

People's Park

It was 1969, and Sonny was driving into Berkeley from the University of Washington where he had been participating in a seminar on global corporations and the death of the nation state. He came to Berkeley to visit Eban Sinclair, a friend from Cornell University who was a graduate student at UC. Eban was a member of SDS, one of the more powerful political activist groups in the country. Sonny had met a few students at the University of Washington who he thought had potential as campus leaders, and he wanted to pass their names on to Eban as potential recruits and future organizers on campus. Sonny also wanted to talk to someone who would know about SDS and where it was going.

When Sonny stopped his Ariel motorcycle for a traffic light on Telegraph Avenue, he saw a young man with shoulder length dark brown hair crossing the street. He was carrying an aluminum framed olive-green backpack; and he was wearing brown leather sandals, blue jeans with multi-colored patches, and a tie-die T-shirt with red, yellow, and purple bursts of far out colors.

“Where’s the campus?” Sonny asked.

The young man stopped in the middle of the intersection and pointed straight up Telegraph Avenue. He then smiled and said, “Welcome to The People’s Republic of Berzerkley.”

Sonny laughed and then formed a V with his middle and index finger and his palm facing forward, the universal sign of peace in the 60s and a symbol of the oneness that bound together the youth of America. The light changed, and Sonny cruised up the tree-lined road and then parked near Sproul Plaza and the entranceways to the Berkeley Campus. From what Sonny could see as he walked into the Plaza, the architecture on campus was a blend of Beaux Arts and a modern cubist style that glorified concrete and glass. The Student Union to his left was one of those gray slabs of concrete; and to his right on the opposite side of the Plaza, was a grand stairway that led to a granite Romanesque building in the Imperial style of Rome that housed the administrative offices. At the far end of the Plaza he could see Sather Gate, a steel and bronze clad Beau Art gateway to the campus with ornate floral trim in the style of the French Baroque era; and beyond that, in the background, towering over the treetops, he could see the landmark clock and bell tower that resembled the Campanile de San Marco in Venice.

Sonny stopped for a moment to appreciate the fact that he was standing in Sproul Plaza, the Fort Sumpter of the student Free Speech Movement. He then walked over to some students sitting

at one of the tables in front of the Student Union building. “Can any of you tell me where the Unit One Dorms are?”

A beautifully suntanned girl with blond frizzed hair who was wearing a bright orange halter top, low cut blue bell-bottom jeans, sandals, and purple Granny sunglasses smiled at him and said, “Go down Telegraph one block and take a left on Durant. Then go two blocks to College Ave. You can’t miss it.”

Sonny gave them the peace sign then walked back to his motorcycle. He found Durant Avenue and College Ave and then Derful Dormitory, a dorm that looked like all the other dormitories in the complex of cheerfully painted prison blocks named after famous alumni. Sonny entered the dormitory, and he was immediately immersed in a collage of smells. There were hints of hamburgers, French fries, ketchup, a pizza with mushrooms and sausage, and a meatball sub to go. These smells mingled with the smells of laundry bags filled with dirty clothes that were being washed in a swirling pool of testosterone thinly veiled in deodorant, shampoo, and the vaguely respectable smell of used textbooks, smudged paperback books, and ink. Sonny could hear a typewriter clicking away and music coming out of one of the suites when the door opened and closed to the sound of Pink Floyd singing,

*“We don’t need no education
We don’t need no thought control
No dark sarcasm in the classroom
Teacher leave them kids alone.”*

Sonny found Suite 104 but printed on the door in bold black letters was, Resident Counselor. Sonny looked at the scrap of paper where he wrote down Eban’s address, and he wondered if he had the right building. The idea of Eban being a dorm councilor seemed preposterous to him, but he knocked anyway

The door opened, and Eban appeared wearing a black French beret in the style of Che Guevara, beat up unlaced brown combat boots, black jeans, and a white T-shirt with a black and white image of an AK 47 assault rifle printed on the front, along with the blood red caption that read - PIECE.

Sonny looked at Eban, then at the sign on the door again and said, “Resident Counselor? You

got to be kidding me.”

Eban smiled. “Hey, I’m the main man in this cell block, Sonny. You need toilet paper. No problem. You need someone to intercede with the screws. I’m your man.”

Eban spread his arms and embraced Sonny, “How you doin, brother? It’s good to see you.”

“It’s good to see you too, Eban.”

“Come on in, man.” Eban gestured towards the couch, “Sit down. Relax. Do you want a beer? It’s ice cold, and I loaded up in anticipation of your eminent arrival.”

“Sure. It’s been a long trip on that old Ariel of mine.” Sonny dropped his backpack on the floor, and he sat down on the couch and watched Eban walk across the room to a mini refrigerator. Eban had been the president of his graduating class in high school and a star wrestler who wrestled at one fifty, but now his crew cut had grown into wild locks of blond hair, and he didn’t look like he could make weight anymore. The lean meat-eating wrestler had been transformed into a sturdy brown rice and beans Buddha with wire rim glasses.

Eban, like many of the young students who joined the new left and other progressive student organizations was an above average student with an above average intelligence who majored in the humanities. In the new world order of the knowledge machine, the humanities were viewed, at their worse, subversive; and, at their best, the new Sherwood Forest for the neurotic dysfunctional children of the rich. Eban was one of those poor lost souls who majored in comparative literature and minored in philosophy; and after reading all those books about all those different kinds of people from all those different kinds of place and different eras of history, he was transformed from a beer guzzling, panty raiding, petal-to-the-metal teenager into a maturing young man who was developing a sense of empathy. Eban had learned how to walk in other people’s shoes and hear their cries for help. This was a malady of the heart that the knowledge industry was desperately trying to cure by making it clear that becoming a human being just didn’t pay. The money was in manipulating people and nature as objects and numbers to be converted into money.

Eban popped the top on a can of Budweiser beer, handed it to Sonny, and said, “Welcome, brother. My casa, your casa.” He then sat down in a red beanbag chair and pulled out a joint from his breast pocket. He raised an eyebrow inquisitively and then smiled as he waved a joint of marijuana back in forth in front of Sonny’s face to tempt him with the forbidden fruit of their generation.

“Absolutely,” Sonny said.

Eban lit the joint, took a drag on it, and then passed it to Sonny who also took a hit, holding in

the smoke until he felt it wash over his body like a massage. Sonny sat back on the couch and looked around the room. Like most dormitory furniture the desk, chair, bookshelves, and couch were made from thick slabs of oak bolted together to withstand the nuclear blast of generations upon generations of invading teenagers. The upholstery on the couch could best be described as Brillo wool or possibly woolen chainmail. The prison cell appearance of the room was softened by a large picture window that looked out onto a rather pleasant view of the campus and the wooded area along Telegraph Avenue. A worn Persian rug covered the cold hardwood floors; and two beanbag chairs, red and black, added a touch of comfort. The coffee table looked like it endured years of disobedient children, a fact confirmed by the empty coke cans that should have been thrown away, the large ashtray full of cigarette butts, and a mound of melted candles of all colors that looked like a psychedelic lava flow. Next to Eban's desk, Sonny saw a large pile of the *New Left Notes*, a SDS newsletter; and his bookshelves were stacked with political pamphlets. On the wall were posters of Mao, Che Guevara, Malcolm X, and two SDS posters. One of the posters called out in bold letters, RESIST! Another read, DON'T MOURN, ORGANIZE.

Sonny took another drag from the joint, and then he looked at Eban incredulously and said, "Dorm Counselor? How the hell did you manage that?"

"It's part of the University's efforts to coop the movement with the creation of student and faculty councils, promises of more diversity, and better food and housing. It's all window dressing. But fuck it. I'm through with this fuckin place. There's nothing we can do here anymore. SDS is going to the streets, man. We're going to become the vanguard of the New American Revolution."

"So, what I heard is true. A group of you have taken over the leadership of SDS, and you're advocating guerilla warfare and a Marxist Revolution."

"You're fuckin A, man. We've tried everything, Sonny; and we got nothing to show for it. We tried to reform the universities, and all we got was window dressing. We fought for civil rights, and we got tokenism. We've organized massive antiwar demonstrations, sit-ins, and teach-ins; and all they've done is to intensify the war."

Eban got up and went to the refrigerator to get two more beers, and he stopped in front of the bookshelf filled with stacks of pamphlets. He picked up one of the pamphlets and said, "Let's see what we got here, *Racism and Imperialism*". He threw the pamphlet at Sonny and picked up another. "*The New Labor Class*," He threw that at Sonny too. Then he went through the

pamphlets like they were cards in his hand, *“The Myth of the Domino Theory – A Guide to Student Activism – The University, Agent Orange, The CIA and Beyond – Environmental Melt Down – The Cost of Imperialism – The Selling of America.”* He discarded all those pamphlets and then said, “And here’s one by you, Sonny.”

Eban tossed that one at Sonny. Sonny looked at the title, *Mass Media and The Consumer Culture of Primitive Totems: The Devolution of America*. Sonny laughed, and Eban put Dylan’s album *“Subterranean Homesick Blues”* on the record player, and Sonny listened to Dylan sing,

*“Look out kid
Don’t matter what you did
Walk on your tip toes
Don’t try “No Doz”
Better stay away from those that carry around a fire hose.
Keep a clean nose
Watch the plain clothes
You don’t need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows.”*

Eban handed Sonny another beer and then sat down and said, “Sonny, we’ve tried to speak truth to power.” Eban paused and a dark sadness passed across his face. “All we got for that, man, is clubbed, gassed, shot, and fuckin murdered. We’re not taking it anymore. Fuck them. We’re fighting back!”

“With what army?”

“All revolutions started with a small dedicated cadre, man. We’ll unite with our black brothers in this country, and we’ll become a vanguard army that will recruit from the billions of poor people in the world who are rising up against American imperialism and its capitalist racist institutions.”

