



BOOK TEN

RoberTo

*Read consecutively
but written sequentially,
the repetitive nature of these
themes, ideas and even words
could be a sign of faulty memory or
- I foget ... oh yea ... -
it could simply attest to their persistence,
pertinence,
and patience.
You make the call.*

*Sent in appreciation
for memories
yet to be made,
good music
yet to be played
and a family of friends for whom
my appreciation is never fully relayed.*

*with much thanks to KarenTo
for all her encouragement and support,
editorially and otherwise.*

*previous editions @
<http://www.robertvtobin-mpa.com/personal.html>*

4/13/14

Instead of talking or thinking
in terms of the past or future,
how much clearer would it be
if we simply referred to the
“known” and “unknown.”

At least this makes it
more obvious
we were either addressing
that about which we know something
but can do nothing,
or that about which we know nothing
but can do something.

How often we do the opposite,
thinking we could fix that has already passed
or else project it into the future
looking for the chance to redo, not do or undo
something already unlikely to reoccur the same way twice.

Believing we can do something when we can't
or we can't do something when we can
is a justification for laziness,
an excuse for bad behavior,
a recipe for frustration,
and a causal factor in social inertia.

5/29/14

We mostly do what's right
not for the rewards derived
but the misery avoided
by doing otherwise.

Who knows where heaven is,
but hell is found easily enough:
wherever the tyranny
of seemingly immediate interests dominate
– indeed dictate –
our decision-making.

Possibilities and prospects narrow
when blinding ambitions
cause us to miss the obvious
- indeed inevitable -
when pursuing the eternally evasive.

It is in the small choices
that big differences are made,
as seemingly little things loom large
as often as huge things prove tiny.

How distorted and deceptive
appearances can be,
misleading we who get hooked
by the allure of the shiny.

Better instead to do what's right
without seeking reward
or trying to control the outcome,
thus reaping any benefits
the avoidance of hell provides.

6/7/14

Is there any challenge greater
- or more liberating -
than the suspension of disbelief?

Unless we stop digging the crater
in which optimism gets buried,
we'll find no source of relief.

How quickly we call "unbelievable"
what is simply amazing
and thus discount its possibility,

instead of marking it "receivable"
for our learning and growth,
and welcome it to our best-est ability.

It's a practice habit forming
- not just to accept what we're given,
but receive it with joy unreserved.

Such gifts are heart-warming,
meant to be accepted and passed on.
In this way, the Greater Good is preserved.

6/27/14

It is.

I am.

You are.

We can.

Perhaps these are the only Facts of Life?

Certainly they are its shortest and most provable.
Their acknowledgement shapes our destiny,
and their acceptance determines our fate.

If it is by believing that we see,
then recognition of these Facts introduces
a world beyond the limits of our perceptions
yet always available for our appreciation.

By living on purpose, we bring to life
a light that radiates outward
to ourselves and others
through acts of love.

By intertwining these lights,
our world becomes illuminated,
and these Facts of Life even more obvious.

6/27/14

It cannot be a coincidence.

Scribbling these etchings for a year
with one of Fr. Bob's pens
has been one of life's privileges and pleasures.

Having its ink finally expire
was a reminder that all things
– including a spirit as strong as Bob's –
come to an end...
or is it, perhaps, just a transition?

So I picked up the other of his pens
to carry on this rumination
and, within a word or two,
it too had fulfilled its purpose,
and
– after connecting us to soooo many others –
simply stopped doing so.

Yet another reminder of
how we must all carry on
until we cannot,
and then pass that job on
to others who eventually do the same.

As it was in the beginning,
is now,
and ever shall be,
now and forever. Amen.

7/3/14

One must keep going
or stop growing;
proof of this is plain to see.

In life, in love,
and all of the above,
all I ever am is me.

Simple but not easy.
It, at times, makes me queasy
but all it requires is just to be

living in The Now
or at least learning how,
with help from you, She/It and/or He.

It's how we find the path
that requires New Math
as we daily pay our fee

by bringing love to life,
and letting go of all strife
while staying smooth as chamomile tea.

7/4/14
Independence Declaration(s)

Can it really be so simple?

Are the purposes of life:

1) To live it to the fullest,
not in some manic or compulsive sense,
but with deep resonance
and full consciousness
of its many permutations,
relentless unfoldings,
and continuing illuminations.

And

2) To share it with others,
not just anybody
or everybody
but rather allow our spirit
to radiate outward
like ripples from a stone in a pond
gently, subtly,
evenly projecting their impact
until reaching its intended shore.

