well, at least I know why I've been so mad. We'll see where all this leads.

Monday, August 28, 2000

Practicing means trying to break boundaries, move beyond, touch new skies, see new worlds, feel new flesh, and enter the Fresh.

This is a whole new purpose of practice based on the here-and-now. It could flow into other things I do, too.

The real reason I hesitate to publish and find it so difficult to reread and edit my writing is that: it is so difficult to look at my goodness.

Accepting, facing, standing up publically and expressing, even proclaiming, pride and joy in my accomplishments, my own inner goodness, beauty, skill, values, talent, intelligence, and compassion for others is my Achilles heel. Facing my own beauty, love, and joy has held me back. Even saying this is so difficult. What about modesty? Am I not boasting?

Tuesday, August 29, 2000

"You're too much for me."

Didn't my mother say that? And when she did, I interpreted it as hurting and displeasing her; thus I pulled back, drew myself in, and, like a turtle, let me true self hide inside my shell.

Yes, it hid.

But it never disappeared.

Well, I still may be too much. But I'm not hiding any more.

Wednesday, August 30, 2000

I won't be pushed back into the can. I can't be even if I try. . . And I tried, but it didn't work.

"You're too much for me" got to me. I tried pulling back, being "nice," being

tender, sensitive – well, not really. . . rather, I tried putting the lid back on the can. But it didn't work. Manly and masculine came roaring forth. I can't stop the damn thing even if I try.

But I can also practice "eating my anger." It is good for me, a tasty dish. Traffic anger. Anger when others try to define me.

Indulgent, hedonistic, pleasure-loving; puritan-streak, gluttonous. I don't know if I like these words. In fact, I don't. They don't give the whole picture; they're simplistic. Man, this man, is more complicated than that.

And what about glory, hero, and pride of accomplishment? What happened to these great notions?

They fell away when I tried putting the lid back on the can. Well, there must have been something heroic about yesterday. Where was glory and pride of accomplishment? Sitting on the hill somewhere getting stoned? Hiding in a valise on Orchard Street? Sitting in the mouth of Slaven Popopowitz? When will the mustard stalk its rinds? And can the turnip ever seek its roots shell behind the mustard greens of a Shell gas station?

Sunday, September 3, 2000

On Saying "You're Wrong"

Arrival on the hill of beans. Hard to simmer while the pot is boiling. Perhaps it's not time yet.

The true boundaries of the sated craziness surrounding my domain are beyond belief. Nevertheless, I'd better start believing it. And I do. Only it is so amazing to see. Astonishing, really. Last night the electricity went off; lights out; total darkness: a power failure. So what? Big deal. But it's as if the ants are crawling through the room.

I took a long walk. Most of it was car dodging. Where was I? I tried thinking it over. Fear no longer worked; neither did push-down lids. Only pride and joy. I had to tell her she was wrong. Wrong, wrong, wrong; over and over again. Wrong about

packing, wrong about saying I never help, wrong about saying she gets nothing from me, wrong about all the times she accuses me with words like “never” and “always.” She goes crazy when I tell her she’s wrong. She never owns up to it, never admits it. (There’s that “never” word again. I’m guilty of it, too. But fuck it! I have a right!) She evidently can’t stand hearing she is wrong. Well, in all fairness, in the past I rarely if ever outright told her. I used to remain silent when she was wrong, hoping she would eventually “get it.” But she didn’t. . . and doesn’t. That’s part of the liberal nature: never wrong, never admit you could have made a mistake, better to blame the other person. It couldn’t be me. Oh, no. I am never wrong. Impossible. If you dare to even mention such an assumption, not only will I fight it until I die, but even after death (although I do not believe in reincarnation or any of that other mystical junk), I will never, never, never admit to being wrong. It is simply not in my nature. Besides, it is you who are wrong. It is always you. It is not, and can never be, me. That is the nature of the universe!

Words like “always” and “never” are not only part and parcel of liberal vocabulary, they are its mainstay, its bread and butter, its foundation. That is why it is possible to accuse and blame others no matter what the facts are. And this because, once you open the door a crack by admitting you may be, or even are, wrong, then the whole inner structure can and will crumble. This is a total threat of annihilation to the liberal personality. It cannot be tolerated no matter what. Thus, accusing others becomes a matter of life and death. The fearful personality survives through a total denial of the fear. What better way to deny it than to blame others?