“Your black brothers? “They threw you out of SNCC because you were white, and now the Black Panthers and other radical black organizations like them are advocating Black Nationalism and Separatism. We’re doing nothing to unite the black and white workers of America. That’s the problem.”

“Fuck the hard hats,” Eban said. “They’re the praetorian guard of a global system of oppression, and they’ll pull the trigger on their fellow workers for a fuckin pickup truck, a six-pack of beer, a TV set, and

a recliner chair.”

“Right,” Sonny said. “And the brightest and most opportunistic of the black working class will be cooped into the system; and they will be getting off the *Freedom Train* in Old Greenwich, Connecticut; and the rest of us will be getting a round trip ticket back to nowhere, courtesy of our black brothers in BMWs.”

“For sure,” Sonny said. “The system is brilliant in the way it divides and conquers and alienates the working class from itself. But the point is that everything is changing. With globalization, American corporations aren’t American anymore. They’ll go anywhere there is cheap slave and child labor, and they’ll abandon the American white working class in the near future. They don’t need us anymore, and we need to make Americans aware of what is happening to them and what will happen to their children. You’re right. We do need to leave the campuses. We need to knock on the doors of working class families, go to the union halls, their workplace, the malls, the bars, the sports fields where their children play, the VFWs and the American Legions, everywhere we can find them. We need to explain to them how they are going to be fucked too. All of us.”

Sonny took a sip of his beer and took a drag of the joint and passed it back to Eban, then said, “Another thing. You say we tried everything, and we failed. That’s not fuckin true. In the beginning, when SDS was founded, we believed that how you make a decision was as important as the decision you make, so we became a direct and participatory democracy. And... because of that we were open and free; and we were flexible and diverse. Wherever we were we could take the immediate issue important to that group or community and use it to open up the discourse to the broader issues. That’s what the universities never got. The issue was never the issue with us because we were able to take almost any issue and connect it to the civil rights movement, the student free speech movement, and the antiwar movement; and we could take all three movements and connect them with one another and the broader issues of the evils of corporate globalism, imperialism and vampire capitalism. We got millions of people to think about things they never thought about before...and... we got them to act on things they never thought they could do anything about.”

“Now you want to give it all up?” Sonny shook his head in disbelief. “For what? Soviet or Chinese Communism? That’s your alternative? That’s progress? The only thing that has changed in those two countries is that the Communist Party in the Soviet Union replaced the old aristocracy; and in China, the Communist Party replaced the old Mandarin class. Otherwise, nothing has changed. The old boss is the new boss, the same as the old boss. No, man, the old models of capitalism, socialism,

representative democracy, and communism are all seriously flawed. We need a new vision of an alternative social, political, and economic structure to replace the old. We're getting there; but we're not there yet. We're not ready for a revolution. America is not ready for a revolution."

"American is never going to be fuckin ready for this, man," Eban said." There's no reforming America. This isn't about evil in America. It's about America being evil, man. There's no hope for America, Sonny. America is fuckin over."

"I can't believe that," Sonny said. "It's like giving up on your family because they're fucked up."

Eban laughed and said, "That sounds like an abused child talking." Sonny laughed as well; and then Eban stood up, and said, "But, I know something that we'll agree on, brother."

"What's that?"

"Pizza, man, I'm starving."

Sonny laughed, "Me too. Do they have any good pizza in this town?"

"Yeah, there's a pizza place called La Val's, man. It's not bad. The closest thing you'll get to New York pizza here."

Sonny stood up and spreads his arm. "I'm ready."

Sonny and Eban drove to Val's in Eban's red 1961 ragtop Volkswagen Beetle; and when they arrived at Val's, they sat down at one of the tables and ordered a cheese pizza with pepperoni and two mugs of beers. Val's was like many campus type pizzerias/Italian restaurants/ take-out joints. It was crowded with tables and chairs, beer signs, and a take-out counter. A black and white menu board over the counter listed a huge selection of food all derivatives of one another and the smell of garlic, onions, cooked tomatoes, ground beef and pork, and the smell of burnt flour, cheap wine and beer. Behind the take-out counter was a large black and white blowup of an aerial photo of the UC campus; and near the entranceway, Sonny noticed a poster calling for students to join in on the building of People's Park, "*Let a Thousand Parks Bloom,*" it said.

Sonny pointed at the poster. "What is that all about?"

"The university purchased and then tore down a block of low rent apartment buildings as a buffer zone between poverty and the university. The DMZ zone, as we call it. It was allowed to degenerate into a muddy parking lot and a garbage can for trash and abandoned cars. Recently, some student activists got the students and the community behind an effort to clean up the area and turn it into a park for the people. It's become a happening. They even got fraternity and sorority kids volunteering

and the local businesses and building contractors and landscape artists have contributed plants, building materials, and skilled labor.”

“That’s great, man.”

“Yeah, like it’s going to change anything,” Eban said dismissively.

“You know, Eban, sometimes it doesn’t matter how it affects them. Sometimes we have to do things just to remind ourselves about who we are.”

Eban bit into a slice of pizza, wiped his lips and chin with his hand, then took a swig out of his mug of beer and said, “I dig, man; but you wait and see. They’re not going to let them even have a small piece of Paradise. Paradise is private property in America, and you have to buy your way into Heaven.”

After they finished eating, they drove back to Eban’s room, argued politics for a while more, and then gravitated towards the youthfulness upon which their politics soared. They talked about the girls that they knew, the fun they had at Cornell, drank more beer, smoked more pot; and watched Laugh-In on TV. Somewhere between Laugh-In, the nightly news, and a trip to the refrigerator for a can of coke, and a bowl of potato chips; Sonny, exhausted, fell asleep on the couch.

The next morning, he woke up, took a shower, and left a note for Eban who was still asleep. Sonny fired up his Ariel, and he drove down Telegraph Avenue to Bowditch Street and Dwight Way where he was told that People’s Park was located. There were hundreds of people there; and as Sonny cruised around weaving his way slowly through the crowds of people, he saw a handmade sign nailed to a tree that read, *People’s Park*; and below it was a table where he could volunteer.

One of the students tending the table had dark bushy hair that was puffed out into waves and curls of anarchy. He was wearing black penny loafers without any socks, tight black tapered jeans, and a black T-shirt with a message scrolled across his chest in white letters that read, *Don’t Trust Anybody Over Thirty*. With his wire rim glasses and his pale delicate features that seemed to be oblivious to California sunshine, the student looked like a cross between Bobby Dylan and a Russian Trotskyite trying to escape the tragedy of a Dostoyevsky novel; but when he spoke, he was obviously only several semesters of well-attended English literature classes away from Brooklyn.

The girl seated next to him at the table was wearing a green Rigoletto style wide brimmed felt hat with a white ostrich feather as a plume. A white cotton Mexican riding blouse was unbuttoned

to reveal a royal blue T-shirt with silk screened yellow daisies blooming on voluptuous breasts.

She smiled at Sonny and asked him, “What can you do?”

Sonny smiled in response and said, “I know how to use a pick and shovel, dig a hole, pound a nail, cut a board...” Sonny shrugged, “I got hands.”

The girl stood up and said, “Gotcha. Follow me.”

Sonny followed the girl through the park that was forming out of the debris, and he was amazed by what they had done. Sod was being laid down on a massive scale. Bushes, scrubs, trees, and flowers were being planted everywhere. Sonny saw a mason creating a brick pathway; and near the pathway he saw a sign that read, *The People’s Garden* which was a plowed plot of land where people were planting seeds for organic vegetable in natural compost. In the background they were building what looked to be a sheltered stage/bandstand for future plays and concerts.

The girl stopped in front of a long line of people who were passing squares of sod from hand to hand. “Here’s your helping hand,” she smiled and said. “Step in anywhere. You are now officially part of The People’s Park Commune.”

Sonny looked around for a place in the line, and then he saw her. She was small and built like a gymnast with well-toned graceful muscles that turned every movement into an athletic dance like water patiently wearing away rock. She was dressed simply in a white spaghetti strap T-shirt, sand colored cutoff jeans with frayed edges, and light tan leather John Deere work boots with white turned down athletic socks. She had a beautiful tan, and her breasts were small but beautifully shaped like prepubescent buds of unknown gender blooming into a woman that he wanted to shape with his lips. Sonny was amazed with how much space she took up for a little person. She seemed to radiate the space around her with a light from within.

There was a moment pause in the line; and when someone stepped out, Sonny saw his opportunity. He slipped into the line next to her, but she didn’t notice him because she was having a conversation with the girl in line next to her. Then the human conveyor belt started again.

She turned, and she was like a shaft of light, a portal to Paradise in People’s Park.

“Hi, I’m Sonny.”

She seemed stunned for a moment like she thought she might know him, but she couldn’t figure

out from where. Confused, she said, “Yes, it is a nice day, isn’t it?”

“No, no,” Sonny said laughing. “My name is Sonny.”

She laughed as well and said, “Oh, I’m sorry. My name is Miranda.”

As Sonny passed the piece of sod to Miranda he asked, “Do you go to UC?”

“I just graduated.”

“What now?”

“I’m going to Cornell for a master’s degree in feminist literature, and I’ll be working part-time for the National Organization of Women as a regional organizer.”

“Wow. I graduated from Cornell. I’m going back there when I leave here.”

“What do you do?”

“When I graduated from Cornell, I went to the Maxwell School at Syracuse University for my Ph.D. in American Studies. I taught for a while at SU; but now I’m a sort of itinerate scholar. I go from campus to campus and try to infect the body politic with democracy. I sort of cough on people and hope they catch the virus and pass it on.”

Miranda smiled and said, “A kind of germ warfare. That’s cool. Maybe you can start a nationwide epidemic.”

“I hope so.”

A young man with long blond hair and a beard wearing blue denim overalls, no shirt, work boots, and a carpenter’s belt came up to Miranda and said, “Miranda, David and I have to go to class. We could use your help with the stage.”

Miranda turned to Sonny and said, “Do you know anything about carpentry?”