Just live it and share it.
Who knew?

It all flows when we let it go.

7/4/14 (cont.)
Kingvale, CA
Bro. Tim's guitar playing
in the background

Music is the elixir of life
lubricating our swings between good and bad
until we find our center.

It brings people together
and breaks things down,
allowing us to discern their true nature.

A soundtrack for reflection
during the causes for pause,
bringing light to life's darkened corners.

It helps us better feel
the gladness or sadness we weather
and all that lies in between,

telling stories true and wild,
teaching lessons to those listening,
and entertaining all others.

Melodic messages
and penetrating rhythms
introduce us to the harmony of life.

7/13/14

Crickets in the evening warmth
emit their relentless rhythm,
calling us to a moment
that might otherwise
go unnoticed.

Many other similar chances
to focus our attention,
revitalize our interest,
and increase our investment
in life:

flowers all around us
owls screeching in the trees
barking dogs and honking drivers
train whistles in the distance
cars hurtling passengers from there to here
downstairs neighbor's ever-whirling fan
drizzle of perspiration after a bath
muscle aches from a weekend well-spent
passing another summer's midpoint.

All of these, like those crickets,
constitute fleeting opportunities
to experience glorious instants
for us to take notice,
listen,
breathe,
smile,
and say: "thank you."

7/14/14

If not the ultimate paradox,
it's right up there.

We are told to stretch our limits,
find our learning edge,
and extend our capabilities
by exercising our muscles,
exorcising our demons,
and thereby stretch our borders.

Yet at the same time we are
advised that
- to remain balanced, stable and strong -
we must stay in the center,
maintain healthy boundaries,
keeping within ourselves,
and be clear with others
about where those limits are
even as we discover them ourselves.

These are not contradictory
but complementary,
fully compatible in a world
defined by opposites
that eventually are united
and become seamless.

7/16/14
60th B-Day

Launching the third/third
(on this planet, at least),
knowing more than I did
but not as much as I wish.
More balanced
but still a bit off kilter.
Feeling stronger
in my moments of weakness.
Seeing clearer and hearing better,
especially when I would rather not.
More appreciative of the ever-present moment.
More respectful of the past
and more deferential to the future.
Calmer and more confident
than I have a right to be.
More grateful to all those who came before
or who stopped by along their way;
all made me stronger than I otherwise might.
More discerning about differences between fact & faith,
more aware of their interplay and
ever more conscious of a Universal Power
- increasingly thankful for Its many provisions.
Enthused for all that lies ahead.
Educated by all that has passed before.
Knowing better love's healing power
and saving grace.

7/19/14

Pain ≠ Bad

How different life would be
if none of us flunked the math class
where that particular equation was being taught.

It's totally natural to avoid pain where possible
or else minimize its many inconveniences,
yet it fertilizes
all growth and learning.

As we seek balance between life's extremes,
there is functionality in negativity,
as it draws our consideration
of changes not considered – let alone chosen - otherwise.

Adversity gives us the chance to assess
whether we might be putting out
what is bringing into our lives
that which we'd rather avoid ... or ignore.

Like all the gods' gifts, pain has its utility.

7/27/14

Morning chirping from
the birds of the air,
whose every need's been provided,
leads to reflection upon why
attention and energies are drawn
to things already decided.

Or toward imaginings
of other places and times,
since there is no other except in The Present;
especially when angst
is found in those others,
while Here/Now is often quite pleasant.

Or trying to influence
others' experiences/perceptions
rather than leaving each to their own,
instead seeing what is
as the best it could be;
from acceptance do serenity seeds get sown.

It's said nothing is wasted
in God's economy
and there's no accidents either.
That which we perceive
in terms of good and/or bad
often turns out to be neither.

7/29/14

Our paths becomes illuminated
only after we walk them.

Our gifts are received
only after we give them.

Our battles are won
only after we stop fighting them.

Our blessings are appreciated
only after we count them.

Our feelings become real
only after we've felt them.

Our purpose(s) gets clear(er)
only after we pursue them.

Our vulnerabilities disappear
only after we accept them.

Our awareness of a Higher Power
exists only after we nurture it.

Our place in the Universe is revealed
only after we've taken it.

Our love gets conveyed
only after we share it.

8/1/15
Sequoia National Park

Breath-taking grandeur
just outside our door
waiting to dazzle and beguile
when we step out of the ordinary
and reach beyond the familiar,
thereby expanding our horizon,
broadening our outlook,
increasing our awareness
and appreciation
of nature's splendor,
the gods' power
and our innumerable blessings.

