

The Original **Adventures of a**
Dying Young MAN

By Andrew H. Kuharevich



BOOK B

ADVENTURES OF A DYING YOUNG MAN



***THE ORIGINAL ADVENTURES OF A DYING YOUNG MAN (BOOK B)**

By

Andrew Hemeren Kuharevich

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The Original ADVENTURES OF A DYING YOUNG MAN
(BOOK B)

Written by Andrew H. Kuharevicz
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2014

THIS IS A WORK OF FICTION. It is about nobody who has ever lived. It is for entertainment and literary/artistic reasons that this book exists. It is up to the reader, how real you want it to be.

“Don't walk behind me; I may not lead. Don't walk in front of me; I may not follow. Just walk beside me and be my friend.”
Albert Camus

Other Books written by Andrew H. Kuharevicz
Traced Measurements
An Untitled and Written E.P One & Two
Summer Travelin' Book (non-digital adventures in American writing)
Happy In Dirt
More Adventures of a Dying Young Man (Book A)

Editor for
West Vine Press Future Dead Writers Series

OTHER BOOKS IN THE ADVENTURES OF A DYING YOUNG MAN SERIES

Book A: More Adventures Of A Dying Young Man

Book B: The Original Adventures Of A Dying Young Man

Book C: The Fear and The Going, Part One

Book D: The Fear and The Going, Part Two

Book E: The Future Book Of War

Book Z: Lost Narrations Of A Dying Young Man

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***THE ORIGINAL ADVENTURES OF A DYING YOUNG MAN** (BOOK B)

First Things First

MAN O' man that was the day. I was sitting around doing nothing when suddenly I knew it was time to leave when my only friend named Yellow Bird flew right into a closed window and then dropped to the grass dead.

Feeling the gut in my stomach growl I buried my pal under the birdbath in my backyard, and throwing sunflowers over the tomb I looked up in the sky...then paused for a second... noticing it was one of the most strange of shadow filled summer days, and I was sad but I didn't really show any emotion because I'm a grown man and most people would say it was just a bird... so I said...

"Keep this town safe my little yellow spirit"... and after I packed my bags and did something else and tied my shoes in double knots I dried my sad eyes and headed down to the bus station. I wasn't crying.

The thing is you got ta' retrace your steps once in a while, and I think that's good for somebody to do, if only to learn how you got here to there to well...just somewhere else, and from that original point you can move on, and so that's what I was going to do, I was going somewhere, I was going to let myself be moved.

And so I'm not entirely sure about my life, but this is a story about who I am and about the time I went and wandered around some wild places, and it's true that traveling is different when you're alone, because you have to watch out for the unseen dangers and learn how to trust

yourself, and so what I was going to do was write it all down.

The plan was simple: I was going to get on the bus and go, and part of the overall story is about learning the ropes of life, and it wasn't a synch and most of the time the journey was hard... but rewarding... and I'm only a young dying man, but when I was thinkin' bouts' things I thought well...aren't we all (in some way or another) dying anyway? I mean every single one of us has been born from a' traveling people stuck on a planet followed by the moon going round n' in circles, and so when it boils down to it that's why I was leaving, and it was just me and that's all it was ever going to be (or so I thought) so I had a hunch that the time had come to see if the words I read about it all those books were real, or if everything was just the way it was, all so typical and normal and nice, and it's just... that I was real bored.

That's it, and so this short book is nothing but a traveling story, and that's all, and it's only a narration of the days when I left the State of Michigan while trying to kill some time (so to speak) before I was going to see my old friends named Dusty Apostolo and Lucy... and those two were about to get married and I received a message from my friend who was a veteran of the Iraq War named Alex informing me that they were about to have a kid. I was told they've been trying to reach me but nobody knew where I was because I didn't tell anybody where I was. Alex said that *it took a whole day to track me down*, and when he asked me *why I cut myself off from the world* I said... *I don't know and I*

didn't mean to do that. He said you're invited to the wedding so get on your way, and the wedding wasn't for a month and a half from the day when Yellow Bird Died, and I didn't have anything else to do and so that's why I thought why not go out there and see the world? Why not go and do something crazy... and that wasn't really a question because I didn't have an answer to anything, and the book I found in the trash next to the dumpster when they closed down the local newspaper, well that book said I should forget everything and take a humanistic pilgrimage that the writer called the "Socratic March".

I was mildly obsessed with those old pages because before I found that book I'd just arrived down from Paradise for the first time and it was real cold and I was real sad even though it was now the summer, and it even snowed on my birthday and that was in May. I woke up and walked to the lake and watched ships go by sitting on rocks and I didn't read any other book and just sat around and typed out the words of the dead philosophy with a typewriter while listening to nature, and when one of the locals asked me *where I got the book* I said *the garbage*. So after they laughed the people who wanted to talk left because I didn't want to talk, and I was trying to concentrate that spring, and even into early summer I was still taking his words to heart that said:

"YOU ARE A FAULTLINE, LET THE WORLD MOVE YOU."

So that's what I was doing. I was trying to forget about everything and was doing my best at following the rules, and even though I was being studious in my discipline sometimes out of nowhere I'd get angry, and it wasn't about nothing either, and I'm not sure why I got so angry because it was just that something bothered me but I couldn't figure out where it came from... and even though I wasn't mad the anger was still there. I wasn't feeling good and life was wearing me down in ways I never imagined being possible. The same ol' story and *shit happens boy*, or so they say and so it goes...

And I don't know when it first happened, but there was a day when my vision changed. I was sitting in the patio and you could feel the fall creeping in through the screen windows, and as I was listening to the wind chimes while watching a Red Squirrel fight with a Blue Jay, over the last remainder of birdseed that was tucked between the individual blades of un-mowed grass in the backyard, I was writing a poem about the condemned schools and the condemned factories and everything was so sad in my hometown when I said:

Why not go see some visions in some brand new places where water is hard to come by, and where it's warmer in October than it is around these sinking swampy parts in July.

And I mean I was sick of standing on these same ol' feet, and even though I was given knowledge I was still just that skinny boy who (in my hometown) looked so out of place. I wasn't better or worse than anybody else, it's just I

was real bored and had all this education but nothing to show for it, and everybody bothered me and I read hundreds of books that I was told to read because I was told by professors they were supposed to enlighten me... and still, even after I read them it felt like I didn't know nothing real about nothing important, and I don't know how to explain it, but it felt as if the earth was constantly moving for me, while for the locals... life was solid. Everybody just stayed still and that didn't make them happy or sad, it was just the way it was, and maybe this wasn't a problem for them like it was for me. Maybe I couldn't accept the truth of society and the way life is, but I wasn't happy and I wanted to be a writer but I didn't even know what to write about, and this was a problem that had to be solved if anything positive was ever going to come out of my life.

And so I don't know what all that means scientifically per se, but I felt stuck in stone and had already experienced just about every city that you could experience within this northern land-massed peninsula. After living in Ann Arbor and having a falling out with Apostolo and being shot in Gary Indiana and left for dead by the train tracks I went back to Irish Hills. Even though I'd done just bouts' all you could do and had eye witnessed so many crazy things; even though I opened my mind to everything new and old and now... and had all these stories full of so much life, well even then everything was about the past, and now that I was older I didn't have much of anything to show for it. I was broke and sick and in my driver license photo I was skin and bones, but

since coming home I was stronger and weighed twenty pounds more than I did when I was living around Detroit. I won and lost and now being levelheaded I wasn't doing anything, and I wasn't even concerned with losing because I didn't think there was anything else to do. I was too young but too old, and I was always in the middle of everybody, and everybody always laughed at me and said *keep on trying boy*. I forgot about the problems of ageing and this helped for a while, and I got by and survived because I was a hard worker and had thousands of stories about just one state out of fifty. But even when I got happier there was this silent but constant humming sound of boredom, and even though I walked all over the place and met all types of good people in Michigan, now it was time to get on the move. Time wasn't waiting for me to grow anymore courage, it was harvest season.

