

How can you know  
What is true  
When the world reflects  
Only what you think

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Judgments  
Tautological foundations of time  
Observations  
Ontological moments in eternity

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### **ASSIGNED SEATING**

In the summer of 1986 I received a phone call from Penny Cooper, my attorney, telling me she had to see me as soon as possible. The feds had just made an offer and she wanted to discuss it before replying. I had been working at a gold mine in Nevada waiting for my criminal case to come to resolution and this might be it. So, I drove to Reno, flew to the Bay Area, and went to see Penny.

She wasn't happy and neither would be I. Their offer, she said, could hardly be called that. In return for my guilty plea, the feds would recommend a sentence of fifteen years. Penny said she couldn't in good conscience recommend their offer. I concurred. It was as if in return for my promising to stand still, they would only shoot below my waist.

I called to reserve a seat on the next flight to Reno. They were fully booked so I had to fly United. At the time, it was the only other airline that flew to Reno from San Francisco and I had an intense dislike for United. Their corporate image was too close to that of the red, white, and blue, an organization I had been at odds with since the 1960s. They had only a few seats left and I had to take what was assigned.

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Boarding the plane, I saw an attractive woman on that about to be filled flight. I glanced at my ticket. My assigned seat was the one next to hers. Not in the best mood, I made a negative comment as my carry-on barely fit under the seat in front me. I still remember her reply, "Don't worry, there's always a rainbow behind every cloud." And, although I wasn't inclined to agree, there was merit to what she said.

She asked if I worked in Nevada, and I said that I was currently working at a gold mine. I asked her the same question. She said she was a prostitute working at the Kit Kat. I was floored. The flight was full. It was assigned seating. And I was sitting next to an attractive woman who had just told me she was a prostitute at one of the better houses in Nevada. Although I was still in deep trouble with the law I knew this latest turn of events was evidence again of the ineffable presence of God.

We had a wonderful conversation on the flight back. She was very much into positive thinking, and because her profession was one that lent itself to the suspension of judgment I told her of the predicament I was currently facing. As accepting of my profession as I was of hers, she repeated once again, with sincere conviction, that behind every dark cloud there was a rainbow.

We talked about many things, and the conversation turned to her current boyfriend who she said worked at the Kit Kat as a driver and helper. He was a paraplegic and somewhat insecure about her affection for him, given his physical condition and her profession. She said, though, she truly loved him, adding, "He shouldn't worry. He's got a great tongue."

We landed sooner than I expected, her presence and the nature of the conversation making the time pass by quickly. She said goodbye and as she stepped into the waiting area, I saw her boyfriend. What I remember is not that he was in a wheelchair, though he was. What I remember is the look on his face when he saw her, a look of total love. And she was right. There is a rainbow behind every cloud. But that was something I wouldn't be sure of until several years later.

I've seen the streets of Shanghai  
The souks of Marrakech  
The alleyways of Tangiers  
The forbidden ways of flesh

Had White House invitations  
I've years in prison done  
I've seen my share of trouble  
I've had my share of fun

And I've learned the world's not  
What it seems to be  
For the ways of men and women  
Are filled with mystery

That the Great Unknown which fills them  
With fears of every kind  
Are simply misconceptions  
Of the growing human mind

That if you stop and listen  
To the promptings of your heart  
You'll find you're taken care of  
By He who's done his part

For the love that He has given  
Is still here on the earth  
Waiting for the Christ inside  
To be given birth

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Observing  
The judgments  
As they pass right on through

Attempting  
To tell me  
What's false and what's true

Caught  
By my thinking  
And the webs that they spin

Seeing  
At long last  
The trap I've been in

Holding  
To the center  
Of all that is true

Now free  
From the bindings  
Of all that I knew

I thank YOU  
My dear SELF  
For the gift of this sight

For  
At long last and finally  
I know it's all right

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### **MY ROAD DOG MOW**

road dog, prison slang for a close friend in the joint

My road dog at Lompoc was an unusual one. He, like I, was Chinese. Unlike myself, he was in his late sixties, in excellent physical shape. I was in my early forties. But as a drug dealer, my

daily routine had included numerous phone calls and restaurants, not physical exercise. But in more ways than one those days were over and, as if to emphasize the point, the day I met Mow, he took me out onto the track and we walked for four miles. The four miles per day regimen would continue uninterrupted for two years until he was released. The next day, it ceased.

I found Mow's case an interesting one. In the eyes of the U.S. government, Mow was in prison for possession of heroin with intent to sell. In my eyes, Mow was in prison for being Chinese. In his sixty plus years of life, Mow had never once used heroin, let alone sell it or any other drug for that matter. In fact, Mow didn't smoke or drink. His one vice had been gambling, and to the Chinese gambling is not a vice. It is simply a cultural pastime. Unfortunately, for Mow, it was to be, at least indirectly, the reason he would end up in prison

After retiring, Mow had opened a gambling operation. Knowing Mow, it was safe, clean, and honestly run, something that can't be said for a lot of establishments, legal or otherwise, these days. Mow's tastes and needs were simple. He didn't need a big house or a fancy car, he just liked gambling and the gambling world; and, as a result, now had some extra money. This extra money, too, was to be, also, indirectly, a reason Mow was to end up in prison.