As turtle only makes progress
by sticking its neck out,
so do we too by stepping into
the world beyond our sight
or even our capability to imagine,
thereby exposing us of the possibilities
that become probabilities
only when not confined by our limited perceptions
and preconceived ideas
about what we construe
as reality.

8/2/15
Sequoia N.P.
(& later
in Hudson, Ohio)

When family gathers
love surrounds
laughter swirls
memories abound.
Smiles widen
eyes glisten
paths illuminate
everyone listens.
Gratitude expands
time stops
perspectives change
smiles pop.
Hope builds
friendships deepen
hearts touch
grudges weaken.
Hands hold
chins raise
pride swells
resentments fade.
Senses tingle
possibilities widen
life happens
futures brighten.

8/4/15

Technologies introduce us
to the concept of Real Time,
in which computation capacity
supposedly drives decision-making
to produce optimal results for all concerned.

How often does(n't) it
lead us into the world where REAL time
is the only one there is,
living in the ever present moment
where there is not difference between
what is REAL
and everything else,
when our consciousness and concentration and conversation
and everything in between
is fully engaged
and completely connected
to everyone and everything else,
with no separation
between the internal and external,
thoughts and feelings,
or you and I,
revealing
how it is that we are here
and why now is the only when,
doing whatever's next
fully and finally
as if for the first time,
with nothing but
appreciation and gratitude
for the opportunity
and no expectation in return
but the experience of REAL it provides.
Technology is good ... but not THAT good.

8/20/14

Effort is more important
than intentions.

Acceptance is more useful
than understanding.

Wisdom is more valuable
than knowledge.

Commitment is more relevant
than connection.

Confidence gets us further
than competence.

Feelings provide better guidance
than ideas,
and intuition better than instincts.

Now is better
than earlier
or later.

8/22/14

Something good comes from everything,
if we let it.

We learn a lesson every day,
if we don't forget it.

There is a message in every moment,
if we get it.

Stay willing, open and honest –
we will never regret it.

A loving heart heals all wounds –
never neglect it.

Our internal alarm clock awakens us,
if we remember to set it.

Each struggle and challenge reveals possibilities,
if we have met it.

Ourselves and others know how we feel
only when we have said it.

The seed of our happiness will never grow
unless we have wet it.

8/23/14

If disharmony is the
result as well as cause
of discord,
then each is a miner's canary
for the other.

So when difficulty arises,
better to ignore our attraction to its symptom
and instead focus on its source
as the path to resolution,
- or at least alleviation -
of resulting stress and strain.

Our usual reaction
makes us experts in the problem rather than solution.

A more useful response involves
stepping back rather than forward,
looking in rather than reaching out,
and
opening up rather than shutting down.

8/27/14

The gods' part is already done.

Only ours' remains.

The seeds of our learning/growth
are already planted;
it is up to us whether they
get watered and fertilized,
are regularly weeded,
and remain unblocked from the sunlight of The Spirit.

It is not just the fruits of our labors that we get to enjoy,
but the medicinal benefits
of that work itself
as well.

It is not just, as the gospels tell us,
by their fruits that you shall know them,
but also by their efforts as well.

Best to avoid those
who know how to cultivate your field
while their own remains unplowed.

Ultimately, only we can do our own work.

9/1/14
Labor Day

We share with others
the narrative of our lives
while telling it to ourselves.

More by what we do than say.
More by how we feel than think.
More by what we believe than know.

This is not so much to explain
or entertain
as it is to make sense of it all.
As if one thread
held it all together, which
– if found –
we could follow backward to find
how we got here
and forward to see where we're going.

But there isn't
and it doesn't.
Instead it is being woven continually
– eternally –
making and marking in Real Time
– the only kind there is –
by the force of our perceptions,
choices,
and willingness to accept
all that's provided
for our learning,
growth,
and appreciation.

9/27/14
Ahwanee Hotel
Yosemite

Life is one long series of surprises
from beginning right up to the end.
Never do we know
how far it will go
or even what's around the next bend.

It's not about where we're going, but how we get there,
that determines whether we enjoy the ride.
We need only do our part
– that's the best place to start;
the outcome's not up to us to decide.

It's the only thing to do, and now's time to do it.
And then again, and again and again.
Giving us many chances to learn
what we've yet to discern,
not knowing what's between Now and Then.