Well, this may be a good explanation, but I’ll be damned if I’ll live with it anymore. Saying “You’re wrong” is now part of my daily life. This, among other things, is what I brought back from Bulgaria. I also brought back pride and joy of accomplishment.

The new ability to say “You’re wrong” is one of my accomplishments. The fact that it has even gotten “easy” to say it is another accomplishment. I might as well take

pride and joy in it.

The Giant "Ugh!"

What infuriates me the most is that I have taken it so long. I have hemmed and hawed, wheedled and deedled my way out, made any excuses and rationalizations for her, all in the hope that I would not have to face the incredible depths of my fury. Unbelievable. Disgusting. A giant "ugh!"

Thursday, September 7, 2000

On vacation you open up. . . and you get "soft." Your defenses slowly crumble; your guard goes down. Sure I fear returning to the city. I'm going back into the struggle, and the fight for survival. I've got to put my defensive armor on again.

Friday, September 8, 2000

Don't change the form. I've got a good one. Start the morning by writing in my journal. Yes, it's slow, soft, and serious; yes, it's contemplative, meditative, pensive, and unwild. So what? That's where I am in the early morning. That is how I start my day. So start it that way. Years of weaving in and out of depression have taught me: the only cure for such "creative sadness" is writing. And journal writing, at that. From journal writing everything else, all other kinds of writing and more, lead outward.

Journal writing clears my head, sweeps out my mind, gives me a fresh and refreshing new slate, my tabula rosa. Sylvan Woods, the new Sylvan "Let Her Rip" Woods, can only emerge out of journal writing.

So let it be this way.

I've always thought of "sad" as a bad state and "happy" as a good state.

Perhaps it is time to think of them as merely "states," and passing states, at that.

Yes, there is also this sense of failure when I am sad. By feeling and being sad, I have disappointed my mother. I have failed her. Happy people are successful people; sad people are failed people. That is the way I see my mother defining it, and the way I see her hopes for me. When I am happy, she is happy. But when I am sad, it makes her sad. Since my "job" is to make her happy, by being and feeling sad, I fail her. And thus, I too am a failure for feeling sad.

No wonder I see sadness and happiness the way I do.

But it is time for a change, a new perspective.

Saturday, September 9, 2000

A terror-filled menu: that's what she had.

I broke down crying yesterday playing my guitar. I thought "After all my suffering I've finally arrived! At last! I am ready to play sloppy and fast; ready to move on to the next mode. This is it! Finally! Thank God!"

Try not to be carried away by the "This is it!" thought. I have, after all, been through it many times before. Rather, in true Buddhist fashion, try simply acknowledging it. Watch it. Breathe on it. Let it pass.

It is the Thich Nhat Hanh road.

Monday, September 11, 2000

Good Questions, Indeed

Since I returned from the Cape I have been pursued by an overwhelming feeling of sadness.

According to Thich Nhat Hanh's Buddhist meditation technique, I ought to acknowledge the sadness by saying to myself: "A feeling of sadness has arisen in me." If it continues, which it has, I ought to say, "A feeling of sadness is still in me." All this

is very interesting, but so far, although I'm doing plenty of acknowledging, the feeling of sadness has not gone away. It still pursues me. How long do I have to keep saying, "A feeling of sadness is still in me?"

How about the question "Why?" Does asking the question "Why do I feel sad?" and trying to discover the answer really make any difference? Will it dissolve the feeling of sadness and make it go away?

No question, the feeling is painful and makes me miserable. And when pain and misery strike, the first thing I do (one does) is try to "solve it" and thus make it go away. Who wants these miserable feelings, anyway? Isn't it better to try getting rid of them and move on to more pleasant ones?

Thich Nhat Hanh's probable answer would be "no." He would no doubt say, Simply watch these miserable sad feelings, observe them, and let them pass whenever they are finally ready to pass. Like passing a gall stone. Eventually, the stone will break up. Then you can piss it out.

