

The Enjoyment Trip

Thursday, October 5, 2000

Definitely A New Day!

Both practicing the guitar over the past twenty years, and writing my journal over the past seven years (and some before) have not only been ventures to prove myself, to prove to myself that I could do it, but also adventures in self-discovery. Since I have discovered myself, is it necessary that others discover me too? What difference does it make to them? Why should they even know? Why would they want to? Only I want to know.

Actually, now that I have proved myself, whether others know or not really makes little difference. I am indifferent to it. Once I know myself, the idea of others also knowing me is almost besides the point.

I only wanted them to in order to confirm myself. Once I had done that, the need diminished. Oh sure, it's nice if they do. But if they don't, it's okay, too.

Best is to visualize the bigger picture: to see others as myself. This usually happens when I teach folk dancing. I am focusing on what I am doing. I "lose" myself in the focus on others. Paradoxically, by losing myself in them, I find them in myself.

In any case, what a road of freedom I am on! I have taken two giant steps, given up two great burdens: guitar performance and publishing my journal.

The Voice of Supreme Joy and Confidence:

My Fun Center Voice

Yoga and running have never been for public consumption. They have always been only "for me." Now this attitude is seeping into guitar and journal writing.

Part of my guitar playing has been a subset of pleasing Big Mama and all the little Mamas out there. Another part was love and enjoyment of guitar playing in itself.

I am dropping the former, leaving the latter. Same with journal writing.

How about Sylvan Woods and Mad Shoe Tours? Is that style of writing for public consumption?

Yes and no. I write it with a “different voice,” the same absurd voice that often pops out when I perform. It is my “public voice of the absurd” born of the miseries, pains, pleasures, joys, contradictions, paradoxes, ups and downs, vicissitudes of life. I love that voice of the ridiculous, Sylvan Wood “attacks,” humor, and grace that protects and enhances me at parties, social events, and public functions. It is the voice of the hidden smile, the sparkling eyes, the secret humor behind the concrete wall. That’s a voice I don’t mind going public with. In fact, I am often to always going public with it. It the humorous voice of love and funny that I introduce my folk dances with. It relaxes some of my students – the ones that get it – and it certainly relaxes me. But, better than that, it puts me on another level, the higher plane of freedom space. It’s even hard to explain and also, whether I can explain it or not is beside the point. The important thing is: I love that voice! When I am finished discovering myself that’s the voice I will use. It is the voice of supreme joy, confidence, and fun.

Why is the journal section called Mad Shoe Fun Center? Maybe because its about meeting, accepting, and enjoying the voice of the absurd, my ridiculous, running-wild-on-the-lawn, fun center voice.

Preparing for the Next Storm

Maybe the past month and this present period, a time when I’ve moved to the next level, is simply the calm before the next storm. The next storm may (will) take place on a new level. But it will be a storm nevertheless. Now I am dropping barriers, destroying dams, letting the stagnant waters flow, and pour through and past their old restraints. These waters flood and feed the seeds of the next level.

What will the next level be? How will I live it?

I don’t know.

What will the next storm be?

I don't know.

But perhaps I am, secretly, preparing for it.

Friday, October 6, 2000

The Motivation Question

I am doing a lot. Making calls, promoting my tours, etc. It's so strange. On the one hand, I'm functioning on a high level; on another, I hardly feel I'm doing anything at all. I neither feel bad or good about this. I'm in a middle state. I cannot even call it blah anymore. The blahs have passed; they are being replaced by the blehs.

On one level, all my motivation pillars have been cut out from under me. On another, without my pillars, I'm working just as hard as ever. Perhaps even harder. But it feels like I'm doing almost nothing. The real world looks in: Jim Gold is working hard, functioning well, doing all the right things; he's on the road to success; he is a success. But when my inner world looks in, it says: What is Jim Gold doing? Hardly anything. As his body and mind move in many directions, his inner core is practically motionless. He feels neither up or down. Where is he, anyway? From a Zen Buddhist point of view, such an inner state sounds good. But Jim Gold is puzzled by how it feels. Actually, it doesn't "feel" at all. That's why it is so strange. He doesn't know what to make of it. He is both there and not there at the same time.

He is such a strange state that he is actually writing about himself in the third person!

I want to forget about Hilma Texidor. I laid out so much money for her tour; I am helpless to get it back. All I can do is threaten to sue her. I'll call Bob Baumol to see if I can sue her, but I doubt if I have a case. Even if I do, it is so much trouble. . . . Yet, the unfairness of it all keeps gnawing at me. First consult with Bob, see what options I have. If I can't sue her, I'll console myself with "learning an expensive lesson." Never

trust others until I have their money! And, when rushed, always have them wire it to my bank!

Why can't I get my money back now? My father would have said: "You've learned your lesson now, Jimmy boy. You cannot rob mail boxes. Now that you finally understand that, I'll take you out for ice cream."

I doubt Hilma will take me out for an ice cream refund. And, even though there's little I can do about it, I'm still mad as hell at her. I may have to be satisfied with simply shooting her.

Saturday, October 7, 2000

I feel I have little to nothing to say to anybody. . . especially women. It's because all I can talk about is my successes.

Not only am I left speechless, but, would a woman or anybody else be interested? Would I be interested?

I can talk about failures, miseries, and downs. But successes? How can I relate to others on this new level? I should just go off in a corner, to celebrate quietly alone. I am "going for a walk" to appreciate my successes in solitude. I cannot imagine myself "sharing" them with anybody, especially a woman. I am in a totally new place.

My successes are expansions. When I look past their shining surface waters, I find the disgusting eels, snakes, catfish, disgusting, frightening, nauseating deep-sea, brook-life! Ugh, ugh, ugh! I wake up in a sweat.