When you are ready you'll know, and those words were found in the trash and written by someone who died in a mental institution, but before the crash of the Stock Market on October 29th 1929 he was a famous academic who moved from Mexico to The United States on November 11th 1918, which just so happened to be the end of World War One.

And why these details are important I'm not sure. I was just really into his writing. It was the only book he ever had published, and although it never was THE ONE, or so it was said (in the most socially valued of academic journals) to be the next great chapter within a blossoming trend within

the field of Continental Philosophy called Existentialism. And I didn't have a clue what the point of telling the reader this was, especially at the very beginning of the book, but after *Yellow Bird Died* words looked different...as if they were tracers of light that were always there, but I couldn't get close enough to visualize what I was seeing. It's hard to explain, but after my eyesight sharpened I started to read everything over and over and again and again, and so starting back to the paper lining of the book I noticed that there's even one sentence that said he associated with Albert Einstein but they never talked about anything but their fondness of sailing.

And I don't know, because there's only one page concerning this dead philosopher's background, but it was noted that His parents freely left Germany when he was only a small child and took teaching positions at The State University in Mexico City. The book didn't mention what his psychological malfunction was, or if it had something to do with his personal relationships, but it did briefly say that his parents were misidentified and unfortunately executed for being American Spies, but before he was condemned and then died before his seventy-second birthday, and for the better part of his professional adult life, he was considered a friend.

And So No

I wasn't as young as some people thought. I wasn't a traveling rookie because I've already been to Georgia and

Florida and lived in the State of California when I was a child. This wasn't just a run of the mill crazy young kid who was a reckless punk sort a story, and I knew what I was doing because I went out there and I saw some of the United States before, but the thing was and like I already said it was simply...time. I was an adult now. I was a free thinking man.

And another thing that happened to me, especially after Yellow Bird died, is that I was getting frightened bout' really doing it...you know... the end; I was afraid of dying young without doing nothin' about my boredom, and of course I knew that such an unknowable sort of fear would never really go away, but at the same time I needed to at least mellow out my beating heart. I needed to learn again and so that's why I forced myself to go, and the whole time I knew one thing, and that was I had to let go of the past and get on the ground and run and do something with my life, and I don't know why I knew that but I did. It's just that somewhere within me there was an inner voice and it knew more than I did...call it my consciousness if you want to...you can call it anything, because I don't know what happened to me, it's just when my only real friend died something told me to try even harder.

And leaving home again wasn't easy like it would be for most people. I didn't have a car or nothing, just some money from washing expensive middle-class boats, and I was getting older and it felt like it was now or never, and it's just that after running around the State of Michigan for so

long with Dusty Apostolo that I thought the time has come to take what you've learned and meet your American family, and that's exactly what this book is, and what you're hopefully going to follow is a story that's probably not too unlike the ones that you've heard in the past, and maybe the only difference between this book and some of the other books written by dead writers is that you'll see what's out there with my eyes, and so I'll admit, that maybe the only difference is me.

So I Left

I knew Yellow Bird would keep me moving and I had some good ol' inspiration to push me forward, and throughout my life I've met so many people who say they're going to do things but then they just stay pat... and the world...well...I was sick of watching the world be destroyed on the local news and likes' I said I wasn't no normal thinkin' person. I knew what I had to do and I knew that I had to get on my way. I was long past being a kid and I've already had a bunch of those *aha moments* and it's just that I knew what I've already been through would end-up helping me on my adventure, and I think when I left it really was now or never, because I already graduated from college and had absolutely nothing holding me back. My mom and dad were gone and all of my friends were livin' their lives and scattered all over the world, and so I was done waiting and I think that's because I was afraid. I wanted to see some of the country again and observe the real South and go

places I'd never been before. Really...all I wanted was what I wanted, and I wanted to experience the sunrise by the ocean and to meet the good people in life, the real people of America, but at the same time I knew that there was the possibility I could get real sick along the way. The doctor said..."Henry, you have so little time left in life, you shouldn't take so many chances with it".

I listened to him, I really did, but with that fear and those ticks and tocks of panic that was causing my heart to beat erratically...and with all that said what I did was I bought a one-way ticket to go...

And that's how I ended up here on a beach in Miami, and that's where our story begins, and that's where I'm at right now.

So once again my name's Henry Oldfield... but... enough is enough already because like the dead philosopher in his book said, "There will never be a time like now"

And he's right, so let's just get this over with so we can get some sleep when the adventure settles down...

But man o' man... I never knew my story would go like this:

Part One: The Beginnin'

THERE'S WHITE paint all over my jeans and there's paint in my hair and paint on my hands and paint on my two bare-foots. My dang skin is burning and there's plastic on these marble tiles in the room where I'm working and all of the floors are covered in plastic sheets and all of the windows are open...and let me tell ya'...this ol' house has so many windows that other day I laughed when I told George that I'd just like to jump out and die...but so...

Right now everybody is on break and we sure needed it because we've been at it all day...just painting on this hill-top... painting these walls and sometimes we get what we call... *sweating' to death sit-downs*...

And it's been real exhausting because there's only been enough time for a few hours asleep in yard that's a beach overlooking the ocean, and so what I've gathered is we've been contracted out er' somethin', but I'm not too sure because I still haven't met the real owner of the house, and the thing is nobody will tell me nothing of any sense and so counting numbers...a head check if you will...there are twelve of us here and two other people who are sitting and smoking and smiling and just a' yelling at us and saying... "Get back to work guys"... "Especially you Henry...I mean... what you looking at kid? Now get back to work, that is, if you scabs want to get paid"

The Bosses

These lazy two other people keep yelling at us when we almost faint from the fumes and the heat and from the muscles that don't wanna' move no more, and whoever owns this place they come from money... and lots of it...and that's about the only thing I know bouts'...well... anything.

I thought it was going to be real easy, but it wasn't, and so I've been painting this house that has eight bedrooms and ten bathrooms and maids for every floor, and there are three of those, floors I mean, and so get this, they've even got this guy with a funny waddle that's paid to go get their mail and he won't even look at me and when I said "hello" he told me that he's "not supposed to talk to people like..." me. I asked him if that's seriously all he does, "get the mail?"

At first he ignored me and wouldn't respond... but yeah, that's his job, all he does is get mail, and when he told me that he wasn't *supposed to talk to people like me* I asked him what that meant, you know, *people like me*. He didn't say anything but being bored with this painting I wanted to talk to somebody who knew English so I asked him why he looked all nervous all day and why he had that funny limp. He told me that his job was real stressful and that he lost his leg and has a fake one because of something bad. The guy started to but wasn't able to get to the end of the story because Flamingo walked in the room and yelled at the mailman and said, "you're on your last leg and you know that Steve", and after the guy said "yes sir" well Flamingo

said I was a “lazy son of a bitch” who was a “real bad painter. You talk too much” he said and “please come with me...”

Following the supervisor into one of the many living rooms He showed me some spots that I missed near the corner of this ceiling that you had to wear a harness to reach, and so I told him I couldn’t see it because it just looked white to me. He said “it’s not the same shade of white you idiot, so don’t mess up again or you’ll be knocked on your ass”. “Gots-it Don” I said and “this white is different than that white, won’t forget again.” And I don’t know why but He got mad and said “you can’t call me that, who the hell do you think you are?” I said “Henry Oldfield” and then He said some more bad words and told me to “go to hell” and so I mumbled “already there” and he said “what did you say?” I didn’t want to get fired already so I said “yes Mr. Master” and he called me “a sarcastic prick” and then told me to “go back and paint and don’t mess up ever again or...”

