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Resonance
A path to faith and freedom

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Somehow, if there is a god, we have to be able to communicate with him. After several thousand years we have probably exhausted our efforts to perceive him through our senses. But we do not perceive our mental activities either; we get them directly through experience. Spirit does not live in time and space. Maybe it exists everywhere, only collapsing into form in conjunction with consciousness, like Schrodinger’s cat.

Upon some form of metaphysics sits our subjectivity, which we experience but do not literally perceive. Ernest Hocking thinks we communicate with God subjectively. I hope to pursue that avenue here. It will entail a lot of reading, but all of which is going to have to be grounded in experience. We win or lose on the field, not in front of a blackboard.

I walked a mile with Pleasure; She chatted all the way; But left me none the wiser For all she had to say. I walked a mile with Sorrow; And near a word said she; But, oh! The things I learned from her, When Sorrow walked with me. —Robert Browning.
To the critters—
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I began by a reference to Fitz James Stephen; let me end by a quotation from him. “What do you think of yourself? What do you think of the world?” . . . These are questions with which all must deal as it seems good to them. They are riddles of the Sphinx, and in some way or other we must deal with them . . . In all important transactions of life we have to take a leap in the dark. . . . If we decide to leave the riddles unanswered, that is a choice; if we waver in our answer, that, too, is a choice: but whatever choice we make, we make it at our peril. If a man chooses to turn his back altogether on God and the future, no one can prevent him; no one can show beyond reasonable doubt that he is mistaken. If a man thinks otherwise and acts as he thinks, I do not see that any one can prove that he is mistaken. Each must act as he thinks best; and if he is wrong, so much the worse for him. We stand on a mountain pass in the midst of whirling snow and blinding mist, through which we get glimpses now and then of paths which may be deceptive. If we stand still we shall be frozen to death. If we take the wrong road we shall be dashed to pieces, We do not certainly know whether there is any right one. What must we do? ‘Be strong and of good courage.’ Act for the best, hope for the best, and take what comes . . . If death ends all, we cannot meet death better.”

—William James
quoting F. J. Stephen
Preface

Here we are, the day after the edge of goodbye. One or two days of appreciation of what came before and it is back to work. This is not effort; it is more like addiction. But all addictions are not bad—honesty, diligence, endeavor, for example. They are called habits. There are spot pleasures (pick your choice), but even those are not intrinsic in the object. Some people like caviar—go figure. A successful fit between us and the object is what provides most of the satisfaction. In reviewing the proofs from the printer for *Coming Home* I would have been relatively indifferent to the work had it not been my own. The accomplishment was central to the satisfaction. The review was not so much a celebration as an appreciation. I was proud and relatively unassailable, if only for a brief few days.

But no whales have been saved, no treaties signed, merely a plan that when mixed with effort could grow into something enduring. Writing this new book will provide some of that effort. The game plan does not change. We simply head to the practice field where we can fashion idea into reality—simple in conception, but difficult in practice where it requires blood, sweat, and tears. Why make the effort? Because we can. It is what we do. And because we must.

I did not plan it this way, but my writing since retirement is taking the form of a trilogy. *Requiem* was broad; I felt it to be my swan song, trying to document any lessons learned over the years. It did that, but in doing so only opened more doors, and in unexpected directions. This journey could simply be an understandable, but nevertheless disguised, desperate attempt to avoid the finality of death. A real man perhaps would simply stand up and “take it like a man”, or today, like a man or woman.

But have we settled whether the bottom line is ashes to ashes? How would we do that? We established in *Coming Home* that empiricism does not have the last word on truth. Subjectivity is not perceptible, and yet it supports our most fundamental beliefs. No one does anything, let alone determine truth, just out of curiosity. We are not random. Everyone is vested in their actions, all the way down. Someone who pretends to be indifferent just to presume superiority might simply be too afraid to face his or her own fears. Curiosity is hardly the impetus to open the door on a dragon.

If we have to be indifferent to be rational, and are simply too fearful to include passion with truth, then we deserve neither passion nor truth. Life may not be a beach; rather, it appears more like a challenge.

And hence the trek continues. Fun or purpose? That choice seems to follow us everywhere. Both might be addictive, but only one has direction. Place your bet as if your life depends on it, because it does, qualitatively and quantitatively.
Introduction
Chapter One
A Frontier Lady

Truth, like gold, is to be obtained not by its growth, but by washing away from it all that is not gold. —Leo Tolstoy

The reading remains a constant. If that stops so does the music. Yet reading is not an end; living is. Reading is a part, living is the whole, yet reading is a part of the whole. Reading gives us new ideas, without which we shall stall, but ideas are not agents. They do not start the engine; they guide the trip.

And mental has its laws. Shockingly, psychology rarely attends to them. This is what we think with, not what we think of. Kant addressed this in his opus, The Critique of Pure Reason. He came up with perhaps thirteen laws of reason. I only remember three: time, space, and cause. But these are critical because it means that time, space, and cause are things we bring to the fair, rather than win there. Without the mental camera of time, space, and cause, we do not see anything. This is pretty big stuff, a Copernican revolution.

Thus there are mental laws, just like physical laws. We are not materialists, who simply reduce mental to functions of physical, and therefore only need physical laws. Ideas do not just run around doing anything they please. They are drawn to other ideas, not exactly like mental gravity, but perhaps inversely to the square of the distance between identity. Their function is to turn our feelings into purpose, which eventually funds itself in knowledge and competency. Competency is the currency we carry in our pockets upon meeting the world. With each accomplishment we become more inclusive, efficient, capable, resonant, and compassionate — i.e. more in touch with God. Perhaps we even become One with Him, evolving together in an ever improving world.

God is probably not incomprehensibly omnipotent. He would not try to fashion a round square, as any omnipotence would cost him in omniscience. And if he wants to delegate actual purpose, he cannot just give it to puppets. So mistakes will be made. But so then is a team, and teamwork is always better than autocracy. It is a quantum world. There are quantum jumps. Our job with God is perhaps to fix the less impressive leaps.

Well this is a rather audacious beginning, perhaps pretentious. The standard line about issues which cannot be resolved by evidence-based data is that they are useless. Hooray for the materialists in their certainty, but since they rule out subjectivity axiomatically, they would not know an intuition if they tripped over it. Materialists cannot get out of Socrates’ starting gate. Not all ignorance is inability to see; much is refusal to look. Half of our information and all of our meaning comes from inside of us.

So much for looking, what about sacrilege? There are sacred books that tell us the truth of our world. Take your pick. That is the problem. With disagreement and the danger of dogma perhaps every two thousand years or so we should update our “truth” with contemporary insights. We are losing faith in God today because it becomes more and more difficult to ignore our knowledge. We were given the ability to reason. Was that just to use it once and forever close the Book to review?

It’s not possible for us to just turn our back on problems: What came before eternity, what does space expand into, what happened to get the Big Bang ready to bang? We can look away, but in so doing the mind shuts a door that we have to pay to keep closed. Ignorance is not bliss; it is a limit to our creativity and competency. We are running low on both of these today and
will just freeze to death standing here doing nothing.

So we have a complete theory of the world, and it is better being person rather than one given to or commanded of me. The mind will poke into First Cause. We can either try to follow it or shut the door. Either one is a choice. Both have consequences. My vision of the world, obtained in part from others, is that of a work in progress, caused by a living Spirit, which shows itself in different forms. We work together with God, or rather are a part of God, and as One work to foster an ever improving world and gain ever increasing competency.

It is a view. It takes us to the top. No door is closed on any dragon here, and the structure remains open for review. If this system continues to resonate, meaning carry its own authenticity, it shall remain my personal truth. Beliefs are personal. We earn conviction, not borrow it.

Intuition led me to start this book with Sarah Eleanor Royce. While she is interesting in herself, that is, however, not the point here. My point, the only one, is to seek a closer relationship with God. Subjectivity is hopefully the avenue to do that, but subjectivity does not just exist by itself. Viewing subjectivity in that manner would be like trying to take a picture of a camera’s lens. Having no object for a subject would default to viewing subjectivity itself, and thus simply chase its tail. Subjectivity can look at memory, which is stored experience, but without reality memory is vulnerable to mere imagination—enter unicorns, dragons, fairies and archangels. We verify nothing with subjectivity alone. We seek confirmation, which means reality, requiring something outside ourselves. Solipsism is the danger in pure subjectivity. But pure objectivity has its danger too, which is lack of meaning.

Sarah Royce was the mother of Josiah Royce, a leading American idealist at the beginning of the twentieth century. Intuition, again, leads me to want to follow Josiah in his theory of being. He was a teacher of William Hocking, the hero of my previous book. It made sense to track the evolution of Hocking’s ideas. Sarah Royce is not going to create ontological insights, that is not what she did. But she parented the source of those ideas, not unlike God parents the arts.

And reading her was a pleasant interlude to constant focus on abstraction. Her’s is a narrative, it reads like a story, and comes together just like random notes when they are part of a song. But reading her was more than that. She became a hero to me. I know not why. Perhaps ineffability is best understood by sneaking up on it from its flank. I would no doubt better grasp Josiah by understanding his development. So I read her book, *A Frontier Lady*. Reading is cheap, insights are precious.

The book is a two day read, and none of it falls away with turning the pages. The ideas stay together like a melody. Perhaps I contrasted Josiah’s experience with my own, and see the treasure that was his family. Night and day comes to mind. And Josiah loses me half way through his career. Since I valued greatly his early works, it bothered me to realize that I had to leave him with the later. Knowing what happened might help me continue to appreciate what (in my opinion) he did best. It was worth saving.

A second reading of *A Frontier Lady* gave me different perspectives. Some of the extremely dangerous aspects of the story began to look simply imprudent. And the whole experience itself seemed like a product of disorganization rather than courage. And on the second read I was much more attuned to Sarah’s mystic orientation to God, which appears to be what supported her amazing determination in the midst of disaster. She never lost her balance. She was a consummately compassionate and reflective individual. She made everyone around her better, and yet working offstage rather than on, she was not properly appreciated. This is beginning to resonate with me.

How this all relates to Josiah we will address, as it is important. But here the driving importance of *A Frontier Lady* is to reflect on what about it perks my intuition to begin this book with Sarah Royce. Again, connection to God is not the main thing; the two must be related.

Josiah Royce was born in Grass Valley, California in 1855. At age 30 he was asked by the State of California to write the history of the state. Josiah asked his mother to write her story, which involved arriving there by covered wagon in 1849 and the early years in the territory. She did so with no thought of publication. It was simply to give information to Josiah to help him write his history book for the state, which he did (*California, a study of American Character*). This aspect adds a different quality to Sarah’s work. It is casual, yet complete. Not quite a diary, not quite a book, with style and simplicity she gives objective and subjective accounts of events, and addresses every-
thing one would want to know, leaving nothing out and yet not getting offensive or pretentious. Perhaps this is what made her work so compelling. One felt the person through her presentation, and the endearing character stood out through her unobtrusive eloquence. Obviously others saw this as well, because the effort was published itself as a book forty years later.

Trains, planes, and automobiles offered no assistance back then. A covered wagons sufficed, until it didn’t, all the way from Council Bluffs to the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Several months before they had moved from New York to a small village just across the Mississippi River. Crossing Iowa was practice with their new wagon, but roads ceased to exist from Council Bluffs on. Mud replaced them, as rain seemed to track their party all across the prairie. The wagon wheels often would sink up to the axles in mud, and oxen had to be swam across rising rivers. I got fatigued just drinking my coffee reading about this trip, so you can imagine what it was like in real time. Indians, snow, cholera, and desert and you can imagine the everyday snags. The Indians were not happy with the intruders, while armed with rifles and resentment. The Royces were not with many other wagons at any time and alone from St. Lake City on. Their party included Sarah, her husband, a two year old daughter, an elderly man they met along the trip, and two young men who rode their own horses, and camped close by but not quite with them. Five and one-half people, at one point facing twenty Indians. There were no casinos back then.