But there's no reason to fear and nothing to avoid,
for surprises are not bad or good.
They just keep endlessly coming
like a great river running
exactly to wherever it should.

9/28/14
Standing on Half Dome

This lovely spot on a gorgeous day
reminds us to say
there's no better way.

The fullness of life continually abounds,
constantly surrounds,
completely astounds.

Drawn to this experience
millions annually seek
to stand on this peak
and hear the gods speak.

Telling us yet again what we already know:
that it's not just a show,
but all part of The Flow.

So onward we proceed
much more aware
of the opportunities to share
this evidence of gods' care.

10/14/14

No matter how much we think otherwise,
we are not
problem solvers,
as they tend to alleviate themselves
more or less
sooner or later.

Sometimes we are instead
problem watchers,
studying its permutations,
focusing on other's part in creating it
and the multitude of ways
we are abused by it.

More often we are
trouble makers,
failing to look past our own short-term interests
to see the consequences of our choices
in the not-so-long-run.

How much better it is
to be solution-focused,
seeing what's right instead of what's wrong,
what's working instead of what's broken,
and where we are
instead of where we've been
or where we are (not) going.

10/20/14

There are already plenty
of critics and judges.
What makes us think the world needs another?

Those studying others' part
instead of their own
must think they're everyone's mother.

The effect is the opposite
of whatever their purpose,
unless their intent is to smother.

Why not instead say:
"I think you can do it!"?
Everyone needs a big brother.

The last thing we need
is one more second-guesser
... it's amazing how long they can hover.

So instead be amazed
by what someone does
and together find the joys we uncover.

By focusing on our own next step
in this continuing adventure,
it's our own lives we discover.

11/6/14

The things we know
and the way we grow
tend to merge together.

Just as what we expect
or what we reject
become as predictable as the weather.

Why not instead be what we've begun?
Walk rather than run?
Looking not outward, but within?

Focused on what's next,
or on sending a text,
we may forget to breath, or begin.

Each moment's a(nother) chance
to join in the dance
to music made for our voice.

To be where we are
we don't have to go far;
it's all just a matter of choice.

11/12/14

Each hour, each day
reveals itself
in an unfolding moment

leaving it up to us
not to miss any one,
thereby allowing it to foment.

To let it be what it is,
instead of what we expect,
is the choice we get to make.

To leave the past back there,
and the future not-yet-here
is the chance we've got to take.

Not allowing fear
- our own or others' -
to dictate our feeling or perception

distinguishes a life
steeped with love
from a distinctly less joyful reception.

11/13/14

We find ourselves drawn ever more deeply
to the life and world we choose.
It happens more-or-less consciously,
but its not like there's nothing to lose.

It's not something we see as it's occurring;
it's beyond our peripheral vision.
So less obvious than that easily seen;
to miss it is no cause for derision.

What remains a simple fact
is a lifetime in the making:
that we all get back what we put out.
More reason to stop faking or taking.

We learn from teachers like Thomas Merton,
who wrote in praise of "becoming who you are"
as if there was some other alternative.
It's the closest things that seem the most far.

11/15/14

The emergence of doubt
does not indicate lack of faith
but rather the presence of fear
which rarely reveals itself,
but instead masks its lurking's
behind anger, egotism and other disguises.

Rather than accept the uncertainty
inherent in the next passing moment
and remind ourselves of what we DO know,
we instead react to our lack of control
by trying to get what we can't
and are surprised when we don't.

11/16/15

Some friends' comment
– “when it's right, you just know” -
seems not only counter-intuitive but also totally reversed.

We'd like to think we know what's right
just as we'd like to think that we'd do what's right
if indeed we only knew.
But by the time we figure it all out,
- as if we could -
it's probably too late
since whatever was right at the time
becomes increasingly wrong
by the time we get around to doing it.

The statement also seems improbable
because it would seem hard to see what's right
among soooo many possibilities,
but that's only if we are looking incorrectly.

Something that's right doesn't require
our recognition, consent or agreement.
It just is.

Only when we allow
all the clutter internal and external
to get in the way
does the obvious become obscured.

The right things tell us they are right,
but we won't hear them
unless we are listening.

Undated

Nothing has more psychological influence
on us, our children and our world
than an unlived life.

So thought Carl Jung,
who knew a bit about such things
and was sharing
what one mother said
should be the first,
last
and perhaps only sentence in
The Definitive Parenting Guide.

