

My Early College Years

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MY MOTHER AND I MOVED TO MESA during my senior year of high school so that she could finish her teaching certificate at Arizona State University. I didn't like Mesa or the high school, and I was only too glad in May of 1951, on the morning after my graduation, to load our pickup and head for Snowflake.

I logged during the summer of 1951 for the Webb brothers on the Apache reservation south of Showlow. Spending nights in Snowflake, I rode to the sawmill and on into the woods every weekday with my brother-in-law Waldo. I trudged behind Waldo's bulldozer, attaching cables to logs and releasing them after he had dragged them to a landing. The contract was a year-old burn and the logs were charred and black, which meant that my sweaty body acquired, even under my clothes, a daily varnish of charcoal and dust.

One Sunday morning soon after I went to work in the woods, I awoke from a dream about a girl named Marilyn Cardon with whom I had often conversed during study hall at Mesa High School. She had short honey-brown hair with a fringe of tiny curls, alert brown eyes, and a pleasant face. It had never occurred to me to date her, and she was not on my mind when I left Mesa. On this Sunday morning, however, I awoke believing myself to be in love with her. Just like that. No warning, no premonition. Suddenly I felt incredibly lucky. Love was an elusive treasure. I didn't doubt its reality; its roots were deep and vital within me. The trick was to find its true object, that adorable person who would evoke and return it. I can't say why I was so sure Marilyn Cardon, having evoked love in me, would return it. I was, it must be remembered, only seventeen.

I exchanged perhaps a dozen letters with Marilyn over the summer, and I drove to Mesa and dated her on three or four weekends. With no other woman have I ever experienced romantic love with such intensity, yet I am startled even now at how little time I spent in her actual presence. It was in my daydreams that I knew her. My labor in the woods had become unbearably tedious, and I sought escape through fantasy. Fantasy was nothing new to me. I had been a daydreamer all my life.

My fantasies about Marilyn occurred in serial form, each requiring, while I trudged behind the dusty bulldozer, two or three days to complete. The substance of each episode was this: unmarried, Marilyn and I made love, and she became pregnant. Confused and uncertain, I fled, and her father and other male relatives pursued and finally captured me. I returned to Marilyn and, in a poignant scene, made amends for the loneliness and neglect she had suffered by my absence. With her pregnancy clearly visible, we were wed. There the episode ended and I began another, precisely like it in its general features. Each episode, as I say, was so detailed that it could take two or three days to complete.

On the last night that I dated Marilyn in Mesa, I parked beside her home and she slid close to me. I kissed her and told her about how I had dreamed of her and had awakened knowing I was in love with her. She said with deep emotion, "No one has ever said that to me before." Nor had I ever said it to anyone before. After that I could not generate my usual erotic fantasies about her. My feelings seemed too sacred, too intense, for the merely erotic.

For the sake of Marilyn's good name, I will emphasize that my actual relationship with her was always chaste and I said nothing about my erotic fantasies to her. I am at a loss to explain my own attraction to the idea of a shotgun wedding, which dates back to my freshman year in high school when, just as puberty broke upon me, I was stunned-and enchanted-to learn that a junior boy had gotten a senior girl pregnant and was required to marry her.

In September I went to BYU because Marilyn was going there. Luckily, my brothers Charles and Roald were also there. We stayed in one of the Wymount dorms converted from army barracks, Roald and I sharing a double room and Charles occupying a single. I found a part-time job peeling potatoes in the Wymount cafeteria. I enrolled in a typical freshman schedule, including composition, college algebra, the Book of Mormon, and ROTC, the last in order to avoid being drafted into the Korean War.

With a population of 30,000, Provo was too vast a city for me. Its lawns, sidewalks, and paved streets were oppressive. I got readily lost among its streets, not realizing for an entire year that a person could navigate the city by its quadrant system of signage. I was also repelled by city fashions for men. On campus I despised the young men from California and the Wasatch Front who wore pleated flannel slacks, wide-soled shoes, and duck-tailed, flat-topped haircuts. As for me, I wore Levi's and flannel shirts to school and a suit, white shirt, and tie to church.

For a couple of evenings during the first week, I borrowed Charles's car and took Marilyn driving. I was very happy and the entire world seemed right. On Sunday we agreed to meet at church. On my way to meeting that afternoon, I realized suddenly I didn't love Marilyn. Just

like that. Again, no warning, no premonition. I was devastated and frightened. I walked her to her dorm after church and went back to my room to assess the damage. I had no idea why I was so frightened and dejected. I did know I had been suddenly tumbled from happiness, and I wanted it restored. I prayed with unusual fervor that I would be in love with Marilyn again when I woke up in the morning. But I wasn't.

The next Friday evening we went to a dance. The orchestra played "September Song," that haunting elegy for the dwindling of love's allotted time. We left the dance early and walked to a spot on the edge of campus overlooking the twinkling lights of Provo. Marilyn hugged me and said she was sure now she was in love with me. The fact that her love had confirmed itself even as mine lapsed seemed a bitter discrepancy. It's strange how irony makes a loss harder to bear.

I told Marilyn about my uncertainty with such equivocation that she granted me time to regain my former feelings for her. But by the end of the quarter she broke off the relationship. I went on brooding and hoping all winter. When spring came, I looked her up and told her I thought I was in love with her again. She told me she was about to be married to a veteran and returned missionary who lived in my dorm. She wished me well and thanked me for, as she put it, making a part of her growing up memorable.