And not wanting him to finish his sentence I said “Right On Boss”, and that’s when the conversation ended.

And so nope, I still haven’t met the real owner of this place. I asked and said,

“Who owns this crazy pad?”

“Don’t you worry about that Henry...that’s none of your damn business boy, just get back to work...if you want to get paid?”

And I do. I want to get paid, and that’s why I stopped talking to the person who’s supposed to pay me because I

need to get myself out of here, and I don't know (well I do) how I got myself involved with this mess, and to tell you the truth, the whole thing is giving me some real bad vibes. There's something going on here and I'm trying to figure it out, and I know that I shouldn't talk and that's another thing, and so I'll tell you exactly what I'm going to do, you know, just to play it safe...

After reading that book over and over on the bus ride down here, I remember that the dead philosopher wrote in chapter five that you should *treat life like a staged play and change roles every once in a while*, and so that's why I'm playing dumb (it's not hard because that's how people treat me anyway) and shutting my mouth...and that's because every time I say anything nothing good comes out of doing that...

As I climbed back-up the ladder to touch up some of the spots I missed I overheard Flamingo talking on the phone to someone over in... I think he said...over in Great Abaco, and maybe that was the owner of this home and I hope if they come home I'm long gone by then...but I don't know who it was because he was speaking in some kind of redneck twang mixed with Spanish, and I'm not too good at Spanish...and I never was...and I don't know why...it's just the one class I really struggled with in college was Spanish. I had to take it three times before I graduated.

Flamingo's not even Spanish man, he has red hair and maybe he his...I don't know...and alright that isn't their real names. I only know Don is his first name and I call him

Flamingo and he doesn't seem to mind and goes with it. I guess it doesn't really matter that I don't know his real last name because it's none of (I'm told) my "fucking business". He's a real rude man and I don't like these nasty words he talks to me with, but I don't want to cross him and so... that other boss...well she doesn't really do all that much...nope...she just sits around all day looking all pretty and such and smiles back when I smile at her, and I talked to her for a while (Flamingo doesn't know the half of what I'm up to) and me and her are going to be long distance friends I think(wink) and for all I know she might be his daughter... but really...and like I keep saying I'm not too sure who these people are, but well... I don't really care and I don't like them... not one bit...because when I asked them what their names were they wouldn't tell me who they were and there wasn't even any tax pages or office job documents to sign or nothing official, and it's just that they're so dang mean and truth be told I wouldn't have taken this rotten job if I knew they were going to be so rude to us workers, because I mean they just yell at me and say get back to work or else, and I know I'm an idiot sometimes but I don't like any of this, because it looks real sketchy.

MY PAL

Sometimes I leave camp and walk around the city if I'm not too tired, but usually when me and George are let go for the day we got nothing much to do so we sit on the sand for a few hours before we have to get right back to working,

and that George fella' said something like he's from Brazil (I think) and don't speaks' the best English, but that doesn't really bother me I told him, "because neither do I".

This wasn't even the plan, and I met him on the other side of the state when I was in Clearwater or maybe I was in Tampa, and I can't really remember, but I met George when I got down here after hitching a ride in Atlanta. I had some sights to see in Saint Pete and that was my business for being here, and before Miami everything was mapped out. I just follow the bus line route and go to the spots they go to. But after getting a drink at an old bar I was all set to get myself out of the bay area and to go out West, but something took over me (maybe the booze) and at the bar I started telling stories and everybody was laughing and I told people that I didn't have much money to travel further because I left my wallet on a bus and so that meant I wasn't going anywhere, and even though that wasn't entirely true, that's how it started...

The first day when I met George I was working day work (a temp job) and I took this position picking up road-kill on the side of the highway. They gave me the keys to the truck because I was the only one that had a driver's license and read English good enough and who (they thought) could actually understand the traffic signs and speed limits and follow the rules of the road. And so that's how I was introduced to George and for a week we drove up and down the Highway (a six-mile stretch) and for twelve-hours-a-day we picked-up ran over skunks and

snakes and animals that sometimes were still breathing, and man o' man we were given this poison dart-gun just in-case those animals were still a' limpin'...

It was a horrible experience, because two times I had to put the final shot in one of them road kills that weren't a' dead just yet. I remember this one time it was a young skunk and I almost cried like a big ol' baby er' somethin', because the poor thing's lips were all bloody and its left leg was ripped right off, and where the white-line on black fur was supposed to be there was blood and tire treads and that sad smelling skunk was blinking at me as if it was saying...

"Please-please... please just stop the pain"...

And so I shot the skunk because George wouldn't shoot anything, and that was it. I wanted to go home or out west or I don't know where, and I knew the wedding was coming up but it's just I was so pissed off and wanted to go bouts' anywhere else other than here. I wanted to get away from where I was because I didn't want to be here no more. I wanted to get out of Florida, because I was hot. But I couldn't quit because George would have been stranded. He didn't know how to drive a car and so I was the one who did it. I shot the animal with the dart but the dart was so powerful that there wasn't much left of the thing, and so after I put that skunk out of its misery George went to place the remains in the back of the truck. I looked at him and said...

"No. I'm gonna' bury the creature. I mean it has earned that much."

After I buried the victim off the side of the road George looked at me like I was a mental patient, and he mentioned how He thought that I was being a bit sensitive for a skunk, but I didn't care and he knew that much about me... and that's probably why he didn't say any disrespects.

It's just that George wasn't made for this kind of work, and after I did what I did he looked at me and shook his head, and so the rest of the time I hardly said a single word, and being a pal he tried to cheer me up. George was singing songs and pointing at cloud formations and checking out the girls and hollering as we drove back to the garage, but still...no... I didn't have anything to talk about. I felt bad for the skunk and there were many skunks, but that was our job so I did it. I put the last shot in their heads and buried them just like I did with Yellow Bird. Road Kill Duty wasn't a good job. I wasn't proud of nothing.

And like all temp labor goes, this one was over, and the last day when I was returning the keys they didn't even say thank you when they paid us one-thousand-dollars minus social security minus healthcare minus homeland-security; the government paid us with them Floridian's taxes and handed over a check to a Michigan immigrant and another Brazilian immigrant...but it didn't make any difference who we were or where we came from, because those government people acted as if me and George were one in the same, and that was fine with me because we were two immigrants and nothing else, and everyone knew what the two of us were up to, because we both had the same

glare in our eyes, and it was a glare that said that we were only looking to get paid.

THE LAST NIGHT

Handed a check I was going to buy a ticket and get back out there but then I took this job, and another day was over and all of us painters were trying to get some sleep and George told me when this job was done that they were going-up towards Virginia.

“For what?” I asked. “Why youse’ gonna’ go there? Got another painting job er’ something?”

“No. My brother is going there to drop off something that he gots’ down here. And after we get done with that business in Virginia well were coming back down to Florida and by then Henry we’ll have enough money to start our business.”

“What kind of business?” I said.

“A lawn care business. And whens’ we get that done I can bring my mother and my woman here and start our real life and be happy. You know what I mean Henry?”

And as he was talking I didn’t know what he meant but I said that I did, and as I looked out towards the ocean at all them waves that seemed to be sleepin’, and as I looked at the water under the dark sky George told me about his girl and how she has one of the most beautiful singin’ voices that I’d ever hear, and He told me how “she can move like a real woman and not like one of these American women that always seem to be playing it safe er’ somethin”.