Who are these dark, murky, cloudy, foggy dream monsters inhabiting the brook pool? Aren't they part of a Ma saying, "You little shit! You are shit! You are disgusting. Your actions are disgusting. Imagine, screaming, jumping for joy like a wild animal, running wild on the lawn, running wild in your crib, shitting all over yourself, shitting all over me! I have to clean up your mess. I have to clean up the mess that is you. You are totally nauseating and disgusting. I hate you. And you can hate yourself for all I care. I wish you would. Nauseating, your are. Totally repulsive with

all your shit and piss running all over your body. Can't you clean yourself? Why do I have to do it? Just because you're two-years-old doesn't mean you can't go shopping in Pathmark? Why can't you go out and earn a living and support me? I can't stand taking care of you. What a burden you and your sister are! But especially you! You little shit!"

These are a few of the choice words I hear a Ma saying to little me. I internalize them; I cover them up. My enthusiasms retreat into the secret chamber of my inner world. I seal off the chamber with waves of nausea, blankets of disgust, steel doors of self-loathing. When I face success directly I simultaneously push it away, covering it with a powerful lid of blahs and blehs.

But the pick axe of self-awareness is chipping away at these concrete covers; I'm slowly lifting the iron man holes, releasing the nauseous sewers of my being into the street. The flood really stinks up the neighborhood. I don't care.

I'm moving into a new neighborhood anyway.

On guitar pieces: I'll just have to admit I can play the fuckers.

With powerful index finger flying I am a formidable flamencan and classical guitar-playing presence. (Wow, it's a good thing no one is reading this journal. I would never want anyone to hear that I think I am formidable. It is just too disgustingly powerful. Ugh, ugh, ugh! What will the Ma and all her shit say? She'll wipe the whole thing away. Wipe away my formidable guitar-playing presence. Now there's a trauma for you!)

Therefore, I'm going to trip you up by making your mind want you to play fast, telling you you're not fast enough, you're stupid, you're too stupid to be fast, you little shit! Stupid, stupid, you! Shithead you! You fucking lousy miserable little twerp. I shit on you! I crush you with my little finger." Aha, a finger, the miniature index

finger. She crushes me with her finger; her finger goes into my baby anus and crushes me. I then crush myself with my own adult index finger, pushing me back, pushing me down, annihilating my guitar playing with a weak, puny, un-formidable index finger.

“I’ll crush you with my little finger!” Hmm. Is that the origin of my guitar-playing right index finger complex? Is it from the anal, shit-bearing period? Did she stuff a finger up my ass, inhibit my shits, crush my creativity, annihilate my formidability and the public expression of my powers?

Sunday, October 8, 2000

The Weight Lifter

Playing guitar (and probably other things) fast means playing it lightly, dancing and jumping around, and avoiding the pre-two-year-old traumatic center. It stands in opposition to the formidable index finger, which moves slowly and, like a powerful weight lifter, centers its muscular body right in the middle of the trauma and says, “Fuck it!”

Tuesday, October 10, 2000

The “Someday” Factor

Should I give up the “Someday” factor? By doing so, am I losing an important, though painful, source of motivation? Eventually, I will go public; eventually I will be discovered. But perhaps there is more to it than that. But what? Perhaps not. But what? The pain itself? Or is there something else? Can there be any joy in going public? Can I get pleasure in doing so?

What about trauma and staying in the present?

It’s a big, big question. Going public has been such a long-term goal for me. Isn’t publication, in whatever form it takes, a part of this? By “deciding” to keep my journal “only for myself” am I not only giving up this important “goal,” but also backing off an important, even vital, source of motivation?

And is it vital? That's an important word: vital, vitamin, vita, life, life-giving waters. True, the whole concept of publication is overwhelming. And I cannot even read my own works. And much of it must be edited, thrown out, tossed. But I cannot do it. I cannot choose between my babies, which ones to kill, which ones to bestow life upon. All these choices are too painful. So I "handle" them by doing nothing. I "farm them out to others," in this case, Barry.

But the dream is still there. The dream to someday perform, someday give a concert, someday publish my writing, someday go public with the fruits of the true me. Someday, someday. How important a motivation force is this "someday" factor?

Completion

Maybe the desire to publish, perform, and "go public" comes, not only from the desire to be loved, appreciated, understood, and accepted by an audience (although this is certainly a factor), but from a deep, hidden, and little understood desire for completion.

Perhaps it speaks of a deeper, visceral, even umbilical connection to the outside world that I have not, until now, either recognized or known about.

I took a long walk to think over the "completion" idea. Somehow I'm discovering either a new inner need, or a new level of an old need: but with this I see myself standing in front of an audience, reading my work or playing my guitar, and it doesn't matter whether they are listening to me or not! Their reaction to what I am doing is almost beside the point. And yet, somewhere, somehow, inside of me is a strange need to "get it out there."

Weird, strange, new. I don't understand this yet. It feels strong and different; it is a mixture of caring about the audience and indifference to their reaction. Weird, strange, new, indeed.

Wednesday, October 11, 2000

The Mighty Hand of Index Fingers.

Come on, buddy, sit down and do it. Sit down and write. The stops are out; the outs are stopped. No more backwards for you. Forward, march!

What is the reason for this ostrich-hiding, feather-bedding forward-backward march? Well, who knows about reasons, And who cares? The plant is ready to flower. All explanations beyond that are irrelevant. Nevertheless, the "Whys?" give me something to write about. The more I write, the better I feel. I'm clearing the field, wiping the slate, dripping my mind free of one month of changes. Sure, I don't understand it. But, who cares?

There are many one-word phrases I can use. One is "devaluation" of my experiences. Yes, I lid them as I do them. Sure it speaks of former traumas. But I'm getting sick of the word lids. I am on an old track. Best is forward march.

I can't remember why I am here or how I got here. Last night, after an hour's exhausted sleep, I woke up with the answer. Certainly, questions are more a source of power than answers. Nevertheless, an answer here or there doesn't hurt.

What was my answer? Back to work! Back to the miracle schedule, back to rising at four a.m., four-pages a day, guitar practice, running, yoga, even to study (although I don't know what to study now.) Somehow I've been reborn. I don't know why.

Well, I do know why. I've made peace with my new level, the one born during and after the summer. I've made peace with success. Why this happened, I don't know. Perhaps it is a process, and you can't rush a process.