One of Mow's relatives, hearing of Mow's improved economic status, had approached Mow for a down payment on a house. Mow had given it, and because it was later found out the relative had a heroin habit, Mow had found himself with a bad debt. And, since it was a relative, and since money did not mean to Mow what it meant to a bank or mortgage company, Mow just considered himself out of luck—how out of luck he would eventually find out.

But just when Mow decided the money was gone forever, he received a phone call from his relative saying he now had a way to pay Mow back. And although he didn't actually have the money, he did have a plan. The problem was it was the police who had come up with the plan, not his relative. Unbeknownst to Mow, his relative's plan was to give Mow to the police instead of himself after being arrested for possession of heroin.

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The police plan was simple. Mow's relative would tell Mow the plan was to buy and sell some heroin and with the proceeds pay Mow back. Having both a buyer and a seller, all he needed was a loan to first purchase the heroin. The police then recorded the phone call and when Mow agreed to the loan, immediately arrested Mow. Now, I would say Mow was guilty of having a worthless relative, of having made two bad loans, of wanting to be repaid, and of living in a land with unjust laws. The U.S. government, however, says Mow is a heroin dealer and they have the conviction to prove it.

And although I am sorry for Mow's unfortunate experience with the law, I am, and will be forever grateful for having known him, even under such adverse conditions. Mow had an unflinching spirit, an ever present curiosity, and integrity uncommon to these times, let alone the place. Prison gave me many gifts. One of them was a road dog named Mow.

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Sometimes it seems that life's a battle  
Sometime it seems it's one big war  
Sometimes then, I will wonder  
How much longer, how much more

I don't know why it's so crazy  
Why it seems to have no aim  
And that's the time I'll ask the question  
Where's the lesson in this pain

I see people hope tomorrow  
Will be better than today  
I see people hope that hoping  
Somehow'll drive the pain away

I don't know why it's so crazy  
Why it seems to have no aim  
And that's the time I'll ask the question  
Where's the lesson in this pain

I keep hoping love is real  
And not what it seems to be  
A trap in which the lonely falter  
A treasure box without a key

I don't know why it's so crazy  
Why it seems to have no aim  
And that's the time I'll ask the question  
Where's the lesson in this pain

(Austin Songwriters Contest, lyrics, 2005 3<sup>rd</sup> Place)

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A foolish man thinks  
A wise man knows  
A fool becomes a wise man  
When he knows that  
A wise man becomes a  
Fool when he thinks

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I think  
Therefore I forget that  
I AM THAT I AM

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Thought  
Gives rise to  
The idea of self  
  
The idea of self  
Gives rise to  
The idea of aloneness

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The idea of aloneness  
Gives rise to  
Fear in the world

Treasure thought and your treasure is fear in the world  
Treasure life and your treasure is love in the world

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## THIRION'S TALE PART I

*Some stories are only told under certain circumstances, when certain events lead to the telling. Otherwise those stories would never be told and would, of course, then never be heard. This is one of those stories.*

My ten-year prison sentence began in the fall of 1986 at Lompoc Federal Prison Camp in Lompoc, California. New surroundings always lead to new acquaintances. This is as true for prison as it is for other locales, only the types you meet there are different.

Dr. Norman Bernard Thirion and I would never have met on the outside. Thirion had served as international banker to Howard Hughes and had been the financial director and project planner for Archisystems, Hughes' personal holding company. Later, he was to work with Adnan Kashoggi, the flamboyant Saudi oil wheeler-dealer through whom he was to develop close ties with the Saudi royal family. My life instead had included countless phone booths from which calls could not be easily traced, and to me words like acid and coke had completely different meanings from those that Thirion thought them to have.

What we did share was an interest in business and money, and countless walks on the prison grounds were spent in discussing projects Thirion intended to pursue once he was released. Unlike

myself, Thirion believed himself innocent and thought that when his appeal was heard he would be freed. Unfortunately, it wasn't to happen. But because it didn't, Thirion was to tell me a story I am sure he never intended to tell anyone.

It was March 1987 when Thirion learned his appeal had been denied. That evening he took me to his room, where he showed me various documents and told me of events he believed were the reason he had been sent to prison. He then asked if I would write down his story and keep copies of certain documents for safekeeping. Thirion had a plan and said he needed the story in the hands of a third party to insure his safety.

The first document Thirion showed me was a letter of introduction from a New York movie production company, Transglobal Productions Ltd. The letter, written in 1983, was from Transglobal vice-president Perry Morgan to Lord Cranbourne, a British Viscount.

The letter to Lord Cranbourne introduced Thirion as former international banker to Howard Hughes and stated Thirion was representing Transglobal Productions in securing financing. The letter was copied to two persons, Dr. [Norman] Bernard Thirion and General Robert E. Cushman, Jr. Thirion informed me that General Cushman was not only Transglobal's Chairman of the Board, but was also retired Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps and past Deputy Director of the CIA.

What was a former Deputy Director of the CIA doing as chairman of a movie production company? The answer: not to produce movies. Transglobal Productions never made a movie during its short existence. It did, however, successfully solicit hundreds of millions of dollars from the Saudi royal family for an Afghan government-in-exile that never received the money.

Thirion said in 1982 he had been approached by Transglobal's two vice presidents, Perry Morgan and Dr. Jon Speller. Morgan and Speller knew of Thirion's close ties to the Saudis and wanted his help in soliciting the royal family to support the Afghan resistance