Somehow all this had cosmic implications for me. A world where such a thing could happen—where I could be happily in love at one instant and tumbled at the next into an indifference fraught with enigmatic anxiety and despair—was morally amiss. I couldn't quite admit at that moment how wrenching a realignment of ideas I had undergone. I didn't give up on trying to fall in love for a long time afterward. But I could no longer rely on romantic love. I puzzled about it a good deal. I still puzzle about it. Romantic love breaks up as many marriages as it engenders. The only thing certain about it is its uncertainty. It is here today and gone tomorrow.

My mother came to Utah for General Conference in early October, about three weeks after I had arrived at BYU. During an afternoon session, she and I sat outside the Tabernacle on Temple Square listening to the sermons over a loudspeaker. I told her about Marilyn. I began to cry, and we retreated to a secluded outside corner of the Assembly Hall. Sobbing bitterly, I said, "It's as if she is dead." Oddly, I did feel as if someone dear and close had died.

In retrospect, I can see that the person for whom I actually wept was standing beside me. I couldn't admit this at that moment. I could only recognize that I was homesick. Roald was homesick too, and we fed on one another's longing. Sometimes we walked in the sagebrush foothills between campus and Wye mountain. Roald would point to the pass leading south from Utah Valley and remind me that home lay in that

direction. Home meant our house and lot in Snowflake, and the farm on the creek, and, chiefly, our mother. I for one felt dispossessed. Having become, as I esteemed, an adult, I had no right to return to my mother. Years later I would recognize in my deep and subliminal emotions that this fact was equivalent to her death. So I say it was for my mother that I wept on Temple Square on that October afternoon in 1951. Having moved out of her home and having no home of my own, I felt as if she had died.

Although I studied with diligence, I made only average grades during my first college year. I was especially astonished to pass all my tests in college algebra at scores above 90, yet receive a final grade of C. When I protested to my math instructor, he introduced me to the concept of the bell curve. He pulled out his roll and there I was, in the big middle bulge of the class, entirely deserving, so he said, of a C.

I made two C's and a B in the three-quarter series of Freshman English taught by Olive Kimball Burmingham. I learned to distinguish between *there*, *their*, and *they're* and to use the subjunctive *I wish I were* in stating a wish or supposition contrary to fact. Though the assigned essays struck me as insufferably abstract, I was influenced by at least one of them, "A Free Man's Worship," by Bertrand Russell. Russell's cheerless description of a nihilistic universe where "all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noon-day brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction" would soon reappear in my thinking. As for poetry, it came alive for me only when, in her rich, resonant voice, Mrs. Burmingham read it aloud. Sometimes the dismissal bell would awaken me from one of her readings and I would realize that, for a precious quarter hour, I had been transported from the general gloom of my existence into a fine, high ecstasy.

On the first day of my Book of Mormon class, the instructor bore his testimony as to the truthfulness of Mormonism. A distinct sensation of doubt went through me. This was frightening and added to the fervor of my private prayers. Until then, I had believed on the strength of my parents' faith. Now I judged it was time to know for myself.

Assuming the Holy Ghost would not bear witness to a youth of my relaxed and indifferent standards, I repented with a rigor that made my life inconvenient in many ways. I attended all my church meetings and began to read the scriptures. On fast day I fasted from Saturday evening till Sunday evening. I gave up swearing and obscene language. I paid a precise tithe on the meager earnings of my part-time job. I strove to forego levity and mirth and to keep my mind fixed on sober thoughts. I was only partly successful in this endeavor, being easily seduced into banter and jest by my brothers and friends. I averted my eyes from the shapely hips or gaping blouse of a nearby girl. I even stopped masturbating, a monumental act of self control.

I must qualify this last achievement. I stopped masturbating while thoroughly awake, but began to awaken at night in the midst of the act, which I always completed. I esteemed that sleep had rendered my Christian will so inoperable that I need not count this as a sin. It, therefore, did not figure in my frequent reviews of the inadequacy of my repentance.

In mid-October Charles and I went deer hunting with our Peterson relatives from Lehi. We got up at two a.m. on opening day, drove to a canyon at the south end of the Oquirrh Mountains, and by four were toiling our way up a steep side canyon with flashlights. This was a new and happy experience for me, my first intimacy with a Utah canyon. Our feet shuffled in crisp, fallen leaves. Our breath steamed out in measured puffs. Soon an incredible parade of car lights appeared on the bottom of the main canyon below us

At dawn a vast cannonading of rifles broke out. This was Utah's first either-sex deer hunt, game managers having at last persuaded the public that the deer herds far exceeded the carrying capacity of the winter range. Deer ran everywhere, and I opened fire with thoughtless haste. Soon I had spent all my cartridges but one. I went in search of Charles, hoping to borrow his rifle. Suddenly a doe stepped from a thicket, and I fired my last cartridge. The doe dropped dead and my heart exulted. I know what blood lust is. It comes from the wild. I neither condemn nor defend it here. What I felt deeply guilty about was not the death of the doe, but rather my fraudulent purchase of a resident hunting license. I felt too poor to pay non-resident fees. But since I didn't have to go hunting, it seemed certain that God, being who He was, would make no extenuation for poverty when he measured my sins.

