

STANLEY YUBAN HAS A VISION

by

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## THE LAST OF THE AMERICAN TRANSCENDENTALISTS

Stanley Yuban was driving along the highway in his pickup truck. He'd just gotten past Newton, a strange, flat town. He had taken a break from driving to get a barbecue sandwich in a drive-in restaurant. "King Porky, King of the Pigs" was the sign above it. An old lady cautiously handed him the sandwich through the window. She held up his money to the light to make sure it wasn't counterfeit.

Stanley was on his way to the mountains. It was early in the afternoon and the woods were colorfully tinged with the changes of autumn. It was very cool outside and it got cooler as he began to climb the first hills. He could see that the hills would get higher pretty soon. There was a line of cars behind his truck that couldn't get past him because of the curves. Stanley's pickup truck did not go very fast. The car right behind him kept honking, because every time it tried to pass him, he'd rev up the engine to go faster. Stanley looked in the rear-view mirror and smiled in satisfaction. The car was a Cadillac with a rich tourist inside it. The rich tourist looked very irritated.

Stanley had a reason for going to the mountains. He wanted to get away from the farmhouse people and have a vision. It happened like this:

Stanley was putting more wood in the woodstove in the living room. It was getting towards the end of October and the nights were getting cold. He was thinking how he better insulate the house or they were going to be mighty cold that winter.

Emily was sitting by a girl named Lorraine. Lorraine had moved in not long after the Johnson boys and their brood had fled. It was after Kent Daniels had moved to a warmer climate. He was in Central America. Lorraine was a genuine 100% organic food freak and ate

nothing but bananas dipped in sesame seed butter. Lorraine was a long and time-honored veteran of organic farms. She had come to their doorstep by hearing rumors about their place. She told them she was looking for a farm to stay on and she'd contribute to the work. Stanley and Emily saw no reason why not. The house was too big for just the two of them.

Lately, Emily and Lorraine had been getting closer to one another. Stanley thought there was something very strange about that, but he didn't let it bother him very much. One time, Stanley heard them talking in the kitchen.

Lorraine was saying, "Listen, man. All these fucking men bastards want is your body. No matter how much they say they care about your thoughts, they don't."

Emily said, "And, after all, these years, I never realized how much I had been taken advantage of. I can remember the first male I screwed..."

That was all Stanley heard. He sighed and went around to the back to saw wood. He figured Emily was going to get taken away from him. Well, that was that. He wasn't going to stop them. It finally got to the point where Emily didn't want to sleep with him anymore. She just picked up her bundle and moved into one of the smaller bedrooms. Stanley would live by himself and watch the moonbeams drift through the window. At daytime, he'd drive to a job site and, while working, he'd try to figure out how to rely on his own resources. It got cold sleeping by himself.

So Stanley was putting wood into the woodstove, warming his hands by the fire. It was something to do. Lorraine was teaching Emily about astrology. She was looking up her horoscope.

"Oh good. You have Libra in your Venus. That means you have a fine balance in your love life. Let's see. Cancer in your Mercury.

You are a mysterious moon-child. Taurus in your Mars. Yes, it definitely clicks. You are very practical, strong..."

Emily kept listening attentively, occasionally interjecting. Stanley didn't think astrology was a particularly exact science, but he figured Emily had to explore and find out who she was. Stanley was thinking about something else. It was about this:

Kent Daniels and Almoreena had gone to the tropics with his newly found cache of money. Kent Daniels was now a successful cocaine dealer. He was rich and all the cocaine addicts loved him. They groveled at his feet for more and better quality than before. Yes, Kent had it made. He didn't need to live on an old farmhouse anymore. He gave Stanley enough money to live on for the winter and flew first-class to the land where grass, tequila, crystal coke, and willing women flow freely.

Stanley got a postcard from Kent that day. It had a picture of a Mayan pyramid in the Yucatan. In the picture, the sun was rising from the background. There were strange and foreign stamps on the back of the postcard. So Kent Daniels was in Guatemala now. Kent put a message on the back. It was in code:

"Getting alot of sunshine down here. I'll be going on an expedition to South America soon. I will be making some rare archeological excavations in the Andes. Be back in spring with rather exceptional souvenirs. Pleasant weather around these pyramids. Wish you were here. Regards to the museum."

Dr. Kent Daniels!"

So Kent Daniels had finally returned to the equator that was his source and gone mad on his killer powder. Kent really ought to stay where he is, Stanley thought. The states were no place to be and it was hard to get illegal souvenirs across the border. If Stanley Yuban were Kent Daniels, he'd stay there for good. It had to be

better than the chaos of an over-industrialized nation. But, of course, Stanley Yuban wasn't Kent Daniels.

Stanley got to thinking about how nice a change of scenery would be, but he couldn't afford to fly to Guatemala. Maybe he could scrape up enough money to drive to the mountains. As he sat there by the woodstove, he thought about it. The more he thought about it, the more he thought it would be worth it. He had been tied down to domestic duties on the farm for too long. He made the decision; he would go to the mountains. Maybe he'd have a vision. He'd heard the Indians used to go to the mountains to have a vision.

Stanley couldn't remember the last time he had had a good vision. One time he was tripping on mescaline while watching the sunrise and thought he was the God-Realized Messiah. That was in California and he got taken to jail. He blessed his tormentors. Another time he thought that he was one with the Primordial Void and began to see this Void in everybody and everything. He nearly had to be put in a mental institution. Yes, it was high time to have a vision.

He interrupted Emily and Lorraine to announce: "I'm going to go to the mountains and have a vision. I'm going tomorrow and I'll be back in a few days." He started to go upstairs.

"Have fun."

"Yeah, enjoy yourself, Stanley."

Stanley saw a hitchhiker. He had long hair, a beat-up pack, torn clothes, and a black dog. The hitchhiker was standing just around a curve. Instinctively, Stanley pulled to an abrupt stop. All of a sudden, there was the screech and honking of about twenty cars behind him. While the hitchhiker was trying to get in, there was an angry roar of engines behind the truck. The hitchhiker had trouble opening the door and meanwhile the cars started roaring at full acceleration

past the truck to dash 75 m.p.h. to the mountains.

"Get off the fucking road, you hippie!", a driver cursed.

"Yeah, why don't you take a horse path, slow poke!", cursed another.

"Trucks like that ought to be outlawed!"

The hitchhiker finally got the door open. He and his dog jumped in. He was a fresh, energetic lad out to see the world.

"How's it going, man?"

Stanley stepped on the gas and moved the gears. The last of the cars had gone by. "O.K., I guess," Stanley replied.

"Jeepers, those motherfuckers sure were pissed."

"Yeah, this truck won't go any faster than 45 m.p.h. People in cars like that like to get to where they're going as fast as they can."

"Right, man. I sure know what you mean. By the way, my name's John and this dog's name is Kemper."

"Glad to meet you. My name is Stanley Yuban. How far are you going?"

"Oh, I'm not sure yet. I'll know when I get there, though. Me and Kemper like to travel. We were in New England a while ago, but we decided to come down here. North Carolina's a pretty nice state."

"Yep, North Carolina has some of the highest mountains on this side of the Mississippi."

"Well, I guess me and Kemper have come to the right place. How high are the mountains?"

"Why... some of them are more than a mile high."

"Jeepers... a whole mile?"

"Yep. But you wouldn't want to go there."

"Why?"

"Too many tourists and resort signs. Also, those mountaineers

up there can be mighty mean to longhairs. You wouldn't want to be caught dead, alone without a car, in one of their towns. They don't make any secret about their hippie-hating proclivities and have no qualms about what to do when one strays into their territory. Why...

I once heard a story about a hippie that got lost and wound up in one of those towns. I won't go into the sordid details of what happened next, but there wasn't too much left of him afterwards."

"Come on."

"Yep, and it's mighty cold up there. I'll bet you'll find it colder up there than you did in New England. Of course, you could go in the woods away from the mountain towns, but there's alot of mean grizzly bears in those woods."

"Now I know you're bullshitting me, man. That was in the days of Daniel Boone. I read somewhere in "Ecology Today" that the American grizzly bear, that is, *Ursus horribilis*, is nearly extinct."

Stanley shook his head solemnly. "Not in those woods. And besides, I most definately am bullshitting you. I like to test people's reactions. For example, the North Carolinian mountaineer is one of the friendliest creatures in the United States and so is the grizzly bear. Just don't fuck with them and they won't fuck with you."

"O.K., I dig. But you shouldn't try to fool people like that, man. You could get bad reactions."

"It's a problem I have."

"I see. Hey, you want to smoke some good herb?"

"No, I've found that it's hazardous to my health."

"Oh. Where are you going, man? I'm just curious about what people do."

"I don't really know. I'll know when I get there, though. I'm trying to find a good place to have a vision."

"A vision... far out. Are you into any particular religion,



man?"

"No. Although you could call me the Last of the American Transcendentalists."

"Like Thoreau and Emerson and those dudes, right? That's pretty heavy. What do you think a transcendentalist is?"

"I don't know. A transcendentalist just transcends whatever's around to transcend."

"Oh. I'm into hatha yoga myself. I do it every morning when I get up. It's very relaxing. You should try it sometime, man. Then me and my dog go for a walk."

"Maybe I'll use it sometime. I don't really get into rituals, though. I think you have to find the Truth yourself. It doesn't mean that much for someone to simply tell you."

"What do you think the Truth is?"

"The Truth is something that's just there, I guess."

The dog started acting restless and whining about something. The hills were becoming small mountains and there was a blue range of real mountains in the distance.

"Hey man, my dog's got to take a leak. I think I'll get off around here, if you don't mind. This area looks just about right. I go where my dog goes."

"You want to get off here?" There was nothing but woods for miles around.

"Sure, man. I got provisions. I'm like you; I have to be alone."