“Henry...” George said, “She can dance. She’s got the best swinging hips you’d ever see and I miss her so much. But you know how it goes... I had to leave.”

“I don’t know George, you never told me, so Why’d you leave?”

“To make a life... like you right? Isn’t that why you’d leave Michigan?”

“I don’t know” I said.

The night was basically over and we needed sleep badly, but I couldn’t sleep because I didn’t know what was going to happen, and as both of us just laughed and took a swell of rum , well then George told me that he needed to get some sleep and that’s what he did. He could sleep through anything...

No. I couldn’t. The work was hard on your body and all of the other boys were so tired from painting all day that they could hardly move, and as soon as they got done they passed out like a group of beached whales.

Most of these men weren’t kids and at twenty-nine I was the youngest and George was thirty- eight. Some of the other workers were in their forties and some were even all the way into their late fifties, and it wasn’t as strange as it sounds and we acted about the same age. The reason was because everyone is looking for the beginning, and I was doing the same thing and just like they were I was still searching for a place to start my life, and that’s what we were doing. We were only looking for a place where we could

smile and comfortably die, just some place where they could play with their grandchildren and feel safe, and it's interesting that I got the privilege to meet your future ancestors, because all of us were lookin' somewhere still in America where we could laugh, and I was the same and we were searchin' for something a rather and there wasn't much of anything to find because I was the only one awake and that's when I noticed that it was just about the start of the same thing. It was almost another day and nothing had changed, and as the sun came up over the ocean all of us were still searching for the beginning. I was stuck and it was dark, and at that very moment the moon came out from behind the clouds, and it shined so much light over the Atlantic Ocean that it was if you could see forever. With the brightness of the moon you could see all the way to Africa and China, and the moon brightened the road that leads all the way into space and even outside of the orbit of the earth, and I could see even the road just passed the great dividing Asteroid field and all the way passed Mars and Jupiter and even my favorite lost dog moon planet named Pluto, and I was just sittin' on the beach at four in the morning when I should a' been sleepin', but man o' man...

Soon Flamingo and Santa Barbara would be clapping us back into that house to finish the smearing of white paint on white walls that have already been painted with the cleanest of paint, and so who knows why they need this many painters...but then again.... it doesn't matter because we're all here and there's only a couple hours until them

people start their dang yelling and saying' "wake up. Let's go guys! Wake up! You got five minutes to get up... if you want to get paid."

Man o' man..."if you want to get paid kid"...that's the only thing those bosses keep sayin': "Henry kid, if you want your money well you better do this and you better do that, you better hurry and no kid, there's no time to eat or ta' take a piss. Get back to work now boy, there's no time to drink some water or butter your toast."...and those two slave drivers bang on pots and chime an orchestra of bells tellin' us when it's time to wake up.

I don't feel good and I'm breaking apart here but nobody cares, and as we keep working and almost falling to our deaths on ladders and pounding away on stilts trying to paint the corners of a twenty-five foot ceiling in a house that has its own damn helicopter port...well after that I don't know what to say.

AFTER HOURS

As I've said, when we're let go for the day sometimes I go and explore, and well one time I went out one of the side doors of this house, and it was a door that none of us were supposed to use. I was where I was told never to go and I was there cause I was bored with all this painting' and nothing ever happening', and so that's why I had to break some kind of rule...you know...just for a spark of something new, and I mean the whole reason that I set out on this travel was for adventure and maybe some danger but

really just for some fun times... but the only thing I've found was sweat and fenced in yards on private beaches located on a highway of oceans echoing the chatter of all those yelling voices, and I was bored and sick and tired of using the same ol' door...so that's why I used the side door.

After I walked down some hallways and heard Flamingo talking about different kinds of handguns I got spooked and so I was just about to walk down the steps and go back to where we all slept, only ta' try and pass out in my good ol' sleepin' bag while giving it my best effort to slow down my heart, but it was always drowned out by these sirens that I couldn't see and were constantly reverberating on jumping currents crushing towards Cuban yachts, but sometimes, and only for a couple hours, I was falling into a sleepin' state with closed eyes and dreaming' under stars. Those stars above that since I've been over here in Miami living like an immigrant I was once again unsure of myself, and as I was coming down with the bug of that weary traveler disease I was also feeling alone while singing myself the tears of them has-been blues, and for so many days I've been real down and not telling nobody bout nothing, because nobody would care if I told them, because what could they do...nothing.

And there I was, I was just questioning my existence again, and for no real reason I was asking all these silent kinds of questions that never have any answers. I was asking the same thing because my head wouldn't stop thinking, and so trying to close my eyes they wouldn't close for very long

and I was still asking but I didn't know what was wrong with me because I knew I wasn't going to solve anything by staying awake all night, and what I was really doing was sweating and thinking when I should have been sleeping. And as I thought that boy...you should really calm yer' self-down and take it easy for a bit, nothing seemed to work. I was still trying to slow down the breathing when opening my eyes I looked at the Stars, and as I thought about all this nonsense well those stars and seashells and even them spiders that climb all over me when I'm sleepin', and with all that life that was all around me, this life under them stars that carries me away, reminding me that "Henry, this is the reason. This is life and this is why...so now go to sleep..."

No, still... I couldn't sleep, and although them other stars slightly drag on my gravitational awareness, and although them other stars a are separated by light years and other distant minds, and although them other stars and nuclear lightening bugs never explain to me fully what's going on and always leave me when the morning arrives, the stars in the sky remind me what it's like being a human being. Those natural shapes turn my lonely blues and that ridiculous traveling desperation into an overwhelming sound of the light breeze of happiness. And I remember I had one dream since I started painting, and in the early morning I was reminded of the taste of Apples, and I think that maybe my dream was telling me that Happiness tastes like the ripest of Michigan Apples that you snack on during the summer

time when the birds are back on the docks resting around the town on a lake.

WEEKS PRIOR TO THE DILL PICKLE

I was lost and wandering around Georgia and well so I worked for this old man and helped him with cleaning out a real old barn. Walking back from the smoke shop one day I ran into him and I'm guessing right away with just one look at me... well...he must have known I needed some work and he was about to ask one of the young men around town to help, but I said *I'd do it* and he said *well get to it kid*, and it was a good thing that I ran into him because I was about done for... and so yeah I was real fortunate that he came out of nowhere but the problem was I think.... I think and that's all I'm saying....that I think he was partially deaf because he had some gigantic hearing-aids hanging out of his ears... those things must have taken nine-volts er' something, and I don't know what his ailment was but he said that he was a bomber during World War Two... and so this is the reason I'm thinking that his hearing was pretty much destroyed, you know because of the constant loading of ammunition and he said...I think... that this was his job during the war and that he did this task for sometimes nineteen hours a day, and I think that's what he said...and then he told me that he was just loading bombs and bullets and then sleeping while in a plane or a boat and then right back to it...and so...I'm not really all that sure, and so when I say he was a mute I don't know...because I'm not no doctor...but what I'm

trying to say is the The Old Man (and His name was Charlie) didn't talk all that much, and when he did speak he said all these funny mumbled things like "get me some water boy" and "LIFE". Man o' that old man Charlie loved yelling the word "LIFE".

