

UNDER CONSTRUCTION. FIVE STORIES COMPLETED.

Introduction

Andy

Bonny

Carl

Don & Eleanor

Francis

Grant Street

Harry & Imelda

Josue

Kim

Linda

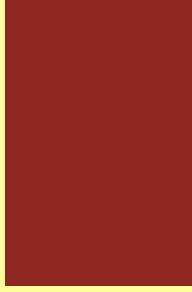
My family history is diverse. Each of my grandparents married a person from a different nation and religion. The diversity didn't register on me when I was young. Chicagoans as a whole are even more diverse than my own genealogy. The diverse relatives who raised me had in common that they were social butterflies. I grew up with a mind almost entirely vacant of prejudices.

My maternal grandfather was an Ashkenazi, or Eastern Jew. Abe was also the son and grandson of rabbis. They were poor, but intellectual and snobbish rabbis in a Jewish village, a shtetl. An uncle on Abe's father's side was the editor of a Zionist newspaper in Jerusalem long before the creation of Israel in 1948. It was common for poor rabbis to marry the daughters of men who could support the family. Two uncles on Abe's mother's side were merchants in the US. One uncle had a dry goods store in New York. The other was a rag dealer in Chicago's Maxwell Street Market. Abe was ashamed of him. Abe didn't like the more prosperous uncle, either. Abe's snobbery was to disdain Jews who make money and their trappings of wealth but to socialize almost exclusively with WASPs of modest wealth and an intellectual bent. Nonetheless, he nursed a general hatred of Christians because they murdered and assaulted Jews in his homeland.

My paternal grandfather was of German ancestry. Charlie was a highly skilled blue collar worker. His family came to Chicago before Germany was a nation and long before the Holocaust. German Christians didn't inflict pogroms on German Jews like the Slavic Catholics did to Abe's people in eastern Europe. The first of Charlie's family to be listed in Chicago records owned a tavern in the 1850s. Taverns have had a firm place in the family ever since. Charlie worked on Great Lakes and Caribbean Ocean boats at the time of World War I. He was exempt from the draft for being a merchant seaman. Charlie's long-term job was Chief Operating Engineer of the Morrison Hotel, Chicago's first skyscraper. It was built before skyscrapers became towering phallic symbols and pricks, the pissing contests of people I don't want to know. Arthur Rubloff, a Jewish real estate tycoon and financier, put together the deal whereby the Morrison Hotel would be demolished and replaced with the First National Bank of Chicago building, which still stands, but has undergone several name changes. Charlie lost the job he loved. He left Chicago when he retired.

My maternal grandmother was descended from poor English people that England exported to Virginia to work plantation fields before black African slaves took over the work. Pearl's ancestors were among the WASPs, white trash, hillbillies, crackers, etc. that migrated through the Cumberland Gap shortly after the American Revolution. They were the first settlers of most US states and constitute the backbone of the country. The surnames of Pearl's ancestors are the names that sit-com and other scriptwriters give to their characters when they want to poke fun at mainstream Americans. It came out in a fight between my parents that one of Pearl's ancestors was an English sea captain who sailed around the world when it was a major accomplishment. He sailed too late to be named in history books, but was the first of the unnamed intrepid captains. A directory of the city of Pearl's birth listed her father as a steam pipe fitter, her mother as a housewife, her brothers as clerks in factory offices, and herself as a teacher in a school set up to Americanize adult immigrants. She was Abe's teacher. She waited for Abe when he served in World War I on the US side. They married in a college town where she attended college. Then they attended Journalism School together. Pearl was an outstanding student, but didn't follow through on a journalism career. Abe followed through; and his career brought them to Chicago.

My World/ Actual Immigrants pdf file



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My paternal grandmother was descended from Scottish Highlanders who hated the English. Mary's people were among the Celts who fought for the Catholic Bonnie Prince Charlie against the Protestant English nobility. It was a genocide. Mary's maternal ancestors escaped extinction by running to Ireland, where they acquired an Irish surname. A hundred years later they migrated to the US with the Irish and lived among them. Mary's father was born and raised in Edinburgh where he became a skilled carpenter. An agent for the Vanderbilt family recruited him and his crew to do the fancy woodcarving on the Biltmore castle in North Carolina. He then came to Chicago and became modestly wealthy by building two-flats in a near west suburb. Chicago records indicated that he married my great-grandmother after their eight children were born. The family disappeared in the 1920 Chicago census. In censuses of previous years, the family declared themselves Scotch Gaelic. My great-grandfather died in 1924. Tenants of the two-flats couldn't afford to pay their rent when the Great Depression occurred. His widow and orphans had no resources to pay the property tax. Charlie, his daughter Mary's husband, was working for the township and earned good money, but the township paid in scrip, not in cash, and the county wouldn't accept scrip as payment for the property tax. The county seized the two-flats and knocked the Scotch Gaelics down to size. The county didn't explain how rent-paying tenants would materialize after seizure. The incident looked more like a land grab than a good-faith government process. Back in 1920, Mary had converted to Christian Science and also became a Prohibitionist. Whiskey was a staple in her family's diet. The family remained close while she lived, but went its separate way when she died.

Both pairs of grandparents had two children each. My parents were the first-borns. Both second-borns were boys. Both boys married second-borns. My grandfathers favored their second-born sons over their first-born daughter and son. The favoritism was intense. It alone could have destroyed my parents, both of whom had been young people of great promise.

My father was finishing engineering school when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. The US military likes engineers. It enlisted rather than drafted my father and made him a second lieutenant, also known as a non-commissioned officer because he wasn't going to make the military his career. The Army deployed my father to Burma, where he commanded a company of Chinese soldiers defending mainland Asia against Japan. The area of his deployment was commemorated in the movie, Bridge Over The River Kwai. I don't know if my father commanded bridge-building or gun-toting Chinese soldiers. He didn't talk about his war experience where I could hear. The one story he told me about a wound on his abdomen turned out to be a lie. He got the scar from an appendectomy when he was in college.

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Abe threw my mother under the bus long before Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. Both his children were outstanding students. My mother skipped one grade in school. Her brother skipped two grades. He graduated from a Chicago high school at age 16 with a full-ride scholarship to a prestigious engineering school and from thence to a career in the Department of Defense. Pearl got breast cancer and spent the last two years of her life in intense pain. My mother was, like her mother had been, an outstanding student at a prestigious Journalism School, as well as a sorority girl at the university. The job of nursing Pearl fell entirely on my mother. Abe was busy being a journalist. Her brother was busy qualifying for the full-ride scholarship and a step up the social ladder.

Abe's prejudice seems to have had two sources. First, Jewish parents preferred boy children over girl children. Second, Abe was the eighth-born of his parents' eight children, but the first-born boy. He was special. I think the seven older sisters melded into one older sister in Abe's mind; and he got the idea that girls and women should spoil him. His family sent him out of their homeland to protect him from the Russian Tsar's draft, so he wouldn't die in one of the Tsar's wars. His family died in World War II when Hitler awarded Abe's homeland to Romania and the Romanian militiar slaughtered the shtetl's inhabitants. Then he may have had mixed feelings about gentile women who survived The Holocaust.

My mother dropped out of college when her mother died. Abe said she refused to take two science courses required for graduation, but I think the story is a lie. Indeed, there are two stories where only one can be true at several points in Abe's life. When his son graduated from high school and left the city, Abe sold the family home and didn't provide my mother a replacement. She had to get a job. She married my father. When he went to war, she moved in with Charlie and Mary. She sold her piano to a sorority sister, expecting to get it back, but it was lost forever. In short, she lost everything in a very short period of time.

She was also beginning to figure out her father. Though she was adept with words and writing truths to the extent that journalists write truth, she couldn't wrap her mind around the truths of her family. She did, however, get out a few words critical of her father, and he put her in a mental institution to silence her. She didn't drop out of college. She didn't fail to graduate on the grounds that the two science courses were irrelevant to a career in journalism. Her father actively sabotaged her talent to widen the achievement gap between his boy and girl children.

Each of my parents had two different and distinct heritages. They gave me four different and distinct heritages. Each of their younger brothers married a woman of one of their two different and distinct heritages. Thus, a family that had been tending towards the melting pot or exceptional diversity, began to revert to the homogeneity of one of my grandparents.

My father's brother had three children. All three married into more homogeneity. My mother's brother had five children. Though all five didn't get married, all five had relationships that increased homogeneity.

I was an only child until my 14th year of life. My younger sister married the white trash of our maternal grandmother's heritage.

I, too, yearned to be one thing or another. I wanted to be ethnic, but instead of marrying one of the ethnicities I already was, I married none-of-the-above. Twice. However, for the most part, my female friends have been one-of-the-above, as were some of the men I dated after the failures of both marriages.

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My father survived World War II Japanese atrocities if he was vulnerable to them. He came home, went to work with Charlie at the Morrison Hotel, and moved into his parents' house until he and my mother could settle into an apartment. They rented an apartment in the neighborhood where my mother had lived most of her childhood, a few blocks from the house where her mother died, the house that her father sold to make her homeless.

I was born. Then whatever happened to start the Korean War happened. When my father came home from World War II, the Army had discharged him to the Army Reserve rather than to full civilian status. Now the Army called him back to active duty for Korea. Not only was my father a leader of men, he was a leader of Asians and had insights into them. I was three. My mother, father and I moved in with Charlie and Mary. My father left.

Charlie knocked my mother down and called her a Dirty Jew. My mother rented a room in a boarding house for the wives and children of soldiers. It was near the apartment of Scotch Gaelic relatives. It was also in an African-American slum. Mary intervened and rented a cheap apartment near Charlie's brother. She smoothed things over when my father came home from Korea.

Again, my father went to work for his father at the Morrison Hotel, but their tempers flared. My father quit, and he was unable to hold down a job thereafter. We lived in absolute poverty. My parents abused me. I was a scapegoat, but I didn't know for what. The circumstances of my childhood did to me what Abe did to my mother but in a more complex manner.

My father's stance on religion is that children should not be indoctrinated. If they feel a need of religion when they become adults, they can look around to find a religion that works for them. In my father's opinion, Reformed Judaism is the best religion. In defense of Charlie's anti-Semitism, Charlie was of an ethnic group that had been decimated time and again by wars financed by Jews. Survivors of the genocide were taxed heavily to pay back the financiers. Did Jewish financiers lend their own money, or were they agents of hidden, non-Jewish haters? Furthermore, when the US took my father for war and put his life at risk, the US stressed Charlie, too, not just my mother and Mary.

