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All Four Knot, A Cover Story

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All Four Knot, a cover story

A culminating project submitted to the faculty of Dominican University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Arts in Humanities

By
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San Rafael, California
December 2013

This project, written under the direction of the candidate's project advisor and approved by the Chair of the Master's program, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of Literature and Languages in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Humanities. The content and research presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

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ALL FOUR KNOT,

A COVER STORY

by Sean A. Smith



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Chapter 4: “Mentally Layered”

The voice of reason has departed Brent Lee, leaving no maintained thought for understanding. Logic itself escapes him momentarily, and he has no discernment of the situation at hand, no comprehension of the events which seem to utterly engulf the moment. All judgment, in fact, has become clouded and fuzzy, but not due entirely to the severity of the blow to his head. Brent's mind actually struggles to make sense of the material world around him, a realm of which he previously had a good grasp. Yet, his mind is, abruptly, now seemingly tested in terms of rationale, as though a sudden actual, unprecedented reality beams forth before him, to transcend his utter mental capacity itself. Mental processes would have to be at their complete and maximum height in order for him to comprehend that which he now beholds, the sight of two people just the same as he had recently known them, yet now, as he beholds them, undeniably different than they had been known to be and further from that which they ever previously were. Simply attempting to fathom possibilities for the present circumstance is grueling for 48-year-old Brent, causing him to bellow over in pain, partly from the backwards thoughts he now conjures, partly from painful concussion. His faculties and senses elude him, and Mr. Whysche and Patrick Singleton themselves seem like incoherent, wretched wrecks, caught up in an apparent whirlwind of mechanical lust and greed, desensitized and having an obvious immunity toward caring for their fellow man, a lone observation Brent is able to partly ponder and mentally still within a small material sphere which remains generalized due to the outlandishness of revelation. Mr. Whysche and Patrick apparently *worship* money and will do whatever it takes to acquire it, at all costs.

Fleshly fallacies and shortcomings of others once in Mr. Whysche's presence seem to project from the face of Mr. Whysche, who, pale, seems to now radiate with a godlike quality,

enhanced by a long depth-of-field effect of floating dirt particles, kicked up from the ground by Patrick's galloping and ghostly dancing in the background. The cloudy dirt moves slowly across Mr. Whysche's motionless body in the midst of a slight wind, occasionally moving with gentle gusts, moments of which Mr. Whysche is beaming. Brent is able to gain just enough thought and height of mind to see Mr. Whysche for whom it is he possibly could be, but that visual thought vanishes and fades, and Brent cannot decipher just what it is he has envisioned. The weight of that thought returns crashing to the ground, leaving mental wounds which cloud perception and alter judgment. Although impaired by the present circumstance, and with discouragement lurking from certain inevitable doom, Brent still is able to return to moments of recollection and instances of vividness. The inner illusion he gains is but for a moment, however, like the biblical metaphor of the vapor of wind which vanishes, dashed by a myriad of minor thoughts of the minute. The momentary mental illusion of Mr. Whysche that Brent internally summons is one of Mr. Whysche being a sort of cult-like figure. But, Brent also second-guesses whether he has also conjured imagery in his own mind of Mr. Whysche resembling someone along the lines, or to the effect, of one of the gods of the ancient Greeks. This visual thought quickly escapes Brent, however, and he becomes doubtful of this non-vivid image he has internally summoned, seemingly mentally manifest, not knowing clearly what he has just seen or just exactly should be considered. He draws a blank, if only laymen's terms could be applied. In actuality, as he summons just enough fear, anxiety and aggression, his mind negotiates enough vividness of thought to internally picture Hermes or one in the likeness of Zeus, albeit not established and firm in his mind.

The height of the thought is dark and silent yet vibrant. At the same time, unpleasant shockwaves of pain from Brent's head injury interrupt his concentration, clashing with thought processes attempting to tune in with the senses. To stabilize his thoughts, Brent momentarily

latches onto the incantation being recited by Mr. Whysche, as though guided by some sudden surge toward heightened help of structured utterance, the tone of which Brent is able to intuitively reason is not summoned from entirely a self-seeking motive. Yet, at the same time, Brent finds that Mr. Whysche's cadence is not one which ideally identifies with a tone of truth. Although dazed, Brent notices that there is a structuring to the language -- of English, intertwined with transliteration of Latin and Greek -- seemingly innate, meant to conjure belief and to summon response from ritual participants whose minds rest after moments of complex thought and drift without the help of a higher wavelength of mental cruising.

Mr. Whysche notices Brent's visage of vagueness and soul-searching, and his earlier inquisitiveness for one far from being young, and quickly reaches for his keys in his pocket and rattles them forcibly in order to weary and distract Brent. Was there some sort of connection to Lucy Patterson rattling her own keys just before her death, in the churchhouse? The sudden, timely remembering of the small detail pertaining to Lucy's keys rattles Brent.

He has become rattled but only slightly agitated, because he has become stricken with fear as though to become lifeless. A seeming paralysis causes him to recoil, caused by his regret in retrospection, and the vantage point of hindsight, for his analytics remain, in his observation of his predicament, as though out of body. At this juncture, a frightful fate, and unthinkably one of physical deconstruct, is certain and impending. The very thought causes, seemingly, a deadening awakening in his very being. Even a bodily lunge as an attempted attack would be a daunting effort, a mistake which could exasperate his captors, conceivably. If only some unseen force could somehow catapult him, as a projectile weapon, or, in the very least, just *toward* escape. Brent insists to himself his life was destined to be more meaningful. Perhaps the moment will lead to some climactic outcome, worthwhile, meant to be and first challenged, like a deadline, yet in a manner unprecedented. If there is not some moral victory in all this, perhaps he merely

survives a scenario which becomes a welcoming expectation for Brent by each and every passing moment of non-warranted restraint. His mind goes into remission, however, when he begins to ponder scenarios pertaining to potential cruelties by his captors, which he despises mainly because they used slight of hand, and ambush, when his guard was down. It was not quite a situation of one not being aware of one's surroundings. The situation is by no means aristocratic, he assures himself, mentally at odds with all that Patrick's speech had been intended to communicate. The concept of survival of the fittest, in fact, seems betrayed from Brent's impaired vantage point, Brent being one who has known what it means to be in competition with established media professionals. Brent intelligently conserves his energy, realizing full well that negotiations he could initiate would only worsen matters, particularly if he is face to face with the epitome of non-reason. His head wound steadily worsens.

Brent is unable to detach from previous *mental wounds* as well. That is, his makeup, his perception of the world, at least the world around him. In fact, the blurry sight of Patrick distancing his dance, high-kneed and chanting, and Mr. Whysche reciting an incantation, causes Brent's mind to essentially bounce off the very situation at hand. It is as though a mental layer of some kind has been projected, as though some powerful force field of thought, or lack thereof, causes reason itself to ricochet, the right mind powerless and hopelessly evaporated in attempting to stabilize cognition, seemingly tugged on by an irresistible, constant stifling of realism. Consciousness, it seems, is no longer a factor and awareness devoid, for Brent doubts his very existence at this instance.

A power dynamic seems to project from the intense moment, and the situation seemingly radiates the inner drives of men who possess hidden agendas and selfish ambitions. They are condescending, especially Patrick, who epitomizes a non-virtuous quality partly attributed to not being rooted in any belief or belief system. They operate from outside the confines of good and

evil altogether. In fact, from their vantage points, the current situation is not dichotomized in any way. With morality not being a real issue, they do not subject themselves to guilt, only gain. “Truth” for them is where they will find themselves materially, based on natural law, as opposed to a law of reaping and sowing. Biblical or moral goodness have not their place in the current circumstance.

Mr. Whysche and Patrick are opportunists in every sense of the word, and they are willing to utterly commit sacrifice as a means for a better, and conceivably not bitter, end. A quiet excitement seems to be evident in their posturing, as though they have been willingly indoctrinated and hold a secret to life others have yet to stumble across. The older citizens of Channel Haven, renowned for their goal-setting, planning, and quietly retiring -- a number of them wisely putting away money in 401K and savings accounts -- become a status quo when compared to a few less financially concerned, such as Patrick, who lives, ironically, in the now.

A great many retirees and elderly citizens of Channel Haven have been conned out of money through fraudulent means, where Patrick and others have posed as representatives of non-profit, charitable organizations. Yet, from Patrick's vantage point, he feels he actually fills the role of the affirmative, while Brent and others are actually in the position of the negative. Patrick takes advantage of others through methods meant to yield results which are advantageous to only him and, also, Mr. Whysche. Patrick, like the late Lucy Patterson, does seek large cash investments, but those which are instant, and sees slow retirement accounts as foolish investments, even where employers match the investments of given employees. Patrick chooses to stay favorable to budget by quantum leaps that each provide a surplus at the expense of the next unsuspecting victim. He does desire a more *permanent* socio-economic status, however, one which will not only involve living comfortably through operating accounts day to day but, finally, through having established a few long-term reserve accounts as well.

The financial drives of the elderly Mr. Whysche, on the other hand, are not quite as clear and, in fact, are monetarily mystery. He has appeared to be well off on certain candid occasions. Yet, he seems to project a certain conservativeness and wisdom in spending while living in a modest, meekly cottage. Interestingly, to a number of observers, his longevity appears partly due to his collection of many coupons and coupon booklets.

As for Brent, although far from wealthy, he has lived substantially beyond just paycheck to paycheck. And, Patrick and Mr. Whysche now seek to increase their own financial situations as they have done before, *this time* at Brent's expense.

In the presence of only Patrick and also Brent, who is severely wounded, Mr. Whysche begins to recite a private poem he had previously written, one which reads like an invocation:

A warrior blows open the battle doors

Behold the charter scare
laughing out loud at you,
mocking you like a hideous hollow goat.
Do not be afraid,
Be frightened!!!
But stay strong,
for it drains -- by the gallons!
Afflicted upon painful portraits
beckoning us to face the truth.
Yet, no one can be worthy of this armor
without the noble prize of being able
to hold up this heavy sword.
Make the election sure.
Make that election true!!!
Indeed, *blow* open the doors,
right through the smoke that rises
from the grounds of a former harvest.
But behold! Now comes the time
of the rugged full moon,
lost in the vast wasteland that was
once a sky. Bend it back with a
soft whisper. Quietly. *Bend* it back.
Now that wish come true, that wish now granted,
to fruition, having run its course
with reality.

It *Will Stand For* ... Generations!
And, many will not even know it exists.
Exaggerate the youthful large belly.
Most fear this concept. Those rules must be broken
with, with ... a wrought Iron axe! With an *iron* rod! Engage!! Attack!!!
Many won't just hear this call to a higher being,
they will embrace it!
They shall hit the old barnyard ceilings!
Some call for lost myths and fairytales
and myths of my feelings not meant to spread hurt!
They are not *meant* for hurt! They are not meant to be feelings at all!
I know no such emotion.
Time, aging, a process of life --
this is *all* that I know!!!
Now bear record of that awful fact!!!
It is my worth in this living torment!!
It appears as a violet past its prime!
Your ... fiery ... *furious* ... eyes mirror mine --
and for just reason: They *also* burn as fire.
They roam ... like ... a boat upon that cold watery trickle.
Called ... *time*.

Brent listens to the words of Mr. Whysche's reading. He finds that, for some reason, he is coherent enough to understand much of its content. Oddly, he finds himself almost appreciating some of the language of the poem. But, he also senses a delusional tone, of an author overly driven by some causeless, even foreign, it seems, ambition. He also senses an eerie underlying howl in the tone, as though audibly projected from one utterly insane. The words and tone cannot be those of the same reserved and bizarre and not-to-be-taken-seriously Mr. Whysche, he convinces himself.

The night becomes completely darkened.

Dogs can be heard faintly barking in the background. Patrick already holds Brent's wallet in his hand. He now holds a revolver in his other hand. Patrick has been listening intently to the reading of the poem as well, and, because there was a reference to an axe in the poem, first waits for direction from Mr. Whysche. As Patrick slowly paces, looking away and at the ground and into the nearby darkened shrubbery, he actually considers the literary content of Mr. Whysche's

reading. He listens to the enjambment at work, noticing that the line breaks are reminiscent of modernism and likely American Modernist poetry, specifically. Having briefly taken English courses as electives as an undergraduate student at UC Davis, he is able to make out, and quite easily, that the poem is devoid of rhyme scheme and meter. He also notices that the poem does not intend to pause, possibly an indication that structured stanzas are not in place. *Is this Mr.*

Whysche's way of breaking free of convention, the norm of the world, in life overall? It's something like free verse, Patrick thinks to himself. His mind is then enveloped by a myriad of thoughts. *Is Mr. Whysche practically canonizing this poem? Is he deifying himself more than I had bargained for? Okay, it's a ... monologue ... of some kind. In ... his ... own voice? There's a different presence there.*

Standing just a few feet from Brent, Patrick extends his gun and then looks in the direction of Mr. Whysche, who, standing about 15 feet away, is motionless, looking toward the dark blue heaven the very moment dark grayish clouds are moving across the glowing moon. Brent, now kneeling, and slouching as though exhausted to his very last breath, notices that Patrick is either careful not to interrupt Mr. Whysche this particular time or that he had actually been in a very similar situation before. Brent senses the mood to be almost beyond ritualistic. "That completes the piece," Mr. Whysche calmly declares. Mr. Whysche then lowers his head, pauses a moment and looks in the direction of Patrick, who has his gun pointed at Brent at close range. Mr. Whysche gives Patrick a nod. And Brent is shot multiple times and killed, just as he is attempting to recall why memories of John Creighton's murder in the Philippines, 25 years ago, have just flashed before his eyes.

Chapter 5: "Mentally Wounded"

Dr. Thomas B. Miller, a doctor of psychology, is a consistently poised insistent, commanding through mere posture at times. In his study of film and its effects on the mind, he has often referred to his own empirical data, interviews, stats and studies involving the viewing of a number of Chinese martial arts films, such as the *Incredible Kung Fu Mission*. The films he reviews are usually of the variety of those which lack technology and often include climactic scenes in settings of rural or rustic landscape. One of the rumors in and around Channel Haven is that real-life situations, particularly when the U.S. has been at war, have frequently called for interrogation in order to obtain a confession. Such activity occurring has been largely based on actual, real accounts. However, many of the elderly in town, having familiarity with Channel Haven going back to World War II, suggest such activity has never occurred, even on a minute scale. In fact, such activity in this conservative and relatively quiet town would be unheard-of, some elderly war veterans suggest. Could the martial arts films themselves merely have projected an aura of even acts of torture in the region encompassing Channel Haven?

Dr. Miller, with the assistance of Mr. Bob Forsythe, a former warlock and witch who still practices clairvoyance, has questioned and evaluated Mr. Whysche on a number of cult matters, in Dr. Miller's office, in Concord, California. In the past, Mr. Whysche has willingly made visits to Dr. Miller's office. But, of late, Dr. Miller has had to leave door hanger cards on Mr. Whysche's cottage front door, requesting that Mr. Whysche return each month for a visit. Mr. Forsythe also wishes to speak with Mr. Whysche again, particularly on matters pertaining to rumors involving a strange method of channeling involving one also being tied up. A number of such events have extended beyond rumor and have also become actual police and sheriff's matters.

Higher investigations have been ongoing in relation to the hostage and terrorist ordeal that occurred in the Philippines during the mid-‘80s. Some say that the murder of John Creighton in the Philippines remains a mystery forevermore. Yet, foul play *could have* been at work, some older residents in Channel Haven suggest. One not-so-recent allegation had been that Mr. Whysche, in fact, had been in the Philippines the very year of the hostage situation, which seemed more than mere coincidence. However, no other leads have in any way connected Mr. Whysche to the ordeal, and investigations have seemingly quieted on the matter. It appears, almost conclusively and seemingly officially, that the ordeal had been a random hostage situation where diamonds were coincidentally on board a tourist bus. Investigators say that it is possible that the diamonds could have been known about in advance and that that could have been a primary motive. However, investigations have not validated proof that diamonds, or information given to the wrong party in regard to diamonds, ever were part of a conspiracy in or around the Philippines at that time. And, the image of a person actually believed to resemble Mr. Whysche in the Philippines, at that time, becomes far less vivid as time goes on.

Law enforcement in Channel Haven consists primarily of a sheriff and sheriff’s deputies. With very little to do, they regularly attend events where they can discuss crime and safety regulations, and the sheriff himself is often attending a number of meetings, ranging from Town Council meetings to Neighborhood Watch Committee meetings and some homeowners’ association board meetings. Most of the conflict the Sheriff has encountered has actually occurred at some of the meetings, where tempers have often flared over new business that has grown old. Meetings have lasted long into the night, even with timed agendas. Conflict had arisen quite often when meetings were bombarded with constant usage of random clichés, in the form of a sort of meditation and seeming chants, forming constant mental wounds in those present. It was apparently intentional, some suggested. Some of the boards of directors, in order

to calm and limit feuds that erupted, resorted to motion cards, whereby each and every board member must “move” to make his or her motion in writing, on the cards. As a result, the atmosphere at meetings has improved, vendettas and conflict have declined, but homeowners concerns have actually increased, seemingly because homeowners, in-between monthly meetings, are often told over the telephone to “put it in writing”.

When visiting Mr. Whysche's cottage, Dr. Miller will occasionally attempt to look through the blinds and curtains. Dr. Miller -- who ran a private investigator agency during his much younger, entrepreneur years -- can see that Mr. Whysche's cottage often has only revealed heaped empty microwave popcorns bags, torn and littered about. A large but fading yin-yang symbol is carved into the dry ground outside, possibly a simulation to *Born Invincible*, a Chinese film which includes footage of a martial arts master fighter digging a yin-yang symbol into the ground with his foot during hand-to-hand battle using tai chi style. Coincidentally, Mr. Whysche's favorite color is white, a possible connection to the yin-yang symbol in general. The martial arts master's white hair generally denotes wisdom, which, additionally, is a possible reason for Mr. Whysche's desiring to be perceived as wise.