“I was a carpenter’s assistant one summer. You tell me what to cut, and I can cut it without wasting wood.”

Miranda grabbed his hand and said, “Come on, you’re hired.”

They walked over to the stage where a wood sign stuck in the ground declared in rainbow colored letters that it was *The People’s Theater and Performance Center*. Next to the stage there was a table saw and piles of wood. The frame of the stage/bandstand was constructed, and they were laying down the floorboards. Steve, the student who had asked Miranda for help, turned his carpenter’s belt and tools over to Miranda. As Miranda put on her tool belt, she pointed to the table saw and said, “Can you handle that? I’ll tell you what I need, and you cut it.”

Sonny shrugged and said, “Sure, I’ll need a measuring tape, a pencil, and a square if you have

one.”

The student, who was leaving with Steve, handed his carpenter’s belt and tools over to Sonny and said, “This stuff belongs to the commune, Sonny. When you’re done, you pass it on to whoever takes your place or put it in the carpenter’s box over there.”

As the student walked away, he gave them the peace sign and said, “Up the revolution,” and then he disappeared into the park.

Miranda smiled and said, “Let’s get to work,” and then she joined the carpenters on the stage and started calling out measurements.

Sonny looked around. Everyone was working to the sound of The Band singing, “*Take a load off Fannie, take a load for free.*” Sonny smiled. They had turned work into play, and at times it looked like a playground where you worried that the children running around would bump into each other or fall off of the jungle gym and get hurt but nobody did. He loved it. He loved working communally with his brothers and sisters. This had always been a concept of his, an ideal, an abstract idea that he wrote about; but now he was living the dream, and at the center of that dream was Miranda. He couldn’t take his eyes off her. He was enchanted by Miranda; and when she smiled at him or touched his hand as he passed wood to her, it was like his mommy smiling at him and telling him he was doing a good job; but his mommy almost never smiled at him like that; and he never seemed to be able to do anything that would make her happy; so he was sucking up her smiles like California sunshine.

They worked for hours, and then a cowbell rang. Miranda came over and said, “Come on, let’s go eat.”

Three picnic tables were full of all sorts of vegetables, rice and bean dishes, the distinct smell of curry, a big pot of vegetable chili; and nearby, a hippie wearing an Uncle Sam hat and coat was grilling hot dogs and hamburgers. In the background Peter, Paul, and Mary were singing,

*“Carry on my sweet survivor,
Carry on my lonely friend.
Don’t give up on the dream,
And don’t you let it end.”*

Sonny served himself a black bean, corn, and red pepper salad, a hamburger, and a cup of cider.

Miranda filled her plate with chicken curry and rice, a fresh green garden salad, and a glass of ice green tea and honey. They found a tree to sit under; and when Miranda gave Sonny some homemade bread from her plate she said, “So, what is Ithaca like? I was only there for a couple of days. The campus is nice, and I loved the view of the lake.”

Sonny smiled. “It’s ten square miles surrounded by reality.”

“Do you have someplace to live?”

“Not yet. I can’t decide whether to sign up for a room in a graduate residential dorm or find a place myself when I get there. What do you think?”

“I’ll help you.”

“Really?”

Sonny smiled, “Sure.”

“Do you have a place to stay?” Miranda asked.

“I have a friend here in one of the dorms. I guess I’m going crash on his floor.” Sonny didn’t mention that Eban had a couch, and he gave Miranda his best lost-dog look. All he didn’t do was wag his tail and lick her hand.

“You can stay with us. We have lots of room.”

“Who’s us?” Sonny asked, fearing the answer.

“I live in a commune. Everyone is cool, and we always have guests.” She smiled and looked at him like she just asked him if he wanted a cookie with the promise of more.

“Far out, that sounds great, Miranda, all I have to do is pick up my backpack from Eban’s dorm room.”

“Splendid,” she said as she got up. “I think we better get back to work. Don’t you think?”

Sonny wanted to say, “Miranda, I’m not thinking at this point. I’m just going with the flow, and it feels great;” but he just got up and said, “OK, I’m ready.”

They worked for several hours more, and then they walked over to where Sonny parked his motorcycle. Miranda loved the old Ariel; and when she straddled the back seat of the bike and wrapped her arms around him, he felt her breasts against his back and the motorcycle throbbing before it roared off down the road. Sonny smiled to himself thinking, “Now this is what a motorcycle is all about.”

He pulled into the dorm parking lot; and when he went up to Eban’s room to pick up his backpack, Eban looked out the window, saw Miranda, and said, “I understand, brother. The first and most important

guy rule, pussy before friends.”

They both laughed, and Sonny rejoined Miranda who suggested that they take a walk along Strawberry Creek. As they walked along the path that followed the creek through the campus, they held hands; and it was like they had always been together. They talked about their childhood, and they talked about their hopes and dreams for the future. They walked hand and hand through the Romanesque arch of Hearst Bridge, and Sonny felt so comfortable with Miranda that he wondered if we all fall in love with the same person over and over again from one lifetime to another. Maybe love is the Adam and Eve of matter and antimatter that constitutes the fundamental core feeling that created the universe at the beginning of time and continues to hold it together and illuminates reality with its magic, a touch, a first kiss that turned their lips, their love into a link across time and made them feel like they were a part of an impressionistic painting, the abstract rays of light fragmented by coastal redwoods and giant Eucalyptus trees speckled with dots of pink rhododendrons, wild currents, and ferns. A white egret seemed like a winged anchor to a reality that flowed over a blue crayfish that crawled through the green gold water that glistened in the sun; and when they finally stopped kissing Sonny looking into Miranda’s eyes and said, “Wow. So that is what lovers mean when they say, ‘I will love you forever and ever.’”

Miranda looked deeply into Sonny’s eyes and said, “Do you think you could love me forever?”

“I already have.”

“So, you think we’ve loved each other from lifetime to lifetime?”

“Yes.”

“Well then how come we don’t remember?” Miranda asked as she took his hand and led him further down the path.

Sonny laughed. “That wouldn’t be any fun. It’s like... Well, what if from lifetime to lifetime we remember the first time we saw a sunrise or a sunset? That wouldn’t make any sense. It’s better that each time is the first time so that each time we experience the wonder of it.”

“So, you’re saying that we’ve been in love forever, but we’re meeting for the first time, but each time we meet we fall in love all over again.”

“Yes, and each time it’s more spectacular and more beautiful than before.”

“I like that,” Miranda said. “But what about other guys that I have been attracted too?”

“They’re all cases of mistaken identity.”

They both laughed and walked on so totally and completely enchanted with one another that

they didn't notice that the stream was polluted by sewage runoff from the football stadium and the pathway was carelessly neglected by a university that had no aesthetic sense when it ran steam pipe lines across the creek in total disregard for its natural beauty. Miranda and Sonny didn't notice this because they were in the world of infinite possibilities and a world of what could be.

Later in the day, they drove to the commune where Miranda lived in an old Victorian house on Sutter Street. Some of the young people there were working in the communal kitchen where they were cooking food for their evening meal and baking whole wheat bread for People's Park and a free food kitchen run by another commune called Provos. Provos, like the Sutter Street Commune, were off springs of the Digger movement which believed that everything should be free.

Other members of the commune were working in *The Free Print Shop* where they were printing out the latest edition of an inter-communal newspaper called, *Kaliflower*, a paper that describes itself as a "flower growing out of the ashes of this currant age of destruction."

The front page of the paper had a green and purplish gray floral sketch of a woman who seemed to be emerging from nature with heart shaped lips. The title story on the front page was *Lousy Dreams*; and it read,

"A specter is haunting San Francisco – communal capitalism. People who rob their brothers from 9 – 5 and then come home to love and share with their selected brothers. Are they the vanguard of a New Age?"

THE WHOLE WORLD IS YOUR FAMILY. The things you create have nothing to do with money – DESTROY THE MYTH. Security as love and faith in your brothers and sisters is coming thru the door – MAKE PROPHETS NOT PROFIT."

Sonny looked up from the newspaper, and he loved what he saw in the commune, but he wondered if he would ever be a part of it. Would he ever shed the excess baggage of his violent past? Sometimes he felt like the Roman fighting for the Christians. If he was victorious, he would never become part of the world he was creating. Even the students around him, who were trying so hard, had their own excess baggage to overcome. Most of them were from upper middle-class families, and they grew up in the insular environment of homogenous suburbs. From childhood they

were taught to compete for the top in an American Darwinian society of winners and losers where money was the way to keep score. Often the nucleus of their family life was split by divorce; and love was betrayed at its core. Many of their hopes and dreams came from the negative space in their lives, the void that was being filled by dreams of the future and the dreams that they were living now. Sonny wondered if they were the prototypes of a cultural evolution of humankind, or were they condemned to failure. Would they ever enter the Gates of Eden and live in the Age of Aquarius where *“Peace will guide the planets and love will steer the stars,”* or were they trapped in a society closing in on itself like a snake eating its tail?

As Sonny was musing over his fate, Miranda, who seemed to glow with goodwill, grabbed his hand and swept him up in her enthusiasm. Sonny signed and went with the flow. He helped her carry boxes of freshly baked bread out to a Volkswagen van that drove off to deliver the bread to the soup kitchen. They joined the others for their communal dinner. Everyone was friendly. Some of them were curious about Cornell and where he had been. After a while they figured out who he was. They had seen other activists like him come to the campus to organize or lecture or speak at meetings or just hang out, tune in, and pass the word on.

Herbie, who looked like a stoned hippie rabbi, pointed to Sonny and said, “He’s one of Tolkien’s Rangers. He’s a member of the Brotherhood of Hope who roams the borders of the empire looking for cracks in the wall.” Everyone seemed satisfied with that. Sonny now had an identity and a place in their community. He was now baptized with a new name, and he was born again as the “Ranger.”