Is it the same with these? Does it really matter if I "know why" I have them? According to therapy, it does. After all, what am I paying thousands of dollars for, anyway? To understand and analyze my feelings and, ultimately, to know more about who I am by understanding and analyzing them. Would Thich Nhat Hanh say all this is a waste of time? Is it? If sadness feelings will keep coming up for the rest of my life, and, although they may keep changing, I will ultimately never get rid of them, then perhaps spending so much time analyzing them is a waste, the wrong direction to go.

And yet, analyzing them and understanding them does eventually make me feel better.

But would I feel better anyway simply through the passage of time. In other words, if I did nothing and simply accepted them, would they lead their natural lives inside my head, die when their time has come, and thus eventually pass on anyway?

In other words, do I really "cure myself" through therapeutic and psychological understanding, or am I simply fooling myself? If thoughts and feelings visit you

regardless, and have their own life cycles in your mind, isn't it simply better to give in to them, watch them, try not to get too involved in them, give them space to "do their thing," and then, when they are ready in their own sweet time to leave, let them pass out of your mind?

Good questions indeed.

Strengthening Through Therapy

Building up the "Watch, Observe" Power

There is no question that through therapy I have learned to understand the origin, use, and application of my lids in life. Self-understanding through therapy has helped me. But has this quest for self-understanding simply been my personal path of gaining enough emotional strength to "watch my feelings," to put myself in the Buddhist "observe them as they pass" position?

Certainly before therapy I ran away from these terrible emotions and the lids I cleverly created to face and handle my pain.

Through therapy I have learned to face and handle them. Am I now ready to watch and observe them? Is that why Buddhist meditation practices are beginning to look attractive?

Very sad as lids lift on all fronts and obsession ends.

The right hand obsession. . . and others.

To live without an obsession. . . with lids off, free, and sad.

The abyss holds the monsters, terrors, and trauma. Is obsession the connection stretched over the abyss. Taut and pushy, it protects you from the fears and sadness lying deep in the abyss. But, once you no longer fear the abyss, and give up, nay lose, your obsession, you also lose your old habits and ways of connecting to the outside,

and even inside world. Then hits the sadness, emptiness, meaninglessness, the free and sad lids-off state I now seem to be in.

But Dave says about this sadness I feel: "I think it is familiar. You've been there before." It is ancient, old. Where does it come from? My two-year-old self, when I deeply experienced the push-down quality of the two women in my life: my mother and my sister.

Tuesday, September 12, 2000

Blah, blah, blah, a total misery of mood. Black, indeed. My center is out and so are my sides. A total inner collapse. Even the abyss, my old and favorite play pen, has lost its sting. Where is my edge? Gone, vanished, sucked up, lost in the world of blah. Even writing does not help. My center has been blasted out.

Nothing to do but ride this blah wave, watch, and wait until it passes.

Well, truth is, writing does help. I feel a hinge better.

Black moods force you to work things through and learn something about yourself. Once you learn it, the black mood begins to dissipate.

Therefore, the black moods are sent to you as teachers. They are the visiting professors of your life.

I'm not playing guitar (or violin or music) for my mother anymore. . . .Another connection gone.

Obsessions drifting down into the abyss and out of sight. How freeing. . . and how sad. As I lose my old connection I am developing dual citizenship: one in the Land of Freedom, the other in the Land of Sadness.

If I am not to play for my mother, why bother playing at all? I play (partly) for

her love and approval. She often does not approve and that is why I try to improve.

But if I am no longer playing for her, why bother even trying to improve? And this in all things.

No wonder I've lost my motivation. Sure I'm free, but I'm free in a vacuum. To whom and what will I be connected? But the old connecting is in its death throes. Is there a new way of connecting?

Wednesday, September 13, 2000

Guitar performance: I don't have to begin at the beginning; I just have to start where I left off. . . even if it was several years ago.

Thus I don't really have to "practice" in the old traditional way of going over and over new material to learn it. Rather I have to restart old forms, and reinvigorate them. And the only way I'll do that is through the deep changes that have taken place within me and that will be projected outward now simply because I have them. This requires no work or "practice" in the ordinary sense. Rather it means simply "existing," developing, and being yourself, and, as a performer, expressing these changes. But will happen simply "by itself" if I get up in front of an audience.