My father's brother served in the Navy for World War II, but he remained stateside because of a policy to have only one of a mother's sons in a war zone at one time. My uncle got married, got to work on his career, and started making a family while my father was gone. The favored second son beat out the first-born child.

My mother's brother went into the military as a high tech professional in the Pentagon. He married the widow of a Navy flyer killed in the Pacific theater of war. She was descended from a wealthy, well-known New England colonial family, but not the richest branch of it. Her father had enough money to support the life of an artist. He moved to Spain, which was popular with artists at the time, and married a Cuban woman. My uncle's wife came back to the US as a young adult and worked as a Navy nurse before having children.

Abe moved to the Washington DC area to live with his son and daughter-in-law and help with the children. I didn't meet Abe until he was back in Chicago and married another WASP woman when I was eight. She smoothed things over with my parents. I connected with my lapsed Jewish and WASP heritages. However, when Charlie called my mother a Dirty Jew he was somewhat correct. My blood WASP grandmother went through some kind of process that converted her to the Jewish religion because Abe insisted on a Jewish marriage. Then religion seems to have fallen out of their lives. But, technically, by Jewish and Holocaust law, my mother was Jewish and so am I.

I met my maternal uncle after I met Abe. I met my maternal aunt and five cousins a few weeks before my 18th birthday, after which I moved out of my parents' house to escape abuse and financial exploitation. Abe's second wife helped me move and find a place to live. Abe's son and daughter-in-law did the best they could to be my family, but it just wasn't in them.

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My aunt was the second-born of her parents, the artist and La Cubana. The first-born was a boy and she totally eclipsed him. He died young, and she inherited the two houses her parents owned in Spain. She also inherited money from a wealthy spinster aunt from the New England side of her family. She was a good person in her own way, but as a second-born child married to Abe's second-born child, she was almost certainly biased towards second-born child. Abe was the equivalent of a second-born child.

Abe seems to have had a profound influence on the first three of his son and daughter-in-law's children when they were little and their personalities were setting in stone. My aunt mentioned that when one child got a new toy, the other two wanted the same toy, and there was hell to pay until all three got identical toys. But giving the three children identical toys didn't stop the fighting. The children raged on. All three wanted the original toy.

Second-born children have been a huge part of my life. Indeed, my life can be considered a research study in the psychology of second-born children.

Now that I'm in my 70s, I can say with some certainty that my cousins couldn't care less about the toys they fought over as children. They didn't want the original toy that one of them got. The problem is that they didn't want the child who got the toy to have it. One child's jealousy was about depriving the other child of something the other child had far more than jealousy was about getting the thing for one's self.

My aunt didn't identify the birth order of the children when she talked about the conflicts. She seems to have avoided analyzing the conflict because the analysis might turn back on her.

I never got close with my maternal cousins, but we did connect from time -to-time. The third-born dropped out of the conflict when they were in their 20s. The first-born and second-born were still at it in middle-age, and Abe became the emblem of something to fight over.

The children were raised in the religion of their New England forebears. The first-born was artistic. She went to art school until Haight-Ashbury became the Mecca for the coolest of cool artistic types. She dropped out of school and moved to Haight Ashbury. The son of conservative Jewish parents fell in love with her in art school and followed her to San Francisco. Then her two younger brothers.

Oriental religion was cool. The first-born sister (FBS) converted. The second-born brother (SBB) joined an Ashram. The third-born brother (TBB) joined, too. Being a follower doesn't have as much status as being a leader. SBB killed two birds with one stone. He moved to a Latin American country and founded his own ashram. TBB moved to the Latin-American ashram and stayed on when SBB became dissatisfied and left.

In the meantime, FBS and her boyfriend moved to my uncle's property and embarked on a back-to-nature lifestyle, electricity not allowed. FBS led her formerly Jewish boyfriend and babies' daddy into a charismatic Christian religion. SBB returned to my uncle's property and became charismatic. He spoke in tongues more frequently and dramatically than his sister and her man.

FBS then led her man into a Jews For Jesus church. They exchanged their rustic home on my uncle's property for a city house and became missionaries of their new religion. They visited Chicago to stake FBS's claim on Abe. They talked to him of Zionism and Israel. Then they moved to Israel, and as far as I know, they're still there.

SBB went to art school. He married a WASP. She was also an artist. He won many awards and earned an international reputation. He and his wife were too busy to have children. Something else nagged at SBB.

When Abe migrated to the US, he changed his eastern European surname to one that sounded WASP, though he got the spelling wrong. SBB reverted to the eastern European name. Maybe he wanted to get back to his roots. Maybe he wanted to advance his career at a time when exotic eastern European names were popular in the art industry. Maybe he was playing catch-up with FBS. When she was in her charismatic Christian phase, she gave herself an eastern European peasant girl's name, probably without knowing that girls of that name were more likely to be of the people who persecuted Jews than to be Jewish.

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As the competition between my two oldest maternal cousins raged across three continents, I suspected that their jealousy started when they were toddlers and Abe was their babysitter. He must have favored the second-born boy over the first-born girl. Instead of teaching the boy to accept his place, he gave the boy the idea that he should supercede the girl. She reacted badly to the put-down and spent her life trying to race ahead from where Abe put her to where she belonged.

Somehow, though Abe was a lapsed Jew who didn't go to temple or socialize with Jews in the US, my cousins knew him as a Jew. After returned to Chicago and disappeared from their lives, and when they exhausted other competitions, they fell into a competition about Jewishness. FBS won hands-down. She married a Jew, had Jewish babies, and lived in the Jewish homeland. How could SBB beat her out?

SBB turned to the Converso phenomenon for help. When Spanish Catholics wanted to take back the Iberian peninsula and eliminate Semitic invaders and rulers, they gave Spanish Muslims and Jews the option of converting to the Roman Catholic faith. It was the colonial era and Spain didn't have many spare people to populate its colonies, but it did have Conversos to unload and they were happy to leave Spain. Because Conversos practiced Christianity, it's difficult to know if Spanish colonists had once been Muslim or Jewish. Muslims were more numerous.

SBB learned that Jewishness is inherited through mothers when FBS took our grandparents' Jewish marriage certificate to an Israeli rabbi for explication. A Jewish man has to marry a Jewish woman to get Jewish children. A non-Jewish man will have Jewish children if he marries a Jewish woman.

SBB pinned his hopes on his Cuban grandmother to win the war for Jewishness. She was dead, and seems to have not left behind evidence of her ethnic roots. SBB wasn't sure of her name and of her family's place of origin in Iberia. Genealogy research would be difficult. I haven't heard from SBB since I told him the odds were that his grandmother's people were Muslim.

Before I met my competitive maternal cousins, I had only my German-Gaelic cousins to deal with.

My paternal second-born uncle had also married a competitive woman, a forensic analysis of whom indicates she was probably second-born. She was raised by modest farmers. She married at age 18. She was younger and less educated than my mother, and it rankled her. She was happy to accept favored status with Charlie. She gave Charlie his first grandson; but the first grandson turned out to be the last grandson. My mother gave Charlie his first granddaughter, and he loved me despite all the trouble. Mary wanted me to be the daughter she never had.

My paternal aunt's second- and third-born children were girls. At a sleepover when I was 12, my aunt put me on the floor in the girls' bedroom, but I spent my waking hours with the boy cousin because he was closer to me in age. He was interested in science and technology; and he constructed something intricate on his bedroom floor. While we played with it, the girls repeatedly ran in the room and knocked it down.

Destructing an inanimate object didn't satisfy them. They wanted to destroy their brother. They ran to the kitchen and told my aunt that their brother ran in their room and destroyed their toys. I told my aunt that the girls lied. They were the offenders. My aunt told me to shut-up. Then she called my uncle into the house and told him to ream me out. He did as she said.

Charlie died three years later. Charlie's will specified that his executor should divide his assets in three parts: one part for my father, one part for my uncle, and one part divided equally among the five grandchildren. The will stipulated that my father would receive his share only if he paid back \$5,000 he borrowed to start a business that failed. If he didn't, the assets would be divided in half, one half for my uncle and the other half divided among the five grandchildren. The assets were considerable. My father's share would be enough to pay back the \$5,000 with tens of thousands of dollars left over. The will named my uncle as executor. My uncle divided the assets in half. In addition to giving himself half, he got 60% of the other half for his children. When my uncle did the math, he omitted the payout he got from Charlie's life insurance and the tens of thousands of dollars Charlie loaned him to buy a house. Life went from bad to worse for my parents, my sister and me.

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After the horrifying sleepover when I was 12, twelve years passed before I spoke with my aunt again. She called to brag that her daughters were going to college. They were going to be teachers. My college education had been sabotaged. I was just then going to college to get a teaching degree myself. My aunt told me to call my cousins. I didn't follow through. She could tell her children what to do. She couldn't tell me diddly.

Like my maternal cousins, I valued Abe far more than I should have. By valuing him, I was eventually able to understand what he did to my mother that made her do to me what she did.

Abe buried his second wife a year after she retired. She and Abe had a joint will. Each left their estate to the other. When the second spouse died, their assets would be divided equally among their children and grandchildren.

Abe's second wife was a divorced woman when he met her. She had one child, a girl, from her first marriage. Her husband abandoned the girl. For one reason and another, the girl was a terror. When the girl was five, my step-grandmother put her in her room to calm down. The girl kicked through the door. My step-grandmother couldn't continue in this way, and she placed the girl with a married brother who had no children. The girl went to college and graduate school. She became a professional, got married and had two children.

After her mother's funeral, she drove Abe to the bank before driving him home. She had Abe sign a card to make her the new co-owner of the joint account. Then she drove Abe home. Then she returned to the bank and withdrew all the money. My step-aunt and I both took care of widower Abe. Abe let the theft slide until he noticed that a gift I'd given my step-grandmother disappeared from the coffee table. Then he called me and I went over. My step-aunt was leaving Abe's apartment when I arrived with my husband and baby. She started yelling at me. She threw herself on the sidewalk and kicked and screamed like a little brat throwing a tantrum. She was 45 years old.

Abe talked to a judge he knew from his career as a reporter. The judge said the dollar amount was too small to fight over. Legal fees would eat it up. Then my step aunt began to harass me at home. She'd call to demand that I give her things that Abe or his second wife had given me. She's an exemplar of the kind of narcopath who is never prosecuted for serious crimes but kills people none the less. Abe was stressful. So was she. Both contributed to my step-grandmother's death.