After dinner Miranda and Sonny helped with washing dishes, and Sonny tried to remain cheery, friendly, and entertaining; but he was becoming weary of the effort. He was tired, and all he really wanted to do was be alone with Miranda. Miranda, who was watching him as much as he was watching her, sensed his weariness. She made him stop and put the pot away that he was washing; and then she took off her apron, whipped his hands with the towel she was using to dry the dishes and said, “Do you want to take a shower before you go to bed?”

“I’m going to bed?” Sonny asked.

“Yes.”

“Where?”

“With me, silly.”

“Oh, then I guess I’d like to take a shower. Sonny smiled. “And the other thing... I’d really like to

do that too.”

“OK, follow me.”

Sonny followed Miranda up the oak stairway with tapered balusters and an ornate newel with hand carved rosettes. The stairway and the floors of the hallways squeaked so much that Sonny imagined that the house was being held together by the bold colors of the walls and the trim on the moldings, the vivid purple and blue and the orange that glowed like a Tibetan temple that vibrated to the mantra tremors of the Saint Andreas fault. As he walked up the stairway and through the hallways, he also marveled at the beauty of Miranda’s body. It was one of those bodies that men watched at women’s Olympic gymnastics meets, or went to the ballet for, or watched a beautiful woman figure skater just to get a glimpse of her ass as she leaped then whirled revealing the glory and beauty of the human form on cold hard ice.

When they get to Miranda’s room, Sonny leaned his backpack against the wall near the door, and Miranda put a Joni Mitchell album onto her Sony stereo player. Miranda’s room had bare oak floors, and it looked like they had been recently refinished. The walls were painted yellow and the moldings and window frames were painted a medium range bright garden green. The ceiling was high in the Victorian style, and the upper panes of the bay windows were stained glass causing red, orange, yellow, and blue speckled bands of light to dance with the silver moon across the floor. A giant rubber tree acted like a blind for the bay window, and it made it seem as if he were looking through a jungle forest out at the city lights and into the night.

On one side of the bay window, there was an old-fashioned art deco green velvet stuffed chair, and next to it was a Tiffany type stained glass standing lamp that was dimly lit with bright stain glass flowers. On the other side of the bay window was Miranda’s antique brass poster bed with rainbow sheets and a white down comforter. An artist’s drafting table served as a desk, and the bookshelves that were made with 2 x 8s and cinder blocks were full of books on art, literature, anthropology, and other assorted topics and subject matter.

Browsing through the books he saw *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan, *Thinking About Women* by Mary Ellmann, *Coming of Age in Mississippi* by Anne Moody, *Male and Female*, *And A Study of the Sexes* by Margaret Mead. He also saw books by Mircea Eliade and Camus, both of whom he loved. On Miranda’s stereo record player Joni Mitchell was singing,

“Sisotowbell Lane

Go to the city you’ll come back again

To wade through the grain

You always do

Yes, we always do

Come back to the stars

Sweet well water and pickling jars

We’ll lend you the car

We always do

Yes, sometimes we do

We have a rocking chair

Someone is always there

Rocking rhythms while they’re waiting

With the candle in the window

Sometimes we do

We wait for you.”

Miranda watched Sonny while he browsed through her bookshelf. She watched the way he moved. Like many outstanding athletic men, Sonny moved gracefully like a big cat; and when he turned away from the bookshelf and stared at her, his eyes were like dark pools that she could get lost in. Miranda smiled and handed Sonny a large white cotton towel that she had pulled out of a drawer and said, “The bathroom is through that door, Sonny. I’ll be back in a minute. I need to sign you in and inform my chatty girl friends that this is definitely a Do Not Disturb night.” Miranda kissed Sonny on the cheek and then disappeared down the hallway.

Sonny flipped the light switch on in Miranda’s bathroom. The source of the light were two Victorian gas lantern style brass sconces with cream colored shades on each side of a large oval mirror with a gold gilded frame that hung above an old-fashioned white porcelain pedestal sink. The soft light poured over the violet walls and the black and white checkered tiles. An art deco style 1950s glass brick shower stall glowed transparently from the refracted soft cream-colored

overhead shower light.

As Sonny was undressing, he noticed that unlike most women's bathrooms that he had seen, there were very few signs of the usual array of makeup, perfume, and other concoctions that were a total mystery to him. Sonny did smell the slight scent of frieze; and on the shelf above the towel rack, he saw a squeeze bottle of oil of aloe and white jar of coconut cream. On the sink next to a small metal container of bee's wax balm that Sonny imagined she used as an all-purpose lip-gloss was a plastic container of Dr. Bronner's Peppermint Soap.

It was identical to the container of Dr. Bronner's Peppermint Soap that Sonny had in his hand along with his toothbrush and a towel. For many of the children of the 60s, Dr. Bronner's was the Swiss camping knife of cleanliness. Sonny used it to shampoo his hair, shower and bath, brush his teeth, and wash his motorcycle and his dirty clothes. In the shower the downpour of warm water soothed his muscles that had been strained by days of riding a hard-sprung scrambler motorcycle and working in People's Park. The excitement of everything new had kept him going, and now it was his passion for Miranda that energized his young body and made him feel renewed.

The shower door opened, and Miranda appeared naked and said, "I thought you might need someone to scrub your back."

They kissed and washed each other all over like they were being baptized and cleansed of all the sins and all the people who ever touched them. They were reborn again, anew for one another; and when they went to bed, they began to disappear into one another; and love became two black holes dancing around each other in a cosmos becoming one, swirling into the darkness that swallowed up all of life, compressing it into the gravity of its nothingness until it burst out on the other side a newborn sun.

In the aftermath, they both stared at one another as if they were looking at their own reflection, and they touched each other gently as if they were discovering themselves for the first time. It's hard to say who closed their eyes first. Maybe it was the candle light going out flicker by flicker as they drifted down into the depths of the ocean like they were floating on a gentle wind spiraling down to the bed of the ocean where a volcano was forming.

Sonny and Miranda woke up to shouts, and there were so many people running around that the house seemed to be shaking like they were in an earthquake. Miranda opened the door of her

bedroom and asked, “What’s happening?”

“They’re tearing up People’s Park!” someone shouted.

When Sonny and Miranda went downstairs, it was chaos. Everyone was leaving for the park. It seemed that the police had come in the night with a construction crew and built a chain link fence around the park; and now, they were bulldozing Paradise.

Miranda was ready to rush out of the house like everyone else, but Sonny said, “Wait, I’ll be right back.”

Sonny ran up the stairway to Miranda’s room, and he dug out two bandanas, two pairs of motorcycle goggles, a pairs of leather gloves, and a water bottle. He stuffed them into his daypack, threw it over his shoulder, and ran back down the stairs.

Sonny found Miranda on the front porch watching people pour out of the student apartments and heading for People’s Park. When Miranda saw Sonny, she grabbed his hand and said, “Are you ready to face the beast?”

Sonny smiled. “As ready as I’ll ever be.” He also said to himself, “And I’m exposing myself, like I never should, all because I’m crazy about you.”

They joined the crowd that grew and grew as they got closer to People’s Park. By the time they got to the park there were over a thousand students and local residents outside the park shouting at the city and campus police who were behind the chain link fences that closed off the park. In the background was the tank like clatter of the bulldozers as their steel tracks tore up the new laid sod. A ton of steel slammed into the ground, its steel blade digging up *People’s Garden* and then plowing ahead running over newly planted apple trees. Thousands of more students came marching down Telegraph Avenue towards the park chanting, “Take Back the Park!”

Sonny saw Eban who was dressed for battle in combat boots, cargo pants, a leather jacket, and a UC Football helmet leading a group of students bent on tearing down the fences. Seconds later, tear gas was thrown; and then rocks and bricks were thrown in retaliation.

Sonny opened his daypack, and he wet-down the bandanas with the water from his water bottle and gave one to Miranda along with a pair of goggles. Miranda, despite the chaos about her, laughed and said, “You certainly came prepared.”

“I’ve been here before.”

Miranda put the bandana over her face like an outlaw from a Hollywood western; and so, did Sonny. The goggles protected their eyes, and the leather gloves allowed Sonny to pick up a

canister of tear gas that was rolling down the street in front of them and throw it back at the police. All around them there were shouts of anger and rage. A car was set on fire, and a National Guard jeep sped by spewing out a white cloud of smoke screen gas that mingled with the black clouds of tear gas to form snakes of toxic vapor. Behind the smoke screen, hundreds of deputy sheriffs wearing riot gear and carrying shotguns joined the local police.

Sonny turned to see Miranda take off her T-shirt so that she could grab a tear gas canister that was in the middle of the street. Sonny stopped and watched Miranda, bare breasted, throw a perfect pass into the middle of group of cops; and he wished he had a camera to capture her naked courage; but then Sonny heard shots. The deputy sheriffs who were wearing gas masks and were armed with shotguns were firing into the crowds of people.

Sonny saw someone on a rooftop get hit; and Sonny grabbed Miranda and shouted, "Run!"

Miranda put her T-shirt back on, and she and Sonny ran up Telegraph Avenue towards the university that had been Miranda's parents away from home that had now turned against her. They saw a student go down, shot in the back while running away. His back was riddled with shotgun pellets. Several students stopped to help him. Sonny was shocked. It looked like double-o-buckshot. Double-o-buckshot could tear through a car door at close range.

Sonny turned to see who was pursuing them when he saw a deputy sheriff wearing a gas mask, a riot helmet, and flak jacket run up to Miranda and grab her by the hair. He was ready to smash Miranda in the face with his baton when Sonny grabbed the club by its business end, swirled the deputy around, and smashed him with a football style forearm shiver across the jaw sending him sprawling to the pavement. Sonny now had the baton in his hand; and when he saw the deputy reach for the revolver in his side holster, Sonny cracked him in the head sending his gas mask and riot helmet flying.

Sonny looked down at the deputy's face. His smug piggy eyes looked as if they were hidden behind the movie screen of his own mean-minded perverse projections. Sonny heard his father's voice say, "So you like to beat up on women with your wooden dick, you fuckin cock sucker. Here, see if you get off on this."