This was a winter of extraordinary snowfall. Storm after storm dropped a thigh-deep accumulation on campus and town, and temperatures often plunged below zero. Starving deer were everywhere—in the sagebrush of the foothills, in the orchards opposite the dorms, among the hedges and flower beds of city lots. With no galoshes and only a thin coat, I made my way to class along paths corrugated with ice. During the spring thaw, an immense avalanche swept off the east flank of Mt. Timpanogos, burying the highway in Provo Canyon under a rubble of snow, brush, and snapped tree trunks. I viewed this spectacle and for the first time had some inkling of the energy stored on snowy slopes.

As the thaw continued, water flooded over the banks of rivers and creeks everywhere. Returning from a weekend trip home to Snowflake for Mother's Day, Charles, Roald, and I drove at dawn through a half-mile sheet of flood water over the highway between Levan and Nephi. Something in the glint of early sun on that slowly flowing water touched my spirit, adding to the accretion of image and emotion that would eventually bond me to Utah.

I logged for the Webb brothers again during the summer of 1952.

They put me on an ancient International tractor and raised me a nickel, to \$1.10 an hour. I set and released chokers by myself, climbing off and on the tractor dozens of times each day. Again I rode to and from the woods with Waldo, listening to country music on the car radio and taking in the bright Arizona landscape. For a while the woods were haunted by memories of Marilyn, for it was here, in my fantasies, that I had known her most intimately.

I fell into a sparse and ascetic discipline that was not entirely unpleasant. In place of the daydreams that had formerly helped make the grueling labor bearable, I substituted serious thoughts about God and religion. I carried a small copy of the Book of Mormon in my lunch box, which I read while Waldo napped at noon. This was my first and only complete reading of the Book of Mormon, whose abstract, repetitious narrative and formulaic sayings did not fatigue me then as they do now. From time to time, I came upon profound or instructive utterances which seemed aimed at me. For a while I felt I had achieved a simplicity of act and thought pleasing to God, and if ever in my life I believed God would soon vouchsafe me a vivid, indisputable revelation of himself, it was now.

One Sunday I spoke in fast meeting in Snowflake ward, expressing my hope for a testimony of my own. A childhood friend, Gussie Schneider, sat on a back bench. I noted the rapt attention she paid to my words, and I began to date her. Blond, trim, and pretty, she was a congenial and flattering conversationalist. From the start I regarded our dating as more than casual, and I quickly found myself in a condition of paralysis, being uncertain whether I wanted to marry her, yet being so attracted to her that I couldn't break away. I brooded over the absence of that quixotic emotion, romantic love, which, had it descended upon me, would have resolved my internal debate in an instant. The conflict seemed to resolve itself when, at the end of the summer, we went different directions, she back to Arizona State, I back to BYU. At the end of the summer, I also abandoned an ambition to become a forest ranger. This had to do with the tedium of logging. I watched rangers marking trees for cutting and estimating the board feet of lumber in the downed trunks, and concluded that their job was as enslaving and witless as mine.

During the second week of fall quarter of 1952 at BYU, I became puzzled by seeming omissions in the chemistry professor's lectures. Another student informed me that this class met five days a week rather than the three days I had been attending. The next morning, while peeling potatoes in the cafeteria, I made a sudden, unpremeditated decision. I would become an English teacher like my father. Visiting an advisor, I discovered that my highest aptitude scores were in language and literature. I dropped the chemistry course and enrolled in two courses for English majors. One of the professors, Clinton Larson, expatiated on his own lit-

erary enthusiasms and often read us his own baffling free verse poems. The other, J. Golden Taylor, solemnly read aloud long passages from the journals, sermons, and letters of the American Puritans. I was a fervent acolyte, worshipping both these professors with little reservation, and I must acknowledge that their encouragement had much to do with my development as an English major.

To my astonishment all my grades for this quarter were A's. I found the taste of achievement addictive, and from then on I tried hard to make A's and usually did. Nonetheless, my initial enthusiasm for literature soon became intermittent, waxing and waning with shifts in my general mood. I had become sensitive to disbelief. Unconsciously attracted to it, as I now see, I sensed its presence in many works of literature and responded with gloom and anxiety. For example, in a later course from Golden Taylor, which featured the Age of Reason in American literature, I noted that Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson considered Jesus to be no more than a man, though a great one, whose basically deistic doctrines had been corrupted by his followers.

Near the end of fall quarter, I had begun to keep a sporadic journal. As winter quarter of 1953 opened, I asked in my journal, "Is there or is there not a God?" In early February I visited several professors in their offices, Taylor among them, for guidance in setting up my future course of study. "I wonder if some of these men," I wrote in my journal, "while gaining their knowledge of English. . . have not lost that which should be the most precious belief in their soul." Going on, I declared my determination not to become like them: "If I can study English literature and remain true to myself and God, fine; if not, I will not trade my soul for an education. I'll dig ditches all my life before I do that!"

