

Martin's Life Remembered

*Past Life Recollections of
Marie Fox O'Brien*

A List of Books

Marie's Story - An Extraordinary Odyssey

Channeled Books

Martin's Original Writings
Revelations
The Divine Nature of Man
Lessons
A new Endeavor
Concepts
Prayers

Past Lives

Moses
Zorah
Rose
Joseph II
Edam the Elder and Saleh
and Inga - Pala - Bana
Peter and Ann
Romulus
Remembrances-The Holy Family
Martin's Life Remembered

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Introduction

Thursday, 10/14/99 1:55AM

It is time, my love, to prepare for our next endeavor. Though there is no urgency, I ask you to find time tomorrow to turn to me and seek my words. Listen, beloved, for the words you long to hear and they will be yours. Know that all I wish for you will fill your heart with all the satisfaction that all you are and do deserve. Know my anxiety that your belief in yourself be both absolute and joyful. You please me, my darling, at all times in all ways. There is no question ever of your perfection to me. You cannot err ever.

Thursday, 10/14/99 3:50PM

In the beginning it was a simple matter to justify all that I tried to accomplish in my many years on earth. I had fulfilled most of my dreams. I had known both earthly success and private pleasure and satisfaction. I had known public adulation and familial approval. I never lacked friends. I was never at a loss for activities and distractions. I had enjoyed good health and known the blessing of a mind that served me well. My career was eminently fulfilling. I never knew a moment of professional failure.

In brief, as I looked back upon my many years I felt justified in a feeling of pride. Yet my mind would not let me dismiss those times when I had acted selfishly in my overwhelming need for achievement. I had often discarded as friends those who offered little to me in material advantage. I had sought out all those who offered me an opportunity for worldly pleasure, and I had taken full advantage of them. I had rarely returned their caring and contributions to my craving for success in all worldly ways.

As I thought back to the early years of my life, I remembered with a sense of sadness that I had even as a child placed satisfaction of my needs above all else. I had accepted all that I was given and gave nothing in return. I was possessed by a selfishness that knew no bounds, and when I was corrected I rejected such criticism and learned nothing. (4:00)

Friday, 10/15/99 2:57PM

There are many who have tried to analyze my success. There are a multitude of theories explaining its extraordinary nature. Books have been written, digested, and analyzed both by those who saw me as a hero and those who deemed me a villain. Even at the time I cared little for the opinions of others. I did not need their praise and I disregarded their disapproval. There was only one thing that touched my soul, and that was the absolute need to conquer and control.

I was not born in fortunate conditions. I was from the start aware that I needed to rely on my-

self more than I did on others, and even when I was fortunate enough to be adopted by a family which chose to afford me the material comforts and the loving concern that were not mine by birth, I was unable to feel the gratitude that my mind told me was reasonable and expected. To be truthful, I think I was incapable of feeling anything but a sense of self preservation, a need to be so independent that I did not have to depend upon others in any way.

My adopted parents despaired at their inability to reach me, to satisfy what they regarded as my emotional needs. I puzzled them completely, and to their dying days they regarded themselves as failures. Above all they needed love returned, and I could not grant them that. I was incapable of such feeling.

To this day I do not know if I was so scarred by my birth, a birth held scandalous in that age, but I do know that from my earliest days I was aware that I would never be fully accepted by a world which held a child accountable for his parents. I knew equally that I would spend my life fighting for this denied acceptance. What I did not know was that this acceptance I so craved early I

would scorn later. (3:10)

Saturday, 10/10/99 4:35PM

Before I stray from reminiscence, I need absolutely to make one thing clear. In all of my life and in all of my achievement I never forgot that there was a limit to human capacity. Even when I felt most powerful myself, I was aware that I was helpless in the face of higher power. Even when I felt myself most fit physically, I knew the frailty of my body. I knew that my mind was a gift just as my sound body was, and yet I knew as well that it was my responsibility to use these gifts well.

I did not always do so in many ways, but I did to the best of my abilities seek to use my mind well and to remain aware of my responsibilities. I never abused either mind or body, and both served me well in all I sought in earthly existence. I knew absolutely that I was born with a capacity for greatness, and I pursued my self-imposed goal at all times at all costs.

As I have said, the cost was all too often at another's expense, and I chose to ignore the possi-

bility that my actions created misery and unhappiness in the lives of others. I knew that those closest to me understood my obsession, my overreaching ambition, and that they forgave in the name of love. I, on the other hand, knew in my innermost being that I was incapable of such forgiveness, of such accepting love. If I had a heart, it did not speak to me. Perhaps, I know now, it is simply that I did not listen. (4:45)

Monday, 10/18/99 1:50PM

There were times when those nearest and dearest to me suffered greatly at the lack of regard I showed for their wishes. I know now how blessed I was in their giving love, but at the time I regarded it as my right, and while they knew no material lack, I failed to give to them the loving attention in their daily lives that they craved and deserved.

It was a time when the role of man in the family was that of lord and master, when all bound to him in family ties were expected to bow to his will in all ways regardless of their own inclina-

tions. The result was, of course, singular unhappiness within the family framework. Young ambition was squelched and denied unless it fit the wishes of the lord and master of the house. Indeed the title "lord and master" more aptly described my family role. "Father" was an identity but not an apt title, for fatherhood was important to me only insofar as my children gave me gratification in meeting my demands without protest.

I cannot imagine the degree of unhappiness I created, but as I have indicated, at the time I was so wholly involved with my own striving to be all powerful in all ways that I had no sense of the extent of my cruelty. It is notable that so rigorous were the mores of that time that such tyrannical behavior on the part of the head of the family inspired more approval than disapproval. Thus was tyranny not only tolerated but fostered. (2:10)

6:00PM

There is great advantage in wealth and power.