So what exactly do I have to do now? How do I "get back into performing?" And this especially since I have no desire to improve, achieve, or even learn something new?

Well, I'm in a new place but I don't exactly know where it is yet.

I don't really feel I have to do anything except have fun.

Is this the meaning, fruition, and culmination of the Mad Shoe Fun Center?

Saturday, September 16, 2000

I wonder if my feet hurt so much from last night's folk dancing at Darien because it was so successful. We had the best attendance ever!

In fact, could the pains in my feet after most folk dancing be my old-

neighborhood attempt to dampen enthusiasm for my success? Hmm. It would not be strange if this were true.

Sunday, September 17, 2000

Maybe self-appreciation is the only true way I can (self) publish. After all, if I can't satisfy, appreciate, and make myself happy, how can I do it for anyone else?

Maybe self-appreciation was born before age two (or I'm beginning to see one-and-a-half) and perhaps during the hidden period before (birth to two), or even during past lives that I cannot remember.

And it was lost at age two, as I now remember it, pushed down by the push-downs I experienced at the hands of (through) my mother and sister.

Tuesday, September 19, 2000

Along with dad (crazy), excitement, exhilaration—the birth rights of the new phase, I also felt a sadness and a missing flicker by. Evidently, my new state has all the emotions of the old. . . only “different.” What is different? What is the difference in attitude? How does it differ, if at all, from the old? Could it be “only” a new level of awareness? That is for me to find out.

Of course, with sadness, my desire and need to write may return. So it has its “up” side.

Sadness could be (is) my motivation in disguise. Perhaps I'm developing a new appreciation of it.

Wednesday, September 20, 2000

I'm rushing to the keyboard this morning. A slight grey fog hangs over me: the "am I getting it right" cloud. It is the home of writers block. But I have no writer's block. I haven't had one for years. Why now? Because of the question: am I really Sylvan Woods? Or am I someone else? And can I pour my journal style into Sylvan Woods? Will it turn out to be another me in disguise? Am I polluting the style doing thus? And what about the plot? Is there a plot? Will anyone want to read it if there is no plot? And, Am I writing this for readers, anyway? Or is it simply to explore and understand myself?

Well, of course, self-understanding is the real reason to write anything at all. Otherwise, why bother? Know thyself is the only dictum worth following.

But what can I know about myself? Who am I, after all? It is a question that haunts and follows me at and through every stage of my development. And what is development? What does it feel like to grow and expand? Don't mushrooms do the same thing? How do they feel? Does anybody care? What about vegetables, ground hogs, walruses, and pigs running wild through the forest. Does anybody care about their expansions? Do they ever feel exhilarated or sad?

And speaking of sadness, I've been awfully sad lately. Especially since this Bulgarian tour got off the ground. In a sense, it's disappointing. I thought I had outgrown sadness. I thought I had finally understood it as caused by iron lids closing down on inner development, stifling artistic freedom both from within and without, pushing me back into the corner, crushing my dignity and worth. Well, wouldn't awareness of these psychic movements dispel future sadness? Shouldn't self-knowledge dissipate self-doubt and blow me up into a large fat zeppelin-like balloon of floating self-worth?

Well, it happened. . . but only briefly. For awhile I was flying high. I cried with happiness? Finally I was free! I had broken down all doors, removed all lids. I soared to heaven in long-term, nay permanent flight! Home at last.

But I sank again. I missed the creative beauty of music and women; I missed my very desires to grow, be creative, and expand. Then I realized that sadness is forever. So is happiness, exhilaration, anger, madness, and joy; so are raging rivers, clouds of passion, and hovering fears of blue skies dying. Emotions are forever. Only the levels change. I had been in the process of changing levels. I had gone from one room to the next.

Life is like a corridor with doors on every side. To get to the next stage you must break down the next door. That's why it's called a "break through." My sadness is my energy and motivation in disguise. I feel it pushing me down as I face the next door of expansion. Sure, once I break through, move to the next or another level, I feel the wahoo joy of infinite suns shining on my countenance. But before I do, I have to pound, scream, and kick; I struggle to remove the next lid, to break down the next door. If I do not, I stay in the corridor which is dark, dreary, and full of blahs. The light is in the rooms.