"Well... O.K." Stanley pulled to a stop. Another line of cars had formed behind him and now they were getting past him as fast as they could.

"Whew. There they go again, man." He opened the door. "Come on, Kemper." The dog eagerly leaped out. Before slamming the door,



John the hitchhiker yelled, "Thanks alot for the ride, man, and take it easy. I hope you have a good vision, man." Stanley nodded his head as John the hitchhiker slammed the door and went on his merry way.

Then Stanley was comfortably alone again. Sometimes he didn't like company. He drove on, looking at John and his dog in the rear-view mirror. John followed his dog into the woods.

"Weird dude," Stanley mused.

Stanley pulled into a small supermarket in one of the foothill towns. He was in Rutherford County. He chose Rutherford County because it had a great deal of wooded area and the mountains were high, but not too high. Also Rutherford County was not teeming with tourists like the higher mountains.

He went into the supermarket. He was the only longhair in the place. This made him very nervous. He got some peanuts, cheese, canned food, peanut butter, bread, coffee, and sugar for about a week's provisions. He noticed that most of the people in there were old with pale, leathery skin.

Stanley came to the counter where some old mountaineers were talking. They stopped talking when he was there. An old lady slowly checked his wares one by one on the cash register. Giving him a hard look, she put them in the bag. The old mountain people regarded him silently. Stanley felt very, very nervous.

"Oh, excuse me," he finally blurted out. It was very embarrassing; he hurried out of there.

The mountain people just stared at him and then picked up where they had left off.

Then Stanley started exploring backroads in Rutherford County. It was getting late in the afternoon and he'd have to find a place to

camp pretty soon. What he was trying to do was find an abandoned dirt road where it was safe to park his vehicle. It was illegal for him to park anywhere except for a designated campground full of trailers where they charge three dollars a night. That was too expensive for Stanley; he was going to find someplace where he and his truck could sleep for free.

At one interval, a policecar started following him for several miles. He hoped the officer wouldn't stop him. Somehow it would be very difficult for him to explain what he was doing there. There was no telling what a policeman in those parts might try to slap on him. Stanley drove straight ahead, trying not to make any mistakes in driving. Finally, by the time his hands were visibly trembling, the policecar turned off on another road.

Later, he turned off on a dirt road that went up a rift between two mountains. There was no mailbox, so he assumed it was safe to go up that way. It went along for about two miles and the way was extremely bumpy. Then he reached a dead-end. There was a shanty there. It had a tin roof and it was patched up with cardboard. There was a little sign in the front that said: "NO TRUSPASSING - THIS MEANS YOU". The sign was written with a crayon. Some little mountaineer children stopped playing and stared at him. An old man in long johns was coming out with a shotgun in his hand. Stanley pulled around in a hurry and got out of there. It was hard to find a place to have a vision those days.

He decided to try another dirt road to see where it would go. This one was smaller and didn't appear to have any tracks on it. It wound up and up a large mountain. As the road got higher, it also got more narrow and more difficult to penetrate. There were limbs Stanley had to drive the truck over. It looked like it hadn't been traveled upon for years. He could be assured that it was abandoned

and that nobody else was likely to come up that way. It was just the kind of thing he was looking for.

The road got so small and steep that Stanley was afraid to drive the truck any further. He found a dip in the road and parked towards the side of it. He turned the engine off. The silence was uncanny. It was very late in the afternoon. He would camp around there.

He got out a pack he had made and put it on his back. He picked up the bag of groceries and carried it with him. He decided to follow the rest of the road on foot and check out what was ahead.

The road was very narrow, muddy, and rocky. The woods were very thick; it must have been a primeval forest. The road began to take on the dimensions of a mere horsepath rather than something for automobiles. The elevation kept getting higher and higher; it was a big mountain. Stanley was out of breath from the climb.

He stumbled across a fence that went across the path. It was one of those pioneer fences where the logs are stacked across one another in a zig-zag fashion. Across the path was a log gate where you take the logs out of their slots to get through.

Stanley slid the logs out and got past the fence. At this point, he was a bit worried because he was afraid that the place would be occupied. If it were, he'd have to go back and sleep in the woods. He slipped the logs back in place and went on.

The path leveled off and he appeared to have reached the top of the mountain. It was cold up there and he noticed a wind blowing from the west. Suddenly he came upon an opening. It was a green, grassy meadow filled with buttercups.

And beyond the meadow, was a fantastic view of the main mountain range in the west. They were much higher than the mountain Stanley was standing on and they were faint blue in the distance. A strong wind came from the west, from where that mountain range was. He could

look over the lesser ranges of foothills that led up to this range.

Stanley looked around and could see no houses or inhabitants in that meadow. It was entirely isolated. Stanley hadn't expected this kind of luck in finding a place. He decided to camp there, by the edge of the meadow, facing west.

He set up a tent and rolled out his sleeping bag inside it. Then he ate swiss cheese and peanuts for dinner, while watching the sun setting in the west. It got colder and he had to wrap his jacket tightly around him. Pink rays reached out after the setting of the sun and touched the wisps of clouds above. Stanley knew that he'd been drawn to the right place.

He drank some water and watched the stars appear. A crescent moon hung over the afterglow of the west. Stanley began to feel lonely and soon went to sleep. There was nothing else for him to do; there were no electric lights to keep him awake and entertain him. It was very cold and the Last of the American Transcendentalists had to breathe inside the sleeping bag to keep warm.

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## EXPLORATION TASK FORCE

Stanley woke up in a warm tent. The sunlight had filtered through the cloth having a greenhouse effect. He lay there for awhile; he had had a good sleep. His dreams had been very vivid and intense. He had a few dreams of painful nostalgia - a yearning to be back at the farmhouse and with Emily again. He saw re-run scenes of Charlie Louis "haw-haw-hawing" and of nice summer nights smoking dope in the living room. He dreamed of that clear spring night when he blew up the road. How beautiful was that memorable explosion.

Stanley finally decided to get out of his sleeping bag and see what the world outside was like. It got too warm inside the tent to sleep any longer. Since it was morning, he didn't feel lonely anymore; the daylight was friendly companionship. He crawled out and zipped open the flaps of the tent.

He saw butterflies dancing across the meadow. A gentle wind was blowing from the west. The faraway mountain range looked fresh in the distance. It was cooler outside the tent. There was something sad about the coolness; the time was soon coming for the deep sleep of winter. The few butterflies which remained would dance for the last time.

Stanley stood up and outstretched his arms towards the mountains as if in worship. He concentrated on drawing his energy up his spinal cord into his inner eye of vision. Breathing deeply, he folded his hands over his lower abdomen, then over his heart, then pressed his hands between his eyes, and finally outstretched his arms towards the mountain range. It seemed to be the thing to do and it was a good way to wake up.

He went back into the tent; he did not like to expose himself to the wind too long. He set up his sterno heating kit and poured water

into a pail over it. He set a match to the canned heat and waited for the water to boil. He took a Vivarin while waiting for hot water for his coffee. He made his coffee and went outside with it. He sat on a rock facing the view. Up there, he felt like he was in the sky.

Stanley began thinking about things, as he will, while having his morning coffee. The first thing he remarked to himself was, "Well, here I am."

"Here I am," he went on to remark, "but I can't say I like it as much as I thought I would. This is just the sort of place I would have always dreamed of being at. It's quiet here and there's no civilization up here, but I don't feel content. Maybe the problem is, is that I'm always cluttered up in my mind with a bunch of noisy thoughts and I'm so conditioned by constant activity in that civilization behind me. Back there, I'd have constant daydreams about being in the mountains, but now that I'm here, I actually feel kind of bored. So I sit here chatting to myself to keep myself company. This is stupid.

"You know, I can't figure out what happened between me and Emily. I guess you just can't sustain any kind of relationship for very long. It all seems to boil down to the inevitable tragedy complex. Nothing that's good, seems to last for very long. I just wish that bitch Lorraine didn't have to move in. I don't even know what I did to offend Emily. It just happened.

"So here I am again. You know, it's so peaceful and quiet here, but my mind isn't peaceful and quiet. I'm so tired of the noise in my head. I'm tired of sitting around and having to haggle with my relationships with other people. If only I could shut up, maybe I could appreciate this nice scene here."

Stanley tried to impose silence on himself. He stopped what he was thinking and looked at the mountain range. He could see remote meadows on mountaintops and tiny little farms. On some highway in



in the distance, he heard a truck. He noticed trees at the other end of the meadow, colored red, orange, and yellow, the west wind stirring their branches. A certain impatience tugged at his emotions.

"It's no use. It's like trying to hold my breath. I can't stop talking and thinking. My mind just goes on rattling on and on like a bunch of ping-pong balls in a room full of mousetraps. My life just doesn't seem to make much sense. I don't even know what I'm doing here. So I blew up a road and went out to live on a farm. It's not enough. I don't know what I'm trying to do."

Stanley sat around and drank his coffee. After he had finished one cup of coffee, he went back in the tent to make another. He liked to move slowly in the process of waking up. He went back outside and sat on the same rock. He still kept talking to himself:

"So here I am. Maybe I'm too worried about what to do. Maybe that's the problem. I'm all caught up in the idea that you have to do something. It could be a result of the conditioning of western society. You feel incomplete, if you don't do something. Everybody thinks you're some kind of wash-up if you don't do anything. Why should I do anything? I seem to be incompetant at everything anyway.

"I'd be a terrible mechanic or businessman, and I wouldn't care to be those things anyway. I can't fight and I can't be super-masculine. I can barely make a living and I'm poor. Society seems to hate me because I don't play their game. I have artistic inclinations, but that won't make a living for me. I can't buy land and I can't find peace. I don't know what's wrong with me right now.