Back on track it was nice to be making some cash, because like an idiot does...I spent more money than I should while drinking at a sad empty bar one night and now I was twenty-nine dollars short of what it took to get out of this area of the country. The truth is I stayed one day too long and the forest and the tourist shops were getting me real depressed, and so that's why I was cleaning out an old barn that had three generations of belongings' in it, and so after working a ton I had the first fifteen feet of the entrance organized and I think it was early on the second day when I found this vinyl recording of a violinist who called themselves The Mockingbird of The Northern Country. And I know things like this happen but I was real surprised when I read that this musician who had his music pressed on this vinyl was from a small little town in Michigan called Paradise. It's a city but not really... more of small spot to get away to in Upper Peninsula, and it's nice in the summer (or so I've been told) and real dark and cold and snowy (I know, because this was the only time I could afford to go there) in the winter, and a while back I spent some time there in an old cottage when I was fed up with everything and needed to reset my life, and I there's nothing too special about life when you get older, but at the time when I was younger my

imagination seemed to instantly connect all sorts of things and so I said, "Isn't this something? Check this out Charlie"...but he didn't care about the music ...but then again...it's just I was real shocked (in a good way) when I found that recording in the barn under a bunch of rat poison and old hats, and I wondered how it was possible that the music made its way all the way down here to Georgia, and so I asked Charlie but like I said he couldn't speak all that well because of what happened during the war, so when I asked again and said "seriously... this is real interesting stuff, you know I'm from Michigan too Charlie?"

The old man was tired and when I said that...just like everything else...he said that he "knew a couple people from Michigan during the war" and I said "really" and he said "yeah, they're both dead."

And no, I didn't say anything when he told me that, because there's nothing you could say back to something like that, and that's why I just went back to work.

So well after he said what he did I didn't have no more words and Charlie then said that he was going to go into town and he told me to *just do my job so I could get out of this place because it was no place for somebody like you*, and alright I said, *Will do* and He just mumbled *life...*

Really nothing seemed to matter to this guy, and the old man said that he *didn't have a clue where the record came from*. He told me that *maybe his son bought it for him...* but he didn't think any of his kids had ever been to Michigan before, and *so what* he said, *that's how life goes boy*.

Sure I know that I said, but the thing is I started to say, but he was gone so I didn't say it but I thought these words to myself: that when you're alone you need to hang on to these types of small experiences...and yeah...you make them into things that they might not be...but I cared about this record and I wanted to know all about The Mockingbird of The Northern Country...but nope...Charlie didn't care at about this music, and it was just one of many records that he had piled inside of his barn, and this barn was old and red and there was generations of rust covering any metal that might have caught light reflecting off those calming solid colors of the Appalachian country during the months that take up the late spring time, and even after I asked again he said for me to just get over my ideas and to forget about it but to remember... be real careful...

Charlie told me to be safe around the nails because the last person that helped out lost his hand after he fell over on accident.

Dang man I said and well...

The old nail went through flesh and spread some kind of poison, and I said *you're kidding right Charlie*, and he said *that's life boy*, and so nope, I don't know if he was serious about anything and if someone really lost his hand who worked in this barn before I got here, and just like usual I didn't know much... but I can say that I knew for a fact he didn't care about my connections to this old (and probably dead) musician, because when I asked him he told me to *just throw it in the garbage with everything else*.

It was a real long day and after Charlie left I kept cleaning and thought I could be out of here in the next day, and so I didn't do what the old man said and I didn't throw it away. I kept the record.

And a year from now when I'm back to Michigan I'm guessing that I drove up to Paradise to find more about who this violinist was, and well I didn't discover much more than I didn't know already about this musical birds life. For the most part nobody really knew who he was, but at the library I found a few articles about him and got his real name. I even went to his gravestone in the middle of the winter and gave my respects. It was Charlie's son.

This Mockingbird of the Northern Country is strangely connected with my life, and I don't know how or why but for some crazy reason we both ended up in the same barn down in Georgia, and back when I first found the record I wasn't too sure what it meant...and nope...I'm still not that clear about the significance of the matter... but well if you haven't caught on by now... I'm a lost man and who's a twee bit romantic... and it sure was...

That Mockingbird and me... and that old man named Charlie... out in the country...just off some dirt road near the Appalachian trail...well us three humans all coming together in an old ragged wood barn in Georgia was the kind of adventurous romanticism that I dug, and I know it means nothing, at least in the grand scheme of things, and so yeah there's more to this Paradise story and the Mockingbird violin player...but well this is supposed to be only a short

little traveling book...and alls' I'm trying to tell you is the most recent events in my trip...because we don't have all that much time left, and I'm trying to outline how I got here in the first place...you know...how I got down to Florida from all the way up there in those Michigan parts, and it sure is, that Paradise story is a good little story and maybe I'll share more of it later...but right now we've got more important things to get to, so for now let me get back to the road that led to this paintin' job in Miami:

GETTING OUT OF APPALACHIA

That's how I got to Florida. I got down here from Georgia by the way of going old-school and holding out my thumb... and after the barn job for Charlie I managed to go backwards and then I was up more towards the north than the south, and I don't know why but I took some time off because I saw a help wanted sign, and then I was washing dirty plates and spoons and forks while covered in unwanted and soapy food in Nashville, and so I'm thinking that's all youse' got to know in adding one-plus-one together in how I equaled out down here in Florida...anyway I'm going to have to stop talking about this cause I hear cracking sounds like someone is maybe sneaking up on me, and like I told you, I'm not supposed to be in the kitchen anyway and I know that I'm probably just hearing things again...but... I'm going to play it real safe because there's no reason to get into any kind of bad trouble now after I managed to get by for so long without even a single scratch, so before anything

nasty happens let's get back to the last couple days of painting.

And well so I was in the house at night and I wasn't supposed to be there, and hearing these noises I was shaking at the knees and just standing still...just a' being all nervous and such, and man o' man I was so hungry that I would do just about anything to fill my belly. After the sounds went away I thought I was safe and so I tip-toed towards where I knew there was some food... and not thinking about nothing because of my stomach I opened the door to the fridge...and we were told not to touch anything...but I swear that George's snores were the reason for my doing these kinds of crazy things... and yep...that's it...it was them snores that musta' been the reason I was making all these errors in judgment. But then again...

There it was, and opening the door the bright light of the afterlife inside of the fridge enlightened my taste buds, and I mean holy cow I tell ya' now they had everything and inside of the ice box there was so much food...but more booze than food...and well I already had two bottles of rum left and I wasn't trying to get drunk at this present time...cause well...I was starving and not thinking about getting all messed up, and no, it wasn't the time to get my drink on because I had to keep my head straight, and they had some real good stuff, and dang...

Inside the fridge there were cases of beer and boxes of bottles of all kinds of wine...yeah.... this was the wrong fridge that I went to, because this was the booze fridge...but

I told ya they have so many places where they keep food in this house, but I didn't have time to go snooping around another kitchen because well...it was now or never... so I looked at what food was in there and it sure wasn't the kind of food I could make me a solid dinner out of... but well at this point I didn't really have the choice of being picky... so I guess anything would have to do...and behind the booze there was some salami and some lettuce and olives and Bloody Mary tomato mix...and just my luck...there was this huge jar of pickles... and man o' man how I do love me some good fresh pickles, and I don't know why...just always have...since I was a boy, and so I guess this was supper.

Not knowing how long I had before something bad happened I looked around to see if anyone was coming, and no, I couldn't hear anything...and it sure did...it seemed like I was alone to do what I pleased, which wasn't anything that bad... I mean... all I was going to do was eat some pickles and some of these olives and salami, and why not I thought...I'll even have me a lil' swell of wine because I think whoever owns this place owes me that much, because lord knows Flamingo hasn't been too nice to us painters, and we worked real hard and such, and I was just standing there thinking about what I could do with this combination of food and I don't know what happened but I lost my placing in what I was doing and with the door open...well I just a' melted into a dream er' something and got all frozen like some crook that's not sure if he should go through with the operation, and I knew that once I made my decision I'd have

to act fast...and also...well I wasn't all that sure what would happen if I got myself caught because Flamingo was buying guns out of trunks, and so who knows and even if one of the other workers observed firsthand what I was doing they might even tell on me because...and well... maybe I'm wrong...but some of them didn't seem to like me very much, and I know it's strange because for the most part it seems like they've been nice to me...based on what I've told ya' so far...but I got this hunch even one of my fellow painting comrades would turn me in just so they could get a good laugh when I got thrown out on my ass without getting paid and even George's brother who drove us here from Tampa...well I don't think he liked me at all...