I am an infinity of lids. I am an infinity of exhilarations. I am an infinity of sadness and eagle joys, of catman ups and sliding downs. There is no stopping the emotional roller coaster although awareness may slow it down and even make it somewhat less painful.

But I never want to give up my pain, sadness, hurts, or my excitements, joys, and exhilarations. (I couldn't even if I tried.) They are the juices of creation in action. I am alive in their reflections.

Thursday, September 21, 2000

Mystery of the Belly Button

Perhaps my sorrow relates to mother, and sister, and one-and-a-half years old (or younger), and my belly button. Perhaps I'm getting ready to look ever further back, before one-and-a-half years old, even back into the womb. Do I remember my sister there? Did we fight even before we got out? And was she always so dominating?

What chance did I have against two such strong women? A little kid. Smash down by big Ma, smash up by little sister. What a big mouth she had! Was it so big at one-and-a-half? How about her pre-natal mouth? Did she scream at me through her umbilical cord? Am I remembering all these things now? Is that why my belly button is so sensitive? Does the mystery of my belly button lie somewhere in my mother's or sister's hands? Have I been oppressed by these powerful women for so long, in reality, my whole life, that even now residues keep returning? Is this morning's sadness simply another residue returning? Sound possible to me.

Rage at the Injustice!

Yes, this feels like an oppression sadness. Perhaps I'll start calling them "oppressions" instead of "lids." There is a sense of injustice in the word. Perhaps it will also put me in touch with one-and-one-half-year old indignant rage. How dare these two women pulverize me! My screaming, wild two-year-old arms are flailing the air. How dare they, how dare they!

Right now I can feel my arms simmering with rage! Could it have begun so far back? Do residues still ring in my ears? Wild, strike out, fearful screaming; an all-engulfing sadness follows. Why me? Why do they have to pick on me? I cry. Why can't they leave me alone, let me be me? I cry, bawl, and scream. But who listens? So finally, in frustration and despair, I retreat into myself, create a beautiful inner room, and live there alone with the best parts of myself hidden, secreted, and loved secretly within my invisible inner chamber.

That's where I hid out most of my life. Now I'm exiting slowly. In fact, I'm out. Nevertheless, the cloudy residues of my former life keep returning.

This is the relationship with women today. I am sick of it. I love them and hate them; I kneel at their feet, and scream with frustration as I try to stand up before them. I'm working to change it.

Looking into my belly button may be the prelude to a deeper understanding.

Friday, September 22, 2000

Sadness

I would love to get to the bottom of this sadness, get rid of it, root it out.

But that is probably impossible. It seems to be “part of my nature.”

Although I project this sadness into events, and people, that affect me in the outside world, I know it has little or nothing to do with them.

Rather, it lies locked deep inside me. To understand its roots, I have to go further inward.

I am visiting my birth- to-two-year-old period. I am even looking into the womb. In the future, I plan to search further backward into previous lives.

The Importance of my Journal

This journal is probably the most important thing I am writing in my life – my self-discovery program. Much of my self-knowledge and wisdom come from writing it.

The short-lived desire to merge it with Sylvan Woods Mad Shoe Tour was simply an attempt to deny its importance and escape how much it hurts to expose myself.

It is embarrassing to say I am so important; it is embarrassing to say my journal, the product and expression of the deepest parts of my soul, the full flowering of my innermost being, and exposure of my deepest desires, is important. Who am I to say such things? How can little me, little Jimmy boy, be important after all?

How can I say “Publish me! Read me!” How dare I be so important! Who am I anyway? “Who do you think you are anyway?” says Ma. “What a nerve! Stand up for yourself? How dare you!” Twin-sister Miki agrees with her by pushing my face down in the crib.

The Difference Between Curing and Healing

What's the difference between curing and healing?

Curing is short-term; it temporarily fixes the pain.

Healing is a continuous process. It concerns itself with expansion and growth. Every time we expand, we break boundaries. When we reach the next level of growth, these newly broken parts have to heal.

