



CHARLES COIRO

“WITH DREAMS STILL GREEN”

Dedication to my mother and father

Who gave me life, and who taught me
the values that were my guide.

With Dreams Still Green

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CHAPTER 1

Drawn westward by tales of opportunity and hope, my forbears either emigrated or sent their children to the land of prosperity and growth; the United States of America. It was difficult for families to break their ties but the rewards of sending a family member to this land of opportunity where one was given the chance of realizing one's potential by hard work and being placed on an even playing field were great. Besides, the other members of the family would soon follow.

Like in all enclaves, people from one country would gather in neighborhoods where the old customs, the foods, and language would provide a certain security. But above all, the families wanted to integrate into the society of their newly adopted country. Perhaps after some time in acclimatization, one could seek vestiges of their familiar landscapes, but for the time being, the neighborhood brought a sense of home to them.

I was born on the 2nd of May in 1929, in a five story walk-up flat in a tenement at 250 West 67th Street, New York City where Lincoln Center is now located. During those days, a midwife assisted in the birthing of

children. As the time for my arrival got closer, my mother sensed that I would be born very shortly. She urged my father to bring the mid-wife as soon as possible since the woman lived a few city streets away. Feeling that the mid-wife would be too late, my mother prepared me for my arrival by placing some pillows on the floor so that my birth would not be too much of a jolt. Thankfully, the mid-wife arrived in time and I was brought howling into this new environment. Somehow, I think I resented leaving my cozy, protected environment where I had been for the past nine months. I was literally snipped from my comfortable abode by cutting my umbilical cord with my father's huge tailor's scissors. New perceptions and awareness filled my every waking moment as I adjusted to this new, beautiful place that we call the Earth.

My father's parents came from the Coiro/ Episcopo lines and were born in a small town called Sant'Arzenio, in the Province of Salerno, some 180 kilometers from Naples, Italy in the Campania region. Their children, Anna, Pietro and Carlo (my father) emigrated to the United States. The parents, Louis and Rose, remained in Sant'Arzenio until they passed away. My grandfather was a surveyor.

My mother's parents, came from the Guidice/ Trivigna lines in nearby Basilicata in the Province of Potenza. The parents, Nicolo, and Rose had four children, Mary,



*Coiro family - Italy: Front - grandfather Luigi, grandmother Rosa.
Back - Margarita, Pietro and Anna.*

Nunzio, Harry and Catherine. All their children were born in the United States. My grandfather had an ice business.

My family consisted of a mother and father plus two brothers and a sister – Louis, Nicholas and Rose, all older than me. In Italy, the family was very religious and like all the other inhabitants of the town, provided the priest of the parish with the best sausages, cheese and other products made by the families. I recall my father telling us that the best of everything went to the local priest. When my father was told to bring some fresh cheese to the priest, he rebelled and said, “we never get to taste the best of the foods since they always go to the priest. When the cheese was finally wrapped and ready for delivery, my father decided to partake of the cheese and hid behind a bush and ate it all. No one was the wiser but I am sure the priest’s opinion of the Coiro family was decidedly negative after that. However, the debt would be paid at some later date when two of my aunts and an uncle joined the Church as Nuns and a Priest. That side of the family settled in St. Louis, Missouri.

MY mother’s parents settled in New York City in the crowded Italian enclave called “Little Italy”.

My father emigrated to the U. S. in 1904 as a lad of 16 years of age. He came without any education or trade,



Guidice family: Catherine (my mother), grandmother Rosa, Nunzio, Nicolò grandfather, Mary and Harry.

he managed to survive doing menial jobs from dishwashing in restaurants to dance instructor and finally to tailoring, which work he continued until his death in 1941.

The apartment in which we lived was one of 16 coldwater flats built of hard red brick and offered no heat, nor bathroom facilities in any of the flats. A toilet was located in the hall and shared by four families of which there were four to a floor. The bathtub, which was in reality a laundry sink was located in each apartment good for bathing a small child and the washing of clothes. Adults had to go to a public bath carrying soap, a towel and an overcoat if you bathed in the winter. Our apartment consisted of four rooms. Three of the rooms had windows; the fourth bedroom relied on a transom above the door for light. For heat, there was a coal burning, cast iron stove with space for two pots to cook on. The coal that we used to fire the stove was stored in a small compartment in the basement which each tenant kept locked for obvious reasons. I remember seeing my mother carrying a large pan of coal up the stairs for the stove. The building had a single stairway and each apartment had access to a fire escape in case of fire. The lower floor was used for stores and any other commercial use. The building was in an Italian neighbourhood, which was supposed to be a step up from living on Mulberry Street in lower Manhattan's "Little Italy". Our new home was a few



Mother and father's wedding. June 7, 1914, New York

blocks from a neighborhood known as “Hell’s Kitchen”. Some step up that was! The rent was \$12.00 a month. My father was a tailor by trade, and earned “good money”, or so my mother’s friends told her. He earned \$12.00 per week. Given that the country was in a deep depression, I suppose that was rather decent pay since so many people were without any kind of work what so ever. Therefore, our family of six was never without food or shelter. If that was poor, I had no knowledge that we were poor nor did I feel deprived in any way, after all wasn’t this the way all families lived? Living on the top floor had some advantages and many disadvantages. In the wintertime for instance, the cold water pipes always froze and one had to keep water in gallons on hand for those times. And in the buildings without any insulation on the roof , the cold seemed to pour in, moreover, we were only one floor below the roof and so before the soot took hold, we would gather large pots of snow (scraping off the top layer where some soot might be) and heated the snow for our supply of water until the pipes were unfrozen. The roof also had the advantage of being a place of respite when the stifling heat of the streets were crowded with the building’s occupants. In the summer time however, everyone brought chairs down to the stoop and talked while the youngsters played and waited until some kind of relief came with the night air. In addition, the roof was accessible to the clothes drying lines that the women used to dry their laundry.



My brothers: Louis, Nicholas and sister Rose

Most families had clothes lines hanging in the air shafts but those living on the first floor had to trudge up the stairs with huge bundles of wet laundry. Thus, the roof became a second private living area. It is no wonder why Le Corbusier, the French master architect built some of his modern apartments utilizing the roof as places of play and recreation. Generally though, the street was the place for play and socializing and offered the protection of the many residents who were sitting in front of their buildings. It was during those first five years, when we were living in Manhattan that I first became aware of my life around me. The years did not have any continuity except that they became embedded in my mind and my consciousness. My first conscious recollection was that of my being held on my mother's lap while she dialed a radio dial. I was dressed in white and was being held on my mother's right knee. I must have been six or seven months old. After that, my recollections were a staccato series of awareness that took place at certain times of my childhood.

Since we lived on the fifth floor, (I was usually in the street playing) my mother would call to me and ask that I visit the grocery store which was just in front of the building where we lived. Usually, I was asked to buy milk, which was stored in huge ten -gallon metal milk cans and was sold to the people by the quart or in glass milk bottles.

Normally though, people brought their own containers or receptacle which they brought with them. My mother would lower the two -quart milk can that we used on a long string or cord from our fifth floor apartment with the money inside. Usually, there was a small note for the grocer to read as to other items wanted e.g. a pound of butter. The butter was sold in bulk and came in wooden barrels of about five gallons. After the purchases, I would climb the five stories to deliver my purchases. The grocery store had all kinds of goodies especially for children. There were penny candies such as gumballs (a delicious lollypop covering a large inner core of chewing gum.) There were also strips of paper with colored sugar candy dots (one bought by the length and of course there was licorice twists which one usually finished with blackened fingers and lips. Then there were jelly candies molded in the shapes of fruit with the appropriate flavors like lemon, cherry, pineapple, grape, etc. If vegetables or fruits were needed, my mother would walk down to purchase them. Almost all fruits and vegetables were sold from horse driven wagons parked at the curbs. One day my mother wanted to purchase 2 cents worth of spinach and she was asked to hold out her apron. Needless to say, the family ate spinach cooked in every imaginable way from soups to stuffed chicken for the following week since an icebox remained cool for only a certain length of time.