During this process I questioned basic tenets of my existence. Should I publish? Should I give concerts? Should I perform? These are bottom line questions that have haunted and followed me for years. Starting last Thursday, I decided to give them up. For a week, I said, the hell with them. I've solved my problems. I know who I am. I have confidence in myself. I'm successful on the inside. And my success is starting to

project itself on the outside. Why then should I maintain my tie with these old forms anymore? Do I still need them? Have I not outgrown them? Why bother publishing or performing? In fact, why even bother writing or playing the guitar? Why bother with singing or with any other activities of my former self. If I have finally reached the end goal, why not nestle my mind and body in the comfort zone, the blissful cocoon of success? Why not give up the miracle-schedule means to the end? After all, I have finally “arrived.”

Well, after all is said and done, I have to admit that arrival sucks. Suddenly, Hilma Texidor jumps into my mind. Where is she? Could something have happened to her? Perhaps she is dead, hurt, hospitalized, or kidnaped. Who knows what can happen to someone when they go to Puerto Rico. She has totally disappeared. My anger at her for canceling is diminishing and turning into worry about her physical well-being. Why are these thoughts coming up now?

Maybe it has something to do with “arrival sucks.” I am standing in my own Puerto Rico. It is full of Spaniards speaking Spanish; strange Andalusian people walk the streets. Who knows what will happen to me on my upcoming tour to Spain. Perhaps I’ll disappear. In fact, my old inner self has disappeared already. Some new stony monster, a dark-face granite creature, a steely stone statue, hard and mighty, full of inner strength with molten tears. Mighty legs, and iron quadriceps is appearing in its place. Where did the old teary me go? Well, it’s still there. But the tears are now streaming down an iron face, a stony, powerful Charles-Atlas like body. My right hand, the Hebrew hand of God, the yad hazak, is stretched forth with five powerful index fingers pointing in all directions. No more middle, ring, and pinky. They are gone. Even my thumb has fallen off. A mighty index looms forth, pointing to an infinity of sky, sea, and land. It beckons and calls as it encompasses people from this world and the next. It curls them in with its finger, holds them in its mighty iron-fisted, stony-cold, unbending hand. They are safe within it. Nothing can loose them from its protection. The hand that holds them is my hand. I cannot loosen my grip on them.

They are in my hand forever and ever, amen.

I don't know what these visions mean. Certainly, they have something to do with emerging strength. An iron, stone, unbending, unyielding self-concept. At last I have rights! At last I have a right to myself! At last I am entitled! Not only to something, but to everything! I am entitled to everything that is mine! Everything that is mine belongs to me! I won't let it go. Never, never, never! I hold it in my stony, iron, unbending, unflexing, hand, the mighty hand filled with index fingers.

Thursday, October 12, 2000

The Birth of Trauma Tours
or How To Handle Total Indecision

I'm leaving for Spain today.

Should I bring my computer? It's so hard to make up my mind. This question arises over and over again.

At this moment, I'm thinking no. Yesterday I thought yes. One thing is certain: my choices are limited to no and yes.

So here we go again. What are the pros and cons?

The cons are: carrying a computer takes up space; it's heavy. It is also expensive and I worry about it being lost, stolen, or broken. But these are minor annoyances which I can handle. The main question is: the computer used to be my security blanket. It reminded me of home; the process of writing on it puts me in touch with the higher forces. That's the high I want and need. And that is the main reason to bring the computer.

Can I get such a high writing by hand? The answer is: maybe. Probably. Even certainly. But then, I have the annoyance of transcribing what I write by hand into my computer when I return to the United States. That adds up to many days of work, many days of mere copying. And I generally hate such "rote" work.

Thus, isn't the main problem, the main worry, that I will have to spend hours rewriting, hours copying my hand-written journal into my computer? And what is this really but hours rereading my writing! In other words, isn't this the old fear, nay trauma, of editing my works?

I've just discovered and uncovered myself. And, once again, I did it through writing on my computer. Would I discover myself in the same manner writing by hand? It is, after all, so much more cumbersome.

Well, that is another aspect of writing on the computer. My flying fingers can imitate my flying mind. I write as fast as I think. Truth is, I can write pretty fast by hand. But, once again, it is more cumbersome.

Cumbersome means heavy and slow. It is the rewriting, rereading mode. Can I stand it? Isn't it the trauma revisited? And, if it is, wouldn't it be better if I practice facing it? I'm just about ready to face it, anyway.

Thus writing by hand in my journal could be my first practice. It could be initiated by this Spanish tour. That could be the deeper writing meaning of this Spanish tour. This could be the "facing the trauma tour." I might even start a new company after this. Along with Posthumous Tours, the company specializing in tours for the dead, I could add Trauma Tours, the company specializing in bringing you face to face with your own personal traumas. This is a service no tour company as yet provides. I could be the first.

All this is very nice. But I still can't decide whether to bring my computer or not.

Maybe I should just make peace with my indecisiveness. Maybe I should just go to the trouble of bringing it indecisively. Maybe I should just bring it with the idea of never using it. My computer will just sit in my room like a lump. It will be like my running shoes: I bring them for that one glorious time during the tour when I am both mentally and physically free (usually about the seventh or eighth day) and I go for a run. During that run, I bless the fact that I decided to go to the trouble of bringing my

running shoes. (Of course, bringing them is easier than bringing the computer. But perhaps this is just a trouble of degree.)

Also, it may make no difference at all to my trauma whether I bring it or not.

The idea of bringing it, and perhaps never using it, the "bringing it just in case" idea, may be the best I can do in this indecisive state.

The only thing that is certain about my situation is that I am indecisive. What does one do when one is paralyzed by indecision? Alexander Bellow said when you can't decide what to do, when you are torn between many directions, take them all. Then, over a period of time, some will slowly fall to the wayside.

This means I should take my computer with the idea that I may never use it. It may indeed, "fall to the wayside." Or it may be my best decision. I really don't know.