Abe buried two beautiful and intelligent WASP women before their time. Pearl was 43 when he buried her. Her talent had taken her into society with people above her own family's class. It was a class that profited from and propagandized for the massive importation of foreign labor in the early 1900s. Pearl over-romanticized immigrants generally and Abe specifically. Abe's second wife was stronger spiritually, but she wasn't strong enough to survive the stress of a failed marriage to one jerk, compounded by a problem child and marriage to yet another narcissist.. She was barely in the ground when Abe found a replacement woman, and another.

My step-aunt stopped cleaning and cooking, but I continued. Abe insulted me and my family. One day I found him in a bizarre situation and state of mind. I took him to the hospital. He told the doctor I'm crazy. I asked the doctor to keep Abe under observation a little longer. because Abe couldn't sustain his act. Abe did, indeed, break down soon after.

Abe did to me what he did to my mother after Pearl died. I found the words to say what my mother couldn't. Maybe I betrayed my mother by getting involved with Abe, or maybe I avenged her. My mother would still be hurtful to me and mine; and it was still in the best interest of my children and me to keep her at a distance. If we got close to her, maybe we'd be stressful to her. She lived to age 91.

I didn't grow up naïve. I had more than enough experience in real life and with literature to know that people can be a problem. But I got through a problematic childhood because I believed that my relatives were the only problem people I ever had known and ever would know.

Thinking as I did, I got involved with tons of problem people. My marriage to a Japanese-American betrayed my father. It also gave me clues to what pushed my father over the edge even before I was born.

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Boiler Room
my grandparents' Chicago



Abe

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My first experience with emigrants occurred when I was 6, at the time my father was going off the rail. We lived in a large and substantial apartment building near Lake Michigan beaches and parks. We were on the third floor.

At first, my mother was a housewife, as she had been since I was born. Then she got a part-time office job during the hours I was in school. She left for work before I left for school. I took advantage of the lack of supervision to wear my party dress to school, until I ripped it.

Four children in my age range lived in the building. A 7-year-old boy was the leader. Andy was the janitor's son. He lived with his parents in a gloomy basement apartment. The only light came through windows on a narrow gangway. His family was Polish at a time when Polish emigrants were known as DPs, short for Displaced Persons. They came to the US in the years after World War II.

In the winter, Andy led us to the frozen wasteland between a lifeguard boat house and open water. It took all our muscle to upturn a rowboat so we could play pirate. Andy was fearless, as leaders must be. He scrambled across the field of knobbly frozen waves to the very edge of open water, where waves beat upon the ice. He called us to follow, but none of us was as sure of our footing as Andy, and we stayed behind.

In warm weather, we played on the sidewalk in front of the apartment building. Andy liked Mother May I best. He was usually Mother. If another child came close to winning, he called the game and led us into something else..

Elderly American women lived alone in two nearby houses. Andy led us to the further house. He told us to run up the steps and ring the doorbell, then run away. He hid in the bushes so he could enjoy the old woman's consternation.

Andy found a pregnant cat and made a nest of rags under the front steps of the closer house. When the cat delivered her brood, he distributed the kittens among us. It was Christmas time. My mother noticed a basket was missing from the kitchen. My father found it under the Christmas tree on the front porch, where the kitten filled in for Infant Jesus.

The apartment lease forbade cats. Evidence of the cat would eventually show up in our garbage, at which time the janitor could report us to the building manager for investigation and possible eviction.

Now I'm an old American lady who lives alone in a house surrounded by many more emigrants than the old women of my childhood. Neighbors broke my doorbell long ago with the help of canvassers and of police officers who came to my home in response to numerous bogus complaints by my neighbors. Several of them really wanted my house.

I was a young woman when I bought the house. I moved into it in winter. I sat on the front steps when the weather warmed up. An older Polish woman walked to the bottom steps and said, How much. I thought she wanted to know how much I paid for the house. But, after decades of experience with emigrants from around the world, I know she meant, How much was my asking price, not the selling price I paid. I was barely in the house; and she wanted me out.

To me, the house was a home, not a commodity. I planned to live in the house until I died.

I imagine that when Andy's family sat at the dinner table and pretty much all day long, Andy's mother communicated envy and jealousy of her American neighbors. American women lived in upstairs apartments where sunlight flowed through the many windows. American women and their family's lived in fine houses of their own. Some American women lived alone without the bother of angry husbands and bratty children. Andy learned that he was obligated to fight his mother's war against her female neighbors.

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I've socialized with other Polish emigrants since. The shortest relationship occurred between my two marriages when I enjoyed a small level of popularity. The Polish guy was at an all night party in a lakefront high rise, with windows facing the sun-rise. We talked while the sun rose. The other party guests had walked to the lake to watch the sun-rise.

It was the early 70s, and he'd arrived in the US only a few years before. He came to the US with his mother, who'd been hired as a laboratory assistant by one of Chicago's medical centers.

He asked me for a date. When he picked me up, he immediately said something exceptionally rude about African-Americans. What did he know of African-Americans, growing up in Poland as he had?

He wasn't the first emigrant to bad-mouth African-Americans to my face, nor was he the last. Many emigrants know that they usurp the birthright of African-Americans. They know they compete unfairly for jobs. Their racism is an attempt to justify the good they take from the US.

When I graduated from high school, I worked full-time in a bank and supported my parents and sister until I was old enough to leave home legally. My maternal step-grandmother moved me into a private girls' dormitory near her and my grandfather. I lived there until I turned 19 and got married.

The others girls were a mixed bunch. Several groups came from small Midwest towns and cities to train to be dental hygienists and medical assistants. My closest friend had been an abused foster child and currently worked as a studio model at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She moved to Boston, thinking she could better pay for the same work, but came back soon after. She said the Harvard boys were rough trade. Another girl was a Playboy bunny. She hated laundromats and dry cleaners. She earned enough to buy new clothes and underwear at two-week intervals, so she threw her clothes away rather than clean them to wear again.

The girl who lived in the room above mine excited the lust of a lesbian. The lesbian climbed the fire escape to the roof of the four-story building and got into one of the stairwells from there. She got off on the wrong floor and commenced a violent assault on my door. It was open so the cross-breeze from window would make the hot night bearable. Luckily, the door of the closet next to the room door was also open. The two doorknobs lodged against each other, and I was saved. The girl in the room next door got the story. She was a young professional from Texas who came to Chicago for the high humidity she needed to alleviate a long condition.

My step-grandmother originally placed me in one of the dormitory's double-rooms. My roommate came to Chicago from Los Angeles, where her single mom had raised. She applied make-up to look like Liz Taylor. She started four hours before the dating bars opened in Chicago's nightclub district. Then she went out to the bars to find a boyfriend. She didn't put the makeup containers away. She strewed them on her bed and the floor around it. When she came home late and tired, she flipped the bedspread to dump the rest of the makeup on the floor. She cleaned up when she woke up, ready for another night out.

My roommate was 25 to my 18. The drinking age was 21. I went out with her only once. I don't do make-up and I looked younger than my age. I drew attention to myself by dancing. The bar owner asked me to leave, but not before a 45-year-old grocer from South Shore asked me for a date. He took me to a nightclub the following Saturday night. The bartender would serve only kiddie cocktails to our table. My life as a swinger began and ended in one week.

A 30-something banker from a wealthy North Shore suburb picked up my roommate one night. He enjoyed her company. He proposed that she become his mistress; and she agreed. He rented a one-bedroom apartment in an apartment hotel around the corner from the girls' dormitory, and there he kept her. He gave her an allowance, and he ordered fancy underwear from the Frederick's of Hollywood catalogue. She said she was happy.

I missed her. I didn't like the next roommate and asked for the next available single room.

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A chubby blond dorm girl was a waitress in one of Chicago’s many Greek-owned corner coffee shops. Koreans have since taken over the lane. Male Greek owners were infamous for demanding sex from non-Greek waitresses. The chubby blond navigated the problem better than most waitresses. She demanded the use of the boss’s wife’s Cadillac in exchange for services rendered. The boss caved to her demand. Her true love was the giant black cook.

One Saturday evening, the waitress drove home in the Cadillac. She invited me and the artists’ model for a night out on the town. First, she drove into a black neighborhood to pick him up. He suggested that we go to a bar with live music near his home. It was located near Roosevelt and California. He and the waitress sat at our table like chaperones while several black men danced with the model and me. Then the cook declared it was time to leave.

My partner had fallen madly in love with me and didn’t want to give me up. He chased us to the Cadillac. Then he ran to his car and chased us when we drove away. Across from the bar, the brick wall of a factory filled the block. A sidewalk filled the space between the brick wall and a row of streetlamps and parking meters. To elude the pursuer, the cook steered through two parking meters and then sped along the sidewalk. The pursuer ran abreast of us in the street. By some maneuver or another, the cook got rid of him. We decided to go home.

The Cadillac sustained some body damage during the adventure. The waitress and the cook discussed remedies. They decided that they would drop off the two girls at the dormitory and go somewhere to enjoy alone time. Then the cook would drive the waitress home. Then he’d park the Cadillac two blocks from the restaurant owner’s house. The owner or his wife or police would eventually find the car. The wife wouldn’t know how it got where it was. For the sake of the marriage, the owner would have to accept full responsibility.

I worked at a downtown bank. I was assigned to a department with a lot of desks in a large open space. Two young black women worked in the department. One of the black girls invited me to lunch. She wanted to tell me that there are two kinds of black people. One kind is the N word. The other kind is Negroes. She was a Negro. The other black girl was an N.

So it is with every race and nationality.

My other friends were two girls from my high school. The girl of Swedish ancestry was the receptionist for the department in which I worked. The girl of German ancestry worked in a different department. We ate lunch and took bathroom breaks together. In her wisdom, the German girl said traveling salesmen are the only men worth marrying, because they’re rarely home. The Swedish girl was engaged to and married a man who came home every day.

My closest friend was a Polish-American girl. Her family owned a south-side two-flat on a block where my Polish-American college roommate bought a two-flat after she got married.

When I was 18, my closest friend was a girl from Indiana that I met the first day of senior year in high school. Her mother got a job in a drapery workshop. The bookkeeping department needed help. I resigned my bank job to run the billing machine and file invoices. I got married. My young husband stashed me away in a dark, 3rd-floor rear apartment far from friends and family. He never came home. His crew of young punks was with him if he did come home.

One of them delivered groceries. If a customer refused delivery because frozen items had thawed, he brought the rejected food to me so I’d cook dinner in the vain hope my husband would come home and eat it.