A favorite on my block were jelly apples, a tart apple dipped in boiling red jelly and then left to harden on a tray. How we begged my mother for the one or two cents a jelly apple cost and how satisfying. One's friends would look on with envy but not a bit of goodness was shown in sharing that jelly apple with anyone. I still recall the basement in which "Guayaquil" the jelly apple man sold his wares. A steep, cement stair leading to a room in which a huge pot of boiling red syrup was constantly on the boil. Small, wooden temporary stands sold lemon ice and gelato. Sometimes an ambulatory cart would sell fresh popcorn. A glass sided box showed the popcorn as it was being popped and a whistling, spouted pot held melted butter. The popcorn was sold in white paper bags and one always asked for more butter. The pretty girls usually got more butter than the boys and so one would always ask a pretty girl to buy a bag of popcorn making sure she asked for lots of butter.

However, of all the delectable foods were those that came on Feast Days. Sometimes, an empty lot but usually the street, with all traffic shut off from both sides was used to celebrate some Saint especially revered in the neighborhood. During the duration of the celebrating, the air was pungent with the fragrance of sausages and peppers being grilled. These were served on fresh Italian bread. The sandwiches were generally wrapped in a waxed white, paper that was

used in all the grocery stores. The men usually accompanied their sandwiches with cold beer from barrels and the women and children usually drank lemonade or soda. Other stands served pizza (unlike the pizza one buys today - it was made of a pizza dough, with a covering of tomato, basil leaves, olive oil and anchovies), gelato and lemon ice stands and sugar coated almonds in all sorts of beautiful pastel colors. Still further, other stands sold Italian cookies of all sorts, pastries and of course canoli, a delicious, sweet, deep fried pastry shell filled with sweetened ricotta with small bits of chocolate or candied fruit peel. In the designated feast area, children seemed always to be running while mothers frantically tried to hold them in tow. The general conviviality was accompanied by a brass band 'boom booming' wildly. There was a small wooden dance floor for some of the people who had not danced with each other for years and the hopeful meeting place for young men and women to get to know each other. Overhead, strings of colored lights gave a gaiety to the usually dreary streets and excitement was everywhere.

During non-feast times or normal times, the big boys played stickball in the streets while the girls jumped rope, played pottsy, jacks or other girl games. During the summer months, the streets were always alive with parents sitting on the stoops attempting to cool off and simply interacted with one another in friendship and

neighborliness or talking about the Depression and about who lost a job, etc. Thus, anyone, small or large, playing on the streets had a series of adults about and felt safe and secure. As darkness started to fall on the evening sky, mothers called in their young children and settled in for the night. I generally went to visit my Godmother and her family who lived just one floor below us. Mostly, I went to play some Italian card games with my Godmother's father,

Compare. Compare was a beautiful man. He was gentle, loving and made one feel that you were an adult. Compare sported a great white mustache tinged in nicotine from the cigarettes he smoked. We generally played one of two games he taught me, Scopa and Briscola. I know now he made me win more games than I normally would have won but the feeling of winning felt great.

Compare, his wife, was a very religious, devoted to the Church and its teachings. She was very active and even crocheted the tunics of some of the Church's man sized saints. Her favorite Saint was Saint Anthony. At home, she kept a small alter with a votive candle always burning, strings of Rosary beads and pictures of Saints in all sizes in front of the plaster replica of St. Anthony. I remember so well how she would stand me in front of the small alter and ask me to recite the prayer to St. Anthony in Italian. After I finished my

praying, she would ask me to bring her something or other from another room. When I returned, she would tell me that St. Anthony liked my prayer and then ask me to look behind the statue to see if the Saint had left me something. I always found a small chocolate candy Kiss wrapped in silver foil as my reward. Sometimes, when alone, I would stand before the alter and recite my prayer but for some reason, I never found the small candy. I never suspected that it was she who placed the candy but the impression was so deeply felt that I eventually chose St. Anthony as my Saint when I made my confirmation.

If one were to analyze or simply think about what is the purpose for all life, whether it be animal, fish, plant or bird, I think that one would conclude that Nature's purpose for life is to continue the species whatever it is. Any creature when not purposefully trying to increase the species would either be preparing for the purpose by either strengthening itself, creating a safe and secure area for raising its young or besting other creatures in the struggle to pass on the genes of the strongest or smartest of creatures to its offspring. In that sense, the genes while not necessarily developed within the body are in some latent form, waiting for its dormancy to end and for its proper time for awakening.

CHAPTER 2

As it happens, my first insight that this force was within me occurred when I was 3½ years old. I would not be honest if I concluded that the sensation was anything but unusual but somehow, I instinctively knew that the feeling was something I had never felt before. In any event, my Godmother who was at that time some 14 years older than I asked if I would like to sleep with her that night. After getting permission from my mother, we retired and went to sleep. Some hours later when the aforementioned, strange sensation overcame me, I found myself curious about the sleeping form next to me. My Godmother was wearing a pajama top and her panties. For some strange reason, I placed my hand inside her panty and touched one of her buttocks. The skin had the feel of an orange, i.e. slightly pebbly. After a few minutes, I turned over and went to sleep. Upon awakening the next morning, I overheard my Godmother saying something to her mother, and she used the word backside. Since they were speaking in Italian, I could not make out what was being said but I do know, that I was never asked to spend the night again. That was my introduction to the opposite sex.

My favorite pastimes were drawing on the porcelain top of the kitchen table. Since it was a washable surface I drew pictures of airplanes, Indians and whatever took my fancy. There were few toys given to me in my childhood so I compensated by making my own. My delight was to take wooden clothespins, fashion cloaks of paper and make small Indian bonnets, which I glued on with a paste made from flour and water. I used colored pencils to detail designs on the cloaks and to color the feathers. I would then make trails for the Indians on the table and enjoyed myself for hours or until my mother had to use the table for the food, she was preparing. Later, during my boyhood, Indians were to be fascinating to me as was the woods where they lived and their skills in living in the wild. I am certain that those first childhood games of clothespins Indians had much to do with my fascination.

CHAPTER 3

It had always been my father's intention to move our family away from the crowded, dirty streets of Manhattan and so he had purchased some 11 lots in Jackson Heights, Queens. A lot was generally 20 feet wide by 100 feet long, some 2000 square feet. There were two parcels of empty land which were six lots and another parcel consisting of two lots. The third parcel of three lots had a small bungalow with an outside outhouse. The bungalow had three small rooms and was in the middle of a fertile garden where my father would grow tomatoes, and other vegetables, which served to provide the family with some fresh foods.

The surrounding area in those days was forested with birch, ash and some oak with a large area of cattails and small bodies of water in the form of creeks and natural springs. Most of the adjoining area was farmland with dirt roads, no sidewalks and completely countrified. I remember the Bungalow as we referred to our small home, as being something really special. Seeing some pictures, years later, I discovered it to be a small stucco over a wood framed building of

approximately 15 feet by 25 feet. It had a dugout cellar, reached from the outside, with a wooden ladder/stair covered over by hinged horizontal door. The floor was a dirt floor and the walls were cemented fieldstone. It was deliciously cool on those hot summer days even if one was not exactly happy to go there. Wooden shelves from floor to ceiling held bottled preserves of tomato, tomato paste, tomato juice, peaches, and grape jam, all from our garden. It was scary going down to the cellar with its dim light and many spider webs dragging across your face but the cellar held our year's supply of tomatoes – a staple of our Sunday dinners. The house always had the aroma of citronella, an oil we used to ward off the hordes of mosquitoes, which the nearby swampy areas afforded as ideal breeding grounds. Because of the many mosquitoes, we had an inordinate number of frogs and this led to a large number of snakes. Fortunately, the snakes were mostly harmless and of the Garter variety – still, they were snakes and one went around the woods and cattails with eyes peeled.