"Oh well, I may as well sit here and watch the mountains. I think I'm going to go for a walk in a while. It'll probably take me a while to realize I don't have to be in a hurry anyway. I'm making too much noise by talking outloud and I'm not going to say anything anymore. I came up here to have a vision and silence is the best way



to be ready for it. So starting now, I'm going to be quiet and listen to the silence of these mountains. A one... a two... a three... starting now..." Stanley shut his mouth.

Stanley continued to sit on the rock. It was hard for him to keep quiet. But he figured that before he could tame his thoughts, he'd have to tame his tongue. He was having withdrawal symptoms from being able to talk. He also had withdrawal symptoms from a sense of time. He didn't have any clocks to know what time it was. This made him feel somehow uncomfortable. He didn't know whether it was 10:00 or 12:00. The lack of noise and the lack of walls to be within made him feel lost. It was odd how the habits of civilization followed him up there, even when he didn't need those habits.

Stanley got up and rinsed his coffee cup out with a little water. He buttoned up his coat and decided to go for a walk. There must be a lot of territory to explore around there, he thought. He also had to find a stream somewhere to get water.

He crossed the lush grass of the meadow. He noticed that the grass of high mountain meadows was much greener than it was in low-land fields. Maybe it was because the air was healthier up there. Violets, buttercups, and purple clover flowers were laced in the meadow. Purple, yellow, and green were colors that complemented each other nicely.

On down the mountain, Stanley headed towards the oak trees at the other end of the meadow. Crickets jumped out beneath his feet. He noticed another pioneer fence by the edge of the meadow. The west wind rose and fell. It was a peaceful, Indian summer day. Stanley stopped to look at the view. It was uncanny that he was the only one around the whole place.

There was a gate and he headed towards it. As he was opening it, he had a terribly odd feeling that he had been there before. As a

child, he had always had dreams of high mountains and meadows. He looked up at the sky. There were fleeting wisps of cloud up there. He got past the gate and put the logs back in place.

There was a road that went down the mountain. The road was narrow and it was covered with leaves and acorns. Chipmunks scurried across as Stanley went down. As he went along, the woods got darker. The road circled along the side of the mountain. Stanley could see far down the slope through the trees, but he couldn't see where the bottom was. Stanley became lulled into a kind of mental sleep.

He was jolted awake by the sight of a cabin. There was a stream nearby it. Huge oak trees surrounded the cabin, but the trunks were far apart enough so that Stanley was able to see a view of the western mountain range between them. This was a good find. Stanley had found water and a possible shelter. He decided to check out the cabin.

It was very old and was made out of square-hewed logs glued together by yellowish mud. The door was stuck, but Stanley was able to push it open. It scraped across the floor. The floorboards were aged, but still intact. The windows had panes, although a few were missing.

Stanley crept along the floorboards, very carefully lest a rotten board break beneath him. A lot of garbage covered the floor. The place would have to be cleaned out. There were three rooms. The living room faced the front and had a fireplace. The one to the right rear was a kitchen; there was a hole in the ceiling where the stovepipe had been. There was a bunch of jars piled up in a corner. A lizard scurried beneath the pile when he walked in. The room to the left rear was a bedroom. There was a broken brass bedframe with a rotten mattress on it in that room. Stanley could never understand why people always left their beds behind when they abandon a house.

Stanley walked back into the living room. The floor was fairly

safe to walk on, he considered. There was all that rubbish to clear out, but that could be very easily done. He didn't notice any holes in the roof, so the place would be waterproof. And since no one lived there, he decided to move in. It rained alot in the mountains and the cabin would be more adequate shelter than his tent on the hill. Also, he would be more hidden away at this spot; no one would be likely to intrude upon his meditations.

Later, Stanley was back at the cabin with as much of his camping equipment as he could lug across the meadow. Some of it was from the truck. He drove the truck between some trees and covered it up with branches. He doubted that anyone would go up there, but he wanted to be cautious. He didn't want to get caught for trespassing.

Stanley dumped all his stuff in the middle of the living room. He didn't bother to do anything more with it for the meantime. He got a bottle and went to the stream to get water.

He had to step through mud to get to the stream. The water looked fairly clean. There was a myth going around that there were these creatures called "bacteria" in open water and that they were so small that they could invade your body and make you ill. Stanley had drunk water in the mountains before and hadn't died from it yet, so he didn't believe it.

Stanley brought the water back into the living room. Then he sat on the steps outside the door. It was mid-afternoon; the sun was heading down the sky towards the western range. The wind was blowing harder and the temperature seemed to be dropping slightly. It was cold, but Stanley liked the wild winds. Autumn was more dramatic up there than it was in the lowlands. He began to wish he had a joint to smoke, so he could get into this scene. At the same time, he knew he didn't actually need it; it would probably make him paranoid.

He decided to go for another walk to explore what was around him. The road went past the cabin to follow along the stream. Stanley walked slowly, in apprehension of meeting anyone along the way. He liked to explore roads; it was an absorbing hobby of his. There was no one there but the wind, trees, and a few remaining birds. High in the sky, a crow caw-cawed above him. The crow wondered what brought this human being here.

Stanley could remember a time when he went crow hunting. He went crow hunting with a .22 rifle and a bow and arrow. The crows were always too smart for him. He could never find any crows when he had the rifle; the crows were probably hiding in the bushes. They knew what he was up to. It was always when he walked around without his rifle, that the crows would circle and circle above his head. He tried to shoot crows with his bow and arrow. A crow would be flying horizontally and the arrow would be making an arc towards it. It would look as if the arrow was going to hit it, when the crow would suddenly flap up vertically. It would then fly on as though nothing had happened. He lost many arrows this way. Finally, he gave up and had to acknowledge the intelligence of a crow.

After awhile, the road crossed the stream and Stanley jumped on rocks to get across. The road went uphill and Stanley had to start climbing. At one point, there was a nest of hornets by the road and he carefully avoided it. He had an intense phobia of stinging insects. When he was a kid, he stepped on many wasps with his bare feet; that had something to do with it. As he moved past, the hornets traced slow, lethargic circles about their nest. The cold weather made them sleepy and many of them were going to die.

The road was going up some other mountain. The steep climb made Stanley cough up phlegm; it was hard to get used to. He lost track of how far he'd walked that day. He amused himself by looking at

sights on the way.

The road led up to the top of the mountain. It was not as high as the other one. This time, Stanley saw a log barn and what must have been a cornfield. Stubble and weeds grew over the field. Stanley peeked inside the barn. It had a dirt floor with a big pile of corncobs. There was a trough, so Stanley assumed that this was where they kept their hogs. The field and the barn must have been part of the land where the cabin was. The whole area must have been a subsistence farm.

He couldn't go straight across the field because it was too overgrown with briars. He decided to walk along the side of the field to see what he might run into. The soil in the field was light brown and the field seemed to cover a few acres. Stanley estimated that the whole farm had been abandoned for a few decades. Around the field, were other mountains. Stanley couldn't see the western mountain range, but he could see the other mountain with the meadow on it behind him.

Stanley finally arrived at the far end of the field. At a certain point, he saw something that looked like a path going into the woods. He wasn't sure whether it was a path or a faint mark that looked like a path. He decided to go back and explore it some other time. He went back around the field, trying not to get snagged by the briars. There were no other roads; the place was closed off from all around. Stanley headed on back where he came from.

The same crow that hovered above him before, circled above him now. Maybe he had once tried to shoot this crow with his bow and arrow and that was why it was there now. After all, the crow could have been keeping its eye on Stanley and maybe it had a good reason for doing so. It followed him back, going, "Caw. Caw. Caw," all the way.



Later, Stanley was sitting crosslegged in the meadow and the sun was about to set. He had a blanket wrapped around him and he was humming to himself. The wind's force increased with the drawing on of evening and Stanley had to wrap the blanket tightly around him to keep warm.

He hummed as though he were intoning the sacred syllable "OM", but he hummed it as a melody. First, he hummed the note "A", then, he hummed the note "G", and finally, he hummed the note "C". He hummed it in a very monotonous singsong pattern, concentrating on each note as he hummed it. He hummed various permutations of this theme. It sounded like a very primitive melody, like the sort of songs that the Indians must have hummed to celebrate the rising of the new moon.

He closed his eyes to the wind as he hummed this melody. He opened them to see the red sun touching the rim of the mountain range of the west. The wind grew stronger than before. He closed his eyes again and concentrated on the letter "O" as a circle radiating ever outward and on the letter "M" as the ripples emanating from this original circle. He merged completely into this melody and began to feel that he had done this many times before, that this was a sacred ritual he had once performed regularly in some distant lifetime. He was once a fisherman by the Pacific Northwest and he had chanted farewell to the setting sun. With his arms outstretched, he had stood by the cliffside, facing the great ocean of the west. The sound of his chant was the only sound for miles around.

Stanley opened his eyes again. He was still humming and he was standing up facing the west, his arms outstretched to the forming stars. The crescent moon grinned in the sky and the sun had already set. Venus was within the cusps of the crescent moon. It was much colder than before; Stanley could see his breath. He stopped humming. There was an awesome silence. Stanley couldn't remember how he came

to be standing up, when not long ago he was sitting down. He shivered; it was very weird. There was yet a red glow on the horizon.

He wrapped the blanket tightly about him and went down the mountain. He went to the cabin where he had his sleeping bag rolled out. In the darkness, he had himself a meal of peanut butter sandwiches. He soon went to bed; it was too cold to stay awake.

While he dreamed, the crescent moon slowly sank behind the mountains.

Demo (Visit <http://www.pdfsplitmerger.com>)



## DAYDREAMS (on rainy days)

Stanley woke up to the sound of raindrops pattering on the tin roof of the cabin. He was securely huddled up in his sleeping bag, lying on top of his tent as a kind of mattress. The cabin had a funny smell of dried rubble. The rain was coming down hard on the roof. The clouds had gathered while Stanley was asleep.