The Royces were cautioned by everyone in St. Lake City to take the southern route because it was late in the season, but they set out north, alone, anyway. Missing the last water source they had to turn back fifteen miles in the Carson desert, with little water for themselves and none for the oxen. And finally, in the Sierra-Nevada mountains they were saved only because a United States outpost in the Sacramento valley sent several soldiers to meet them, having been alerted by a previous travelers they were coming. Without that help, which included four pack mules to replace the wagon for their supplies they would never had made it. The day after rescue a blizzard hit which would have ended their story. This was not simply a daring, or courageous adventure; it was somehow driven, and not with great forethought. I do not fault Sarah Royce for this injudiciousness, but she subscribed to it, which cannot be filed in the plus column.
Nevertheless, my admiration for her has returned. She was compelling not so much is what she did, but it how she did it. Sarah was not Miss America, a candidate for the Presidency, or a corporate CEO. But she made everyone around her better, fostered an environment that allowed Josiah to become the best he could be, keep her composure when all else were losing theirs, and found beauty around her every day rather than seeking it two weeks a year in Paris or Bermuda. I noticed her relation to God more on this second read and paid more attention to the editors comments about spirituality/religion.

She was a puritanical Christian, but broke from the religious tradition to become more mystic. I am not a theological scholar, but I am going to take the difference between puritanical and mystics as being that she had a personal relationship with God rather than one mediated through some human agent. This could be wrong, officially, but it will not matter for us as long as we know what we mean. I am going to call someone who follows the spirit of the law a mystic, and one who follows the letter of the law a puritan. Webster defines puritanical and having a rigid moral code, so that works.

Sarah Royce was consummately moral although not on orders from above, but rather with communication from alongside. She and God walked together through life, and that seemed to make the difference. I think this is useful for us in finding God. Her finest moments, by her own account, were often at the end of the day, when the children all tucked away, the chores all done, and she was able to play her melodeon to add music to a heartfelt appreciation for and connection with a Higher Power. It wasn’t just the church; it was God. It is not like Sarah was a god, but she was god-like in Hocking’s perspective—not in the things she did, but in the things she fostered and inspired.

Surrounded by Indians without losing her calm, confidently making a life and death decision to turn back in the Carson desert, and getting the hell out of their first house in Green River, several miles outside of town, when her husband was not infrequently in Sacramento to get supplies for their store. She and God made these decisions. She could not have made them by herself. But she did make the decision to accept a personal relation with God and stuck with it, even though doing so conflicted with her puritanical church. And since there is no empirical method one way or the other to verify a communication with God, perhaps it becomes a quantum issue which path one takes (the choosing itself is what creates reality). As in the above James quote, one will simply freeze to death standing still. Sarah Royce did not stand still. She chose her paths and gained confidence doing so, certain she was acting with God—and who can prove otherwise?

I want to have that kind of trust. She is an example. Perhaps one that is heaven sent, not unlike Jesus, although minus the god status. The wondrous occurs daily when one experiences it in a caring relationship. She elevated everyone around her, yet never drew attention to herself. This is godlike. I did not notice on my first read of her book how she communed with God. I figured she had a garden variety religious experience. But not so, and I contend this communication is what made her special. That is why I start my book with her. These are the kind of people who draw society together. California progressed because of people like her. (All good things end.) She taught school, energized religion, reflected on issues, and genuinely cared for other beings. This is a good place to begin a book.

Sarah never mentioned her husband my name, but then she left out most other names as well. Still, I wonder why these people were drawn to take such chances, and have a hard time figuring her out on that. Grabbing for the gold ring was not her style. Perhaps her back stage presence limited her exposure. People did not see the treasure within. I am inclined to fit her husband into that slot. He was rather casual about running overnight to Sacramento and leaving her to fend for herself and the children. She did not tolerate that long and demanded they move more into town. But why did he not see this?

Finally, I got onto this path by having problems with Josiah Royces work. To the degree that I thought his early works were inspiring, I failed to find that feeling later on. Is it possible that Josiah left undeveloped California to find scholastic treasure (gold) in Boston? Was his such a quest as that of his parents? And if so, did he ever fit into the class society of Harvard and Boston. He was probably always seen as unwashed. In 1907 he had to commit his second son to a mental institution, and his closest associate at Harvard, William James died. Two years later a son died of typhoid. A frontier person in a “foreign land” would never be well grounded. Because of these traumas and did he revert to the essentials of his early life, loyalty and
community. Sarah was consistently loyal beyond everything to her personal God, and community was the social experience of the day as it coalesced, in large part due to Sarah in the mining towns. Those were good times and Boston perhaps not so much.

Loyalty is fine, but Josiah made it almost autonomous. Loyalty is a two way street. Trustworthy is the other half. Loyalty for its own sake is counterfeit. The story of Job displays that tragically. We will get to that later on. I felt that Josiah made loyalty valuable in itself, “loyalty to loyalty” as though it could grow by rote or perhaps become an agent. He annoyed more than just me by his insistence on it. There are other qualities you know: competency, compassion, empathy, caring, courage, discipline.

And I thought he left his wonderful conjecture of us all being One with God for which he substituted community. Did Josiah seek God in academia, only to lose the mystical orientation practiced by his mother. And then did he try to substitute community for God. Things were not going well for him personally from at least 1907 on and he seems to have secularized his spirituality to grab onto something tangible as a life raft. Such an interpretation helps me in that I can hold to his early stuff and jettison the later without having to feel it entails some logical error. Quite simply, he did what everyone did. They attributed the magic of their lives to something outside rather than inside and threw away the wonder of personal spirituality for an empirical substitute. Cooperation with God is not a beach, but it offers more to do than drink piña coladas. Perhaps Josiah threw away spiritual for the physical. Should we advertise personal truth more or would that destroy its essence. Do the best doctors have the biggest advertisements? Josiah had a near perfect environment growing up which allowed him to be the best he could be, and perhaps he threw it away for a townhouse on Beacon Street. Be careful what you wish for. It is the together that matters; not the address.

What if paradise is a round square. Everyone might reach for it, but even Omnipotent cannot accomplish the nonsensical. Delegated genuine purpose cannot be without limits either because the agent has to be free to make mistakes. If God has to deal with reality, which makes pure fantasy impossible, then we would be fine with that as long as we are all in this together. A glass half full looks pretty good if full is impossible. But loyalty is not independent as Josiah wants to see it. Loyalty goes a long way, but only if met by trustworthy. Without the reciprocity it is pointless and destructive.

Also, our most satisfying experiences are those earned against resistance. Competence is not simply a series of full glasses. It is the result of our reaction to half full. Sarah Eleanor Royce offers inspiration to deal with glasses half full. She does not fill them up.

Perhaps people living in truth just go quietly about their business. After all, truth speaks for itself. So they might go unnoticed; but they might not care. Humanity is not the Absolute.
Chapter Two

Cast Away

C ast Away was a motion picture in 2000 with Tom Hanks, one of my favorite films, and not merely of a series of car chases or machine gun fire. It carries a message, rather than trying to escape one.

Cast Away in People magazine, in 1997, was the story of my life, along with two other adoptees, the three of us having been left on door steps or park benches. ABC flew the three of us street urchins to New York to tape a pilot episode of a new TV show, although I do not know if it ever got on the air.

Cast Away here today becomes a chapter because this issue is central to this book. Philosophy is not about blank contemplation. It is about reason added to will to produce purpose. Deep tendon reflexes and startle reactions are not actions; they are reactions—no self has to intermediate as agent. But without a self one will never write a chapter in a book. Chapters are not reflexes. Reflexes have a purpose, but are not purposeful.

This chapter might become central to my entire trilogy of writing. It is nice to have a purpose, the basic one of my recent efforts being to find an experiential connection to God. But as I

Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you get neither.
—C. S. Lewis
continue on this path, it becomes more estranged from society, and I start to resemble Tom Hanks in *Cast Away*. In the movie he was stranded alone on an island following an airplane crash. Pursuing my path leads me to my own island. Christianity does not work for me—there is too much dogma and too many miracles to keep reason afloat. Philosophically I embrace absolute Idealism, which places Spirit at the center of the universe but has few adherents today. Today all is realism, positivism, materialism, or physicalism, which appear to be synonyms for the idea that everything is made out of matter and there is no god. You can see the problem immediately about philosophy when people cannot even agree what to call the elephant in the room.

I can grasp philosophy, barely, but that is not the point. No one enjoys living in abstractions, the goal is to combine them into a more effective reality. But philosophy can be like quick sand; the more one struggles with it the deeper it gets. The system I embrace here is a form of idealism, which sponsors real, albeit not without some reflection. But the concept “real” is not itself merely self-evident. We usually just presume it rather than understand it. Real is obvious only to the degree that one does not verify its credentials. In essence, reality is idea backed up by experience. For example, one might think there is a tree in the yard, but it could be merely imagination. Reality enters when one walks outside and perceives a tree. Only then is it considered real. But experience is more than just perception, and perception is more than reception. Kant got to the point about reality, which he called the “thing in itself”, that it was something we could never perceive or know anything about. What you see is not what you get. So determining reality is not as easy as we think. But that does not mean you should stand in front of a fast moving train.

Resonance in this book is a metaphor for experience. Experience then becomes the verifier for truth, hence idea becomes “real”. There is a major issue here, however, in that science excludes subjectivity. All is supposed to be perception, but more than half of our experience is subjective. As I peruse my memories everything seems to be anchored in affect, not pictures. I believe, following the work of William Ernest Hocking as I presented in *Coming Home*, that communication with God is subjective, not objective. God is not going to be on the stage pulling rabbits out of hats; he is going to be off-stage “parenting” our efforts to produce value. God is going to be idea with affect, essentially experience, essentially truth, essentially honest communication. I feel more whole following this conception, but also more wholly alone. However, if feeling more integrated reflects a communication with God, then I am anything but alone. And who can prove that I am wrong about this, Steven Hawking? Hawking (not Hocking) feels that the universe is caused by the law of gravity. That is like saying we get to the store by internal combustion. Perhaps too many facts obscure the truth, just like Berkeley’s dust.

As my focus now shifts progressively to subjective and away from objective, I swim progressively less with the other fishes, to the point that I actually reach the level of isolation for Tom Hanks in *Cast Away*. My truth fits no one in my circle. I have become essentially alone, a Cast Away. Perhaps that is fitting, as it is how *People* magazine saw me.

A moment of clarity hit me in writing a comment to my high school class on Classmates.com. I am struck by its conclusion, and that leads me to the plan I shall be relating to you with this chapter. Here is the post on Classmates:

"The past is not dead, it is not even past". I keep re-living that precept today, which relates to my experi-ence of having a judge ask me at age twelve if I wanted to be adopted by the Andersens or go to a boy’s home. (I was a black-market placement with them as an infant.) It seemed a simple issue of security back then. Today I cannot stop dramatizing it as a choice between disingenuous in heaven or reality in hell. I chose heaven back then and ended with emp-ty. Fortunately the past is not dead yet, and I get a chance today to choose reality. But, as expected, hell follows with it—just look at the content of this post. Pain, loss, suffering and stress exists in hell, but so does hope. Empty, however, leads nowhere. Purpose and hope might be as good as it gets, even in hell.

The take home message here is to pay cash for your hope. Do not buy it on credit.

So off I go to do real—and fend off the bats.
Quite simply, if hope and hell are for me tied together, then the best plan available is to hope for the best and prepare for the worst. I am more efficient in a lower weight class.