How much better for us all if a “lived life”
became the sole criteria for success,
the only barometer for progress,
and the one true indicator of growth.

It would seem impossible not to live life
were there not so much evidence
of our tendency to substitute this moment for some other,
making what we don't have more important than what we do,
and supplanting some other power
for that already within us.

Living life is our best choice,
but not our only one.

11/27/14
Thanksgiving

Undated

The things we don't do are harder
than those that we do.
We forget when charging forward
to remember what we knew,
often neglecting to consider
what will happen when we're through.

More often we simply ignore
what's happening now.
Distracted by the bait d'jour,
we miss out on the WOW!
Failing to focus on the why
distracts us from the how.

Our worst sins
are not those of commission.
It's when we fail to act
that constitutes our greatest omission.
The difference is made by choosing
to what we give our permission.

Neither can our eyes see
nor our minds comprehend
the fullness of life
or the degree that things could be otherwise.

Yet our hearts can feel
what our brains cannot know,
and our souls can open us
to powers beyond our strength
and realities that defy comprehension.

The influences of the gods' powers
are beyond our understanding
but not our appreciation,
which needs to be expressed
to be fully experienced
and accepted.

Only thereafter
– if at all –
is it understood.

Perhaps that's why Thanksgiving
is the only holiday
that requires two days for reflection?

11/28/14

Just in from the “Who Knew?!?” Department:

A friend notes that unconditional love
does not mean loving without conditions,
since even that decision
itself imposes a stipulation.

It also doesn't mean to love without boundaries,
since all things have their limits.
Everyone should live within healthy borders
and reject the intolerable.

There is – or should be – a mutual commitment
to keep the bar high,
remain in the present,
focus (only) on our part,
keep the faith,
remain hopeful
and be loving.

All these we can do unconditionally,
but themselves also impose conditions.

Watching young couples explore
- and those not-so-young continually re-examine –
the nature of this paradox
is a reminder it need not be a conundrum.

12/2/14

Good and bad are not just relative terms.
They are also highly subjective,
placing us not only in judge's robes
but in the role of prosecutor, jury and executioner.

Worse, it implies we are not only all-knowing
but also all-seeing,
seemingly blessed with complete knowledge,
total awareness,
and accurate/unbiased interpretation
of circumstances vague at best
and outcomes uncertain at least.

Worst, it places us in someone else's shoes
when the only ones that fit are our own.
It puts us somewhere else than the only place there is:
here;
and some other time than the only one that matters:
now.

Better instead to keep our attention where it belongs:
on where we're at,
who we're with,
what we are doing,
how's it going,
when it's happening.

It reminds us how radical the guy was who said “judge not”,
and how resisted was (and is) his admonitions.

12/10/15

We are challenged to stay within our boundaries
while extending ourselves beyond our limits;
between these two points
learning and growth occurs.

An evening workshop exemplifies
the nuggets of wisdom that await our discovery
when we reach beyond our own perceptions and experience.

Among these:

Much of life involves giving our heart a home.

We ignore things we don't want to know.

If we don't deal with what's within us,
whatever it is will carry us with it
then carry on without us.

Those who matter don't mind,
and those who mind don't matter.

If we don't transform our pain, we transmit it;
better to name, claim and thereby tame it.

We dye our lives in the color of our thoughts.

A dagger cannot pierce a lover's heart
if it never leaves their beloved's hand.

12/13/14

It must be this simple,
since there is agreement among all the sages
that our doubts about others mirror our own insecurities,
as has been known throughout the ages.

So quick we are to deflect and defer
responsibility for our part;
making others liable for our joy or unhappiness
is exactly the wrong place to start.

Yet how counter-intuitive it is to give to ourselves
the very things from others we seek:
acceptance, appreciation, forgiveness, tolerance,
and a continual turning of the cheek.

If we cannot find in ourselves
what we seek from another,
why and how would anyone else?
We must treat ourselves as if we are our brother.

12/19/14
Dad's B-Day

He is, and shall always be,
our Captain,
encouraging us to chart our own course,
anticipate the tides,
sense the prevailing winds,
avoid the shoals,
watch out for pirates,
keep our sails trimmed, and
not-just-remain-afloat-but-forge-ahead,
unfettered if not always undaunted.
Our Captain taught us to be
like all good sailors:
follow our guiding star,
read our own compass,
show respect to our shipmates,
know our depths,
and stay smart about
when to drop anchor and where.
Like all real navy men,
our Captain stood his watch
and enjoyed shore leave.
He has a knack for knowing
when to go full-steam-ahead,
and how to pull back the throttle.
He keeps going in the right direction,
knowing his position in any weather,
when to defy the odds,
how to ride out a storm,
and where to seek safe harbor.
He never even thinks about going down with the ship.
He is, and shall always be,
our Captain.