There is great satisfaction in knowing that no chance has been untested, no opportunity ignored, no obstacle left unconquered. At the same time, the hunger for wealth and power is corrupted by its insatiable nature. Never did it occur to me during the course of my life to say to myself, "That is enough." Indeed I was totally incapable of such admission. Each triumph caused me to look for newer challenge, and when that challenge was met and I knew victory once again, my hunger was not satisfied but grew inexorably.

I cannot say that there were not any other pleasures in this lifetime. As I have indicated I knew marriage and fatherhood. I enjoyed the company of those who amused me, and even more the company of those whose wit challenged response. In all the years of maturity there was little I could not command and I grew steadily greedier in my expectations.

Looking back, I wonder how I could have so ignored my shallowness and could have so totally overlooked the transitory nature of all I possessed and all I longed to know of recognition. I wanted the world to be in awe of me, and to that

end I ignored all those things that I now know made me a poor man. (6:10)

Tuesday, 10/19/99 2:25PM

What, I wonder, now that my life has passed seven decades, should I remember to persuade myself that it has been a life well spent? I fear I may find a great lack in myself. Yet I must do this.

Perhaps it would have been better if I had known less success early. Indulged as I was by my adopted parents, I received the best of educations. To their joy and to mine, I exceeded all expectations in my academic performance. I succeeded without effort, and perhaps that was when I first fell into the habit of thinking myself superior to my peers, indeed to all others. It did not occur to me to share the pride I felt in myself. I did not stop to think of my ability as something given to me rather than something earned. In a sense I thought of it as a right -- perhaps not "divine", but just as irrefutable.

Even then I paid a price for this self adulation. Though my parents never wavered in their devo-

tion, even when I was most insufferable, others paid scant attention to my superiority and distanced themselves as completely as possible. Even the servants seemed wary of me. I must confess that this latter group had good cause. I was insolent and demanding, insufferable in all ways, and I did not know the meaning of courtesy and gratitude. Again, though they were embarrassed by my lack of grace, my parents never betrayed their feelings to me or to others in any way, though they tried in every loving way to persuade me to be a kinder person. They forgave much and demanded little. (2:38)

5:16PM

I digress now to speak of the present. Though past error does not lend itself to total correction, it is possible to compensate to some degree. Thanks to a series of misfortunes, I was jarred into a sense of reality. It took the death of a daughter I never fully appreciated until she was gone from me. Her death was both premature and cruelly painful, and there was a new sense of urgency in my life which had nothing to do with

power or money. I cannot explain or describe the devastation I felt at the prospect of her death. A young mother, happily devoted to her husband and her child, she fell victim to a wasting disease which was deemed fatal from the very first unmistakable symptom.

There was nothing that science or medicine could do to halt the inexorable advance of the disease. My money could not buy the thing I wanted most. Although I had in the past airily commented that money was not everything, secretly I held firm to my conviction that it was of primary importance. In the face of my daughter's suffering and approaching death, I saw myself as I really was -- a grasping, uncaring materialist, totally impotent in all I wanted to do for my child.

It is the grace of God, I believe, that my child and her mother recognized in my anguish a repudiation of the arrogant selfishness that had marked my life. Equally it was His grace that awakened in me feelings that I had never known before. I was like a man who had been starving, ignorant of his need, and in this tragedy I took the first steps that were long overdue. I deter-

mined that my daughter should not have lived in vain.

I will not describe the horror of her death, but I knew fully for the first time the miracle of her life. It transformed me. (5:31)

Thursday, 10/21/99 3:46PM

In all of life's trials, and there were many, this death was overwhelmingly the greatest. Equally, in all of life's blessings, and there were many, this loss of my child was the source of ultimate blessing to me.

For the first time in many years I was brought to a realization of my own impotence, and when my sorrow wracked my soul, it was as if the floodgates had burst and all the emotions I had denied for so many years were loosened in all their power. In utter gratitude for their love so freely given for so long, I embraced my family and offered them all the love that they had patiently waited for in total loyalty to an undeserving husband and father. We were drawn together by tragedy and loss as never before and we knew

the power of caring in all ways.

I know that at first my wife feared that I had become unhinged, so radical was the change in my behavior and in my words. Caring always, she hovered over me with words of love and comfort and reassurance. Once persuaded by their mother of my soundness of mind, my children displayed toward me the affection that they had not earlier dared. I even saw my friends in a new light and, once again, realized with chagrin what I had been denying myself all these many years.

Pearl, for that was the name of our lost child, was certainly an angel for us all, and we took into our caring the husband she left behind and the child too young to fully appreciate her loss. Together we sustained one another in the darkest days of loss and mourning, and each of us knew in our hearts the true meaning of family love.

It may be hard to understand how one so encrusted and unfeeling could so quickly change, could learn to feel love and to respond to love after such a sterile existence. I cannot explain this in logical terms, but there is no doubt in my mind that I owe all saving grace to my angel

daughter. (4:03)

Saturday, 10/23/99 2:38PM

Lest anyone misinterpret my words or their intent, I hasten to say that in them I do not seek recognition for myself. I do not expect the world to forgive and to pity me for all my inner unhappiness, but I do seek to serve as an example to all those who may fall into the same error as I did and who live their lives misdirected. I seek to assure all such individuals that although wealth and power are pleasurable in many ways, and in even more ways may be used wisely, they are in and of themselves empty triumph, often pursued so greedily that they divert the seeker from wisdom and awareness of their empty nature if not used wisely.

I came to this awareness late and live each day of my life regretting my avarice and selfish devotion to my own gratification at the expense of all others and all else. I do not seek to excuse myself even when I have been so blessedly excused

by those whose devotion to me knows no bounds. Each day of my life my first thoughts are of the dear daughter whose death awakened my heart and revolutionized my thinking. It pleases me to think that she smiles upon me even now as I write. To her I owe my soul.