The hope part is easy, but it is entirely contingent on preparation, and preparation in hell does not sound like too much fun. This is where the idea meets the road. Otherwise one is just idling at a stop sign, or worse, in the garage.

So bring it on. If I am essentially alone, then so be it, and it appears to be that way. My experience is deviant enough to get into People magazine under the pathetic title of Cast Away. That does not just Go Away. My experience is pretty close to the idea of hell and offers little more than “perhaps”. I am no longer young, and all my running, which included eighteen marathons and added up to running perhaps fourteen times across the United States, has damaged some joints. Independence is essential to creativity—he who pays the piper calls the tune—and not by choice I have become such an odd duck that if I wish to perceive the truth I had better be able to make it on my own—like Tom Hanks on his island.

So here is the plan. I shall lose weight to the point that I reach my best competition weight for today. I wrestled one-ninety-ones in high school, but the one-fifty-four division looks better today. Fifty pounds of weight might be worth fifteen years in age. This is not simply idle contemplation, nor is it pie in the sky. It is life in hell, with hope, in an effort to pursue my connection to God, with as much authority and grace as possible. This will be my Sarah Royce trip across the plains. Hope lives at the other end. Effort and determination will be required today. I intend to eat 700 calories a day, back loaded to the evening. Any less calories and the body breaks down protein to feed the brain. This little plan is not for aesthetics; it is to perceive truth. If I am going to increase competence, then anything less is day dreaming. There is gold in them hills in the future, and hopefully not titanium in my hips or lead in my ass. Like Sarah Royce’s work, this shall be a diary of my journey, a trip to personal truth and connection. And like her book its publication is essentially incidental.

Will this prove anything? No, it is unlikely that we ever prove anything that is not pure abstraction. We are sure that two plus two equals four, because it carries its a warrant in its own definition. But the real world is inductive, not deductive, and inductive is never absolute—good enough for space travel, but never exempt from reflection. Only God has certainty, because he created it all—or so we conclude, subject to reflection. Belief is always a hypothesis, unless we are gods—and then we only play one in our arrogance.

Day One: There are more than a few problems to this exercise. First, I do not know what to call it. Literally, this is a report of a diet. What is the big deal there? Then again, things that we take for granted cannot justify themselves under close examination. I understand why philosophers are given little credit for endless work. Blank contemplation is what people call it. Berkeley said we raise a dust and then complain we cannot see. I am on a diet here and it seems like an avenue to secrets of the universe. I will live with that, but it certainly does not inspire confidence. Surrender might make more sense.

And my literary approach is just as confused. There are two analogies to use. I can go with Cast Away, which stressesaloneness, or compare Sarah Royce’s perilous journey. Cast Away reflects content; wagon train stresses process. Perhaps I will use them both and simply live with the dissonance. After all there are several very significant positions in my life that currently seem to drive the wagon or increase the isolation.

As a diet, the endeavor fits nicely into materialism. I need to walk better. Surgery is an option, but then I run into
my contempt for today’s society. The Ciallis commercial, where they state that one should ask their doctor if his heart is strong enough, drives me crazy. Since when did sex become a wind sprint, and how difficult is it to observe that if it causes chest pain one should probably stop. I can concentrate on calories, scales, and activities, and manage a diet from the point of view of science; but subjectively it constitutes a totally different experience. How does one measure or attain determination. I have probably dieted every day of my life in the last fifteen years, and produced precious little. Orthopedic surgeons are going to replace hips rather than suggest weight loss, because surgery is what they do, and few will ever lose the weight anyway. A PTSD patient of mine weighed 325 pounds. He had diabetes and an ulcer on his foot. He insisted on surgery, and it did not go well. Losing 150 pounds might have worked better, but diets are not a walk in the park. There is subjectivity insinuated in them and that opens the world to everything, most of which does not show up on CAT scans or ultrasound.

No end of thoughts parade through my mind on this endeavor. Under the mental microscope there first appears a dust. I hope to eventually see through it. Several compelling concepts keep recurring. Most notable might be my unflagging belief that this writing might be of critical importance, and tagging along with it is my awareness of the abject indifference with which it is greeted. I sing my song, take a bow, and walk off in silence. That is cool in some ways, because I can write anything I want, and it forces me took to God for validation. But this will not be a starving artist project, if any art at all.

Also running through my mind now is an awareness that I have never been in the inner circle of any other human being. My birth family sold me. My adoptive family bought me to address Ann Andersen’s suicidal ideation, and my pretending that none of this mattered made my relation with friends and acquaintances hollow. However it came about, the reality I face today is of being closer to my dogs than to people. I never used to have problems with people, except perhaps the tedium of pretend. There were no fights, legal problems, addictions; no red flags at all—except my actual adoption, which is a significant issue and my lack of “resonance”. My problem was not that I had contentious positions, but rather that I had no positions at all.

This issue is in focus now because I have opinions, but they fly in the face of most social conventions. I am not Christian, dislike materialism, embrace idealism, and feel the country has totally lost its way. I think we do just about everything wrong, and this is because we have lost our belief in God. Connecting to God appears to aid my vision, without which I had no convictions at all. Today my life is about improving a connection, to God, not through an intermediary but through reflection, contemplation, and reason. I want real belief, not the pretend that I tried to manufacture most of my life. Everything starts from belief, and belief comes through experience, not just contemplation or demand.

This diet is about losing actual weight. I want to be able to walk again. But it is about so much more as well. It is about me finding something to believe in, and the problem there appears to be that purpose and pain seem inextricably connected. The note above to my high school classmates strikes me as a wonderful yet horrible truth. We find purpose and satisfaction only in truth, yet truth can reveal a Bates Hotel experience where we can only complain to the manager. Fear keeps us from seeing the truth, and lacking truth we find no purpose. As I see it we are living in hell right now and only by seeing that clearly can we have hope of overcoming it. All the rest is posturing, empty fanciful pretend. Purpose and hell or pretend and heaven—that is the choice I keep moving toward from which everyone else seems to turn away. I am quite alone currently, not knowing whether to sign up for a social skills course or confront my view of reality. It really is sink or swim here, not just about the weight, but also about the weight of the world. My personal truth does not seem to go way. Everyone else does that.

Oh, and for the first day of this project, the diet was a piece of metaphorical cake. Today was obviously quite different in my eating habits, and almost no effort at all. This does not a season make, as for one day it is quite obviously notable. Maybe the way to lose weight is to read more Kant, but actually I did not or could not read at all today. That, too, was different. However, I did spend much of it organizing this chapter. There is more than one way to tip scales.

Day Two: The Sarah Royce trip analogy makes sense when the diet is about effort. This literally becomes the diet,
but then one has to have thoughts about something. To have no thoughts is not to think, and predicates cannot be nothing. So the diet is in reality an effort to lose weight, which for me is factually a big deal, but it is also connected to the entirety of my life. Twenty minutes do not just get set aside each day for the diet. My whole experience wraps around it at this present time, although is currently cast in this framework, although it could be displaced by anything more urgent. Abstracts come to life only through their individuations, like the Navy lives only through the ships.

The literal diet has hardly shown up yet today. I would normally have found some excuse to eat no matter what exhortation I threw at myself in the morning. But I seem to mean it now. My sense of purpose has more conviction. That is critical. I do not understand it at all, and cannot avoid the hypothesis that God is somehow a part of it. I cite no miracle here; only the possibility of something miraculous through the medium of subjectivity, the throw away chaff of materialism.

Then it occurs to me that I should review Spinoza. This enters into my concept of God, in that the idea occurs spontaneously. The feeling itself is not compelling, but its arrival appears to be by air mail. I did not set out to think about what to read. Spinoza just popped into my head and with Hocking this is what I am calling Godspeak (my term). Certainly God does not typically think in English, and since I am the immigrant here, I should learn the native tongue. That is going to take a while, but then I have a while.

Here is where I am trying to communicate with God, saying that thoughts which appear to come of their own accord (not the product of my conscious effort) shall be viewed as a communication with God. Subjectivity is direct experience, not having to be mediated through perceptual channels. Why settle for dial up when you can have broadband. After significant study, I believe the probability of such communication might be more likely than not. It certainly is a rational possibility. And I do not simply get to choose what I believe. Belief for me is more reaction than intention. The quest of this book, and one of the main things I will do for the rest of my life, will be to try to understand how such belief occurs.

What I see now is not how I viewed it then. I have made a big effort to try and understand these things and in the pro-
cess something shifted. Continuing this line makes more sense to me than that there is nothing more to reality than atomic particles. The presumed has become the evaluated, the result of which leads to idealism rather than materialism. Eternity cannot be endless, it has to start and stop depending on a reference point and that point according to materialism is matter. Yet space cannot simply keep expanding—into what, more space. Once you have a space, cognitively you define an outside of that space, which becomes even more space and then an endless regress. And finally, if cause makes the world go round, then why does everyone believe we act on purpose. The belief that we act with purpose is the bedrock of our experience. No one throws that away. Yet materialism see only cause, which purpose itself must be subject to. A purpose due to cause is like a clock that acts randomly. By chance it will prove to be right twice a day—or 0.0013% of the time.

Hence idealism becomes my belief, although since it both new to me and out of fashion with the world, I lack conviction. Belief apparently exists on a continuum. One of my strongest convictions today it is that we cannot will what we believe, or will what we will. Belief in God follows experience, not commands or daydreams.

This brings me to Spinoza. A significant period of my philosophical endeavors involved the disagreement between Spinoza and Descartes. This is a living, breathing part of my experience, hence I see that belief correlates with experience. It is not some mental exercise we do in class or church. Rather, it is drawn from the bedrock signals of our lives. Descartes said there were two substances in the world, mental and physical. Idea gives birth to action. Spinoza had a more unified view, seeing the world as one substance, but with two perspectives. Josiah Royce continues this theme, which we will be getting to in the next chapter. In any event, the take home message here is about control. Descartes sees thought as the agent of action—out of sight out of mind. Cognitive-behavioral concepts stomp on negative thoughts to avert negative actions. With a single substance thought becomes the mediator of emotion. Mental alone cannot contain emotional. One needs an opposing emotion to subdue another, and competence consists in holding all in check until a satisfactory option can be enacted. In essence, idea is a plan not an agent.

Spinoza comes spontaneously into my head this morning because I am wondering what force is acting against my desire to eat. It is working, but for how long? And God is implied by the fact that I view ideas that arrive in my mind on their own accord, as a communication with God. And here is the bottom line. This chapter is called Cast Away because that is exactly what I was and will unfortunately always be. It is the subject to which all my predicates attach. I do not have a name derived from kin like everyone else; I have a condition. My name is arbitrary, my history is not. The subject of an individual is his most substantial truth. I am different from those not thrown away. People want information from names, not fairy tales.

This is not an issue of reparations; it is a matter of consequences. If I could be different I would gladly do so. But some things are never forgotten, a lesson I have quite learned in my life. Better to adjust to the reality of events, than to hope they will eventually fade away. The details might eventually fade, but the reasons for them never do. The danger appears to be the cover up, not the incident. Incidents happen. They can be awful and inexcusable, but they are finite in time. The cover up, however can be endless because it is on going. There is a reason why the cover up generally turns out to be more of a problem than the incident—because it continues until one stops doing it.

Interestingly, there is apparently a new type of therapy, called Acceptance-Commitment Therapy. It involves facing the truth and dealing with it, rather than turning away and hoping for the best. Turning into the skid is quite what we did in group, without an official flag on our car however.