12/24/15
Christmas Eve

How often Christmas giving
distracts from The Present we've already received
as the frenzy of giving and getting
makes us forget the birthday being celebrated
is not even ours.

That which is said to have been born long ago,
- as noted at tonight's remembrance service -
was not just a special person or sainted savior,
and more than an idea or belief.

Rather, it was a life-giving, light-generating message
of singular purpose
and multiple benefits
that offers a way of relating to our world and each other
based on a novel set of guiding principles:
fear not,
judge not, and
turn the other cheek not once or seven times, but 70 x 7.

This message contained not one "shalt not",
instead imposing affirmative obligations:
stay present,
forgive,
remain grateful,
seek answers within,
and - of course -
share with others that which has been freely given to us.

It is all this and more that we are offered
by he whose birthday we celebrate.
It is those same gifts we are challenged to share
when we make daily our celebration of life.

12/25/15

Christmas came early once again
as it does each year
if we pay close attention to its purpose,
bringing love to light
and our life to love
– the greatest act in the world's grandest circus.

Enlightening our minds
while illuminating the darkness
and warming those places most cold,
if/when we stay in The Present
– a gift awaiting our reception.
Nothing else we can do is so bold.

This is what we celebrate annually,
as if we needed reminder
of our highest priority.
But if it was that easy
to practice what we preach,
those who do so would not be a minority.

How ironic it is
commercialism peaks at year-end,
making it impossible to miss
the remembrance of a man
who showed us all how to live
until betrayed by gold pieces and a kiss.

12/28/15

It's possible, we're told,
to live each day
without being fully alive,
eating and breathing
but not really seeing
the very path upon which we strive.

It's possible, we're told,
not to like
the person that we love,
trying to make them be what they're not
or not letting them use what they've got,
expecting instead for them to fit like a glove.

It's possible, we're told,
not to practice
what we preach,
expecting others to do
what we would not too.
We all must learn that which we teach.

1/1/15
New Year's Revolution

If there is indeed no time like the present,
and no other place but here and now,
heaven or hell is not something hereafter;
it comes from what we choose, and how.

If we are truly the center of the universe
with time and space infinite in each direction,
those choices take us toward love or fear;
our path a continual mid-course correction.

If we aren't punished for our sins, but by them;
and God's is not what we're without, but within;
if truth is not about finding, but seeking;
it's not where we finish, but if we begin

to focus not on doing, but being;
not on what we get, but give;
on who we're with, not where we're going;
not on when we'll die, but whether we live.

1/7/15

What our lives need most
is not revolution
but resolution.

Not so much reformation
as revelation.

Those things most available
seem most elusive,
while that which forever remains remote
becomes our constant pursuit.

If knowledge gets in the way of understanding,*
and both get in the way of acceptance,
then the task ahead is easier
- as opposed to simpler -
than we might expect.

The challenge lies not in knowing,
or doing or seeing,
but in being.

* Tich Nhat Hahn

1/20/15
Van Nuys, CA

The stars have aligned.
The moment is here.
It's only a question of time
before we come to the realization
and accept the obvious:
at each new moment, we come into our prime.

We need no other explanation,
admonishment or exhortation
to simply be in the place that we are.

All that is
is exactly as it should be -
it's as obvious as a bright shining star.

Any passing clouds
obscuring our vision
are almost always man-made
from assumptions and expectations,
fears and trauma;
bringing darkness surely as trees bring shade.

It's up to us
to experience the joy
available for our recognition
when we breathe and smile,
stay aware as we can, and
rely on feeling instead of cognition.

1/22/15

How many things there are
- friends, mentors, sponsors,
love, encouragement, appreciation, trust,
understanding, happiness, peace –
that we don't have when we need them,
and don't need when we have them.

That is not a coincidence.

When doing that which is necessary
to have those things
- being friendly, loving,
understanding, appreciative, peaceful, etc. –
these very acts themselves attract
what we desire.
It's an investment with endless returns.

And when we don't it won't,
instead giving us back
that which we are putting out
- resistance, mistrust, and all the rest -
in direct proportion to the degree emitted.

We get more of whatever we already have.