Our little neighborhood was known as Frog Town and we loved and defended its environmental uniqueness with much fervor. During the summer days, we played in the woods, we designated the larger woods as Woods number 1. The 2nd smaller woods we called Woods number 2. Woods number 1 was more wetland and included large areas of cattails, creeks and springs

of ice cold, clear water which both fed our swimming hole and brought many of the residents on Sunday morning to fill gallon jugs with the sweet, deliciously cold water. Woods number 1 also had a different type of animal species such as musk rat, beaver, and snakes and was also home to migrating ducks and geese. Woods number two was more conducive to squirrels, some deer and woodchuck. Wild cherry trees yielding green hanging wild cherries brought with it the pitty blowing season where the un-ripened green cherries afforded us the seasonal game of using a small, metal tube with a wooden mouthpiece to molest other players by using our blowguns to propel the green cherries in a mock war. The secret trails through the cattails were our dens closed and hidden to all eyes except those few who built them. There were also elderberry bushes, which in the fall were wild fruit for both boys and birds alike and consumed in great quantities. Blackberry bushes abounded and so did wild grape, which climbed the nearby trees. In the Fall, the fermented grapes gave many a bird a drunken high. In these bird blessed woods, sparrows, robins, blue birds, starlings, owls and hawks, flickers, nut hatches, chickadees, various types of woodpecker, wrens, warblers and oh so many other varieties made my childhood a boy's paradise and as close to being an Indian as I had dreamed.

In the evenings, all my friends gathered to play any number of games such as Ringalerio, Chase the White Horse, Stuck in the Mud, Red Rover, Johnny on the Pony, War and other games. Afterward, we built a huge bonfire and roasted mickies (potatoes spirited from our homes) which we cooked until they were blackened like charcoal – but what flavor once you got past the burnt outer skin. We talked and day dreamed about what we would do when we were grown up. Holding punks, the dark brown seed stems of the cattails in our mouths by their stems while a rich fragrance of smoke wafted from the lighted ends driving off some of the mosquitoes. Too bad, we thought, they were to be a prelude to smoking cigarettes, the real jump from boyhood to adulthood. Of girls, we spoke not at all. We were all aware of them as some sort of interesting phenomenon but no one dared talk openly. These interesting creatures would soon be the main subject of conversation – but not just yet. First, we had to become adults.

June 30th was a sacred day awaited by all – it was the last day of school and heralded a full two months of vacation – no school. For some reason, the first of July had an aura of something good about it. One could sense it in the atmosphere – it was just different if one tried to explain it. The sun felt warmer, the air fresher and a delicious languor seemed to permeate everything. The change in climate really started on the

first day of Summer. I recall one particular start of Summer when I think I really felt a sense of happiness that I do not think was ever again to be so strong. An older boy, Paulie, was standing against a sickle pear tree, a columnar tree some thirty feet tall. It was in blossom with its white flowers bringing the promise of small pears. It was an acknowledgement of life – an awareness I had not experienced before and I had such an intense feeling of happiness that some seventy years later, I can still feel that young boys heart as it beat in happiness and joy. I cannot recall any sky that was ever so blue nor any sun ever so beautiful. It was such a small, almost insignificant happening it seems, but powerful enough to withstand times and events so long since past. Perhaps it was a harmony derived from innocence and acceptance –a notion of oneness with all that is, like a balance as perfect as God.

CHAPTER 4

I always liked being alone, where I could respond to Nature surrounding me without embarrassment; to see my skin, burnished brown by a summer sun, feeling thoughts that were silken and as smooth as corn silk; the colors of new jonquils a sunny yellow and the fragrance of green, luminescent as I embarked on my secret quest in the woods. The air was alive with birdsong and calls from Jay, and Robin. The chipping sparrow, the innocent sound of the Chickadee, the hollow knock of the Woodpecker seeking worms and grubs and the surprise visit of the Bluebird, silently flitting through the branches.

I was off to see the newly discovered small pond that I chanced upon some days ago. I divulged my secret find to no one and came this early morning to assure my secret was safe. As I walked, the new muddy trail sucked at my sneakers – good! no, other foot prints had been there before me. A sudden view of an escaping snake or the retreat of a muskrat made everything even more my secret. At last there appeared my small discovery. Tadpoles by the hundreds swam away as I approached and the silent pool seemed to be leaching

from a tiny spring moving so silently and slowly that it kept the tadpole pool almost without movement. All of a sudden, two mallard ducks landed on a larger body of water and I felt the strange instinct of a hunter seeking food for his tribe. My mind convinced me that I was an Indian – living and hunting in the woods and my joy was almost complete but, how was one to bring home the trophy of his hunt with no weapons. I looked for a stone, the few around were covered in green moss and were lying in soft, black mud. Searching for a stone to throw, the pair of ducks seemed almost to be laughing at the Paleface trying to learn the ways of the forest.

CHAPTER 5

That joy and happiness was soon to be shattered by the sudden death of my father. He had returned from work one afternoon, and had to stop three times to catch his breath on a short, one block distant walk from the trolley car to our home. I was twelve at the time and I sensed the gloom and uneasiness as the family sat outdoors to cool off on that hot, July evening. At about three o'clock in the morning, I heard my mother shouting my father's name.

The doctor came but my father was gone. In those days, the use of the home for the laying out of the body was the norm. There were funeral parlors but they were too costly and most people simply used their living rooms for the wake. At twelve years of age, I was completely disoriented and afraid. The house, to me, was no longer the place of refuge and security. It was replaced by images of my mother and sister grieving and the atmosphere and gloom was stultifying.

Fortunately, fate intervened, and in 1941, at twelve years of age, I was given an unusual opportunity to visit Newport News and Norfolk, Virginia. A friend of

our family, a Merchant Marine captain, George Violante, (I will refer to him as Captain George) had to make an inspection trip to see his vessel which was being refitted in Newport News, Virginia. Newport News and adjoining Norfolk are the Headquarters of the Atlantic Fleet of the U.S. Navy. Captain George had asked my mother permission to accompany him and his younger sister Jenny for the three day trip. Jenny was at that time fourteen or fifteen years of age and I suspect that with Norfolk being a Navy town, the Captain wanted to be sure that his young sister's interest in young men would not get her into any mischief while he was busy inspecting his ship. I was given permission to go and quite frankly, I was grateful since my father had just passed away and I was anxious to leave the house which was oppressing and heavy with both mother and sister dressed in black as a constant reminder of my father's death.

When we arrived at Norfolk, Capt. George thought we would like to stay at Virginia Beach since Norfolk was a rather grim town and as mentioned before, we would avoid the many temptations for Jenny. Captain George rented two rooms at a small tourist hotel in Virginia Beach. In those days, Virginia Beach was a long strip of white sand beach paralleled by a single gravel road. There were few houses and most of those were bungalows used by the Virginians during the summer months. At intervals, a small street running East had

some of the few stores that served the local population. The beach was almost completely empty and one could really enjoy oneself. On that particular day, Jenny and I were bobbing up and down in the ocean enjoying the cool water and sunshine, and noticed that at about 100 feet distance, a man seemed to be struggling to get shore. We watched for a few moments and determined that he was in trouble. Being a fairly good swimmer, I reached him without trouble and started to help him reach shore. He must have been about 400 feet from where his family was sitting. He asked if we would please accompany him to his family. Captain George was at the hotel going over papers and I asked Jenny to call him because I was frankly a little afraid of being with this person by myself. After all, both Jenny and I were relatively young and caution seemed the best path. The man appeared to be about 35 years of age and seemed highly agitated. After I accompanied the man for some two blocks, we were met by Captain George and Jenny much to my relief.

We, Captain George, Jenny and myself were introduced to the man's mother and father and to my still young eyes, a very attractive blond woman whom I assumed was the man's younger sister. After some chatter and thanks on the part of the family, we were invited to join them in their bungalow which was just on the other side of the road. The family was preparing a small barbecue in their back yard.