FARWELL MIAMI

Turning around I gave em' a salute and took a swell to the now painted house, and from the distance I could see Flamingo through the big picture window up on the hill, and Flamingo was looking down on me with binoculars...and I hoped he enjoyed the show from above...

That fella, well he was much smarter than he let on... and I never knew he was a better spy than I was, but without knowing a thing He was always onto me and I didn't think he was who he was, and so since I got here Don was observing me like I thought I was him...and so no...

Flamingo wasn't half bad ...and well... he just led a different kind of life, and you know...everything works out I think in the long run... at least that's what the sane-men

have always said in the books I've been told to read and did read...

Somehow... it's going to be good for me...I hope...and I'm sure the equilibrium of goodness will catch up with Flamingo...and just like everybody else who plays that role... he'll get what's coming for him...and especially...if he doesn't start being nicer to people, and I remember when He told me...

"If you keep taking chances you're going to fall. Stand in-line and do what people like me say...or else Henry..."

And those were his exact words when I was caught doing what I wasn't supposed to be doing, but Flamingo doesn't know who he's dealing with, and that no matter what he says nothings' going ta' change... because I've got a plan.

"So what" I mumbled when Flamingo told me I was going to fall, and I said that because falling down once in a while isn't so bad if you get up...because if you think about it...that's how you learn how to walk, and I wanted to do more than just walk, I wanted to learn how to get into outer space, and maybe only in my mind... but still...

After everything that happened to me I was still alive, and nobody was there to pick me up when I fell, because I was a real long way from home and amongst all of this in order to help me learn what the real life livin' people knew about existence, and sure that caused me to run into some dead-ends once in a while...but the truth is...it's the same for every one of us...because that's our nature...and it's an

action and a stutter...and it's all practice and nothing is ever as simple as the word perfect. It's a universal constant that those who are trying their best to learn how to be true, and every single person I met down here in Miami, from the immigrants to the millionaires...

Every last one of them' I looked at with my own eyes was taking a chance.... and so... bouts' the only thing I could think...concerning the WHY we were doing this... was because us folks who slept on the beach and painted the walls of Flamingo's house... well...what we were doing was taking the chance to live all over again the very next day, and we only did this because we didn't know what else to do...but to live. And I mean isn't it funny...that somehow we all ended up at the same spot...together... during the same moment... in all of this time?

So... if Don didn't think humane thoughts in the same way as some of us people do...well even then...I'm sure that there were moments in his life when he was alone, times when it was just him and his gun and he was in his kitchen sipping on his beer, and I bet ya'... once in a while at least there's a time before those later moments and maybe even in the future down the road when he'd be doing all of those not so nice things that he does but after that...well I'm sure there are moments in his life where he sneaks him a giant dill pickle just like I'm sure there are days when Flamingo just looks at the ocean and thinks about how good life has been to him. I mean he should be grateful, look at this place, and so I'm sure he thinks nice thoughts once in a

while because everyone does and everyone feels nice sometimes about what's going on, and what I'm trying to say with all these words is actually very simple, and that is I'm sure Don Flamingo looks out of his big house with brand new painted walls and says "wow...now that's a beautiful sun rise... and WOW... I'm so lucky that I'm alive..."

That's just what I think and maybe I'm wrong, and it doesn't really matter because I'm leaving and he's only a memory now and can never hurt me again, and so after I got my stuff well I walked up and closed the gate behind me. This part of my life and my adventure was over and I was happy that it was...real happy...and luckily I had some money and some options and really nowhere to be yet...because I mean...it was still the summer and when I have time to spare I get lost and so as it goes I got turned all around and forgot about something a' rather...see... I knew I wanted to go somewhere but in my head...well... for some reason I had me no destination in mind. I had to go, but I didn't know where to go, so I walked away, and that's all.

It was a mess and so being mixed up I walked into the city of Miami and went to the bus station...which was packed. Laughing helped me move and also... so did that book I had that told me to let the earth do the moving, and I laughed and after I went through the metal detector I just stood there not even thinking as I waited in line to purchase a ticket. After about twenty minutes it was my turn, and

when I got to the teller I froze... and so...well...I just looked at her face and smiled and for some strange ol' reason I wanted to hug her because I was alive and not painting that house no more, and I didn't do this because you don't hug a woman you don't know. It's just that I was stuck in my head and I was about to get on another bus but I didn't know where I was heading, and to tell youse' the truth I was daydreaming and praying that the line would last forever because this is where I wanted to be. I wanted to be in line and waiting in line thinking about nothing but being in line doing nothing but waiting...but as it goes... waiting never lasts as long as you think it will...so...

“NEXT...NEXT! HELLO! Sir where to? SIR? Can I help you? Where are you going?”

I snapped out of it and realized where I was so I mumbled as I looked at the map behind her, and well I thought now well so I guess I could go just about anywhere in America if I wanted. The map was big and there's many places to go and I was thinking about maybe going back to Michigan cause I ran away when I left...and not from my family...but I ran away from the doctor's words...

“Henry you're sick. That tumor is going to get bigger if you don't get operated on. If we do it soon you'll be fine but I don't know. You might be able to live with it forever. It's not spreading but the headaches have to be terrible...”

“No. I got used to them and I don't like needles.”

“Henry, this is serious you know that right?”

“Yeah, I know...and so Doc...well I think that I’ll just think about it and get back to you soon...”

That was the plan and I don’t know still, so I’ll think some more and go somewhere else and besides my bloody noses well nothing is that bad and I can’t even tell if I’m really sick or not. There’s charts and I’ve had tests and I know what he said but it’s my body...and man o’ man... likes I said I was a running away from my looming fear, and so as I’m in line at the bus station I’m thinking these thoughts and then I figured well that tumor didn’t really seem to be doing all that much... and maybe it liked being alive too... and I know that’s not possibly the truth... but maybe it was helping me be a nicer person because before I was real jaded after what happened to me when I went on the road with Dusty Apostolo back up when I was in Michigan. But now I felt great ...and really... I felt so good that even though I thought about going home and getting the operation like the Doc recommended...well... I looked at the teller and she was still waiting for a decision while at the same time all these folks were getting all antsy behind me and saying... “Come on. Come on boy! We’re going to miss our bus.”

I didn’t know where I was but I knew that I was going somewhere, and so with all these thoughts in my head and these bright red destinations on a map...well with all of that going through my dome I was spinning in circles because I still didn’t know what to do or where to go...so that’s why I closed my eyes and pointed...

“What?” She said.

“I want to go there.”

“Where’s there...sir?”

“I don’t know mam’. I have to leave and so I want to go out there. Everywhere. Out West!”

“Where out West... do you want to go?”

“Texas, and as far passed that as possible.”

“We have a deal right now. You don’t have any more bags do you?”

“Nope. Just my pack and my folder. I travel light-speed...get it?”

“No...oh...good one” she said... “So... there’s a deal right now for locations in Texas on the Super DUPER Bus, and so How about I book you a ticket to Houston?”

“Sounds Good....Wait a sec....what’s passed California again?”

“The Ocean” She said.

“Oh yeah....Sorry.... I’m dumb sometimes. It’s just I get excited... and well...I forget things. But Houston...and so well... don’t spaceships come from there...aren’t I right?”