So I have Spinoza here this morning and a relatively easy time watching myself not eat. Good for the diet, and perhaps good for finding truth and reality. I want to be connected to God, but I cannot simply will myself to believe. It appears that one has to earn that belief. The best we can do is try, and hope, and reflect on that process while we do it. And I might even buy a scale because this project could actually get me back into fighting shape. Fighting shape now is different than yesterday. But perhaps I need to be quick to escape rather than strong to confront. Either one works for me. But sitting duck does not.

It is later in the day here and my resolve seems secure. Biologically I am running on empty and can feel it, but that offers no justification to “just have a little”. That never works.
What does seem to work is my aphorism about not buying hope on credit. The precept is easy to conceive, abstract enough to be applied in various venues, and it appears to intrinsically carry a bit of authority. I pay cash for hope by living the day before eating anything. I then can eat only one small meal close to bedtime. The effort precedes the calories, i.e. paid for in advance. And the hope flag is waving. I might even try out for Dancing with the Stars—if only I could dance. A quiet and consistent sense of authority has settled in over my life at the moment, which is nice. Now we just need to do this for two months.

The time is now 8:20 pm and I have reached Heartbreak Hill. When I ran marathons we used to carbohydrate load to increase our glycogen (a sugar molecule), which allowed more efficiency. On days six, five and four before the race one ate zero carbohydrates. You could eat all the protein and fats you wanted, but no carbs. That was not much fun. Then on days three, two and one pre-race you stuffed yourself with carbohydrates. Heartbreak Hill is about at the twenty mile mark for the Boston Marathon. That is where one’s fuel supply switches from carbs to fats, and it is like putting diesel into a regular car. The loading must have worked because I never noticed any difficulty at any part of the race, which I ran three times.

But that is where I am now on the diet. Prior to this moment it was smooth sailing (running), but now biology has kicked in. I have 90 more minutes before food today. The rubber has met the road. Without this project I would be eating now. Instead of food I have hope, hope that some day I may not simply be a caboose. Hopefully this will become easier with time.

The day is over, the goal met. It isn’t fun, but it is doable. A sense of deliberateness is more prominent than hope, but it is a nice feeling actually. God is not going to pull rabbits out of hats, but his collaboration should be manifest. It will add to a sense of belief in God if things go better with His cooperation rather than me doing it alone. The belief might itself create the reality (a quantum concept), and this remains a process, perhaps never completed, yet always improving.

**Day Three:** This trek is becoming bigger than myself. I wake up feeling like part of a program. Quite obviously this changes my daily experience—few people wait until bedtime to eat. There was a familiarity to my existence, and that is leaving me. Even the writing has assumed a different character. I must say goodbye to a familiar order. So the process generates a new issue, intrinsic to life itself: one must let go of the old before reaching out to the new. There is a hello here; I am eager to see if anything improves. So optimism is almost impregnable. But with each missed meal I say goodbye to a yesterday, and while it is necessary to change, there is still a loss.

My previous books came from that world. Evolution entails change. That a new leaf replaces an old leaf is not bad, but it is not the standard view of heaven. Perhaps our view of heaven itself is up for grabs. Certainly in my mind it is. People generally conceive of heaven beginning when one dies, yet heaven is eternal. This is a square circle. It cannot begin at one time and have been forever. Just what part of eternity then is today. Today should be a sample of one for the whole lot of infinity. And that should be one small scientific step for us to start generalizations for our conception of reality, certainly better than some fantasy of endless weekends praising the glory of God. How could we listen to harps and sing the same songs for billions of years. And why would God need all that praise? Is He not aware of his own worth? We need to think about these things, because otherwise we just fill in the blanks with rainbows and dogma (two sides of the same coin). Our view of heaven is not conceptually secure because generally we are thought to enter eternity when we die.
So what are we living in today, another eternity? That sounds more like a movie script (Dueling Eternities) than a reality.

The landscape of dieting is becoming familiar even here by the third day. I am not sure it will get easier as time goes by, but it already seems to be getting regular. Heartbreak Hill awaits me later today.

**Day Four:** I am halfway between tedious and totally lost this morning. The trip appears endless ahead, the purpose obvious only in its factual way, and my intuition is flagging. The fact remains that nothing is of more importance to me than this adventure (or whatever it gets called), and yet it hardly makes sense to continue. The factual issues, observable things, remain present, but if there is nothing more than that the end shall be merely a large heap of facts. Ideas occur like separate musical notes, random and without cohesion, destined to never organize into a tune. Even a rap song would be better than random. But a song has to start somewhere, so what are the remaining notes?

I look for the bedrock precepts of my being. They are scattered but do pass by. Buying hope on credit might at this point of my life be one of those valent precepts. That concept, frankly, is what started this whole effort. The concept is that pretend is empty and truth is difficult. Do I surrender truth for security only to find empty? That would have to be a relevant precept here. And then there is the absolute isolation—the island and the whole Cast Away business. As I mentioned above I am torn between analogies of lost on an island or crossing a territory. That becomes reflected in the pictures I add to the text, which has been a prominent activity during the past three days. I have chosen the *Cast Away* analogy because it is the end. A boy’s home might be better than pretend, where no one on the planet shared my perspective about the consequences of my rather horrible history and its correlate of my connection to society and spirituality.

It remains a constant awareness that all of my writing is essentially isolative. People might read it on the web but they never comment, and only one other living human being has read *Coming Home*. That raises the question as to why I am typing these words at all. The answer is that I have a personal, subjective, perhaps connected to God feeling that this material (not the literal diet for example, but the meanings attached to it) might be critically important to the whole world. Government seems to have gone the way of unsupervised power, and now feeds on its own. And the keepers of the order, its citizens, sit by and watch Rome burn. Perhaps there will be a lucrative market for fiddles—a “maybe we can profit from Armageddon”, or “just win baby” philosophy of self interest. That is what we have today. Everybody deserves a second, or a third, or an endless regress of chances, if he can help us win. Quite simply that is not seeing the whole for the parts—another name for selfish. Which leads me to another precept.

I remain pretty constant in monitoring life through game theory. I am not capable of understand game theory, which might even be more difficult than quantum mechanics, but it produced an approach to life that is easy to follow. Simpler is always better. Game theory is essentially of competition between two sentient beings. Hence it becomes more difficult than science, which is us against dumb rocks. The Prisoner Game, one of the classics in this world of conception, led to a simple best strategy for success: Cooperate until the other does not and then cut. If the other changes back then cooperate again. The principles are simple: 1) Cooperation compounds exponentially. 2) You can’t teach motivation. 3) Trying again is worth the risk.

So we did get off the ground here this morning on ideation. It was more than individual notes; they perhaps comprised a verse. Facts are important, yet nothing but facts eventually ends up simply as a heap of facts. That is life today, at least in the USA. Meaning is what we are after here, and meaning involves facts organized into a system, or a song to use a musical metaphor. Meaning comes from the top down; facts come from the bottom up. Facts are inductive; meaning is deductive. And if you do not chose your ultimate top, one will be provided to you, minus the commission.

Finally, I have to respond to the question of why bother to write this chapter at all if no one is going to read it. Perhaps a diary would be more appropriate. That makes sense. I, for one, will read this; I, for one, can build my life upon it. Is that not sufficient? This looks like a promising path. I can simply use the format of a book chapter rather than a diary because it is more natural to speak to a listener, rather than rushing to the other
side of the table to hear one’s own worlds. And then there is God. Hopefully He listens, and perhaps believing is seeing.

Evening has arrived, and I have not been hungry all day. Have I simply been busy or does this reflect some metabolic change that makes eating less easier. I miss foraging in the kitchen so there is some loss of enjoyment, but there is little pain thus far today. And the sense of achievement holds more value that spot pleasures. Fresh baked bread and juice is not worth the feeling of accomplishment. Other than the possible appetite change I see nothing else. Not that it would be expected after only four days, but I used to think I could feel the difference of just one serious diet day or so. That probably was an illusion. Eating becomes more satisfying when one is starving, but any way one assesses this project culinary satisfactions come out a loser.

So much for the perceptions. Conceptually I am mainly aware of my failure to understand the concept of God. This does not mean that concept is all there is; what is means is that we have no idea of what God is like. Having a god or not is in itself of little value. Value comes from the attributes God carries. An indifferent god who does little more than keep a ledger of our pluses and minuses is of no value to us. Predicates carry the day here, not mere existence. The only workable conception is that of a Living Being who is concerned about our personal welfare. We can do indifference and disdain quite on our own.

Another one of my bedrock principles is that we can generate neither belief, will, purpose, nor love out of nothing at all. Help is needed in these areas from truth and real. We work with what we are given, not with daydreams.

I cannot wait for my one-course dinner in a cup, only three hours away. Keeping busy with comparative ontologies helps, and perhaps I can throw in a metaphorical hot fudge sundae.

**Day Five:** Only two hours into this day and trouble arrived early. I cannot sleep and will have to eat something to address that issue. Ninety calories of V-fusion Berry drink should do the trick. Running on diesel fuel and sleep do not mix; but ninety calories can jump start it.

And while I am up, intuition tells me that what crosses my mind is important. That includes the idea that I am writing this almost entirely for myself. So I can do anything I want with this work. I am glad to share, but certainly do not want to throw away what matters to me because it might upset someone else. At issue here are the two obvious drivers of this little two month adventure. The fact is that other than one friend there is no one who cares about my experience other than as a means. Abject altruism probably does not exist, but for most people collaboration is genuine, rather than just pretend. An exact replica of the bed George Washington would have sleep in had he come to our town, had he come here which he didn’t, is not the same as the real thing. Pretend always defaults to real, and I was grounded in pretend. I call it being a garden tool, and in surveying the history of my life it looks like one giant dereliction of duty of every responsible person early in my life pretending to be connected.

I was more than a means to keep my adoptive mother afloat. Yet the first person in my life to ever ask how this all was for me happened at the photo shoot for the People magazine article. I was fifty-seven then.

I grasp the concept that everyone out there has their own family, friends, and others. Nice for them. But the same for me was always put on hold. With no blood relatives, the Cast Away moniker became my most salient identifier, and left on the doorstep simply does not go away with time. I no longer care about that, unlike with my the first book, and I see no little residual illusion, hope, or wish for any connection with my family, heritage, or history. The last words my adoptive father
bounced off of me were that whatever happened to me before they bought me was none of my business. Need I repeat this, it’s incredible! Some things are just wrong. Everybody knows that. Even Cast Aways can see it.

So I jettison adoptive family also. But there is more to corrosive facts than simple incidence. To deal with them you have to first see them, but then also respond. The newest psychotherapy is called Acceptance-Commitment Therapy, two items not one. That works for me except the “therapy” part, as it is way bigger than therapy. To paraphrase the name, “Truth and Consequences” is life itself. And consequences usually means cutting ties, i.e. stopping the bleeding.

Few will ever want to walk that trip with you. They all turn their eyes away and walk off, like in the song about the blind, lame and insane Australian soldiers returning from Gallipoli in World War I. Some things just are not pretty all the way down.

I probably saw more combat vets in PTSD out-patient group than anyone else in the world (about 170,000 patient hours). That happened because we share the same turning of faces and looking away. Together it was easier to face it, but there came a point when resolution stopped. One more step was necessary and it seems to be the hardest. That would be saying goodbye to everything there was and learning to settle for a new system essentially estranged from the direction of society. Society turns away from the skid, when the move to make is to turn into it. And that goes on until it reaches the point where

Spinoza comments about how excellence is as difficult as it is rare. Rare to me, at this point means, for practical purposes, the only option. This is my little song, and I have the challenging, yet ghastly, feeling that it needs to be sung and the finger of responsibility points at me. I have the problem. I can see a path to address it. I simply have to do it. This is win or die trying.