Sudden Sadness Facing My Inner Israeli Strength

My sudden feeling of sadness comes from the realization of Israeli strength. I am winning, the right's point of view regarding the Palestinians is winning; hapless Clinton and Barak's miserable "peace negotiations and proposals" are losing. I identify with Israel's strength. I am also furious at their "giving up" through so-called "negotiations" which are really disguised forms of "giving in." By winning my argument, I've touched the trauma. Thus, the return of my sadness.

Thursday, October 12, 2000

I've got a minor headache. I refuse to be thrilled by my existence. I devalue it.

In order to be thrilled by my existence I have to be able to stand in the shit. Stand in the pool among the eels, suckers, catfish, and snakes.

My headache is part of my shit.

I'm standing in that shit right now!

How does it feel

Among the eels?

I'm getting used to it.

As I do, I'm flushing my headache down the toilet.

Sunday, October 15, 2000

Hard to start with this hidden passion.

Indeed, our arrival in Malaga initiated the adventure. Who would think it: "Malaguena," both song and dance, comes from Malaga! So does Malaguena Salerosa, at least the name: the salty one from Malaga. Picasso also was born in Malaga. Our group landed in Malaga. But we have yet to dance Malaguena, or play it on my guitar. That will happen in America.

From Malaga, we hopped in our tour bus driven by Jesus. Later I found out that the nickname for Jose (Joseph) is Pepe. Thus "Pepe Romero" is "Jose Romero" is "Joseph Romero." There is also a nickname for Jesus, but I don't know what it is.

I met our guide on the domestic plane ride from Madrid to Malaga. Her name is Maite Jurado. Maite is short for Mary Teresa. She is tall, very thin, and, believe it or not, a Basque! Now that is intriguing. I have never met a Basque before, except, of course, for Jorge Caneda, the organizer and prime mover of this tour. (Naturally, I have something to do with it, too.) Maite spent three days "dry-running" this tour; she visited every restaurant and hotel plus did research on the dance groups we are visiting. She has a degree in architecture. Her father, Paco, an ex-engineer with IBM, now works in tourism, too. In fact, he often works with Alejandro Muniz, the director of the agency that is organizing the land arrangements for our tour through Jorge.

Anyway, after losing all of our baggage in Madrid, we hopped in our bus and headed through lovely coast, then up into exciting Serrania de Ronda mountains to Ronda, one of the lovely white towns of Andalusia. We stayed overnight in a pleasant hotel, ate supper, and fell promptly into a deep sleep.

Oh, I forgot to mention, we also had our first dance class. Now that was fantastic! It started with a short performance of a fandango, tanguillo, sevillanas (I

think), and an improvised, or rather, choreographed version of a local dance. Then we had a dance lesson. We learned the basic or first step of Sevillanas, the three quarter time dance from Seville. We learned not only the three-quarter time footwork, but also the movements of the hands. Beautiful, indeed. Most of us bought castanets after learning how to use them.

Thus ended day one.

On day two we headed for Jerez de la Frontera, again driving through beautiful mountains, passing Arco de la Frontera, etc. Jerez, the sherry capital, is also home of Bulerias, whereas Alegrias comes from Cadiz. I love these dances and have been playing them on my guitar for years. Now I found out their homes from the waiter at our supper in Santa Puerto de Santa Maria, where our beautiful Monastery Hotel (a former monastery) is located. The waiter said his brother-in-law was the second most famous flamenco guitarist in Spain (after Paco de Lucia). He danced a few steps for us but got very shy after we demonstrated our one-day-old knowledge of the Sevillana we learned in Ronda.

Perhaps it has something to do with working out the self-disgust thing.

Sunday, October 15, 2000

What Are Politics?

What are politics? How can one understand these so-called outside events?

Politics, as well as history, does not actually consist of "outside" events. Rather, such events are reflections of the mind, yours and mine; they are the inner conflicts of personality, reflected outward in collective form. All politics, as well as all of history, can be viewed as the metaphoric and symbolic struggle for freedom, self-discovery, and inner peace taking place within the mind.

Civil wars reflect the internal war of opposites; periods of calm and grandeur reflect thoughts that arise between such mental civil wars. Periods of great change and

transformation tear up the old habit patterns of the mind.

Liberal versus conservative, Israel versus Palestinian, fascism and communism versus democracy, such outward conflicts are mirrors; they are collective reflections of inner states.

Look how I run my tour group. I balance, then drift between, democracy and dictatorship, authoritarianism and liberalism. There is a daily civil war going on in my head. Which direction should I take? How do I handle this person or that? Such questions are conflicts in disguise. What are wars but brutal inner questions trying to find outward collective resolution?

Indeed I feel a collective dimwit this morning. I don't know why. Perhaps it reflects the intelligent passage on politics I just wrote. How perceptive of me, indeed! And I had such trouble writing it. When I finished, I reread, spent thought about, examined, reworked, and edited it. Quite unusual.

Let's face it: I had a great, mature, postcollegiate, intellectual idea. I expressed it. This puts me straight out and publically in the same league as those great intellectuals I always admired at the University of Chicago. Me, talk about politics? Me express a view? Why, this is, up to now, practically unheard of. Jimmy boy, it is better that you stay in the corner and shut up. Political talk is only for grown ups – and smart ones at that. Etc.

Well, I've moved out of that world. I'm beyond that now. So much to the point that it is hardly worth mentioning.

Wow, I've started something completely news here: I wrote Sylvan Woods and the Mad Shoe Tours style right after clearing my head with morning journal writing. Perhaps that is the time to write Sylvan Woods. Morning time, right after journal "serious" head-clearing time. Hmmm. We'll see where this leads. But it sounds and feels right. I am in a freer mode after writing my journal. It prepares me. I am ready to

“rise in madness!”

Tuesday, October 17, 2000

Seville

We arrive in Seville. I so looked forward to the beautiful hotel room I would have. Ah, the wonderful rug on which to do yoga, the spacious desk upon which I could place my computer and write with tranquility and inspiration, the strong, clear lighting under which I could dwell in peace, harmony, and floating mental freedom. Instead, we ended up in a real shithole far outside of the city center; my room has no rug, little space, no paintings, no decor, and no desk. We're here for three days. I felt so disappointed, especially after the beautiful Monastery Hotel rooms we had in Puerto de Santa Maria.