1/28/15

So-called “secrets” of success
are no mystery.
They hide in plain sight.
It won't take long
to find out what's wrong,
but we immediately know what's right.

To see ourselves
as others see us
is one of those simple – but not easy – tasks.
To know how others feel
and share, for us, what is real
we have to take off our masks.

This depends not so much
on our capabilities,
but rather on our willingness to trust.
We must treat one another
as a sister or brother,
quick before we all turn to dust.

2/5/15

Thinking, like all good things,
should be done in moderation.

Who knew that too much
could be as bad as too little?

We are blessed with many tools
and numerous opportunities to use them
correctly
carefully
consciously.

Someone can get hurt otherwise.
Us, for instance.

Thinking, like all things, is best done when shared,
giving us a chance to check in reality
what may indeed be a Good Idea only at the time.

The plan, it's been said, ALWAYS looks good on paper.

2/8/15

At the place where
love and life intersect,
spirit can be found
inhabiting every cranny and nook,
flowing fully and freely
in endless abundance.

To live without loving
is possible but not preferable
- an option chosen only unwillingly.

To love without living,
perhaps achievable in theory,
is unfulfilling in practice.

By nourishing our souls
we illuminate The Path,
invigorate our lives,
and make better our world –
all by parking at the intersection
of Life and Love.

2/12/15

Yet another gathering
of the Family of Friends,
enjoying each other's company,
experiencing the power of presence,
and the blessings of the Universe.

The sound of laughter,
the music of love,
feeling closeness and care,
warmth and acceptance.
Sooooooo many reasons to smile.

Levels of anticipation
and appreciation
ascending concurrently as the fullness of being
becomes what it always was
and forever shall be:
an end in itself.

2/15/15
Honeymoon: SF
The Day After

It is in an eye's blink
that life's most precious moments pass,
with or without our awareness,
recognition, or permission.

Yet in that same moment
can our awareness rise
to welcome those experiences
not as a freak happenstance,
but as the fruits of our labor
and the gods' as well
as we co-conspire to shape life's destiny.

Nothing more or less,
gained or lost,
given or taken,
created or destroyed,
but rather a drama continually unfolding
in which we play an important role
but are not the whole show,
whose ending is inevitable,
but as yet unwritten.

2/16/15
Honeymoon: Half Moon Bay
A-B-Cs while you were sleeping

Availability of our awareness
Beginnings of our bliss
Closeness of our connection
Depth of our decisiveness
Ease of our elation
Forestalling of our fear
God-given nature of our gifts
Hopefulness generated by our healing
Inspiration as the source of our illumination
Justification of our joy
Knowledge of our kindness
Levels of our loving
Mindfulness of our messaging
Novelty of our notions
Opportunities for our observation
Passion of our pursuit(s)
Quelling of our qualms
Realization of our resolve
Strengthening of our sincerity
Test(s) of our tenacity
Unattainability of understanding
Variability of our vigilance
Wellspring of our willingness
Xi if our spelling was in Greek
Yielding of our youth
Zealousness of our zeal

2/20/15
Honeymoon balcony
Big Sur, CA

Looking back, reaching forward
comparing notes 'long the way,
reflecting on the initial sparks
that brought us to this day.

Recognizing synchronicities
the gods disguise as coincidence
to keep us from being overwhelmed
by powers present in every instance.

Empathizing with others
seeking their way along The Path
that is illuminated by persistence,
not tricks of higher math.

Two redwood trees near this balcony
grow as close as could be,
yet neither stifles the other
this is how two "me" becomes "we".

And so it is in every form of nature:
as without so it is within.
With each new milestone we pass
is a new chance to begin.

2/26/15
26th Year Later

There is time aplenty,
yet never enough.

It indeed flies
without ever leaving the ground,
yet can also stand still
while constantly moving.

It's something we keep track of,
yet is so easy to miss.
It is always here
but never stops.

It is keeps passing us by
yet always there when we need it.

It is an invention man-made
after we had managed for eons
to do without a word for "before" or "after".

Like faith, time is
what we need when we when we don't have it
and what we have when we don't need it.

Time can make 26 years seems like a minute
and each minute a quarter-century.

Like all man-made things,
time's value lies not in how much we have
but what we do with it.

2/28/15

The secret of love, they say,
is not to go to sleep mad.
But the trick - of course - is not to get angry.

If the challenge in life involves
recognizing the moment as it is happening,
the trick – of course – is to be there
when it arrives.

If the solution in any relationship is to
differentiate irrational feelings
from rational facts,
the trick – of course- is to shut up until then.