Stanley got up, shivering to warm himself. He hadn't slept particularly well that past night; he had the creeps about lying by himself in that abandoned cabin. He had a vague fear of rattlesnakes or rats being in that place. What if some insect decided to have him for dinner? At times in the night, he started imagining that little bugs were crawling all over his skin and he kept scratching at them. He also kept having some idea that there were ghosts and demons in the place. Perhaps the cabin was a trap set up exclusively for him.

Stanley set up his coffee-making kit and prepared his morning coffee. He was glad that it was daytime again. The light of the day seemed to disperse any evil spirits that might be hovering around.

He slowly woke up on the speeding effects of the coffee and sugar. It was a cold and rainy day. Taking note of this fact, he resigned himself to being inside the cabin. He was glad he was not outside in a tent. He thought things to himself for amusement:

Stanley wondered if maybe he ought to go back. He wasn't sure what he was doing there. What did he expect to accomplish there anyway? Stanley always seemed to be doing a bunch of crazy things for nothing. And besides, it was raining and he was cold.

It occurred to him how ironic it would be if all of a sudden, the whole city of Charlotte got wiped out by an A-bomb. At least, that would have given him a good purpose for coming up into those mountains. But then, he'd be completely on his own to somehow try

to survive in the woods. He wasn't sure if he was ready for that kind of change.

For some reason, for the past few years, Stanley always felt that there was some great purpose for his life. But he always kept going from one thing to another. He kept hoping that he would finally arrive at a point where it would all come together at once. Somehow that point kept eluding him. Maybe there was no such thing as a point where he would get it all worked out. Yet he clung to a certain premonition that there was a purpose for the chain of events he was going through.

For example, when he quit school and lived on the farm, he felt that that was the point where he had resolved all his life's problems. He thought he had finally found the place that he was headed for all along. But things didn't work out so smoothly there either, so he felt compelled to go to the mountains and thus he wound up in that cabin. It was like things kept fluctuating over and over again and there was no final resting place. Exasperated, Stanley tried to figure it all out. But maybe, also, there was no point where he could figure it all out; he was doomed to be caught up in endless chains of thoughts, arriving at no final conclusions.

But Stanley got bored with this. He had tried to figure everything out many times before, and found that it was no use. He couldn't figure out whether life was an absurd joke or whether it was a serious trial. Questions like that were on the same level as trying to prove or disprove the existence of a Cosmic Intelligence. It was no use. He might never know until he died - until the whole personality called "Stanley Yuban" dissolved away.

He entertained himself by poking through the junk in the cabin while having his second cup of coffee. He was curious to see if he could reconstruct the life of whoever lived there before him. Be-

neath a pile of clothes, he found a faded, old envelope with the name "Jamey Bynum" on it. The name was written in pencil. The envelope was dated "1947". There was no letter inside. Somewhere around 1947, Jamey made up his mind to go and dropped his garbage on the floor.

There was also a little paper container concerning hospital insurance for only 25¢ a month. On the container, was a picture of a happy man in a hospital with his leg in a cast. He was happy because he had paid his insurance. The paper container said that all you have to do is drop a quarter in it, send it off, and all will be well. Stanley wished it were still that cheap; he couldn't afford hospital insurance. If he got sick, he'd just have to die.

Digging deeper into the rubble, he found a picture near the bottom. It was a moldy, worm-eaten photograph of Jamey Bynum himself. Jamey Bynum was a black man and he looked like he was coming to the end of his days in the photograph. He was wearing a black suit and he had gold teeth. He looked very proud, all dressed up in the finest clothes he had. Jamey Bynum probably never had his picture taken very much.

Jamey Bynum was probably married and had three children. His children slept in the living room, while Jamey Bynum and his wife had life's fleeting pleasures in the privacy of their bedroom. His children learned about the facts of life while listening to them at night. Jamey and his wife were loud and sometimes they had arguments.

Jamey Bynum's father was probably a newly-freed slave following the Civil War. Jamey Bynum's father was too young to <sup>know</sup> what "free" was, when someone came and informed him that he was "free". Jamey Bynum's father didn't understand what was going on; he was set free in a world that he didn't have any idea how to adjust to. Later, Jamey Bynum's father paid his rent by living and working on a tobacco farm.

Well, Jamey decided he wasn't going to pick tobacco all his life long and be a hired slave in a white man's country. So he saved up what money he could and took off to the mountains. And he lived happily ever after.

Well, not completely, but relatively. There were times when he wasn't sure if he and his family were going to get enough to eat. There was also a time when they had to lay low while a band of K.K.K. men, trying to reconstruct the South, passed by. Jamey would get into arguments with his growing children about why they couldn't go to the lowlands. He had a hard time trying to make them understand that they just wouldn't find life easy there.

But Jamey was a good man. When some of the people nearby needed an extra hand, they could always ask Jamey. Jamey was a good handyman. Jamey was a good father and a good husband. Jamey lived a good life. Jamey had cornbread and pork eight or nine months out of every twelve.

When Jamey's oldest son reached the age of fourteen, he sat on the front steps and thought about how boring life was on that dumb farm. He thought his father was all looney about how terrible it was back in the lowlands; he didn't think his father knew what he was talking about. Jamey's oldest son was curious about what it was like in the cities. He heard that they had apartments with running water and built-in heat. You didn't have to chop wood or fetch water from the stream. Those apartments, he heard, had electricity and you could have music and lights with just the flick of a switch. This all sounded like a good thing to Jamey's oldest son, so he ran away that very night. He never came back. That was the talk of the family for years.

The end of the day was coming. Stanley quit daydreaming about Jamey Bynum and his mind drifted to other things. He opened the front

door and sat by it, looking at what was going on outside. The rain was washing the mud away in what used to be Jamey Bynum's front yard. Stanley could not see the mountains because of the fog and the rain. He daydreamed and watched the rain; there was plenty of it to watch.

The next three days were more or less the same as that first day. It rained and rained again, the drops pattering like thousands of tiny feet on the tin roof. The sound of the raindrops intruded into Stanley's dreams; he kept hearing the roar of an enraged mob of peasants trying to storm into the King's castle. They were fed up. Stanley spent most of his time sleeping, drinking coffee, and daydreaming. There were times when he felt an overwhelming urge to go back, but something held him there. He was beginning to enjoy the luxury of doing nothing at all. Emily was probably getting worried about what happened to him. He decided to let her.

An interesting idea occurred to Stanley. There were two classes of people who had absolute leisure, he decided, the extremely rich and the extremely poor. Both classes didn't work at all. One class didn't need to make a living and the other class didn't bother to make a living. The poor people just lived, leaving it up to the cardio-respiratory system to keep them alive. The extremely rich busted ass to get that way. After about forty to fifty years of stress, they finally got to enjoy it at the end of their lives. But they were not really free; they had to worry about their stocks or something like that. They had to worry about someone else trying to get what they had.

The extremely poor just didn't bother to do anything; they didn't give a fuck. They just lay around and waited for their welfare check to come along. They didn't eat very much and some of them didn't even have a roof over their head. Wearing rags didn't bother them very

much. When winter came, they either froze or migrated to a warmer climate. They ate whatever came along and tried to live in places where they didn't have to pay rent. When something went wrong with their health, they either tried to cure it themselves or went to some clinic. If that didn't work, they just let it go. Unfortunately, there were times when they had to work, but they didn't do that for very long. And the poorer they were, the less they needed to live on. They thrived on cheap thrills like sex, food, and alcohol to make their short lives more bearable. A few popped pills and things like that. Some traveled around. Others didn't do anything at all.

And that was how Stanley was living. It wasn't too bad; he just didn't give a fuck. He felt sorry for the wretched middle class who live a neurotic lifestyle of work, work, work to maintain their nice standard of living. It was simply a matter of what you wanted to do with and what you wanted to do without. You can be a "have" and have to work hard for it or you can be a "have-not" and not work at all. It all depended on your point of view.

At the end of each day, Stanley sat by the open door and hummed his meditation song. The rainy sky turned from grey to blue to black. Time seemed to go by more and more slowly, until the pendulum came to a stop and there wasn't any more time. Stanley got bored, but it was too wet to go back to his truck. Sometimes, he stepped out to get a breath of fresh air and to take a leak. He watched the ragged clouds go by. On a leafless branch, a lonely crow sat, its feathers shaking drops of rain off.

During the nights, Stanley tried to sleep despite the invisible bugs that crawled all over him. He kept getting an eerie feeling that the ghost of Jamey Bynum was creaking in a rocking chair, playing his harmonica by the fireplace.



## IRREVOCABLY LOST

On the morning of the fourth day in the cabin, Stanley was sitting on the front steps, drinking his coffee. He still didn't know what he was doing there. He didn't know what happened to Jamey Bynum. He didn't know why the sky was blue. And what's more, Stanley didn't give a fuck. If you were to ask him if he was worried about Emily, he'd answer, "I don't give a fuck." If you were to ask him whether or not he had had his vision, he would declare, "I don't give a fuck."

Stanley sat around, taking his time. He wasn't going anywhere. He didn't know what time it was or even what date it was. Sometimes he lost track of his thoughts. The long days of doing nothing had done that to him.

It had stopped raining that day. The clouds had lifted up and occasionally Stanley could see a faint patch of blue between them. The clouds stretched into a horizontal plane extending to the western mountain range, barely touching the tips of their peaks. Stanley was surprised to wake up that morning without the sound of the footsteps of the little rain people on the tin roof.

As Stanley looked at the clearing day, he thought about how he'd like to forget about everything else and just stay there. No one would ever bother him there. If he bought just food, he could live on \$60 a month. He could sell his truck and live in the mountains all winter long. This was just the kind of thing he had always been looking for - uninterrupted leisure and scenery that was like paradise.