The family I was introduced to was the Edgar Cayce family. There was Mr. Cayce, his wife Gertrude, their son Hugh Lynn (the man we had helped get to shore) and finally, the attractive blond Gladys Davis, who I was later to learn was Mr. Cayce's secretary. Mrs. Cayce told Captain George that her husband wanted to do a "reading" on me. I was at once dismayed since I was in no mood for a bible dissertation. What turned out to be the reading was instead a type of regression that Mr. Cayce was well known for performing.

Mr. Cayce had the ability of going into a trance state and was able to trace a person's life and his beginnings and/or his illness if he was being asked for the cure of some sickness with which the person was afflicted.

We arrived at about noon and had a pleasant barbecue of hot dogs and hamburgers and a great root beer. After a while, Mr. Cayce indicated that he was going to rest for a while and asked that we please remain until he awakened. At about 3:00 P.M., Mr. Cayce appeared in his pajamas and an old looking cotton robe. We were asked to join him in his study which was a small room with a high bed like a massage table, a few chairs and a small desk. There was also a candle. The room was darkened by closing the wooden shutters and the candle was lighted. Mrs. Cayce then asked Mr. Cayce to lie down and we were asked to

remain quiet. I was asked to look at the candle flame and not think of anything in particular – to just let my mind wander as it wanted. Mr. Cayce started to breathe harder and began talking while Mrs. Cayce directed the asking of questions and Gladys started taking dictation. The story according to my recollections:

I was told that I thought I was Italian but in reality I was Greek and was born sometime in the 1300's B.C. As a young child of 7, I was abducted from one of the islands in the Aegean and bought along with other abducted children (male and female) to the island of Crete. Here we were trained to be bull dancers- a religious/entertainment that used young children to leap upon and do acrobatics on the backs of bulls. Many children were seriously hurt or killed in the dangerous tricks we were trained to perform.

Later (there seemed to be no time sequence in the reading), I was to find myself on the east coast of Italy where my family were swineherds. Not only did we raise pigs to sell but also made some items like crafts for sale and barter. Supposedly, I had some talent making articles and name we were referred to was Cuoro (the name for pigskins in Italian). My last name is Coiro. At that time, I met my soul mate, a Gypsy girl who came from the Hungarian/Romanian part of Europe. She was a girl who was very free with her favors and I too, enjoyed her favors. I was so in love

with this girl that I asked that she not have anything to do with any other man and that I wanted her to only see me. She laughed at me and wanted to know who I thought I was asking that she be mine alone. She was at once both kind and cruel – a sort of dual personality. I was so in enamored of this girl that her cruel side made me suffer greatly. This young girl was to be the one person who would be plaguing me from then on and we were supposedly joined to resolve our karmic differences together. The young girl was later found drowned and washed up on the coast wrapped in seaweed. I wrote a poem in what I guess is an unconscious memory of that event.

SEA MAID

Enigmatical image, you appear in your
Intricate aspect
resonant of light and reflections;
crystals of your protean self.

Engulfed in your surge,
I dissolve in a vortex of you,
grasping at lights that foretell
the moment's duration of your eye's flash.

You stalk on multiple levels,
your highways, striations of nimbus or sea beds;
a seeker of life's coming forth.

Procreant, you breathe life into dust and
the dry distillations of yesterday's rain.
With tracings of seed still dank on your feet,
you sow blooms from your joints and
urge exhalations from yet unborn lungs.

Your thighs are a legend to mute exhortations,
your breath, whispered promises of
soon to become.

Mantled in a swirl of minnows and sea foam,
A crab diadem crowning your brow,
you awaken primordial wrack- Oh Sea Maid,
my Queen from the sea.

The reading next shifted to Spain. While not of the immediate El Greco family, I was somehow allied to it. I was told that at that time in my formation, I was a Sephardic Jew. This was during the time of the Spanish Inquisition. During that time, the Catholic Church was on a quest to raise great sums of money. One could buy indulgences from the Church and in that way, secure your place in Heaven. One of the devices the Church used to obtain money was to seek out wealthy Jews in Spain. If a family was suspected of being Jewish, the Church could confiscate all the wealth including the house of the person under suspicion. My job was to hold smoking green bows up the chimney so that the smoke seen coming out was from a Christian family since the Sabbath excluded the cooking and preparing of food by the Jews.

The reading concluded with the observation that I would be knowing my soul mate in this lifetime, but surprisingly, I was told that she would be a surprise and that she too was going through her Karmic changes and that in a future life, we would be joined. The reading has always intrigued me and I often wondered if was true. Perhaps time will tell.

CHAPTER 6

Like most children, collecting became another stage in growing up. The main purpose for collecting was for trading – having something tangible in your hands. In one sense, it brought extrinsic values to articles that really had no value, not unlike the goods and articles we buy as adults today. Marbles, bottle caps, matchbook covers, stamps are articles that have no real value for living but the trading of these articles taught us how to deal and negotiate with our fellow traders.

Since no cash was available, we assigned value according to scarcity. Why for instance were certain bottle caps worth more or Alka Seltzer matchbook covers worth 50 units while more common matchbook covers were worth practically nothing? Value was measured by scarcity. These may seem far fetched but they did make a person more aware of “values”, even if they were for the wrong reasons. To trade, we resorted to what we felt were adult methods. We needed to have skills and many youngsters resorted to what they felt were adult ways – we played cards to accumulate more of whatever we were collecting. Playing cards required skills in determining the

possible chances one had based on the display of cards that were discarded, etc., a sort of counting of cards.

Movies were very influential in an unfortunate way. They portrayed images of men who were feared by law abiding men. So, in order to be feared or respected, one resorted to the movie image of the iconoclast who ignored societies rules. These rebels became the heroes of the growing lad. Of course, not all youngsters reacted in this way, but a great many did. What I am suggesting is that the battle for power and influence starts early – in one sense, a distortion of Nature’s “the survival of the fittest”. It is really no different from boys pushing each other around and generally making pests of themselves with their aggressiveness.

I have often wondered why such mannerisms took place and can only conclude that as young boys, we wanted to be noticed and especially to be noticed by girls who we were sure admired our “manliness”. I am certain the girls had too much sense for this but then who did they have as substitutes?

To act like a young boor was no different to today’s youngster who buckles under peer pressure to take drugs, liquor, smoking and including sexual pressures that will make them more in keeping as one of the crowd, boys and girls alike.

Not all things were negative though.

Among the interests that my friends and I had was the raising of pigeons. On occasions, we were invited to climb up on the roofs to visit a pigeon raiser and to see his coop in operation. There we saw up to 100 pigeons of all colors and markings. Of course we could not distinguish one from another with the exception of color – but it was thrilling to watch the coop’s owner send up his birds with the wave of a long bamboo pole. Around and around they flew and when the bird’s owner wanted to get them back, he whistled a beautiful, gentle signal and threw some feed on the roof of the coop and as if by magic, the birds descended. What beautiful control to be able to manage so many birds with so few tools. It was magic! And then, when the coop owner could name the many types of birds and some of their characteristics, we became spellbound. There was no way out, one had to have his own coop. In exchange for helping keep the coop clean, we were allowed the privilege of staying around the coop while the owner flew his birds. In that way, one learned what was necessary in having a coop, how to feed and water the birds and how to distinguish the breeds and varieties. We learned the subtleties of pairing, breeding, the importance of markings and the recognition of the good and bad points of each variety.

In those days, a “good” bird, depending on its breed, would cost about twenty five to forty five cents each. More exotic types cost between fifty cents and one dollar. After that, the prices for us were simply out of range. One was proud to be the owner of a coop and we spent as much time as we could in close contact with the pigeons and learned much about their characteristics. They were no longer just pigeons but now individuals with their own differences.

We had Flights, Tipplers, Homing Pigeons, Nuns, Owls in all manner of colors.

So, a pigeon was not simply a bird called a pigeon but a creature that had many interesting aspects that I had never considered before. Perhaps other creatures had differences just as well. It was a good lesson and an awareness that filled my beginning wonderings about the earth upon which I found myself living.