As for the rest of my family, I know infinite gratitude for all they have given to me in acceptance and love, and each day brings greater blessings. My wife, especially, has shown me the power of love, and there is no way I can fully express my love and admiration commensurate with her giving nature.

3:45PM

What I did to compensate for a life ill spent has been to many a source of aid and comfort. I chose to take all I possessed in excess of need to establish a foundation devoted to the care of the terminally ill first of all and secondarily to learning from this care the causes and remedies of the ills that man suffers. I found to my pleasure a multitude of well wishers and experts anxious to

give selflessly of themselves in pursuit of the goals I had set for our endeavor.

Never have I known such a full heart and a mind so at peace. My family joined me in all I strove to do, and I was newly aware of their goodness. We were, each one of us, intimately involved in the venture born in love of a lost child, and each of us found full gratification in both accomplishment and shared feeling.

It is many years now since the inception of this program, and lives have been saved by all that was learned from the suffering of others. Steady progress is a source of encouragement and joy to all involved. Not a day passes that I do not recall the bleakness of my years of striving for power and money. I wonder how I could have been blind for so long, but above all I am grateful for the sight granted to me at a time of personal loss. I know that it will not be long before I join all those gone before. My heart is filled with full anticipation of that step into another world. I know finally the meaning of true richness. I am grateful.

10:13PM

In the end I must confess that I have been less than honest in my self appraisal, in my ultimate confession. Yet I feel still the need to explain myself more fully. At the end of this life I need to leave behind me a history total in its honesty, constructive in its lessons, grateful in its blessings, and a testimonial to the staying power of human love divinely inspired.

I knew such peace after I had recovered the essence of life's meaning. I knew absolute fulfillment in the love of family that I had so deprived myself of knowing for years untold. I knew the recognition of honest approval, that of those who judged without regard to the giver but with regard to the worth and sincerity of the gift. In all, I considered myself blessed beyond deserving, and while I could not ever recapture the years lost, could not ever fully compensate those I had deprived, I found infinite satisfaction in the effort to do both these impossible things, and I knew in my heart that I had at least partially succeeded.

I cannot say that I considered my life a total justification of all that went before my awakening,

but not a day passed that I did not try to do so. I sought out those I had wronged and made amends to the fullest extent possible. I tried to reach all those, in brief, who had suffered from my ambition and my greed, and while I was not totally successful, I never stopped dreaming of this ideal. Word spread, too, of my efforts in this regard, and I began to be sought out. Those I had injured came to me in full expectation of justice and reprisal, and I made every effort to satisfy their needs. Not always did I please the injured. Some were wounded beyond my capacity for healing, but more went away with renewed faith than left in despair.

Thus was new beginning nourished and renewed, and in all my efforts I knew total sharing both within and without my close circle of friends and family, and I begin to know increased wonder and faith in the goodness of all those I knew in this life. They came from far and near in this sharing and I was infinitely enriched.

Sunday 9/24/994:02PM

In all of what I have said, I have avoided details of my life. It is important for full understanding that I recall and share all that seems to me important and instructive.

As I have said, my beginnings were less than ideal. I was born of a servant girl in a rich and noble household. Never was it considered important to determine my parentage beyond the obvious. I was treated as unwelcome and can now imagine the anguish of my birth mother. All I know of my early years is what I remember of living in a home for children without parents. I was never treated cruelly in my memory, but it was a place devoid of feeling and a place where each child strove to obey the rules and win the favor of those in charge.

There were never any visitors for us, and so I remember with particular accuracy the day that a well-dressed couple came to the home and asked specifically for me. In a short time after my initial interview, I learned that they were to be my future parents, that they were adopting me -- and I remember the exact words -- "out of the goodness of their hearts." I was too young to question these words, too naive to wonder how I

could have been chosen sight unseen while scores of other children waited for such good fortune. Had I asked, I am confident that no answers would have been forthcoming.

In later years I speculated about the reason behind my adoption, but my new parents were never forthcoming. They simply said that one they trusted had told them my name and that I would be a suitable child for them, past their childbearing years as they were. Indeed at first I thought them very old. Now my suspicion increases that they may have known the full story of my birth and parentage and were in some way --emotionally at least -- related to one of my parents.

I have never been able to verify my suspicions, all having been shrouded in secrecy. There were no records to be found when I searched. Officially, until my adoption, I did not exist (4:18)

8:14PM

It was some time after I left my home for unwanted children before I became accustomed to

my new environment. I was at first fearful of the two sober strangers that I was called upon to regard as my father and mother. Indeed they were often for a long time at a loss for words when they dealt with me. I, on the other hand, was not at all helpful in this regard, accustomed as I was to speak only when spoken to. There were long silences between us from the first of the day to the last, and it was particularly painful at meal-times shared by the three of us. Looking back I can understand this awkwardness, though not fully. At the time I accepted silence as the norm, and it did not occur to me to be more garrulous. I did not know how to initiate conversation with adults, and when either of my parents tried to do so, I responded as I had been trained to respond -- politely and in monosyllables.

