

Common Greetings— *January 18th*

FORTY BELOW

The headline reads
30, 40, 50 below . . . !
For the first time in two winters
Fairbanks' official temperature falls
40 below. The chill's lucky for three
who predicted the dip to occur at 11 p.m.
January 18th, 1989.
The date catches my attention:
Dad died January 18th, a Saturday.
He was 42; I'm 42 . . .

this is the year I've waited for,
half fearing, half expecting
nothing. The oldest of three sons,
I was in fifth grade
when Dad died suddenly, a heart attack
in a dime store twenty miles from home.
Mom didn't drive so he sat in the car
waiting for her to finish shopping.
Perhaps he would've lived—
my brother Ken thinks so,
became a doctor
who works at not being like Dad.
But something happened at Anzio.
I never heard the full story;
I only know Dad didn't trust doctors.
He wouldn't talk about the war,
not even to Mom, but he must have known
he had problems.
He tried to quit smoking,
lost 70 pounds and got his waist
below 40.
He was buried in trousers
he hadn't been able to wear for years .

This year, January 18th again fell on the Sabbath, as it did in 1958 ... Dad died 56 years ago today, time that passed without calling much attention to itself, time I remembered when I was in Fairbanks:

CRANES

Three in May, five now, sandhills in the field,
pecking fallen grain. I saw them again today—

I followed them north last spring,
Lakeview, Paisley, Kenai, Fairbanks,
listening as long V's crossed the moon
like bombers returning from Germany.

Heavy wings lumber southbound,
join migrating flocks ...
I wonder what Dad thought as
he stood in German fields,
far from his home in Indiana,
or what he'd think of me,
alone in the Arctic
in an August rain.

* * *

FROSTED WINGS SHIMMER

over the gray Tanana as southbound
sandhills cross the crescent moon
like B-29s headed for the Rhine,
a river Dad crossed when twenty-nine

(when twenty-nine, I crossed the Yukon,
arrived in Kenai with four dollars and
the promise of work in a month). A farm
boy from Indiana, Dad's letters home

were published in his town newspaper.
Grandpa saved copies that I remember
seeing (I was too young to read) when
a boy on an Indiana farm—Dad wouldn't

talk about war; didn't live till memories,
like the warbles from high flying V's,
faded silent ... I've now lived longer,
been published in the local newspaper,

have had a world record and have seen
my children mature. Although the sun

hasn't set, the new moon arcs over
the Tanana where willows and birches

will bud again when sandhills return.
* * *

It is the concept of not talking about traumatic experiences that I want to briefly address today; for every person who survives the Second Passover liberation of Israel when a third of humanity suddenly perishes, followed by the Second Woe when a third of surviving humanity perishes, and that followed by a third part of surviving humanity again perishing when humanity attempts to resist the returning Messiah—every surviving person who doesn't or hasn't taken judgment upon him or herself will then physically live into the Millennium, but will live with changed human nature and will live with the trauma of the world's population going from seven billion to approximately seven hundred million in seven years ... post traumatic shock, yes, times ten.

Dad was born in 1915, and was twenty five when drafted in, I believe, the second round of America's first peacetime Selective Service lottery: he was in basic training at Fort Ord summer of 1941, met Mom on the bus when returning from advance training at Fort Lewis, and was in the first American landing in Tunisia. But he died before I was old enough to ask questions he wouldn't have answered. He drove truck throughout the War: Third Division, Fifteenth Infantry, C Company. What I know is that according to the Advance Service Rating Score, Dad had, I believe, 125 points and was discharged from the Army in July 1945. He married Mom within a month: they honeymooned in Oregon, and I came along fourteen months later.

What I also know is that when I was a small child, Dad still didn't wait for the car to stop before he bailed out. It wasn't until about when he returned to driving truck in 1949 that he waited until the vehicle came to a complete stop before he got out.

A lot of life is represented by very few words.

There were a couple of things that Dad didn't want us three boys to do, the first of which was to go into the military and the second being ride motorcycles ... I tried to enlist three times in the Vietnam War era and the Army wouldn't take me: too big, too muscular. Then my local draft board tried to draft me three times, same story. I was in shape at 265 pounds and six feet tall, 29 inch inseam (short legs). But my brothers Ben and Ken both enlisted. Ben saw twenty-seven months in-country service as a Sea-Bee; Ken served his tour as a military doctor in Honolulu and in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Neither of them remembered enough about Dad to question enlisting, but then, I didn't either.