In general, Mr. Whysche, who is Caucasian, has been known to leisurely watch movies which contain extensive violence, in general, including those which tend not be categorized as being typical action-adventure or drama films. He is one who certainly views film from the vantage point of the male gaze. Some would actually suggest, in fact, that he is undoubtedly a voyeur, even though his offbeat speech and strange proverbial wisdom is usually taken in stride and even made light of. He has never been rumored to be connected to anything even remotely resembling snuff films, however. And, interestingly to some in Channel Haven, even the thematic elements part of the martial arts films do not parallel his apparent outlook toward those around town. He is not one to seek conflict, and, based on the perception others have of him, he

has little or no reason for revenge. In fact, he fits no real profile, and, strangely, the inhabitants of the tiny town of Channel Haven do not place much emphasis on profiling in general. In terms of overall, general taste, a number of those residing in the town prefer old black-and-white American-made films, with town favorites including *Top Hat* and *Swing Time*, both starring Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire.

“Mr. Whysche is also into horror and sci-fi,” an elderly volunteer worker once suggested. “*Frankenstein* is a black-and-white favorite (film) of his.” Mr. Whysche will often make allusions to the book *Paradise Lost*, similar to the way the original monster, created in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, the novel, alludes to Milton’s work. Interestingly, Frankenstein’s monster is an eloquent creature in Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, an all-time great literary work published in 1818. In contrast, Frankenstein’s monster as portrayed in film is far from eloquent. Perhaps this is partly the reason for Mr. Whysche’s lack of concern for ever seeking a formal education in order to gain intelligence. He comes across as one self-taught and self-learned, yet he has an undeniable yearning for film and even books which contain intriguing content. In fact, he has been seen reading Milton’s *Paradise Lost* at the town meal kitchen in Channel Haven, and his own coffee table has a dated version of the book *Frankenstein* placed on it as a sort of centerpiece.

Oddly, Patrick Singleton is big fan of the *Exorcist II: the Heretic*. Jane Thompson, not yet aware that Brent Lee has been murdered, says that both Brent and Patrick have been known to watch the film, often together, over the years. Dr. Miller has questioned Mr. Whysche about the *Heretic* on occasion, yet Mr. Whysche’s responses have implied that he is, for the most part, not a devout viewer of the sequel starring Linda Blair. Generally, and for the most part, Dr. Miller, when referring to the *Heretic*, often refers conceptually to what he explains is “mental height” and that which one is able to internally see, through internal illusion. Where Mr.

Whysche and Patrick are concerned, it is not made apparent as to whether the two just so happened to have engaged the film from different vantage points or whether they call on the film as though using it to serve as embedded code. In their unknown dealings, they are able to be on the same page, so to speak, as though communicating through hidden dialogue. Their conversational discourse is often eerie, partly because their communication intertwines with snippets of cult-classic film and also because their rapport, at times, seemingly consists of no apparent utterance. They also seem to understand one another's overlying intention through common, ordinary language, as though something additional is simultaneously being said, in just as many words, through heightened mental language, above and beyond the mere surface utterance. Sometimes they decipher the higher point or message communicated through repetition or simply by another term which rhymes, embedded merely while not being schematic. Other times, they simply seem to be on the same wavelength. During some of Mr. Whysche's and Patrick's moments of dialogue, they seemed, at times, to negotiate and maneuver in and around one another's words at a "rapid rate," as described by a man listening to them when being momentarily in their presence while walking his dog.

"Strange of you to listen so intently on my voice at such a high tone," Mr. Whysche says to Dr. Miller during a monthly visit, on a Friday afternoon. Although very aged, Mr. Whysche has also been known to sometimes project his voice quite powerfully, adding a deeper tone, slightly deeper than a baritone, as though speaking to a multitude. That is rarely the case, however, and only when called upon at functions and gatherings at the town's hall. An informal theory on Mr. Whysche has been that he can use his voice to guide, "help," and even manipulate others. Rumors have often been spread about in relation to the downfall and demise of certain individuals in Channel Haven over the decades, that a manipulative force had seemingly harnessed in their very beings. Yet, Mr. Whysche's offbeat and unstructured utterances are not

manipulative but, rather, loosely used, and actually sometimes devoid of cognition, to avoid the point at hand. In fact, Dr. Miller has determined that Mr. Whysche actually shares with others a passion to "help" that is only partly attributed to the way in which his words will uplift someone feeling not confident in their outlook toward life. However, Mr. Whysche's words are not firmly structured in the sense that they mentally lift, guide or manipulate the listener, Dr. Miller concludes.

Yet, in opposition to that conclusion, Mr. Whysche, by his own admission, suggests that he often has the goal in mind of instilling wisdom in others through not only a soothing voice but one which is *truly* uplifting. "The keys I hold help in time of rest," Mr. Whysche has often imparted. Dr. Miller, aware of this comment, has asked Mr. Whysche to elaborate on abstraction versus concreteness, conceptually in regard to strengthening another. Mr. Whysche, in the same context, was also asked if he referred to a spiritual faith coming to others "'by way of hearing and hearing by the Word of God'." Mr. Whysche, on the contrary, has clarified that the "help" involves being mentally firm in a way which may carry another. "My mind is firm, cruising and never down," Mr. Whysche once said. Seemingly, Mr. Whysche has actually begun to utter and basically repeat the psychology, empirical data and theories of Dr. Miller, mimicry Dr. Miller has found fascinating.

Well aware that Mr. Whysche has a religious background, Dr. Miller has routinely brought into his evaluative conversations with Mr. Whysche the general concept of one's own 'free will'. Dr. Miller, who has studied determinism at length, was intrigued by the examples Mr. Whysche used to rationalize the topic. "Yes, I have the freedom to choose. I have the freedom to choose The Pier brew pub over Ernie's," Mr. Whysche answered one Friday afternoon during a visit to Dr. Miller's office. Intrigued by Mr. Whysche's practical answer, Dr. Miller again asked for elaboration. And, Mr. Whysche would oblige during the following session, referring to the

topic of “free will” as it pertains to John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*.

“The Fortunate Fall, the *felix culpa*, was fortunate because man’s choice was involved, you see,” Mr. Whysche suggests during the following monthly visit.

“Interesting,” Dr. Miller replies, leaning back in his leather chair, which appears cozy and non-threatening. “You appear to be familiar with certain works of literature, Mr. Whysche. And, you address a number of literary angles in your suggestion. Is this also your belief, your personal conviction, in the areas of ‘election’ and ‘predestination’?”

“Yes. But, I’m a Deist, you know. Man has been given full reign after the creation in the beginning.”

“*Deism*. I see. So, man does have ‘free will’. Or, does that ‘will’ apply in only practical areas, such as those you referred to in your example of choosing restaurants?”

“Man can also make mistakes, in falling short.”

“I see. Is that another reference to Milton and the ‘Fortunate Fall’?”

“It could be so. Indeed, it very well could be. It could be very much likened to the *felix culpa*, very much so.”

“I see. Now, how much do you read *Paradise Lost*? How often?”

“Quite often.”

“Each night? Every week? On the weekends? ...”

“Yes, it’s weekly reading.”

“Is *Paradise Lost* a work beyond being literary for you? Or, is it personal to you? In other words, would you consider it to be a sourcebook of, say, *belief*?”

“I don’t really believe in it for the work’s gospel sake, but it’s similar to being a biblical work, yes.”

“I see, Mr. Whysche. Now, did you determine that?”

“What’s that?”

“Is it predetermined for you to see *Paradise Lost* for being merely literature?”

“Indeed.”

“Explain.”

“*Paradise Lost* is not as inspired in the matters of the spiritual realm, you see. It does not guide man’s thinking as much. If you look at Frankenstein, for prime example, he read *Paradise Lost* instead of the Bible.”

“Interesting point, Mr. Whysche. Frankenstein’s monster, in the book, refers to Milton’s work. Can you relate to the monster of *Frankenstein*?”

“No, I can’t relate to him. Not the monster. He’s just a creature, a monster of imagination.”

“Is he part of *your* imagination, Mr. Whysche?”

“(laughs) No, he’s just in the book, just a made-up monster.”

“I see. Is he part of your makeup? Or, are you ‘made up’ of him?”

“Frankenstein is only created as a character. He’s part of fiction. He’s not someone you would expect to live among you, outside the novel.”

“Thank you, Mr. Whysche. That concludes our session. Any questions?”

“No. That would be all for me, too.”

“See you next *month*? *Third* Friday of the month?”

“Yes. Thank you, Dr. Miller. I will return here.”

Mr. Forsythe would be called upon during the next three monthly sessions because of the religious nature of the discussion content, which has been transcribed from recordings. Based on careful evaluation, Dr. Miller has begun to suggest that the way in which Mr. Whysche has lived, including a lack of tidiness along with a constant pursuit of underground films, is demonstrative

of his over-indulgence in pursuing and taking in knowledge. In addition, Dr. Miller has begun to also arrive at the possibility that Mr. Whysche's steadfast religious yearnings could be a direct result of religious experiences which are, in fact, forms of epiphenomenalism. Dr. Miller has been able to diagnose some of the religious experiences Mr. Whysche has often shared with many other individuals. From the vantage point of neuroscience and also materialism, the particular religious experiences are occurrences which are delusional and actual malfunctions, Dr. Miller inferred. Referring to the book *The New Frontier of Religion and Science*, Dr. Miller referenced passages on the particular forms of epiphenomenalism, where the *qualia* of consciousness are not based on conscious brain-function yet hold no governing power. As with many other Channel Haven residents who have been part of a religious experience, a dualism is occurring where Mr. Whysche's brain is doing one thing while consciousness another. The religious experiences have been partly the reason for Mr. Whysche's obsessions, Dr. Miller inferred. Yet, Mr. Whysche's mind has not been diagnosed as being that of one who would harm others or himself. He also does not appear desensitized by the violent films he views. And, only future sessions will determine if he has at all taken a subliminal cue from the films. In addition, a number of precedents had already been established many decades prior, such as the violence found in the famous montage scene known as "the Odessa Steps" sequence, in Russian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), a silent film.

Mr. Whysche's living conditions are noticeably subpar, however, and not always consistent with his stage-presence image, Dr. Miller evidently noticed in visiting Mr. Whysche's cottage.

Dr. Miller has frequently discussed and explained, within general group sessions, that the mind can lack, and be robbed of, certain areas in order to achieve apparent outward success. To attain apparent success, which is in actuality falsified, at the expense of another area of one's

mind or life, and not true to one's own abilities and mental capacity, the result is neglect in that other area, a depreciation due to over-appreciating the other area. In other words, as Dr. Miller has explained, practically, "People tend to put all their eggs in one basket," while additionally mentioning at times, "... robbing Peter to pay Paul." Some recall that, in 2003, during a series of lectures, Dr. Miller had used the stairs in a public facility as a metaphor for the height of mind lacking in some and that the mind therefore is unable to generate inner illusion. That which is illusory would allow for more vivid memory, Dr. Miller had explained. Dr. Miller wore shades in the lighted dining room during his informal demonstration that afternoon, illustrating that illusory vividness would lack without maintained mental height. The top of the stairs extended to an upstairs hallway, Dr. Miller had pointed out, and that plateau was representative of mental height maintained firmly. In contrast, if one were *not* already "there," at that plateau comfortably, without needing aggression to arrive there, they would essentially be at the bottom of the stairs.

At the bottom of the stairs, inner mental imagery and its vividness of thought subsequently vanish, Dr. Miller demonstrated, putting the shades on again. The low point of the stairs was representative of those not always mentally cruising at maintained mental height, where thought can be negotiated to arrive at understanding. Monumental mental efforts would therefore be required to arrive there if not already there, and a person of lower mental capacity would essentially have to "borrow" or "steal" from other aspects of life to merely just touch mental height, if for even a split second. The mind's eye within that very brief moment becomes void for a split second, not quite knowing that which it has just seen, or whether it has seen anything at all, Dr. Miller had explained. Dr. Miller had ended his informal discussion there that particular afternoon. Many business professionals, leaders, and managers have suggested that they have tremendously benefited from Dr. Miller's expertise.

In contrast, concerning Mr. Whysche, people in and around town, including Patrick and

Jane, have tried to “make heads or tails,” intending that pun one way or another, of that which Mr. Whysche utters, because they have both wondered, from their respectively different perspectives, if he could be playing a game of sorts. Perhaps he is not only smarter than that which people have perceived him or estimated him to be; they have actually pondered the thought that he could be, or at one time had been, at least partially brilliant. His proverbial wisdom is usually offbeat, but he has occasionally made comments which are quite profound. “To say the least,” the 49-year-old Jane emphasized. And, some go so far as to suggest that Mr. Whysche's insights have resonated with not only theologians but also readers of literary cannon, literary critics and those studying literary theory.

Mr. Whysche's shared knowledge was peculiar and often came across as “a kind of tasty morsel” at times in the estimation of a particular UC Berkeley student of Rhetoric, who made the suggestion after having been in Channel Haven three summers. “Yes, without a firmament, a void occurs in another area of one's mind or life when one must borrow or rob another area of life for outward success,” Mr. Whysche had said to the student, echoing the psychology of Dr. Miller while also seemingly referring to the beginning of the biblical Book of Genesis. “That’s right. Creative emergence can be hindered in other areas, as a result,” the Berkeley student agreeably re-emphasized, referring to book author Michael Dowd's *Thank God for Evolution*. The Berkeley student would later suggest to some of his Berkeley classmates that routine scriptural references spontaneously conjured from memory could actually enhance unbiased persuasion and debate on creationism versus evolution. Magisteria of science and religion would remain in parallel domains, the student concluded, consistent with his text readings and findings. The concept even impressed Berkeley rhetoric professors, in areas not pertaining to religious argument but actually ethos, pathos and logos.

Could Mr. Whysche have been mentally elevated to being on the same wavelength with

that Berkeley student? Brent had once pondered. Mr. Whysche himself has often suggested that mere college students are not where "he is" mentally. "They get merely a glimpse, and they only sustain a wound in the mind," Mr. Whysche once claimed.

Suggested casually and in passing but also during somewhat intense conversations at relatively long durations, the frequent mentioning of the "mental wound" has been heard in times of leisure outdoor discussion amongst those in town. It seems to be a conversational topic which is increasing in popularity. Some have become condescending. "This is how we get to people," Mr. Whysche was heard saying, as though mentoring Patrick. The comment was peculiar, some suggested. But, was there also some sort of leadership element present at the time? one eave's dropper considered. Did Mr. Whysche have more of a presence at times? Did he seem to project an aura about him of any kind? a naturalist in town once asked. In any event, Patrick seemed to respond to Mr. Whysche's commentary at that time with acute awareness. It was as though the topic of mental firmness discussed by psychology experts, perhaps a reiteration from monthly sessions in Dr. Miller's office, was now being made into example, and Mr. Whysche's utterances are becoming utter maxims.

Chapter 6: "Detachment from a Mental Wound"

The mental wound can occur upon visual impact, Dr. Miller has suggested, with that which is audible also inflicted on the mind as well. Dr. Miller has explained, lectured and also written specifically on the mental wound in a pamphlet, which has been deemed myth by, ironically, some materialists. Neuroscientists insist that Dr. Miller is not qualified to even lecture on the matter. According to Dr. Miller's studies, some individuals can merely hypothesize but cannot detach from a given wound. Unless one has the mental ability to detach from the wound,

the mind will always perceptually see something the way in which the "injury" occurred to the brain that very moment. He argues that Mr. Whysche's "presence" is one that is merely patched with film scenes.

Mr. Whysche is not an avid reader of Greek Classical literature, but he has often referred to the film *Jason and the Argonauts* concerning the mental wound and detachment. He has been known to say "I go another way," which is a quote from Medea, High Priestess of Hecate, just before Medea walks away from Jason after having used a leaf to heal a wound on his arm. Mr. Whysche also mimics Hermes's crossed arms, raised above his head, at the beginning of *Jason and the Argonauts*, when Hermes mentions "without fear or wound." The non-threatening Mr. Whysche has pointed out that the Chinese martial arts film *The 36th Chamber* includes a training chamber where wrists wounds, in the form of deep bruises, are strikingly similar to the dark, apparently wounded-like wrists of Hermes during that early ...*Argonauts* scene. The wrist wounds of *The 36th Chamber* occur when a hammerhead on an extended pole, which increases the hammerhead's heaviness through gravitational resistance, is used to strike a bell during training, Mr. Whysche is quick to point out, seemingly attempting himself to arrive at Dr. Miller's data gathering.

Dr. Miller, on the other hand, where film is concerned, has simply made film *comparisons* to arrive at mental wound data, while also bridging psychology with science. Representational of processes involving the mind, certain mental wounds would occur at the height of the lifted hammer, for instance. Dr. Miller is not exactly a fan of the films he observes. He only brings *The Exorcist* into this particular equation, rather than the *Exorcist II: The Heretic*, in referring to the leg wounds of Regan when she is levitated, during the film's famous climactic exorcism. Regan's eyes are white, Dr. Miller has emphasized in discussion with colleagues, suggesting that the white eyes are representative of Regan's not realizing what she had mentally

saw at height of mind. Mental wounds occurred at mental elevation, Dr. Miller points out, and certain mental wounds can blind the subject in relation to reality. "This likely is the case with Mr. Whysche."

Mr. Whysche had been under investigation for possibly manipulating various elderly citizens, embezzlement, and for being an alleged accomplice in extortion. There had also been rumors of his involvement in cult dealings. Yet, Dr. Miller had candidly diagnosed Mr. Whysche as one not capable of manipulating another person who has a rational mind, nor is Mr. Whysche one capable of mentally blinding such a person toward reality. At the same time, it has also been determined that Mr. Whysche is considerably competent, potentially, in his own everyday living.

A person recently letting her guard down to Mr. Whysche is the 49-year-old Jane Thompson.

Jane closes her eyes. Lying on the ground and attempting to raise her body with one hand pressed on loose terrain, she collapses on her palm not firmly planted, rolls over, and a quick snapping of her wrist occurs. A small cloud of dirt rises upon her collapse. She momentarily displays an agonizing facial expression seemingly seamless with the ground's gray and brown dried dirt, not patched with any grass immediately beneath her. Jane opens her eyes faintly, attempting to see Mr. Whysche.

"Helllllp!"

"You seek help because of a deepness of tone that is lacking in your presence at this time. Your need for help is one of deafening, because you don't hear a voice of tone of which you can cling to."