Approaching adolescence was in itself, exciting, mystifying and confusing. Were we adults yet? We started to eschew the children’s games and pick up the mannerisms of adulthood. Unfortunately, this included smoking and petty gambling and not fortunately, our interest in young women. Now, however the need was for transportation – a car. We all longed to have a car in order to get away from the neighborhood. Interest in dances or any activity where one could meet girls other

than those of the neighborhood and for that one needed a car. A new car was unthinkable in terms of cost but a used jalopy that one could fix and afford to buy was a possibility. Bicycles of course were kids toys - how was a person to go out with a girl riding on the handlebars? Adulthood definitely precluded a bicycle. Along with an auto, libido was the topic of most importance. If a young boy went on a date, the next day he was inundated by questioning friends with “did you make out?” In those days, most young girls remained virgins until marriage, so the “Yes, it was fantastic, and what a wild girl she was”, was of course pure wishful thinking. Probably, a good night kiss was the most one could get and nothing else. Dreams are such beautiful things for the young for with them, they live vicariously and sometimes even believe that the daydreams took place.

CHAPTER 7

Of course, the dating and adult acting was a prelude to some serious thinking. The girls they grew up with now started to go with boys older than themselves. This pressured the young men to seek other areas and neighborhoods for female companionship and the girls were usually younger than themselves and oftentimes very inexperienced. So, the question of “did you make out” was often rhetorical since the girls were too young to have any experience that the boys dreamed about having. Also, the thinking started to revolve around what kind of work or career to consider. In my neighborhood, college was a fantasy to most young men and so they concentrated on good paying trades. Some went to technical high schools or trade schools as did I in my intention to become an airplane mechanic and the hopes of the young women were to find a serious, hard working, conservative young man to get serious with. They were now starting to think of an eventual marriage and the start of a family and thus join the traditional path of their parents and friends.

As for me, after graduating from an aeronautical trade school, I was able to obtain a job with American

Airlines. I was told that at the moment, all jobs as junior mechanics were to be followed by first working in the parts washer department. Here, airliners that were due to be completely overhauled were completely stripped down, and parts that were exposed to certain kinds of wear or corrosion were stripped of all primer painting, and/or other deleterious materials and re-inspected or replaced according to the decision of the chief inspector. The work involved chemicals, and large vats of boiling solutions that left me hard pressed to breathe. I was also unused to working shifts that started at mid-night to 8:00 A.M. After about a year's time, I decided that the work was starting to affect my health, also, there was no word about advancement to junior mechanic status and so after thinking about my options, I decided to leave and to change my focus on what I intended to work at.

By this time, I also discovered that I had little in common with my boyhood friends. In a sense, we both went our separate ways. I felt a certain tendency to express myself in a different kind of creativity – art and sculpture. Since my early childhood, I would be drawing and sculpting faces in the clay like soil near my home. One day after having spent many hours carving faces in the soil, I felt a sense of fulfillment that I had never felt before. I ran home and I remember telling my mother that when I grow up, I want to be a carver. Of course, I never suspected that one could

study such an art and the thought and feeling remained locked in my thoughts.

A young man with whom I shared an avid interest of jazz was someone with whom I could discuss these restless feelings. He also was interested in some work that had a need for “artistic sensitivity. I remember our remarking that a certain man in the neighborhood always returned home from work dressed in a suit and tie – a gentleman to our eyes. This man, we discovered, was a window trimmer who did displays, his hands were always clean and he looked unlike many of the people we knew who worked in factories and/or trades. The window trimmer seemed to be prosperous and so we both decided that perhaps we should look into the window trimming business.

After my decision to leave American Airlines, I had a vacation of some three weeks and I decided that I would attempt to find a job in that business. I went out every day to department stores, haberdashers and any other stores that needed someone to trim their windows. Of course, I did not have the least notion of what was required but after learning a few terms of the window trimming business I persevered. With more luck than experience (I had none at all), I was hired as an assistant to the men’s window trimmer in the now disappeared B. Altman department store, where a whole new world opened to me; one that led me on a

final path and to my current life. Since I was apprenticed to the Men's Wear display section, I learned what was necessary to select an ensemble for the man who dressed in accordance with the British tradition which was conservative, well made, and expensive. I learned which types of fabrics and patterns were used in suits, ties, shoes, hosiery, to what shirts were preferred and what styles were definitely not to be considered. What were the accessories and what degree of quality was required? I learned when a Morning suit was worn; when a dinner jacket was required, when white tie and tails were worn and what shoes and hosiery went with each. To me, who was used to emulating the jazz musicians zoot suit, this was a revelation. Hats from bowlers to top hats to caps and Barcellino felt hats were all part of the learning. Along with the dress came the events that these gentlemen attended whether it be social events or sports. All these accoutrements also brought antiques from either Britain or its many colonies such as India, Hong Kong, or its African colonies. Goods from British Malaya, or its South American colonies all had authentic antiques as part of the displays. All antiques were authentic and signified the many products that England imported. Seeing all these objects were in themselves an education for me.

CHAPTER 8

Learning a little led me to realize how totally ignorant I really was and this started me thinking that perhaps there was much more in store for me. I started taking courses at night at Columbia University – mostly in history until I was finally inducted into the U.S. Marine Corps. In 1952.

While the training was more than tough, I now know that I would not have missed that opportunity for anything in the world. Discipline, order, pride all combined to what I felt was a special experience. I learned that the Marine is trained in a special way to follow orders. One was not supposed to ask or think “hey, this could be dangerous”, you simply followed orders whether it was to attack or scout or patrol.

In order to achieve this unwavering line of discipline, the recruit had to first lose all sense of being who he was. He was humiliated, bullied, cursed at, and made to do things that any civilized person would never imagine doing. He was awakened at hours like 2:00 A.M. to go out of the barracks and bring back buckets

of sand and water. These were then thrown on the floor and we had to clean the floors until a drill instructor with white gloves assured that everything was ship shape. Other similarly unimaginable tasks awaited us nearly every night so that going to bed was a prelude to horrors. By the time we graduated some two months later, everyone felt that what we went through was so much more intense than other branches of the military, that we developed what was called “Esprit de Corps”, a notion that since we had much harder training, we were superior to the lax training of the Army and Navy. It was certainly an interesting psychological point in training. Not only did my training teach me discipline, but in the service, I met three fellow marines who molded my life and were of enormous influence for me. One fellow marine was Miguel Rodriguez Ferret. Miguel was from Puerto Rico and had been teaching his students Spanish poetry. In particular, the poetry and plays of Federico Garcia Lorca. He pointed out how Lorca, citing the plays of writers of such as Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina and Pedro Calderon de la Barca to name just a few was able to build on the traditionalism and regional ties the people had to the soil that was so important to the Spanish drama and Poetry. I learned of the spirit laden Spanish sense of tragedy that exists in the music, dance and the bull fight that gives the Spanish color and texture to the culture. Manolete, the matador was his especial favorite and he explained some of the importance of

this “encounter with death” with its Traje de Luces (suit of lights) to its beautiful dance between charging bull and fearless bullfighter. Miguel taught me about the different stages that took place; how the faena took place to see the bulls characteristics, how he either hooked to the left of the right and most of all, to judge its strength. He explained the solemnity and concern for the bull even though the ritual was to sacrifice the bull; why the padded, blindfolded horse was used to give valor to the bull who would then feel its efforts in attacking could give it focus. How the piercing with the lance tired the bulls neck muscles so that the Matador could deliver his “coup de grace”. The learning experience was to me fascinating and I was able to understand a little why this “dance of death” was so important to the Spaniard. I think that my time with Miguel affected my feelings for things Latino.

Another young friend, Tony Kokinos, a talented illustrator and artist displayed such enthusiasm and fervor that I was caught in the web of high emotion in my observance and participation in the arts.