Roast beef was on the menu one night. All the punks were gathered at the dining table in the livingroom. They asked me to invite my Polish friend. They’d seen her and she was very pretty. She said she’d drive over. Then she called to say she wouldn’t. She became frightened and turned back home when she drove into a black slum between her home and mine. Apparently she lived a narrow life.

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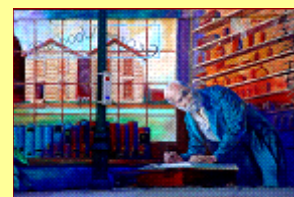
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Among the punks in my husband's crew was an English transplant. He came to the US with his parents and siblings when a Chicago area factory recruited his father for a tool-and-die maker job. The mother got an office job downtown and settled the family into an elegant apartment in an upscale area of Chicago. She wasn't satisfied and moved the family to a large Victorian-era house with a turret in an even more upscale area.

She invited me to a holiday dinner once. The experience was awkward. She talked like a duchess; and her working-class husband sat across the table tongue-tied, beaming politely. He suffered a heart attack shortly his wife was killed in a freak accident. His son took me to visit him on his deathbed. He asked his son to leave the room so he could speak to me privately. He asked me to look after his son. His son was several years older than me and was about to receive a lot of money from insurance policy payouts. I was poor and still struggling to get out from under the terrible burdens of my childhood and the failure of my first marriage.

Nonetheless, I did the best I could to look after the Englishman, or he stayed in touch. I don't know which it really was. He visited frequently and got tight with my second husband. He invested some of the insurance loot and used the remainder to buy a somewhat smaller Victorian-era house. It lacked a turret but it was located in an even more upscale neighborhood.

He sold his share of the turret-house to his siblings. They invested the remainder of their inheritance in an income property. It was a bad deal and they lost all they had. One sibling didn't have a paying job. The other sibling held down a job with a modest wage. They started home improvement projects but didn't finish them. They became property tax delinquent and were in danger of losing the house.

My friend was frantic. He decided to put a mortgage on his house to bail -out his siblings. I advised him not to. They weren't a good credit risk. The siblings would lose two houses instead of one. He took my advice.

He also engaged in semi-suicidal behavior and injured himself seriously several times.

He'd gotten into a desk job like his mother. He lived as upscale and snobbish a life as possible to maintain the family status. But was it really the family's status? All three siblings seemed to be caught in the emotional quicksand of a mother who thought she was too good for their father, the father being a really nice guy.

The mother was typical of many emigrant women from many parts of the world. She couldn't tolerate entering the US on a low rung of the social ladder. She wanted to be up where many Americans never have been, and many of those who did get there had to struggle and live shamefully for generations. Instead of making a home for her family, she bought a house. Her children couldn't find words for what they thought. They expressed themselves by trashing her house and their houses and losing all that they gained by their parents' death.

My friend enrolled in a course on tool-and-die making. He was a personable guy and became close friends with the instructor. The instructor told him the story of the best student he'd ever had. The student was black. He'd be an asset to any company that employed him, but no company would. The young black man had to give up the idea of being a tool-and-die maker.

Now my friend had to cope with the fact that he shouldn't be in the US at all. An American company shouldn't have recruited his father. His father's employer had had home-grown options to staff his shop.

By this time, I was a stay-at-home mom and the housewife of a modest bungalow in Chicago's blue collar bungalow belt. Several of my neighbors were emigrant Polish tool-and-die makers. My husband was the son of another ambitious, blue-collar, emigrant working woman. She was house-proud but she didn't rise to the level of a turreted mansion in an upscale neighborhood. My husband and my friend combined forces to drag me down as low as they could. They did so for the sake of their mothers, to deny the truth of their mothers, and to make me a scapegoat for their mothers to avenge the unacknowledged rage of their scorned fathers.

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I lived in cheap, cockroach-infested apartments with lousy roommates (including two husbands) in dangerous neighborhoods and I did without many things other people take for granted to save for the house. It was the cheapest brick house in a marginal neighborhood when I bought it.

I wanted a house for three reasons. First, people who knew me when I was young expected me to become an artist. I merely wished to be an artist, but I knew I couldn't compromise my integrity or my vision and would never earn a living as an artist. If I owned a house, I could get by on what I earned with part-time work and have free time to make what I wanted to make.

Second, though I didn't go to college until four years after high school, I did learn about myself like college students are supposed to do, per current university mission statements. I learned that I didn't want to be a person who went along to get along when the boss told me to do something wrong. I wanted to be ... Nay, I was born and raised to be a whistleblower. Wrongdoers inflict terrible revenge on whistleblowers. A house with a clear title would be a hedge against retaliation if and when I had cause to blow the whistle.

Third, after a childhood of sleeping on the couch in one-room kitchenette apartments and moving frequently, I wanted space and, if I had children, I wanted to stay home with them like all the women in my family did, except my divorced step-grandmother and her ambitious daughter.

I anticipated that when and if I became a stay-at-home mom, my days would be an endless gabfest and kaffeeklatsch with my neighbors, like I'd seen when I lived in an Italian suburb.

My dream was unrealistic. All my American-born housewife neighbors were all about their houses and children. They rarely saw the light-of-day, though one invited me over to sit in her kitchen while she cooked.

The two Polish emigrant mothers were working mothers along the lines of other emigrant mothers I knew. One mother hooked up with a customer of the deli where she worked part-time. She told me not to visit because she wanted alone time with her lover. She said that in Poland, mothers aren't expected to take care of children, but to go out and have a good time on the pin money they earn with part-time jobs. Spinster aunts take care of the children. Her older son ran away during one of her trysts. He came to my house. When she called to tell me to send him home, he ran further away. When I ran out to look for him, my storm door slammed shut and locked. I had to break a pane of glass to get back in to my own children. I didn't replace the broken glass until just a few years ago, when I finally had a respite. The boy wasn't lost forever. A Polish beauty shop owner recognized him when he ran past her shop.

The other Polish emigrant mom worked full-time. She supplemented her income by renting rooms to single emigrant men. They worked nights. While she as at wok during the day, they brought home black prostitutes who worked a nearby busy street. The woman's son spent a lot of time at my house, but his mother couldn't and didn't reciprocate the care I gave her child.

Then came a Christmas morning when the boy knocked on the door. He wanted to brag on the expensive, trendy present his mother bought. His mother, like my mother-in-law, bribed their children to accept their absences. Eventually they inflated the economy to the level where most mothers, alien and native, work outside the home to fulfill unreasonable expectations.

After the Christmas knock on the door, my son told me to get a job and buy him a banana bike. Like hell. Not only do I own my home free-and-clear, I have tens of thousands of dollars saved for a rainy day out of your father's paycheck. I'm sorry you picked up on the values of a man I shouldn't have married and of people who shouldn't be in the US.

At the time, I home-schooled my children because of horrendously bad experiences with the older boy's school. I wouldn't put him back in the situation from which I rescued him. I wouldn't throw my younger child to the wolves in the first place.

The least of the problems, or so I thought at the time, was a day when the older boy threw a tantrum and refused to get on the school bus because he didn't have Nike shoes. I had to carry him on kicking and screaming. A few years later, I worked at a school where black teenagers were killing other kids to get their Troop jackets. Fads are a perpetual and dangerous epidemic that spreads in school and beyond.

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My second marriage ended a few years after the banana bike incident. Then I was a happily liberated empty-nester. I enjoyed more than a decade of semi-popularity and I got out dancing as much as I needed.

A younger Polish woman came up to me at a venue that was Cuban restaurant by day and Puerto Rican nightclub at night. She wanted to be friends. I'd been wanting to go to Mexican cantinas for several years because I like conjunto music and dance, but I was afraid to go alone. We asked our partners for names and addresses of cantinas, made mental maps, and several years of good times followed. We also went to American dances, wedding receptions, and other celebrations and fetes.

My friend had the snazzier car, so she usually offered to pick me up and do the driving. She was always late, by hours. She explained that in Poland teachers punish children for being tardy by whacking them with a stick on the back of the calf. It leaves no mark but hurts like hell. Therefore, Polish people spend the remainder of their lives in rebellion, habitually late. There were other reasons for my friend's tardiness.

Her family lived in the Polish highlands before emigrating to the US. They emigrated because an American shop owner recruited her father for a tool -and-die-maker job. Over they came, he, his wife, and their five children. They settled into the Mexican barrio of a small Midwest city, where the mother opened a bakery. Polish is a semi-Latin language. It shares Latin cognates with Spanish. My friend learned Spanish and English. She didn't have any American friends besides me when I knew her. Her friends were Puerto Rican, black and Polish.

She recalled that in the Polish highlands, dark-haired girls would send their brothers out to drag blond girls into the fields and rape them. She hadn't been raped, but she was afraid of sex. Three days a week for several years, she went to the clubs with me, but it wasn't to dance. She wasn't much of a dancer. She'd talk through the music, which was annoying. Eventually, she stopped showing up at my house and I resumed going out alone.

She was a clerical worker, but wanted to earn money without punching a time clock. She took the test to become a real estate agent. She rented a desk in a realty office, but during the time I knew her, she sold no houses. A decade before we met, Hispanic emigrants made life hell on my block. Most of my white neighbors, many of them Polish, had already sold their homes. My friend knew.

For me, the dancing out and the Hispanic boyfriends were a kind of inoculation against my neighbors from hell. My social life gave me the strength to resist the evils of my home life. I eventually realized that my friend was working a lead when she became my friend. She hoped I'd list with her. When I didn't list, she said she wanted to move in with me.

I considered her a bad risk; and I couldn't afford to support her.

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In Poland, as in many other countries that send surplus people to the US, a person must own a house in town and a farm in the country to be a something and somebody. To be only a renter in the city or a farmer is demeaning.

My friend's parents decided to buy land and build a large house in the countryside near the father's job. They bought a piece of a larger tract. It wasn't on a road, and they accessed it on an easement that passed by the seller's house. They paid in full for the land, but they wanted to build a very large house, and they borrowed back what they paid for the land. They didn't pay the seller according to agreement and they owed him a large sum of money. Nonetheless they drove back and forth past his house many times a day as if they had nothing to be ashamed of.

My friend bought a suburban townhouse before she had the money for a down payment. She borrowed \$10,000 from a German couple who were in the US for only a short time. She didn't pay them back before they returned to Germany. They contacted her several times, but the debt was still outstanding.

Habitual tardiness affected her work life. She'd report to work an hour or two late and then work four hours late to appease the boss and silence malicious gossips among her co-workers. Nonetheless, her jobs didn't last.