“Uh yeah...they sure do...”

“Nice. So Houston sounds great. Send me there” I said.

“Will do captain. Will do...”

That’s where I was off to, Houston Texas, home of spaceships and Nolan Ryan, and after I made my decision the lovely teller printed out my ticket and after twenty-seven

hours of waiting for the West Bound Bus to get to Miami...well...without hearing any sounds I woke-up and grabbed my backpack and waved to the teller who really didn't acknowledge my farewell...and I don't know why she did didn't wave back... because she called me captain and I thought that was nice and that she liked me, but when I waved she acted like I was a ghost and was rolling her eyes...

And so what...nope...I don't think that's the reason I took one more swell of my bad rum without anybody seeing me, it's was...just that I needed to drink so I could sleep on the bus because I needed some sleep...and after the swell turned into the rest of the bottle I got my ticket punched by some rude employee who yelled at me because my ticket wasn't out of the folder that they placed the ticket in after they gave it to me...

But anyway, so then I walked up the steps and instantly I was smelling the smell of the cabin...but at the same time the smell was refreshing...you know... in its own weird way...

I walked in and without even plugin' up my nostrils I inhaled the air like a fish back home in the fish bowl after flopping around on a marble floor, and it was nice to smell the bad smell and so I just let the world move me as I took everything in very slowly, and it was almost like being back in your childhood home again...

And as I put my headphones on and the bus rolled and I got myself out of the Miami, and when we got on the

highway the sun went away and then it was night, and inside of the bus where I sat in the middle it was cold and I felt good enough to sleep.

PART TWO: THE MIDDLE PARTS

THE BUS left Florida and went through...I don't know...maybe Alabama...no...Mississippi?

Awoken by old brake pads and the smell of...campfire...the driver screamed and told us that we're going to take a few hours "to stretch" in a city named Clarksdale.

"Great...status quo" I said.

And it's just...this always happens when you take the bus, and you're always late and never early...because the concept of time isn't the same as it is...let's say...for people who live in normal towns and places that aren't moving on four wheels.

It got real hot inside and something was smoking up towards the wheel... and something did smell like oil and then through the front windshield there were flames. After that, everything got worse, but for some reason maybe I thought that this was a dream (when it wasn't) because I didn't care so I closed my eyes and tried my best to get back

to the dream I was having, because it was a good dream and I liked it better than my real life...and (“LISTEN UP FOLKS...”) I was crossing my legs (“FINE”) so...

I guess this was a good time to pull-over anyway because I had to go to the bathroom but I didn’t want to... because I was real tired...

And even though the good dream was gone I didn’t want to get off the bus because I had an entire row of seats to myself, and this is because it looked like we were going through parts of the United States where people don’t usually go back to, and so that meant the bus was pretty much vacant, and that’s why I basically had a bed.

“WHAT ON EARTH IS BURNING?” I said.

“GOD DAMN IT! Don’t worry about it. Just get off the Bus.”

And so... this is what the driver said, and he doesn’t like me, and I don’t know why.

THE SMELL

It’s been like this for the past few hours. At first the driver said it was “fine” so I went back to sleep. I knew something was wrong and the motor was on fire or somethin’, and I also knew I had to take a whiz, but I was just so comfortable...that it felt like I was in one of my past beds... and I think I know which one...

It was the bed that I had in my first apartment and it was a king, and in the middle there was a dip.... but you just had to sleep around the sinkhole...

And so that's what I was dreaming about and that's what I was trying to go back to, and I really missed my old apartment and I missed an old girlfriend of mine, and sure, for some reason I even missed Apostolo and George too. I missed everyone but now they were gone and I was all alone and nothing was going to change in real life and that's why I wanted to stay in my dream. That wasn't going to happen.

The bus came to a stop in a very sparse town and being forced off the bus a police car was there as well as what looked to be an entire fire department. I didn't care and walked off and I was told "not to go far because another bus was on its way".

And so I didn't say anything about nothing...and in Clarksdale the adventure stalled, and no, it wasn't the first time he's been my driver, and I didn't know his name...but... he knew mine, and I've seen him before but I never asked em'...because well... I didn't think that was necessary.

THIS IS WHERE WE WERE

I was standing in what looked to be the middle of nowhere and there was an old run down garage that was rusted over and rounded off, and it looked like a hanger for a small airplane but it was some kind of storage room for trucks. Still waking up from my nap I was trying to write something down in my notebook because this whole scene was real strange, and I didn't want to get too close because it looked like a location where I could get into some serious

trouble. Not wanting this to happen I unzipped my backpack and got my glasses out because when I put them on my face I could see good enough to make out the words, and the sign read “shop” and something else...but...no...I couldn’t read the first word because the rust ate it, and I didn’t know where I was but the trees weren’t palms and then I felt safe because I knew I was far enough away from Flamingo and his crazy gun collection, and so after I cracked my neck...out of nowhere and for some unknown reason...I wasn’t worried and something exploded in my head, and I don’t know how to explain it because I don’t know what I mean, but what I’ll tell you is that I felt stronger and healthier... and it happened but well no... I don’t know what it was, but this not knowing didn’t matter because something was changing inside of my mind, and maybe I was growing up...I think that’s it...but it was more than...

I don’t know what to say about the experience. I was calm and it sort a’ felt like I was back in the Midwest again...but no...I wasn’t... not even close. I was here and the locals were confused why we were here, and a small group of them gathered in the yard of a house that was across the street, and I didn’t want to talk about what I already knew was going on. There was a bunch of cross-armed folks and bald men were trying to pin-point the problem, and sure... it was something else...if all you did was just twiddle your thumbs and sit around in places like this, but no, I wasn’t surprised, because Public

Transportation in America is always like this, and there's always some kind of disaster in one way or another, and I'm no future teller...so I didn't think this was going to happen...but the fact of it happening wasn't a shock or a drag, because it was nothing but...the way it goes.

Lighting up a smoke I noticed that the bus driver was real mad and everyone else who was on the bus was sitting on the side of the road. One thing about me is that...if you watch me... I tend to veer away from the pack, and I don't know why I do this, and it's not because I'm some kind of coward or somethin'...I mean... I'm always there to help if the good people need a soldier, but I stand back and scan and scale the necessity of my involvement, and so like I usually do when things like this happen....I was just walking about a good half block away...so I could distance myself from the disorder, and trying to relax I was singing the song... *In Walked Bud by Thelonious Monk*...because well...I don't know why really...it's just what popped in my head, and it's not like I was bored either...nope... it's just that I had nothing else to do...but hum...croak and burn some rhythms away like seconds of time...and so feeling good I was gently kicking some rocks and singing and a' boppin' along when I tripped over a fire hydrant that was almost completely covered by wild grass, and I wasn't embarrassed because I hit the ground hard and somehow I managed to cut myself on...well...what looked to be the shattered remains of a mason jar that was hidden by the wild green grass....

I was bleeding a bit so I grabbed my rum bottle out of my backpack and tore off the label and along with a rubber-band...and so no...there wasn't much time to think about the proper way to make a bandage...so I used the end of a ripped-off thumb of a mitten my godmother knitted and wrapped it around my forearm and everything was fine, and so getting up again and brushing myself off I was looking at a Baptist Church, and it didn't look like anybody was there so I didn't think it would be a problem if I rested on their property while I was waiting for the new bus to get here, and who knows how long it was going to take because buses are slow.