My room faces a narrow, noisy street with mucho motor cycles and motor-scooter noises; people talk endlessly into the night while shithole dogs bark. (Actually, there are no dogs. It just feels like there are.)

But at least the hotel is clean: The mice have taken baths, and most of the cockroaches speak Spanish. The gypsies camped outside my window are lighting fires in the buildings opposite me; many play flamencan guitar; all dance Bulerias, Sevillanas, and even Alegrias. I think I see my old guitar teacher here, along with his flamencan-playing, Spanish speaking buddies.

Upon arrival, we explored the city. The high finances of the Turkish empire were no match for our Macarena touring crew. We went to work. Joe, our Pepe, led us by taking a hammer from the back of the bus and smashing the Giraldo Tower. Soon we had torn down this masterpiece of 12th century Almohad architecture; it was constructed during between 1147 and 1212, but no one seemed to mind. But we did care that the Roman emperors, Hadrian, Trajan, and perhaps even Theodosius were born just outside of Seville in the now destroyed Roman town of Italica. Our purpose then was, basically, to tear down the whole fucking city and turn it into a modern day

ruin just like Italica. Indeed, our cultural tour is unique: instead of exploring ancient ruins, our purpose is to create them. Or, at least, that seems to be my purpose this morning.

I feel so hostile! I guess I'm somewhat disappointed in our first day in Seville. True, the old city is beautiful, especially walking through the narrow artistic streets of the Jewish section. If we were not staying in this flea-bag miserable hotel everything else would be fine. Even this hotel isn't so bad. It's just my expectations were so high and my room is so low.

Well, why complain? On the other hand, why not? That's what journal writing is for. Yesterday I was riding high on writing Sylvan Woods. Can't I do it again today? Every day is different. We'll see.

Wednesday, October 18, 2000

A Night of Tapas in Seville

How do I tell people about this one? Dance troupes galore. Flying Spanish feet. Stamping, singing, laughing, crying Sevillanas. Seeing a rehearsal of a top Seville dance troupe, and getting a private lesson in Sevillanas from the founder and director of Grupo de Danzas Ciudad De Sevilla, Joaquim Ruiz Postigo. Truth is, it is just too early to talk about it. But I would love to remember the Sevillanas he taught us.

There can be no denying the Mephistophelian aspects of nights beyond time.

I'm not in the mood to write anything this morning. Does that mean anything? Does my mood really matter? Or should I say, the hell with my mood, fuck it, and just write anyway? Probably the latter. In fact, just saying it, facing the temporary deadness within, opening to the darkness of walls, towers, fixtures, and Jorge Canedas, can evidently open up a small passage inside the canals of my brain—the dwarf forms of Canedellias—and help pour for a wellspring of dancing mice. These grains beyond time can visssify the quandary of legends behind the time wall.

But actually this morning someone is looking over my shoulder. I'm writing

with an audience in mind. Who is it? Natalie? Why? I don't know. Perhaps it is because she is in my writing class. Or the three of us, Natalie, Mayta, and I walked back to the hotel together through the late night streets of Seville and I spoke to Mayta "in private" in Natalie's presence. I said it's okay to talk because she is "in the family." Well, once I included her in the family who appeared in her place but my mother of course, or my mother of course, who is now looking over my shoulder and judging my writing.

I'll have to drop this cloud and take back the ability to make mistakes in both private and public. Goodbye black-crowed shoulder bird. Fly off my shoulder. Go back to the barn rafters where you belong.

Now, onwards and sideways. The warm-up whir is happening. Faster and faster the fingers fly; faster and faster the mind races. That mind, believe it or not, is mine!

Friday, October 20, 2000

Claustrophobia

Tight, gasping. It's claustrophobia. No time to myself. The walls of the tour have closed in. I'm incredibly tired—but this fatigue is more about claustrophobia than exhaustion. It happened in Bulgaria, too. I noticed it there, recognized it, dealt with it, and moved on.

Same here. Of course, the seven and a half hours of sleep I had last night didn't hurt either.

Blessings

My claustrophobia is taking place even though I couldn't ask for a better group! Thus, it has nothing to do with the people on this tour. Rather, it has to do with the schedule and pacing. But more than that, it has to do with me. My awareness of it. Awareness, self-awareness, is the only way to handle it. I've just done that. Now I'm

back to love, to loving this tour and the incredible experiences it is giving me. Function in the positive: let's look at the positive. Can I handle it? Yes. After all, I did bring Fred Curtis's letter from Drew University!)

What can I say? What an experience! What an honor to organize, lead, and run such a tour! What an honor to be here! What an honor to have such a wonderful guide as Mayte Jurado, and to deal, in the distance, with Jorge Caneda, Alejandro Muniz, and Paco (Francisco), Mayte's father. When I can step out of myself and my personal problems, I recognize that I am truly blessed to lead and do such work. After years of therapy, searching for the true me, for the loose, laughing, off-the-wall, mad shoe wild and wooly, running wild on the grass, pensive, thoughtful, artistic, dynamic, reclusive, in-room, out-in-public me, I finally have to say that on days like this with realizations like this, I feel truly blessed to be put on this earth!

Perhaps I'll be stronger now. I'll be able to look at, dwell in, contemplate, and realize that I live in these blessings.

Perhaps, since I am stronger now, I can realize that looking at my blessings is the road on which I am heading.

I doubt if there is even a "perhaps" here. Rather, there is no doubt about it. I am moving in the direction of contemplating and appreciating my blessings.

Saturday, October 21, 2000

Duty

Mostly drained this morning. Should one write when one is drained? Should I write when I am? What is the difference between one and I?