For a while, her income was from a company that supplied bartenders and servers for weekend banquets. We were on the phone when she was supposed to get ready for a serving job, but she wasn't getting ready. I drove over to help her. She'd come unhinged. She couldn't pull it together. With a little help I got her to work on time.

She supplanted her income by converting the townhouse basement to a rental unit. She advertised for tenants in Polish media.

Her townhouse was a duplex. On the other side of the party wall was a middle-aged Italian-American spinster. She wasn't attractive. My friend was very pretty though she didn't have a love life to prove it. The Italian spinster was uncomfortable having a pretty blond girl next door and began to wage war. Her father was like many other Italian men. He had political clout. He used his clout to intimidate my friend with a barrage of suburban town inspectors. She had to evict her tenants. Fines piled up. She wanted to get the best possible price when she sold, and spent money on Polish handymen to fix up the townhouse.

One of her sisters was an attorney,. The sister couldn't help because she needed to be on the right side of men with clout. My friend sold the townhouse, bought an expensive and large SUV on credit, and made a down payment on a townhouse in a more distant suburb. I haven't heard from her since, but I did get on the mailing list of a Polish-born real estate agent near home.

My neighborhood is historically white. A directory published while it was building up shows that first residents were of diverse European heritage. When I bought my house 50 years later, some of my neighbors were Polish, but not a preponderance. Nonetheless, representatives for all the electoral districts were Polish. The neighborhood and parish in which I live had an exceptionally bad reputation city-wide, and Polish residents seemed to be the main reason why. Fifteen years after I bought the house, when Hispanic Nuevos Conquistadores had been active for a decade, the Cook County Regular Democratic Party used a primary election to poll the strength of Polish voters compared to Hispanic voters. Hispanic voters won.

Dark-haired females making trouble for blond females is one of the reasons why. Dark-haired Huns and associated Asians invaded Slavic Europe many times. Modern DNA studies are ongoing. Studies indicate that Asians left their genes behind when and if they receded from conquered territory. As many as 50% of Poles might have Hunnic ancestry.

My friend's blond brother married and had children. She and her three sisters weren't married and didn't have children when we last spoke. All the sisters were troubled in some way. The parents built a shrine to one of the girls. They lost her when she became so desperate for acceptance that she joined a cult. People can receive a message of hate without being fully aware of it, but become an agent of their own extinction and self-destruct.

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My life moved on, and I was in a neighborhood bank. It was located in a neighborhood where Hispanic residents and small businesses replaced Polish predecessors. A Puerto Rican girl handled my business. I remarked that her first name is the same as that of a male Puerto Rican who was in my classes a few years earlier. She'd gone to the same school. She remarked that she still remembered her favorite teacher, but in the remembering, she realized that she didn't learn anything in his class. He was a personable guy who put on a dog and pony show. Nothing more. I've met several Puerto Rican women who can tell it like it is.

She sent me to the waiting room so she could take care of a Hispanic customer who couldn't speak English.

Two blond women sat in the waiting room. A Polish bank executive recognized them from the old days and they reminisced. At the end of World War II in Europe, agents for the victorious countries set up reception stations to help Displaced Polish Persons find new homes. They all had stood in the line for England, but an English official whisked them over to the US line. So, here they are. Being displaced by Hispanics.

Many Anglos and Anglo-Americans seem to have slept through the American Revolution and War of 1812, and all reports of those significant events after the fact. They don't realize that England and the US were cleft in two. They aren't the same country. What goes for one doesn't go for the other. An Englishman can steer war-ravaged people to the US as much as he wants, but he doesn't have the force of law behind him.

Many current emigrants to the US come from British Commonwealth countries. The US isn't in the Commonwealth. The US separated from England and became independent of England long before England unloaded its other colonies. England unloaded the cost of governing colonies but created the British Commonwealth to perpetuate trade and other money-making rights. Citizens of Commonwealth countries have a British passport and can roam freely across Commonwealth countries. Citizens of Commonwealth countries don't have a US passport by right. They can't enter the US at will.

Commonwealth or non-Commonwealth, many aliens assume the US is a monarchy. They live in the realm under the protection of the king. Or queen. The monarch wants them here even if most of the pre-existing population doesn't.

Polish emigrants and their descendents are exceptionally Anglophiliac

I met my beautiful but troubled Polish friend when I was casting around for a social life after more than a decade of incarceration in a bad and lonely marriage. It was too late for me to be an artist and to mingle with artists at their skill level, but I tried. My social life included musicians, dancers, and poets.

On the practical side, as a middle-aged white non-Hispanic female, I was last-hired-first-fired. While I was a housewife, the job market had become perversely anti-discriminatory. It was still discriminatory, but discrimination had reversed. I met a lot of people in work environments because I had a lot of jobs.

Thus I stumbled into another phenomenon. It's the phenomenon of Polish men who marry Anglo girls and adopt the Anglo surname. England has done a remarkably good job of marketing itself as the pinnacle of humanity. Everyone wants to be English.

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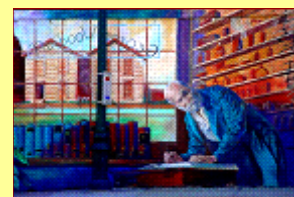
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My grandfather Abe’s shtetl was in Poland and in Ukraine at different times. He said the languages are similar and also the people. He hates them both because they killed Jews back in the day.

It was inevitable that I’d become friends with a Ukrainian girl and bring her to my grandparents’ home for a visit.

‘O’ became a special education teacher around the same time I did and we worked with some of the same children. She was the only teacher besides me who did the job as it was supposed to be done. I respected her. I can’t say the same about most of my colleagues.

She came to the US with her parents in her early teens. The parents bought a two-flat in Ukrainian Village. I can’t remember which side of the Easter controversy they were on. O invited me to her parents’ two-flat because she wanted to show me the Puerto Ricans who loitered at Ukrainian homes and harassed the people.

She dated a Polish boy for a while. He was in his second year as a Chicago police officer. He said everyone who stays on the force after their second year is corrupt. Then he quit the force.

O’s relationship with the policeman didn’t last. She fell in love with a Ukrainian emigrant like herself. He was active in an organization to liberate Ukraine from Russia. She traveled with him to Ukraine. They were in Kiev when Chernobyl melted down. O moved to Poland. She died of cancer a couple years later. She was 40 years old. Beautiful, intelligent, and good.

O set the bar for emigrants from all over the world. The more they cry wolf to get into the US, the more they obligate themselves to stay in the homeland and fight the beast. A true American would. Americans have lost their lives in battles with the beast for hundreds of years, in the US and abroad. No alien life is more valuable than an American life. Some foreigners aren’t more deserving of preserving than their compatriots. No foreigner is more deserving of preserving than Americans. .

What happened to Andy? I imagine he became a policeman. Cops seize every opportunity to pound on doors and bust in, as if they’re tragically alienated. As if they’re outsiders wanting desperately to get in.

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I graduated high school. I got a job. I moved into a private girls' dormitory. I attended classes at night at a city junior college. The Psychology instructor told students to get a partner and teach each other something. Then write a report about the experience.

'Bonnie' offered to teach egg rolls. I like egg rolls. I taught bacon, lettuce and tomato sandwiches with cheese on top. The kitchen of the girls' dormitory was in the basement. It was cramped; and to work in it was to annoy the girl in the room next door.

Bonnie had a small apartment in a high rise building on the lake. Her windows looked north along the Outer Drive and beaches. She, too, was 25 to my 18. Bonnie is an Americanization of her Thai name. She was actually Chinese. Her parents moved from China to Bangkok to open a Chinese restaurant. She'd grown up in the business. The secret ingredient of egg rolls is peanut butter. Smooth, not crunchy.

Back in Bangkok, Bonnie developed a wish to marry a rich American man. She did her research; and she was realistic. She was tall; and her face and figure weren't attractive. She couldn't expect the man to be attractive, but he had to be tall. He would be a banker. He'd be from a North Shore suburb but live on the Near North Side. He'd be WASP and he'd attend a specific church of a specific denomination.

She attended the church and joined the Young Adults social group. She found exactly what she was looking for. She stayed in touch long enough to send me a wedding invitation. I can't remember if I attended the wedding. I do remember sitting on a pew at the back of the church. I might have been waiting for Bonnie to take care of some business.

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My first marriage began and ended with movies.

The first movie is named Bridge To The Sun. A web search of the movie title yields the story line, production details, the trailer, the full movie with streaming and dvd options, the autobiography on which the movie is based for free online viewing at archive.org, hard copies from various vendors, and a website maintained by the daughter of the hero and heroine. Local libraries might have the book and movie in their collections.

The chapter on 'Carl' has been in the works for more than two decades. Before I could write about Carl, I needed to understand why Bridge to the Sun was a powerful influence and had a painful effect on my life. I finally bought a dvd on Ebay, but then I stalled several months more before watching it. The movie is more heartbreaking than I remembered. A few years before Pearl Harbor, an American girl and a Japanese diplomat meet at a party and get married a week later. They spend most of the marriage in Japan. They are true lovers. The diplomat is opposed to Japanese aggression; and he ruins his health in clandestine actions against Japan's military-industrial complex. He doesn't want his wife and daughter to see him die. He sends them back to the US; and lives out his life in the land of his ancestors. Some people would say the lovers were noble, but the correct word is honorable, meaning loving and loyal.

The last movie that affected my marriage to Carl is a Japanese samurai film. I don't remember dubbing or subtitles. I couldn't find it on the internet if I wanted to.

Carl's story is the story of how I came to be in movie theaters to see the two movies.

The summer between my junior and senior high school years, my parents moved from a suburb to Uptown, a Chicago neighborhood then known as Hillbilly Haven. Most of our neighbors were working poor from southern states.

Three other girls transferred to the high school when I did. We became friends in the counseling office waiting room. Two girls were Japanese-American sisters. One was going into her senior year. The other was going into her sophomore year. The fourth girl moved to Chicago from Indiana after her parents' divorce. The four of us ate lunch together thereafter.

I'd lived in Uptown when I was seven to ten years old, but in a different part of it. It was an elegant part of town when it was first built up. After World War II, the elegant apartments were divided into efficiency apartments to accommodate GIs and their brides. Most of the large single-family houses remained whole, so middle-class and poor mingled.

Black families lived on one block. The mothers were cleaning ladies for wealthy people in the area. A block away in one direction was a skid row and bars for alcoholic Amerindians. The hillbilly skid row was a block away in another direction. A Japanese-American Buddhist temple was in the same circumference, though most of the congregation lived further away.