During the summer of 1952, Roald had married Luana Field. When I returned to Provo that fall, I roomed in the dorm with my nephew Dwain, a high school comrade with whom I had been equally forward in rebellious talk and obscene humor. Now my sobriety made us incompatible. For a while he dated a California girl who let him into her bra and panties, a favor he exulted over in my presence. One Sunday evening he pulled up with the girl in Charles's car. Leaning into the car window, I exhorted them to chastity. After that, the girl denied him the expected liberties, and he seethed with anger at my interference.

At the beginning of winter quarter, Gussie transferred to BYU, and I began to date her. Instantly I was back in my former conflict, deeply attached to Gussie, yet lacking the resolve to marry her. Consequently, I put a good deal of energy into the attempt to persuade God to make up my mind for me. Once I undertook a three-day fast, stalwartly ignoring the food around me while I peeled potatoes in the cafeteria and praying with as much fervor as I could muster. At last, a few hours short of my allotted three days, with no word from God and afflicted by a thumping

headache, I gave in to the weakness of the flesh and ate an orange. I am happy if others find inspiration in fasting. For me, it is a quick route into a surly and ungodly mood.

Soon I decided that securing my endowment in the temple might induce God to say clearly yes or no on the issue of marriage. I arranged to have the president of Snowflake Stake ordain me an elder in his hotel room at the conclusion of general conference in April. In May Roald accompanied me to the Salt Lake temple, where I participated for the first time in the ceremony of the endowment. Rushing to make our session, we ignored a man with a flat tire who thumbed for a ride on the highway between Provo and Salt Lake. Roald likened us to the Pharisees in the parable of the Good Samaritan, concerned with the outward trappings of righteousness rather than with its compassionate core.

Soon after this, I felt for about a week that I was truly in love with Gussie. One Sunday evening I proposed we marry, and she agreed. She phoned the news to her mother, and her mother informed my mother, who resented my failure to be the first to tell her. The truth is that I returned to my dorm heartsick and frightened after proposing and had no spirit for telling anyone about it. So my search for a definitive sign from God went on even as I superficially played the role of a man engaged to be married.

During the summer of 1953, I logged for the unionized Southwest Lumber Industries at \$1.95 an hour, a considerable improvement over the wage I had earned from the Webbs. While waiting for the woods to open, I pulled green chain at their Overgaard mill for a couple of weeks. A fellow worker on the green chain lacked one of his thumbs. He said one day his wife had warned him that he might chop off a thumb while splitting wood. "And you know," he told me, "pretty soon I did." He was a brother to Rufus Crandall, whom I knew well as a music teacher, chorister, and general provider of musical entertainment in Snowflake. "Rufus made something of his life," his brother told me sadly. "I haven't done a thing with mine." This wistful self evaluation affected me. Regardless of how threatening higher education appeared, I knew I couldn't abandon it.

Once the woods had opened, I operated a tractor, which, unlike the antique International I had operated for the Webbs, was designed to skid logs. A Caterpillar D-7, it was equipped with a winch and a protective screen over the operator's seat. I even had the luxury of a choker setter, a rotund middle-aged immigrant from west Texas who spoke with an ineluctable southern drawl. One day at lunch, my choker setter entered a debate with other workers on the merits of condoms. He said using condoms was like washing your feet with your socks on. He granted they were useful, as he had learned when traveling by bus in the South one time. He had sat by a pretty redhead who accepted his offer to share a hotel room. "She gave me the clap," he said. "You wouldn't have thought it." In subtle ways I persecuted this man. One day at a landing,

while he knelt among some logs unlatching chokers, I revved the engine of the tractor with a slight tap on the throttle. It was a joke, of course. Not knowing that, he launched himself directly into the air in a frenzied attempt to get clear of the logs.

Roald, who spent that summer in Snowflake, also got a job logging for Southwest. Morning and night he and I drove the forty-five miles between Snowflake and Overgaard in our mother's pickup. This was a nostalgic road for Roald because it went by the ranch where his high school sweetheart had lived. My brother Leon returned from his mission to Sweden at the end of the summer, too late to earn a stake for his return to BYU. My earnings paid tuition for both of us, with \$300 left over for buying a car. On a hot Saturday in August, Roald, Leon, and I drove to Phoenix, and I bought my first automobile, a pale green 1941 Chrysler sedan with a sluggish early version of an automatic transmission.

I continued to agonize over Gussie throughout the summer. I was in a state of paralysis, unable to marry her yet equally unable to release her. I had long talks with Mother about my indecision and, on her advice, I sought a second patriarchal blessing. If the patriarch had instructed me with authority to marry Gussie, I would have. His blessing, however, consisted of instructions about like those in Chinese fortune cookies. I broke our engagement two or three times. With amazing patience, Gussie was willing to reinstate it. We had good times together—dances, parties, drives, earnest conversations. Finally, when the summer was over and we had returned to BYU, Gussie put a definitive end to our engagement. This was after church one Sunday morning. I returned to my dorm room and wept bitterly.

Leon and I roomed together in the dorm during the 1953-54 year. One night while going to sleep, we heard Debussy's "Claire de Lune" on the radio. Leon said, "I'd give anything to be able to create something that beautiful." I saw a new aspect of his personality and of my own, as well. Sometimes we went to the music library and listened to Verdi's "Meditation" by ear phones. Though I had little musical ability, I had identified certain classical pieces as the clearest examples of sheer beauty that I knew.