I'm starting off with a bunch of questions. Why? Probably because, as Elie Weisel said in Night, questions have a special power; they have more power than answers. I'm hoping that, by asking questions, I'll not necessarily come up with answers but rather, I'll jump start my mind which in turn will jump start my fingers,

which in turn will jump start my writing. It must be working. I've already produced two paragraphs out of nothing. Well, not nothing, but out of mere questions. True, quality and meaning may suffer. But am I writing to create meaningful prose or to write every day no matter what? Indeed, it is the latter. I don't care if I produce pages of shit, volumes of junk. The main task is to write, write, write. Everything else will take care of itself.

So, now that I have jump-started my mind, what else is new? Nothing that I can think of. Oh sure, I'm reading about the Basque: Euskadi, and of San Sebastian, Bilbao, and even the capital of Navarre, Pamplona; I'm looking into Roncevalles, the "Song of Roland," and perhaps visiting Lourdes. I'm exploring the Pyrenees in search of new words. But mostly I'm exhausted. I'm stretching my mind in all directions, trying to rise above my mental and physical fatigue, reaching for an inspiration when I have none. And all this is in the service of writing, and for the purpose of fulfilling my quotas so I can walk the streets again today with head high.

And once again I ask the question: Must I be inspired in order to write? In fact, must I be inspired to do anything? The obvious answer is: No. Witness these pages I have just produced. They were created with not a wit of inspiration, from a half-dead mind attached to a half-dead body nourished by a half-dead spirit. Any yet, they were produced.

What does all this mean? (Another question.) It means I can, must, should, and will go on in spite of inspiration. Call it a sense of duty.

Now there's a word I've never before. Duty? Me, having a sense of duty? Impossible. I never think of myself that way. I am free, a wild, unchained spirit roaming the Sierra Nevada mountains surrounding Granada, playing flamenco guitar under an olive tree in the groves of Jaén.

But indeed I do. My duty is to follow the writing trail. I am on the pilgrim's path, a lifetime trek to the miracle schedule, Santiago de Compostela, Galician land.

There is, evidently, no escape. I am not my own master, as I once thought. My

duty is to “another.” And this is true, even though that “other” is within me.

Monday, October 23, 2000

Continuing My Voyage Straight Into The Center

Maybe I'll buy a guitar in Granada today. Imagine that. First I'll play it. Then I'll sell it in America. Moving into the “guitar business” could be one of the “excuses” I need to return to Andalusia. A new business in the making.

But even more important psychologically is developing yesterday's idea of “going straight to the center.” This could and would be a major jump for me.

By the way, yesterday I noticed this: As we were touring the Alhambra and walking through the gardens of Generalife (from the Arabic genat-al-arif—“genat” is garden, “arif” is architect (God): Garden of the Architect), my mind slipped or, I should say, soared straight out of the garden into the Canary Islands. I mentioned this to Mayta, our guide. She said you should stay in the present. First, I apologized by saying, Yes, that is one of the lessons I have been put on earth to learn: how to live in the present. Then I realized this statement was made defensively. Why should I be defensive when my mind soars? Answer: I should not be. Only the old self from the old neighborhood would be defensive about such a thing. Realizing that I now live mostly in the new neighborhood, I quickly thought: Why put myself down? My defensive statement was not even true. Rather, I am in the present, in the here-and-now even when I'm soaring! The gardens of Generalife in the Alhambra served as an inspiration! They lifted me out of my environment, put me on the a higher plane of imagination, and released my mind to soar in the higher realm of imagination. There is no way Mayta or anyone else can actually know what is going on in my brain, how I interpret the present. Only I can know that. Thus, by knowing myself, as only I can know myself, I turned a potential negative into a positive. This shows definite progress in psychotherapy and self-knowledge. In this instance, I went straight to the center.

So ends our tour of Spain.

Saturday, October 28, 2000

Editing constricts me. That's why I don't like it.

Where is my More in editing?

Why am I so mad?

Perhaps it's all this riff-raff getting in my way, all these noxious and annoying thoughts, the "mores" and details and fears of this world getting in my way, pushing me away from my "Alhambra" joy and ecstasy.

Yes, right now I feel there is nothing more glorious than being able to play the "Recuerdos de la Alhambra!" Over and over again I play. It puts me in heaven. Nothing could be better! All the other "details" of this world are simply annoying. So, I'm mad because these details, some consisting of my own thoughts, some of others' demands, are distracting me.

I am there! Here! I'm in "Alhambra" joy and ecstasy land. There is no other place to go. This is it! I want to sustain and remember it. The only question is how.

I'm mad because I'm back in America. I don't want to give up the memory of this marvelous Alhambra tour of Spain!

Monday, October 30, 2000

Alhambra Success

Why do I feel down? I'm not used to it. I haven't felt down for so long. Why now? What is it?

Bernice is acting like an asshole again. Could it be that? I doubt it. It's nothing new. The return of her old criticisms and accusations are annoying like flies buzzing around my head. But I've dealt with this so many times before. Nothing major here.

I sense it is something else.

Actually, know it is about my guitar playing. It is about my "Alhambra" success! Yes, my "Alhambra" playing has reached another level. I played Segovia's recording yesterday and compared it to my playing. Now, finally, I can play "Alhambra" at the same speed he does! Yes, I am victorious. It only took twenty-five or thirty years!

Then the negative self appeared briefly. It questioned me: How come it took so long? What is wrong with me? Then another thought occurred: Did I play "Alhambra" well thirty-five years ago before I took my first lessons with Alexander Bellow? I don't remember having a "problem" with my tremolo until he told me I did. He said, "Your tremolo is uneven because of the right index finger. You must practice it slowly and evenly." Somehow this statement traumatized me. My right index finger "froze up." It has been that way for years.

I'd like to blame Bellow for my tremolo, "Alhambra," "Leyenda," and arpeggio difficulties. I don't remember having such problems when I took my first classical guitar lessons with Rolando Valdes-Blaine. He was an accepting, loose, fun-loving kind of guy. Sort of an "anything goes" man. Bellow, on the other hand, was a perfectionist. Totally like my mother, I would say. Well, maybe I needed a trauma to push me through life. So I took one from Bellow and pushed it into my guitar playing. I must have needed some way of "keeping me down" and "in my place." I needed to put a lid on my wild, wooly, jumping, creative inner self. I couldn't stand the divine madness of its fiery excitement and expansion. Why not chose Bellow and my index finger to fill the push-down role?