The "help" offered to a subject by a stronger mind is a concept with which Mr. Whysche is now quite familiar, having visited Dr. Miller for half a year and having previously viewed countless martial arts films, by his own volition, either in the Chinese language or with English

subtitles. He has equally viewed such films which are voiced over and translated into English. Mr. Whysche, having practically become immersed in the symbolism and embedded codes believed to be in the films, has suggested that the original language of the films is higher in tone and pitch, reflective of mental height. That height is like a "Great Wall," Patrick his apprentice has found, with one jumping onto or over the symbolic concrete wall representative of that attained mental height. Deeper voices of English translation are intended to "help" the viewer, and listener, the peculiar yet inquisitive Mr. Whysche has found in his experiential journey of watching movies. The "help" is a mental help which carries an individual's thought processes as though to even guide that person, hence a form of possession, scientifically. The mental help is at work when the subject is mentally resting, Mr. Whysche has also found, in leisurely watching movies, referring again to the ...*Argonauts* when Medea lifts keys from men who are sleeping and then says "Hecate, help me" in the scene that immediately follows.

Similarly, Dr. Miller had suggested that "help me" is scarred into the possessed Regan's stomach area, which is made visible when she is resting, albeit uncomfortably.

The *scientific* possession at work is also a relevant factor in a broader, representative sense where imperialist control is applied to a geographic territory. A dominant foreign entity inhabits, guides and controls the inhabited just as a colonizer would take residency in the land dwelled in by the colonized, according to a number of credible professors in the region.

Patrick, who, ironically, possesses a presence more fascist than Mr. Whysche, would also make illuminating discovery, eventually, in this area, finding that the "help" concept is evident, arguably, in a few of *his* favorite films as well. Two such films are *Spellbinder* and *Less Than Zero*. In the former, the character Miranda Reed lifts a turkey while preparing a meal in the kitchen and then is asked, "Need any help?" In the latter, the character Julian says "help me" -- not long after walking down a few steps -- and, at another point in the film, an answering

machine played causes the character Blair to raise her head in front of large words written on a wall. Mr. Whysche recently commended Patrick on his finds in these films. After viewing the films himself, Mr. Whysche suggested to Patrick that the mental robbing and stealing to heighten a mind which is down, as denoted in Downey's name, is embedded in *Less Than Zero* as well. Patrick, stunned by this revelation, has found Mr. Whysche's supernatural discernment to be "'off the charts.'" And, just as Mr. Whysche had suggested, in a tennis court scene in *Less Than Zero* a quantity of tennis balls is over-appreciated. Incidentally, it is through non-stop viewing that both Patrick and Mr. Whysche have seemed to have absorbed this information at a startlingly geometric rate, and perhaps that knowledge becomes power and ultimately leads to wealth.

The two have been particularly drawn to *Less Than Zero* as of late, partly because of its generation and demographic and also partly because the upper-class lifestyle depicted in the movie in no way represents the blue-collar class structure of Channel Haven. Notwithstanding, they find some scenes, including windmill footage, to resemble the scenery around Livermore, California, and also nearby Antioch. The two men, as well as other Channel Haven residents, also are drawn to the particular movie because its urban scenery and high rise buildings in no way are representational of the rural, rustic aesthetics and landscape of Channel Haven, allowing for a very intentional contrastive pun when discussing the film.

"Nooooo! I'm not going ... to die ... I can't die ... here. What d' you want?"

Patrick, age 48, fixes his gaze upon 49-year-old Jane and approaches her as she lay helplessly on the dry ground patched with grass and growing foxtails. Jane is able to make just enough sense of the situation to notice that Patrick is dripping wet. Patrick glances over at the 66-year-old Mr. Whysche, who opens one eye and smiles devilishly.

"What?" Mr. Whysche quietly asks Patrick.

Without warning, Patrick shakes his head violently back and forth, purposely causing his

wet hair to fling water onto Jane. Some of the water also lands on Mr. Whysche, who leans his head back and laughs, as though entertained, childishly maintaining a grin. Patrick smiles vibrantly.

"Patrick, this ... this isn't who you *are*," Jane insists, seemingly to assure herself that the situation is not that which she sees unfolding before her.

"Just who am I, Jane? Someone you think you knew back in the Philippines? Someone you were working on a magazine with for no real gain of any kind? How much did *anyone* really know about *anyone*, in the Philippines? I'd like to read you a poem, Jane. From someone who had been in a situation such as yours."

"Uhhhhh," Jane exhales in pain. She attempts to break free by rubbing the rope of her tied wrists firmly across the ground.

Looking at Jane in delight, Patrick then looks at few stapled sheets of paper he is holding. He then begins to read a two-stanza poem:

A transcending descent of the sonnet

Let me find love in that time which endures
with affectionately felt courtly kiss,
received from sincere embrace to pleasure,
muting regret, giving in to caress.
Fantasy without serenade still sings
an entice of true love in retrospect.
Yet the tide of sanctimony a dream
and reality lost in heart's regress.
A fair moment not void of compassion
and still vibrant from the spontaneous.
Feelings overflow as though a mansion.
Magical desire empowers us.
The moment is enchanted, love not lost.
The moment never leaves us, without loss.

Glide like the vigorous snake in the harvest field
where there is never shineful light,
a vast wasteland of frozen-cold-frozen bitter.
It is not all totally invisible, though:

Feel the sky all around you.
It is there.
Once blue, now red-green, and orange, and a purple horizon
cherished in this artistic portrait.
It was meant to be interpreted as the intersection of
crashing waves of a hundred flames.
This view won't ever be expired,
only exploited in those sable clouds
continuously floating slowly in a blue sky.
Vigorous like vegetables,
forming a bountiful and always-living will to love thee.
A love that must be livened
and lived out --
but Never!
I fight this irresistible force!
That long, sleeping desire must not be weakened.
I cannot escape autumn's return.
Borne from a definition of bier, formed on the clashing rocks.
Those rocks broke in two;
the seeds formed birthed a valuable haven.
Don't ever wander away, nor ever allow life's path to transcend.
Or else, heartache!
Now we must adjourn, for winter approaches.
From dawn to dusk, remember the clashing rocks.
Yes, mine broke in two. I dare not swim again in nature's pool.
If only time of day could stay friends with the once-blue sky.
Then would I be able still to love you.
But it will be a transcending of the sonnet.
Leaves scatter 'round and 'round. And 'round.
Nothing will allow me to forget thee.
I will always love thee. The mountain piles are left to ponder.
Now gather. Now encompass.
Many of our brethren also are now gone.
Without reason. It is a new season.
The pain must leave. We must awaken, and try hard to elude it.
Oh, the pain, the great and terrible pain.
It does not leave, but it must leave.
Let us not shout at the pain!!!
Let us release the pain.
Let me be! Now go!
Depart from me! It is too much to bear.
Out of my head, this intoxication!!!!

"This poem was written in 1983," Patrick adds. "Guess who the author was. Could this have been to you, or about you, Jane? I don't think it was about Lucy. I just have that feeling."

He tosses a few Polaroid photographs of the author onto the ground, near Jane's face. Jane, lying on her side, keeps her eyes closed as the photos land immediately in front of her. Remaining motionless, she does not at all respond to Patrick. She only slightly squints and shows tension in her closed eyes. She finally opens her eyes to see the photos, which are of a 20-year-old John Creighton, just two years before he was killed in the Philippines in 1985.

Patrick, although not as animated and excited as previous moments of criminality, begins another one of his lengthy speeches, which have now become candidly trademark for being pre-death:

“You and Lucy Patterson argued quite a bit. I think it was actually about John, a carry over. It probably was. Was it, Jane? John had shared with me that you two had ‘got it on,’ when we were at Davis. And, it wouldn’t surprise me, actually, I’m quite sure, that, that you also knew about Lucy and I, that we would probably, eventually, live together, sooner or later. I won’t ask if you knew about her mansion. You were already beginning to know too much, in general, about Lucy’s wealth, as a matter of fact, and I knew you would eventually be on to me, that we needed cash fast, to go into business. Lucy said she had tried to get rid of you herself, a *few* times. Who knows if you were even aware of that? We couldn’t afford to have Lucy’s accounts show activity at the exact time I was going into a burger sandwich business. You could have, someone could have, begun to make connections, to Lucy, to John’s death and who knows what, Jane. Sixteen tourists, including John, died in that kidnapping in ‘85, *sixteen*. Could, could you just ... *imagine* if information got out, that Mr. Whysche gave Lucy diamonds to hire those killings. Could you *imagine*? How would I appear? How would *Channel Haven* appear connected to an overseas scandal? John had been on to people in Channel Haven, he was no dummy. He knew there’d been occult and ritual dealings in the area. But, I look at it from ‘outside the box,’ that some at that time did what they had to, to get ahead. They explained it all to me, that the ‘50s and ‘60s

were a survival of those who were fitting together, ‘nicely knit,’ the best. Like *lively* stones, Jane. And, I’m a descendent, Jane, that’s right. Perhaps John was trying to figure out if he could be a descendent of an *aristocracy*, *besides UC Davis*. Situation is, we’re now an oligarchy, a select few in Channel Haven, high above ‘a great crowd’. And, the diamonds still needed to remain a secret, and kept from collateral use all these years later. The risk of being found out was too great, *too much* of a risk. All would be for naught. I mean *all!* The cash needed to be drawn from Brent’s accounts, after he was killed. There was no other way.”

Jane listens intently without interrupting, trying to learn all she can. Wounded, she finds herself struggling to retain all of Patrick’s revelatory disclosure. She maintains her silence for just a moment.

“What?” Jane then says, in a high-pitched, aggressive whisper, which seemingly is quickened with each and every passing second. “Excuse me, Patrick? You killed *Brent*? Brent’s *dead*? No, Patrick! I can’t believe it. No! You’re not mentally right. *Are you*? I sense that you’re ... out of your mind.”

“Yes, Brent’s *dead*.”

“We were all like family, Patrick. We were all in the hostage situation together, and we’ve been *closer* than a family, *sometimes, because* of it. You know that, Patrick. You *must* know this. The magazine was going to be about us, all four of us, all five of us, together, a tribute to John, and for Channel Haven itself. You betray integrity *itself!* And, you let yourself down, *Patrick*. How could you kill ... *kill* Brent? How *could* you?! Over *money*? You two seemed, you seemed like *brothers*, for *years*. You two shared countless times, always watching intriguing film together. You got along quite well, all the time, had so much in common, ever since ... since John was killed ... no. How could you commit such a heinous crime? Patrick, what are you doing with a *gun*? Period. At all? This isn’t you. You’re better than this, Patrick. You have an

outstanding education. You're not like those heartless terrorists in the Philippines. Don't be. You still have a chance to be successful, beyond measure. Don't make this mistake. Patrick, no.

Patrick, don't be a *coward*."

Patrick, quickly glancing at Mr. Whysche, suggests, "I think Jane will do for this year's set off."

"Yes, Patrick. Indeed. Channel Haven will be shaken by her disappearance. First, however, we must have her fully secured by tie-up."

"There's *not* going to be *anyone* tied up, if that's what you're saying!"

Patrick and Mr. Whysche turn around and look in the direction of the voice they have just heard from about 20 yards away.

"Who-who said that?" Patrick asks, tilting his head and leaning to see past a tree.

Another man tenaciously lunges at him from the opposite direction.

"He mentally dives," Mr. Whysche observes, not even flinching.

The concept of the "mental dive" is one which Mr. Whysche knows all too well, pointing out that the literal dives into water which occur in the ...*Argonauts* are representative of the mind being aggressively heightened and then collapsing, producing a sort of unconsciousness. The seven heads of the Hydra dragon in the classic film dive downward, and, so, the name "Hydra" becomes both an elemental reference to water and also a scientific reference to one's mental pattern when the mind collapses following unmaintained height. At that time, on the sudden way down from mental height, the person is essentially unconscious and can even be momentarily callous, having complete and total disregard for the situation at hand or any proximate person.

"Who lunges?" Mr. Whysche asks. "He will collapse just as Talos was drained of water."

Patrick avoids both the men's attempts to tackle him by back-pedaling in a semi-circular pattern, continually circling and maintaining distance from their repeated attempts to bring him

down. One of the men, after getting up and quickly shaking dirt off his upper body, faces Mr. Whysche and then begins to approach him, looking directly at Mr. Whysche with the fiercest of countenances and demeanors.

Jane, noticing this, is suddenly able to summon just enough energy to make her escape.

She runs away with her wrists still tied.

Patrick, noticing this, immediately reaches for his gun. He is aware that he still has exactly two bullets in the chamber. His main concern is that Jane now knows exceedingly too much and thus must be stopped. Patrick shoots the two men first, just as they were retreating from his wielded gun.

Patrick then runs after Jane and tackles her. Having no bullets remaining, Patrick begins to choke her and then beats her with his gun, with a series of blows to her face, arms and stomach. Having been fairly active through extensive walking in recent months, Jane is able to effectively use one of her hands, even with her wrists still tied, to severely scratch Patrick's neck and face. His immediate concern is that his face will display marks by which he could later be identified. At Patrick's brief moment of hesitation, Jane knees him in the groin. And, just as Patrick reaches for a large boulder, Jane kicks him in the stomach after she quickly stands, which literally knocks the air out of him. Jane, wounded and bleeding, runs, stumbles and attempts to make her way toward escape by even crawling.

"Her tied wrists limit her acceleration and mobility," Mr. Whysche comments from afar.

Patrick struggles to gather himself but is able to begin chasing her. About fifty yards away, Jane trips, stumbles and falls into a trench. She uses every ounce in her being to avoid yelling out in pain. Her lips quiver as she attempts to remain motionless at the bottom of the trench, lying on her backside, her wrists still tied. She continues to bleed excessively from her wounds. She feels as though one of her legs is broken. The leg goes numb. Patrick finally catches

up to the trench and looks down at her. Jane, who feels certain to die, squints ever so slightly as to appear actually dying that very moment. Squinting, she can see Patrick's image, standing high above her. Patrick studies the situation for a few seconds. He then turns around and leaves.

The two men Patrick shot just moments prior die at the scene. Mr. Whysche begins to bury them in trenches about 25 feet from his cottage. He places some military ordnance in the trench with them.

Patrick, dazed and confused, returns to Mr. Whysche and informs him that Jane was severely wounded and also is certain to die any moment now.

The bodies of the two men killed would later be discovered and identified by coroners as Rick Banks and Mark Hanson.

Chapter 7: "A Mark Shift from a Dichotomy's Goodness"

Mr. Whysche is a practicing spiritualist. He is particularly fond of the sunflower, which, as Mr. Whysche suggests practically, is a source of food with its many sunflower seeds while also providing shade to the immediate ground. Yet, he seems to have obtained knowledge of this symbol from Madame Patricia Whyte, a spiritualist and renowned medium and clairvoyant throughout the region. The peculiar Mr. Whysche has also been known to walk through areas of Channel Haven wearing a metal triangular frame, in the shape of pyramid, on top of his head. During events and conferences also attended by psychics and spiritualists from Marin County and outside the area, he would often have handy spare triangular frames in his possession and would not hesitate to place the peculiar items on others' heads, sometimes unexpectedly, yet

playfully. The result would often be abrupt laughter by those in proximity, such as those standing near an exhibit booth or table, and a look of surprise by the person now wearing the pyramid. Yet, the reaction would never be one of apprehension or dismay, the reason being that there never was reason for discontent during his readings when he "had the floor" before either tiny groups or seated multitudes.

The psychic readings given by Mr. Whysche have not been private sessions but open to any one present at the many -- including the larger, annual -- psychic fairs, held at the Channel Haven Inn. Like Madame Patricia, he had gained much credibility in giving clairvoyant readings, and the readings would often be scheduled for a specific time beforehand, scribed on a program agenda. Those attending a given psychic fair would be encouraged to be a part of the informal group gatherings, away from the exhibit booths, where 25 to as many as 200 portable metal chairs might be arranged in a typical audience-like setting. "Make sure you attend Mr. Whysche's reading at 12 o'clock," a host passing out the program itinerary might emphasize in advance. "And, I suggest you put those Starburst candies in your pocket right away," the host would add.

Although Mr. Whysche usually stood before a small crowd, his readings often became mysteriously personalized and unmistakably one-on-one. A mere tangible object, such as a wedding or engagement ring, was often Mr. Whysche's only request from participants, who would remain seated during his readings. At times, he requested that the participant only randomly speak a phrase-length utterance, before his direct reading of the individual. "May I hear your vibration?" Mr. Whysche would casually ask aloud, extending his open hand in a warm and encouraging gesture, only faintly smiling, and his eyes still, asking the participant to simply utter anything that quickly comes to mind. He would usually first close his eyes, momentarily, and become silent before offering his transcendental insights, focusing on a single attendee as though the individual was removed from the crowd and under observation. When

holding one's tangible ring, he would often massage it with his thumb, as though meticulously going over every curve and examining every groove. His eyes would sometimes remain open as he silently held such objects, firmly in his grasp and firmly standing, his eyes fixated as though in some strange trance or appearing as though in a daydream, yet his countenance non-threatening. In fact, his gentle smile on his almost expressionless face, strangely similar to a striking still photo, seemingly drew in the participant, as if some supernatural rapport existed between the two, outside of time, with all the crowd looking intently and offering a deadening silence in anticipation.

Mr. Whysche claims that he can see into the spiritual realm, and that clairvoyance is not limited to one's aura, as numerous participants and attendees to his readings can attest. For instance, Mr. Whysche, after listening to an elderly woman's vocal vibration, advised her that she was accompanied by the spirit of a great Indian chief. That particular psychic reading drew a rumbling response from the particular crowd, when attendees gasped and briefly engaged in conversational whispers, appearing to be stunned not only by the reading, and merely the thought of such a mystical presence, but also by Mr. Whysche's boldness in making such a declaration. To another attendee he had suggested, "You're being followed by iron workers..."