From the vantage point of old age, I wonder why these two good souls took on such a thankless task as taking me into their lives as an only son. Perhaps they expected a warmth I was never able to provide. I was far from a joyous child. I am led to think that they were somehow satisfying an obligation, whether real or fancied. I would give much to know the nature of this

obligation, though I know I never will

The weeks passed quickly after my adoption, and I awakened each day in fear. I feared that what I knew was but a dream, that I would awaken and find myself back with all the other unwanted children. I feared that my new parents would find me a disappointment, regret their decision, and return me to the home. I coped poorly, in any case, with the demands of my new life, and yet each day that passed I felt more secure. I knew eventually that no matter how lacking I was, my adopted mother and father would not reject me, would not stop trying to please me. My attitude softened, but only slightly, for I still felt incapable of complete trust and certainly incapable of emotional dependence. (8:29)

Monday, 10/25/99 4:57 PM

As I have said, my adoptive parents did more than I deserved in nourishing my ambition, and when I was first sent to the village school I was clearly a misfit. I had received a rudimentary education in the home, and so I was accustomed to

the discipline of a classroom. What I was not used to was the boisterousness and rowdiness of my fellow students. I quickly became the butt of their jokes and the object of their ridicule, and I found myself withdrawing further into silence and solitude. I had no weapons to fight.

It was the kindness of one of the masters which saved me. He realized that he would only make matters worse by actively defending me, and so he invented excuses to separate me from my tormenters. I was assigned certain chores to divert me from their company, and his presence made my life more bearable. I could not complain to my parents. It showed weakness, and I feared it might prove excuse to dismiss me as their son. I felt at wit's end.

Then, Mr. Armstrong, my kind defender, solved my dilemma. He was acquainted with my parents, though not a close friend, and he found it possible to call on them without raising suspicions. I learned later from him that without alarming my mother and father he suggested to them that I would be better served in a different educational environment. Perhaps In a few years I would be ready for standard classroom school-

ing, but that it was his advice that temporarily I be permitted to study at home with the aid of a tutor.

When my parents protested that this might be a financial burden beyond their means, he offered to serve as my tutor for at least a time. He told them that I had the ability and the inclination to be a success as a scholar and that he would find it rewarding to help me on my way. He would do all, he said, to ease the burden, donating his time and providing whatever books and other study materials he could.

My parents, at first dismayed by his report, seized gratefully upon the solution he offered.
(5:14)

Tuesday, 10/26/99 2:55PM

Out of this friendship with Mr. Armstrong, came my first feeling of self worth. It was important to me to excel, not necessarily to please him, but to persuade him that he had not underestimated my ability. It took little effort to excel, and I once more became aware of my selfish na-

ture when I gave full credit to myself for my academic progress and scant credit, if any, to the devotion and talents of my tutor. I was, of course, greatly relieved to be free of torment, and it was of no concern to me to be without friends. I counted myself fortunate to be different from those who had so ridiculed me and whose academic mediocrity I considered a true reflection of the dullness of their minds.

During these few years of home schooling I was able to direct my interest much more freely than had I been in a classroom, and I was at all times encouraged by Mr. Armstrong, a paragon of excellence in his chosen field. For a brief time I was so impressed with his passion for teaching that I fancied myself following in his footsteps. Now, as I look back, I wonder how I could have even considered such a calling. I had a mind, but it was an impatient one. I lacked totally the warmth that marks a good teacher.

My parents, encouraged by Mr. Armstrong's appraisal of my abilities, went out of their way to provide me with all I needed for my studies. If I mentioned a specific book, for example, it was soon mine, even without my making a specific

request. My reading was useful too in providing material for dinnertime conversations, and I discovered that my parents were both interested in and pleased with my choice of books. They made it a point to read some of what I read and were, to me startlingly acute in their criticisms and observations. I did not often disagree with them in this area, and when I did I was at least wise enough to do so politely.

In short, these brief years were marked by the first feelings of happiness and security I had ever known. (3:13)

Wednesday, 10/27/99 5:04PM

I have never forgotten Mr. Armstrong. My only regret about him is that I did not make clear to him at the time my gratitude for all he taught me. I learned devotion from him, though I did, I fear, not learn it well enough to make this a part of my character. I like to think that he was aware of my limitations and knew in his heart that one day the extent of his goodness would be clear to me. Perhaps I wish this without reason.

Yet I wish this too of my father and mother. Although my communication with them reached a tolerable level for us all, and long silences disappeared, I responded to them without the warmth they deserved. They were not a demonstrative couple, but their devotion to each other was clear. They were devoted to me as well, but in a far different way. All my needs were met with caring and generosity, and they must have been hurt by my lack of emotion in my responses to all they gave to me.

Even when they died, within a few months of each other when I was twelve, I was dry-eyed. I truly tried to feel the sorrow I knew was right and natural and I could not. I think I shocked their friends by my unnatural calm and my detachment. I remained stiff and unresponsive. When they tried to express their sympathy I was mute. I stiffened in their embrace.

I was taken in hand by Mr. Armstrong, whose tutorial had lasted much longer than originally anticipated, and he guided me through the rituals of mourning and internment for each of my parents, father following mother, as I have said, within a few months. It was clear even to me

that he had no wish to live without her. Before his death he spoke to me of what lay ahead for me and urged me to make full use of my talents. He spoke often of my obligation in this regard. I listened each time, nodding my agreement, but I did not speak of the burning ambition that lay smoldering in my breast. That was my secret, one I did not share with anyone, even Mr. Armstrong.

After my father's death I was taken by Mr. Armstrong to the office of his solicitor, and there I learned that my parents had provided for me generously and that it would be possible for me to have any education I chose.

Thursday, 10/28/99 4:47PM

After what seemed an eternity to me, the legal niceties were taken care of and my parents' estate was legally settled. As it turned out, beyond a few legacies to dear friends and faithful servants, all their worldly goods were settled upon me, and Mr. Armstrong was named as my guardian and trustee until I reached the age of

majority. My parents' solicitor was clearly not totally happy with Mr. Armstrong's designation and clearly implied in the single meeting I attended that he would have been the wiser choice.