And finally, Pompey Iacullo, a brilliant young man of 25 years of age, who at that age had obtained his Doctorate in Philosophy. From Pompey, I received lists of books that were deemed the foundation to any kind of understanding of the written word. I read constantly and daily and was able to discuss many of

the works with Pompey. Why these three men took me as a friend, I will never be able to answer because I felt I had nothing to offer. Perhaps they could see my sincere cravings for their help.

Along with the opportunity to travel to the Far East, all of which I was able to do in the service, I further received the opportunity to study with the G.I. Bill of Rights. There would be no turning back anymore and I made a final decision that I would study architecture.

CHAPTER 9

With my acceptance at Pratt Institute, (I was now 25 years old) I decided that I would make every effort to participate in as many activities as I could so as to make my stay at Pratt meaningful. Being a little shy by nature, I plunged instead to working in theatre, literature and poetry groups. I even managed to edit the yearbook in my junior year, an unheard of assignment for a non senior. In any event, I worked extremely hard, earned the Dean's Medal for overall achievement. When I graduated, my design professor asked me what I would be doing now that I had graduated. I answered that I would get a job in an architectural office. He then asked who I would like to work for and I answered that Skidmore, Owings and Merrill would be my choice. He then told me to go to Skidmore Monday morning. I did and was hired without an interview and worked with the design department helping to develop the ideas of Gordon Bunshaft, the head designer in the New York Office. When I finally settled myself at Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, I received a letter from Pratt Institute asking if I would be interested in joining the faculty, I said I would be interested if I could work part time since I

was ready to open my own office. I was able to establish a start with the security of having a paying position at Pratt.

CHAPTER 10

In the interim, I married a student from Pratt who was studying architecture. Excited by the prospect of living and working in a Latin American country, we moved to Caracas, Venezuela. My wife, Carlota Perez would continue her studies in architecture at the University of Caracas and I would be doing some work for Carlota's father who was a structural engineer. It was quite a revelation since I did not speak Spanish, nor did my father-in-law speak English. He would give me pages of sketches with Spanish notations which I had to interpret. That time was really a baptism by fire but it forced me to utilize all my energies to conquer the tasks set before me.

Meanwhile, a fellow student at Pratt had promised me a job with the Ministry of Public Works which he headed in Caracas. When I finally did get to work for the Ministry of Public Works, I was told that I could not work in the office where the other architects were working. I was told that there were many Leftists who would be opposed to a gringo working when there were many architects not working and so I rented a space and conducted my assignments from that space. I

was the architect for the Division of Special Works which was part of Ministry of Public Works.

What that meant was that the Governor of Caracas had many political paybacks to settle. During the time of his ouster from politics, he was jailed and those institutions that helped him he was now obligated to pay back in the form of projects that the organization wanted or needed. I remember his calling me to go to meet the Mother Superior of a Nun's order so that I could design the Nunnery she requested. There, we developed the program for the number of Nuns she housed, their requirements, their manner of living, praying, dining and their requirements for bathing and other needs. It was exciting to be given such responsibilities so soon.

After, the project was approved, the building was built and no one was the wiser. I would be paid by going to the Governor's office and by telling his secretary that I was there for my monthly pay. She opened a large safe, took out a large wad of bills, paid me and that was that. I did quite a number of projects in that way and avoided the possible conflicts that would have taken place if I worked in the Ministry office.

It was during this time that my wife and I decided to separate. Carlota became involved in the Leftist Student Movement and forsook her studies to be active in the Communist Party.

Left alone and without friends, I decided to participate in the activities of the Caracas Theatre Club. The club was a social club with an emphasis on performing theatrical works. Since I had been involved with theatre during my studies at Pratt, I joined and involved myself in theatre. Being alone, I attended the theatre productions every night doing everything from props, design of sets, acting and eventually directing. It was all exciting and helped ease some of the pain of being in a foreign country without any close connections. I worked on every production and found great satisfaction and enthusiasm for the theatre. Being part of the theatre group also brought me into contact with artists of other disciplines. Dancers, painters, sculptors, writers and poets along with people of radio and television were all acquainted with each other and the interacting stimulus enhanced the work I was doing. It was there that I first started doing sculptures. A young sculptor, Harry Abends and I worked with a series of different materials and visited other sculptors who were active in the field. The times were really exciting for me and I resolved to work on sculpting when the proper time came. In the meantime, though, I did my architectural work.

Eventually, the political situation in Venezuela was the factor that prevented me from continuing my life there. A major strike in which all activities stopped left me without a job and the prospects of obtaining work,

even with the help of my friend, simply faded away. I had no recourse except to return to the U.S. where I struggled to re-establish my office. I returned to teaching at Pratt while my private practice started to take hold.

CHAPTER 11

A short time after I returned from Venezuela in 1962, Fate brought me to the most important time in my life. While planning my next move, I met, quite by accident a former girl friend. Helen Lapchuk, a fashion designer who I had been seeing during the time that I was studying architecture at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York. During my absence in Venezuela, Helen had started studying anthropology at Columbia University with Margaret Mead, the famous anthropologist. She had by that time married an anthropologist and she wanted to be able to accompany her husband when he went on “digs” that sometimes lasted several months in foreign lands. As we greeted each other and talked about old times, she asked if I was seeing anyone since I had just returned from South America. On learning that I was at the time, single and starting to make new friends and acquaintances, she asked if I would like to meet a friend of hers who was also a fashion designer. I said I would be agreeable and so Helen said she would ask her friend if I could call. The woman’s name was Urleene Chaplain who was later to become my friend, partner, wife and soul mate for the next 46 years. That first phone call



My second wife Urleene Chaplain.

lasted some six hours and we found so much in common that we agreed to meet.

Since our careers were different, we decided to find a way in which we could work together. Since all design follows certain requirements, i.e., understanding the problem to be solved, knowing the characteristics of the materials you are using, understanding the techniques of manufacture and finally designing the product for the market you are working in. There were many new things to learn and our partnership became an exciting and stimulating learning experience for both of us. In the meantime, we both worked in our own fields to earn a living but we also were lucky enough to get accounts through friends. Once we were able to rely on the partnership to survive, we made a decision to move to Connecticut and to find a piece of land where we would eventually build our home/studio. We lived in the area while we accustomed ourselves to our new environment. After a few years, we were finally able to build our home and studio. Our work brought us to various cities and countries and we were happy and involved. After 25 years, we decided that even though we loved our work, it was time to think about where we would retire. We both realized that retiring was simply not hanging a hammock and putting our feet up. One has to work and plan for that day as possibly the most important time in ones life since there would hopefully be enough time



Home and Studio - Ridgefield, Connecticut - designed and built by Charles Coiro

to do the things one never had the time for. Also, the extremely cold winters took their toll on Urleene and so we decided to take a vacation somewhere south to escape the cold weather. We chose Costa Rica. Here was a country that was relatively unspoiled and was at the same time very highly educated and their dedication to education, health and the environment made it ideal. Being somewhat impulsive, after seeing the various areas of the country, we decided that when our time came to retire, we would do so in Costa Rica. So after a few days, day we started to look for an area to which we could retire when the time to retire came possible. We ultimately found and bought some 3.9 hectares of rolling hills and heavily wooded property in Piedades, Sta. Ana. This gave us time and an incentive to plan our future home and for the activities we wished to pursue. Urleene chose to spend wanted to design our new home here in Costa Rica. With her skills and drafting from our years of designing furniture and furnishings, she developed plans for what was to be our new home. There was space for my studio and space for Urleene to work with her plants and a beautiful kitchen where she could do her cooking. After a great deal of hard work and diligence, Urleene designed our new home.