Thus, in a larger, long-term sense, there is no such thing as curing. There is only healing.

Monday, September 25, 2000

Exhilaration Practice

I always thought I was aiming for the ability to play fast on the guitar. But I was wrong. Secretly, even unbeknownst to me, I was aiming for the ability to play with exhilaration. It came through as "fast" but the real meaning of fast was exhilaration.

I am now "practicing exhilaration."

I wonder if the pains in my feet are subtle ways of resisting exhilaration through my feet, resisting the exhilaration of folk dancing, running etc. I'd like to think so.

Why take vitamins? It keeping me thinking I'm on the path.

Tuesday, September 26, 2000

My Shame of Pain

I have always been ashamed of my need for pain as a motivator. Part of me, a voice deep inside, tells me that wanting pain is "sick." What's the matter with you, Jimmy boy? What's the matter with you that you need pain to motivate you? Are you sick? You are, indeed, sick! In fact, you probably shouldn't be motivated at all. You should just sit, rest, and be happy. And you'd better be! I'll crush you into the corner, step on all your toes, vilify and destroy every male desire that you have, if you ever dare try to pull that pain shit on me! You'd better stay down or else! Pain will only get

you out of the house, put you on the road to adventure and daring. It is such a fucking male thing to do! And you will never have it under my aegis! You can bet on that. I'll do everything I can to stop you. And your father, who sits in a corner all day anyway, can do nothing to stop me and will do nothing to help you either. Pain is out for you. Forget about needles, challenges, pushes, strikes, blasts, explosions, energy bursts, beatings, whippings, annihilations, and destructions. All these male pain-filled motivators are out for you. Your job is simply to sit quietly in the corner and please me. As far as your own needs: fuck 'em!

Now where is this voice coming from? Can you guess?

I guess I have to say my shame of pain is "just" another lid in disguise. It is shame about a powerful inner male motivating force.

Artistic Temperament

Depression (Exhalation) and Creation (Inspiration)

I have no motivation. It is vaguely depressing. But it could be my creative energies gathering to rise. . . .But they travel in disguise.

On one level, this vague sense of depression visits me on and off all day long. It is the artistic form of exhalation just as inhalation is the artistic form of inspiration. Thus, I don't have to search for misery, sadness, and pain. It comes with the artistic temperament.

In a larger sense, I am doing yogic breathing all day. The cosmic breath, in and out, down and up, create and destroy, depression and inspiration. It is the essence of the creative process. I don't have to try to live it. Rather, I might as well be secure in the knowledge that I cannot help but live it. It is simply the essence of me. And there is no way out.

It is a total mistake and misdirection for me to want to lose my depressions; only an artistic blindness pushes me to labor at giving up my sadness.

Sadness, depression, exhalation, creation in disguise, whatever terms I use, these cloudy feelings will never go away. And it's a good thing, too. When they do finally leave, I'll know that death has come.

Motivating Misery

Sadness will create pain; pain will create motivation. It will happen. Why? Because it is part of my artistic essence, the other half of my artistic soul. Nothing I can "do" about it. Nor would I want to.

Thus, I don't need manufactured worries about money, immortality, love from others, praise, audience appreciation, and other forms of external success to motivate me. My inner creation factory produces enough motivating misery by itself.

The pain during artistic exhalation (depression) is caused by the loosening attachments, giving up the past, letting go, saying goodbye to old forms.

The pleasure, nay joy, during artistic inhalation comes as the new forms are born.

I have been trying to understand – and thus get rid of – this sadness (depression, artistic, creative exhalation, etc.) for years. Now I realize I am "condemned" to have it for the rest of my life.

Thursday, September 28, 2000

Are fears, like sadness, forever? Are they too part of the artistic temperament?
Are they one more way of keeping out the beautiful?

Or are they, even though they feel awful, part of the beautiful?

(Of course, they are part of the Beautiful.)

Are they part of expiration, inspiration, or neither?

Do they belong in a whole other category?

Are they, like sadness, part of the hidden energy supply that fuels motivation?

Or do they simply cause freezing up and inhibition? Are these two elements necessary parts of the creative process? Do they enhance it? Or merely inhibit it?