As it is, he proved helpful and considerate in the sale of the house and the disposal of their belongings. The servants were given first claim after me of what they wished to take from the house before its sale, and they were most humble in their choices. It surprised me when I went to choose that I did have some emotional attachment to some things. I was fond of the paintings which had hung in the hallway, and, of course, I chose to own all the books that had been given to me and the few that my parents had chosen to own before my arrival. As for the rest, except for portrait of my parents taken at their nuptial ceremony, all went under the auctioneer's block and returned a sum surprising to me.

During this time of disbursement, Mr. Armstrong had been considering my future in academic terms, and he discussed with me what he considered the best alternatives I had. Boarding school, was, of course, a necessity, and Mr. Armstrong's careful calculations revealed that I had

funds sufficient to see me through the remaining years of my schooling with funds to spare regardless of my choices. The problem then began to be clear. Where was I to go at recess times? I was still too young to be independent. I had no relatives that I was aware of. I had no friends. I was devoid of suggestions.

Then the solicitor, who had remained helpful despite his having been replaced by Mr. Armstrong, ventured a suggestion. He knew of a couple who lived in London, childless and of ample means, who might welcome me into their home during school holidays. They had in the past so befriended young men in need. I was pleased with the suggestion and Mr. Armstrong conceded that it solved a major problem. As my guardian he would keep in close contact and as the keeper of my purse strings he would see to my needs, including those outside school expenses.

Looking back, I am surprised at how little I cared where I spent my holidays. I expected little in human contact. I relied totally on Mr. Armstrong's devotion and felt I needed no more. And so I was received into another family, kind

and caring, but much caught up in their social lives so that even during the brief time I spent with them over a period of a few years I felt no sense of belonging. (5:12)

Friday, 10/29/99 2:15PM

Though I did not matriculate at the top schools, I received a reasonably good general education, and I had the advantage of outshining my peers in academic achievement, something easier to do than in the best institutions, though I have full faith that I would have attained all my goals wherever I studied.

I did not endear myself to my fellow students doing effortlessly what required much more of all others. This is not to say that my peers lacked ability, for indeed many were very clever, but that I was clearly superior in my natural ability and seemed to excel with little or no effort. Even the masters were cautious with me. When I challenged, they tended to fail in rebuttal, and so rarely was I rejected or questioned when I offered an opinion.

My only regret was that I lacked what I consid-

ered just praise for all I did. My peers were grudging in their admiration, and my teachers only slightly less so. I missed Mr. Armstrong's encouragement, but I realized coldly that I had passed the need for such, and gradually my reports to my guardian became briefer and less personal, and I do not remember ever thanking him for his continued interest and devotion. He was faultless in all ways and I lacked the wisdom to know how privileged I was in his caring. I use the word "wisdom" inadvisedly here. I think I lacked the very rudiments of thankfulness. All I was given I considered mine by right. How often have I regretted such arrogance and callousness. (2:25)

Saturday, 10/30/99 5:30PM

In all of my years of schooling there was within me a growing ambition to achieve both wealth and fame as quickly as possible. I do not know where this obsession originated. I know that I felt always the need to excel in order to prove my own worth and to increase my feelings of independence. I do not know precisely when this

general need to excel became specifically a hunger for fame and fortune. Perhaps it is not significant. What I do know is that by the time I completed my schooling I was totally obsessed with the need for both. I found it easy to make a choice of priority. I determined that I must first concentrate on making as much money as I could as quickly as I could.

This was a daunting need. I was without social connections in a great city. I had not made influential friends among either the faculty or the student body in university. I knew that to find a post I would have to accept a pitifully unchallenging position and to expect meager wages. I persuaded myself that I would accept both these conditions in good grace while I sought to understand the most direct avenues to advancement.

To that end I apprenticed myself to a financial institution, a brokerage house highly regarded in the financial community. As I had expected, my wage level was pitifully low, lower than some I worked with who had less education than I but who had apprenticed earlier. I was expected to do a variety of menial jobs. I took messages by

hand from one office to another. I posted debits under the watchful eyes of a senior accountant. I attended meetings and took notes which I transcribed and delivered to various offices. In general, I was invisible. (5:48)

Sunday, 10/31/99 6:00PM

I cannot explain the vagaries of fate. At the time I did not stop to consider the wonder of all that happened to me.

I had been living my humdrum existence for several months, dreading the dreariness of each day's work, despairing of ever escaping from my self-imposed torture. I spent every spare hour trying to learn more about the complicated world of finance and had been about to despair completely when the miraculous occurred.

As I have said, one aspect, and by far the most interesting, of my work was to attend meetings, take notes, put them in an orderly report, and then deliver these reports to various offices. I had just started on my rounds of delivering my report of the latest meeting when one of the officers high in the hierarchy of the company

emerged from his office just as I arrived. He stared at me blankly for a moment -- invisible still as I fancied myself --and then his expression changed.

As I handed him my report, he asked my name and asked how long I had been responsible for these reports. When I replied, he said, "I could have guessed," and motioned me into his office. For a brief moment I was alarmed, but then instantly I realized that he could not be finding fault with the quality of my work. I was totally confident in this. I remained standing as he took his chair behind his desk, and he did not invite me to sit down. Instead he looked over the report I had just delivered and nodded his head as he read, as if in agreement. It turned out to be approval. He asked me many questions about my background, about my education, about my exact duties and responsibilities within the company. As I replied to each of his detailed questions he shook his head from side to side often, and once again I began to be alarmed.