“It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”

—Theodore Roosevelt

As I write this I am listening to the Stones doing Blinded by Rainbows. When truth seems to indite humanity then game is on. One either gets it right with God or dies. That is my experience here. I hate the indifference, arrogance, and rainbow chasing of the significant people in my life, and I hate myself for being blinded at times also. So let’s look right down the barrel of this thing and see if it is loaded.

Also, I lost a dog last week. She was eighteen years old and I cared for her as she gradually failed over the last couple of years. We slept together face to face each night. My world actually revolved around her, which is possible because I am retired. Logistics contributed in part to this situation, but blinded by rainbows, not mine, seemed to cause the aloneness of the final stretch. I no longer wish for my birth mother. I am pretty much sick of that issue. But there are consequences to derelictions and for me that means I love animals more than people. I shall no longer apologize for that or feel compelled to volunteer in a
soup kitchen rather than running an animal rescue. Instead, I think I shall celebrate my choice. What I do carries my truth; what people want me to do is all fake. I do not like this responsibility, but these are the cards I have been dealt and am playing them.

Madison was my life. She is gone and I noticed that I have not thought a lot about her this past week (the week following her death). In a conversation yesterday I told my friend about not thinking of her much and immediately started crying. This was not just a tear or two. Madison arrives as a typhoon. And it became obvious to me that I was thinking with Madison not of her. This diet stuff and the quest that it entails is the way I keep her alive. Hopefully the project will allow me to be more efficient in taking care of more dogs. I need to do that. I do not need to visit soup kitchens on Thanksgiving. Humanity is not my family. Dogs are. I did not create this. I just call the truth and deal with it. So shoot me.

Thus there is some clarification on Cast Away here, in that it is time to face my last hellish truth, and to commemorate Madison. I am pretty much running full out and not in much of a mood to slow down. This must be what being in the arena feels like. And this project is not about calories; it is about life. The day has transpired uneventfully with respect to diet facts. One hour to go before nutrition and holding steady. Good for me. But the day itself might be a stand alone. I have innumerable things to say, many of which were noted for recovery during the last post. I face a situation not unfamiliar with a sense that I might not be up to documenting its major significance. The Friday Night Lights are shining, and that has always been an issue for me.

So I put off the writing until evening, confidant that I would not lose the facts, but perhaps more importantly would not displace the resonance. Experience trumps mere idea. Treasure lies in the meaning and synthesis more than with individual facts.

Another issue that concerns me is that upon facing the morning sun, excitement about value can fade like the stars. Perhaps there is no truth involved and the enthusiasm is all subjective—an all the girls get prettier at closing time thing. I know the facts will be preserved, as I jotted them down. That is a comfort because perhaps the energy can be reconnected by tugging on the label and there are labels.

First on the list notes that adoptees have to act brain dead to cover for everyone around them. Let me state what has become quite a conviction for me that adoption per se is not a terribly big issue. One’s birth family had no room in the inn and gave you to strangers. Nothing pretty there except in adopt-talk where all are angels and all shall have harps. The birth mother is said to have made the greatest sacrifice possible by giving her very own to someone unable to conceive. But there is an obvious flip side that everyone with is capable of seeing. First, he baby must be given up before it is received. People keep what they love, not give it away to strangers. But the main issue here is that common sense simply screams nonsense. No one does this out of pure joy, but rather from duress or mere indifference. Blinded by rainbows is not the only reaction to relinquishment, as a significant effort is made to discourage any contemplation or consideration of the enormity involved. This discouragement settled into my mind as an offense on the level of crimes against humanity—talk about a dragon hidden behind a door. Also, there is absolutely no where to take this issue, something one might undertake at age twenty, but not at age four. Blinded by rainbows morphs into shackled by lies.

Also, the adoptive parents are glorified. There were so loving that they took in someone else’s child as if it was their own. Whoops, they did not receive this wondrous gift, instead they reached in to fill the void. Which is it? Did it possibly happen that they took an adoptive child as a second choice because they could not have their own. No one dreams of growing up so they can give away their children, and it is inane to think the child will not consider this. Yet he or she might not because his or her job is to pretend in order to cover concerns the parents themselves have about it. If the parents cared that much about the child perhaps they might have considered helping the birth parents keep the child. The adoptee has to provide cover up, go brain dead in the process, and trump all his intuition to favor lies given to him by his entire adult world.

Notice here that I do not find adoption per se the trauma. It is a loss certainly. Among the things human beings identify most closely with their identities are family, ancestry, and nationality. I know none of these. This is flying blind, blindfolded if you do not even know you are doing it.
What does the damage are the lies, but they are endemic in all three aspects of the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. My intuition clashed with external data and intuition lost. All resonance disappears at that point and in our present theory of the world that means all connection to God. This is no small issue. It is the whole issue.

I am not looking for reparations here. Nor am I looking for anything that can be conceived as missing in the adoptee which is replaceable by the birthfamily. There are no missing pieces, only missing good-byes. Trust is broken, and all the king’s horses and all the king’s men cannot put it back together again. Look inward for resolution, not outward. Reality, not restoration, is the goal.

Actions have consequences and they are either faced or endured forever. Loss can be resolved. An adoptive family who faces reality together can do quite well, a real adoptive family. But when dealt a hand of deception the only option is to face the truth and play the hand you have. There were no face cards in my hand. The kings and queens were all illusions. Pretending otherwise is endless empty; facing it is solitary hell. Standing still is facing winter on Donner Pass. There are other people like me, but few that I know. Most live pretend or do not have hellish experiences (beyond the range of normal experience). Facing lies or indifference from every living adult during my growing up experience does not stay within the range of normal. No one sees the wounds inside, and nothing can be done about that which is not seen—except to reflect blame on the individual himself—“nobody here but us chickens”.

I am always on the outside looking in. That is just a fact, not some deficit of my character, nor me whining about life being difficult. It is possible to hang with other odd ducks and form a family or community out of “none of the aboves”. That works while the sun is shining, but come a storm and most people circle around real. Real is blood, DNA, heritage, or something other than what I have. My family literally is dogs, which kind of leaves people out, and which with another person is not unlike adoption, second choice at best.

A dream caught my attention last night: I missed an eleven o’clock meeting this morning that had lost interest to me. I am now standing clearly in the doorway of another room (the edge of goodbye) when students from the other class/group come in rather upset that the class would no longer continue. I tell them that we could be forming a new group/class and might be able to meet in this room. In fact the room is available for discussion right now, and I am rather excited to have an hour to address issues.

Noon is typically when I sit down to the computer and begin reading or writing. The night before I had been jotting down a list of ideas that I did not want to forget. So it appears that the old system of pretending will not work, but parting forever might not be necessary, we might just reformat our system. That fact is possible for the few people in my life who are more than just business associates. This all takes me to the prisoner game.

The 11:00 am meeting was no longer cooperative. It had to be cut, but the possibility remains of restarting if reestablishing collaboration can be reacieved. Blinded by rainbows I see as the last straw for me in pretending another human being will ever include me in an inner circle. Conceptual, upon which the gathering of ducks of odd feathers was built upon, did not look as attractive as traditional real, which was held on to even though it was only illusion. People bleed out trying to instill motivation in others. An aphorism I am quite fond if is of Lou Holtz being asked how to motivate a football team, to which his answer was get rid of those not motivated. Holding on to a sinking ship and pretending otherwise, led to jumping off our gerrymandered skiff to embrace an idealized, but sinking yacht. Sinking or not it sure excluded me. I am calling this blinded by rainbows.
Perhaps I am a real jerk. That is a possibility I cannot disprove and which might hence explain the deflection, but when the same thing happened to Madison our dog it led me to quite this place, all alone, and learning to live with it. This is truth, under an overpass. This is the driving force to get myself ready to fend for myself, apparently entirely alone. I can no longer cover for what appears to me to be empty. I may not be deserving of anything at all, but other people were involved in Madison's life when she was alive, yet only I was there when she died. Blinded by rainbows and incurring the mess than inevitably follows is simply not acceptable. Nothing of admiration comes to mind there. Madison deserved better, and I intend to honor her by finding courage to face the truth. That drives me today and fuels this project. I run just fine on disgust and anger when it sponsors love.

There is a solution to this predicament. God, Madison, and I formed a family. People talk about God, country, and family and arrange it in various orders, but only God can be at the top of that list. God is the whole, of which everything else can be a part, but not the other way around. The ideas that drive me today come from my work with Hocking presented in Coming Home, and he talked of a virtuous circle. We are born knowing God. If we draw a circle around ourselves as individuals then everything outside the circle we deduce from our premise of individuality (us and everything not us). This is a correlate of everywhere you go there you are. My book Coming Home is about coming back to family with God which is a priori built into us. We start with God and learn individuality, not the other way around. And this first world is independent of the finite world we learn. The two are synergistic rather than competitive, not two forces in a one pie world, but one force in a contingent world.

Humanity as the ultimate family makes no sense. Human beings are contingent on external reality, as family is contingent on humanity, and society contingent on individuals. None of things create themselves. There is no ultimate when you have to postulate another agent to produce what you have placed at the top. Cause cannot create itself. Do the math, or not, because it is impossible. Matter cannot create itself. Spirit could, because it is not finite. There are laws of reason, things we think with, not of. We just haven’t studied them, having been
busy working on physical law. But eternal means not contingent, and it could never get started because it always has been. How it does this trick we may never know, but spirit causing substance appears possible, whereas round squares and first cause are not. God, the law of gravity, abstract consciousness, or mindless will; those are the choices. This is metaphysics folks, not turnip trucks.

God is first cause, not dependent on another entity, first family to finite families. Anything less than blood relatives, or apparently of DNA does not carry the creed of reality if humanity rules the world. But it does not. God comes before country and family. Odd ducks will play at conceptual as second best for what we call “real” families, i.e. made of the same material stuff, but a strong wind blows them over, and can lead a hold at all cost and never cut attempt at what they perceive to be real. Better than family as conventionally defined are people united by virtue of their vision of God. It is not the vision itself that counts here, but rather a real God, yet only one with which both parties share the same predicates. In other words, I can trump being a member of a “real” family only with someone who shares a similar view of God. Every person on the planet can be blinded by rainbows. Only an shared accurate view of God can hold people together. Accurate becomes the key word. A yes or no belief in God is about as productive as the religious wars we view every day. People will always default to what they feel is real unless they have something more genuine. We are contingent beings; don’t hitch your star to another contingent individual.

**Day Seven:** Hope is not winning the lottery or getting a participation trophy. That is buying on credit or blinded by rainbows. Hope is having a vision of tomorrow that appears to be an improvement over today. It is not where you are that matters, it is where you might go. Any paying for hope in cash is achieving that vision as a result on your own effort and intension. That acceptance-commitment is better is true because better itself is subjective, and it also entails all of the esteem, confidence, and competence that comes with purpose. That is money in the bank, compounding exponentially.

And I have a word here about confidence. Briefly watching an NFL game, a program that once assumed more impor-
kin. People want as much information as possible about others and blood (heredity) seems to encompass the most. No one contends this; proof is in the surname. However one wishes to cut up the heredity/environment pie, the heredity component takes up a sizable piece. And it is a constant, environment is contingent.

People want to deal with the truth. The bane of mankind is wasting time on mere ideas. They want true ideas, i.e. backed up by experience. Jason Smith, the son of John Smith, is the name of that individual as subject for whatever predicate he carries, butcher, baker, or candlestick maker. But Kevin Jones, the adopted son of Robert Jones, is merely a facsimile. “Just like a real family” is not a real family—it is not even a good facsimile. And trying harder to make it so kills it as family at all—it becomes an indoctrination camp. None of this matters when the sun is shining, the child could even be called Humpty Dumpty and it might at times even appear to be quaint. But let the wind blow and people get down to the basics, life and death. Real in a bunker trumps even gold-plated pretend.