Home and Studio - Costa Rica, - designed Urleene Chaplain, built by Charles Coiro

CHAPTER 12

My plans were to sculpt. I had taken some courses at Pratt and also at the Silvermine School of Art in Connecticut. While this preparatory work was only an introduction to the techniques of sculpting, what I needed now was to develop skills and that one gets only by applying oneself to the discipline. I worked steadily every day and finally chose working with metal as the material I would have to understand and master. Everything came with effort and patience. When I needed to learn how to weld, I worked with a master welder who introduced me to the techniques of welding. Since my sculptures had finishes that were the same as automobiles, I worked with an automobile body shop as to how to apply finishes. I also had to learn to paint with a spray gun and a compressor. All these techniques were new to me but I was able to learn to work with my materials, and not against them and learned the limitations of myself and the materials I was working with until I could finally successfully attempt any shape or finish I wanted to employ. In the meantime, I was able to exhibit in over 20 collective showings and some 7 individual exhibits. I have included some examples in the pages of this story. I

worked steadily until my present age of 80. After 25 years, and hundreds of sculptures, the weight of the steel was too much for me and so I decided to continue my work, only using the materials of words to give my word sculptures patina and body and the story structure to replace the structure used in sculpting. I would continue working and avoid the hammock until I had no other choice. I also wanted to spend time writing poetry in which I had always had an interest.

The writing of this short story was a wonderful way in which to trace my beginnings and to observe which decisions I made that led me to my current path. I have been fortunate in my life to have found the ideal person with which I was able to do so many wonderful, fulfilling things together. Perhaps other things will follow but in the meantime, I can say I have no regrets whatsoever.

I have included as a proper ending to this tale, a fragment of my favorite poet, Dylan Thomas in whose poem, “Poem on His Birthday” best expresses the wonder and faith and hopes I have so far encountered in this beautiful world.

- - - yet though I cry with tumbledown tongue,
Count my blessings aloud:
Four elements and five
Senses, and man a spirit in love
Tangling through this spun slime
To his nimbus bell cool kingdom come
And the lost, moonshine domes,
And the sea that hides his secret selves
Deep in its black, base bone,
Lulling of spheres in the seashell flesh,
And this last blessing most,

That the closer I move
To death, one man through his sundered hulks,
the louder the sun blooms
and the tusked, ramshackling sea exults,
and every wave of the way
and gale I tackle, the whole world then,
with more triumphant faith
than ever was since the world was said,
spins its morning of praise.
I hear the bouncing hills
Grown larked and greener at berry brown
Fall and the dew larks sing
Taller this thunderclap spring, and how
More spanned with angels ride
The mansouled fiery islands! Oh,
Holier then their eyes,
And my shining men no more alone
As I sail out to die.

Poems of Tenderness and Pain...

OUT OF A NINTH MONTH'S WONDER
VAE VICTUS
I HURL MY SONG
A MATRIX TO MARVEL
SEA MAID
SEA FOAM
UNDERSTANDABLE AS YES
SEEKER OF SEED
READY FOR THE COILED EMBRACE
IN A SIBILANT STRIDING
AGO
YOUR SIGH CRESTS FORWARD
EXISTENCE ON AN EDGE OF SHADE
TANGENCY
YOUR GLANCE AWAKENS
YOUR SIGH CREST FORWARD
THE STREETS OF ESCAZU
UNSPOKEN WORDS.
INDIFFERENT TO A TIMES BEQUEATHAL

OUT OF A NINTH MONTH'S WONDER

Out of a ninth month's wonder, I
Whispering my joy come
while pain from my eyes formulated a
foams denial to body and brain.
Homonculus – swaggering your disbelief
to the deep.
My mingling of salt and seed
brought me sharp to the viscous edge.

No despair darkened that face – no threat
Menaced my lips –
A wind, discordant with my breath eased
Softly around, while clouds
Dolloped high their azure tints,
a reflection of sea and sky settled
about my new bones like the
Miracle of May once again.

VAE VICTUS

No strictures so tight; your name

 Anchors anguish in me.

Unimaginable absolve, I go questing

 penance in darkness and light;

 A blind man tapping at mists and of clouds;

A Zeus with his thunder seeking ground

 in your core.

I HURL MY SONG

I hurl my song and let it skyride
westward to your, I hope, empty ears.
deafened now, I guess, by groveled
exhortations provoking new hopes
in their beseeching bent.

Your bones unbuckle by degrees
until your glisten is convinced by
an urgency stronger than stone and
as unrelenting as a tide's pull or
as a mouthings suck.

I quake in the thought of you – your
legs salt stained by a tide of strangers
surrounding you.

A MATRIX TO MARVEL

Your face pressed tight against
the see of my sight
is an oblivion caressed by pain from
your smiles embrace.

A gaze, with its subtle
purpose of plenty
awakens a nerve's celebration
to dawn, while your voice,
a skimming of water, like sound
sending signals to an anointed ear
builds constructs of hope – bridging
a heart's pulsing surge of itself.

No less, a matrix to marvel.

SEA MAID

Enigmatical image, you appear in your

Intricate aspect
resonant of light and reflections;
crystals of your protean self.

Engulfed in your surge,

I dissolve in a vortex of you,
Grasping at lights that foretell,
the moment's duration of your eye's flash.

You stalk on multiple levels,

your highways, striations of nimbus or seabeds;
a seeker of life's coming forth.

Procreant, you breathe life into dust and

the dry distillations of yesterday's rain.
With tracings of seed still dank on you feet,
you sow blooms from your joints and
urge exhalations from yet unborn lungs.

Your thighs are a legend to mute exhortations,

your breath, whispered promises of
soon to become.

Mantled in a swirl of minnows and sea foam,

a crab diadem crowning your brow
you awaken primordial wrack – Oh Sea Maid,
my queen from the sea.

SEA FOAM

Your face, still sullied by foam
 and sea kisses,
I issue myself to you in a
 Sounding so resolute,
I remain transfixed between tidal fingerings
 And stars that rivet me to your flesh.
The blanching heat from your thighs,
 redolent of fusings,
 is like a thundering tide's welcome
 to marrow and bone.
Alone with the moon and her silence,
 We harken to voices unformed
 Lying still in the deepness of you.

UNDERSTANDABLE AS YES

Framed in the structure of
 a denials menace,
a moment punctuates a
 half hidden hope
 locked between two thoughts,
 not quite daring it to form.
I struggle to define a simpleness
 of you – my voice, uncertain,
 is as certain as the eye
 beholding rain or as the
 scent of you is as understandable as yes.

SEEKER OF SEED

Seeker of seed and the breast's solace,
you elect me to your loins;
a singular means to an end.

I approach the anointed hour
With an ambivalence unendurably
induced by a time's disparity.

An ineluctable reticence,
half vetoed by your thighs;
I am left stateless in the void
Between a thrust and its return.

Locked in the resolutions of your silence
and your will's desperation,
I am already forgotten by your fold.

READY FOR THE COILED EMBRACE

No tarried closings on a yesterday's
 goodbye – a shoulder's lifted
resignation sets your body bending
 in your inexhaustible surge,
while you fasten on a new eyes piercing,
 your bones unbuckle,
ready for the coiled embrace.

IN A SIBILANT STRIDING

In a sibilant striding

 you awaken susurrant strandings
 of nerve

alerting an insistence to action

 that converges on my breast's cross.

The space as you near

 is a pulsing force of fields
 leaving me helpless in its
 tide's pull.

Your thigh's friction as you pass,

 like the insistent rub of
 a cricket's call to a mate
 draws me to the void you vacate; but
 a lodestar urging convinces
 your passing's a one sided thing
 with me spun silly for days.

AGO

A time ago

Your name announced itself to me
In strident cries adrift from
winds across a mountain and a western sky.

A pulse ago

when hope soared high as condors seeking
seas,
emboldened by your breath's horizon,
I searched your eyes for hidden cause.

A face ago

before the mute persistence of you
echoed in my heart, I sensed the menace
in the averted cheek and dared not call
account.

A grief ago

before the absence whittled notches in my
hope;
before the last surrender finalized itself upon
the dawn
I reached for starlight in the skies.

A lament ago

I sought a gentle fog to blur the edges of my
heart;
a proof of purpose
so that I could not dare to love again.