There was a time when he wanted to buy land, but he found it was prohibitively expensive. The cities were consuming more and more land and it was becoming more and more difficult to live in the country. Because of this, Stanley found it difficult to keep from going insane. Then he found he could rent a cheap farmhouse in the country.



But it was only semi-country really; there were too many power lines and highways. There was too much barbed wire and tractors. But now, he could just live there in real wilderness territory for free. And why not?, he considered.

After he was finished with his coffee, he decided to take a walk. He put on his heavy army boots and began trudging through the mud. He had alot to think about.

The crow started following him again.

He got to the path he wanted to explore. Maybe it would lead him to a better place. He might find a more obscure way to penetrate in and out of the land that the cabin was on than the road. Stanley had to be sneaky when he was living in the country without paying any rent. It was illegal to live somewhere without paying rent or owning the place you lived on. He slipped through the briars of the path. He had to concentrate very closely to make sure he was on the path; its markings were very faint.

It occurred to him how ironic it was that a hundred years ago, land was one of the least expensive commodities around and that now it was the most impossible thing to afford. In those days, you could get land for a few dollars an acre and now land went for a few thousand dollars an acre. You had to be filthy rich to live in the country now. Another ironic thing was that in those days people wanted to leave their farms and go to the cities and now people would sacrifice anything to get a few acres in the country. It was all like rats jumping off a sinking ship. Stanley Yuban considered himself a fugitive from a collapsing civilization. The days that the futurists were looking forward to were there now.

The path was level for awhile and then went downhill. Water dripped off the leaves and Stanley got wet. He had to pick his way

through briars and step over fallen branches. There was nothing like a natural obstacle course to get the blood circulating through his veins.

He arrived at a small clearing in the woods and sat on a rock. He wondered where his life was going to. He also hoped that it wouldn't rain again. It looked like it was going to clear up, though. A sparrow was singing on a tree; it was happy about the change in the weather. He got up and continued to follow the path. It went back into the woods.

It was late in the afternoon when Stanley got to the pile of coal dust. The clouds were dispersing and he could see the half-moon rising in the direction away from the sun. He had stumbled upon an abandoned mine and there was a tremendous pile of coal dust there. There was a blown-open hole in the side of a mountain and there was a lagoon within the hole. A road led away from the mine. There were all kinds of funny things to explore around that countryside, he considered.

He sat by the big hole and shouted into it to hear his echoes. The water in the lagoon was very clear and there were fish swimming around in the depths. It looked like the bottom opened up into an underwater cave receding far into the bowels of the mountain. Stanley looked into that void deep in the waters and began to hum, "MMM-MMMM..." The vibrations of his humming reverberated within the walls of the cave. It sounded interesting and he kept on humming to increase the rate of the reverberations.

"Stay!", a voice in Stanley's head spoke.

"Who are you?" Stanley asked.

"Trust me," the voice answered.

"Why should I stay anywhere?" Stanley responded. He shrugged his

shoulders and got up to go. He had been by himself in those mountains too long; now he was hearing voices in his head. It could have been a demon trying to lure him into the depths of the water.

Stanley briefly wondered whether he should explore further up the road or go on back. He decided to go on; he'd find his way back okay. Stanley never got lost; he only got bewildered. The moon would provide illumination if it got dark on him.

The road went uphill between two mountains. There were no recent tire tracks on it. Stanley couldn't understand why everything was abandoned around there. He was beginning to fear that it had something to do with him. He looked behind him to make sure.

Then, going off the road to the left, was something that looked like a horsepath. It crossed a stream, then went straight up the mountain. The water in the stream looked clear enough to drink, so Stanley sampled some before going up.

It was a steep climb and Stanley had to be careful not to slip on the mud. The path zig-zagged up the mountain and was overgrown in places. At the last lap of the climb, Stanley had to scale over some rocks. Then he arrived at a crag.

The west wind was blowing hard and the clouds were completely swept away. The sun had already set and there was reddish-orange glow left along the horizon. The half-moon was above Stanley's head. The western mountain range was a deep blue in the distance. He turned around and he could see all the way to the mountain with the meadow. The sky was turning darker and stars were beginning to appear.

He stretched out his arms and began to hum his meditation song to the mountains. As it got darker and darker, he felt a peculiar oneness with the moon and the wind. He was immersed in the experience.

When he was finished, he looked up at the star-studded sky with

the half-moon in the center. It was completely dark and he began to think about heading back. Then it occurred to him that he didn't have a flashlight and that he would never be able to trace the path back in the dark. He was a long way from his sleeping bag and food, and he was stuck there. What was he going to do?

Well, he decided, he would freeze if he stayed up there on the crag. It was getting icy cold and the wind was blowing hard enough to nearly knock him off the crag. He decided to head back in the direction of the road even if it meant going straight through the woods. He took one last look at the western mountain range and tried to find the path.

He slipped on the rocks going down. The half-moon barely gave light and it was heading away to the other side of the mountain so that one side would be in darkness. Stanley tried to hurry before that happened. He had trouble deciding where the path was; his night vision wasn't very good. He followed it as closely as he was able to. There were spots that were more narrow than the way he remembered them. Then clouds came and obscured the faint light of the moon. Stanley couldn't remember where the curves of the path were. He went straight on down.

Before he knew it, he was surrounded by bushes and trees. His face kept getting scraped by invisible branches. He tried to find his way back to wherever the path was, but tangles of bushes stood on guard behind him. The more he tried to find his way back, the more he went around in circles. Then he slipped and skidded down an unseen slope. The worst had happened. He was irrevocably lost.

AN INTERVAL FOLLOWS HERE IN WHICH STANLEY YUBAN STUMBLES HELPLESSLY THROUGH THE BRUSH, CURSING THE BLIND ELEMENTS AND REGRETTING THE DAY HE WAS BORN, HOWLING AT LIGHTS IN THE DARK.

Stanley tripped over a rock and fell flat on his face. He was sobbing; it was cold and he was hungry. There was no food to eat and nowhere to sleep. Then he noticed the fire.

He didn't understand why he hadn't noticed it before. It was so obvious and there it was - right in the middle of the woods. The fire meant warmth and food. But it could also mean enemies. Stanley approached the fire like an alien in the darkness and like a moth fluttering to its fate.

There were two figures sitting by the fire. They looked incredibly familiar. Stanley couldn't figure out what it was that was so familiar about them. It was only when he had crept closely enough, when he realized that it was the lone trucker and his Master. It was terribly, terribly strange. They had a teapot warming up over the fire.

"Come in. Come in and join us. We've been expecting you," the lone trucker greeted him.

Stanley stepped with the circular clearing where the fire was. "Expecting me?" he queried.

"You seem to walk into the right situations at the right time," his Master replied. "But, of course, it was all timed to happen that way anyway."

"This... this... is a right situation?"

"But you have to ask the right questions," the lone trucker said, shaking his head. He threw a stick in the fire.

"I... I don't understand," Stanley stammered.

"But, of course, you don't. You don't even know who you are, do you?" his Master answered. "You can't even stand still. Sit down; you're making me nervous."

Stanley sat by the fire. "But... but I don't even know what I'm doing here. Everything's so cold and I'm so confused. Nothing makes

any sense and I can't figure anything out." Stanley suddenly broke down and wept profusely.

"A chronic condition of mortals," his Master mused. "Do you think he's ready now?" He directed this question to the lone trucker.

"Yeah, he's ready."

Stanley stopped crying and said, "That's the whole problem. You all think you can just sit around and say whether I'm ready or not. You just sit here and wait until I'm this far out and say I'm ready. Ready? Ready for what?" Stanley began to stand up.

BLIND WITH RAGE, STANLEY YUBAN STANDS UP AND SCREAMS AT THE MOON. STANLEY YUBAN DOES NOT CARE WHETHER HE IS READY OR NOT, AND THIS MAKES HIM MAD, DAMN MAD.

"Damned tooting!" Stanley replied.

"Will you please sit down, Stanley. We don't have all night."

"All right, all right." Stanley sat down. "I admit. I can't figure anything out. I tried, I tried to be oblivious of this, but I can't go on anymore. Please do something for me. I can't help myself."

His Master yawned. "Very well. I will remind you that you came up to these mountains to have a vision. This is quite appropriate because you have gone through a series of changes which render you ready for such an experience. Everything that happens to you, even your mental condition, is the most perfect thing that could possibly happen to you at the time. Therefore, you are ready for the cup." The Master gave the lone trucker a significant glance. "He's ready for the cup."

"It has been a long and difficult journey," the lone trucker said, gazing into the fire. He picked out a certain earthenware cup



out of his bag and poured the tea into it. The tea had a peculiar purple color and seemed to glow. The lone trucker handed it to Stanley, saying, "This will help you traverse the rest of the journey to the stars. It will enable you to be cut loose from time and space for awhile. You will come back somewhat changed."

Stanley couldn't wait. Eagerly, he imbibed the contents; they warmed his belly and he did not feel cold anymore. Nor did he feel hungry. As a matter of fact, he began to hear a humming inside his head and the face of the lone trucker seemed to dissolve away.

"Bye, bye now," the lone trucker's fading face said, with barely the hint of a smile.

Demo (Visit <http://www.pdfsplitmerger.com>)



## STANLEY'S VISION

Stanley found himself standing on a vast space balcony. It was a huge horizontal plane floating in space seeming to extend towards infinity. Beyond it, were the stars and the crescent moon. The stars formed into a vast array of geometric patterns - triangles, rectangles, circles, spirals. The stars were bright and multicolored - orange, red, green, purple, blue. The light of the crescent moon was curiously subdued and there was a bluish-white five-pointed star within its cusps. Rainbow-like colors rippled across the face of the stars.

There was an incredible humming sound all around, seeming to come from the space balcony and from the stars. It was like the hum of a huge power transformer or like a strange and fascinating chord on a moog synthesizer. It was almost musical; it was the primal chord from which all music arose; it contained all the diverse notes of all the different scales merged into this one magnificent hum - the grand opus, opera of the universe.