The high school attendance area included more neighborhoods than Uptown. Families with roots in Scandinavia, northwest Europe and West Asia fed the high school. Japanese-Americans had a small enclave they settled after World War II. A small Chinatown transitioned to Vietnamtown after the Vietnam War. Africans expanded the African-American population. The high school was the first Chicago school to have an international student body.

Linda was the senior Japanese-American sister. When I had bus money, I rode the bus with her and some black kids to school. I had to walk through the hillbilly skid row and step around drunken Indians sprawled on the sidewalk to get to the bus stop near Linda's house. I walked to school alone when I didn't have bus money. I had to walk into a driving snowstorm one day. I told Linda I kept my head down and my shoulders hunched to escape the sting. Linda said I should have stood straight and taken it face-on.

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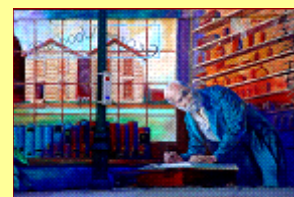
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Linda and her sister transferred to our high school from another Chicago high school. When their parents came to Chicago after World War II, they moved into an historically Polish immigrant neighborhood to which Texas-Mexicans emigrated later. Linda and her sister got involved with Tejano boys. The sisters' parents moved to Uptown to break up the relationships.

I was useful to the sisters because my parents didn't have a telephone. When the sisters wanted to see their boyfriends, they told their parents they were going to my house. Their parents couldn't call to verify.

I could use the same strategy for my love life. I could tell my parents I was going to Linda's house; and my parents couldn't call to verify.

I didn't have a boyfriend. I had a current crush in a series of crushes. My crush was a hillbilly boy I saw on his roof from my backporch during the summer. He came to Chicago from Pike County, Kentucky, where he'd been a coal miner. In Chicago, he operated a punch press that punched out plastic straps for 6-packs of beer. He left Kentucky because a mine caved in and killed his uncle and his girlfriend's father. His mother died when he was little. His father married a Cherokee woman to give the orphans a mother. The father continued to dig coal.

'Larry' was 19 to my 17. He was drunk and teetering on the edges of the roof to fool around with his friends. Nine years later, I graduated from college. Instead of doing the tour of Europe, I drove an old car down to Appalachia on my way to other places in my own country. I wanted to see where Larry grew up. A county deputy hassled me on my way into the Pike County county seat. As in Harlan County, Pike County officials discouraged college-girls with license plates from northern states. The rivers really did run black.

A major rainstorm commenced when I drove away from the town. The road was carved into the mountains. It had a sheer wall of rock on one side, a steep drop on the other side, and no apron to pull off on. No motels and campgrounds. Eventually a clearing loomed. It was paved in gravel and occupied by large road-building machines. I was settling down to sleep in the backseat when a woman appeared at the window. She had a rifle in hand. She'd heard somebody thunder down the mountain and came out to investigate. She said, We grow them wild around here. She invited me in for coffee. She and her husband had gone north for jobs in Detroit factories, but didn't like the place. Their son was in the bedroom off the livingroom. His legs had been blown off in Vietnam. His wife dumped him.

Larry worked on a jalopy when he came home from work. The jalopy was parked off the alley, across from the garbage cans for my building. In a total reversal of my character, I was eager to take out the garbage. Larry tolerated me as best he could.

There was nothing romantic between us, but a 13-year-old girl in his building thought otherwise. She claimed Larry was her boyfriend. When school started, she and a girl in my building waited out front to jump me. I went out the back door. Then they waited in the alley to jump me. After several more days, I talked to Larry. I asked him to tell the girl if she was or wasn't his girlfriend so she'd leave me alone.

Larry handled the situation more honorably than 99.999% of the world's male population would. One of his friends had enlisted in the Navy and would report for duty in a couple weeks. Larry arranged a double-date for himself, me, the 13-year-old, and the Navy recruit. He filled the jalopy with 6-packs and we went to a drive-in. When the guys went for popcorn, I poured the beer down a convenient sewer. It was my first and last date with Larry.

The Navy recruit and the 13-year-old fell in love. They became engaged and got married in short order. The girl's parents invited me over for Sunday breakfast; and the mother taught me to make biscuits. The parents wanted to thank me for getting a problem off their hands.

Larry and I remained friends.

Linda worried that her father was getting suspicious of hearing that she was going to my house Friday and Saturday nights. She and her sister arranged to meet their boyfriends at a bowling alley a few blocks from home. She asked me to show up. She told her father where she was going, hoping that he would go to the bowling alley to spy on her, see me, and trust her thereafter. I asked Larry to walk me over because the way was dark and dangerous. The three girls bowled at one lane and the three boys bowled at another lane. Larry walked me home when Linda thought enough time had passed for her father to have come and gone.

(sung) Last night I went to sleep in Detroit City
And dreamed about the cottonfields and home
Oh, how I wanna go home

Homefolks think I'm big in Detroit City
From the letters that I write they think I'm fine
But by day I make the cars
By night I make the bars
Oh, how I wanna go home

(spoken) So I think I'll take my foolish pride
And put it on a southbound freight
And ride on back
To the ones I left behind
Oh, how I wanna go home

condensed from
Detroit City
Tillis, Mel and Dill, Danny (writers)
recorded by Bobby Bare (1963)
<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/bobbybare/detroitcity.html>

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My relationship with Linda was about getting her out of her house to see her boyfriend. I didn't have a real boyfriend; and my parents often told me to take my little sister with when I went out. When I took her to see Larry, I said his name was Linda.

The Indiana girl didn't have a boyfriend either. We'd hang out at her house after school. Occasionally, we went to movie palaces with a Moorish theme on Saturday nights.

One of the movies was The Cardinal, about a poor New England Catholic who rose in the hierarchy of the Catholic church. His unmarried sister got pregnant. The pregnancy was at risk. The doctors could save the girl or the baby, but not both. The mother of priest and girl was a grieving widow. The girl's doctor asked the priest to decide who should live and who should die. The priest told the doctors to save the baby.

The decision was horrid. The mother could have other babies. The baby couldn't have another mother if it lived; and wouldn't know the difference if it died. 'Donna' and I studied birth control. I don't know why Donna used the Old Testament for a reference. She found a passage that tells Jewish couples exactly when they can and can't have sex. The Biblical prescription is the exact opposite of the rhythm method.

Many decades later, I learned that Old Testament laws govern both Jewish and Muslim Semites. A researcher who dug deep into the Spanish Inquisitions learned that religion itself wasn't the concern. The Christian priests and monarchs were concerned about the Semitic birth rate. Semites reproduced at a higher rate than Christians. Semites might overwhelm the Iberian Peninsula and then all Europe. Inquisitors gave Semites the option to convert to Christianity, which promotes New Testament abstinence more than Old Testament reproduction.

Donna and I saw Bridge to the Sun.

The first semester ended. A counselor got around to looking at my transcript. She saw that I had enough credits to graduate mid-year. She recommended that I stay in school to June. She enrolled me in Office Practice and Art. The Office Practice program placed students in part-time jobs. I worked afternoons at a downtown bank. The counselor said nothing about the scholarship a counselor had lined up at my previous school. I didn't say anything either. I didn't want to be anything that required a college degree. My goal was to become independent ASAP.

Donna got involved with the Arab boys at school. Her boyfriend's family owned a nightclub. She went to work as a waitress and learned to belly dance. The family let her perform from time-to-time.

People who knew me when I was young thought I'd become an artist. I finished a clay project in Art. Tree surgeons had cut down a giant oak tree across the alley from my parents' apartment and sawed the trunk into smaller pieces width-wise. I decided to split one of the pieces in half length-wise and carve a bas relief on the exposed surface. The pieces were heavy. I couldn't pick one up, let alone carry it to school on the bus. Donna rounded up a crew of Arab boys. They loaded the wood into their car and hauled it up the stairs at school. I spent the last three months of senior year trying to split the log. The bas relief didn't come to pass.

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Linda’s father died at the beginning of second semester. Linda’s mother honored his memory by reinforcing his edict against Tejano and all other non-Japanese boyfriends. Linda’s mother was circumspect in the doing of it. She said Linda was flabby and needed exercise; therefore, Linda should enroll in an athletic program at the Buddhist temple down the street. Linda invited me to join. My family needed what I earned at my job. Linda said I could sit on the side and watch.

I’ve thought all these years that the boy who caught my attention in the Buddhist church basement resembled the honorable hero in Bridge to the Sun. Watching the movie last week, I saw that Carl resembled in appearance a character who was on screen less than a minute. The character was a low level draftee of the Imperial Army stationed in the homeland. He seduced a starving peasant girl with bits of food.

I piled mistaken identity on top of mistaken identity. I turned out to be the honorable party in the relationship with Carl. He was steadfastly dishonorable.

Linda saw my crush as an opportunity to throw her mother off the scent. She didn’t know Carl, but she did know the boy he partnered with. The boy had a crush on her. She told the boy she wanted to go out on a date, but it had to be a double date because of her mother’s rules. She wanted me to be the girl on the double date. He should invite Carl.

So, I found myself at a telescope on the observation deck of a downtown skyscraper. Carl pointed out his distant neighborhood. My neighborhood was in the opposite direction and couldn’t be seen. Carl held my hand. He said it was soft.

Thereafter, we saw each other at the Buddhist church Friday evenings. His parents drove him there and drove him home. We saw each other without his parents a few Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons. We declared eternal love and set a wedding date for after college graduation.

However, Carl failed all the tests of a good-faith high school boyfriend. A real boyfriend cut his school to spend the day at his girlfriend’s school. Carl didn’t spend a day at my school. I cut and went to his school. Carl was among the 5% ‘white’ population in a school that served black slums. White boys were victims of racist assaults most days. Carl was exempt because he was a brown-skinned, black-haired Asian. White and Asian girls were safe.

Carl’s white friends became my friends. He had no Asian friends. His gang included the sons of Holocaust survivors, university professors, one Nobel Prize winner, politicians, celebrities, and blue collars who lived in an island surrounded by black slums. Carl taught me to lock a bicycle securely. He taught me to walk down the middle of the street after dark because muggers hide in the bushes. When we got married, he put bars on all the windows, and a pick-proof lock on the door. He also bought a Colt 25 for me to carry when I was out alone after dark.