YOUR SIGH CRESTS FORWARD

Your sigh crests forward
 Oracular in a wave's pass
 Drowning the foamed applause
 That announces the patrimony
Of your core's strut.

Light, streaking celadon between
 the pearled capsules of your watered cape,
 trails in your ebb track, as you emerge,
 wrack limbed with a sea's harvest to divest.

The heart, distanced a height away to
 the scanned horizon with your sun,
 spawning an eye's glisten into a focus

Dunned by a light free of fire and limned in the
 Blurred edge of a shades clinging
I search southward for my surge and force
With a yearning young as pain.

EXISTENCE ON AN EDGE OF SHADE

Existence on an edge of shade
flashes into a dissolute pattern of becoming

I grasp a moment's reality and hold fast to its sound
while measuring its constancy in space.

A continuity broken only by the interval of
your lash's blink and your breath's expire.

A benediction of sounds, still sibilant, like
overtones or vibrations of a note's refusal to die.

TANGENCY

Tangent to a lights horizon
and the Perspective of a sigh,
Your infinities point of vanish
is a Time's flow, stirred by a marrow's breath
shaking loose a history of me.

YOUR GLANCE AWAKENS

Your glance awakens a warfare,
sentinel and silent
while your form provokes
an insistent denial in a void
left vacant by your laughter's edge.

An innocence grown old seems vanity's
attempt to yet alert life.

Why does your lip's curl still smile toothless in its
knowing way?

A cutting quickly to the core.

THE STREETS OF ESCAZU

Evening ----- sands construct the cone
and siameseing starts it's timeless tempo.

In the crepuscular light come girls who walk in pairs
like Nuns ----- or Whores,
with arm encircled waists, heads in
conspiratorial bent, they whisper secrets each to
each. (I do not think they speak of me)

Like sighs or breath, their footsteps leave no trace,
but, meld into the silence of a thousand pasts.

The streets of Escazu are empty now and a tenebrous
is filling the hideouts and corners
like dust that is hidden while it awaits
your vegetal breath.

Silence in the marketplace too ----- your name,
menacingly absent from the murmured
asides and the Raves that transpired.

An ecstasy of air, heavy and lugubrious pervades
While a parched soil, trembling and impatient
Implores the rain for your arrival.

Yes, the streets of Escazu are empty now.

UNSPOKEN WORDS

You say so much to me without words!
 did you know that? watching your face turn
 slightly red and across your forehead
 a line of blood beneath your skin admits
 that you are moved as well as I.

Your eyes search mine, seeking a positive
 response to satisfy a doubt

Those eyes, a pale green, like seawater washes
 like a tide over my face.

INDIFFERENT TO A TIMES BEQUEATHAL

Indifferent to a time's bequeathal, I struggle
to engage shadows that crease the
smoothness of my soul's repose.

The unseen beckon of remembered words and
signs offered each to each at times
both sacred and profane.

These still sing to the anointed ear and yet
reverberate within the trembling heart.

We, in our chant to life that balanced both the Ant and
the Ape permitting us to set our course, together, hand
in hand.

We avoided the words and deeds that could vanquish
the totality of two into one ... using instead words of
love and joy with the harmony that bound us each to
each.

I reach out to feel your touch and relive the bliss
that I once knew.

When will you come to me? Will I join you soon?

SOME SCULPTURES IN METAL

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ANGELA'S DREAM

0.72 x 1.53 x 2.07 Painted metal 2005



NEW LIFE

3.76 x 0.33 x 1.29 Painted metal 2005



AEGEAN SEA

1.60 x 0.23 x 1.10 Painted metal 2005



THE SWANS

1.13 x 0.83 x 0.68 Painted metal 2005



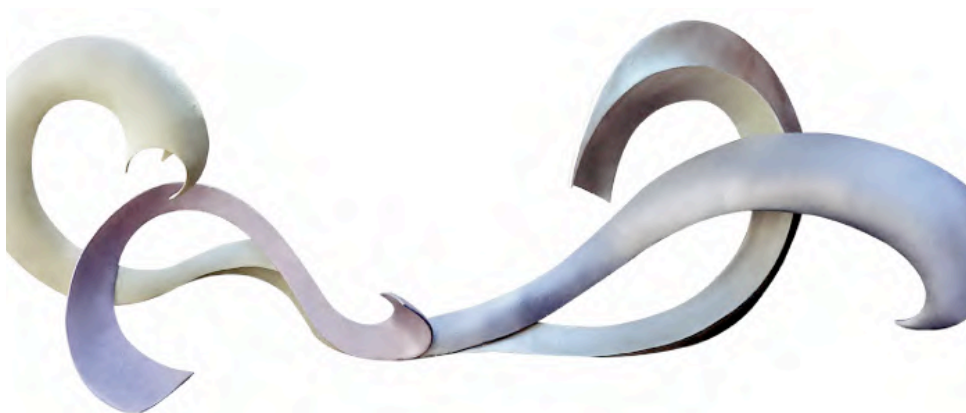
CONCEPTION

0.90 x 0.18 x 0.70 Painted metal 2005



BLUE FLAME

0.53 x 0.66 x 2.13 Painted metal 2005



ODE TO JOY

2.90 x 1.15 x 1.07 Painted metal 2005



WAVE

0.76 x 0.98 x 0.50 Painted steel, glass



EVE

1.25 x 1.58 x 1.04 Soldered zinc, copper



SERPENTINE FORMS

2.42 x 1.40 x 0.91 Welded steel



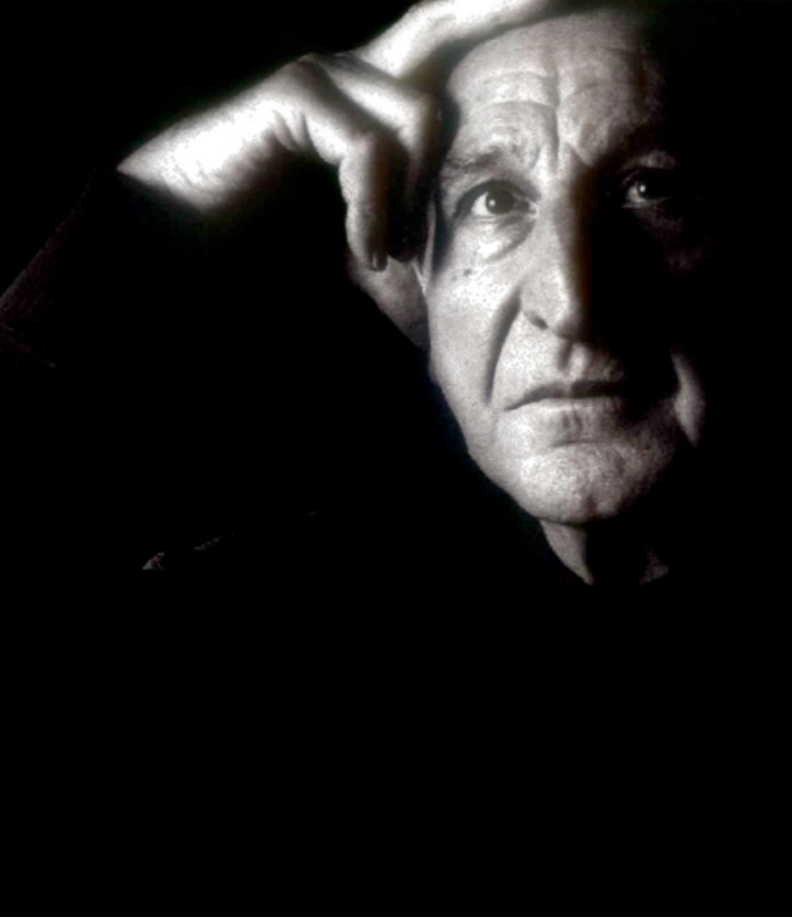
RESURRECTION

2.62 x 1.80 x 0.80 Wood, welded steel



MOON FLOWER

0.95 x 1.10 x 0.52 Painted steel



CHARLES COIRO Author