Sonny grabbed the T baton by the opposite end and swung the handle in between the officer's legs and into his groin causing him to squeeze his legs together in agony with the wooden baton sticking out like a penis. Sonny picked up the revolver that had fallen to the ground, and he raised it. He could hear Eban saying, "Do it, Sonny. Show the son-of-a-bitches that they're not the only

ones who can shoot people. Start the revolution right here and now. One shot will do it!”

Miranda grabbed Sonny and shouted, “Stop!”

Sonny turned and stared into Miranda’s eyes, and he became himself again. “Look,” Miranda said.

He looked down the street, and he saw more cops emerging from the clouds of black smoke. Sonny threw the gun away, and he and Miranda turned and ran off down the street. They cut up an alleyway that led into a parking lot that exited onto a side street; and they were able to get away by following the labyrinth of connected backyards, driveways, and side streets to Miranda’s house.

When they got there, they immediately washed out their eyes, took a shower, and scrubbed off the residue of tear gas from their bodies. Rumors and news was pouring in. Hundreds of students were admitted to the hospital suffering from head traumas, shotgun wounds, and respiratory problems brought on by being exposed to the tear gas. Hundreds more were probably injured but didn’t go to the hospital in fear of being arrested. James Rector, the kid that Sonny saw get shot on the rooftop, was in critical condition from shotgun wounds. Another student was believed to be permanently blind; and many others were riddled with shotgun wounds on their heads, necks, backs, and legs. It was also confirmed that many of the deputies in the sheriff’s office were using double-o-buck shot. There was talk of sit-ins, boycotts, rallies, and outright violence. There were calls to all the other communes and political activist groups. Meetings were being set up, but nothing was settled though it was clear that they would march on the park again tomorrow.

That night Sonny and Miranda made love with a desperation that came from a near death experience where every gene shouted out for survival. Sonny growled like a big cat when he came, and his growl turned into a guttural purr, the vibrations sending Miranda into ecstasy as his hands like paws caressing her, his claws contracted as he licked her breast, her nipples, his lips touching the very sensitive tips of her existence.

She looked up at his muscular silhouette. In the background she could see the moon ringed with stars and the red, yellow, and blue lights from the stain glass dancing on the tongue like leaves of the rubber tree. She felt like she was being licked all over by the moonlight, the stars, the jungle like tree, and the beast within who was staring at her with dark pool like eyes.

“Who are you?” she asked.

“I’m you,” Sonny said.

The next morning Miranda, Sonny, the students of UC Berkeley, and the residents of the city

woke up to discover that they were being invaded by thousands of National Guard troops; and the City of Berkeley had become the first American city to ever be occupied by an American Army since the Civil War. At first, everyone just wandered out onto the streets to watch the spectacle of what seemed to be an endless convoy of trucks and jeeps rumbling through the city, a drab green metal centipede that belched smoke, spite fire, and had a thousand marching feet.

They watched People's Park being turned into an army campsite and a place to park their trucks and jeeps next to the bulldozers. Barricades of barbed wire were set up, and the streets that accessed the park were closed and guarded by soldiers with rifles and fixed bayonets.

A few makeshift signs appeared. One read, *Welcome to Uruguay*, and another read, *Join Us.* A student dressed as Jesus Christ was carrying The Cross of Private Property and Capitalism, and a sign hanging from his neck read, *All of This for Two Acres of Paradise?*

The next day there was a meeting at Miranda's house that was attended by representatives from all the communes in the Berkeley area. The agenda was to discuss possible political actions and elect representatives to a steering committee that would be made up of all the political action groups on campus for the purpose of determining a strategy for a unified action. Because of the curfew and the suspension of habeas corpus, it was decided to hold the campus wide steering committee meetings in Oakland. Already several meetings on campus were broken up, and the participants were arrested. Everyone was on edge and fearful that at any moment their door could be broken down in a warrantless raid, and they would all be arrested. Many of the students were terribly angry. They had seen friends and fellow students beaten and shot. Some of them called for a massive confrontation, even violence if necessary.

At this point, Miranda stood up and said, "We can't become them. We have to beat them in the spirit of People's Park. I propose that we surround them. We create a People's Park everywhere in the city. Wherever there is a green space, we plant flowers. We become terrorists and attack them in the night with love and care. Let them fear their mother's touch. That is our greatest weapon against a patriarch that wages war against its own children."

Miranda's speech was met with applause, and it seemed that she had planted the seeds of an idea that spread from house to house, dorm to dorm, organization to organization. Flower power would surround the war machine and smother it with love.

The battle lines were drawn, and every night the student terrorists attacked, planting flowers in all the parks and any and every available green space in the city. Some of Mother Nature's more

aggressive warriors dug up slabs of sidewalk and replaced them with flower gardens. Others were repairing the cracks in the asphalt and concrete roads by ripping them up and planting patches of violets, red and yellow geraniums, pink and orange tulips, sunflowers, and marijuana plants. Other students blocked off roads with strips of sod seeded with flowers and full-grown plants and grass. It was the Flower Children's version of barbed wire, and signs were planted to warn of the dangers ahead. One sign read, "*Beware! Flower Zone.*" Another read, "*Beware! This Area is Mined with Seeds of Love.*"

Sonny was trying to do his part by calling all his connections at all the universities that he had visited to get support for the People's Park Movement. He was also helping to write leaflets and news releases along with eyewitness accounts and photos to be sent to newspapers throughout the nation to let people know what was happening at Berkeley.

When Miranda walked into her room, Sonny was talking on the phone to a friend of his at the University of Oregon about organizing a rally and coordinating it with a press release. "Listen, Dave," Sonny said. "I'll send you the news packet. Yes, we're living in a police state here; and if we don't do anything about it, we're the future. Thanks, brother. Up the revolution."

Sonny hung up the phone and turned around to see Miranda dressed all in black. Her face was blackened with wax shoe polish; and she was holding two flowerpots, one filled with yellow daisies and another with red, white, and blue tulips. She smiled and said, "Are you ready again to take on the Beast?" She held up the two flowerpots. "This time we are fully armed."

Sonny winced and then asked, "Where are we going?"

"Into the heart of darkness."

"I was afraid of that."

Miranda handed him one of the pots, took out the can of black shoe polish she had in her pocket, and painted streaks of war paint on Sonny's face. She laughed, and said, "There. Now you're ready."

When they went downstairs, there were over twenty members of the commune armed with flowers and dressed in dark clothing ready to go. They were organized in pairs and fours, and they each had a destination. When they were outside, Sonny turned to Miranda and said, "Where they were

going?”

“The Park.”

Sonny smiled. “Why did I ask?”

“Come on,” Miranda said. “Follow me.”

So, like a good puppy in love, Sonny followed Miranda into the war zone. They kept to the side streets, backyards, and alleyways, and away from streetlights. If they were caught by the National Guard patrols, they would be immediately arrested for violating the curfew. If they were caught by “The Blue Meanies,” who were the off-duty cops that roamed the streets looking for students, they would be beaten. On campus, the students in the dormitories had synchronized their radios to the campus radio station and put their speakers in the window so as to fill the air with an eerie electronic tribal music that vibrated throughout the city turning it into an instrument of suspended tension as Paul Simon sang,

*“Hello darkness, my old friend,
I’ve come to talk to you again,
Because a vision softly creeping
Left its seeds while I was sleeping,
And the vision that was planted in my brain,
Still remains,
Within the sounds of silence.”*

Hidden within the sounds of silence, Sonny could feel the Leviathan. It was there. He was right. It did come out of the depths of the darkness from our collective unconscious, unrestrained by reason and empathy, and now it had a life of its own. He could feel the evil, the vibrations of its breath creating an atonal resonance, its sharp steel claws scratching the electrified air. As Miranda and he were standing in the dark shadows of an alleyway next to a boarded up Indian restaurant; he could feel it all around them. Many of the stores were boarded up in response to the occupation and the student sit-ins and protest marches; and Berkeley looked like a ghost town except for the music and the students who were now banging garbage can lids together like shields as background percussion to the Rolling Stones singing, *“War, children, it’s just a shot away.”*

Miranda was ready to bolt across the street when Sonny stopped her. He could hear what

sounded like drumsticks banging together, and then he saw them. Two Blue Meanies were walking down the middle of the street banging their nightsticks together to the beat. The Blue Meanies were wearing their blue uniforms without an identification tag, and their faces were hidden behind Halloween masks. One was Frankenstein, half human, half machine with electrodes sticking out of the side of his head, his face made of cadaver skin crudely stitched together. The other was Wolf Man, half human, half animal, blood dripping from his fangs. They approached a darkened entranceway to a building, and a skull appeared out of the darkness with lifeless eyes. Then a Devil Clown appeared who had crazy eyes and was laughing at the sadistic fun of playing hide-and-go-seek with the children.

Just as Sonny was going to suggest that they try to cross the street further down the road, three students appeared from Parker Street armed with what looked like marijuana plants. They were about to plant them in a pothole in the middle of the road when all four Blue Meanies came running out of their hiding place. The students saw them coming, dropped their plants, and ran back down Parker Street with the Blue Meanies in pursuit.

Sonny didn't know who the students were, but they looked athletic, and they could run. Sonny doubted that the Blue Meanies would catch them; so he turned to Miranda and said, "Let's go," and they ran across the street and disappeared into an alley and then into the back lots and trees. It was so dark amidst the trees that he could barely see Miranda who was carrying the yellow daisies like a candlelight in the dark. They crossed Regent Street on the run, and Miranda once again led him through the darkness. She opened the gate to a backyard fence, walked across a lawn and up the stairs to the back porch of a large old house and knocked on the door.

The door opened, and it was Herbie, from the commune. Herbie smiled and said, "Hi, Miranda. Hello Ranger." We've been waiting for you.