As you've probably figured out I'm not like some people, and it's true, that some people would be worried and call someone if something like this happened to them, and I sort of wanted to...but... I didn't have anyone to call and like I said...all of this was normal and the bus was broken and I was stuck, but I didn't care because it was an adventure and I was tired so I thought I'd take a snooze until somebody woke me up and then told me it was time to get back on the road, and I mean... it was the heart of the afternoon and I was feeling good and the warm air was just right, not too heavy and the sun was a summer sun... but the clouds were big and moved often...creating the softness of cool shade, and well... I liked where I was sitting and this area looked dead but it wasn't. There was life and people were helping out with the bus problems, and I probably could have helped

too, because I knew more about engines than people would think, but nobody asked so I walked away.

As the mess got sorted out I looked up to find a cloud that I could use to imagine with, but when I tilted my head the weather changed and the clouds were gone. The sky was naked and it was so bright that it was a spotty shade of dark. Squinting I looked at the signs above me and where I was... I read...was at an intersection that was created by two streets called Illinois Avenue and Martin Luther King Drive...

"Where you going" I said, because the bus driver was walking as he was bootin' stones and breaking twigs down the street, but he wasn't kicking them for fun, rather he was physically frustrated and I was just trying to be friendly and he said all these bad words out loud...

"Hey" I said. "Who are you talking to? Me?"

"No. I'm talking to myself... is that ok with you?" The bus driver said.

"Yeah...I'm sorry... but how long until the new bus arrives... and wait...hey...where ya' going?"

"I don't know... got ta' blow off some steam because this is bullshit. Just wait there and don't move...just...son of a bitch I hate...so...listen I just need to go for a god damn walk Henry...and so tell me boy...why are you always on the bus? You could live in one place you know. Use all this money you have and stop riding around in circles. Pick a damn city and just stay there. I don't understand you...never mind...just wait there..." and then I tried to ask him...

"What's going on" but I was told to...

“Shut the hell up and learn when to leave a man alone...”

“And what if I didn’t” I said...

“Your ass will get left in Mississippi...”

“Word....I got-it. Sorry. Have yer’self a super good walk...” and...

The American flag hung in front of the rubber factory and it was waving like jazz, and that’s when I think I fell asleep...but I don’t remember...because the shadows were back and everything was real nice.

COLD BUS AT NIGHT

I didn’t say another word and four or five hours later another bus arrived and the night got colder. The air conditioning was on full blast and the windows steamed-up. Pulling out a wool sweater I must have fell asleep, but it didn’t matter because we just kept driving and the night was my home. Moving and going somewhere I was out like a light, and before I knew it, I was forgetting about everything that was real, and going back into my dreams I had a vision and everyone was at a party with balloons and piñatas and the music was a combination of a bunch of different styles of music all rolled into one new from, and it wasn’t electronic...no...all the instruments were real and there was a horn section and it was strange but that’s normal because dreams are strange and...well there were cartoon birds that were chirping the beat of the tune and it was a good dream and everyone was there and they were asking

me how my trip has been and when was I coming home? I told them I didn't know and then my grandfather who I never met walked up to me and asked me how my book was going...

It was just a dream but these people who loved me and maybe they didn't really care two ways from Sunday how they felt about me in real life but it was my dream, it was my party, and it was just like a poem, a beautiful poem that highlights everything in accordance with how the song lulls you along those music-sheets of life...while smoothly the dream is reminding you of all those memories those great things that are harmoniously in love with dancing fools who are now spirits lost somewhere in between the past and the present....

And it was weird... but the dream was just right, as if it was a book of perfect prose made from ice cream melting on a hot flimsy paper-plate covering apple-pie and coated with a layer of blueberries picked from the fields during a Michigan summer, and it was one of them days that lacks the dying-dog panting tongue of this southern heat, and as we moved further west I was sleeping within the darkness of the bus and everything was just like it should be. I was dreaming about being on the beach barefoot and the feeling you get from the cool air on a hot august day, and I was dreaming that's all; I was dreaming about smiles and of teeth sweating with joy, and then I felt like a wave, and then the dream was...

Well now I was opening my eyes and the bus started its motor after it stopped at a trucker-station without me even knowing. I think it was the ignition that brought me back, and so rubbing my hands together to create friction because I was real cold we got off an exit ramp and as the bus jerked my head and slammed it into the window real hard the dream was over and I was back on the highway.

Mess of History

Even as the country collapsed well...I was still young enough that living the life of war was fresh. There was so much to see and the world was there. Walking everywhere my feet never hurt and the world only got bigger and even my hometown felt like a new country to explore. So I walked in the woods and that didn't feel strange and everyone and everything was so new, and I figured if there are lots of people and places on this planet, that must mean there's also many first-times and first-warnings, first run-ins and first get-a-ways and first drops...lows...highs...

And I didn't know what else to do with my life so I traveled around the country succumbing to the insanity that was fuming from the inner depths of what I would later on call my...

About Writer

Andrew H. Kuharevicz is a writer/jester/gonzo journalist/social investigator and errand boy philosopher from the State of Michigan. He first went far out there with a book called *Post Modern Artist in Exile* (currently out of print) back in 2006 and had a mild underground success (less than 2000 sold) with a book titled *a Spontaneous Revolution*. He has written poetry and prose and social commentary (personal website is *Adventures in American Writing*) and his words have appeared in online websites and in physical newspapers for almost ten years now. He has his first hardcover book coming out later this year, a collection of writing called, *Notebooks and Three Dimensional Boxes, years 2005-2014*, and besides writing the *Adventures of a Dying Young Man Series* he is a constant student of the written word. He is a collector of typewriters and enjoys a good font. He sticks to the physical book but is slowly learning how to adjust to the world of the eBook. He is an old man at heart but young when it comes to making good decisions. He's also a head editor and visionary of West Vine Press and has been publishing other writers from around the United States in the *Future Dead Writers Series*. His current projects are (as said) *The Adventures of a Dying Young Man Series* that consists of four more books, ending with *The Future Book of War*. Following the adventures of Henry Oldfield and his rise and fall and then physical transcendence over his past the next book in the series *The Fear and The Going Part One*

picks up at the end of where *Book (A)* left off. We're taken back to the office of a literary agent named Babushka who finally gets Henry a publishing deal writing science fiction pop-up books. The third book will be published sometime before the summer of 2014, and then the last three books aren't scheduled to be published for a couple of years, as Andrew wants to write something new and focus on reality while writing journalism and essays about book stores and girls that he's dated and conducting psychoanalysis experiments on dead writer's that he's fond of. In all honesty, it's time to get out of Henry's head for a while.... And no, Andrew doesn't really enjoy writing...writer profiles in the third person.

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"Maybe I was born dumb er' somethin'..."

THE ORIGINAL ADVENTURES OF A DYING YOUNG MAN

I wasn't thinking straight and then it hit me that this was how my life was probably going to end: *Henry Oldfield. Boy born dumb who read a book is killed for stealing fermented cucumbers in Miami.*

TEN YEARS before the end of **MORE ADVENTURES OF A DYING YOUNG MAN BOOK A**, **THE ORIGINAL ADVENTURES** happen before the streets. An American who thinks he's going to die is horrified after the absurd death of his only friend, and after planning on going on an adventure but never doing it, he finds a book (*dated from 1893*) in the trash written by a Philosopher who said an individual should **"LET THE WORLD MOVE THEM"**. After being "real bored" **HENRY OLDFIELD** (*the naïf protagonist*) gets on the bus and ends up discovering what the United States is all about, and from gangsters and working road kill duty, this book tracks through Appalachia and Miami and hitchhikes with a goat man. **THE ORIGINAL ADVENTURES OF A DYING YOUNG MAN BOOK B** is about what happens before Paradise **IT'S JUST a SHORT TRAVELING STORY, AND THAT'S ALL**. Written by Andrew H. Kuharevicz

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