If Kevin Jones does not reference truth in his name, his identifier as subject defaults to the most accurate truth. He takes on the subject name of Adoptive Child. Everywhere he goes, there he is. Everything he does in the critical moments of life predicates on Adoptive Child. That is the best truth available for prediction, albeit not to cover the insecurities of those involved with adoption. Blood is thicker than water and it predicts better than chance. Charles Manson’s nephew might have been a fine young gentleman, but who would want to roll the dice? Personally, I can think of nothing worse than to give away my dogs to strangers. Even as deranged as my idiosyncrasies might have made me, my opinion carries its own warrant. It does not just come from Bob the Adoptee; it comes from Bob the sentient being, possibly in connection with God, and possibly speaking a relevant truth. We will see where that leads. We know something was handled very badly, and the fruit is said to fall not far from the tree.

People do not think about this, they think with it. So it is not even noticed until action springs from it. The ostensible game winner for people who knew of my adoption if we disagreed on a serious issue, was to dismiss me on the basis of my adoption. Whenever it was felt necessary, in multiple areas of my life from people who knew of my adoption, the trump card to be played was Bob the Adopted Child. I will spare you the details.

Adoptees know this subject-predicate issue well, although not by that name. They are perpetually referred to as adoptive children, regardless of age or social status. Most people are never going to be so outstanding or nefarious to outshine surname as the logical subject of his or her predicates. For that, most of you can be grateful.

Day Twelve: Moses was not forever known as the kid sent down the river. He became known as the man who brought back tablets from God. Perhaps that option is still available to us today. If subjectivity is a communication with God, as through Hocking I now believe and try to further understand, then why is my personal truth not as important as that of Moses? He might have been smarter and more dramatic in his presentation, but truth is still truth. Perhaps it is the saying of it that matters, not so much how polished the presentation. I am not trying to be facetious here. Today ought to count in eternity as much as yesterday.
And maybe the truth of the Bible is more metaphorical than literal. For sure there is nothing commendable about Job not cutting his losses when God was just showing off for the devil, and two by two onto an ark sounds like a prescription for disaster. Yet these things stick in our minds. Resonance seems to carry a warrant for its own truth; ideation, not so much.

But it is time to move away from mere conception here. A real diet is occurring, one measurable by scales, belt size, and competency. Without the diet there would be no philosophizing here. Without the philosophizing there is no success. This is Hocking’s concept of mystic or creative alternation—part to whole, whole to part.

Tom Hanks lost a lot of weight for the movie. I have always been impressed by that fact. He looks totally different before and after his adventure. There is hope, and maybe a metaphorical island works as well as the South Pacific. I like his character too. He gets angry mostly at himself, does not blame others for adversity, and perseveres. “Nobody here but us chickens” (me) can morph into something resembling that. He cares about others, as do I, if only animals and handicapped people. I am not especially self-centered, do not get tired or bored, and now with some sense of genuine I can face the truth. Some sense of genuine is critical. Translated into my new ontology, this means with God I can recognize abject reality here. Depending on humans, I could not face the truth of their duplicity. Depending on God, they can chase all the baubles they want. Alone, with God, Madison, and one friend, I can survive—and maybe even prosper (at a lower weight class).

The diet is pretty steady, becoming familiar, although not much fun. The effort I probably think with now, not about; in that I am driven to do the conceptual part. Most of last week was spent editing the conceptual material above. It is not true that the diet alone at the end simply becomes a heap of facts. There is not one without the other. But this is going to be a marathon rather than a sprint. I will be moving on to reading Royce, since diet reflection might be nearing its conclusion. I will keep monitoring this endeavor, probably shifting more to fact than meaning. Losing weight is a very big deal here. It deserves better than just tagging along while finding God. Dieting itself might be that very journey. Connection to God is not rest, harps, and imagination. More likely it will be blood, sweat, and tears, in the name of love, creating value. Pain and progress, anyone?

Thanksgiving transpired yesterday. The salient affect for the day was aloneness, albeit not loneliness. I had God, my dogs, and a friend. God remains tenuous. Connecting there is a process, hopefully, and while it becomes more familiar I do not default to it. Close behind came determined. I worked hard editing and felt full speed ahead with this project. The energy of the project seemed to support the diet, or visa versa. When busy, I am not hungry. Without purpose it appears easier to turn to distractions, one being the kitchen cabinet. Astonishment placed third. Nothing I have done seems to warrant the indifference. Perhaps the sins of the parents are visited on the children. Nothing else seems to fit, which does not prove reality, but suggests it.

Day Thirteen: The numbers add up slowly. My focus in this past week has been more on the conceptual than the factual. But with a little calorie tweaking, the diet continued. However, the numbers are not attractive. A pound of fat is about 3700 calories. My activity level is not what it used to be. A good day would be a deficit of 1000 calories, which works out to around two pounds a week. Do the math. This journey is going to take almost as long as it took the Royces to go from Council Bluff to Grass Valley. Most of this will be sheer effort, disquieting, actually. I need two perfect days here to pick up the pace. The wagon
has kept moving, just not as fast as I would like, and time is not on my side. This is not automatic. Perhaps in a month or two it will become muscle memory. I am off to read Royce. We will see if I can walk and chew gum at the same time. Setting short term goals does inspire confidence. Four months does not.

Third Week: Josiah Royce describes three periods of modern philosophy. He places the first in the seventeenth century and calls it naturalism. Galileo started it, focusing on facts and introducing science. This allowed prediction of events, albeit on the level of cause rather than purpose. They viewed the world as a mechanism—understand the mechanics of the watch and you will completely understand time. In the second phase Locke and Berkeley looked at mind as a function of reality. Focus shifts from objectivity to subjectivity, albeit both views being undercut by Hume. Hume eliminates subjective but also drags conceptual (natural law) along with it. These efforts take most of the 1700’s. Royce calls this period humanistic.

Kant then views time and space as mental concepts, not objective reality. The battle is joined, both mental and physical have their reality. We have a stalemate, stage three, which we are still in. Materialism/spiritualism, what we think of/what we think with, objective/subjective, matter/reason—we drag this antimony everywhere we go. Royce felt the 1600’s were the heyday for materialism, but he wrote at the end of the nineteenth century. Darwin, two World Wars, and the loss of commodity money everywhere on the planet have perhaps today brought us back to naturalism. People seek material things today more than spiritual. But they sneak deity in through the back door disguised as nature—as with Steven Hawking saying that order in the universe is due to the law of gravity. This is a gross category mistake, by the way. It attributes agency to an abstract concept. We have merely taken the mind/body dichotomy and pasted it onto the universe. Back to square one, just bigger.

But my main point here, which has become somewhat belabored, is to reflect that this Cast Away project has two perspectives. It is a diet, as in real physical weight loss, but also conceptual, as in genuine ideas of the world. Perhaps we should revisit the end of the nineteenth century when we were trying to be more comprehensive. There appears to be both matter and spirit, the same problem that man has faced for as long as he has grasped more than plowshares. I understand that today is all about stuff, but I am not sure most people understand that we have run around in a circle over the last four hundred years. The scary part for me is that I have been around for eighteen per cent of that and am getting tired of standing in the starting blocks. So on goes the diet, i.e. real weight loss and conceptual organization, in an effort to stop chasing our tails.

I will maintain the faith that conceptual adds up to more than blank contemplation. Others can show off their trophies and awards on the other side of this debate. But if the earth moves, it will require both positions to do so, and I would certainly celebrate, perhaps more gracefully with the weight loss. Objective and subjective both matter. One does not exist without the other.

About this combined effort I wish to quote from Faust, a real shift for me, perhaps notable in itself:

“Thou hast it destroyed,  
The beautiful world,  
With Powerful fist:  
In ruin ‘t is hurled,  
By the blow of a demigod shattered!  
The scattered  
Fragments into the Void we carry,  
Deploring  
The beauty perished beyond restoring.  
Mightier  
For the children of men,  
Brightlier  
Build it again,  
In thine own bosom build it anew!  
Bid the new career  
Commence,  
With clearer sense,  
And the new songs of cheer  
Be sung thereto!”

Let us not misunderstand the drama here. This is not about something like a French, Russian, or even American revolution. Things are not shattered, meaning is. One could enjoy spot pleasures all through the transition and not avoid loss, grief, or limitation. That hings fade and alternatives exclude is conceptual, not physical. Physical and mental have their own
satisfactions and limitations, but neither is contingent on the other. Goethe was talking about Kant, not Napoleon.

Tennyson is talking about us:

“O living will that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock,
Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow thro’ our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
A voice as unto him that hears,
A cry above the conquer’d years
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be proved
Until we close with all we loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.”

The diet itself is not automatic, nor is it intolerable. I seem to get involved in either loss (animal rescue and life) or anger (sick of still trading truth for security). Affect appears to be more salutary for dieting than apathy. Most of my attention is conceptual, although today factual has gained importance. The process seems neither long nor short, it has simply become the routine of my life. This could well abort, as it is hardly habit, but lost in endeavor is not a bad place.

I can say that factual entails more energy than conceptual—tripping over a step focuses attention more than imagining doing so. And the level of hope for new adventure keeps pace with the physical. If all that happened at the end of this project was obtaining of an attractive thesis, even a vital one, the finish line would be anticlimactic. Publishing a digital book is not the same as holding a bound copy. The physical counts here. I would prefer increased physical capacity over a sense of intellectual accomplishment. This project is metaphorically an effort to turn back the clock. Perhaps we might also throw in a physical law for it. I will even settle for pragmatic, if truth is not available.

*   *   *   *   *
A time warp has ensued, experienced by me, noted now by you. The thinking continued, that is what thinking does, but it could not interface with weight loss and its meaning. But I am back in the saddle again, having avoided losing ground by increasing exercise, but realizing once again that my life is contingent on the effort, probably necessarily successful, to lose weight. One cannot separate the fact from its meaning. The fact is simple, the meaning is that it buys my freedom. We cannot face what we cannot surmount, and my expectations for increased mobility forecast two almost entirely different worlds. Cool stuff.

I am glad the ideas keep rolling on. Now work is again progressing on the cross-country metaphor or the Castaway analogy. It is nice to feel the synergy again, and writing does not have to be placed in a new and different chapter which forecasts tripping over Castaway, chapter three.

Then again, meaning and facts always go hand in hand. The facts reflect situation and the meaning inspires response. I am back in the saddle in part because of the thinking that carried on and facilitated the return. Horse and rider, rider and horse; we need both to get somewhere.

On the horse side (perceptual, material) it works better not to simply starve until evening. Twelve to fifteen hours are long enough to discourage much but sheer will power. Thinking gets hard when the brain runs out of sugar. The body then attacks muscle from which it can generate glucose, and while that does not cause a pain in a say an arm or leg, it makes one feel sick. God probably knew what he was doing in the design, and physical body necessarily follows the general plan. Spirits apparently are irresponsible just running around by themselves. Whatever, I now eat one or two small portions during the day which obviates the overswing. That is where discipline must come in, during the trying time, when the brain becomes unruly.

I kept my weigh in check most of my life by running, which is why I know have the hip problems, but I can also increase the exercise today as well as diet. So we have offence and defense, and for now it is working. That, more or less, is the physical side. This will not be done in a month, but some change needs to be consistently perceived, or it just becomes Disneyland.

The mental elements have become very big deals while I
was vowing and exercising to a five week draw. Since following my intuition has become the major way I try to negotiate life and presuming that since it is spontaneous it reflects connection to God, I find little problem today being impressed with new ideas picked up along the way. It thus does not become tooting my own horn, but having the common sense and decency to recognize something greater than myself. I am referring to the idea of self being the object of one’s predicates. There is more than identification to a person’s name, it also facilitates prediction.