Charles had married Betty Hayes during the summer of 1953, and they now lived on Charlie Redd's ranch at LaSal, a tiny hamlet of a few houses, barns, and fields set against the timbered slopes of the LaSal Mountains in southeastern Utah. With a degree in animal husbandry, Charles managed Charlie Redd's dairy. He counted on some day having a farm or maybe even a ranch of his own. Leon and I visited Charles and Betty at Halloween and Thanksgiving. I envied Charles. With a good natured, competent wife and an outdoor job in a place of stunning beauty, he had everything a man could possibly want. For breakfast Betty fed us unforgettable venison steaks and fried potatoes. We helped Charles in

the dairy, went on happy excursions after hay and grain, and hunted cottontail rabbits on a nearby sagebrush plain and grouse in the firs and aspens of the mountains. Southwestward were the Abajo Mountains and the beginnings of the fanciful erosions of Canyonlands. Evenings we heard coyotes in the crisp, clairvoyant dusk. I realized that this place had firmly anchored itself among my emotions. In few other human habitations have I sensed so strongly the presence of the wild.

I took French that year from James L. Barker, a marvelously ugly man of great amiability and pedagogical skill. From Barker I learned the idiomatic nature of all language. There is no such thing as a precise translation from one language to another. I learned when speaking French I had to detach each syllable from the next. "You cannot speak French and remain handsome," Barker often said as he proceeded to distort his blubbery lips into an authentic French sound. However, not even he could teach me to pronounce the deep-throated Parisian R. When I say it, it sounds as if I am getting ready to spit.

By an equal stroke of good fortune, I took a year-long series in LDS moral values from B. F. Cummings, a French professor who taught religion on the side. What little hair Cummings had was chopped rather than cut by the unsteady hand of his wife. He had gold-capped teeth and spluttered when roused to zeal. He sometimes wore shoes and socks that were not mates. Once a bit of egg yolk remained on his jacket lapel for a week. He was often unprepared and was likely to stride into class late with an improvised pie chart apportioning moral value in an abstract and, for his students, meaningless way. Nonetheless, I was very attached to him because of his enthusiasm for Mormonism, which he said was the most enlightened, progressive religion the world had ever seen. The important thing was the eternal progression of the self as taught by Joseph Smith, a concept, as Cummings claimed, that motivated human beings to strive for ever nobler, ever more lofty and ideal behavior. Later I would realize that here was the essence of liberal Mormonism. I would also realize later that liberal Mormonism is not attractive to most Mormons, including the Brethren who direct the church. It is as alien to them as Methodism or the Episcopalian faith.

Toward the end of fall quarter, I suffered another crisis of faith. I visited the instructor of my class in neoclassical British literature, Leonard Rice, whose views, as far as I could make out, proceeded from the premises, not of a Christian, but of a secular humanist. I told Rice that I doubted God's existence. He said he had discarded certain Mormon beliefs and retained others. He believed in the reality of cosmic good and evil, and in the ability of human beings to participate in either. I wrote in my journal: "Dr. Rice also impressed upon me that if I am to lead the intellectual life, then I must develop patience. Patience, waiting for problems to resolve themselves, is the big quieting factor."

Leon and I drove home for Christmas vacation. The weather at Snowflake was almost balmy, and I enjoyed a respite from my internal conflicts. On a hike with a nephew, I watched a cottontail rabbit dupe a pursuing dog by performing an instantaneous U-turn in a bush, doubling back while the befuddled dog ran blindly on.

I talked with my mother about the possibility of going on a mission. She wanted me to go, and with the Korean War moving toward a conclusion, draft boards were beginning to issue deferments to missionaries. I was agreeable to the idea. It did not occur to me at that moment that I was an unlikely candidate for a mission. In most moods I was still a believer. On Christmas Eve I wrote in my journal: "This evening, gazing in a darkened room, with the warm crackling of the fire in the stove, at our Christmas tree, a feeling prompted me to pray, and so I did, merely asking that God give me a soul that could better appreciate the mission of Christ; as I see it, to hold the same love for Christ that he holds for me is one of the ultimate goods."

After Christmas vacation I began to date a seventeen-year-old named Jerry Brown. Jerry was tall and pretty, with short, curly, auburn hair, dark eyes, and a warm, inviting smile. Though she was still a senior in high school, she was already a flutist in the BYU orchestra. With characteristic speed—before we had gone out on our first date—I decided I would marry her when I returned from my mission. At no time in our year-long relationship did I think of myself as being in love with her, yet there was an affinity of spirit between us which seemed a more secure basis for a marriage than romantic love. Sometimes we took in a play or lecture on campus or went to a movie downtown. More often we took a drive or a walk, ending up in her living room engaged in a long, earnest conversation. One evening at a fireside in her home, she played "Claire de Lune" on her flute. I recognized that she had selected it because she knew I loved it. Even now, nearly fifty years later, the soulful tones of a flute, no matter where I hear them, remind me of her.

I think Jerry suffered as I did from depression, and we found a therapeutic sympathy in one another. She was sensitive to irony and humor, yet was generally of a serious bent of mind. She had a hortatory enthusiasm for ideals and principles. Sometimes she would fervently declare that the future of civilization depended upon adherence to principles, which, as she said, were more important than life itself. We talked endlessly, yet there was something prescient and wordless in our relationship, an intuition of mood and opinion in one another which, when it had become explicit, thrilled us, as if it were evidence of a spiritual force that had us in its care.