If most negative behavior
is fear-based responses to past circumstances,
the trick – of course – is to stay here
and not go back there.

If the lesson of life is to
be the change we seek in others,*
the trick – of course – is to actually learn it.

* Mahatama Gandhi

3/20/15

Sometimes we're shown
and at other times shoved
toward a destiny only partly our making.

Sometimes we see
but more often only feel
learning opportunities there for our taking.

Those times we feel lost
are when we most likely find
life's experiences truly earth-shaking.

It's when we give
that what we receive
is as plentiful as leaves that need raking.

And when we seek acceptance
rather than understanding,
it's higher ground we are staking.

3/27/15

It's widely believed
our forward momentum gets traction
from less attention to words
and more focus on action.

Both of these are shaped
by our way of thinking,
which can either be helpful
or quite simply stinking.

Our position on any issue
comes not from how we stand,
but rather where we sit;
what we see shapes where we land.

Who knew it was a matter
of where and how far we look
that makes our life a horror story
or some grand adventure book?

It's not about questioning facts
but rather focusing on their sources;
that's the only way to keep
our cart behind its horses.

3/29/15

If we ever looked deeply into ourselves
- even for just a moment -
we might never (again) say anything
to anyone
about their behavior,
choices or attitude.

Focusing elsewhere is
is entirely purposeful
in distracting us from introspection
as much hurtful as it is humbling
- which is painful in itself
but involves much less suffering;
doing otherwise sows the seeds
of our own future humiliation.

"Who are we to talk?"
is not just a rhetorical question,
but the first step
in the journey of a lifetime.

Asking it,
AND listening for the answers,
grounds our interactions
with everyone and everything
in a far more positive place
than if we drive ourselves to distraction(s).

4/2/15

If the further we go
the closer we get,
then you just have to wonder
why we have not arrived yet.

There's no way of knowing
the answer to this riddle.
It's without beginning or end;
just one loooooooooong middle.

With our eyes we search outward
for what's found only within,
which we can feel but not see
along a path razor thin.

There is nowhere better
than the place that we are.
To search elsewhere is fruitless
because we'll never get that far.

4/4/15

We usually find out the hard way
what we need to learn
for we'd never start if we knew in advance
all the ups, downs
and turning arounds
as if it was some new dance.

One such example is the reason
they call it the "Cutting Edge."
For at the point things change
it all gets very strange;
it'd be safer to jump off a ledge.

It's mostly cuts and bruises
that come with the territory
when staying fully in The Now,
not sticking with the familiar
or whatever is similar
and instead doing what we don't know how.

But it's there we evolve,
learning to grow as we go
and appreciate all that is given.
Witnessing what's revealed, in awe,
in the teeth of Life's saw
involves sticking with The Plan as written.

They don't call it "the Cutting Edge" for nothin'.

4/20/15
One Year Later

As a fellow collector of experiences
and experiments,
I reflect on our past year
in terms of feelings rather than memories.

The first of these feelings is tranquility –
a lifelong pursuit realized
in fleeting-but-precious moments.

Another of these is affirmation,
validating long-held thoughts and beliefs about
how the universe works and when (i.e. only now),
how important love is,
and what a difference attitude and perspective make.

Yet another feeling is the WOW! Factor
as our path becomes illuminated
when our internal lights shine outward
through a calm mind,
clear eyes,
and a peaceful countenance.

The most primal of these feelings is
our basic need for security
which is noticed only in its absence.
It arises when we are supported in
letting go,
loosening up,
and laughing at the frivolity of life's seriousness.

Also easily overlooked is
the feeling of gratitude unleashed
when we escape the tyranny of want,
the bondage of fear,
and the futility of dependence on externalities.

Perhaps the most valued of these feelings
is liberation
as we are freed from life's most pre-occupying thought:
"what's going to happen to me?"

Certainly among the most subtle
is the feeling of well-being
emanating from firm willingness,
total openness, and complete acceptance
of who we are, why we're here,
and how appreciation and happiness
lay in direct correlation and proportion to each other.

These feelings help us learn
joy is not as some future outcome,
deferred pleasure
or conditional possibility,
but rather a moment-to-moment decision
that determines how we see ourselves,
each other, and our purpose/place in the universe.

These benefits of these feelings accrue
not in their accumulation
but instead are derived from their culmination,
by which we increase and strengthen
our connection to whatever Higher Power
got this started, keeps it going, and gives us the choice
whether to feel or forego them.