I once planned on writing a book on the topic of “self”, which like so many words that we use but never think about, seems to accept whatever a person imputes to it—thus really meaning nothing at all. Self, like mind, love, belief, and faith, cannot be seen. It is conceptual and ethereal. So it is useful, but meaningless, like political speeches. Until we get a clarification it is hard not to trip over the concept wherever one confronts mental and mind. And psychology, trapped today entirely in empiricism, cannot view it at all. So “self” becomes something like “myself” which just begs the question, an entity less compelling than “soul” and weakened by no obvious connect to the body—neither fish nor fowl, reflecting the endlessly perplexing mind/body issue.

In my opinion, the best response or answer to this issue comes from philosophy rather than psychology. However, not just any philosophy will do. It appears that most of the orientations today hang from sky hooks, and tying sky hooks together does not improve the situation. The philosophers who avoid such problems are not bothered by the mind body dichotomy. They do not root everything in quarks and force fields, but rather in a superior spirit. That works, of course, but also of course, it presents the issue of God, which bothers half of humanity—that part which installs humanity as the center of consciousness in the universe. But that is another issue, hopefully personally settled for me by my previous work. There is a bottom line here, however, which is that at some point one simply has to jump, to God or to a god-clone, i.e., something like Steven Hawking’s law of gravity. One way or the other we have to drag purpose into this world. No one will ever be convinced that he or she does not somehow act on purpose. It is inconceivable to think we are just pushed around by the big bang. And if that statement is in some giant intuitive leap, found to be false then it will be the end in any hope for meaningful existence in this time/space. Also in one way or another we will worship something greater than ourselves because it does not take a rocket scientist to appreciate our personal relevance when staring out upon the universe.

We are known by our actions, to get back to the insight which I think has merit, and we default to a subject that fits the greatest part of these predicates under a single theme. That is a bit wordy, but it means that we call ourselves that which is most central to our behavior, i.e., our kinship. Environment differs, DNA not so much, so heredity provides the consistency to define the names we choose for our selves. Again, selves are not actual things, they are conceptual—not things at all. Self is the whole, greater than the sum of its parts, and bearing no physical relation to the parts other than its form.

But generalizations have require their specifics. Every self has different parts, but it remains a self. So we differ. Identical twins have different experiences and hence become different people. Patsy and Elizabeth were identical twins, but different people. I knew one of them, not the other. For me, a person who was adopted, my surname is false, as is the date and place on my birth certificate. The whole document is a lie. It is a birth collusion rather than a birth certificate. Three wrongs lies do not make a right. Continue down that path long enough and one reaches a point of no return.

Adoption does not necessarily entail lies, but it embraces them. White lies, black lies, corrupt lies, whatever, they are not truths. And in the process, as people try to organize information on others to understand them, they intuitively sense that more
is to be gained by rejecting the lies than incorporating them. In *Blacklist*, a TV show that redeems itself in honesty what it might lose with its gratuitous violence, Elizabeth Keen’s baby is not acceptable for adoption after the couple learn Elizabeth is the daughter of a Russian spy and had been arrested for treason. That the charges were erroneous does not invalidate my example, it supports it—close enough is sufficient to steer clear. DNA is fixed, environment is contingent, and both contribute to the individual. Everyone knows this, regardless of what he or she might profess to be politically correct. The adoptee’s intuition finds essentially no validation in society, and social interchange becomes essentially a practiced script that is hard to to express genuinely, because it isn’t. Practice here does not make perfect. And the perfect lie would be all gateway to hell.

Truth has to be grounded in something better than consensus. An ideal becomes a possibility, but it is too abstract, although abstract it has to be. If we are talking about ethical truth, then the matter will always impinge on the individual versus others. That seems to be the essence of morals, and someone incapable of seeing past his nose is never going to do anything durable or valuable. Self/other is is the ethical absolute. All other ethical truths get in line behind that. The truth is deductive. Physical truth is inductive. It is perception, but perception is tricky. Basically perceptual truth is consensual validation, not absolute. Basically, perceptual truth is a consensus of what the great majority of people see from the same perspective. But we can never see the thing in itself, only the image in our minds. And if your tree is red and mine green, no matter as long as we connect our individual experiences. Or, if dogs see in black in white, is that the truth of reality and our colors merely illusion, or are they merely color deficient. Those kind of decisions are votes, not perceptions. No cannot see a dogs vision. Nor can I experience your green. Nor is green anywhere in the world other than in minds. Fair enough, the point being that truth correlates very much with majority opinion.

Do you see where this is leading? Not having a blood family, not having an honest adoptive family, how do I or most adoptees negotiate the world? Our communal experience is basically different than the vast majority of society. Here comes the critical leap. Does one honor the consensus view and ignore intuition, or follow intuition and fly alone? Intuition gives us the energy, consensual reality gives us a road map. We need both. None of ur are Rand McNally (or I guess today, the inspiration behind Google Maps). So what to do?

God is the only answer. A conceptual ideal provides one half of the problem, it can be literally useful, but it lacks energy and no one can hold onto it for long. Kant’s imperative, doing one’s duty for the sake of duty itself, might dazzle, but hardly inspire. We are social beings, like it or not, and without love, the mind falters. Purpose is typically for someone, with someone, and from someone. I am talking about a spontaneous, creative purpose here, not an ordered, directed one. And for me I have not changed one bit. That purpose includes other living beings, specifically dogs. I get calls weekly to an almost infinite number of human charities. I am annoyed by the impudence of the calls at all times of the day, albeit not about the charities themselves, but then notice that all of my discretionary money goes to animal rescue. We run one. It is not cheap. That facet of my experience is critical to my well being today, for only by appreciating the abject indifferent by the significant people in my early life, can I gather the resources to help the critters. One road is real for me, the other not, because of facing the reality of my early experience. Facing the first abandonment (there is nothing else to call it) gives me the personal resources to want to help dogs today. Without seeing the reality of yesterday, I would not be enacting the reality of today. Josiah Royce called it atonement, but
he means of finding salvation, which is not attonment, which Royce calls it. We have done nothing wrong except refuse to sell our souls for porridge. I call it crawling out of my rabbit hole, which has given me pride, which assists in effort, which causes a virtuous circle. Pride, purpose, strength and truth form a system orbiting around God. All in all, perhaps a better deal than life on a beach, but certainly not rest and relaxation. The bottom line appears to be that without God we can never escape the orbit of ourselves. With God we need never lose the value of self-esteem.

God provides truth, synonymous with reality, which gives inspiration to idea. Idea alone is empty. thought does not move a mountain; idea and effort might. We can do what we will, but not will what we will. And belief is similar, we do not sign a waiver to indicate belief, experience leads it to us. And experience is driven by will. All of these concepts live in the world of material effect. Idea designs, but cannot produce. Effort can produce but not an end. Idea and effort combine to produce purpose which leads to effect. This would appear to be tautological, but remember, according to science the world is entirely causal. To be rationally consistent what appears self-evident is actually impossible. That would seem to be a very shaky start to begin a system to explain the world. Cause is for inert objects not for living beings. Einstein said, “God does not play dice with the universe”. For science this presents two issues: 1) It presumes a God, and 2) it implies a purpose. We seem to keep tripping over truth and trying to look the other way. I did that with my life. It did not work well. And I can generalize upwards here.

Sticking with my life, however, I could never generate real out of repetition. Genuine eminates, it is not installed. One can generate an ideal from the inside but can only verify it from outside and if insight allows perspicacity before its time, it flies alone with humans. Spinoza had that problem. We might here as well, albeit with a smaller issue and lessor intellect. But it is my issue, so it matters to me. The bane of my existence was trying to generate real out of pretend. It led to incessant failures, all propped up on hope for eventual success. The core of me was empty, while the outside somehow adumbrating success. Lois Grosshardt asked me to introduce her as she ran for junior class secretary. I assume she did that because I was polite and had a block sweater filled with stars and stripes. I do not recall anything my introduction to the class. I might has well not have even been there. And I ran for senior class president because my wrestling partner, who went on to become a United States senator from Colorado, told me I should do so. I recall nothing of that speech either, other than a vague sense of hollow.

I hate recalling this. Better to be damaged and real, than practiced and pretend. The truth will out, and we all feel it, whether we can accept it or must look away. This is not about seeing the truth; it is about having the courage to face it, and courage is not about exclamation, it is about preparation. Consciousness is required here, not magic tricks. In a foxhole with ample ammo is is possibility, with no ammo it is indefensible and injudicious as well. Courage is not whistling past the graveyard, it is carrying a flashlight, and today perhaps also a gun. But awareness is critical to all of this. Life is not lived simply looking the other way. It is squandered doing that.

I coined a metaphor while revisiting adoption in this process and it might prove useful. We use metaphor to color abstract with tangible. The value of a metaphor is in the silence of its work, like a good baseball umpire. This might appear too trite to function well as metaphor, but it seems to stick with me, so I share it. I viewed my adoption as being grafted into a different family. Lets play this out literally in the metaphor. That is what metaphors try to do.

Suppose I am a pear grafted onto an apple tree. One branch on this tree grows pears. They differ markedly from apples. Apples are colorful, store better, taste different, and even as metaphors themselves, get different treatment. A bright shiny apple is usually a complementary moniker, pear shaped is disparaging. There might not even be such a thing as pear cider; while apple cider can be the center of festivities. People give apples to teachers, not pears. And crisp seems more attractive than soft and mushy.

What exactly could pears, metaphorically, have to do with metaphorical apples. What would they talk about? The orchard likely does not value the pear branch. Trees of a fruit stay in suit. Polite conversation is the best we can hope for, and the poor pear branch is not aware of any other tree in the world that it can belong to on the basis of being rather than doing. The pear will be valued as a means, not an end.
Poor pear. And this pear, me at age twelve, was the only pear at Thanksgiving and Christmas gatherings with twenty other apples. Weather and current events are good for two minutes of conversation, then it all goes sour. And if the whole world refuses to look at any difficulty, where on God’s green earth can the pear branch find any place to share reflection. The whole world turns away, the orchard is all apples, and the pear is alone with major problems and no avenue to address them. No single similar fruit, not even a persimmon (nothing against persimmons), and a problem that is real with no avenue of redress is the nature of PTSD. Two elements come together there: the degree if stress and the capacity for redress. No one can run a marathon if pulled of the street and ordered to do so, but anyone can run a marathon when given sufficient time to prepare. There is a discord in pressure and capacity, and adjustment breaks. The pear faults itself for being a pear and attributes the deficiencies of family and society to him or herself. I can’t fix them but I can fix me becomes the mantra, and that can run for some time on placebo effect, and then be replaced again and again, until too much simply becomes too much, and then disaster. Disaster is whatever one can cram into the empty, including suicide.

So why not turn literally to other adoptees for something like a family? We are all pears. But I have been there, done that, and it does not work. A repair of history is what adoptees want, not life change. Find and fix, not acceptance and commitment, is what adoptees want. The latter is actually the dull name of a new therapeutic approach, probably better called Life Management. That comes closest to what we did with the Vets. And we must have done something right to accumulate the largest patient group numbers of perhaps any other such group on the planet (again, 170,000 patient hours). One is free, like socialism, and the other takes work, like free enterprise. And yes, these issue can generalize to more than just adoption. It would be worth little if we are dealing with such a minimal problem world wide as adoption. But everything is part of the big picture and are contain components of what the big picture entails. All paths lead to Rome. But that statement is time stamped. We know about new continents civilizations since Rome, and then of course much further up the abstraction chain, all the way to the edge of the universe and First Cause. Anybody that wishes to challenge this reason needs to provide an explanation for first cause. First cause cannot birth itself. It requires something outside of itself. Looking away from any problem means playing pretend. How does that differ from my personal experience about being essentially alone? “Anyone who expects to be ignorant and free expects what never was and never will be”.—Jefferson. Personal and cultural can parallel each other. Why not, society is not a new being, just a collection of individuals, and they can be blinded by the reflection in each others eyes. We need a perch outside ourselves.