Carl was a high achiever in athletics and music, but not in academics. His parents drove him to tournaments out-of-state many weekends. He had several trophies. He liked American folk music, especially Appalachian music. He liked to say Leadbelly, the name of a Delta bluesman. He took banjo lessons and could pick out tunes on all string instruments. His played Foggy Mountain Breakdown and Cripple Creek. Cripple Creek is about horny hillbilly girls.

On the racially-diverse parent front, Carl’s mother called me a hillbilly slut. My father found fault with Carl for wearing gym shoes because they stink and corduroys because they’re sloppy. No mention of bad feelings generated during World War II up to the moment of our conceptions.

Linda and I arranged prom night. Our school wasn’t really our school. We had no emotional ties to other seniors. We weren’t concerned about depriving ourselves of nostalgia and mementos later in life. We decided to go to Riverview Amusement Park where my grandmother’s sister operated the Tilt-A-Whirl, and then to a coffee shop across the street for cheeseburgers and shakes. Our prom was a party of three couples made up of three Japanese-Americans, two Mexican-Americans, and me.

Three years later, my 21st birthday was identical, except that Carl’s friends took me out while he was in Vietnam. They were so funny, I peed in pants on the way home.

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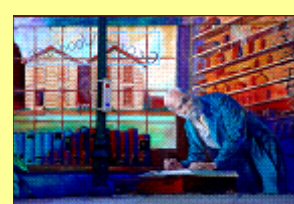
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Linda and I had separate graduation parties. My step-grandmother knew that my life with my parents was rough and offered to help me move away. I declined the offer. I said I'd survived thus far and I could hold out until my 18th birthday, after which I could leave legally.

One day, the bank had asked high school work-study employees to work late for quarterly coupon-cutting. I couldn't call home to tell my parents. When I got home, a policeman was at my parents' door. My parents assumed I ran away. They wanted to pre-empt any charges I might make against them with a charge of delinquency against me. It would put me in a juvenile detention center and discredit me as a witness against them.

Carl and I worked full-time after graduation. Carl worked more hours. We saw each other Sunday afternoons. My father decided I should learn to cook and prepare Sunday dinners with my mother, leaving me no time to see Carl. Carl's parents instituted a similar strategy to keep us apart.

My parents' abuse and exploitation crescendoed the week of my 18th birthday. Back in first semester of senior year, I'd told my mother I'd get a job and leave home as soon as possible. She said that my (paternal) grandfather's will declared me insane and appointed her my guardian until I was 25. It was a will that left me \$1200, of which she'd spent \$600. I called my (maternal) grandfather to say I was ready to leave home, but there was the problem of my alleged insanity. My grandfather said he'd talk to a judge he knew. The judge gave the green light. I bought my parents tickets to a play. My step-grandmother's daughter and son-in-law picked me up while they were out.

The girl's dormitory I moved to was convenient to Carl's Saturday afternoon banjo lessons. We began to see each other Saturday evenings, usually going to one of the two theaters near the dormitory. Chicago's Japanese-American community had contributed one of its own to Chicago's mob. Carl admired him and pointed him out on some of our walks to the theater.

Carl's birthday was five months after mine. A few months after his birthday, Carl ran away from home. He had no valid grievances. All he could come up with was an incident when he was five. His grandmother babysat so his parents could go out one evening. The grandmother locked Carl in a closet, but not his siblings.

A lifetime of experience later, I can say with certainty that Carl has a too-common personality type. It's a personality that steals the grievances of other people to get an excuse to commit grievable offenses against other people, as well as play victim. My parents committed grievable offenses against me. Carl's parents gave him every advantage they could, and never abused him.

Carl moved into a two-room apartment rented by a graduate student from Israel. The student's bedroom was the livingroom. Carl's bedroom was an alcove in the kitchen with a fabric curtain for privacy. A cot filled the alcove. The student ate boiled liver every day. He came in the kitchen to prepare it every time I visited.

Carl said he'd kill himself if I didn't marry him immediately. I didn't want Carl's death on my conscience. On the practical side, Carl pointed out that we'd save money and see each other more if we lived together. My 19th birthday was approaching. My step-grandmother made an appointment for me with her gynecologist and asked me to wait until I was 19 which would give birth control pills time to take effect.

Illinois legislators, in their wisdom, wouldn't allow people to drink until age 21, but did allow people to contract for lifetime marriages at age 19. Carl didn't want to wait for marriage until he was 18. He rented a friend's car and drove us to another state. We honeymooned during the three-day waiting period between getting the license and the ceremony. A circuit court judge performed the wedding. After he said the words, he drilled into Carl's eyes and said, Young man, this marriage will work only if you treat her with respect.

Respect isn't in Carl's wheelhouse.

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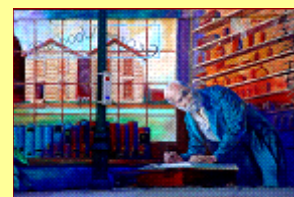
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Carl and I argued all the way from Chicago to the out-of-state clerk's office, from the clerk's office to our honeymoon destination, then back to the court, and on to the highway to Chicago.

At the time we got married, Carl attended a junior college full-time and worked part-time. I worked full-time and attended a junior college several nights a week. When we returned to Chicago, Carl dropped out of school and quit his job. Carl also quit banjo; and music fell out of his life. His music was a bait-and-switch. Carl hadn't been entirely forthcoming about his life during the many hours we didn't see each other before marriage.

Carl's sister was a year older than he. She got pregnant her first year of college and had a shotgun marriage. She was ambitious to climb the social ladder, and so was her husband's mother. 'Gwen' worked full-time to put her husband through a prestigious all-male college and then a graduate school of business. She wanted her husband on Wall Street. One of America's most famous sons had a child the same year she had a child. She wanted her husband to earn the money to put her child in the same elitist kindergarten as the famous American's child. Gwen achieved her goal, but her marriage eventually failed.

Gwen's mother-in-law (GMIL) had a daughter. The girl was a tall, willowy, blond artist. She was also flaky. GMIL wanted to marry her to a rich man. GMIL did her homework. She walked her dog daily because one of the neighborhood's most eligible bachelors walked his dog daily. His family was well-known and wealthy; and he had a seat on one of the world's financial markets. Eventually GMIL met up with him. She invited him home to meet her daughter. It was love at first sight. The beautiful girl married the handsome rich man. He cleaned up after her and did the housework.

Gwen's husband attended a Chicago college the first year of marriage. Gwen's antenna were tuned to all things trendy and upwardly mobile. The trendiest place in the neighborhood was an auto repair shop. The shop was trendy because it serviced sports, foreign and other exotic cars favored by university people. The shop was more trendy than its competitors because the owners and mechanics were two former university whiz kids who turned their backs on Ivory and Corporate Towers in favor of greasy hands and the smell of metal all day.

Gwen and Carl's brother-in-law (CBIL) spent their free time at the shop. Their time was limited. Carl got unlimited time to spend at the shop when he bamboozled me into marriage. I didn't see him more after the wedding. He was asleep when I left for work. He wasn't home when I got home from work and school. The shop owners barely broke even on the shop. They didn't pay Carl that I know of. He was a kind of apprentice. Carl saved money when we got married. My cost of living went up. Carl's mother had been a working and somewhat indulgent mom most of his life. Carl plugged me into her socket when he ran away from home. I was the grown-up. He remained a child.

Carl is typical of many second-born children I've known. He's all about one-upping and putting down the first-born child. Over time, in a younger brother, older sister configuration, all older sisters become stand-ins and scapegoats for the blood older sister. Thus, at the same time Carl played games with his sister at my expense, he degraded me in her stead. Carl kicked me down the social ladder while his sister climbed it.

Carl rented a third-floor rear apartment a few blocks from his parents' home. It was dreary; and I didn't like being in it alone. I joined the Y so I could swim the nights I didn't go to school.

I came home from the first swim night to find a note from Carl. He'd come home at a reasonable time for the first time since the wedding. I hurt him severely by not being home for him. So, he would disappear and I wouldn't see him until he healed from the wound I inflicted on him. Nobody I called knew where he was. The shop was the only place he could be. The way between shop and home was dangerous. He didn't answer the shop phone. He threw me into a state of panic and destroyed the little peace of mind I had. Carl was a boy at war.

Carl put stress on me similar to the stress my grandfather Abe put on my step-grandmother, his second wife.

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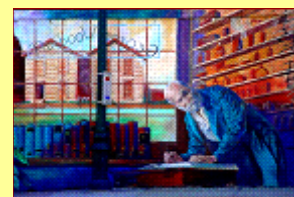
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The shop owners were star-crossed lovers. They met at age 16 when they were early college entrants. Her father was a university department chair. His father was a blue collar worker. The Korean War draft tore them apart. While he was at war, she got pregnant by another man and had a shotgun marriage. When he came home from war, he married another woman.

The star-crossed lovers were destined for each other. They divorced their spouses and married each other. They discovered their mutual love of cars and opened the shop with money from her inheritance.

When Carl dropped out of school, he lost his student draft deferment. He became eligible for the draft during the first big troop buildup of the Vietnam War. Carl didn't qualify for a family deferment because we married a couple weeks after it was revoked. Carl received his draft notice at the same time I was ready to divorce him. I put off divorce. If Carl really was suicidal, Vietnam was the place to kill himself. I also thought it was wrong to divorce someone about to risk his life for my country. I had a long life ahead of me. I didn't think losing two more years of my life would matter in the long run.

When Carl ran away from home, he cut off his parents as thoroughly as I'd cut off mine. One day, while he fooled around with cars, I walked to his parents' house. They had a right to know that their son was going to war and might not come home. Then I had to send wedding announcements to a long list of Japanese-American relatives Carl's mother gave me. Then thank-you cards. CBIL hosted a small family gathering for her family, Carl's parents, my grandfather Abe and my step-grandmother. CBIL gave me a catalog of fine art reproductions and told me to pick out two for a wedding present. I chose Gauguin. Carl's mother took back her hillbilly slut slur. Tacitly, not actually.

The owners of the auto repair shop had connections. One was a well-known doctor. The wife made an appointment. The doctor found that Carl had sensitive ears and would go deaf in an environment with booming guns. He wrote a letter to the draft board.

The day arrived for Carl to report to the Induction Center. I took the day off and went downtown with him. I couldn't go in the building; and waited outside several hours. Carl came out to say his final goodbye. At the point during induction when draftees are stripped down to their shorts, a sergeant came in the room and called Carl out of line. The sergeant had a notice from the draft board granting Carl a medical deferment. Carl could put on his clothes and go home.

Carl said he declined the deferment because he'd bonded with the other guys the few short hours he was with them. He went off to Basic Training.