There were four students in the apartment, Herbie, Archie, Heather, and Jennifer; and Sonny guessed they were couples. As they passed through the kitchen to the living room, it was obvious that the house, like so many student apartment buildings, had been broken up into as many apartments; and the landlord had done as little as possible to maintain what had once been a beautiful turn of the century home with tall ceilings and a broken down marble fireplace in the living room. The cracks in the ceilings were covered over by a false ceiling of Styrofoam squares that were water stained, and the deteriorating plaster walls were covered over by fake wood paneling. The furniture looked as if it was donated by a parent who had cleaned out their mother's house after she went to a

nursing home or died. The furniture was expensive but worn and not really of antique quality, but it created a cushioned generational presence that was comforting.

On the walls were quality copies of two famous posters. One was an art nouveau poster by Alfon Mucha of a beautiful young girl growing out of floral lines and a plant motif, her golden hair a living light shaped by a crown of white daisies. She was holding up a drawing board with a heart in the middle that was threatened by the thistles of stupidity, the thorns of genius, and the blossoms of love. The other poster was *The Kiss* by Gustave Klimt, a poster where straight lines and rectangles embraced swirls and circles, and white light was transformed by the mysterious shapes of darkness into the Sun God kissing Danae. The two lovers were surrounded by a golden Byzantine aura and a mosaic of brilliant impressionistic colors slipping down like a silken gown into a bed of flowers on the edge of an escarpment where lesions of love were rooted in the impenetrable amidst the fall of naked transparency.

The windows were decorated with hanging plants, and the living room floor was covered with pots of flowers – daisies, petunias, geraniums, tulips, and even large sunflower plants. “I see,” Sonny said. “This is a munitions dump.”

Miranda smiled and set down her plant on the floor and said, “Come, see.”

She knelt down next to the large front window and cautiously pushed the curtain of orange and green scrolling Indian mandalas aside just far enough so that Sonny could see that they were on Dwight Way, directly across the street from People’s Park, the chain link fences, and a wooded area at the edge of the park. Some troop trucks and jeeps were parked near the fence and beyond that was a bivouac of troop tents.

Herbie, who was standing behind Sonny said, “We created a diversion earlier, and we were able to cut part of the fence with wire cutters. It’s held together now with garbage ties. See, the post to your left, near the trees. See how it sticks out a little at the bottom? We didn’t do such great a job there. We had to hurry, but so far no one has noticed.”

“I see,” Sonny said.

Miranda grabbed the pot of red, white, and blue tulips; and Sonny grabbed a pot of yellow daisies from the munitions dump. It was decided that they would rely on Herbie, Archie, Heather, and Jennifer to watch out for the police and the military patrols. Miranda and he would hide in the hedges outside, and Herbie would give them the go ahead by blinking a flashlight, just like in a

black and white late-night spy movie.

Miranda and Sonny left the house; and as soon as the latch on the front door clicked shut, Sonny knew there was no return. Being outside again was particularly eerie because everything suddenly seemed so normal. The music had stopped, and all Sonny could hear was the electronic buzz of the streetlights and the chirp of a cricket nearby. When he settled into the silence, he could see fireflies flickering about on the lawn and in the park.

The flashlight blinked in the front window of the house, and Sonny and Miranda ran across the street. They found the ties that held the lower end of the chain link fence together, untied them, and slipped through the opening with their plants. Using the trees and the parked army trucks for cover, Sonny looked around trying to figure out where he would plant his flowers. He saw a bulldozer parked near one of the trucks, and he decided that he would plant his pot of daisies in the exhaust pipe that was sticking up vertically, high above the engine block of the bulldozer. He turned to tell Miranda, but she was gone. He then saw her crawling towards the dark olive-green tents. There was laughter from one of the tents, and several of the tents were glowing from the lanterns within.

The flap of a nearby tent opened like a bat taking flight, and a soldier appeared. He was walking straight to where the trucks were parked, and he seemed to be walking straight towards Sonny, but then he stepped into the darkness nearby, and Sonny could hear him unzip his pants and pee so loud that it sounded like a waterfall in the darkness. When he was done, the soldier retraced his steps and disappeared back into the tent. Miranda reappeared from the darkness, and Sonny was trying to figure where she was going when he saw it.

Some soldier had stuck a bayonet into a small tree next to the nearest tent and hung a battle helmet from the bayonet to use as a water bucket. Above the helmet he had hung a mirror. He probably was using it to brush his teeth, wash his face, and shave. Miranda reached up and pulled the helmet down and planted the red, white, blue tulips in it. She then hung the battle helmet turned hanging plant back up on the bayonet.

Miranda snuck through the darkness back to where Sonny was standing, and she was flushed with excitement. Her eyes nearly glowed in the dark like a wild animal at night. Sonny smiled and said, "I don't believe you. I'll be right back."

Sonny kept low and used the trucks to screen his movement. He climbed up onto the bulldozer, reached up and planted the daisies in the exhaust pipe, and then hurried back to where Miranda was

waiting for him between the troop trucks. They were about to retreat back the way they came when a match flared, and they were looking into the face of a soldier who was lighting a joint of marijuana.

The soldier, who was an African American teenager hiding his age behind a mustache and long sideburns, took a toke from the joint and then handed it to Miranda and said, “You two are crazy, man. They catch you here, and you are truly fucked.”

Miranda took a toke off the joint, handed it to Sonny who said, “Where you from?”

“I’m from Oakland, man; but I’ve been goin to San Francisco State College part time and doin this National Guard shit to stay out of the draft. Dig?”

He looked around to see if anyone was coming and then said, “This is all weird shit, man. I don’t even know what the fuck we’re doin here.” He took another toke out of the joint that Sonny handed him and said, “You got to go, man. They be changin sentries soon, and some of these crackers would love to beat on you. You all Niggers to them.”

“I’m hip,” Sonny said. “Come on, Miranda.”

“What’s your name?” Miranda asked.

“Ronnie Wright.”

Miranda hugged him and said, “Thanks, Ronnie Wright.”

They were about to leave when Ronnie said, “Wait.” He took a sheet of folded up paper out of his shirt pocket, wrote something on it, folded it back up, and then handed it to Miranda and said, “Now get the fuck out of here before we all get caught.”

Miranda and Sonny disappeared back into the darkness. They slipped through the fence and crossed Dwight Way without being spotted; and once they crossed Telegraph Avenue, they ran like hell, stoked by what they had just done. They burst into the front door of the commune laughing; and when they were safely in Miranda’s room, they frantically took off one another’s clothes and made love in celebration of their triumph. Miranda opened herself up like a flower, and they were like the Gustave Klint painting, *The Kiss*. They both fell off the edge, a golden aura of falling flowers and bright bursts of color that crashed down to the rocks below and the swirling waters that were like hands that carried away particles of the impenetrable.

After they came together, they laid in bed, their arms around each other, looking out the window at the golden moon and the stars beyond, the orange, green, and blue lights of the stained glass fusing into each other, dancing on the tongue of the tropical leaves, the last drops of a sparkling

potion of passion that lingered to be savored.

“Oh, I forgot,” Miranda said. She got up and looked through her pants and pulled out the folded sheet of paper that the soldier had given her. She turned on a light, sat cross-legged on the bed next to Sonny, and read it. She then handed it to Sonny who read the leaflet.

To Our Fellow Students

The Nation Guardsmen are not pigs. They are young people and teenagers like us who just want to have a good time, a life of their own, and a future to look forward to.

Most of them, like us, do not want to go to Vietnam. That is why they are in the National Guards, but now they are occupying an American city because we wanted to build a public park and turn a neglected trash ridden mud hole into a little bit of Paradise for all.

To the National Guardsmen

Talk to your brothers and sisters here. Find out what is happening, man. Resist when you can and get hip. There is no compromise with the rich old white men who want you to go too far off Vietnam to fight an imperial war or turn your guns on your fellow citizens here at home.

Trust no one over thirty. Trust us, not them, and join the Movement. Resist any way you can, and remember, we are fighting for you. We are fighting for all young people in the country. We want Peace not War. We want Love not Hate. We want a future that belongs to us, not them. People's Park was built for you.

Across the page was Ronnie Wright's handwritten message shouting out, “Help!”

“Wow,” was all Sonny could say. It was one of the leaflets that he had written.

“We can't let him down,” Miranda said.

“No, we can't,” Sonny said. Sonny kissed Miranda, who turned off the light, and they

snuggled up dreaming of all the things they would do only to wake up the next day to discover that James Rector had died in the night at 10:12 PM while they were planting flowers in People's Park. He died of acute heart failure resulting from double-o-shotgun wounds in the stomach, spleen, pancreas, kidney, and portions of his large and small intestines. A silent mourning descended on the campus and the city, and there was a memorial scheduled for James Rector to be held that afternoon in front of the administrative offices at Sproul Hall. After that there was a rally scheduled in Sproul Plaza for a campus wide referendum on People's Park.

Everyone was apprehensive. They had already torn off the mask of friendly fascism from the face of Ronald Reagan to reveal the monster within. Now there were rumors of tanks parked at the Marina; and today Sonny and Miranda and thousands of other young students were going to lay their bodies and lives on the line and bare witness to the fact that America was murdering its youth, not just the kids in Berkeley, nor just the dreams and hopes of a generation, but the youth of a nation. The past was murdering the future, forever; and America was turning in on itself and becoming a closed society.

Earlier that morning, a house meeting was called at the commune to discuss what was happening and what they were going to do. Information sheets were passed out and experiences were shared to help people prepare themselves for what could be a violent confrontation. After a silent prayer for James Rector, the meeting was adjourned with an announcement that they were having homemade pizza for lunch and all the Coca Cola they could drink. With a cheer they rushed into the dining room and devoured the pizza and coke like children at a birthday party with hopes of cake in the end. For the moment they had forgotten all their fears and were absorbed in the pleasure of what they liked.