I would like to feel that fear is part of my artistic temperament. That way I could accept its energy and make peace with it.

Saturday, September 30, 2000

Hilma Texidor stopped her \$3460 check after I purchased her ticket and land fare. It took a chance on her. This puts me \$3460 in the hole. Sure, she went to Puerto Rico to get her birth certificate; she may get her passport; she may even decide to join our tour after all. But. . . she may not. If that happens, and it may happen, I'll be stuck with a huge expense and I'll have to work mucho hard to get my money back. I may get none of it back, or all, or some. I may also sue her for her cancellation. But no matter what I do, this adds up to a big pain in the ass. An annoyance, even a major annoyance.

Nevertheless, why should I disturb my inner peace because of it? Let it go and "just" another annoyance in the giant collection of tours annoyances that always come up. Go back to feeling that wonderfulness and inner freedom that I am experiencing. Fuck the annoyances. Let them rain down on me, and wash off me, too, like rain water off an umbrella. Sure, I have to handle them. But I don't have to let them touch, pollute, or destroy the inner peace of my soul.

Part of the fun and beauty of an addiction is self-disgust and loathing.

Suppose I find out I've been right all along, that I've been playing in a healthy

fashion all along. . . .

Well, it's take many years to build self-confidence.

I'm moving towards self-acceptance: acceptance of my sadness, "cosmic depression," as healthy for my creative self, acceptance of the often weird ways I grow and move towards expansion.

Maybe slow and powerful index has been right all along.

But I don't want to "make peace" with the fact that I've got it, that I can play beautifully and powerfully. Well, that's fine, but that is still yesterday's playing. I want to move on, move ahead, break barriers, open new skies, grow and expansion. I want the thrill of falling walls, fresh and fertile fields plowed afresh by my new and growing hands.

I don't want to live in the glories of yesterday's expansions, even though memories of their shining stars and bursting suns were thrilling in their own right.

But I want new thrills, and I want them now.

We'll see where this leads.

But the first thing I see is I need a new "goal," a new road, a new path and purpose for my guitar playing.

This is not a performing goal but rather a search for a new personal growth and direction. It's a "What do I "do" with my new skills now?"

Will a new sadness come along to help show me the way?

Sunday, October 1, 2000

Making Peace With Sadness, Fear, And Pain:

I'll Start With My Feet

I've got sadness, no problem there. I've also got fear and pain. It's just that when they emerge I usually want to deny or run away from them. I want to "cure" myself, so-called "free" myself from them. Nothing wrong with working towards

temporary freedom. But permanent freedom, for me, is death. Oh yes, I can reach the state of awareness where I can watch, as an observer, a witness, the passing of my pains, fears, and sadness. That's okay. But give them up? Never. Of course, I couldn't even if I tried. And tried I did, most if not all of my life.

But my temporary success in the land of fearlessness, painlessness, and sadnessless only put me on the continent of Blahs. There I lived, temporarily to be sure, in the kingdom of Blah-blah land. No highs, no lows, no motivation. Maybe it wasn't Blah-blah land. Maybe it was a temporary calm between storms which I, having rarely if ever experienced such a long-term state, interpreted as the permanent new level on which I would now exist.

In any case, I am moving from Blah-blah land into the Land of Sadness, Fear, and Pain. And with a new appreciation of the power and importance of these feeling states.

I can begin my new existence right now. True, I feel no sadness this morning. But I do feel pain—and with it, fear. The pain in my feet not only hurts but it has succeeded in making me afraid to run, sit on my heels, and even do the lotus position in yoga. I'm also afraid of what it might do to my dancing career, and my physical life in general. So "luckily," I've got plenty of fear to work with, and plenty of pain. As I say, true this morning, none of this makes me sad. Perhaps sadness will come later, for another reason. Meanwhile, I'll deal with and make my "peace" with pain and fear. Instead of "giving in" to them, I'll try working around, through, under, over, or even "near" them. I'll try seeing them as "friend," mean friends, but friends nevertheless. After all, just because I don't like them, just because I even hate them, doesn't mean they are not my friends and that they are not "good" for me.