Jerry's serious mindedness strengthened my resolve to master my appetites. I entered now, in this, my last year of college before going on my mission, upon a particularly monkish regimen. I had, of course, at-

tempted to live by a rigorous standard of righteousness from the moment of my repentance, as I called it, at the outset of my first quarter at BYU. Although I was not certain of God's existence, I lived as if he not only existed but kept a meticulous account of my every thought and deed. Any sort of sexual interest in a woman seemed wrong, and I tried hard to contain the instinctive lust that rose daily when I saw the pretty legs of a girl in the seat next to mine in class or glanced at the bobbing breasts of a girl in the hall.

Yet, by the time I began to date Jerry, I had accumulated an astonishing sexual history. I had put a hand into a girl's bra many times. I had slipped a hand along a girl's inner thighs and inserted a finger into her vagina. I had unbuttoned my pants and allowed a girl to fondle my penis. On one memorable night, I had even tried to copulate in the front seat of a car. Luckily we didn't know how the deed was done in those circumstances. "Are we doing it?" the girl finally whispered. Obviously we weren't. Nonetheless, returned to my dorm, I found her pubic hairs on my penis. From that moment I regarded myself as a fornicator.

As I say, Jerry's fervor for principles inspired me to an even greater mastery of my appetites. I never held her hand, never hugged her, never kissed her. One evening she informed me she had allowed another boy whom she had dated to hold her hand. I said a girl who dated me had to live by my standards of no physical contact even when dating someone else. She accepted this policy. Where had I come by this Victorian ideal? My mother had long urged on me the ideal of kissing my wife for the first time over the altar in the temple. Understandably, then, I proudly narrated my activities with Jerry in my letters to my mother, making a particular point of the spiritual nature, as I termed it, of our relationship.

I can't say why my happiness with Jerry should have seemed an evidence for God's existence, but it did. In my best moods I believed without wavering. Many passages in my journal speak of our relationship as an extension into "the ideal" or into "true spirituality." At this far remove I cannot define precisely what I meant by the word "spirituality." In concrete terms, it simply meant that I was feeling a certain kind of happiness. Somehow that happiness seemed an evidence of realities beyond the material world.

As spring quarter of 1954 opened, I enrolled in my third course from Golden Taylor, a course in the literature of the American Romantics. I also enrolled in Shakespeare's tragedies from Parley A. Christensen. "P. A.," as he was called, was a grand old humanist who bore himself with a regal dignity. His grey crew-cut bristled, and his thick glasses magnified his eyes. Although he was a native of Idaho, he spoke in a husky voice with something akin to a British accent, which he had consciously adopted. I had taken Chaucer from him as well, and my esteem for him approached veneration, a fact that made his evident disbelief all

the more potent. I wrote in my journal: "He undoubtedly is a wise man, schooled by years of experience and intellectual pursuit. He frightens me however. I fear a similar fate for myself."

I am sure my classes from Taylor and Christiansen had much to do with the crisis that I now fell into. But also important was the ambient discussion of organic evolution which transpired everywhere on the BYU campus at that time. I learned a good deal about evolution from students attempting to refute it. The premises of my faith did not allow for a figurative interpretation of Genesis. It was an either/or situation: if organic evolution was a fact, then the Christian God did not exist. During my freshman year, my geology instructor took his class on a field trip into nearby Rock Canyon. At one point we observed the fossilized shells of marine creatures in a stratum of dark grey limestone common in the Wasatch Mountains. I tried to dismiss the implication of these fossils. The earth had obviously existed much, much longer than the defenders of Genesis asserted, and I could continue to believe in a six-thousand-year-old earth only by not thinking about the fossils. But as I say, evolution was in the air during the spring of 1954. The refutations I heard failed to impress me. I couldn't resist thinking about those fossils. They had been there a long, long time.

Near the end of April, I recorded in my journal: "Why cannot I see or is there indeed nothing to see? My whole life, as ordered up to now is vitally threatened—all desires, all hopes, all joys shall be shattered if the last wall remaining between me and utter disbelief goes." The next day I conceded that I no longer believed in the Christian deity. With this candor came a temporary relief. It did not seem so bad to be a disbeliever. My natural life would go on, made neither longer nor shorter by the fact that I did not possess an immortal soul.

That night I said my customary evening prayer, reasoning, like Franklin or Jefferson, that the impersonal creative force of the universe was worthy of my reverence. I paused at the end of my prayer, realizing there was no logic in finishing my prayer in the name of Jesus as I had always done before. At that instant I remembered a passage from the Gospel of John: "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already." With that, I was swept by waves of terror and a hysterical impulse to run. I had no idea to where or from what I wanted to run. I controlled the impulse to run only by what seemed a great exertion of energy. I got onto my bunk, hoping, as I fell into a merciful sleep, that by morning the terror would have dissipated. Unfortunately I awoke to the same desperate impulse to run. I was afflicted by grief and despair as well as terror. I had no appetite and could think of nothing to look forward to. This went on for ten or twelve days. I ground through each day, peeling potatoes, forcing myself to eat a little food, attending class, trying to study. As early as the second day of this episode, I concluded that I was to some degree insane.