Those attending the psychic fairs range greatly in age, with a few being relatively young, in their mid-twenties, to the vast majority being well beyond age 40 and primarily the elderly. One recent attendee, a World War II veteran, was 92 years old. Styles and the relevance of the fairs vary, too, with some of the younger men and women seeking to become more self-styled, with a taste for tie-dye shirts, while some have truly a pantheistic outlook or embrace Hinduism. A range of those simply seeking to enhance a nirvana experience to actual practitioners of Buddhism are often part of the equation as well. Varying exhibit booths can often consist of palm readers, readers of the Tarot, tea leaf readers and those presenting leaflets on numerology

or astrology. Various gems and crystals are on display, as well as audio products on the metaphysical. A number of individuals frequenting the fairs in Channel Haven have professed to be witches, inclusive of both men and women. And, many with a desire to be one and at peace with nature have suggested they are Shamans. A few routine visitors who practice Shamanism, in particular, were intrigued by Mr. Whysche's reading concerning the great Indian chief. They presented him with a dream catcher at the following fair and had hoped to hear more in areas which could pertain to Shamanism, specifically. However, Mr. Whysche would focus more on spirit guides in general at that next psychic fair.

Chapter 8: "Undead and Unrevived"

The time has come to attempt contact with the dead. Séances in particular flourish in Channel Haven in and around key dates year-round. Halloween, or Samhain, is a particularly popular time to conduct a séance. Yet, it is also rumored that séances occur in Channel Haven at times which coincide with the witches' calendar as a whole. The selected days of the year are rumored to date back to an ancient Druidian culture. Numerous inhabitants in Channel Haven are pagan, which is common knowledge to many who even attend church. Some who attend the psychic fairs find it interesting that Mr. Whysche also attends worship at a small, charismatic non-denominational church, located just outside Channel Haven. The church condones "speaking in tongues," and some yield themselves to a message that comes forth consistent with the sermon. When the church attendee brings forth the timely message, the Pastor will pause, close his eyes and allow the message to be fully heard. Some in the church have claimed to have heard directly from biblical prophets. It is actually quite a change of pace from Mr. Whysche's dealings with the supernatural, and many of the faith movement would obviously consider his

contrastive pursuits of interests atypical. Mr. Whysche is an elder at the church and has been seen singing, clapping and helping with the distribution and circulation of offering plates during the church's Sunday morning worship service. The church is a relatively small congregation, consisting of approximately 120 total members. Perhaps Mr. Whysche, a Deist, attends and assists the church because he does not, as he has outwardly claimed, deal with evil or, specifically, the "negative".

During one of Mr. Whysche's readings at a psychic fair, he had suggested to the participant that she was being continuously accompanied by a spirit. She immediately interjected in asking him if the spirit was "evil"? In turn, Mr. Whysche had responded -- as a number of attendees recall -- "We do not deal with the negative here." Was the comment, with an omission of the term "evil," genuinely from one having an actual stance against good-and-evil dichotomy? Mr. Whysche has not been one to discuss such an over-arching concept at length, and hence it appears from the surface that he simply does not take "good" and "evil" into much consideration. At the same time, there is a presence about Mr. Whysche that does not exactly radiate from his being but does seem to mysteriously project, in the estimation of a few elderly Channel Haven residents, that he is one who consciously removes himself from the dichotomy of "good and evil".

Séances are conducted by actual mediums in the area. Mr. Whysche, a spiritualist and also medium, does not claim to be a certified medium as a number of Channel Haven residents do, some in advertising fashion. Certified mediums in the area are often ordained ministers as well. That ministry is not evangelical but more or less allows one to conduct funerals, baptisms, weddings and the like. The casual ordination of "minister," however, has become increasingly sought after for purposes of providing one credibility in conducting séances. A sort of confidence the medium projects from being ordained becomes somewhat of a draw for participants,

particularly those seeking an authoritative presence when a renowned clairvoyant or psychic is not available in the region. Some attendees of séances strictly attempt to make sense of ectoplasm, to this day, seeking actual manifestation of the supernatural in order to validate their own inner views toward the existence of life and existence beyond, the spirit world. They do not seek reasons for steadfast conviction, however, not leaning too heavily or placing too much credence in that which is dogmatic. Many look to the Ascended Masters as they remove themselves from a belief system aligned with an "old world" and as "New Age" beliefs are realized.

Madame Patricia Whyte has been called upon to lead this current séance, June 22, 2011, which will attempt to make contact with the spirit of the late Lucy Patterson, who died almost a year ago in a Channel Haven church facility. A number of those interested in gems and stones are intrigued by rumors of a diamond rolling out of Lucy's pocket exactly at the time of her death. Those attending this séance led by Madame Patricia are: Jack, the owner of Jack's deli; Patrick; Mr. Whysche; and nine frequenters of psychic fairs, including Thelma, owner of Thelma's coffee shop. Both Mr. Whysche and Patrick are also attempting to make contact with the spirit of John Creighton, who was killed in the well-known hostage situation in the Philippines almost three decades ago. Mr. Whysche had been unsuccessful in making contact with John and had been ridiculed for his claim that John's presence had actually been in the room on a number of occasions. Mr. Whysche had suggested that he was frightened by another presence, six months ago, that had actually accompanied LUCY, as spelled out on a Ouija board. Since that time, Mr. Whysche has declined to attempt contact with Lucy or John. Co-workers and acquaintances of the late Lucy have agreed that that would be ideal and in the best interest of all. Yet, Madame Patricia -- who is more of the director mold than promoter, even though she advertises her services extensively -- has been known to find answers when supposed causes of

deaths have remained in question. And, the death of John, in particular, still haunts a number of people a quarter-century later, they suggest, his death remaining on the conscience of those who had been close to him.

Mr. Whysche is in attendance but does not sit at the table. He stands in the dining room silently, his eyes closed even before the séance begins. The lights of tiny lamps remain on for the time being, not to mention a number of flickering candles that will provide the only illumination needed moments later.

Jane had conducted a séance last Halloween at the conclusion of a Channel Haven Halloween party, at a single family home, which just so happens to be structurally Victorian. Unlike Mr. Whysche, Jane is not a medium or ordained minister, both of which Mr. Whysche has professed to be. That particular séance conducted by Jane, about eight months ago, had lasted about 45 minutes, and there had been attempt to contact past loved ones. Those who participated in that séance, just beyond All Hallow's Even -- 2:00 A.M. and, hence, actually on All Saint's Day -- were: the owners of the home; Jane; the hired DJ; and three party-goers who were welcomed to stay the night.

The owners of the residence, a newly wedded couple, had concluded the party at 1:30 A.M. Slouching on hay stacks in the back patio, where the DJ played music and attendees had danced, the few who remained had stalled in getting to their tasks of cleanup, including the DJ, who had worked overtime and would have to break down all his equipment, load it, and still drive on the highway for about an hour. The night and early morning for many others, however, was described as “one of the funest Channel Haven events ever,” referring to residential events.

The séance at hand, on this current Midsummer Solstice evening, is suddenly canceled, without warning. Madame Patricia enters the dim dining area where all the would-be participants are seated. She informs them that the “negative” is particularly present tonight and would

possibly even overwhelm some of the guests, the novices and the learners. Mr. Whysche scoffs at the remark. Madame Patricia ignores him as she looks about the room, visually scanning the floor and seats of guests while having a look of disappointment.

"Thank you all for coming. I apologize for any inconvenience. I apologize this evening was all for naught," she says with almost business demeanor, concluding the evening firmly.

Madame Patricia just moments later is approached by Mr. Whysche, in the hallway leading to the home's master bedroom.

"What presence did you sense, Patricia?"

"It was the 'negative,' and powerful."

"I must have a question answered, if I may."

"Okay."

"What is the most convincing magic?"

"Do you mean David Copperfield magic or 'magick,' as in magick with a 'k'?"

"The one that uses darkness."

"Okay ... do you mean--"

"The most powerful through dark forces."

"Well, Minister Whysche. By the way, do you still go by 'Minister Whysche'?"

"Yes, that's correct. I respond to Minister Whysche also."

"Minister Whysche, it's interesting that, that you use the term 'darkness'. A deity, or goddess such as Hecate, *Queen of Darkness*, could be *extremely* powerful, but maybe not as powerful as another god--"

"That's what they say in *Jason and the Argonauts*."

"Yes, a film with some very famous occult scenes, in addition to being fantasy."

"Fire is called down in that film," Mr. Whysche adds, slowly raising his chin and looking

at the ceiling's light fixture in the hallway. "Is that the most powerful magick?"

"Well, it depends on the person's imagination, how powerful the person feels about an event," Madame Patricia says sarcastically.

"Fire called down cannot be surpassed by any magician, I suppose."

"That sounds a *little* bit like biblical lingo, but, yes, that's one manifestation of the supernatural that is actually like an act of God, you could say. But, who needs to summon power at biblical proportions anyway? Is this an area you find compelling, Minister Whysche?"

"I seek information on what the Almighty allows and doesn't allow."

"Uh-huh. I see. There's the Bible again. I'm even aware of that whole argument of what God allows and doesn't *allow*. Satan being bound a thousand years, all that good stuff. The Bible is not where you truly find origination on magick, although some fanatics like to claim otherwise."

"But Satan, is *loosed*," Mr. Whysche adds.

"What's that?"

"Satan is *loosed*, out of his prison, *after* the thousand years. He shall then 'go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.'"

"Satan is loosed a thousand years, the prophets of Baal cut themselves, the Bible is about a God who casts people who aren't the elect into a fiery furnace, and so on."

"But, calling down fire is included in the Bible, just like in *Jason and the Argonauts*. It has to be the most powerful manifestation. Yes?"

"Yes, and *no*, not because the Bible blankets, or attempts to blanket it, anyway, or be an umbrella over it as some try to validate."

"Nothing could be more powerful."

“Well, if you insist on beating this to death, Minister Whysche, there *have* been some who have claimed to be descended, or connected, I should say, or, better yet, align their history back to the magicians of ancient Egypt, that is, Pharaoh's magicians, who duplicated Moses's feats, some of them. As a matter of fact, it's recorded in a Christian book that isn't your typical Christian propaganda. It's 'born again' fanatical, though, if I recall correctly. You can't get more powerful than that, duplicating Moses. I *tell* ya. *Calling down* fire from heaven, *though*, uh, a *little* overboard. A little outrageous to say the least.”

“Could there ever be anything more powerful than that which we have just discussed? That which others fear and dare not discuss?”

“Let's see, there *is* one demonstration of power that very few will ever be able to match.”

“*Yes*. And, what would that be, Patricia?” Mr. Whysche asks, his countenance becoming that of one seemingly making highly intelligent inquiry.

“Raising the dead.”

“Like a *resurrection*?”

“There you go again, Mr. Whysche, with the biblical discourse. That's so confining. I wouldn't exactly put it that way. But, yes. Although, the materialists might object to an actual ‘incarnation’. But, it looks like you get the idea--”

“‘Raising the dead’ is actually *synonymous*,” Patrick interjects, walking proudly and slowly approaching Madame Patricia and Mr. Whysche in the home's relatively lengthy hallway. “I learned *that* much listening to a little Christian radio in Sacramento, during my undergrad days. Raising and resurrection are synonymous.”

“That's on an unbelievable power level, Patricia,” Mr. Whysche says, ignoring Patrick while slightly smiling out of one side of his mouth and gently laughing.

“And, the thousand years becomes a semantical debate,” Patrick adds. “Is it a literal

thousand years, or is each thousand years a 'day' from God's perspective?"

"And, other questions begin to arise," the Berkeley rhetoric student, in attendance, adds, walking out of a bedroom after looking through a photo album and intently listening. "Were the six days of *creation* actual 'days,' as in 24 hours, and not just possibly intervals of a thousand years but each day, in harmony with science and evolution, and also *geological* calendars, actually millions of years?"

"You'll have to excuse me, Mr. Whysche," Madame Patricia says quickly. "I have to take this call. Blessed be."

Madame Patricia begins an enthusiastic conversation on her cell phone with one of her clients concerning wealth and love affairs.

Mr. Whysche, Patrick and the Berkeley student walk over to a table in the dining room to continue their conversation and to eat the remaining items on a vegetable plate. The large tray-like plate consists of carrot and celery sticks, radishes, olives, broccoli, cauliflower, wheat crackers, as well as a variety of cheeses, which have all been arrayed around a small bowl of ranch dressing and also spinach dip. The usual deviled eggs and tiny liverwurst sandwich squares, however, have not been included in this evening's snacks.

One of Madame Patricia's colleagues enters the dining room to collect writing markers and a small dry erase board.

The Berkeley student is picked up from a Christian friend who drives and worships in the same "zone" that encompasses the Berkeley area. Their large church consists of "zones" which meet together for Sunday worship services, which are grandiose and magnificent. Their Sunday worship services, attended by countless college students dressed informally, some in college sweatshirts, are held within a variety of very large urban settings, in cathedral-like facilities which the church rents just for that Sunday.

Mr. Whysche is one of the last to leave the home this night and begins to walk back to his cottage before any remaining attendee at the would-be séance can offer him a ride home. Patrick, unaware of the moment that Mr. Whysche leaves, falls asleep on the couch and stays the night.

A self-professed spiritualist, Mr. Whysche had made claims, previously, that he had observed the actual manifestation of ectoplasm, albeit in a very dark setting. That series of supernatural occurrences occurred about 50 years ago, when he had merely sat in on a session. Other phenomena at that time had included table walking and a change in voice of the medium, an elderly woman named Louise, who had channeled a deceased man who had worked on major railroads being built in the U.S. during the mid-19th century. Mr. Whysche claims to have also been in the presence of such paranormal events as the audible playing of horns by spirits unseen, in the darkest of settings.

Contrasting those darker settings, Mr. Whysche in recent decades has spent many Sunday afternoons at the town kitchen, a contrast to church and the psychic fairs. For Mr. Whysche, a triality of sorts exists between the three arenas, while orthodox Christians eat at the town kitchen as well. Yet, for the most part, it is generally a mystery as to exactly what the beliefs, belief systems or even ideals are of those visiting the town kitchen, which is not owned, per say, by the town but is actually run by two women who live at its very location. They willingly welcome all who would visit their kitchen, whether or not in a sphere of Christendom, eagerly awaiting Sunday's guests, who provide both monetary and food donations. British satire is always available for reading, sometimes read aloud and even theatrically. Jane Thompson has often volunteered to help the ladies, hosting and serving patrons coffee and meals. Together, the three sometimes harmoniously sing and entertain their lunch guests. They will sometimes step in unison, high at the knees, standing side by side. The three will collectively intertwine at their arms, placing their off-arms at their waists, while singing:

Welcome, *welcome, welcome* to our kitchen, our *kitchen*, our *kitchen*.

Welcome, *welcome, welcome* to our kitchen, our *kitchen*, our *kitchen*.

Welcome, *welcome, welcome* to our kitchen, our *kitchen*, our *kitchen*,
our kitchen, our kitchen!!! Yeah!"

The end of their routine consists of them loosening their arms from one another, spinning away and then gazing in admiration, very slowly shaking their heads, glaring and passionately laughing. One elderly man who has observed the performances for quite some time has suggested that the women, at the very moment they sing and dance, seem to "come across as some of the most powerful women in the world, as though royalty."

Patrick lives closer to the town kitchen than to Mr. Whysche's cottage. The area in which Patrick lives is an extremely small suburban area which would normally be considered rural when compared to larger towns and cities. His production job is conveniently in walking distance, only about 15 minutes away.

Two days after attending the séance that had been cancelled due to the presence of the "negative," Patrick works much later the first weekday back to work. Just before leaving the small warehouse, he takes an extra moment to scan the area. He is feeling rather paranoid on this Monday evening. As he gets outside the facility and locks the front entrance, a cat suddenly leaps from the shadows, out of a trash can.

"Ahhhh!" Patrick hollers while jumping backward in a quick, fearful reflex.

The cat darts across the street and into the corner of a small lot field. It flees by leaping from a cardboard box onto a wooden fence, a sight which seems familiar to Patrick, as though someone had escaped from him. He puts his hand to his chest and massages his bicep with his off-arm as he gathers himself.

Patrick carefully emerges from a shadowy area and into an area dimly lit by a street light.

“Anyone there?”

No one responds.

And, not even a single vehicle can be heard, not even from a very far distance.

The area is quiet beyond reason, not even a cricket making a sound. Noticing that the public street area is clear, Patrick begins his usual walk home, eager to get away from the dark, isolated area.

After walking only about two quasi-blocks, Patrick hears the sound of one walking in heels. He quickly turns to look. No one is there. He turns back around and walks again. The sharp sound of the heels becomes increasingly louder. He turns to look again. Out of the shadows emerges a woman dressed in fine attire.

“What cha askin’ for?” Patrick asks with a look of sincerity.

The woman, who stands a commanding 6’ 3” in heels, only responds, “You’ve committed far more grievous offences than extortion, indulging and excess.”

“Excuse me?”

She then turns and walks away, seemingly vanishing after re-entering the shadows. Only three steps of her heels are heard, and she is gone.

“Lady, you have no idea. And, you don’t know me, to make such an assessment.”

There is no response. Patrick notices that all is quiet again. He continues his walk home, frequently looking over his shoulder and periodically pausing and glancing behind him.

As he approaches his cottage, which just so happens to be strikingly similar to the cottage owned by Mr. Whysche, a sense of relief uplifts his spirits. Upon arriving at his cottage, Patrick smirks at the fact that he had just felt fearful, not to mention paranoid, which he finds partly justifiable for working much later and walking home in the dark. But, the walk itself was as much the same as always, he reminds himself, shrugging his shoulders. And, any fear is actually

unjustifiable, he reminds himself. He considers any paranoia to be unacceptable as well and thus quickly re-establishes his confident outlook and fearless mindset.

Exhausted from the long night, Patrick very slowly and sluggishly walks up the three tiny wooden boards forming steps directly under his front door. The steps have just enough room upon which to briefly rest his brief case as he searches for his keys.

The keyhole on the front door seems to guide the key he holds.

He opens the door and very slowly enters.

"Hello?"

The door hinges squeak as the door slowly creeks open, very slowly coming to a stop.

He turns on the light.

Sitting in a chair at the kitchen table is a woman with facial wounds wearing boxing gloves which are worn and torn.

"You left me," she says. "Now I give you that same pain."