Standing on that platform, Stanley was bathed in that single whirlybird-like hum - mesmerized by the colors of the stars. There seemed to <sup>be</sup> icy space winds all about him. It was unbearably intense. It was like being back at the point where the whole universe began. The stars seemed to move ever so slightly.

Then a little disc-like spaceship suddenly appeared out of the sky and landed on the platform near Stanley. It seemed to beckon him to come. A door slowly slid open. It wanted him to come in. The humming and the space winds were too much for him. Stanley walked across the glazed material of the space platform and entered the ship. The ship had a sleek design; it was the sportscar of spaceships.

There was somebody at the control board. The door slid shut behind Stanley and the ship took off. The acceleration didn't throw him

off balance; there must have been gravitation controls. Through a small front window above the control board, Stanley could see that the ship was heading a bit to the right of the crescent moon and the five-pointed star. The driver didn't say anything.

"Who are you and where are we going?" Stanley finally asked.

The driver gave a peculiar chuckle. "Those are rather typical questions, wouldn't you say?" He didn't even turn his head.

"Well, I was just curious."

The driver put the controls in automatic and turned around. He had long hair cut half-way down the ears and a pointed goatee. He wore purple egg-shaped granny glasses. Instead of eyes behind the granny glasses, Stanley saw two tiny flames of scarlet fire burning. "I suppose I may as well explain a few things to you." He kept grinning insanely. "I am, you might say, a technician. I manipulate things behind the scenes. I operate the warp and woof of time and space. I lurk between the dimensions and deliver freight between them. I make minor adjustments every now and then to make sure everything's functioning okay. I have been assigned to take you to a, ahem!, preparation ground. I'm afraid I can't divulge any more details. Do you understand?"

"I guess so," Stanley replied. The ship gave off an eerie whirling sound.

"Good. Let me show you to your room." He got out of his seat. Stanley noticed that he had gloved hands with claws on them.

"O.K."

The driver pushed a button and a door slid open. He led Stanley into a room with a waterbed and a sky window. The room was medium-sized. The sky window was large and rectangular; it hung directly above the waterbed.

"You will find everything you need in here. You will spend the

rest of your journey in here. You can lie back and watch the stars go by. There is a stereo by your bedside if you want to hear some good music. If you need anything, just call me through this speaker and button here. Well, I hope you enjoy your flight." His expression did not change from that insane grin, like a kid fascinated with making bizarre explosives. He left. The door slid closed behind him.

There was only a blue light above the door and the light of the stars through the sky window. Stanley lay on the waterbed and looked up at the stars. They were much brighter and clearer than back on earth. At the way the stars were moving by, Stanley judged they were going very fast.

He plugged in a tape. None of the tapes were familiar to him. They had strange and alien symbols on them. Immediately, an unusual celestial music played. It was not unlike what he had heard on the space balcony. There were no vocals except a chorus of some sort, singing in no earthly language. It was good space music, rare and fantastic. There was a whirling hum that pervaded it. It must have been what the original music of the spheres was all about.

Stanley lay on the waterbed and looked out through the sky window. Once he saw a huge red star with about twelve planets. Another time, he saw an icy blue star too bright to look at directly. There was a black hole where matter and anti-matter had exploded into one another. He saw lonely stretches of space and galaxies forming and colliding like huge snake tails coiling out into the cosmos. After a very, very long time, he fell asleep to the stars and the music.

He woke up to a strange yellowish-green light falling on him through the sky window. The sky was a dark greenish-blue with bright yellow clouds. A voice through the speaker announced: "O.K. Time to get up. We're here." The door slid open.

Stanley walked out, rubbing his eyes. "Where are we?" The outside door was open. The air was warm and not unpleasant to breathe. Outside was a field with yellowish-brown soil. There were patches of what could be called eucalyptus trees here and there. The terrain looked like an African savannah.

"I think you will find that the landscape explains itself. Well, out you go. I haven't got all day."

"Well... all right. Bye then." Stanley wasn't sure that he wanted to go out there.

The driver looked around and grinned. "You enjoy yourself. Look. There's a wide world out there for you to explore. So go on out and get yourself some sunshine and fresh air. It'll be good for you."

Stanley stepped out onto the dry grass. The door slid closed behind him and the spaceship took off. He was on his own. He had nowhere to go. He looked up. There was a green sun in the sky. The light was more subdued than on his own planet.

Stanley had nothing better to do than walk across the field before him. It was a hot day and Stanley noticed he was getting thirsty. The field was very large. His feet sunk in the dirt. Then he saw someone working the field about a mile off. There was a shack of eucalyptus wood nearby the man.

It took alot of wading through plowed dirt to get to him. When Stanley got near enough, he yelled, "I say, man, would you by any chance have some water to whet my dry throat?"

The farmer turned around. He had a black face. He was none other than Jamey Bynum. Jamey was grinning; he had the same gold teeth that he had back in Rutherford County. "Why I shore do. Here you go, suh." He handed Stanley a goatskin bag.

Stanley tilted it up and guzzled. It was a good grape wine. He wiped his mouth and asked, "What are you doing here, Jamey?"

Stanley had been told that the land was good for the people.

Jamey kept dropping seeds in holes that he'd poked in the ground. "Why shucks, suh. I live here now. It's shore better than where I lived before."

Stanley looked up at the green sun. "Yeah, I guess you could say that. But I have to remark... you sure had some nice land back on earth, Jamey."

"Yep. Had to leave it, though."

"I guess we all do, Jamey. By the way, you wouldn't know who you passed your land on to, would you? That's nice land and I wonder who owns it now. It's abandoned."

"Don't reckon I know. I didn't leave no will. You can have it, if you want to. I ain't planning on going back. You see, no one bothers me around here."

"Gee, that's awfully nice of you, Jamey. But what is this place anyway?"

"Why, I reckon this is paradise, suh. Shore is nice, though. Ever since I've come, no one's been around to bother me. I just plants these seeds here and I has me a good harvest all the time."

"It sounds great, Jamey."

"Yep, shore is. Ain't nothing like the good life."

"Can I really have your land, Jamey? I mean, it's the best abandoned land I ever lay my eyes upon."

"Why, shore you can. I ain't got no call for it no more."

"Jamey, you're a nice guy. How can I ever thank you?"

"Shucks, you don't have to thank me. Just take good care of it and it'll take care of you."

"Bless you, Jamey. Well, I want to wander around this planet and see what they put me here for. I'm glad to see that you're happy, Jamey."

"Why shore, suh. I hope you find what you're looking for, suh."

The whole area was like a semi-desert. There were rolling hills and clumps of eucalyptus trees. Stanley was heading for a group of mountains he saw in the distance. It would be cooler up there. He was heading now for what looked like an oasis.

Among the eucalyptus trees around the oasis, Stanley saw his Master. He was lying against a tree trunk, looking very relaxed.

"How are you doing, sir?" Stanley asked.

"I'm very fine, Stanley. Get yourself a drink of water and sit down awhile. You have plenty of time to get to where you're going."

Stanley splashed water on his face and wet his throat. Then he sat by his Master. A faint wind was blowing.

"I suppose you're wondering what's happening here, aren't you?"

"You might say so, sir."

"Very well, then. You have come a long way. Each phase you went through was absolutely necessary. Let us review each phase:

"First of all, you lived in an apartment in the city. Although you hated it, you continued to live there out of a kind of inertia which prevented you from going anywhere else. You went to school, participating in a progressive educational program. You tried to prove yourself an artist, a writer, but you failed because you were aware that intellectual activity accomplishes essentially nothing in itself. Your work was uninspired; it was simply technique play. You knew this all along.

"In your frustration, you began to do large doses of drugs. This only aggravated your problems. You became lost in a world where you were unable to distinguish reality from fantasy. You began to turn more and more bitter, deciding that life is all some kind of absurd joke. You began to explore the world of insanity and all its repercussions.

"You hated the city where you lived and felt powerless to get



out. You let yourself feel powerless. You began to blame the government and the industrial complex for your predicament. You felt revengeful and pinpointed your revenge on the road that you blew up.

"This was simultaneously the best thing you did and the most stupid thing you did. We were surprised that you'd actually have the nerve to do what was originally a fantasy. In this, you proved yourself capable of action. It was also abominably stupid, because it left no marked effect on the structure of the industrial complex as a whole. That will collapse of its own accord. They could have killed you.

"You finally realized this. You formed a responsible relationship with Emily, quit school, and lived on the farm. You learned how to live on the land. You formed a more basic lifestyle. You also quit doing drugs, which surprised us even more than your action of blowing up the road. You began to realize that you can control your environment by chasing the Johnson brothers out. That was very good.

"But somehow it was not enough. Something went wrong between you and Emily. You needed something to replace what you threw away. That is why you drove to the mountains. You are searching for the meaning of life. Do you follow what I have said so far?"

"Indeed, sir, I do. I never saw it as clearly before as I see it now. This is the best session I've had with you yet. Please go on, sir. Enlighten me."

"Very well, then. Now I am going to tell you about your future. It may or may not happen exactly as I tell it now, but it is very likely to happen the following way:

"First of all, your relationship with Emily is very significant. It is important for you to know someone else besides yourself. You must go back and learn to relate to her. You will find her a bit changed. She is a deeper person and she misses you. You must also

relate to Lorraine as well. Each person who comes into your life is very important, no matter how varied they may be from you.

"Two or three people will come and go in the farmhouse while you are there. You will stay there during the winter. When spring comes, you will move to that land in the mountains you have discovered. That land is now yours. You have staked a claim to it.

"After you are well settled in the mountains, an atomic bomb will destroy the city where you come from. There will be a famine in the lowlands, but you will be self-sufficient by then. You and Emily and Kent Daniels.