At the end of this period, I bought Joseph Fielding Smith's new book, *Man: His Origin and Destiny*, which attempted to refute evolution by geological catastrophism, the doctrine that the earth's fossil record was laid down, not gradually over vast eons, but suddenly in a relatively recent series of floods and other natural catastrophes. Having read Elder Smith's book, I wrote in my journal: "Now I must investigate the veracity of our scientists." Science, it appeared, was not solidly against a literal interpretation of Genesis. Perhaps my Mormon faith was credible after all. With that, my intense anxiety dissipated, and I resumed what I might call more normal emotions. However, my swing back toward faith must be described as tentative. I was much sobered about my future and far more wary about what unexplored distress might lie within my unconscious mind.

Of the two world views between which I wavered, one postulated a fundamentally domesticated universe, the other a fundamentally wild one. Christianity assumes that the supernatural predominates over the natural, that divine personality reigns, that heaven and hell are realities. The naturalistic view assumes that nature is predominant, that creative force has no personality, that the human spirit does not subsist beyond death. Just before the crisis described above, I ended an entry in my journal with this: "I feel I must have the truth; and yet I am so completely ill equipped to find truth. I shall work—respond to my effort, God. Give me truth or kill me. Life is bitter as gall without you. I do not want to be an animal." Three days later, with the crisis fully upon me, I wrote: "No, I do not want to be an animal, but I suppose that I am one."

Although Jerry and I continued to date, our intimacy was marred by the unspoken recognition of my lapse from faith. On the last evening before I went home for the summer, I was ill at ease with Jerry yet loath to say goodbye. She gave me instruction on sketching and we created a song at the piano, I devising the lyrics, she the music. When I finally left, she followed me from the door and asked whether I would accept a mission if I were called. I said I didn't know because I didn't know whether I would be teaching the truth. She said something of a rebuking sort, unusual for her. As I started to drive away, she came from the house and stopped me. She apologized for hurting my feelings and said she was for me and not against me.

Before leaving for ROTC summer camp, I tended to a matter of confession in Snowflake. During the general conference of the previous April, I had attended Saturday night priesthood meeting in the BYU Fieldhouse, where the preachments of the Brethren from Temple Square were broadcast, and had heard Joseph Fielding Smith warn that serious sexual sins could not be absolved simply by abandoning them; they had to be confessed to a proper ecclesiastic authority. My heart fell with this injunction. I saw no alternative to confessing myself a fornicator. On a Sunday morning about two months later, soon after I had returned to

Snowflake, I called on my bishop. This was one of the most difficult things I ever did. I had no assurance I would not be excommunicated. In childhood I had listened with something close to horror while excommunicated adulterers, newly rebaptized, wept openly in testimony meeting over their sexual transgressions.

The bishop was a tall, robust, bald rancher named Barr Turley, descended on both sides from the pioneer settlers of Snowflake. He invited me into his living room and sat facing me, still chewing his breakfast. This good man listened with astonishment while I confessed myself guilty of fornication. He did not ask for details nor did he ask me to identify my partner.

"You haven't been doing it lately?" he said.

"No, sir."

"Good," he said. "I respect you for having the courage to tell me about it. Now consider the matter closed. You don't have to tell anybody else about it, not even another church authority."

I was deeply grateful for this succinct management of my confession. There were stories about this bishop in his younger days. Maybe he knew that the best way to deal with guilt, assuming one has stopped sinning, is to forget about it.

Early in July, Roald hitchhiked from Provo to Snowflake, and he and I drove to March Air Force Base near Riverside, California. We were assigned to a barracks floor with about thirty Texans, drawling, good-natured fellows who were prone to boast and exaggerate just as I had always understood Texans did. I did not find summer camp unpleasant. New sights and a demanding schedule had a salutary effect on my emotions. We rose at dawn, performed calisthenics, and marched to breakfast in a cafeteria, where we were served abundant food. Through the day we attended lectures or made field visits to hangers, repair stations, and radar units. Evenings we relaxed in the barracks, writing letters and reading. At ten, lights dimmed and we went to bed. For me the most trying aspect of barracks life was the fact that the toilets stood in a long line without stalls or other concealment. I did not mind using the urinals in the presence of others but tried to restrict my use of the toilets to evenings or other times when the restroom was empty.

By an incredible coincidence, Jerry's parents left Provo and invested in a small restaurant in Riverside, only ten miles from the air base. On weekends I rode a bus into Riverside and dated Jerry. I was in a more believing mood, and our times together were harmonious. One evening we went to a movie and then talked for a long time under the palms of a Riverside park, unconcerned that the only other persons in the park were men, single and in pairs.

Back in Arizona after summer camp had ended, I worked for Southwest on the Mogollon Rim for three or four weeks. It was during this pe-

riod that I saw the only mountain lion I have ever seen in the wild, a half grown cub. Between jobs I induced Jerry to come stay at my mother's house after her parents had abandoned the restaurant in Riverside and moved to Mesa. Jerry gamely adapted to the rigors of my mother's domicile. She helped my mother cook and do dishes, and studied her genealogical papers with interest. There is no question Jerry won my mother's heart. A harmony of spirit existed between the two women; both were compassionate, serious minded, work oriented, and fervent in their faith. One of my chief regrets over not marrying Jerry is that she pleased my mother so much.