Chapter 9: "Down Time in Channel Haven"

Located in Channel Haven is a brew pub called Earnie's. The name cleverly fits the clientele, with Channel Haven being a tiny town where most common people can command a sort of presence. Earnie's whimsical logo design is that of a close-up in the likeness of the very likeable and popular owner, Earnie, holding a fishing rod and wearing a number of literal hats, including a baseball cap. Earnie's is open throughout the week and is frequented weekdays by regulars who, coincidentally, are an accurate portrayal and seemingly precise representation of some of the town's more visible "walks of life". For instance, a postal worker, Dave, arrives just

after work, around 6:30 P.M., almost each and every weekday. A man who owns a bicycle shop, Wade, can often be seen playing darts alone at the pub and walking back and forth to select songs on the digital touch-screen juke box mounted on the wall. A few general maintenance workers, paid daily, live the cycle of: picking up a work order from a job dispatch early in the morning, reporting to their respective job sites, returning to dispatch to get paid, cashing their checks at the nearby market, and then dropping in to Earnie's for "happy hour" around 5:30 P.M. Construction workers show up frequently, especially during jobs of new construction in the area. And, landscapers contracted to tend to proximate public and common areas drop in regularly. "Is this a biker bar?" some customers from out of town have occasionally asked bartenders. On the wall behind the bartender's serving area hangs a poem:

Beer Binge

Beer
a genuine draft
Beer
bottled or on tap
Beer
soothing and savory
Beer
slammed or drunk lately
Beer
5 in 1 sitting
Beer
while karaoke singing
Beer
watching playoffs
Beer
at a Hofbrau
Beer
at a club
Beer
at a pub
Beer
at a kegger
Beer
by the pitcher
Beer

domestic or imported
Beer
evenings, weekends, and when afforded.

Earnie's flourishes as a hub of social and drinking activity particularly during Oktoberfest. Movies are shown at that time. In a dark area inside the pub hangs a lighted and framed movie poster for the film *Chicago*, the musical that won the Academy Award for Best Picture, for year 2002. The poster adds a dimension to the establishment which often conjures reflection of the nearby area formerly the town of Port Chicago, California.

Also informally considered a "bar," Earnie's intends to also be a sports bar of sorts, with team pictures of the Chicago Bulls' two three-peats, their six total NBA championships, mounted on the walls of a small dining room that has the appearance of a den. Yet, sports fans who frequent Earnie's root for the Warriors and also the Lakers this decade. And, those who wear Raiders and 'Niners gear simply do so for casual style, some simply seeking another reason just to drink, which makes sense to girlfriends and spouses who watch \$50 a week of hard-earned money disappear at the bar. A banner at the pub reads: "Monsters of the Midway". Another reads: "The Windy City".

Beer-drinking is the norm for the hands-on working class in Channel Haven because of the town's need for workers who can endure grueling labor as well as the respective job places' and sites' poor work conditions. The subpar work environments are particularly those within warehouses and also facilities which conduct assembly line operations. They often operate on a Just-In-Time schedule, a process where inventory, which costs more money when more is stored, is not stocked for long durations or periods. As a result, workers find themselves practically stationed at conveyor belts near rollup doors, particularly where there is a high volume of orders coming through their respective shipping and receiving stations and standup terminals. The conditions for such workers are often at their worst during the winter, or the last quarter in a

calendar year. Within that time frame, various graveyard shift workers often wear multiple sweatshirts under heavy coats or hooded jackets, along with gloves. In-door environments have such a chill factor that workers' breaths can be seen, to such an extent, in fact, that it would appear as though they are smoking. Freightliners back in throughout the morning, and the rollup doors are often left open entire swing and graveyard shifts.

Work conditions overall have come a long way since the *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*, a work written by Friedrich Engels after his stay in proletarian Manchester. The Proletariat had been the lower working class, while the Bourgeoisie were the capital-owning class. The classes had been formed by the Industrial Revolution. Arguably, Engels -- labeled by historians and theorists as co-founder, along with Karl Marx, of modern socialist theory -- had relied on his pre-existing socialist ideal, as opposed to abstract knowledge, in observing the Proletariat and Bourgeoisie. Coincidentally, during his observation, Engels had placed most of his focus on factory workers. The conditions in 19th century England had been intolerable for workers, with social underpinnings connecting them to literal slums. The working conditions of relatively unknown Channel Haven cannot be compared to those of England in the 19th century, but Channel Haven warehouses have had their instances of unsatisfactory work conditions and also excessive drunkenness, in modern times. Another recurring trend, in post-modern Channel Haven, has been the use of speed and other uppers. The result has been class conflict and division in commercial areas of Channel Haven, where general laborers have formed their own arbitrary social units, looking out for one another, casually trafficking uppers, chipping in for gas, carpooling, and splitting the costs on car maintenance and insurance. Those with just slightly a bit more status and longevity can often be mistaken for being part of "cliques," and the small groups often do become so. As many as five workers have been seen living out of a single van.

Some workers who drive will often allow as many as six workers to ride with them, often in tiny compact cars, dropping some of them off at scheduled job sites en route to their own respective assignments. Even though they are part of a lower working class, one can arbitrarily say, they can often be dispatched as many as five days per week, granted that they are able to arrive at an agency or dispatch center as early as 5:30 or 6:00 A.M. Fortunately, for such workers, they are provided work boots, hard hats and even goggles where needed. While, unfortunately, construction cleanup and similar types of jobs are not in demand during the rainy season, and the warehouse jobs subsequently become scarce for some workers. General warehouse work is seasonally in demand, however, at the end of each quarter, when inventory is cycle counted. That being the case, another working class is informally formed in Channel Haven: those who will request only cycle-counting jobs, which are usually temporary and rarely temp to hire.

Cycle-counting in Channel Haven ranges in pay from \$8.00 to \$12.00 an hour, with the higher end being based on shift differential pay for those working graveyard, when most warehouses have their inventory counted. Such temporary workers usually wear collared shirts and slacks, and, so, the job of cycle-counting has its advantages. Not considered skilled work -- and not requiring certification that comes with such jobs as forklift driving -- cycle-counting becomes the choice of workers not interested in jobs involving physicality. The challenge, however, is continuous counting into the early morning, with some parts, or SKUs (stock keeping units) in inventory being tiny items stacked in the hundreds and even thousands. "It's like counting sheep," a tiresome cycle counter recently suggested. In stark contrast, some parts could be large boxes containing items such as computer monitors, which make for easy counting, where pallets might have merely four, six, eight, or twelve monitors stacked squarely upon them. In such instances, a cycle counter's checkmarks on his or her inventory printout become quite

plentiful, but not tedious.

Cycle counters carry clipboards and either check off the quantity as being correct at a given bin location or write in the number of their count, in discrepancy, alongside the quantity listed according to the warehouse's computer-operated system. Where counts are not consistent with the data quantified to a location as indicated by computer systems, inventory control personnel are notified. I. C. personnel will then begin their searches, both in automated fashion and through actually walking the warehouse, radio in hand, sometimes walking the floor in its entirety until finding the missing part(s). New printouts will then be generated by I.C. for additional counting where part relocation occurred.

Some of the larger warehouse operations use handheld devices whereby cycle counters merely scan the SKU and then enter the quantity of a part on the same handheld's number key pad. A warehouse that contains hardware and nuts and bolts uses scales in cycle-counting its smaller parts, where a single unit of a particular part is first weighed. The weight of that single unit is entered and then the whole quantity of the part poured into a scale, weighed together, and then divided by the single unit's weight, which calculates the quantity of the part in stock.

A benefit to working in some warehouses as part of a larger, temporary staff during inventory periods, mainly the end of a quarter, is that a free "lunch" is usually provided to everyone who worked. One warehouse provided hundreds of sandwiches, chips and sodas -- from Bob's Deli, located in a small industrial area in Channel Haven -- delivered and arranged in catered-like fashion, placed on tables near the entrance of the warehouse. Many cry when this quarterly anticipated moment finally arrives, from not only a team effort successfully completed but also because many assignments unwillingly end, some of which might have involved extensive overtime pay. And, many of the laid-off have dependent mouths to feed. Such workers, who often have other jobs which they work daytime and/or swing, have momentarily

experienced a brief climb up the socio-economic ladder with a second or third, graveyard, temporary job. But, a price is paid in over-committing, where another area of the worker's life is seemingly robbed, sometimes including one's good health.

Numerous graveyard workers are undeniably addicted to speed and/or cocaine or simply rely on huge amounts of caffeine. Some such workers are actually feared, literally, partly because they can be overly aggressive and even fierce at times, because they work without much sleep. They also tend to seem threatened by anyone else potentially becoming a mainstay. They are often viewed as mysteriously insecure, largely because they will gossip or frown upon others in discussion in attempting to get others at odds with one another and thus furthering division. Job security means others must leave. They often conduct their deceptive deeds wide-eyed, until the next day. A number of them have become skinny beyond measure and some have a sort of heavy metal rock appearance, keeping their hair long and wearing tight jeans. They often will remain scruffy at times. They are not at all concerned with shaving, but they ironically come across as being far from transients, never having an actual odor emitting from them. A chemical-like scent is often smelled around them, however. Yet, these particular workers make no mistakes, constantly printing labels in streams and labeling parts, standing at computer terminals and quickly moving about, applying large plastic wrapping to a large order on a pallet, applying the packing slip. They are also eager to grab a pallet jack and move parts as a given order would call for when actual order pullers are not available. And, they are less affected by the cold conditions of the warehouse and will sometimes wear just a single t-shirt.

In contrast, a number of other workers also fueled by various uppers will still often wear heavy coats, such as a San Francisco 49ers jacket, still coming across as being affected by frigid work conditions. A paleness and cold sweat is often evident in their countenances, and they will often wear shades during their respective graveyard shifts, moving about quickly and without

ceasing, honking repeatedly, as they effortlessly maneuver their forklifts.

Unofficial rank seems to be an informal, underlying theme in the industrial area of Channel Haven. The ranking of blue collar workers, which is sometimes unintentional, is somewhat consistent with the way in which the nearby area of the former Port Chicago site, part of a very small Port Chicago town, is still envisioned. The former Port Chicago site has a brief World War II history, when an incident had involved an explosion that had occurred at the Naval Munitions Depot. A U.S. Naval Weapons Station continues to operate at that area, along Suisan Bay. The World War II incidents that were involved in the explosion had been considered a mutiny at the time.

Class division exists among today's commercial drivers coming through Channel Haven as well. And, the classes are essentially pre-existing: according to Class A, Class B, and Class C driver's license holders. The latter, which is the basic driver's license, the driver's license every California driver would be required to acquire from the Department of Motor Vehicles, is sometimes in employment demand. A Channel Haven labor agency often just needs various workers to be driven to respective job sites but, also, rent-a-car agencies often need their cars relocated. A single rent-a-car agency might call for as many as 15 Class C drivers to drive hours in each direction. Class A drivers, the drivers of diesels and big rigs, make a relatively good living, and many traveling through Channel Haven will often stay overnight at the Channel Haven Inn. After making enough money, they will sometimes return to the motel in hopes of acquiring additional Class A work dispatched in, around and leaving out of the area. Problems can arise, however, when they attempt to juggle separate driving jobs while unbeknownst to dispatchers. Some drivers will hide their multiple driving logs from the next dispatcher, who is unaware that the driver might not be setting aside adequate time for sleep and rest. Oftentimes, a dispatcher will simply overlook routinely checking drivers' logs.

Where drivers coming through Channel Haven are not routinely drug-screened through urinalyses, some will use the opportunity to use methamphetamine to stay awake. General laborers working two and three jobs have been known to stay awake durations ranging from three days to two weeks while “amped” up. Some worker's compensation claims have been determined to be fraudulent.

Temporary graveyard shifts continue to be the most readily available for Channel Haven job seekers, and there is a constant overall demand for general laborers, with a number of temporary agencies thriving where blue collar workers are routinely needed. The result is that working classes of sorts continue to be arbitrarily formed well into the 2010 decade.

Lucy Patterson, deceased, had been certified in various production capacities and was a skilled machinist in nearby Concord. Somewhat similarly, Jane Thompson has been in supervisory capacities in assembly line operations in Channel Haven. Patrick Singleton, in addition to holding a UC Davis degree, was proficient at a time in skilled warehouse tasks which also involved excessive data entry and knowledge of various computer applications, in and around Channel Haven.

Skilled workers are at the top of the hierarchy where blue collar work is concerned. Because journeymen carpenters, electricians and plumbers have their own tools, and usually small trucks as well, they are routinely called upon for their services. Apprentices often do not own their own tools and will often have to wait for opportunities where a journeyman can use some assistance. An apprentice might simply request to “ride along” with a journeyman, to learn, to be available in the event that he is suddenly needed, or to simply get to know the journeyman better so that the particular apprentice is requested in the future.

Below the apprentices, and in a separate work sphere altogether, are the general construction workers, sometimes referred to as “construction cleanup,” ranging from basic

push-broom sweeping to landscape mowing. They may sometimes even get a job not desired by most, such as roof tearoff. Such general laborers work on minimum wage and will often not receive a full workday but rather a four-hour minimum, sometimes after waiting hours early in the morning, in a cold warehouse, waiting to be dispatched. The only entertainment on hand as they wait might be a very old television with very little channel variety.

As many as four workers' names might be placed on a single work order. Some will often be dishonest about their involvement in the usage of larger electrical equipment once they have returned from a job, attempting to earn a higher paycheck, sometimes just enough for one more beer. Jackhammers can take their toll on workers conducting demolition, and those in payroll who issue checks usually give the workers the benefit of the doubt.

General laborers will often agree to a job strictly on another worker having transportation, whether or not reliable, and the driver being able to accommodate them in his vehicle. Gas-money bargaining therefore becomes part of their own informal arrangements, respectively, with agencies and dispatchers in Channel Haven mainly concerned that the workers arrive to respective job sites on time.

Some suggest that industrial business surging in Channel Haven is not only a reflection of the "productive forces," or *Produktivkräfte* at work, but also that which transcends production of the material world. The very instances of poltergeist in the area have been partly attributed to the minds of laborers extensively networking and productively working in the face of alienation.

About two arbitrary blocks away from Earnie's brew pub, along a dirt road, is another beverage-serving establishment called The Pier. As though right on cue, 5:00 P.M. every Friday, the demographic of The Pier drastically changes from its quieter cocktail lounge-like atmosphere to a 21 and older crowd. Fridays are dubbed "First Call Friday's", when pitchers of domestic draft beers start at \$5.00, a price which lasts until 5:59 P.M. and increased by only a dollar to

match each hour. Another favorite at The Pier is the usual bottled beer, such as Corona and Modelo, each served with a slice of lime. Suddenly rivaling those particular brands of beers is Blue Moon, on tap, served with an orange slice. Customers have the option of having their beer served to them in an actual jar, similar to some of the roadhouses out of town. A poem in The Pier reads:

Class Meats @ Sea Level

Guests rest on sandy shores filled with scores
of rods dug deep and anchored by weights
left behind by lures for albacore.
Strong test the grade; no signs of paper plates.
The wind gusts blankets and a thrown apple core;
'tis not the stage at the dock, where wooden crates
are heaped of cases dock workers count: 24
received with ship's cargo, packing slip taped,
bells seemingly sounding seagulls to soar.
Workers brace for the next oncoming waves.

Cooks muscle cases from the conveyor,
and potatoes and rock cod they contain.
Midday chowder the choice, small packets torn.
Crab is cracked, shrimp sauced, near view of a crane.
Dining to include: fillet, chips & liquor,
while less fortunate fish in vain who remain.

Sea food, including fish and chips, are popular items on The Pier's menu, and beer, in addition to Napa Valley wine, is the beverage of choice to accompany such meals. Although not far from Suisan Bay, some of the food distribution warehouses and small suppliers in the area choose to deal in canned sea food goods which are imported from well outside the area. Such imported food items include sardines, tuna, salmon, shrimp, oysters, and anchovies. The sea food is fairly consistent with that which would be found in nearby Suisan Bay, which has been known to also consist of striped bass and sturgeon. Licensed fisherman or those fishing for only sport have been known to find "hot spots" in the Mallard Reservoir, located not far from Port Chicago Highway.

Also off Port Chicago Highway is the U.S. Naval Weapons Station, around the area of

the former Port Chicago site, which is more immediately proximate to Suisan Bay than Channel Haven. And, not far from the U.S. Naval Weapons Station is the Belloma Slough, a direct connection to Suisan Bay, which is also intersected by other sloughs relatively close in the area.

The tiny town of Port Chicago had been located in an area which is in-between Suisan Bay and the town of Channel Haven, with a small area of the old Port Chicago town, some streets and circles, not immediately connected to the bay. Channel Haven is not directly adjacent to the actual area of the former port but adjacently close. Imported sea food is actually trucked in through Port Chicago Highway via Highway 4. And, sea food is sometimes served by cooks and caterers in informal, fisherman-like attire.

Sea food not only attracts customers to The Pier brew pub, sea food in general also maintains a consistent theme with the industrial concept of operations alongside a former “port”. Logistically, incoming freight with such food items actually is made more convenient for Channel Haven wholesalers who do not await fresh crab and shell fish right along the bay, such as business owners running companies and outlets around Fisherman's Warf in San Francisco. Port Chicago Highway almost becomes a conveyor into the town of Channel Haven. Because canned foods maintain their respective qualities for many months, entrepreneurship involving sea food in Channel Haven is comparable to many other small geographic areas renowned for the market. And, a steady demand in Channel Haven keeps sea food in just enough quantitative bulk supply to meet demand. Suppliers and distributors outside California often mistake tiny Channel Haven for being a national leader in importing and exporting sea food, and other foods and some raw materials, due to it being near a highway named "Port Chicago" and simply by the way Channel Haven reads on various product invoices.

In the cocktail lounge area of The Pier, mainly used early and late afternoons, hangs another poem:

The Heisman Above All Others

The Best Player in the Country
 on one of the best football teams,
 a possible national contender
 and an array of endless dreams.
 Like going Number 1 in the NFL Draft,
 the curse of that status a mere ghost of the past.
 Agents line up to get the signing bonus fast.
 Pro teams finished last forget they were harassed.