After lunch Miranda and Sonny went to her room and dressed for the memorial and rally. They wore long sleeve shirts and layered clothing, running shoes, motorcycle helmets, and goggles. In their daypacks they put a bandana soaked in vinegar, bottles of water with baking soda to cleanse their eyes and hands, and a clean hand towel and a bar of soap in a plastic bag. On their wrists they printed the phone numbers of legal aid services and lawyers who had volunteered to help them. Everyone had written down their parent's phone numbers and their home addresses in the house directory in case they couldn't make bail, or they were hurt badly. They also had to sign out if they were going to the rally, and they had to sign in or call in by dinnertime, or it would be assumed

that they were missing in action.

At the meeting, Dave Wycoff, the commune's representative to the People's Park Steering Committee stressed that above all else there could be no violence. He warned that the police may try to provoke them, and they may try to seed the crowd with agent provocateurs. "If you see them, stop them," he said. "They would love to portray us as a violent mob; so, no matter what, remember, we have to keep to our principles. This is about love not hate peace not war."

This was extremely hard for Sonny. He had never in his life turned his back on a fight and to stand there and take a beating was against his very nature. Yet, he had to do it, whether he wanted to or not. He had to follow Miranda and give love and peace a chance.

Miranda and Sonny helped set up the first aid table in the dining room, so they were late leaving for the rally, but even then there was still a large flow of people walking up Telegraph Street to get to Sproul Plaza. When they got there, things were worse than Sonny had imagined. The students in Sproul Plaza were ringed with Nation Guard troops wearing gas masks and carrying M-1 rifles with fixed bayonets pointed at the students. Behind the masks were teenagers with their own individuality, but now they were non-human parts of the machine. They had no minds of their own. They were the hands and arms and legs of an organism whose brain was somewhere else up in the chain of command.

Miranda was about to enter the Plaza when Sonny realized that it was a trap. He grabbed Miranda and said, "Stop. Look. They're letting people in, but they are not letting them out. See." Sonny pointed to a couple who were trying to leave, and the Guardsmen were holding them back.

"There. Look," Miranda said and pointed to another group of students. "You're right. They are holding them back there too."

"It's a honey pot," Sonny said.

He was about to warn people when he heard the helicopter overhead. White clouds of tear gas descended upon the students in the Plaza below causing them to panic as the troops closed in. The gas was like nothing Sonny had ever experienced before. Even with a bandana and goggles on, the gas was seeping into his eyes, mouth, throat, and nose. It felt like he had just swallowed an extremely hot chili pepper. His eyes were watering, but he could see students running in every direction. The air was full of screams. He heard someone cry out that they were blind, and he saw other students wandering around disoriented as the troops and the police closed in. People were being beaten and arrested while they were still holding their throats gasping for air from the effects

of the tear gas. Sonny saw one student bent over vomiting from the effects of the tear gas get smashed in the back with the butt end of an M-1 rifle by a faceless Guardsman with plastic bug eyes and gills for a mouth. He watched the student go sprawling to the pavement vomiting all over himself as a young coed stood by horror stricken, her eyes full of tears as another faceless Guardsman grabbed her by the hair and dragged her off into her own horror story.

Sonny turned to look for Miranda. Miranda was helping a girl who was shaking her hands hysterically like she was trying to shake something evil off, but she couldn't because it was all around here. She was a tall and lean girl with long blond hair and pleasant features; and she was wearing white shorts and tennis sneakers and a bright green T-shirt with bold bright red letter that read, *Surf's Up*. She even had make-up on. She obviously had no idea of the danger that she was in by coming to the Plaza, and now her whole body was covered with rashes and blotches of red. They had to get her out of there.

Sonny came up to Miranda who was trying to calm the girl; and at the same time, wash her eyes out. "Are you all right?" he asked Miranda.

"I'm feeling nauseous, and I'm having a hard time breathing."

"How about her?"

"That stuff temporarily blinded her, but at least now she can see."

Sonny put his arm around the girl's shoulders and asked, "Can you run?"

The girl nodded, and Sonny said, "OK, we're running down this road towards college town, and we keep going until the air clears."

Miranda grabbed the girl's hand and said, "Come on, Susie, let's go," and they all started running down Telegraph Street along with thousands of students who had broken out of the Plaza. When they got near downtown Berkeley, Sonny took off his goggles and mask; and he immediately started coughing, "Jesus, they've gassed the whole god damned town. Come on, let's keep going."

They kept running, and as they neared the commune, the air began to clear, and the effects of their exposure began to wear off. They were all exhausted, so Miranda made them stop at a gray two-story stucco house with green trim that had an outdoor water outlet. With the clean hand towels and soap that Sonny still had in his backpack, they all washed their hands and faces thoroughly. Sonny rinsed his mouth out and then took a drink of fresh water, and he felt much better.

A middle aged woman, who was wearing a cotton dress with a floral pattern and had her hair

tied back in a neat bun, came out onto her front porch that was decorated with hanging plants of red geraniums flowers and said, “My God, what happened?”

“We were gassed,” Miranda said.

“Where?”

“On campus.”

“Good Lord,” the woman said, “and it carried all the way over here. I had to close the windows, and my daughter called me. She is a nurse at Cowell Memorial Hospital; and the tear gas was so intense there that it interrupted operations, endangered patients with respiratory illnesses, and put many of the nurses out of commission. One patient had to be put in an oxygen tent, or he would have died.” She looked at Susie who looked totally miserable, and said, “Do you need anything? You could come inside and wash up properly, and I could wash your clothes for you.”

“Thank you, that is very kind,” Miranda said, “but we live nearby, and we have everything we need there. If we come into your house, all we’re going to do is contaminate it; and it’s going to be a mess for you to clean up. It’s like someone poured cayenne pepper all over us.”

The woman thought for a moment and then looked at Susie again and said, “Wait.” She went inside and came back with a plastic squeeze bottle and handed it to Susie and said, “My daughter, the nurse, told me that if I broke out with a rash or anything that I should use this. You treat it like a sun burn, and this should work.”

“Thank you,” Susie said, holding the bottle like it was the cure to all her misery.

The woman took one last look at Miranda, Sonny, and Susie before she went back into her home. Shaking her head in dismay she said, “You’re just children. If that stupid man in Sacramento who I voted for had just been patient, he could have simply waited for you kids to graduate; and the day to day realities of life would have defeated you; but now look.” She smiled. “You won’t forgive him. Will you?”

Miranda clenched her fists, “Never!”

The woman shook her head again then closed the door behind her; and Sonny, Miranda, and Susie walked the rest of the way back to the commune. When they got to the house, the dinner table was set up for them. There was a box of surgical gloves to wear and garbage bags to put their contaminated clothes. There were bottles of antihistamines, aspirins, milk of magnesia, and skin lotions for burns. There were also stacks of clean towels and individually wrapped packages

of soaps.

Sonny, Miranda, and Susie went up to her room, stripped off their clothes, and they each took a shower. Miranda gave Susie an antihistamine, and then Miranda and Susie went in search of clothing for Susie. Sonny took some milk of magnesia for his stomach and changed into clean clothes and then fell back on the bed thinking that maybe Eban was right. Maybe not now, but sometime in the future there would be a truly bloody civil war; and he must ready himself because he was never going to stand by again and watch innocent people be brutalized like they were today.

As he was lying in bed, he watched Miranda and Susie running all about, coming in and out of the bedroom, going into the bathroom, trying on clothes. Susie had called her friends who lived nearby, and she was going to go there. Later, hopefully they could drive her back to her dorm. All her clothes were contaminated, so now the fun seemed to be in getting her dressed to leave. There were giggles and laughs. They seemed totally oblivious to him.

He heard Miranda say, "What do you think?"

Susie was wearing a plum colored silk spaghetti strap T-shirt and a light tan Western Indian style leather vest with long leather tassels along the sleeves and the hem of the vest. She was also wearing a matching tan leather belt tied together by large brass decorative rings and long leather laces hung low below her exposed navel and her low rise light blue bell bottom pants with holes in the knees. Peeking out of the bellbottoms were nomad sandals and pink toenails. On her head she was wearing a mauve colored silk scarf, gypsy style, with one end of the scarf draping down over her shoulder. Someone had airbrushed violet flower petals, transparent like sexy silk lingerie around her cheeks and eyes to blend in with the dark purple mascara and violet eye shadow that highlighted her sky-blue eyes with flecks of green. A wild white daisy that was pinned to her golden hair brushed the violet flower petals on her cheek and made everything seem real.

"She looks beautiful," Sonny said, and it was true. Miranda had turned the sorority girl from San Diego into a beautiful hippie girl, and now Susie had forgotten all about the ordeal that she had just gone through. She was beautiful again and all was forgiven.

She hugged Miranda and said, "I love you," and then she turned to Sonny who was standing up now, and she hugged him so tight that he could feel her breasts against his chest. He could smell lilacs when she said, "And I love you too." She looked like she was about to kiss him, but then she stopped, turned to Miranda and said, "Well, I guess it is time to go, Miranda. I'll bring the

clothes back as soon as I can get into my dorm room. Probably by tomorrow, I would think.”

She then looked at Sonny in the same way she looked at him when she was about to kiss him and then whispered in Miranda’s ear, squeezed her hand, and then she was gone.

“What was that all about?” Sonny asked.

“What?” Miranda asked.

“The whispering.”

“Oh, she said that you were gorgeous, and she was never going to forget you. You’re her hero for life.”

“Oh, come on. You did more for her than me.”

“That’s true, but she won’t want to fantasize about me when she masturbates at night. She is going to want you.”

“What are you talking about, Miranda.”

“She is going to marry Mr. Right. He’ll probably be good looking and be a corporate CEO or a high tech type; and they will have a beautiful home in Marin County or Silicon Valley; but every once in a while, when she is feeling particularly depressed about her totally scripted life, you will come to her in her fantasies at night while she is sleeping next to her husband; and you will make love to her in ways that her husband could never do because you are free, sensitive, and courageous. You are everything she could never be and feel secure. But she can have her lifelong affair with you, and no one will ever know.”