It was in the loneliness of the Arctic, far from the saltwater of Kodiak, when I began to consider why a person cannot talk about what the person has experienced; for even as a writer with many books behind me, there are things about which I don't talk, things that happened, things I'm not necessarily proud-of, things that hurt when even remembered. But not post traumatic shock—

My brother Ben claims not to remember years of his life. I used to doubt him, but not anymore. The mind does, indeed, protect itself by not remembering experiences that occurred; by denying itself access to these memories until the memories themselves have been overwritten by other experiences. Then it is the other experiences that are remembered.

One thing I have experienced and have observed in others is that the passage of time occurs at a “realized rate” proportional to the amount of stress the person is under: the greater the stress, the slower time seems to pass. Time seemed to stand still for the last six feet of thirty-mile-an-hour travel before a head-on collision with a Peterbilt: I was traveling roughly forty-four feet a second. To travel six feet would have taken a seventh of a second; yet ten minutes or more seemed to pass with me fully aware of what was to happen but unable to do anything to prevent impact. I watched the distance slowly close, at first unbelieving—*what is that truck doing in my lane*—then realizing the finality of the head-on, but able to even tighten muscles. So I was tense from having just steered out of a slide on an icy road; from having just returned to my lane after being across the centerline; and I was surprised to find an eighteen-wheeler in front of me, making a bad situation even worse and seeming to stop the passage of time, suggesting that human perception of the passage of time is in relationship to the amount of stress the person undergoes. For me, on October 30, 1984, time passed at one-seventh of its perceived “normal” rate. And if any sort of a corresponding relationship could be sustained for the seven endtime years of tribulation, years that will be unlike any period that has previously befallen humankind in their intensity, then these seven years will seem a stretch from a jubilee year to a jubilee year. The seven endtime years of tribulation will seem to last forever when in reality (for living entities outside of the stress zone) these years will pass very quickly.

What will occur beginning with the Second Passover liberation of Israel will be traumatic enough for human persons not initially knowing or understanding what is happening to significantly raise stress levels to a point where a day will seem not to pass; will seem to be a week long.

What Dad could have addressed was being pinned down on the beach at Anzio: how long did each hour seem to be? How fast must time seem to pass before a person can “instinctively” react. I slammed a door when Ben first returned from Vietnam. He was over the couch and behind it before I turned my head, his reflexes that quick. So can a person become accustomed to a slower passage of time (because of high stress) and respond in a *normal manner* in this perceived slower passage of time, with this new *normal* then becoming translated into much quicker reactions in perceived “normal” stress and “normal” passage of time?

The preceding question actually has theological value: in the antediluvian age, human persons lived long lives, lived life-spans beyond what a person lives today in this present era. Because a human body kills itself—is auto suicidal—which is what the aging process is about, it is theoretically possible to live these long life-spans if that indwelling auto-suicidal gene is turned off ... at the Second Passover

liberation of Israel, liberation will be from indwelling “sin” and “death”: liberation of Israel will come about through the Christian being filled with spirit, the divine breath [life force] of God in the breath [life-giving force] of Christ, thereby imparting to Christians the mind of Christ and the nature of Christ, an impartation that will cause the Law to be written on hearts and placed in minds so that all Christians know the Lord and are therefore finally under the New Covenant.

With the Second Passover liberation from indwelling sin and death, Christians will no longer die from internal causes, the chief of which is the auto-suicidal gene that kills the fleshly body and that was given to humanity when Adam ate forbidden fruit, with the activation of this gene *tweaked* when humanity was baptized into death in the days of Noah. With the Second Passover, that auto-suicidal gene gets turned off. So it isn't that humanity will become immortal—the flesh will always be mortal, perishable—but that with liberation from indwelling death, the human person will die from external causes, such as martyrdom or earthquakes bringing buildings down upon the person. The person will not die from pneumonia or cancer, a heart attack or old age.

In the Millennium, the thousand year long reign of Christ Jesus as Lord of lords and King of kings, there will be no indwelling death in any person. All of humanity will have been liberated from sin and death as Christians were liberated at the Second Passover. So how long will a person live? The person who doesn't take judgment upon him or herself during the Affliction (the first 1260 days of seven endtime years) or during the Endurance (the last 1260 days) and who continues to live physically will enter the Millennium as a living human person who is without sin and who has the mind of Christ and who will live until the Adversary is released from his chains after the thousand years, barring accidental death. When the Adversary is released, this person will be older than Methuselah who lived 969 years. And time will seem to fly for the person, whose movements—if viewed from our present “normal” perception of time—would seem to be in slow motion.

During the Millennium, there will be no transactions. Every person will live under the person's own vine and will eat from the person's own orchard and field. And the Adversary, when released from his chains, will use what humanity has accomplished in our stressful “normal” perception of time to deceive the corners of the earth and bring them against the saints; for when humanity is again in the presence of the Adversary, stress levels will rise and time will seem to slow down, thereby permitting more to be accomplished in less time ... a person can dive behind a couch at nearly the speed of sound.