Less likely a bust,
 less likely victim
 of the blame game,
 the embodiment
 of fight song and hymn.
 An *unbelievable* resume,
unbelievable highlights.
 Not just game speed,
 as all will see
 at the combine.

The envy of all when MVP
 of the Discover Orange Bowl, the Rose Bowl,
 the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl, the Citrus Bowl.
 and BCS National Championship,
 major feats in the face of de-cleat.
 Now a man amongst boys
 who remain rowdy friends.
 Now part of a fraternity of faces of poise.

The Heisman high above
 the Maxwell
 the Doak Walker
 the Butkus
 the Bednarik
 the Outland
 and a host of others.
 The Heisman Trophy
 campaign brings tears
 to hopefuls and to mothers.

The Pier does not intend to be partly a sports bar similar to Earnie's. Yet, pictures of trophies in general are a large part of the aesthetics of both Channel Haven pubs, and particularly Earnie's in

that it boasts pictures of trophies won by the '90s Chicago Bulls and '85 Chicago Bears. Yet, The Pier also is fond of trophies, fishing trophies in particular. The Pier is decorated with numerous photographs of both adults and children holding prize-winning fish and their respective trophies and plaques.

It is not exactly definitive as to when the genre of poetry became actual past time at the Channel Haven establishments. Many without a literary background to speak of have taken a liking to the expressive art form. Jane Thompson, a 40-year Channel Haven resident as well as former production employee somewhat similar to the situations of both Patrick and Lucy, had been aware of the faulty worker's compensation claims in the Channel Haven area. As a result, she took up poetry to make sure she had appeared bedridden, in addition to only walking very early in the morning. If she had been seen walking before sunup, she knew she could use the alibi that she was desiring to work again. Jane, feeling somewhat guilty later, would later admit that she had somewhat "milked" worker's comp. However, "It was not exactly a 'cash cow'," she says. It was poetry that had actually made her moments rewarding. Some of the posted poetry in pubs is believed to be authored by Jane herself, remaining anonymous.

For inspiration, Jane had been recently reading T. S. Eliot's *The Wasteland*, which is considered part of American Modernist poetry and also bridged with British literature. In addition to frequenting parks and recreational settings during her walks, Jane would also sit at marina-like areas, where she would read canonized literature aloud. Beholding the view of Suisan Bay, she had been particularly moved and intrigued by the lines at the very end of *The Wasteland's* fifth and final part, What the Thunder Said, which reads, in part (beginning at line 377):

A woman drew her long black hair out tight
And fiddled whisper music on those strings

And bats with baby faces in the violet light

Whistled, and beat their wings

380

And crawled head downward down a blackened wall

And upside down in air were towers

Tolling reminiscent bells, that kept the hours

And voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted wells.

In this decayed hole among the mountains

385

In the faint moonlight, the grass is singing

Over the tumbled graves, about the chapel

There is the empty chapel, only the wind's home.

It has no windows, and the door swings,

Dry bones can harm no one.

390

Only a cock stood on the roof-tree

Co co rico co co rico

In a flash of lightning. Then a damp gust

Bringing rain

Ganga was sunken, and the limp leaves

395

Waited for rain, while the black clouds

Gathered far distant, over Himavant.

The jungle crouched, humped in silence.

Then spoke the thunder

DA

400

Datta: what have we given?

My friend, blood shaking my heart

The awful daring of a moment's surrender

Which an age of prudence can never retract

By this, and this only, we have existed

405

Which is not to be found in our obituaries

Or in memories draped by the beneficent spider

Or under seals broken by the lean solicitor

In our empty rooms

DA

410

Dayadhvam: I have heard the key

Turn in the door once and turn once only

We think of the key, each in his prison

Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison

Only at nightfall, aetherial rumours

415

Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus

DA

Damyata: The boat responded

Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar

The sea was calm, your heart would have responded

420

Gaily, when invited, beating obedient

To controlling hands

I sat upon the shore

Fishing, with the arid plain behind me

Shall I at least set my lands in order?

425

London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down

Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina

Quando fiam ceu chelidon—O swallow swallow

Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie

These fragments I have shored against my ruins

430

Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.

Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.

Shantih shantih shantih

Inspired by Eliot, Jane Thompson would then visit the nearby shores of Suisan Bay. She had desired to entirely remove herself from the loudness of industry and manmade obstruction. During her meditation, she threw a stone into the water and observed the rings it formed. Then, in a free write, Jane wrote down the following in her personal dream journal:

One must never hastily speed through existence. All around each individual are the elements she enjoys, catering to the human senses. We are all part of the material world, yet not always in touch with it. We must be sure to yield with the current to make life more exhilarating. That current is a literal one at times, such as in nature, in the natural streams of continuous flowing water never obstructed or paved over by man. The water gently glides over the rocky terrain and loose gravel, picking up speed in the midst of that which weather would unwind. A stream of water, in particular, becomes a metaphor -- for a stream of life itself -- moving like free-flowing music that must not only be appreciated but also conducted, orchestrated and acted out expressively. And our expressive inner energy allows for that experience: the unique human experience.

The trees are our guide; we observe their changing of seasons.

The sky is our refuge; we take a moment to ponder its infinity.

The streams are our model for life's movement; we must, again, go with that current, yielding yet not overtaken by the force of that water. The water itself yields and, for that reason, it becomes a guide for our observing, for learning life's lessons, and we do so most effectively with a gentle stance.

Still-standing water, it seems, would more likely, and seemingly more accurately, be our guide to observing our situational Being. Yet, a still body of water provides little example for cherishing life. In fact, it provides none. With a pond, time becomes less a passage and hence idleness. Speeding through life hastily therefore becomes not only a matter of no concern, it also becomes mute. With a mere non-moving pond, there is nothing to stabilize, nothing to halt, nothing to catch in the current, only to catch that which is baited, in darkness. Yet, we may cause ripples in a pond, with, say, the throwing of a stone. However, there is little delight in causing circular expanding ripples, unless one clings to their youth into adulthood. Ripples eventually

disappear and diminish with each growing ring, the opposite of growing waves which naturally move in accord with nature's tide, a result of a gravitational pull not our own.

Life must not be taken for granted. We must ponder our purpose for Being, while, with every passing moment, embracing what life would offer, including its changes. Yet we are careful not to conform to its unwelcome changes. Returning to life's examples as found in nature, let us consider once again the stream. With a natural water stream, excess rains could cause flooding, sometimes moving as seepage, other times as spontaneous violent overflow, surging. If we were to directly engage the offered circumstance, by halting the aggressive water's powerful course, we would actually impede, or, ultimately be overcome by its deceptive force. And, the terrain, for instance, could become the most severe mud slide and give way in a way inescapable. Without taking the time to remove ourselves from such conflict early on, and to stop and use discretion, we would not be allowing for the hesitation needed for a still mindset and hence not be able to find any possible pleasure within such a situation or through that which it might produce.

Where man would intervene in nature's events and confines, he or she must, of course, act quickly and without delay. Notwithstanding, he or she could err in hasty judgment. The result could be the going with a current of the most catastrophic kind. Therefore, when observing both nature and life, we must never rush to judgment but, rather, gather our thoughts beforehand, before they become manifest action. Taking a moment to reflect allows for fulfillment in the long run, for we will not have hurried into a given situation -- advantageous or not -- at the expense of the moment.

The sight of large surrounding rocks, around this particular stream's perimeter, provides stability to one's mind, allowing for a stillness that leads to fulfillment. The situation is no longer a chaotic situation of water enraged and moving about hastily. From afar, the tall boulders

appear as monumental landmarks, rivaling the scenic Stonehenge site in Wiltshire, England. The stream has become tranquil again. The water weaves in and around the boulders as though gently caressing the vibrantly green terrain, which currently grows like moss, some of the moss growing on the boulders to complement their dark texture. As one walks up the hill, toward the now-quiet boulders and stream, one undeniably notices that the grayish-blue skies have seemingly merged with portions of motionless boulders. The clouds and stream move as one, appearing seamless in their unanimated flowing over the hill. A large formation of ducks quickly moves over the hill, abruptly providing the sound of many horns, a sound which eventually drifts, drifting into faintness over the distance of a valley.

Some of the poetry posted in the two Channel Haven pubs does not consist of sheer figures of speech but, rather, some of the works come across as though the anonymous poet, or poets, are rather adept at the expressive art form descriptively. Other poems use the jargon and lingo of a speech community, such as that found in a Channel Haven industrial area of commercial workplaces. The following persona poem, later labeled a dramatic monologue, written by a worker literally waiting in a dispatch center, is a prime example of a "work" some have found profound. The particular 32-year-old worker, who wished to remain anonymous, had commuted into Channel Haven from 90 minutes away, seeking work. His anonymous monologue reads:

Reconstruct

Some people do it
4 or 5 times in their lifetimes.
An *I Ching* manual therefore becomes handy.

New buzz words, new lingo,
new jargon
and a new probationary period.

I presently await a ride to work a new

day as I play a video game by Midway
inside a convenience store.

I already look like I've been
through a war
sleeping between breaks on the floor.

In waiting for my ride
to car pool, I place my cigarette
on the video game dashboard.

The dashboard has been wounded
in its extensive mileage, while \$00.25
a game has merely doubled.

A car horn honks. It's my ride!
I look to pass my joy stick.
To the next shift.

I look at my temporary
lead as we speed off. He's eager
to get to his cubicle, which is like a loft.

The highway exit seems so far
right now, an hour away minimum by car.
The car pool lane saves the day.

He's already got my work order in hand.
General labor the assignment involves.
Yet the assignment calls for work boots, goggles and gloves.

I didn't bring any safety gear! "We never need such items."
"I've worked with much less in new construction."
Another missed assignment due to miscommunication.

I just left a site before its completion,
a layoff after a temporary assignment ended early.
The late graveyard shift only for a season.

During previous ventures
I've even considered the imitation
aromas and oils industrially sold door to door.

My stay was brief,
as though business out of a case
door to door would provide me a new place.

I found them to be much less successful
than vendors who stocked the machines
with high-volume snacks and creams.

Working while earning an education,
they figured something out about
all our ambitions, zeal and dreams.

And classified postings in reams.
The Internet now captivates us
with the click of a mouse. Say: "cheese".

Our searches are in vain
to say the very least.
We toil until cease of sleep.

I do a key word search which yields
startup bargains and blaring results
that will never materialize past insults.

"Proof available"
no longer an implemented phrase,
send resume and cover letter no longer slow pace.

Snail mail replaced by the information age
in this post and modern way of life,
with human intervention bringing less strife.

The surrounding cities only seem
to list work for my ex-wife.
I'll pass this time, the questionnaire on life.

Sarcasm abounds in some of the links
as though the work will become less rigorous
through the way a young kid thinks.

She doesn't know it all. He's teachable.
She's not been through some awful places.
He's educated.

Yet they're not cross-trained
as I AM. I'm the man in command
of my resume, my destiny.

I know more than my next warehouse employer
that even he could be a voyeur.
Never have I disclosed a single trade secret.

I binge and indulge
to cope with the hard reality
that I'm the one paying my credit card bills.

I know the routine thoroughly
as though a cookie-cutter haven of unrep.
I'm ironically put in a state of remission.

My lead safely returns me to a convenient store.
The clerk sees me enter. I look at the clock
which is not to punch in or to kick, just the game.

I've been on unemployment for six months,
which is certain to exasperate. Within a few months,
a new career *cannot* be late, at any rate.

Another change in assignments I currently await.
Until then, I've run out of change and minutes prepaid.
And, I cherish just coffee in a warm break room as of late.

-- *anonymous*

The poetry that hangs at the two brew pubs cannot be compared to the reading of literature and satire at British coffeehouses during the 17th and 18th centuries. One would not expect the likes of Richard Steele or Joseph Addison to begin circulating a new publication at Earnie's or The Pier. Yet, the poetry has been commended by a few credible poets. Even some literary critics who have stopped into town for a meal and beverage have found that the tone of the poetry, in particular, provides a mood consistent with a theme that meshes with the establishments' settings and atmospheres. But, the poetry has actually become popular more for the laughter and sarcasm it conjures from binge drinkers and regulars. One heavy drinker, in a severely drunken state, sarcastically coined the poems "Beer Pub Poetry." The name stuck, a hand-written sign was made, and many poems continue to be hung on a cork board below some of Earnie's rafters.

Chapter 10: “Poetry Past the Hour”

Mr. Whysche, a closet poet, has often run into trouble at both of Channel Haven’s two main beer-serving establishments. Some customers recall him having worn a bowl on his head while intoxicated a few times, after fully consuming large quantities of chips and salsa or peanuts. “This old dude freaks me out,” one young lady once uttered at Earnie’s. Her boyfriend, in his early twenties, had then become confrontational with Mr. Whysche, who merely smiled and very slowly ducked his head in response, as though wearing a Chinese hat, rather than a bowl for food items. Mysteriously, just as he slowly tilted his head downward, which was something like a bow, a young hostess who was seating people was simultaneously announcing, “Come on down.” In addition, it is rumored that Mr. Whysche, at that very same moment, was actually standing under large beer drinking glasses which hung from the ceiling, the only place, other than the bartender’s serving area, where such items are placed in that manner, for sale. The young lady’s boyfriend was rumored to be suddenly stricken with fear, as though he was in some powerful supernatural presence. An addition to the rumor by another party is that the hanging glasses even rattled at that time, and not just slightly. The young lady had then quickly grabbed her boyfriend by the wrist and guided him out the dark establishment.

A number of actual Polaroid photographs are said to exist which show Mr. Whysche nearly passed out, with a brown bowl worn as though a hat, tilted and hanging off his head. The photos are being sought by Mr. Forsythe, assistant to Dr. Miller and investigator of crimes pertaining to the supernatural and the occult, who suggests that the particular look does not simulate a manifestation of ectoplasm but, rather, the manifestation of a crown of thorns.

Many spiritualists were shocked that Channel Haven had been entertaining such a phenomenon, which seemed beyond even stigmata. In fact, the manifestation of crowns of thorns

during private séances was foreign just conceivably, as mere concept or thought. Yet, rather than merely based on rumor, actual photos exist of crowns of thorns “manifest” on a person’s head, and a number of the photos had been casually circulated amongst citizens of Channel Haven. The photos do not include a painful expression or injury of any kind, with the crown of thorns apparently loosely rested on a séance participant’s head, usually, and supposedly manifest randomly. All of the photos display a dark background environment, with the participant’s face, at about a medium close-up distance, seemingly radiant but from the camera’s flash. And, based on séance accounts in Channel Haven, a trend did momentarily exist where crowns of thorns manifest materially when a participant sometimes had a crucifix in their possession, sometimes unbeknownst to any other participant.

Mr. Whysche had also barely avoided altercation a few years ago at The Pier, after disagreement over juke box selections. He had used about \$10.00 to make multiple Easy Listening selections one Saturday night. A few young drinkers, in their early twenties, had confronted him as he walked past the pool table they were using.

“Hey! Old man!”

Mr. Whysche ignored them. Just as Mr. Whysche reached the men’s restroom door, one of the young men poked him in the back with his pool cue.

“Hey, go take that garbage-ass music somewhere else!”

Mr. Whysche quickly turned around and grabbed the pool cue. He and the much younger man then both attempted to wrestle the pool cue from one another and then held it in an apparent stalemate. Unexpectedly, the young man suddenly collapsed and fell to the ground. Workers in the pub came to his aid and found him motionless. He then came to, yet coughed excessively and could not talk for quite some time as he sat up, on the floor, against the pool table. He attempted to communicate something, and one of the pub’s waitresses provided him her pen and notepad.

The young man, keeping his eyes closed, wrote down songs that he would actually have distaste for and songs which Mr. Whysche had “not recently” selected, ’60s rock ’n’ roll. Some who recounted the incident recalled seeing Mr. Whysche leaning over and turning his head in attempt to read the song titles the young man had written. Later, Mr. Whysche, gently smiling, suggested that the young man had written music titles on the notepad as requests for him to play.

Disagreeably, a psychic in Channel Haven insisted that the incident had been a classic case of “automatic writing.”

In stark contrast to the pubs, a food establishment in Channel Haven free of incident, altercation and conflict for almost a half-century is Thelma's Coffee Shop. In fact, the coffee shop's setting and mood are 180 degrees opposite to that of the pubs. An old-fashioned establishment, with a '60s theme and memorabilia, the shop caters to mainly those who are middle-aged and the elderly. On Sundays, however, Thelma's becomes a place bustling with activity. Typically around 1:00 P.M., waves of children in Sunday School attire proudly pour in with parents and elders. The children favor root beer floats and a variety of ice cream sundaes. Children waiting in line always marvel at Thelma's pies on display in the glass casings near the register. Thelma's is renowned not only for its pies but for its cobbler as well. A family business passed down generations, the establishment is run by Thelma's grandchildren, with some of Thelma's great-grandchildren working as servers.

Thelma's Coffee Shop is partly decorated with a few pictures of Shirley Temple, near its dining tables. The dining area also includes a fairly large photograph of Thelma's Coffee House, in early Channel Haven, placed within a large frame incased in glass. War-time decor is on display on a wood-finished wall adjacent to the shop's west entrance, where a picture of John Wayne is in plain view. A somewhat overly dramatic painting is on display which attempts to depict the explosion that had occurred at the Naval Munitions Depot in the former neighboring

town of Port Chicago during World War II. Another wall displays pictures of scenes from the war films *Midway* and *Memphis Belle*. The wall also includes a framed picture of the book cover for Ernest Hemingway's 1940 novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

The imagery within the setting of Thelma's compliments its very ordinary "Thelma's Coffee Shop" and "We're Open" signs shown in the establishment's front windows. The entrance area, however, was recently upgraded and now allows people to comfortably relax as they are waiting with their families to be seated. Children and their families are promptly handed menus in the lobby area. Independent contract workers tend to go right to the counter upon entering. Truck drivers stop in throughout the week and sit at the spotless counter, which includes eight comfortable stools. Coffee of various special blends are served at the counter, and those working through the night and early morning cannot wait to also have a quickly served omelet, hash browns, large waffles, and eggs and sausage, all of which can be served at the counter as well.