I need not have worried. After the last question was answered, there was a long and thoughtful silence. It went on so long I was hard pressed to

stand before him calmly and silently. Then he spoke, and his words made my heart race. "You are being wasted," he said. (6:14)

Tuesday, 11/2/99 10:00AM

I had no concept that day of the extent to which that day would change the course of my life. It was a relief not to be invisible, that at least one person in this great company knew that I was a worker and worthy of attention. As I said, I had no concept of that day's eventual significance, but as I stood before Mr. Underwood's desk, I listened in awe as he spoke to me. He had noticed, he said, a sharp improvement in the quality of the reports delivered to him after each meeting and he was about to inquire who was responsible when our chance encounter took place.

When he asked me how I had come to join his organization, I stated once again my reasons. Though I did not fully indicate the degree of my ambition, I made it clear that I regarded my job as only a beginning, an opportunity to learn and

to do well in the process. Then he questioned me more closely about what I had learned. I spoke of what I had observed within the company and of my studies outside of my working hours. He asked me about my leisure time activities, and I replied that I enjoyed no leisure, that learning was my pleasure.

At this he invited me to sit in a chair close to his desk and began to speak of his own humble beginnings in the company many years earlier. As he spoke I realized that I was privileged to hear his words. His reputation in the company spoke of his reserve, his taciturn nature, his demanding personality. Each word made me realize how closely our early lives resembled each other's. His description of his advancement in the company was the product of dogged persistence rather than brilliance, and I was unworthy enough at that very moment to be thinking that I could do all he had done much more quickly.

Looking back, I can sense the degree of his loneliness, and I think he saw in me the son he never had. His striving to succeed had not afforded him the luxury of marriage and family. This I learned much later.

5:40PM

What Mr. Underwood proposed to do, he said to me, was to arrange for me to be his assistant. In this capacity I would continue to be responsible for preparing reports of meetings, but I would be relieved of my other onerous duties.

At these words my heart lifted, and I mumbled my gratitude. Mr. Underwood dismissed my thanks with wave of his hand and continued. He wanted to appoint me as his assistant and to determine my additional responsibilities as we progressed in our relationship. He was hard pressed to attend to all the details that his responsibilities entailed, and he welcomed the relief I represented. He added in a conspiratorial tone that I must be prepared for some resentment among my colleagues. Mine would be a position others would covet, but none of those he had considered had met his expectations in all ways as I had in the limited area he knew.

I assured Mr. Underwood that I would do my utmost to reach his high expectations, and that I

had every confidence in my ability and application. He nodded his approval as I spoke, and then, almost as an afterthought, added that there would of course be an upward adjustment in my wages. Once again I murmured my thanks and once again he dismissed my words with a wave of his hand.

When he rose, I knew it was a gesture of dismissal, but as I stood, uncertain of my next move, he assured me that my desk would be situated close to his office for ready communication and asked if I had any requests to make of him in this regard. I replied that I would be more than pleased with whatever he decided, and that I would report to his office the next morning promptly on arrival.

I returned to my working quarters in a state of jubilation scarcely disguised, and for the rest of the day my co-workers regarded me with curiosity. One asked specifically what caused my joyful expression, and while I had no wish to be rude, I am afraid I was in my curt dismissal of his question. (5:51)

Wednesday, 11/3/99 2:22PM

It took very little effort to please Mr. Underwood, whose reputation for being a tyrannical overseer I found totally unwarranted. It was a simple matter to do all he asked with dispatch and efficiency, and as the days passed I realized that I was no longer invisible. People spoke to me in the halls. Others lingered by my desk to make conversation. I was sought out socially, but I determined to refuse all invitations until I felt totally secure in both my job and in my social skills. I had had little practice in the latter. Eventually, however, I felt more comfortable in the presence of my colleagues, though it took more than a few months. I think I developed a reputation for snobbery during that time, a reputation, at that time at least, totally undeserved, but I regarded it as superior to the truth of my social limitations.

There was a strict hierarchy within the company, and there were limits to the social interactions in terms of superiority in position. Those higher in authority could create a friendship with those lower in rank, but it was unthinkable to approach a superior with such a motive. Mr. Un-

derwood had spent his many years in the company totally aware of the scheme of things socially, and he was circumspect in every way in our early dealings. He made it clear that ours was a working relationship first and foremost and that there might be opportunity later for a personal relationship, but that such a change must await the right moment.

This did not displease me at all, for I remembered his early history and surmised that he might be as socially inept and insecure as I was. Both of us knew absolute security in our professional relationship, and for a long time that was enough for both of us. I continued to spend my spare time living in the world of high finance as related in books and journals. Only occasionally did I wish for more. (2:40)

Thursday, 11/4/99 1:10PM.

It amazes me, looking back, how quickly I progressed within the company. Mr. Underwood was at all times generous in his praise, not only to me but to the other officers. I found myself

the object of curiosity. Where had I come from? Why was I such a creature of mystery beyond business hours? Why did I refuse to socialize with my peers?

I am grateful even now that no one knew the answers to their questions. It pleased me to be mysterious and to fancy that I was the object of much discussion both within and without the office. I knew, however, that in order to achieve all my goals I needed to be more than a solitary mystery man. I knew that despite my misgivings about my capacity to be socially adept and interesting I must expand my field of interest.

I had no real desire to do this, but when I realized that it was a step I needed to take I went about it in a methodical way. I attended the theater. I listened to concerts and tried to understand the messages of the great masters. I expanded my library to include the classics I had never read as a boy, and I decided to choose a field in which to become an expert. After some thought I chose Greek history and mythology, and to my absolute amazement I found it a fascinating field of interest. I was absolute in my self discipline during these years and took a perverse

pleasure in eschewing the company of others beyond work related. (1:20)

Friday, 11/5/99 1:49PM

Before long I was adept at dominating a conversation on almost any subject. I say this not to be boastful but rather to reflect my single mindedness. Once I determined that to fulfill all my expectations I needed social connections, I set about disciplining myself as I had in my professional life.