The person experiencing post traumatic stress experiences competing *normal passages of time*, with one normal coming from the battlefield and the other normal that of civilian life. These two (or more) “normals” are not reconcilable; hence, the mind needs to protect its sanity and what seems to be abnormal behavior ensues.

Now, who am I to discuss this subject: Mom and Dad left Indiana in 1956 and moved to Oregon where there was no support community, no friends, no family;

then Dad died suddenly in January 1958. I did 6th, 7th, and 8th grades in one school year and started high school when 12. Mom remarried when I was 12, married a Seventh Day Adventist—Mom had been raised a Unitarian, and as an adult didn't attend church. I started college when 16, and Mom committed suicide while I was still 16. The court pronounced me an emancipated minor, and I married at 18, took a job in the pulp mill at Toledo, Oregon, and opened a gunshop when 20. And I actually thought I was immune to depression: I was immune until the winter 1991-92, when alone for the first time since marrying (two daughters were still in Fairbanks, attending UAF, and one had returned to Anchorage to attend UAA). I was living in a little Mormon town south of Pocatello, and living on a Doctor of Arts stipend from Idaho State University. I was too broke to return to Kodiak, which was then home; too broke to buy groceries other than for a 50 pound sack of beans; and too broke to socialize. I had never really felt alone in the Aleutians, but I did that first winter in Idaho—and I got to address all of those things I had suppressed when a teenager, and I got to address them alone for that is where they must be overcome.

So I do know a little of what I write. I have experienced gradual shifts in my “normal” perception of time, accomplishing in times of stress an impressive amount of work even though I seemed not to have worked harder or faster than I usually work. I have also, when not under apparent stress, produced little work despite seeming to have been equally diligent. Why is that? And how does this relate to the Tribulation and the Millennium—the two subjects are related; for during the seven endtime years of tribulation, amazing feats will be accomplished, and during the Millennium, little will seem to get accomplished. Without the stress produced by the Adversary being the reigning prince of this world, the prince of the power of the air, the *new normal* for the passage of time will be the annual crop cycle. In the Millennium, a person will actually sit and watch the person's garden grow and will be entertained by the birds and the bees ... what will go on in Vegas will be the blooming of cacti and yucca plants, and these blooms will stay there; so that what happens in Vegas will truly stay in Vegas to produce generation after generation of cacti, their fruits harvested by deer and mice and shepherd boys that will never see a floor show, nor even imagine a spray of dyed ostrich plumes concealing perceived nakedness.

I know a little of why Dad didn't want his sons to ride motorcycles: on the gravel roads of rural Indiana, he had taken a couple of pretty good spills and survived. But close friends hadn't. The brother of his brother-in-law hadn't. And in the months before he died, he still had gravel working its way out of his arms from his spills. However, since recrossing the Mississippi in 2000, I have had a couple of glass shards from a traffic accident in 1978, work their way out of my scalp: at least one is still imbedded near where the others were.

From our perspective, it's difficult to imagine a culture without transactions, and difficult to imagine old age not ending life in less than 120 years. It's difficult to imagine a new normal for the passage of time, a new normal that permits a person to slow down and smell the roses, a cliché that has significance in this present world ... what would the world be like if it was normal to smell the roses

and watch bees work bean blossoms, squash blossoms, cucumber blossoms? Would the person who lives from this present age into the Millennium speak to his or her offspring about this age? Or would the person be as Dad was, silent about the War, not willing that his sons go to war; but by not speaking out forcefully against going to war, his sons either went or were willing to go.

In John's vision, we see,

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while. ...

And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. (Rev 20:1-3, 7-10)

The prophet Ezekiel saw two occasions—not one, the first physical and the second spiritual—when Gog comes against first many peoples gathered on the mountains of Israel (Ezek 38:8), then after the thousand years, against the mountains of Israel (Ezek 39:2). It is this latter coming against Israel that occurs immediately before the great White Throne Judgment. And how successful the Adversary will be in bringing many with him into the lake of fire is dependent upon those who have previously lived under him telling what they know about his form of war, that of competition and transactions.

The ones who will need to speak after the thousand years are today alive. But they will not want to speak. They will be like Dad, like Ben, like others who have returned home from Iraq or Afghanistan. The Adversary would have no success at all when loosed from his chains if they would speak, but it might be that they cannot. My observation is that those who have really experienced combat can't speak of it whereas they who speak experienced very little. And this will apparently be the case through the Millennium for those who have lived under Satan and his angels.

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