There are not any franchise fast-food restaurants to speak of in Channel Haven, only those who intend to ambitiously expand their respective restaurant establishments into chains one day, similar to the aspirations once held by Patrick. Yet, customer's visiting Earnie's often get their food "to go," and both Jack's Market & Deli and Bob's Deli prepare and bag food items such as sandwiches. Patrick's plan and product for a restaurant had been to serve burger sandwiches of varying sizes and shapes. In addition to sour dough burgers, hamburger patties would have been served on the likes of french rolls, rye bread, and even sweet breads with marble designs.

A peculiar dirt road exists near the food establishments in Channel Haven, a road less than a quarter of a mile long, which becomes a dead-end at a chain link gate, leading to nothing but bushes and ivy plants, the grayish metal gate having orange reflectors fastened upon it. With nowhere to detour, the road becomes a place to park partly because some seem to desire a

drive-in restaurant experience.

Some youngsters attending The Pier on Friday nights will often use the road as well, as a place to “make out,” because the road is only remotely lighted at night. Used condoms are occasionally scattered along the road. A few abandoned vehicles -- used cars missing license plates or seemingly bought illegally, from “chop shops” -- are often left behind, sometimes just parked, other times stripped of any part having value. A particular problem within the area is that it begins to attract those who would “shop” on cars parked at Earnie's on Friday nights. “Shop” as in not attempting to steal the entire car but, rather, take various parts, from hub caps to CD players.

Not far from the dirt road near Earnie's and The Pier is the Channel Haven Inn. Although a two-story motel, it boasts a few facilities which are relatively impressive, with its main attraction being its relatively large ballroom, which is always playing its large television and also serving daily an inexpensive breakfast at \$4.25 a person. The ballroom is a primary location in Channel Haven for weddings, banquets and reunions.

A lengthy poem which hangs in one of the main hallways not far from the motel's lobby reads, at length:

The Best Reception

Hotel maintenance crews in denim of night
and collared caterers in black and white
meet at the center of a carpet of myriad decor
to connect pieces of a wooden dance floor
which becomes a newly fashioned square
perfectly aligned glossy, with no spare
time to waste preparing for the Reception
in haste. The ballroom's high scenic walls shun
the less formal. Yet they belong, on this day,
to the bride and groom, to reign center stage.

The bridal party arrives as though casual company
yet arrayed in silk and satin, majestic figures proudly

place gifts on a table draped in velvet
then walk ~~~ over patched cable ~~~ circumvent
which leads to the DJ's dark console of music selects
and gooseneck microphone ! which he checks.
Background music provides a mood most gentle
and pace to arriving gentlemen not of a look rental
but confident in tuxedos < :: > and bow-ties matching
corsages, chivalrous and commanding, in mirrorly standing.

The DJ introduces without folly
the bride, bridegroom, and bridal party,
who seat themselves horizontally on stage,
after receiving in a line, at a table that rivals any display.
The ballroom is arranged with 30 tables draped
in fanciful cloth / and perfectly / spaced.
A sit-down dinner, no less, and each with 6 golden chairs
which seem to make all guests their heirs.
The Maid of Honor smiles, the photographer
takes a snapshot, seemingly kneeling up to exalt her.

The Best Man seizes the moment and chimes his glass.
His best friend joined in matrimony he outlasts.
Laughter and applause expand the spacious ballroom
filled also by the aroma of stuffed chicken as though invisible plume,
seemingly becoming vestige as freshly baked and toasted bread
arrives, in clothed baskets, and placed on mats of decor matching the wed.
Speedily yet gracefully caterers converge under control
dipping in and out of the kitchen, like cars which roll.
A second wave of heavy metal carts youthfully cruises
between tables which begin to receive salad then meat dish one chooses.

The DJ maintains a background flow of continuous Easy Listening
dubbed for the occasion, while the chandeliers are still brightening.
A dinner place awaits the DJ as well,
but not to his surprise, for, with every gig, his ego swells.
And, there are rumblings that there will be an open well
of Chardonnay in the corner where a server stands and none else.
The lights dim just enough to remain their glitter.
Guests eager to get into a groove leap from their tables to jitter.
But, before the open dance floor, the Father of the Bride must dance
with his daughter. And, the Bride and Groom must have their *first dance*.

"Celebration" by Kool and the Gang opens the dance floor,
followed soon by such tunes as
"New York, New York",
"Old Time Rock 'n' Roll",
and "Louie, Louie".

Big Band by Glen Miller
gets the crowd "In the Mood"
and they quickly embrace for a
"Moonlight Serenade".

And later, a *dance of money*
and some romance
when men get their one last chance
to dance slowly with the bride
yet first must wait in a line
which seems far too far at times.

A line rivaling parading lines formed by "Wooly Booly" and "Conga".

A line of tunes smooth like a current which does not rhyme:

"I've Been Waiting for a Girl Like You"
"Always on My Mind"
"Lady in Red"
"Crazy"
"Chances Are"
"Smoke Gets in Your Eyes"
"I Only Have Eyes for You"
... an "Unchained Melody".

Currency and pins
are turned with little step.
Tuxedo and unbelievable gown,
embracing, some firmly some not,
at the shoulders, at the hip.
Not a single frown.

An unforgettable running dance.
An unforgettable whisper.
An accidental cheek and neck caress.
Some shoved.
Some did not get the chance
for one last irresistible dance,
in good taste,
and flavorful from the dessert
that still buds of soufflé.

"I Had the Time of My Life"
with just enough energy
emphatically excites all
when another chance

for one *last dance* is lively called.
Some intertwine, some prance.

In-laws were happy with what they saw
and with that which all experienced;
all were entranced.

And, the bridal party stays the night
in the hotel bridal suites up 6 flights.

-- *anonymous*

Another poem, by another anonymous author, is posted at a small, 40-year-old boxing gym in Channel Haven, at which Jane would work out and teach self-defense just after she had returned from the Philippines. Rather than a poem about boxing, the particular poem reads more like a work describing a power lifter's dilemma with the modern health club scene. The poem is posted on a cork board not far from the boxing gym's entrance, alongside some old bleachers inside the gym. It reads:

Lifetime Membership

Contemporary crowds of regulars warm up
with low resistance. Tons of treadmills
support all walks of life
swirling sweat through persistence.
Long-term and short-term,
life's spinning cycles of goals,
are stairs never mastered, never minded,
turning like pages o' magazines
their machines firmly hold.

A flat band of leather, a rusty buckle
becomes a girdle -- making measurement irrelevant --
encircling a complex that has resulted from a complexity of dieting,
momentarily turning a spare tire of flesh from flab to firmness, to lift the soul.
Like a brace of life
it arches generations
punctured through the limbs
of the weighty charismatic vibrations
and might of the modern and post-modern gyms.

Power never drips of shapeless fortitude,
for one eventually finds the instantaneous weight

of folly much too hefty.
Explode!
Squat!
The ground rumbles as the weight forcibly falls.
True heaviness is much too great
a burden to elevate. We fortunately all fall
short but stretch. Alleviate.

She notices me
observing her through the wall
of mirrors.
Jerk!
She's the high-impact aerobic type,
unmistakably for years.
Bench!
I remind myself.
Block out the pain.

My realistic goal: to stay clean, fixated and with power.
They know *nothing*
of this white powdery chalk in a tilted bowl,
I can *tell you that*.
It's *still* in my system
some 20 years *later*. The same 44-pound Olympic bar
never ceases to be gripped.
And, now, with gray hands straps,
tightly on my wrists and palms,
and with 2 powd'ry *hand claps*,
I take my place in today's gym.

Racquet *they* made
weighed against me
in the past.
They used to use
way too much
chlorine.
My eyes
were all
red.

On deck, a weighty gaze accompanies
young white-collared trainers' words
and clipboards. Not the case for a simple hoist,
blue in the face.
Breathe.
Work out frustration at a health
club instead of drowning in binges of sorrows.

Set the bar "high," they say.
 But the attainable is instantaneously collared;
 snug firmly against weights which do have their proper fit on a bar.

Protein bars. A 40-gram protein shake. PowerAde.
 I thirst for soda, a tub of extra-buttered popcorn and nachos just, just ... *drenched*
 in cheese.
 Hefty like slabs of concrete.
 Weighty like slabs of ribs.
 I'm convinced I'm Confident.
 I don't need rock-hard abs.
 But charted size measurements like monuments
 on a postcard for none to hearken
 lengthen regimen, not to mention
 discouragement.
 The mirrors of the locker room
 also to be ignored,
 just as soap and water drains away
 from the slick, detailed floor
 until power, again, is made clear'r tomorrow.

Mr. Whysche prepares to commit suicide in his office, as Dr. Miller. He methodically moves about in his office as though following ceremonial procedure. He draws the curtains, and closes the blinds in the reception area. Looking at his wall plaques and certificates one last time, Dr. Miller slightly smiles as he considers that which truly matters to him, in this life. He worked hard for his career and for the status he has held for two decades. His alter ego, Mr. Whysche, has been merely a persona, albeit one he has come to know all too well, he assures himself. Mr. Whysche has in no wise become who he *truly* is, in actual existence, as part of his utter Being. Dr. Miller's mind is too powerfully elevated, too mentally heightened, he convinces himself one last time. Psychology and the workings of the mind, the psyche, he knows all too well, as though he had practically written the book. And, any mental wounds which would form from a glance of Mr. Whysche in the mirror he would most assuredly be able to detach from. "I go another way," he again says to himself, seemingly mocking death itself, enjoying the power he has literally held in his grasp. He intends to enjoy the moment in a manner which is patiently climactic. All too

often, he reminds himself, moments have lapsed without full gratification, without paramount satisfaction and delight, without being able to truly relish in the moment at hand, even while arbitrarily reigning over Channel Haven. He has, in fact, attributed a lack of ecstasies to certain situations that have involved hesitation and regret, rather than fully indulging in the situation through paced and maintained certainty. And, he considers all of the various moments in which he has not attained utmost pleasure through the senses, and all the while, as an elite human, he has possessed a heightened capacity for sensation and understanding of stimuli. However, the next few moments will involve some undesired pain, he reminds himself. Yet, the aftermath will be void of remembrance, which he equates with those who have not truly lived and have not ever seen the big picture, or known exactly that which they have thought they saw, in being continually wasted mentally.

It was Mr. Whysche who had killed Lucy Patterson. The tiny diamond that had appeared in the churchhouse at the time of her death had not been intended to actually roll onto the floor but, rather, to be found later, possibly by paramedics or coroners. The revealing that an expensive diamond was found on Lucy was intended to signal to Patrick that he, Mr. Whysche, had committed the murder, through ingested poisoning. Patrick did indeed get the message, and he had been quite impressed with the manner in which the diamond surfaced, as though Mr. Whysche was demonstrating a distant telekinetic power. Even more persuasive for Patrick was the fact that Mr. Whysche had actually determined Lucy's destiny, which was actually fate. She was not predestined to go further, Dr. Miller had privately established in his Concord office. As the peculiar Mr. Whysche, he had suggested to Patrick, in not quite the same words, that "Lucy was not required of, to be chosen as one of the elect." Patrick had a hunch that Lucy, and later Jane as well, had actually been on to both he and Mr. Whysche, but mainly Mr. Whysche. Patrick had lived momentarily in Lucy's mansion, and they had shared the highest of intimacies

and also the most lavish of lifestyles, at times. Yet, Patrick had always kept their connection with one another in the highest of confidentialities, covered with guises of commonalities, disclosing the secret only during his speeches at moments of actual murder. Aside from such moments, he has never disclosed to a single person that Lucy was owner of a mansion, in Danville, California. Nor had he ever shared with even Brent or Jane, until disclosure at moments of death, that Lucy had only been using her production and assembly-line job as a cover and for economic sustenance of hidden wealth. Lucy had begun to trust Patrick with the world, especially when he had informed her that Brent had been taking pictures of her mansion. Finding Brent's curiosity to be far more investigative than for merely media purposes, Lucy had struck up casual conversation with Brent, bringing up random, indirect topics in attempt to see if he had known she was living in a mansion or had been well off. Lucy determined for herself that Patrick had never shared with Brent even the slightest of what she had termed "classified".

Just before she had died, Lucy was becoming fairly aware of Mr. Whysche's involvement, as Mr. Whytenhammer, in the Philippines a quarter-century ago. He had been part of the same exhibition with the 20 tourists -- including John, Lucy, Jane, Brent, and Patrick -- for a short time. In fact, Mr. Whytenhammer had been a passenger on the very same tourist bus, albeit for only a few hours, leading up to John's death. Mr. Whytenhammer, Dr. Miller's alter-ego just as much as Mr. Whysche is, had the appearance of one in his mid-forties at the time. Lucy, in her very early twenties, at the time, had actually remembered him, drawing on just enough of her inner illusion. Mr. Whytenhammer at the time had worn a large hat, the size of a sombrero, which kept his face shaded. He seemed to stand a commanding 6' 5", rather than the 6' 3" those in Channel Haven were accustomed to seeing him as, in the 21st century. On the tour bus in 1985 he had sat alone in the two-person seat immediately in front, by the driver. He stood out above the rest. And, he always seemed to be first in line to obtain his luggage off-board.

Lucy had even been able to visually locate him from a great distance as he had begun to walk up a large mountain range with a large group of natives. His large hat and also beige and light-brown scout attire had starkly contrasted the dark terrain of the mountains yet had meshed with very large rocks and boulders. Lucy, in having a conversation with Jane, had mentioned seeing a tall man with a hat walk beyond the shoulder of a mountain toward a high hill with a green slope. Horsemen had accompanied him at various moments, she also recounted. Lucy also would later see Mr. Whytenhammer walking over a bridge, when she had noticed that he seemed to actually march in military-like fashion. His posture seemed to be the same where he would walk through a main pass.

When around Lucy, as well as Jane and the others, Mr. Whytenhammer had inquired about some German guns and rifles. And, natives seemed to increase in number in following him at areas where horses had been stationed. He seemed to not mind the large bulls in some of the villages, they noticed.

In and around villages, Mr. Whytenhammer seemed, for some reason, drawn to fields and orchards. While there he would sometimes carefully examine horses' saddles, Lucy and Jane had both noticed one particular day. Lucy had once come across Mr. Whytenhammer again when he was resting on a pine-needled floor in a different village, near a small spruce tree. He seemed to feel quite comfortable around those he considered "drunkards," she recounts. Mr. Whytenhammer had kept a handkerchief on him and would occasionally use it to open a canteen where he would walk along stream areas, connected to a main pass, which had an appearance of some stream territories in the states. Lucy and Jane had also noticed, in the Philippines, that Mr. Whytenhammer had assisted some in raking together a huge pile of sawdust and then returning to a meadow near the mountains in order to rest, still wearing his light brown scout attire.

Much later, in the states, Mr. Whytenhammer himself was apparently well aware that Lucy had

been somewhat on to him, in passing, because he apparently chose, very strategically, to first appear face to face with Brent and Jane at Lucy's funeral.

Jane, however, had *not* been on to Mr. Whysche, not fully, as far as connection to the Philippine Islands.

Jane recently took Patrick's life during an inevitable re-encounter at Patrick's cottage.

And, hence, Jane is the only one to remain of the four; Brent is still considered missing.

Patrick, deceased, simply goes unnoticed, it seems.

And, oddly, the late John Creighton somehow now seems avenged a quarter-century later. Lucy, his wife, had never officially changed her name to Lucy Patterson-Creighton, always remaining Lucy Patterson up until dying in 2010.

Lucy, Brent and Patrick, like Jane, had all aged to their later forties. Yet, there had remained a youthful element in all of their lives, including that of Jane. None ever married, nor did any raise any children in their pursuits of wealth. All was all for naught, and, for the former three, all for naught from outset to end, from blue print to would-be second creation. Nothing ever materialized. Nor ever will, indefinitely. A tribute to John, a magazine they had actually mapped out and met over in 2010, is for naught. It was to say something mainly about John's character but also the industrial character of Channel Haven and its relatively unknown history.

Yet, the small town of Channel Haven, California, will continue to have a relatively *unknown* history, inclusive of mainly the nearby Port Chicago incident that had involved an explosion near the town's Naval Munitions Depot, during World War II. The events that had transpired at that time, during the second world war, were considered a mutiny.

And, in the 21st century, Channel Haven becomes increasingly a place of crime as time goes on.

A magazine illustrating the hostage situation that had occurred in the Philippines exactly

forty years after the end of World War II, would have somewhat bridged history in the region with that of former Port Chicago. Yet, the hostage situation in the Philippines that had involved four Channel Haven hometown survivors, up close and personal, is now lost in the Channel Haven archives. And, maybe not just the magazine is put on hold this time. Maybe history and life itself, for a select few once considered amongst themselves worthy of being a sphere of influence, was all for naught.

Quite the opposite, Dr. Miller has experienced a life of continuous gratification and gain.

Just before and at the very moment he is taking his life, Dr. Miller/Mr. Whysche writes a poem, announcing each line as it spills onto the page. Based on careful consideration of the various scenarios that could become the actual aftermath of his suicide, he had already made in advance the firm decision to create the poem in his own handwriting. He spontaneously titles it “A never-bending dream”. He never wavered in his ideals, yet he had to lower his highest standards at times. Before he writes the poem, he takes one last look at his Army photo, a picture taken of him in 1954, when he was 19 years old. He had been keeping the photo in his desk. The photo has never bended, even in the slightest, nor has he.

Never bending, yet now slightly raising his guard to fully become Dr. Miller.

Without allusion to Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, for he does not create a *complete* Dr. Miller.

Dr. Miller removes everything from the top of his desk and begins to write:

A never-bending dream

Talks of living unforgettable dreams.

Go down smoothly.

It doesn’t nourish.

But still.

It doesn’t detour us.

Now pull out that
long plunged-in arrow.
Gaze upon it.
For it represents life and humanity's frail hope!
It is of no use.
We must totally reject
all that is to be rejected.
This vibrant urge must be a pulsating one,
beaming forth from a book three feet tall!
Can you feel it?
Thump upon the hard desk!
It is a fortress of shelves!
Never bending.
Never breaking.
Covered in cloaks and garments round about!
Round and oval. Draped like curtains.
Now firmly grasp them with mighty, strong hands,
long and true. The hands, they must be true.
Dream of standing. Pull toward life.
But wait!
The waves crashed about the clashing
rocks, stacked to the clouds.
There is no foundation!
So, *glide* them.