I'll start with my feet. I'll do yoga warm-ups, then go running. As I do them, I'll watch my pains and fears. I'll focus on looking at them with a new attitude.

Monday, October 2, 2000

On Getting A Cold

Does the cold I have come from a feeling of suffocation, or vice versa?

Having a cold, sniffles, heavy chest, etc., makes it hard to breathe. It means "I can't breathe." Isn't that an early sign of suffocation?

Where and how did my cold originate? Could it have started deep in my psyche by some push-down, low, suffocating feeling which, in turn, extended itself to my physical body, made it vulnerable, and opened it up to the flood of cold germs who are now trying to extend their visiting time with me?

Is my psyche creating a welcome mat for these noxious visitors?

Well, why not? I'm a strange person; my psyche does strange things; it "acts" in strange ways. It protects me from facing the miserable and scary feelings of suffocation by creating a welcome mat for cold germs. When they visit me, I can forget about the original suffocating feeling. I can focus on cleaning my house of these flat-footed, cold-creating monsters which, for whatever reason, is less threatening than facing the origin of my suffocation feeling.

What could the origin be? Perhaps the emptiness of success, the blahs, that I have been experiencing over the month.

What have I lost with this success? My connecting link to mother. I've severed my former ties with the outside world. Well, this is quite a trauma. Certainly a short visit by cold germs. The mere inconvenience and familiar territory of a cold is better than facing such a trauma. What could be more suffocating and squash down than losing your mother? She would appear in myriad forms, centering my existence in the outside world. Most of my life used to be centered upon pleasing her. Suddenly, that incredible purpose is gone. I'm lost, floating, falling, then trampled under by the abyss. Right there is a good suffocation.

Let the cold germs in. They are diplomats of a former familiar life. This new existence, built on freedom, is simply too frightening and dangerous. Although it is the undeniable and irrevocable direction I am heading in, I do not go easy into the new

Immortality Born from the Need to be Heard

Part of my sadness is the feeling that I will never be understood. No matter how hard I try, how much I scream, cry, manipulate, bawl, scratch, fight, struggle, die, no matter what I, little-baby-me, does, I will not be heard. So I write like crazy in the vain hope that someone will hear me. If no one hears me today, then I can always assuage my misery by thinking someone in the future may “discover” my writing. Surely they will be the ones who will listen. I keep the hope of being heard alive. I envision a researcher discovering my writing in the attic a hundred years from now. They read me. At last someone is listening. True, I am dead. But so what? Someone is listening. Finally, I have been heard.

The immortality aspect of my writing is born from my need to be heard. The need never seems to leaves me.

Does my desire to perform come from this need to be heard? Probably.

Does the trauma of stage fright originate in the fear that, no matter how hard I try, no one out there will really hear me. Oh sure, they may clap politely, but deep in their soul, are they really listening? My deepest though and fear is: Probably not. But my deepest hope is that they are.

And thus I keep trying, forever hoping. I pray that some day a true listener will arise in my audience.

Tuesday, October 3, 2000

Sorry to say it but, living in the New Land in which I have “made peace” with the Three Sisters: sadness, pain, and fear, while I realize their “motivating powers” I also realize that, for motivation: “all I have left is bliss.”

Bliss, enthusiasm, excitement, expansive energies, smiles, and joy as motivators?

How can this be? How will this happen? How can it take place?

Although I do not know these answers, I nevertheless, at this point, “have no choice.” I’ve exhausted the other possibilities. Perhaps I am even happy about making my peace with the Three Sisters.

Can enjoyment be my new motivating factor?

But what choice do I have?

Though it is hard to accept, I realize there is no other choice.

En-joy-ment. I can even enjoy watching (as witness and observer) the motivating effects of sadness, pain, and fear. Aha!

Wednesday, October 4, 2000

Perhaps my feet hurt and I’ve developed a heel spur because I have to learn how to walk all over again.

The new self, living in the new neighborhood of the New Land, needs a new mode of moving. This train is on a new track; it needs a new means of loco-motion.

I’m learning—I’ll have to learn—how to live in the land of enjoyment. There is no other choice.

So ends a New Leaf.