Well, whether I blame him or not, today I am in a totally different place. I have succeeded. And, rather than deny it, I can face my success with courage and brave awareness.

Since I bought my Francisco Diaz guitar on Gomez Street in Granada and returned from running my tour of Spain, a whole new level of playing the guitar has opened up. I do not recognize myself. But I also do. I see my hidden self coming to the surface, the pre-Bellow soul that hid in my shoe whenever I took lessons with him.

Swatting the Accusation Flies

I am also totally pissed off at Bernice. She can't get out of the "blame me" mode. She can't get out of her obsession with debt, and the fact that I have no sympathy, interest, or even understanding of her wanting to be a cripple, and total focus on health care, nursing homes, long-term health care insurance, moving from our house because some day she won't be able to walk up stairs, etc. I have no sympathy for this focus on all future catastrophic events. I feel, if and when they happen, I'll deal with them. Meanwhile, put your mind on something else, something more positive.

But even if she likes to dwell on these fears, that's okay. It is her choice, and I can deal with it. However, it never stops there. She has this terrible habit of blaming her fears on me; then, because I don't have these fears (or don't want to dwell on them) she accuses me of not caring about her.

Frankly, even though all this is "nothing new," it still disgusts me, nauseates me, and gets me sick. I could sympathize with her if she had the courage to look into herself, admit these fears, and move on from there. But instead, she refuses to face them and chooses to blame me instead. It is a disgusting habit.

Although I say "it is nothing new," perhaps I am wrong. Rather, since every day is new, I might be better off thinking it is something new. And this because I am different and thus looking at and dealing with it on a different level.

And although it is like flies and mosquitoes buzzing around my head, it still pisses me off. After all, these insect creatures are really annoying. Usually I swat them until they go away.

I'll do the same for Bernice's accusation.

Insurance: Subtle Worship of the Negative

I wonder why I can't stand talk about long-term health insurance—or any insurance for that matter.

I know insurance is reasonable and "good." Yet, I can't stand talking about it. I

can't stand the subject. As soon as I hear the word "insurance," I want to run away. And yet I know insurance is "reasonable and good."

Perhaps it is because insurance and the insurance field is totally based upon fear of the future. It is founded upon "What bad things might happen to me." I don't know of any insurance plan to protect one from the good things that might happen. Thus, although "realistic," it is a totally negative field. And, deep down, I wonder if it is even good for you. It immediately focuses your mind on the negative. It induces fear and mucho pus. Thus, it is subtly destructive. I sense that. Thus I try avoiding the subject as much as possible.

I wonder if thinking about the fears that insurance insures you against doesn't subtly "draw" these negatives towards you.

Instinctively, I recoil from insurance. Is it my instinctive protection against negative influences?

Tuesday, October 31, 2000

Cold Piece

I have a cold. The snot is dribbling down my backside. Is this a bad thing?

Well, it is physically uncomfortable. A minor annoyance. But there is a greater factor: the fear that it may get worse. Slowly this miserable cold will grow into pneumonia; it will incapacitate me, I won't be able to work or even function. Soon I'll be hospitalized. I could even end up dead. And all this from a little cold.

So my imagination is turning this minor annoyance into a grave assault.

Someone asked me, "What do you think?"

I answered. "I don't 'do' thinking. I do dreaming. Dreams are more powerful to

me than thoughts. They are the great motivators. Thoughts are “mere” by-products of dreams.

Without a dream, who cares about thoughts?

Look at my cold. Without the dreaming capacity of my imagination, it would have remained a mere cold, something to “take care of.” It would have no poetry whatsoever. But by using my dream capacity, I have managed to turn it into an exciting terror, a true fiend to haunt my imagination and scare me half to death! This cold is thus no longer a mere medical problem. It is now interesting; it is an event!

Although a cold is unpleasant, the poetry of a cold is an imaginative adventure into the depths of misery. Even though I hate it, I like it. Its snotty dripping also has a creative purpose: it caused me write this Cold Piece.

Understanding Me

What do I need people for if they don't understand me?

And what does “understand me” mean?

Does it mean accept me? If it does, why do I need people to accept me in the first place? For self-confirmation. But if I can confirm myself, if I believe in myself, why do I need others?

Without the need for others to confirm me, I am quite free. But I still resent it. Why the fuck can't they understand me? Why the fuck can't they accept me?

And why the fuck am I so angry about this? Why can't I welcome the freedom that comes with acceptance of the fact most will not, can't, understand me?

Friday, November 3, 2000

March of the Infinite Snot is a choral work by Jim Gold. It is performed mostly in the morning, during the night, and all afternoon long in sporadic bursts. It consists of great globs of snot loosed on the public.

Snot dripping inside and out. I'm nauseous, disgusted, sick, and miserable.

Otherwise, I'm okay.

Sunday, November 5, 2000

Does my impatience and irritation have something to do with going to the center?

I wonder if this impatience and irritation is related to my ties to the past, and breaking my ties with them.

Breaking ties:

1. Selling my Rubio guitar.
2. Considering giving up my Bloomfield Folk Dance Group (unless it meets my standards of 20 registrants.)

Just as my Alhambra playing represents an entry into a new present, my irritation and impatience may represent the desire to break with old routines, holdings, thoughts, and views.

My irritation and impatience has to do with having it on my own terms, meeting my standards.

Bloomfield folk dance registration, etc.: I want to fit reality to my standards. My standards are moving from my room into the public domain.

Monday, November 6, 2000

Why Go To Mount Sinai?

Or Tours Are Really Pilgrimages

Is the fundamental experience of "falling into the hole" one of sadness or one of terror?

Sadness has something to do with mother. Terror, however, feels almost “abstract,” as if my whole existence depends upon it. It feels even “beyond” my mother.

With sadness I can somehow “control” my mother.