More matter (stuff) never gets there, always begging the same question, “what caused the cause”. The only reasonable answer appears to be Spirit. And the only useful spirit is a conscious one. All roads do not lead to Rome, Rome is just a halfway house in route to God. This is not just idle thinking. It is sound reason, which people fail to see the need for because they presume it with their common sense, and do not want to struggle to reach it. The problem for everyone there is probably that the only reasoning that we can personally trust is our own. Reasonably trust is that which we work out for ourselves. We believe probably only when we have a significant hand in building it. Truth is not discovered, facts and experience are discover; truth is created. It is the design we make out of the experience and facts, not the truth that we find in them.

Being a pear grafted on to an apple tree, I cannot use the wonderfully simple truth of consensus as my truth. So I can either pretend or die, if I want to continue to survive in this time/space without a second path to reality. Spinoza was in the same position. He was excommunicated from the Jewish faith and did not fit in with the Christians. He lived alone on the second floor of a house rented to him where he
ground eye glasses and wrote his masterpieces. This work shall be no Ethics, but neither shall it be mere dream weaving. I can do nothing else. The cards dealt to me include adoption. Those are the cards I must play, and the goal is not happy reunions, but cosmic truth. I can live with that. I can live for that.

Let’s watch the crash. Looking to my adoption as a subject to my predicates, and having viewed the resolution as basically a cessation of any attempt at significant relationships based being rather than doing, why not revisit adoption as a place of shared perspectives, not a blood family, but mostly fruit other than apples. After all, my writing began as a confrontation of my adoption, Second Choice, Growing up Adopted was my first effort. It sold out, not deviating from the adoptee norm of the times in terms of resolution. I ended with some kind of I miss you mother and wish we could have been together. I am not there now and the adoption groups still see reunion and contact as the royal road to health and happiness. Betty Jean Lifton, the leader of the adoption reform movement when I was involved, coined the term Ghost Kingdom for the mental ensemble of all the “what ifs” had adoption not transpired. It is not called Ghost Kingdom because of its evanescence, but rather because of its idealization. The truth shall set you free might be the mantra. That natural family trumps everything else becomes its fallacy. Chasing What is Already Gone (Mary Chapin Carpenter) might be the theme song, and it carries the hard and tragic truth that time moves on. We can change ourselves, and our reactions, and the meanings of the past, but we cannot undo the facts. Call it whatever you will, when a clan does not keep its own, its own becomes its never was. Trust has been broken and it is best confronted (in my professional and personal opinion) by acceptance and commitment, rather than painting over the empty. We can forgive, try to ignore, pour distraction upon it, but consciousness, once experienced cannot be removed by itself. Its self is merely a history of its experience and if it ignores experience it becomes a different self. Pretend destroys truth and truth is the life force of consciousness. You do not want to drive on a road you wish were there if only they had made it, and they should have done so, but didn’t. We cannot drive the car and also be the engine.

Adoption groups are out there available on the internet. I got into one and quickly realized its limits. This led to a letter and a brief dissertation in one of the groups. I lasted about two weeks in group, trying as hard as I could to simply fit in rather than actually have feelings and opinions. But it became quickly oppressive. I am still the odd duck in terms of conflict resolution and my fate this time simply repeated our position fifteen years ago in the adoption community. The concern. My first perspective led to this notation:

Dan,

The group appears to be useful to me, especially in the fact that all suffered the same situation. So that is nice, but where to go with it remains uncertain. I think (hope) I become wiser about it all with continued focus. But this places me always on the edge of goodbye, because the more convinced I am about my intuition, the more fixed becomes the color of my feathers. A bird of a different feather remains a bird, but not always part of the flock.

The unity of people who were adopted is genuine and perhaps at the level of family. What is not general is their response to this experience. And to the degree that one response type or another demands subservience, the unity is gone. We, of all people, should be able to recognize the need for individuality. That is precisely what is lost in adoption. On the other hand we also need to find our commonality or we fracture again into alone.

There is work to be done. But that is what life is about. Heaven is not eternal rest. Heaven is individual will applied to that which we care about in an effort to help insure its existence. Plato called this love. That works. And it is blood, sweat, and tears—not indolence; today, not tomorrow. —Bob

I do not write for distraction. For me it is not a variant of solitaire. I mean what I say, that is the whole point—I am trying to find out what I mean. So these were not just words, and they were hardly private. The whole exercise never got off the ground, so that is perhaps unfortunate, but I take some comfort in that my words more often than not appear to have some support out there independent of me. We could not form a dialectic and broke into alone—alone perhaps only for me, but empty for the rest.
I have not wasted my life playing slingo or collecting gum balls. It cannot all simply be wasted, which in this situation means deferring in favor of something that my head and heart tells me will never fly. Basically, I cannot cover for others simply to have others around me. A personal relation to God offers an alternative to humans and allows me to carry on. That connection does not happen as an epiphany, but rather my experience somehow coalesces out of all the work trying to address the big issues. Nothing seems to guarantee that relationship but everything seems to construct it. This is not all or nothing. It feels more like a gradient, and while not very far, I am far enough to grasp that general concept and direction. Somewhere along the way I am going to have to attach spirituality as a predicate to my self. More accurately it is going to be the name I attach to the subject of my self. I will be the spiritual person who reads philosophy, or likes Chicago P.D., or loves dogs. Every day seems to add something to the structure, perhaps my very own cosmic lifeline. I do feel the resonance, not as emotion spikes, but more like a continual sense of purpose and beneficence. Metamorphosis might be the word. I am perhaps metamorphasising into a relationship with God.

Go with intuition, go with God; these are not synonymous, but close enough. I can no longer jettison my inner experience to fit in with other people’s demands. Those who give up liberty for security deserve neither liberty nor security. And my intuition is becoming more comfortable to me. I seem to be learning it as I travel this road. The end for the group came quickly. I could not surrender my convictions (my only sense of purpose for the group) to an orientation that I see as insufficient. The adoption world to me appears to have simply changed one set of chains for another. Originally personal truth was surrendered for the security of a roof over one’s head. Now it appears to be given up to for the self esteem of birth mothers. External security either way, and personal truth lost in either direction. One tyranny simply changed for another. That is the way revolutions go if they occur without reflection. There is no free lunch either way. Idealized birth parents or other traumatic adoptive parents are both false ends. Following trauma beyond the realm of normal all the way to the bottom is difficult. All things excellent are as difficult as they are rare. Following real, evanescent trauma all the way to the bottom is one of those things. And answers do not come cheap.

My second foray into adoptive community lasted as quickly as it began. The jpoint most worthy of note was that there was nothing else I could do. Win, lose, or draw I have to be what I am. Give me truth or give me death becomes give me truth and alone. But I am not alone. I am metamorphizing and now have God. We communicate subjectively. I intuite Spirit, not perceive it. That works. So did my comments to group which were greeted by abject indifference, leading to my absolute disassociation. Our positions could not coexist and while “family” might be gone, reality is not.

The hello or goodbye went this way:

“It is comforting when an action simply needs to be done. Doing it matters more than the consequences. That is my situation here, so here I must make my stand. Thus I have a speech. Bear with me for a minute.

My credentials in this room, like yours, are that I was grafted onto a different family. My lifetime of effort responding to this could, hopefully, be useful to us today. That is the personal part.

Professionally, I spent a career dealing with having been adopted. 170,000 patient hours with combat PTSD veterans in out-patient groups, and two wars against an Administration that was trying to eliminate subjectivity from therapy in the Veterans Hospitals (finally settled by national mandates from Washington in our favor) is not a shabby experience. Also, 205,000 people have visited my website where I talk about this stuff.

I am one of us in this room and cannot simply throw my experience into the wind in favor of one system or another. Basically, we are the system—which is more than a technique. It includes people—us. That is how we become integrated, by caring about and working on an issue together, like a family, actually.

The component of ourselves is more important than a mere “repeat after me”. We need to keep our eye on the whole, as well as the parts. And how we do something is as important, or even more so, than
what we do. People or technique becomes the critical question here; pick one.

And by the way, science favors technique in this debate, as does most of psychology today. That combination is almost impossible to confront, when viewed from inside the system. But confront it we must. Consider yourself blessed that we are not earthlings.”

It became a goodbye. Everyone loses.

One more conceptual issue remains at this point in Castaway. Remember that we are trying to fuse ideation with material in order to find truth and create reality. One does not exist without the other and typically we lose sight of that connection. People typically either go physical and scientific, or spiritual and mystic. One needs the other to create in this world. And ultimately in my effort to metamorphose into a personal relation with God I need to fuse these two elements and read them according to internal experience and external fact. Fact at this moment are the diet numbers, and experience is reaching to get them.

In my recycling of the adoptive community as a familial surrogate I repeated a previous such experience. My second book *A Bridge Less Traveled* was coauthored with a partner, with whom our adoption connection was viewed as the basis for an enduring relationship. We were half right; extended indeed, enduring apparently not. That Bridge has become fifty percent less traveled. The details of our dissociation is not of significant relevance here in terms of the big picture, even if I understood them. Let us just say that such Bridges are not easy, and either loss of courage or return to sanity generally brings them to an end. Such appears to be the case here. Yet the major issue of importance at this moment appears to be a similarity between my introductory comments to the above adoption group, where I stated that when it comes to dealing with adoption issues I have no choice but to state my truth. It became an issue of communication with God versus congregation with people, and people do not work for me. Everything in our relationship was all good until it suddenly became all bad. With God and alone versus with a partner and empty has become a no-brainer at this point in my life. My soul cannot be up for sale. I could have this all wrong, but then I could have it all right. I cannot exist hanging on to what is already gone.

So be it with my previous partner. Life change is required for healing, not verbal affirmations. And life change as I see it in adoption involves being essentially alone. The physical differences and ubiquity of pretend in adoption essentially cuts family off at its roots. Few shared interests and vacuous communication is not inspiring. We were rejected by our birth family (the whole clan), and lied to by our adoptive family (the endemic problem with adoption). That eliminates the general concept of family. Everything else is quickly perceived as a retreat and one never totally lets go of the original wish for whatever could have been, which typically expands into an idealized Ghost Kingdom. Blood, sweat, and tears is a tough alternative to everlasting bliss, and it is either hard or stupid to keep up with it. Then again, there is the Spinoza comment about everything excellent is a difficult as it is rare. He is not just blowing smoke. I am barely hanging on and that is entirely credited to my metamorphosing into Spirituality. Everyone cannot do it. Everyone does not want to do it. And some perhaps have common sense to not waste a life trying to do so. Pick one, but each is a different Bridge. Mine has gone from a bridge less traveled to one least travelled—perhaps not even worthy of maintenance.

I know nothing of what is happening on the other side of what once was us. But I know the relationship is over, because I am half the relationship and I no longer want it. I have lived my life covering for the irresponsibility of others, and I can no longer be impaled on pretend to ignore truth. Maybe things just change and relationships run their course. That makes sense also. Maybe there is nothing more to it than that. But my leaving leads right into the diet. I need to gain some mobility to function efficiently on my own. The diet is central to that. The split
could provide motivation. More than that it seems to inspire my
writing. Since the whole is greater than the parts and the writing
addresses the whole, then a greater good could follow. That is
pretty clean. Hence, I will pursue my course and cannot do oth-
erwise.