It did not take long for word to spread within the company of my social graces and new found interest in socializing with my peers and even more with my superiors. In a sense, I found being a social success a challenge as fulfilling as any other, partially, I think, because I regarded it as an achievement solely my own. It was a type of conquering that gave me pleasure and renewed confidence in my own abilities. At the same time, I worked assiduously. There was no

task too challenging for me to attempt, and though I did not always succeed fully I was given credit for the boldness of my efforts and for the energy of my approach.

I remember clearly the day when Mr. Underwood called me into his office and said that I had so far exceeded his expectations that he could not in all conscience regard me simply as his assistant. He said that he had commended me to the governing board as a department head and that he had every expectation that they would act favorably on his recommendation. I would, he said, be doing much the same work but with more authority and more compensation. I would be working with my own staff, a small one to be sure, but that he would continue to call on me when needed and I could delegate tasks as I saw fit. (2:01)

Saturday, 11/6/99 3:45PM

Of all the people I met in my new effort to succeed socially and to thereby increase my chances of business success, the most appealing was a

young lady soon to become my wife. Her name was Sarah Winchell, and she was the niece of Mr. Underwood, his sister's only child.

I knew immediately that Sarah had all the attributes I deemed necessary to please me. She was intelligent, educated far beyond average for young ladies of that time. Though demure in behavior, she quickly betrayed a lively, inquisitive mind, hungry for more knowledge, and she expressed herself both colorfully and clearly. It immediately occurred to me that she had the makings of a poet, though she said firmly that she had no such pretensions. What she had, she said, was a lively mind and a fair imagination, both yearning to be nourished.

To this day I am surprised that Sarah chose to respond to my interest in her. She was not without suitors. Her family, though not wealthy, were comfortably well-off and Sarah as an only child lacked for nothing she desired. In addition to all else, she had a serene beauty, a dark-haired, dark-eyed perfection of looks that I found irresistible.

We met first at her uncle's house at a rather lavish dinner party given in my honor. This generous gesture on Mr. Underwood's part astonished

me, for, following my promotion, it gave me instant access to all those men who would be significant to me in later years -- and indeed almost immediately as well. Sarah was seated some distance from me at table, but my eyes strayed in her direction as often as hers strayed in mine. I was hard pressed to act totally engrossed in the conversation of my nearer table mates, but I succeeded in not only doing so but, I admit without pretense of modesty, I livened the conversation immeasurably with my wit and wide ranging knowledge, while at the same time deferring to my companions' opinions and statements. Sarah said later that although she could not hear clearly, she knew exactly what I was about. (4:00)

Sunday, 11/7/99 3:40PM

It is amazing to me as I regard the past that I was so blessed in life. Not only did I find myself surrounded by those who wished me well, but I was supremely gifted in my family. It is of great concern to me that at the time I was so self consumed that I paid scant attention to all I was

given but instead relentlessly demanded more. When I was not successful I reacted like a spoiled child, blaming everyone but myself for my failure.

Knowing what I know now, I regard it as little less than a miracle that my wife and children were always stalwart in their defense of me when others found reason to reject me and to speak unfavorably. There were friends as well who endured insult and injury and yet remained faithful, indeed helpful in every way.

I know that I owe much of this loyalty to my Sarah. She never for a single moment stopped loving me. She protected me in every way and was a constant buffer against harm to me. I know that her children adored her and would have walked through fire if she had asked. As it was, for love of her they felt love for me, even at my most undeserving. Our friends adored her as well and stood by me in times of difficulty for her sake.

Monday, 11/8/99 4:15PM

I do not think that Sarah loved me instantly. Nor can I honestly claim that my love was instant. On the contrary, I was the slower of the two of us to reach the realization that we needed each other in special ways and that life together was our shared earnest desire.

I think that Sarah in her sensitivity recognized the need I had for love freely given, and in her generosity she accepted the fact that I was not capable of the same capacity to give love freely. I am sure that from the very start of our relationship she hoped that I would learn to be more trusting of love and more capable of its full expression. I was appallingly slow in this learning. Yet we interested each other in many ways. Sarah took an avid interest in my career, sharing with me the triumphs I so coveted. Not always was she fully approving of my methods. She deplored my tendency to manipulate friends for personal advantage. Yet her generous heart accepted me fully as her husband and soul mate and was constant in her efforts to remind me of the right and good rather than the expedient. She accepted times of neglect. She defended me against all accusations.

And when our children came into our lives she raised them as images of herself -- good, kind, tolerant creatures all. If they ever gave her a moment of distress she never betrayed it. As I have confessed, my interest in my children was confined to expecting them to excel in all they sought to do. It is not that I was unaware of the gentleness of their beings. It is simply that I did not care. As long as their actions pleased me and reflected credit on me I was satisfied. Beyond that I did not care what they did or said or felt. You ask yourself how I could be so unfeeling. Would that I had asked that of myself all those long years ago. (4:28)

Tuesday, 11/9/99 3:26PM

At all times now I am aware of the blessings heaped upon me. I know all now that I needed to know as a young man. As I have said, the rest of my life will be spent in compensating for my earlier total unawareness of all that life should mean in love and giving. Above all, I need to confess past error openly to do all that is possi-

ble to persuade those just beginning their life's careers to succeed without failing as a human being, as a creature of love and giving.

I use "giving" in a very general sense here. I learned too late that there are many forms of giving. Certainly I gave my family all they needed in material things. We lived well, and never was either my wife or my children in any way deprived of food, shelter, recreation, and other luxuries. I needed to appear to be the soul of generosity. It was my self image, and I wanted it to be my public image as well.