"Kent Daniels will return. He will have very much money and you will form a small commune on your land. You will build wind generators and an advanced greenhouse. You will build houses that are able to trap solar energy. Someone will join you who has knowledge of these things. After the destruction has occurred to a large part of the world, you and your children will go out and begin a new, more advanced society. The blueprints will be provided for you.

"And now, you must head for those mountains you see ahead. You have something you must experience. This is all for your own good and for those who follow you."

Stanley shook his head in amazement. It all sounded exactly as it should be. That was the way he always wanted it to be. He said, "Thank you, Master." And he went on his way.

His Master lay back and bathed in the rays of the green sun. He had nothing more to worry about; Stanley would get there.

Stanley came upon a straw hut by a road he was following. A pretty girl about thirteen years old came out. She had long dark hair and a fine small body. She was wearing an Indian dress. She took his hand and led him into the hut. How could Stanley resist?

She slipped off her dress; she wasn't wearing anything underneath. She said, "I want you to fuck me." She cupped her breasts in her hands.

Stanley saw no reason why not. He took off his clothes and they embraced each other for a long time. Hotly, they made love, breathlessly and soundlessly.. After they finished, they lay still, looking up at the straw roof. A mynah bird overhead called out from a eucalyptus tree.

The girl sat up. "I am here to teach you the essence of sexuality. On your planet, too much emphasis is placed on words. When you experience sex, you must experience it silently. You must feel one with it in every cell of your body.

"The problem with your race is that they feel that sex and spirit are necessarily contradictory to one another. Sexuality is spirit merged in body. Spirit and matter are never more one with one another than in the act of sexuality. It is the union of opposites where the two struggle to become one and ultimately create something beyond them. Even electrons and protons have sex - the electrons love to circle around the protons. Together, they form an atom. They could not exist without one another.

"You must experience sex to the hilt before you can ultimately pass through it having understood it. Therefore," she smiled, raising her legs, "you must eat me."

Stanley spent a few days there and all they did was make love. She taught him every single posture and variety of lovemaking, then taught him tantric yoga. He had to meditate on male and female while being inside her. He was not allowed to come. When he was able to do this for three hours, she let him go.

She gave him a charm to remember him by. It was a small disk with a blue gem in the center. From the center, four rays in four

directions were engraved. She said it was a love charm.

Stanley continued following the road. He was closer to the mountains now. The landscape began to change. It was more wooded with familiar-looking trees. There were clear streams. Once he spotted a unicorn in the distance.

"Ha!" someone yelled and jumped out. It was a highwayman dressed in gold and leather clothes. "Where are you going!" He was laughing and had a sword pointed towards him.

"I'm going to those mountains if it is any of your business," Stanley replied.

"To get there," he said, laughing all the while, "you'll have to fight me." A sword appeared in his other hand. "Here, catch!" He threw it towards Stanley and the sword found its way into his hand.

"But I don't know how to fight," Stanley muttered, helplessly looking at the sword in his hand.

"You'll do okay," the highwayman replied, "and I would strongly advise you to use it now!"

So Stanley clashed swords with him. The steel flashed green rays in the sun. To his surprise, he knew exactly how to handle the sword. It was amazing. They kept parrying back and forth against each other, jumping all over the road, kicking up dust. The highwayman was left open for a second and Stanley rammed the sword through his leather vest. Blood spurted out and the highwayman fell to the dust.

"How terrible. I killed him," Stanley thought. He had never killed anyone before.

"Not yet, have you," the highwayman burst out laughing. The blood poured back into his wound and he was not dead anymore. "I'm a magician. Nothing can kill me. I can do all kinds of things. Can you do this?" He picked up his sword and pointed it at a huge rock.

Lightning flashed forth from the sword and melted the rock.

"Well, I can try," Stanley said. He pointed his sword at a smaller rock and found he could do it.

"My purpose is to teach you about power. Power is very useful thing; you always need a little bit of it to get around. So, if you stick around for awhile, I'll teach you everything I know."

Stanley spent a few days with the magician in his forest. He taught him astral projection, levitation, mind reading, mind control, hypnosis, mind over matter, teleportation, astrology, and the secret of immortality. Soon, he learned to hop like a rabbit over huge patches of woods. It was a lot of fun. He could wish up anything he wanted. After awhile, though, it seemed monotonous to get everything you wanted. He said goodbye to the magician.

"Before you go," he said, "remember these words and remember them well: Never use your powers unless it's absolutely necessary and only if it's beneficial. And never, never misuse them. If you do, the Man will get you and you'll get turned into a rock. Otherwise, you're okay. Bye now." Stanley

Stanley took leave and hopped along to the mountains. After awhile, he began to prefer walking again. He could see more scenery that way.

Stanley finally arrived to where the mountains were. At the foot of a high mountain was a little village. The road went through the village and up the huge mountain. Stanley could see a light behind the peak. The light seemed to pulsate and gave off bright rays of illumination.

All the people in the village seemed to be very happy. It was a simple village with a shoe shop, a bakery, a farmer's market, and the usual businesses you would expect a simple village to have. It

even had a town fool and a minstrel. Stanley could not understand why all the people were so merry as they went about their business. They must be preparing for a celebration of some sort, Stanley decided.

The town fool was uttering profound idiocies and the minstrel was standing on top of a small box, playing his lute and singing. He was putting verse to music, making the music fit the mood of the verse. It was beautiful to listen to. He sang of happy days in far-away valleys, of elves and dragons and unicorns. He sang of noble knights on sacred quests. It occurred to Stanley that these people were a race descended from Atlantis.

Stanley came up to the minstrel and asked, "Excuse me; I hope you'll excuse me."

The minstrel stopped playing and smiled. "Anytime, my friend, anytime. What would you like to ask me?"

"Can you tell me why everybody here is so happy? I've never seen anything like it. Is there a special festival coming up?"

The minstrel smiled broadly and said, "No festival, my friend. We are always like this. We are so happy because God is up there." And he pointed to the mountain peak where the light was coming from.

"Can I find God up there?" Stanley asked.

"Indeed you can, my friend. Everybody can. Go on your way and God bless you. It is so wonderful; God is there and that gives us so much joy. My friend, if you will harken to me for a minute, I will sing you a song about God." He strummed his lute and sang.

It was a beautiful song. Stanley stood in awe about what he saw around him. He had to find whatever it was that made them so happy. He pushed his way on through the crowd and went on along the road. It spiralled on up around the mountain. Stanley wound around the curves. The road was carved out of the side of a cliff. He had to stay close to one side of the road because there was a sheer precipice on the



other side.

It took him a little longer to get up that mountain than he anticipated. It was a steep climb and there were peculiar changes in the weather. Clouds came by and made it difficult for him to see the road. Rain, sleet, and snow fell upon him. He had to crawl along the sides of the cliff to avoid getting knocked off by the fierce winds that swept the mountain. A few times he had to jump across a gap where the road had eroded away. Another time, the road was just a little footpath and he had to hug the cliffside to keep from falling off. It was very exasperating, because whenever the clouds cleared away, the peak of the mountain looked like it was another mile high, rising above the land like a thin spiral conch shell.

Finally, Stanley arrived at the top. It was very pleasant up there and a gentle wind blew. He was able to see all the land of the planet from there. It was so high, he could see the curvature of the horizon like an astronaut in orbit.

Behind some rocks, he found a small meadow with clover and violets. Some goats were grazing there and there was a small stone house. An old goatherd came out of the house. He was not surprised to see Stanley. He was a very serene old goatherd and he had a sly look in his eyes.

Stanley approached him and asked, "Uh, sir, can you tell me where I can find God? They told me that I would find God up here."

The old goatherd smiled and shook his head. "God?" He did not seem to understand.

"Right, you know, God. Uh... the Truth. You know, the meaning of life. Is it up here? I thought it was up here somewhere."

The old goatherd started laughing. "You, came all the way up there to find God?"

Stanley was beginning to get irritated. "Yeah... that's right. You know, God. C'mon, do you know where I can find God?"

The old goatherd kept laughing until tears came to his eyes. "My son...," he had to catch his breath, "what you seek is what you are." Then he doubled over with laughter. "Ah... Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha..."

It hit Stanley like a thunderbolt. At that moment, Stanley Yuban became enlightened.

Stanley was walking along a path on the other side of the mountain. The path was leading into a valley covered with jungle vegetation. The green sun was out and he was enjoying his enlightenment. It was a nice sojourn.

Hanging from the trees were windchimes. He was in the valley of the windchimes again. There were earthen windchimes, silver windchimes, and gold windchimes. There were ancient symbols on them and the sound of their tinkling filled the whole valley like the strum of a sitar. Somehow he had remembered being there before. It was like coming home.

He found a peculiar cave along the path. He went into the cave. It was nice and cool in there. Mynah birds called outside.

There was an altar with a huge book on it. The book was lying open. Somewhere in the impenetrable darkness behind the altar, was the sound of an organ playing. Or it wasn't really playing... it was humming. Stanley approached the altar and the book. Candles burned beside it.

The book must have had thousands of pages in it. The pages were old and faded, but legible. It seemed to be a book of wisdom. Stanley had never seen anything like it. At random, he turned its pages. Here were a few of the things he found:

"Nothing is real. Reality is that which is left after everything else is stripped away. The universe is but a blank turning of pages. The pages say nothing. It is a book that will always be written and it will never end."

"Be merged into that single original HUM and you will realize all that was and all that will be. All it was is what it has been all along and all it will be is simply what it was before. In IT, lie all possibilities and all potentialities. All things inevitably disperse to be drawn back into the original VOICE."

"Golden leaves fall and the sun sets. What more can we say? It is nothing more than an endless circle and an ever recurring pattern."

"Be eternally vigilant, O Seeker, for everything is interconnected. You must forever watch the pattern unfolding. You must always be one with the pattern. Then you will see it for the dream that it really is."