But terror is “beyond” control. I am flushing my existence down the toilet. Even Ma can’t help me with this.

Terror feels even more primal than sadness. It feels most primal of all.

Sadness may come later, as an expression, or rather, an avoidance, of terror.

I can cling to my mother with sadness, and thus, she will protect me from “falling into the hole,” from being flushed down the toilet, from the terror of thus being annihilated. Through sadness, created by bowing to all her wishes and thus giving up important elements of my self, she becomes my Great Protector.

What am I protecting my little two-year-old self from? The great (toilet) flush of annihilation.

Is all this true?

Also, is it true, I “decided” to make myself sick, give myself a cold, in order to avoid the radiance of my post-Spanish tour, Alhambra-playing brilliance?

Can I really believe in the truth about myself I am both revealing and creating?

It is so utterly amazing that I could do this. Amazement and wonder. Some awe thrown in, too.

Can I stand it when the God within speaks to me?

Maybe that’s what I’m going to Mount Sinai to find out.

In February I’ll be running a tour to Egypt. Why?

I’ll be visiting sites of my ancient Egyptian slavery. Wearing my two-year-old swaddling clothes of Jewish bondage, I’ll be floating down (cruising) the Nile on our Nabila II cruise ship. Once again I’ll feel the old shackles that my inner Pharaoh used to keep me down. Then I’ll head for the Sinai Peninsula to climb the sacred mountain. I

want to see if I can face rock-bottom mountain truth.

What is the real reason for this trip? To see if I can stand it when God speaks to me.

Just as I went to Spain to discover and have confidence in my guitar (Alhambra) center, so I'm going to Egypt (Mount Sinai) to discover and have confidence in my God center.

On the surface, these trips are about visiting foreign countries. But on the deepest of levels, they are pilgrimages of discovery, voyages to the center of my earth, visits to explore, believe, and gain confidence in the center (heart) of my being.

That is why I personally have to go on this trip to Egypt, no matter what. Wars, terrorism, public disturbances are annoyances that cannot (should not, must not) stop me.

The time is now. God waits for no man. Or no woman, either.

Tuesday, November 7, 2000

Friday, November 10, 2000

Living in the Land of Bass

After years, nay, a lifetime, of living in the flitty land of Treble I am moving into the powerful, sustaining Land of Bass with its long-willed foundation tones, stable support, and certainty of purpose.

I feel like I'm locked in a box. It's not claustrophobic but it is strange. I feel I should get out of the box, should escape into something more "peaceful. But somehow, on one level, being in this box is peaceful. Also, if I left the box I wouldn't know where to go. Somehow I'm there already; somehow being in the box is being there—or here.

Part of me believes I should escape the "pressures" of my busy life and escape

into my old room. But most of me doesn't believe this anymore. Perhaps I've broken down the walls between in-room and out-room, between the artistic studio of my in-mind and the going public aspect of my out-mind. Somehow this division is not a problem anymore. In fact, it feels like the division itself has disappeared.

Now in-room is out-room, and out-room is in-room. Going public with my thoughts and personality is "the same as" staying private with them.

Alienation has ended.

I have no place else to go but here.

Is this what "going public with my Alhambra bass notes" means?

Probably.

Sunday, November 12, 2000

(I'm A) Sails Man

It's a new world: running wild on the mental lawn, and in public, too.

Selling, jumping, crying, screaming, squeals of laughter, shouts of joy. . . and it all feels so easy.

"Another soul saved." I did it. I did it years ago, too, and I'm doing it today. It feels so natural, moves so smooth and easy.

Only a momentary wake-up and return moment to the old neighborhood. I see Dick Forsyth before me. Yes, he is laughing and having a great time enjoying my personality and humor. But am I pushing it? Will I fade? We he see the so-called "real" (old neighborhood) me? A momentary flip, a passing blip. Naturally, I right it quickly. But it did occur. Now it is gone. It was at one percent level. I return to my new self.

I made four hundred and ten bucks yesterday. But, once again, the money seems almost "irrelevant" next to the joy of the operation. Yes, I hit some good tour possibilities, too. But again, the money, although nice to get, again seems almost

“irrelevant” next to the joy of my modus operandi.

What is relevant is the ease and naturalness of “jumping around,” of running wild on the NOMAD, Newton High School lawn.

I enjoyed it so much. I don’t get tired; I never want to stop. There is no place else to go.

I just stand in my position in front of my sales table, and smile and vibrate. That is all.

That is what a personal appearance at NOMAD means. That is what a personal appearance is.

Now I see why I have had so much former trouble with the word “sales.” It has been misspelled. The correct spelling is not “sales,” but “sails.” I am a sails man. I sail off into mental and spiritual space, even as my feet remain standing in front of my NOMAD sales table on the physical ground.

I am not a salesman.

I am a sails man.

Wednesday, November 15, 2000

I wonder if this sudden surge of unexplainable rage and raging is part of, and related to, the “mad” in my mad shoe experience.

I wonder if this rage is located in my ankles, in the new pains (since September) I’m feeling on the tops of my feet. (instep?)

Are my feet tops the physical location of my hidden mental raging, the physical location of dancer’s madness, mad shoeing, raging madness expressed through the dancer’s feet?

Is this about going public with “real” anger, mad shoe anger, the raging aspects of the “mad” shoe?

Is this the most hidden of all my hidings?

Isn't it also the "other side" of my running-wild-on-the-lawn, mad shoe experience.

Isn't "Kill 'em, kill 'em! Murder the bastards!" "Just" another aspect of the mad shoe experience, another (the other) side of running wild on the lawn?

Plus it is glorious fun to shout "Kill 'em!" or "Murders the bastards!"

Shouting "Kill, kill, kill!" Is glorious: Anger is its own high.

They're just words. I certainly don't want to kill or murder anybody in reality. But feeling, saying, and shouting them, is sometimes such a great release! Ah, if I can escape the guilt and feeling that something is wrong with me for feeling and saying them, I relish the release! I glory in it, love it!

So end a new leaf.