In my total insensitivity I realized not at all what I was not giving. I was first of all not giving love felt and expressed in action. What I gave in material advantage I gave to satisfy myself, and the giving was cold and dispassionate. I never sought to know what any one of my family wished me to give. I was a tyrant in my decisions, neither caring nor responding to any need but my own.

Perhaps most seriously I deprived those I should have loved unconditionally of wills of their own. I dictated absolutely what I wished of my wife and my children, and never for a moment did I consider their inclinations and desires. I forced

my sons into educations not of their choosing. Though this was not uncommon at the time, it was still selfish and arrogant. I dominated their professional lives, and I realize now that I stunted their initiative and thereby limited their achievements. My daughter was more fortunate. I expected nothing of her, and so she felt able to marry in love and for love, and in this she had the gentle encouragement of her mother.

Sarah, perhaps, suffered most of all. I expected her to be a model wife and perfect mother and to know no further distractions. She was strong enough to retain a vital part of herself and to continue to nourish the good mind which had first attracted me to her. She read endlessly and seriously, and, I discovered much later, she did write poems -- poems of dreams and love and happiness in all that life offered. She created a haven for herself, and in that haven found the strength to deal with a husband totally demanding and infinitely ungrateful. (3:47)

Wednesday, 11/10/99 12:25PM

It is time for me as I approach the end of this life and the start of another to pay full homage to all those who loved me despite myself, to thank them for their undying loyalty and their strength in tolerating me at my most intolerable. I need, too, to seek out those estranged by my words and my actions and seek to beg their forgiveness and offer whatever compensation is possible. I need above all to thank those nameless and faceless persons who made it possible for me to reach the peak of achievement. I could not have done it without their dogged industry and devotion to a job well done. They labored with scant compensation either materially or emotionally. To them I am absolutely in debt. Lastly, I must pay homage to my Pearl, whose life and death are testimony to the divine in man. As I have said, I wasted precious years when my only daughter was growing from childhood into adulthood, a striking replica of her mother in both body and soul. In a sense I am grateful that I valued her so little that I did not interfere in her life. Had I, my guilt and remorse would be infinite. As it is, I am grateful that she enjoyed the pure love from first her mother and then her husband and child before she left this imperfect

world. I feel her presence every day of my life, and I sense the pleasure she knows in my regeneration. All I do I do in hopes of pleasing her, and it does not take more faith than I have to believe fully that she animates my soul. (12:37

Thursday, 11/11/99 3:45 PM

I need speak before I conclude what miraculous changes I have seen in my family since we were united in grief.

First, my Sarah. She is never more beautiful to me than when she looks at me with eyes of love. She has always been a creature of love fully expressed, as I have said, but when I was most intolerable in my behavior, her looks betrayed a guardedness, as if she feared to be more open and to invite wounds. Often I was guilty of wounding my beloved Sarah by thought [about an hour interruption]less acts and words. She never replied in anger. Her only refuge was in silence when gentle persuasiveness failed, as it did often. Now she knows the full extent of my change in all I know of love, and she is fearful no longer. This has, of course, brought fresh beauty into our relationship, and Sarah came to

trust me enough to share her private world. She first gave me one of her early poems to read, and though I could sense pain behind the beauty of her expression, Sarah's natural joy shone through her words. Later she opened more doors for me, and I cherish the time when I find on my pillow at night a poem newly completed that speaks of life and love without pain.

As for my two sons, they were released from fear of me as if from imprisonment. In truth it took some time before they trusted me fully. Often they turned to their mother to be assured that I had discarded my old self and was newly found in a new awareness of all past error and all good intent to compensate in every way. I do not think that I will ever be as close to my sons as I might have been had I been wiser in their early years, but daily their trust grows and their awareness that I chose to be their loving father who is still to some degree a stranger to them. I cannot describe my pleasure when my older son came to me for advice. It was a time of great joy for me as we discussed his problem as equals, one perhaps more experienced. (5:00)

Friday, 11/12/99 3:25 PM

In the end and at the end I hope that I will have a sense of self righteousness. I do not use this word in a pejorative way, as it is so often, but rather to express a sense of rightness in the sum total of my life. I perhaps rationalize in thinking that there was reason in my early behavior, that I was meant to succeed in amassing wealth. I think equally that I was blessed to realize its value when used wisely and unselfishly. I would not have, perhaps, come to this realization without learning that no riches equal the value of a single human life. Thus I have learned through deprivation. I cherish the memory of our beloved Pearl each moment that I live, and I thank her for the blessing of her grace.

There are so many I have need to thank, as I have already said, and perhaps I will be granted the opportunity before I die to reach out to all those to whom I am indebted. It is too late for some of this number, and for that I am truly regretful. As for all the rest, I feel joined in holy company, and it is my privilege to count myself so.

My dearest hope is that others will and have learned by my example of a soul gone totally astray and then brought to grace. I hope that I will leave behind memories of one who, when awakened to the true value of this life, sought to do good. I cannot ask for more.

Saturday, 11/13/99 3:50PM

In order to insure the story of my miraculous conversion to awareness of the overwhelming power and importance of love and the insignificance of worldly riches and pleasures, I intend to insure awareness. This story will be told and accepted as divine truth. In the end there will be no doubters, and my voice will join all those others who were blessed on their human journeys in love given and received.

There is no other currency that feeds the soul. There is no other emotion so compelling and so necessary to the soul. There is no other road to spiritual perfection than learning the lessons of love and striving to reach such perfection in the giving of love that all struggles cease, all wear-

ness vanishes, all doubts are resolved, and the body and soul are joined together in perfect peace and contentment.

All men, no matter their station, no matter their talents, no matter their limitations, are capable of this ultimate achievement. Many learn as I did, through tragic loss. Others are blessed to know almost from birth the preciousness of unconditional constant love for all souls come to earth. This is promise divine.