"The average being spins on an endless wheel of chance. According to the laws of chance, he will experience the good and the bad in equal proportions. But who defines what is 'good' and what is 'bad'?"

While Stanley was reading this, the hum of the organ grew louder. Then it struck an eerie and startling chord. All of a sudden, Stanley was rolling like a balled-up armadillo down an endless flight of stairs. It was totally dark and Stanley rolled for a long time. He was not aware of any pain. He felt like his body was shaped like a steel ball. He rolled onto:

A large multicolored roulette wheel. He was rolling around on all the different possibilities - rich or poor, black or white, male or female, intelligent or dull, east or west, organic or inorganic. It seemed that somehow the wheel was outside the walls of the entire universe. Helplessly, he rolled around faster and faster. The wheel turned around so rapidly that it gave off a whirling sound that became the old original HUM that seemed to pervade the whole universe. He was being torn apart from all directions, becoming one with all the various possibilities in one undifferentiated swirl. Then he was catapulted off the wheel and was flying through the universe at the speed of light.

Faster than the speed of light. It seemed to him that he was going through figure-8 configurations back and forth through the universe or several universes. He also seemed to be going through loops back and forth through time. There seemed to be no beginning or end; it all seemed to go on and on. Then he passed through into a dream state. He felt like he was recollecting a great many things that he had long forgotten:

It seemed that he was able to remember all his past lives. He was once an Atlantean priest heralding the people to worship the sun-rise. He was a slave building a pyramid in Egypt. He was a clerk in nineteenth Russia. He was a virgin sacrifice on a Polynesian island. He was a mad Duchess in a feudalistic colony. He starved to death in the streets of China. He spent a whole life as a housewife in Ireland. He was a vicious Norseman who hacked women and children to bits until his career was ended by a spear in his back. He was a woman in Lebanon who was gang-raped to death. He was a Zen Buddhist monk who committed suicide by jumping off a cliff in the Himalayas because he wanted to sacrifice himself to the Void. He was once a Sufi dervish in northern Persia who liked to drink wine and tell stories. There

was one time when he was even a Martian. It all came back to him; he realized why he had to go through everything he went through.

He went back, back further... He was a savage in a very primitive society in a body half-animal, half-human. He and his tribe were terrified by some unseen thing in the jungle. Then he was part of a herd of mastodon; it was cold and they were migrating somewhere. They kept migrating, migrating, and migrating, with no end in sight. His large, furry body died in a glacier somewhere.

He was wandering through a swamp in a huge, awkward body. He got tired and went to sleep in a bog of warm mud. Something ate his body.

He crawled back into the ocean and swam through the depths. There were all kinds of strange, luminous creatures there. He ate some of the smaller creatures. He breathed and tasted the salt water. It was warm and life-giving. There was a strange light above him.

He went blind. He was just a thing crawling in the ooze, eating tiny creatures in it, until something ate him.

There many times when he had innumerable limbs and he grew all the time. He reached his arms towards the sunlight and ate the sunlight. His roots ate the dirt. Things would bite his arms off, but he'd grow them back. Sometimes he drifted in the water, sunbathing all the time. When there was no sun, he went to sleep.

He was just a formless cell, complete in itself without organs. He simply floated around, absorbing whatever came his way. Then he was ooze trying to gather other ooze, until he was...

Inorganic. A mere atom. A rock basking in the sun. A planet. Star dust. Spawn of the cosmos. The original unit. Gas. Space. Nothing. Passing back... back...

To the beginning. Darkness. Then the humming again. The original vibration which set all other vibrations into motion. All things hummed in harmony in the beginning before time was. How beautiful

was that Dawn, the arising of light out of darkness, the beginning of the universe and the beginning of the journey...

He saw entire universes expanding and contracting, being created and destroyed. The pattern was always the same. Form and chaos neatly complemented one another; it was all very perfect. It always went in one gigantic cycle - formation and disintegration. There was no time - only a constant pulsation like the throb of a heartbeat or the waves of a vibration. This principle applied from the largest galaxy to the smallest organism. All things rose and fell. But the background was always the same...

Stanley opened his eyes to find himself on the waterbed of the spaceship again. The stars were going in the other direction from the way they were going before. He saw the same galaxies, the same constellations, the same black holes.

A voice came through on the speaker: "We are now approaching the end of our journey. Destination is coming up and mission has been accomplished. You have had a glimpse of what is called "Cosmic Consciousness". Please stand by and, no smoking, please." The voice chuckled over the speaker.

The ship came to a stop and the door slid open. The driver turned around. "Did you have a nice time?"

Stanley said, "It was all very interesting, to say the least."

"Good. We're back where we started from." The door slid open. It was the space balcony again. "Take it easy." The melodies of the humming poured in through the door. Stanley stepped out onto the glassy surface.

The ship took off behind him. He was facing the crescent moon and the five-pointed star. The humming grew louder and louder. He was alone with the multicolored stars and the shimmering rainbows again. Something was rising from beyond the space platform. The



humming grew ever-increasingly intense, as if it were coming from the machine of the universe, the central life-supporting system of all the planets in the cosmos. A light was rising. It was some sort of indescribable jewel. It was purple, blue, and green. It gave off all shades and varieties of light. Its dazzling rays illuminated everything, going chiefly in four directions. There were fantastic geometric patterns in the light. And the humming grew louder and louder, singing like a celestial chorus, until it was an explosion which no one or nothing could withstand. The light was so intense and the multicolored stars sang...

Stanley Yuban found himself sitting crosslegged, watching the full moon reflected in the still waters of the lagoon. He was back in the abandoned mine; he had been gone for a week. It was cold, but Stanley was wearing a warm coat. He still heard the humming in his head. He would never forget it; he would carry it around for the rest of his life. It was a clear, crisp autumn night on the planet Earth, back in the physical world.

It was very peaceful and the moon in the water was completely sufficient to him. He breathed deeply, meditating by the lagoon. He saw the face of a moon-goddess in the water. He realized that this was where he should have been all that time. What were the most fantastic visions in the world compared with the peace he felt right there?

The lone trucker appeared beside him. "Did you have a good vision?"

Stanley answered, "Yes."

"Do you know where you must go now?"

"Yes."

"You're clear-minded now. Are you confused anymore?"

"No. Never more."

"Good. I have two things for you that I was directed to give you." The lone trucker reached inside his cloak and brought out two pieces of paper. "One is the deed, in your name, of what was once Jamey Bynum's land. You'll need it to prove that you own it." Human beings have peculiar laws." He handed it to him.

"Thank you very much."

"The other is sealed. You are not to open it until after the destruction. It contains the blueprint for a new society. Human beings will not be ready for it until after the destruction. Do you promise not to open it until then?"

"I promise."

"Very well, then." The lone trucker handed it to him. It was rolled up and had a ribbon tied around it. "Take good care of it and do what you have to do well." The lone trucker looked up at the moon. "Well, I have an errand to run in another part of these mountains - a conference with some Venusians who have a base not far from here. I'll see you later, Stanley. I'm glad you had a good vision."

"Thank you and goodbye, lone trucker."

The lone trucker disappeared. Stanley was left alone to meditate on the moon in the water. The wind rustled leaves off the trees. Spirits danced in the light of the Harvest Moon. It was the season of the corn shucks and the preparation for a long period of cold weather.

He felt something in his pocket. He took it out; it was the disk the girl had given him. He held it up to the moon. The blue gem in the center glowed in the moonlight. The disk seemed to hum ever so faintly in the silence of that night.

He meditated until dawn.

He made his way through the cornfield. He was thinking that the

soil would need fertilizer, but not much. He wondered where he could put a wind generator so it would receive the maximum amount of wind. He passed through the meadow and thought he could raise cows there. Of course, he would want to build a solar house with large windows on top of the mountain so it would face the view. He turned around to take a last look at the mountain range of the west. There would be alot to do when spring came.

He saw the crow flying in slow circles above him. "Caw. Caw," it cried through the cool autumn air. He caught its eye and, at once, understood the mind of a crow. Everything was okay. He went back to the cabin to get his stuff.

Stanley Yuban was back on the highway, heading back to the farm and to Emily. He saw a familiar-looking hitchhiker and a dog. It was John and Kemper. He pulled to a stop and let them in.

"Hey man, it's you again."

Stanley said, "Yep. Long time, no see. I'll bet you found it cold around here."

"Jeepers yeah. I'm going to find a town or some place to winter in. Hey man, did you have any visions up there?"

"Oh, a few." Stanley started hearing the hum again. It seemed to be trying to tell him something. He drove in silence for awhile.

"I'm heading back to a farm," he said. "I live in a farmhouse."

"Wow, that's a good thing, man. That must be alot better than living in the city."

"Yep. It sure is."

"Say man, do you know of any good places down here in the South to stay during the winter? It's getting too cold to sleep outside anymore."

"Well, you could live at my place. It's got lots of rooms.

There's too few of us there right now anyway."

"Gee, thanks alot, man. That's really neat. Well, Kemper, we found a place. No more cold. How do you like that, Kemper?" The dog barked enthusiastically.

"As long as you contribute to the work. There's wood to cut and we're going to plant a garden in the spring."

"Sure, man. I like to do that kind of thing. Say, I wish I had some herb for you, man. I ran out when I was there."

"That's okay. We're non-drug oriented anyway."

"Far out, man. This is a funny coincidence, you know. Here I am looking for a place to stay and there you come at just the right time. It's weird, man. Have you ever thought that it's all interconnected, you know, and things are supposed to happen the way they do? I mean..."

They rapped all the way back. Stanley stuck to backroads and allowed every car to pass. Stanley Yuban was on his way to a different life. He was going to work it out; it was going to be more mellow from then on. Stanley Yuban was a man of the earth now.