Ride *out* the life of the clouds
like a high-flying war vessel!
No corpse there shall be placed.
But the unavoidable, the inevitable,
is the mean crimson sprinkle launched
into the dramatic cosmos of no return.
Now dream about what you have heard.
Dream about it!
Dream. Dream.
Listen to your dreams.

Chapter 11: "Mortally Bound"

Jane has begun to listen to the ravens in the area as though they had a message to share. She had often been seen over the summer sitting at a park bench just beyond the outskirts of Channel Haven, where she had often read Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*. She had been reading Book IV of Chaucer's great work because it contains a famous speech by Troilus, a speech which has partly allowed her, in addition to Eliot's *The Wasteland*, to forget about Patrick's hurtfully climactically speeches.

While at the park area, Jane would also observe the ravens purposely, as though they were demonstrably communicating with her and not merely aware of her presence. One thought that had crossed her mind was that the ravens were on the verge of becoming self-aware. She had been known to watch other birds which were sentient. Yet, the ravens began to capture her attention above and beyond any flying creature that she had found captivating. She often fed the

ravens corn, which she would bring along in a can for her own lunches, in a knapsack, during her routine walks on the trails. She even began to keep a can opener in her knapsack, in the event the cans in her cupboard were not of the peel-off-lid variety. She had first noticed the ravens' need for food upon her walking down a dirt road just beyond Earnie's and adjacent to The Pier brew pub. A single raven had been attempting to peel open a partially wrapped food item, in aluminum foil, with its beak. Standing about 15 feet away, Jane had noticed that the bird would attempt to get to the food inside by standing on it and then also pecking at it. She noticed that the bird had obviously arrived at this particular location because of the left-behind food items usually sprawled and scattered about, apparently from those who had parked their vehicles near The Pier to eat and then had driven off.

The raven seemed to be in need of anything it could find to devour. It had apparently snuck up on this particular left-behind food item, not to mention the road, in order to just have this tiny bit of food for itself. In just looking at the raven and its circumstance from the surface, she could see that the raven likely had to tussle, and quite often, with other birds in order to acquire its own share of food. Possibly, large flocks of seagulls had already eaten any other food items left behind and then subsequently left the area. But, there seemed to be an underlying, central message the raven was trying to get across to her as she increasingly observed the fairly large bird.

It then dawned on Jane that the raven was perhaps trying to tell her something beyond just the obvious. Her mind naturally dismissed that thought, however. And, she would later conclude confidently that the bird was just hungry and, so, she simply continued to bring cans of corn to a park bench, about a quasi-block away, where she would toss the corn onto a grassy area. Upon later feeding some seagulls some french fries in the parking lot of Earnie's, a lone raven had appeared. The raven did not attempt to get in the way of the seagulls as the seagulls

eagerly waited, their beaks pointed upward in anticipation, for the throwing of each and every fry. The seagulls, having landed, would move laterally upon the pavement and would quickly converge upon the fries. The raven, however, quite differently, only watched as Jane continually attempted to toss at least a single fry into the raven's proximity. The raven seemed to have the range to get to the fries on various occasions but merely looked the fries in as they would land. Jane had recalled from days before that seagulls had abruptly landed, and quite aggressively -- as though pouncing from the sky with weighted, falling gravity -- to snatch up a partly broken egg roll that she had thrown into the grassy area, actually intended for the ravens' feeding. Those seagulls in the grass area of the park had made their presence felt and had basically taken over the egg roll, without regard for the ravens, in a survival-of-the-fittest-like convergence.

Quite differently, in the parking lot of Earnie's, the seagulls had initial control of the food from the outset, while the single raven seemed to be hesitant and did not even make the slightest attempt to get to the food it was being thrown. In general, Jane began to learn that the seagulls held sole dominance when it came to any of the birds' feeding in a given area. This was the reason, she realized, that the ravens as a whole awaited corn; the seagulls would not converge, or the corn would be too scattered abroad, becoming something more along the lines of food for grazing, a feeding activity which appeared natural for the ravens. However, with some soul-searching, she began to consider the idea that that lone raven remaining stationary and simply watching the seagulls eat could be a sort of passive communication of some kind. Perhaps it just involved the obvious, that the ravens would not dare, both instinctively and also based on experience, to get in the way of the hungry, and possibly starving, seagulls. She considered the possibility that the particular raven was actually communicating a quiet understanding, that the seagulls, as part of an animal kingdom hierarchy, must eat first, and that the intervention or taking of their food would result in the seagulls becoming hostile. In fact, Jane had noticed

previously, in the grassy park, that a seagull had aggressively snapped its beak -- in a poking, biting, recoiling-like reflex -- at a raven that attempted to eat within a large group of larger birds.

Yet, the raven seemed to be showing Jane something profound as it seemed to realize it was being watched a bit more closely by a human being. Again, common sense, she thought, suggested that the raven was merely attempting to communicate that seagulls were taking too much of the ravens' food. But, as Jane increasingly watched that lone raven in the parking lot, Jane knew she was honing in on a sort of rapport with the raven, one which was relaying a message to her that actual starvation had occurred somewhere. An entity or being had been severely hurt somewhere in existence. Jane yearned to further her understanding of this distant relaying of some kind of revelation. She sought illumination.

The ravens continued to visit the park. As they began to increasingly flock to Jane for food, she began to attempt to show them that she was attentive to their efforts in communicating. Not long after, a hurt raven, unable to fly, had been waiting in the grass as Jane approached to feed a flock of them, carrying a can of corn in her knapsack. The bird was seemingly crying out, somewhat looking as though it were a newborn waiting for its mother to provide it food. But, as Jane continued to approach the bench, the bird was able to fly after all. That very night, Jane had a dream which turned to actual nightmare.

The nightmare involved a man being tied up. He was yelling directly at the person who had tied and bound him. And, the manner in which he yelled was as though he had not only known the culprit but also that the person who tied him had been subordinate to him in one way or another. The manner and tone in which the tied person hollered was clearly authoritative: "You are to release me at once!" Upon Jane's waking from the nightmarish dream, in a cold sweat, and after taking a few deep breaths and then sighing in relief, she would begin to draw parallels between her nightmare and the crying raven in the park. In fact, the very words

pertaining to “release me at once” seemed to take the place of the raven’s crying. It was as though this is what the raven itself had literally and loudly cried.

As Jane continued to routinely return to the park she became convinced the ravens were trying to tell her something in regard to suffering, toward which she was becoming increasingly receptive. The ravens seemed to become somewhat excited as she continued to be attentive and watch them, the birds seemingly realizing she was setting aside her human understanding of communication. As she walked alone one night, quite a distance away from the park, a raven, which she could not even remotely see, cried loudly, in a single abrupt sound, less than a second long, similar to a very loud chirp. The raven was either in a tree or perched upon wiring between telephone poles. Something about the tone of the chirp-like cry seemed to conjure the thought that someone was, or had been, trapped, possibly in a place of darkness.

The nightmares continued and were actually similar to those Jane had experienced a year ago, in 2010, when she would occasionally awaken drenched in sweat, still horrified by the mid-'80s hostage situation in the Philippines. Yet, the sun shining through her window would seem to brighten her day, and so would the way in which she had decorated her living quarters. As she has moved well beyond any concern in relation to her workplace injury, the now 50-year-old Jane currently enjoys, ironically, walking much longer distances and resting at outdoor locations, mainly recreation sites and even areas that are quasi-parks. Yet her 50th birthday seemed to just pass her by.

Jane returns to the same particular park area but this time for personal reflection and to gain piece of mind. She considers again the fact, a factual far from dream, that she is the only one out of four, believed to be very close at a time, left alive. A certain eeriness somewhat overtakes her. She begins to cry as she feels momentary remorse for taking Patrick’s life. It’s an odd change of outlook, she quickly realizes, because she has had such relief for doing what she

had done: killing Patrick by stabbing and beating him to death. From her point of view, Patrick lacked affection and a regard for life, in general, a conclusion she had drawn when he let forth his horrifying speech not far from Mr. Whysche's cottage as she lay severely wounded and tied at the wrists.

Jane massages her wrists. She attempts to gathers herself and then comes to the realization that she is feeling remorse only because she had taken another life. In order to cope and to re-solidify her stance, she recounts the killing of Patrick step by step, literally:

I knew I had to get to him during his down time from work, late at night. I was still wounded. And, he out-weighed me by 40 pounds. He had actually forgotten that I was the one who had duplicated a key for him, years ago. It turned out to be a waste, because the original key was found. But, it wasn't returned to him. Had it been given directly to me for a reason? Could someone have already been trying to help me, years ago? Or, had it been inadvertent, and coincidental, that I got the key?

That night was eerie, a really quiet night, almost scary. I could even hear and feel the grass move as I approached Patrick's cottage, quietly, pitch dark. I knew he wouldn't be there, and, he wasn't. The cottage was dark.

I was in range. And, I was in a rage. I had no gloves, to hide fingerprints, but I didn't need them. I was ready to beat him to a pulp with my boxing gloves. I had replaced just enough threadings to make him feel my blows, which would have to be true.

No lights were on in his cottage, just as I had presupposed. That walk up his tiny steps, those old wooden boards, seemed like an eternity. I can't believe how much just that first board cracked. It seemed as loud as walking on the boards in the small bridge at the trail, early mornings.

As I stood outside Patrick's cottage I paused for a moment, standing at that first step. I

then slowly reached up to insert the key. It fit! I couldn't believe it. And, then, it ... turned. Slowly. Unbelievably.

I looked around again. No one was there.

His door squeaked. Loudly. My lighter gave me just enough light, plenty. That could have easily been a trap, now that I look back. In looking back, I could have been locked in his cottage and tied up, indefinitely. No one would have known my last whereabouts. It was actually an unbelievable risk, looking back.

Just as I'd expected, he had plenty of items I could use to kill him, with all that he had talked about, money and a food and sandwich business. It was then just a matter of waiting for him to come home. My appearance, my hair messy, my face still wounded, would give me just that split second to initially stun him.

Time moved quickly. I sat in the dark about an hour. I could hear him place something down on the steps outside. It's him! I could also see that he was already opening the door ... carefully, very cautiously. 'Hello?' he said. It was him, voice and body.

He's reaching for the light switch. He sees me. He's ... scared. That's what I want!

'You left me,' I said, as soon as we made eye contact, sitting in that chair, in his kitchen. 'Now I give you that same pain.'

'What!? Oh my God! Who are you?! Are you ...'

Just as he tried to make out what he saw, looking at my boxing gloves, is the precise moment I attacked him with a knife. I had placed the knife under my arm. The chair seemed to catapult me, beyond my injuries. It almost seemed second nature. It was the largest knife he'd owned, and it was unbelievably sharp, too sharp. His blood splattered everywhere, and I think I was only punching a corpse by that time, afterward, shouting at him.

With every punch I was yelling: 'You bastard! You lousy, lousy son of a bitch!'

I'm surprised that, the whole time, I was actually able to ignore the Patrick I once knew for decades. I wonder if his death has even been reported yet. Or discovered. Could he even still be there? Am I here where I sit now? Am I still even the same Jane?

I think I'm regaining peace of mind.

Jane again massages her wrists.

Mr. Forsythe, Dr. Miller's former assistant, suddenly sits down on the weathered bench, alongside her. She seems to snap out of a dream.

"Ahh!" she yells, almost leaping from the bench.

"S-sorry ... sorry Jane. I didn't mean to scare you," gently resting his hand on her shoulder.

Jane looks at Mr. Forsythe as though drawing a blank. She takes long, deep breaths as she sits down again, very slowly, looking at the ground as though puzzled by her very own existence. She intuitively realizes Mr. Forsythe means her no harm.

A credible contemporary cult expert, Mr. Forsythe had been at Dr. Miller's side during many sessions in which patients had been behaviorally screened and observed. Mr. Forsythe had been an independent contractor who seemed like a mainstay at Dr. Miller's office, housed within a small, independent department of psychiatry, in Concord, California. Often involved with studies pertaining to ritual abuse, Mr. Forsythe had been mainly involved with issues that involved psychology as opposed to psychiatry. Yet, he often assisted with matters involving adolescents not part of actual organizations or covens but those who were self-styled, the dabblers, users of street narcotics, and hence psychiatry had also been a focus. He finds it ironic that, as he awaits autopsy reports, he actually now approaches Dr. Miller's death as though a case, one which possibly involves prescription-pill overdose. However, Mr. Forsythe remains unaware that Dr. Miller had had a life of diabolical dualism, as the candidly monstrous "Mr.

Whysche”.

Mr. Forsythe discloses to Jane that Dr. Miller had recently committed suicide.

"Dr. Miller is dead. He took his life a few days ago."

Jane, remaining motionless as she sits on the bench, does not react to Mr. Forsythe, and seems to even ignore him. Mr. Forsythe is concerned that Jane was not even in the slightest concerned with being alone in this somewhat isolated park area. He considers the fact that he could have snuck up on her completely, and he feels as though he did indeed approach her sneakily, which, for a moment, makes him uncomfortable. Yet, he notices she is not appearing caught off-guard any longer.

Mr. Forsythe then becomes as silent and as motionless as Jane as he considers the possibility that she could be meditating or that she herself has experienced loss. Her mood does not appear somber to Mr. Forsythe. Yet, he finds her to appear dormant and to not be her usually energized self, energy that radiates particularly during and after her long treks. Mr. Forsythe repeats the news regarding Dr. Miller.

“Dr. Miller is dead.”

Noticing Jane is still quiescent, he pauses to consider the possibility that Jane has overexerted herself. Her countenance is pale and droplets of sweat cling to her face. Could a lack of sleep be the reason she now almost seems to slumber? Mr. Forsythe recalls Dr. Miller discussing instances of nightmares and also “hot flashes” becoming increasingly more common in Channel Haven as a whole.

“Earth to *Jane*,” Mr. Forsythe says sarcastically and uncharacteristically.

Jane finally responds, noticing a seemingly different character in her presence.

“Oh, hi, Mr. ... Mr. *Forsythe*.”

“Dr. Miller is dead.”

“Dr. Miller?”

“Let’s see, I guess you didn’t know Dr. Miller.”

“I knew of Mr. Whysche.”

“Dr. Miller had been seeing Mr. Whysche in his office, concerning psychological and social matters.”

“Oh.”

“Someone had left a poem in his office where he was found dead. You write poetry, don’t you?”

“On occasion,” now gently smiling, her voice somewhat raspy. “When I sit near the bay.”

"I have something for you, Jane."

"Something for *me*?"

Mr. Forsythe opens his brief case and removes a manila folder. As he removes the folder it slightly bends, at which time Jane can see what appear to be pages of a magazine.

"Guess what I have here?" he asks.

"A magazine?"

"Yes, a magazine. And, not just *a* magazine, *your* magazine, ma’am, the work you'd all been contributing to."

He opens the folder to display the glossy-covered magazine that looks just as Jane had envisioned it.

"The *magazine*!"

As she quickly skims through the pages, she notices that her eyes seem drawn to the early '80s pictures of John Creighton, her once close friend, deceased.

John, who was killed during the hostage situation in the Philippines, had been married to Lucy Patterson. Jane had maintained a close-knit friendship with Lucy for the decades that

followed. Then Lucy, unexpectedly, died, last year, of apparently natural causes. And, since then, from Jane's point of view, there had seemed to be a dark cloud of death that continually hovered over her as well as the other two remaining hostage survivors: Patrick and Brent. And, Jane cannot believe she actually had a role in one of the deaths, the fierce killing of Patrick.

Her mind transitions over and over from the pictures she views in the magazine to morbid memories from the Philippines 26 years ago.

In looking at more of the magazine's page layout, she can vividly recall the time captured in the photos. She still finds it hard to believe that John's death was actually 25 years prior to the naturally caused death of Lucy. Jane still struggles with the concept.

Just as the four had collectively planned, the magazine contains a photo essay of pictures of John just before he had been killed by the raiders of the tourist bus. As Jane turns more pages she pauses to look away from the magazine and at Mr. Forsythe, still sitting at her side. She looks at him almost in bewilderment. She cannot believe that the magazine also includes pictures of a very young Patrick as well. The sight of the photos suddenly causes a quick reflex in Jane, and she quickly slams the magazine closed and places it back in Mr. Forsythe's brief case, which is open on the ground.

Jane suddenly goes into an eerie trance and begins to spew forth an utterance, at which time Mr. Forsythe reaches for the pen and yellow notepad in his brief case. Mr. Forsythe quickly changes his mind, however, realizing he also has a mini-tape recorder handy, and quickly decides to record Jane while not removing the tape recorder from his brief case.

Jane utters:

"The magazine was all for naught. It brought too much pain. The magazine shalt not exist. But, I give you another story, of survival and those who persevered starvation. In my house were many mansions. Observe the birds of the air and of the field. Does not your Heavenly

Father feedeth them? Are you not more worthy than they?”

“You’re a *Christian*. Interesting.” Mr. Forsythe politely responds, leaning away and then slightly standing to move to the end of the wooden bench. He turns his shoulders to face Jane.

Jane, as though in a trance, rises and then slowly begins to walk away, continuing one of her lengthy treks, gradually speeding up.

“Jane? *Jane*. Jane!”

She seemingly vanishes as she walks up a slight incline in the road, just as night is falling. Mr. Forsythe suddenly has a heart attack. No one is present to help him. He collapses. Jane hears this at a distance of about 80 yards and turns around. She pauses and tilts her head inquisitively. She can see that Mr. Forsythe’s body has become lifeless. Jane turns to continue her trek again.

All Four Knot, a cover story

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End Notes:

- Chptr. 4: *A warrior blows open the battle doors* was written by Sean Smith in 2005.
 Chptr. 6: The second stanza of *A transcending descent of the sonnet* was written by Sean Smith in 2004.
 Chptr. 10: *A never-bending dream* was written by Sean Smith in 2005.
 Chptr. 9: A passage describing a reflection by the character Jane is derived from a HUM 5262 class exercise.