Sonny laughed and said, “You are weird, Miranda. Or maybe I just should say that you’re a woman and the two terms are mutually inclusive. Would you do such a thing?”

Miranda grabbed Sonny’s arm gently; and as she was leading him out the door she said, “Of course not. I have my fantasy man, and he’s quite real.”

Sonny paused at the door, thought for a moment, smiled and said, “Miranda, that is quite flattering, but why is it that I hear Homer saying to Ulysses, ‘Beware Ulysses, you are in the grasp of the Sirens, and you are beyond your depths.’ ” Sonny kissed Miranda passionately then whispered in her ear, “And I don’t care.”

Miranda laughed, and they both went downstairs to see if everyone got back safely and to hear the latest news. Bob Ward and Rachel Swartz were in the emergency room being treated for respiratory complications, but it was expected that they would be released soon. The hospitals were overflowing with students and Berkeley residents suffering from tear gas related symptoms and bruises and

concussion suffered from the beatings they took at the hands of the local police and the Guardsmen. Judging from the relatively small number of arrests, it would seem that the police were content with inflicting suffering and pain. In many instances, they just left students in the Plaza seriously injured without giving aid. They just walked away like bullies in a schoolyard. However, they went too far this time. They not only gassed Lowell Memorial Hospital, but they also gassed Jefferson and Franklin Elementary School where it caused many tears and enraged parents. The hospitals analyzed the tear gas used in the gassing of Berkeley, and it was reported that it was, as Sonny suspected, CS tear gas, a gas developed for Vietnam and outlawed by the Geneva Convention.

By the next day it was decided that these acts of brutal sadistic stupidity had turned public opinion their way, and it was time to organize a massive march on People's Park. They would call on the whole community and students throughout the state to join them.

Sonny and Miranda talked things over, and they decided that he should go on the road and plant seeds again. This time the message would be come to Berkeley and join the march on People's Park. Sonny was certain that the roads were going to be carefully patrolled, and campus police and law enforcement in most campus towns were going to be looking for "outside agitators," so Sonny decided to use a disguise that he used before when he was going from campus to campus. Sonny rented a four-door white Ford sedan, and he hung up a three-piece suit and a tie on a coat hanger above the back-seat door. He wore kakis, brown cordovan shoes, a button-down white dress shirt; and he casually hung an olive-green herringbone sport jacket over the front passenger seat. On the front passenger seat, he also placed an open briefcase that featured Oxford University Press stationary; and in his wallet, he stuffed some Oxford University Press business cards conspicuously next to his driver's license.

Miranda trimmed his hair and put nonprescription wire rim glasses on him and said, "There. You look like a defrocked professor looking for a new career in publishing."

"Thank Archie for me," Sonny said. Archie Cowen was an English Literature Instructor at UC and a member of the commune. He loaned the clothes to Sonny for the trip, and Eban gave him the stationary and the business cards.

Sonny kissed Miranda goodbye, and he went on the road going from campus to campus. He had posters hidden in the car that he put up in conspicuous places, and he placed ads in the local campus newspapers announcing the march. He visited with local student activists and even reached out to fraternity and sorority organizations that were surprisingly supportive. Reagan had

fouled the nest and violated the traditional sanctuary of the university, and even the most conservative of students found this a threat to their own wellbeing. Somehow, they understood that Reagan had attacked youth itself.

Sonny drove day and night, and he went as far south as Arizona and as far north as Oregon. When he got back to Berkeley the day before the march, Miranda immediately put him to bed, made love to him, and then took him out to dinner for pizza and beer at La Val's where she told him all that was happening while he was gone.

"Things got bad after you left," she said. "We tried to march on downtown, but they broke it up. They arrested over four hundred of us, and they put everyone on the Santo Rita Prison Farm. It was awful. They made everyone lay on gravel all day long and treated us like we were Viet Cong prisoners of war. But once again they went too far. *The San Francisco Chronicle* wrote a front-page expose demanding an investigation into the mistreatment of the students. Then the Berkeley City Council voted to encourage the Regents to allow them to rebuild the park, and students voted in a referendum overwhelmingly for People's Park in the largest voting turnout in the history of the university. Out of almost fifteen thousand votes we received nearly thirteen thousand votes. We also created a People's Park Annex on Hearst Street. It's a mirror image of the original. And... nine thousand students from all around the state conducted a peaceful protest in front of the State Capitol Building in Sacramento against the seizure of People's Park and the occupation of the City of Berkeley."

Miranda hugged Sonny and said, "I'm sure you had something to do with that. Now people are coming to Berkeley from all over to march on People's Park tomorrow. They estimate that there will be over thirty thousand people marching. And get this. Two sweet old ladies donated thirty thousand daisies for the march, and the Quakers have come in to organize the march and train marshals to ensure that the march is peaceful."

Miranda hugged Sonny and said, "You made this happen, Sonny. Many people are here because of the work you've done."

Sonny smiled. He didn't really know how much he did. So many people were doing so many things simultaneously that it was hard to determine who did what except that they were all of one heart

and somehow that caused everything to converge into this moment of truth.

After dinner, Miranda said, "I want to show you something. Let's go to the park."

"What about the curfew?" Sonny asked.

"They're in retreat."

Sonny fired up his motorcycle, and they drove towards People's Park. Sonny was a bit nervous. He was wondering what Miranda was getting him into now. He did notice though that things seemed different. There was a noticeable absence of cops and Guardsmen on the streets, and he could no longer feel the presence of evil in the air nor could he see the strange glow that Berkeley took on at night during the occupation, as if it was being seen through the eyes of something that wasn't human and ate light. As they neared the Park, Sony felt like he was tripping. It seemed like he was driving his motorcycle into a milky way of flickering stars, and then he realized that thousands of students and Berkeley residence had surrounded People's Park in a candlelight vigil. There was no sound at all. It was as if the universe had stood still for a moment just to listen to itself breath. Sonny felt totally refreshed and hopeful.

The next day it was bedlam. Everyone was converging around the People's Park Annex for the march. The marshals were giving orders through megaphones and herding everyone in. Sonny and Miranda were in a vanguard of over fifty motorcycles. Sonny saw some Hell's Angels amongst the motorcyclists, and he wondered what they all must look like to the National Guardsmen in the park - thirty thousand people descending upon them like a tsunami wave of humanity with flower children running along the edge of the marchers handing out daisies, putting them in the hair of policeman who were standing by smiling, totally overwhelmed, now merely spectators to something so vast that it could swallow them up like the back-tow of the ocean.

Like a tail, the marchers left behind grass sod where there had been asphalt and concrete, and bare breasted girls showered the sod with flower seeds. Overhead, a helicopter was flying with a banner trailing behind that read, *LET A THOUSAND PARKS BLOOM.*

When they reached the park on Dwight Way the flower children stuck daises into the barrels of the Guardsmen's rifles and weaved flowers into the chain link fence creating a tapestry of color as the sound system on a flatbed truck blasted out the Beatle's singing, "*All You Need is Love.*"

Maybe love could conquer all, Sonny thought. Maybe Miranda was right, and women should take over the leadership of this country and care for it like a family, everyone related

to one another in the pursuit of the common good, beauty everywhere. All the children in the world would become our children, and Mother Nature would embrace all, making sure that every child had its place in the sun.

Behind the park fence Sonny saw a Guardsmen waving at him, and he realized that it was Ronnie Wright. “Look, Miranda,” Sonny shouted. “It’s Ronnie.”

Miranda waved to Ronnie, and he held up the combat helmet with the potted red, white, and blue tulips. Ronnie had saved them.

Sonny was swallowed up by the massive goodwill that pervaded it all, and it was the first time in his life that he ever experienced the pure joy of the spirit of life that was magnified by each and every one of them. Sonny listened to John Lennon sing, and the words vibrating throughout Berkeley, a message to the generations to come.

*“You may say I’m a dreamer,
But I’m not the only one
I hope someday you’ll join us,
And the world will live as one.”*

After the March on People’s Park, Miranda and Sonny prepared to leave Berkeley for Ithaca. Sonny made some calls and found an apartment. He was familiar with the building. Some friends of his had lived there, and he knew the landlord. The third-floor apartment was on Eddy Street next to the old entranceway to Cornell, and it overlooked the city and the lake. Miranda and Sonny packed up her things, and they arranged for a moving company to deliver her stuff to Ithaca in two weeks. When everything was arranged, Miranda said her tearful goodbyes to her friends with pledges of eternal friendship, jumped on the back of Sonny’s Ariel motorcycle and off they went, super tramps making love to America.

They made love in the golden green grass of Big Sur with the ocean playing its symphony of waves and crashing symbols, the percussion of water against sand and the booming of the bass. The sun turned the peaks of the waves into silver, and their bodies glistened waiting for the words of love that came over and over again. They came in Glacier Park amidst the verdant greens and gray and white veined stone cliffs looking down into mirror like pools of water that reflected the blue sky, the evergreens, the red and yellow wild flowers, and the snow peaked blue gray

mountains. The motorcycle roared across Utah passed red stone memories sculpted over millions upon millions of years from long gone mountains and valleys and rivers, now immortal profiles of the beauty of death.

They roared across these ancient museums of nature at the peak of their youth. They were in love; and they felt immortal and free as their hair blew wild in the wind like filaments of light connected to the rays of the sun that touched their very being at every point, every moment, making them one with everything it touched, every grain of sand, words of green giving birth to hundreds of miles of golden cornfields.

When they arrived in Ithaca, they camped under a fragmented mirror of stars that flickered through a tapestry of leaves and towering trees that formed a cathedral of nature, the sounds of Buttermilk Falls echoing through the glacial gorges like a chorus as they danced naked around a campfire, the flames licking at their flesh as The Grateful Dead sang,

*“Dark star crashes,
Pouring its light into ashes.
Reason tatters,
The forces tear loose from the axis,
Searchlight casting for faults in the cloud’s delusion.
Shall we go, you and I while we can,
Through the transitive nightfall of diamonds?”*