One evening Jerry and I had a long talk at the farm, where we had gone to milk the cow my mother kept. We both wept, releasing pent-up tension. According to my journal, I wept for Judas Iscariot, who, as I said to Jerry, was "a poor wretch who wasn't responsible for what he had done and rather than deserving imprecation and perdition, he of all men needed to be taken into the arms of Christ and comforted." How had I come by this astonishing pity for the most egregious sinner in the entire lore of Christendom?

Guilt for my recurrent disbelief weighed on me. Inwardly, I protested the condemnation of disbelief because it did not seem a matter of choice or volition. I have had an empirical bent all my life. For me, belief derives from evidence. A person can't will himself to believe in the absence of evidence. That's why I prayed so earnestly for a sign that God existed. I had come to feel that most sin has its roots in the unconscious, where choice has no play. In priesthood meeting one day, I called sin "a psychological morbidity," a heresy for which I was instantly rebuked by a graduate student in chemistry. It was an experimental sally on my part rather than a deeply fixed conviction. Yet it helps explain my pity for Judas.

On the evening before Jerry left Snowflake, my bishop invited me to visit him in his home. As I expected, he called me on a mission, and I accepted. I returned home and asked Jerry to pray with me. We knelt at the sofa in the living room and, as I recorded, "prayed that the obstacles would be removed from before me." This prayer was the climax of my relationship with Jerry. We felt unified and affectionate, and very hopeful that God would touch my spirit and make me a believer.

A few days later my stake president interviewed me and asked whether I was morally clean. I said I was. He then asked expressly whether I masturbated. I said I didn't, interpreting my frequent masturbation upon awakening from sleep at night as involuntary and, therefore, beyond the imputation of sin. The following week Leon and I drove all night to Salt Lake City for my interview with an apostle, Elder LeGrand Richards. Within a few days of our return to Snowflake, Leon departed for service in the U.S. Army, and I did not see him again until he visited me in Belgium almost a year later.

For the final three or four weeks that I was in Snowflake, I had a job stacking green lumber with Dwain at a planing mill. Dwain had also been called on a mission. He went to Salt Lake for a week for the customary orientation at the mission home, then returned to Snowflake to continue stacking lumber while waiting for a visa to Brazil. Rarely has a missionary viewed his approaching service with a more ribald resentment. He denounced the mission home with obscene eloquence. He scoffed at the temple ceremony and said the missionary lesson plans were little better than arm twisting. When he returned from Brazil two and a half years later, he was so mild and passive that I wondered whether I had ever known him before. From this I learned, if I hadn't known it before, that spiritual transitions can efface whole blocks of a person's former personality.

I was pleased to be called to the French mission, writing in my journal: "I would feel greatly disappointed if something went awry and I was forced to remain here." Reviewing my doubts, I declared: "Now I go out in ardor to preach to other people that my Church is the truth—which very item I doubted myself—and in honesty I cannot say that I know my church is truth, or that Christ yet lives, or that God exists. Yet I feel at ease about preaching such things." In October I quit my job and drove to LaSal for a final visit with Charles, Betty, and the newborn Collette. I helped Charles milk his cows and move a stack of hay. He and I hunted on the mountain and brought home three or four pine hens for Betty's oven. I saw deer in the fields at evening. At night I heard the transcendent yelp of coyotes. The wild beauty of LaSal bore in on me with the deep poignancy of imminent loss.

I returned to Snowflake for a few days. On the day I left for good, I called by the schoolroom where Mother was teaching and said a final goodbye. There had been a sweet harmony between us during these past few weeks. With deep regret I left her standing in her classroom door, little comforted by the knowledge that I was fulfilling her fondest dream by going on a mission.

I stayed overnight with Roald and Luana in Provo before continuing to Salt Lake for a week of indoctrination at the mission home. Jerry was in Provo, beginning her freshman year at BYU. I went to see her. We stood on her back porch, which overlooked the winking lights of the campus and city. For the first time in the nearly eleven months since we had begun to date, we hugged and kissed. I felt the most tenuous of emotions. All along I had treated her as a disembodied soul and could not now make any shift. Separation loomed in my mind. Two and a half years seemed interminable. At last I released her and struck off for Roald's place through the dark orchard below her house.

Elder Statesman: A Biography of J. Reuben Clark

D. Michael Quinn 600 pp., \$49.95, 1-56085-155-4



Young "Reube," as he was called, repeated eighth grade three times because it was the highest education available in rural Grantsville, Utah. In 1890, at the age of nineteen, he was accepted at Latter-day Saints College in Salt Lake City, there future LDS church apostle James Talmage became his mentor and eventually officiated in Clark's marriage to Luacine Savage, daughter of pioneer photographer Charles Savage. Clark went on to become U.S. Under-secretary of State and later Ambassador to Mexico, then abandoned his promising secular career to become counselor to three LDS church prophets. Though friends, Clark and his co-counselor, David O. McKay, sometimes approached politics and religion differently. In fact, many church leaders came to view themselves as either "Clark men" (pragmatists) or "McKay men" (idealists). D. Michael Quinn's long-awaited revision of Clark's life will continue the dialogue on the role of the church in the twentieth century.

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