One of his neighborhood friends got involved with a townie at an out-of-state university. He brought her home for the summer and she became my roommate.

Carl came home for a couple weeks between Basic and Advanced Training. He spent his days at the shop. The male owner raced a sports car. Carl's job was to install a roll bar in the car for an upcoming race. Carl didn't finish the work before he left to report to his next base. If he mentioned it to the shop owners, nobody finished the job.

Carl and his Army classmates got a long weekend leave. Carl invited me to the base and rented a motel room in the city outside the base. When we were on an Army bus from the base to the city, Carl jumped up and shouted, Get your hand off my knee. He thought one of the other soldiers harassed him sexually, though I didn't see it. Carl never talked about experiences with homosexuals, but dread of them might explain some of what happened soon after.

But first came the sports car race. The male shop owner rolled his car when he cut into a turn. The force of the roll flipped the driver's head and torso over the top of the low-slung door. The body of the car landed on his head and crushed it. He died in the ambulance on the way to the nearest small town hospital.

The widow was inconsolable forever after, but she never expressed emotion.

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Carl graduated from Medic School. The Army ordered him to a West Coast base where he'd join a company of soldiers waiting for deployment to Vietnam. Officials thought the wait would be around four months.

Carl asked me to fly out and be with him the four months. I took a US Civil Service Exam. I quit my job. I landed on the West Coast on Sunday and went to the base personnel office on Monday. I hadn't received my scores on the exam, but maybe the Personnel Office had access to them. The personnel officer called the Finance Office of the Army hospital and asked if they needed help. They did; and she opened a position for me.

Carl rented a cottage near the base's gate. We bought a car. The good news on Carl's military service is that he got paid. In my mental bookkeeping ledger, I paid living expenses and deposited Carl's base pay and combat pay in a savings account.

Two of Carl's buddies rented cottages; and their wives came out. They couldn't find jobs and lived on Army pay.

I didn't feel loved while I lived with Carl off-base. In retrospect, I think he invited me to live with him because he wanted to avoid homosexuals in the barracks; and he wanted to keep up with the Jones of buddies who'd live off base with their wives.

Linda's Tejano boyfriend was drafted several months before Carl. The boyfriend proposed marriage; and they became engaged before he was deployed to Vietnam. The Army made him a medic, too. A letter came from Linda to say that he'd been on a helicopter bringing in wounded soldiers when it landed on a mine and exploded. He died.

The three married couples visited the sights and took road trips on weekends. I fell in love with a house with a white picket fence in Portland, Oregon. The Amerindian skid row was a vast boardwalk. I saw an ocean. Mt. Rainier was a daily sight. My Finance Office co-workers directed us to a Seattle park. It was a rainforest. It also had caves where Chinese coolies lived after they were smuggled into the US. Snow doesn't fall on the Northwest Pacific coast. We were there for a very rare snowstorm. No more than an inch or two landed on the streets, but traffic came to a dead stop because the streets went up and down hills and nobody knew how to drive them in snow.

The Army is big on bulletin boards. From one I learned that you can refrigerate canned food after you open the can. You don't have to put the leftover food in a new container.

My Finance Office co-workers were a captain, a private, and a half or full dozen middle-aged civilian women. My job was to interview soldiers who'd been wounded in Vietnam, read the regulation book to determine the allotments due them and their families, and run the bursting machine. The burster made a sound that reminded me of Yankee Doodle Dandy. I put new words to the tune and danced around while I waited for the trays to fill with another batch of vouchers in quadruplet, one tray each for the original and carbon copies in sherbet colors.

Some of the wounded men were beautiful. I went weak in the knees. I had to excuse myself and wobble from the counter to my desk so I could sit down.

Carl's company got orders for Vietnam. My co-workers asked me to stay on. The private and one of the middle-aged women had spare rooms in their Seattle houses. I could stay with them. I expressed my regrets. If I stayed, I'd be unfaithful to my husband. I arranged to live with Carl's parents while he was gone.

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The Army gave soldiers a month's leave between deployment orders and deployment.

Carl's mother sent us names and addresses of the many Japanese-American relatives who lived on the West Coast. We drove south through the Mt. Shasta forest, where I saw a deer in the wild for the first time. Several relatives lived in Sacramento and in subdivisions in the Bay Area. We crowded into booths in several coffee shops for family dinners. A cousin had pet miniature rabbits. An aunt played an electric organ. The grandmother who locked Carl in the closet lived with his bachelor uncle on Asbury Street in San Francisco. We drove Highway One to Los Angeles to visit more relatives. One uncle married a woman who survived the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki when she was a little girl. She was sterile. He was rich. They adopted two Japanese orphans and gave them a good life. Los Angeles freeways are confusing and I couldn't get a sense of the city's geography. I wanted to see the ocean again, but where was it?

We headed back to Chicago on Route 66. Relatives had given us fruits and vegetables from their yards. We had to relinquish them at the Arizona border because of AZ Dept of Agriculture regulations to protect the state's farms. We stayed overnight in Albuquerque in a cheap motel in a rough-looking part of town. I learned later that New Mexican Hispanics had a high rate of criminality and the state's prisons were bursting at the seams. A bee flew in the car window and stung me on the butt. A waitress refused to serve us at a coffee shop outside St. Louis. When we honed in on Chicago, I saw Chicago as I'd never seen it before, coming in through the haze of the vast industrial area to the southwest.

The Sunday evening came when Carl's parents and I took him to the airport. My sadness was for the white boys forced to go to war in far off Asia. I felt no sadness for Carl. Nonetheless, I wrote him a love letter every day and he reciprocated. We got tape recorders at the PX, the Post Exchange, and sent tape cassettes back and forth. Carl took his R&R, Rest and Recuperation, in Japan where he stayed with relatives. He bought a Nikon camera at a PX and sent home photos. When he came back to Chicago a year and ten days later, I gave him a year to shape up or ship out. But while he was in Vietnam, and if I were allowed, I would have carried a rifle into the jungle and killed every gook I saw for being a threat to Carl.

I slept in the attic bedroom of Carl's parents' house. I put a National Geographic map of Vietnam on the closet door. I read war reports in newspapers every day. I watched war news on television every day. I located place names on the map.

Carl was assigned to a field hospital in a military base north of Saigon. He had several jobs. He took wounded soldiers off helicopters and assisted surgeons. He gave penicillin shots to Vietnamese girls who prostituted themselves to US soldiers in a village outside the base. He answered the phone when helicopter crew called to say they were bringing in four wounded Viet Cong. They had only one on arrival because they threw the other three overboard to scare the survivor into talking.

Carl rode in a truck to pick up medical supplies at a warehouse in Saigon. He was riding in the back on a return trip when a box fell on his foot and broke his toe. He was put in a Saigon hospital. He was in the hospital when a general came through and distributed Purple Hearts to all the inpatients. Carl got a Purple Heart.

The news told of the slaughter of US soldiers by NVA, North Vietnamese Regulars and Viet Cong near Carl's base. A lieutenant was the son of a high general. The general went to the base and asked for volunteers to look for survivors, even though the field was still hot. Carl volunteered. For this he got a Bronze Star.

Carl wrote his father. Carl's father opened the letter at the dinner table. He exploded. He said Carl should be here taking care of me, not playing hero over there.

Many people took care of me while Carl was gone. His friends took me to the movies and on their adventures. The race car widow invited me on her adventures. Carl's parents took me out to dinner Friday and sometimes Sunday. They drove me to my grandparents' house Saturday. The Monday after Carl left, I'd gone to the university personnel office. The university hired me as a medical secretary on the strength of my experience in the Army hospital Finance Office. My co-workers invited me hither and yon. I had adventures with Donna and an Army buddies' wife. Linda invited me to take Japanese language classes with her at the Viking Center. I tried to study but I couldn't. I can't read a word of Japanese. Nonetheless, I know the difference between katagana and hiragana. One is an extensive alphabet of whole words spoken differently but looking the same in both China and Japan. The other is an alphabet of syllables to capture the pronunciation of Japanese words. I can still say, Watakushi-no shujin-wa nihon-jin desu.

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Carl survived Vietnam in spite of himself. We stayed in his parents' house for a month until a graduate student who sublet our apartment got her degree. Then we were back where we had been before the draft notice. Carl now had the advantage of the GI bill. We both enrolled in college full-time and worked part-time. In our new weekday schedule, we woke up and left home together. Carl drove to his school. I took over the wheel and drove to my school. When my classes ended for the day, I drove to Carl's school, and he took over the wheel. He dropped me off at my job and drove to his job. The last leg of our daily journey was supposed to be Carl leaving his job and picking me up at my job at 5:00 pm. It never happened.

Carl was back at work in the coolest auto repair shop in time. If I'd been the widow, I would have blamed Carl for the death of her one true love. She didn't. She held herself together enough to get through her days, but something was missing from her mind. If she paid Carl, I didn't see it. The GI bill paid Carl's tuition with a little left over. I paid living expenses. Regular and Hazardous Duty Army pay stayed in the bank.

We acquired another car, for a total of three. Carl bought the first car the summer I was 18 going on 19, before I know about his life at the auto shop. My mother had to turn over the \$600 she didn't spend of the \$1200 I inherited from my paternal grandfather. The transfer occurred in Probate Court. My mother's lawyer was a family friend. He asked me to not contest the amount; and he asked me to wait in the hall to keep the transaction simple. I then deposited the money in my account at the bank where I worked.

A few days later, Carl said he located a rare, exotic car at a low price. The asking price was \$1,200. He had \$600. Could he borrow my \$600? He and his friends organized a road trip to the out-of-state location of the car. Carl invited me along. The car was too exotic to park on the street. When I married Carl, the cost of keeping it in a garage fell on me.

We had the humpbacked Volvo we bought in the Pacific Northwest. The Army buddies had bought televisions instead of cars. Carl and I watched tv at their houses; and they drove around in our car.

The third car was yet another foreign car. The widow was good at making friends. One of her friends was the parts man in a dealership in an upscale suburb. A customer brought in an Alfa Romeo that needed a specific part to be functional. The parts man mentioned it to the widow. She mentioned it to Carl. The parts man told the dealer who told the customer that the part was unavailable. The customer traded in the Alfa cheap. The parts man bought it. Then he located the essential part. I don't remember if the GI Bill or I paid for the car. The choke was still a problem. For some reason, I was the only person the choke would work for.

Carl attended a junior college the first year home from Vietnam. He didn't take it seriously. I attended a university. I took it as an inconvenience I had to endure to get the degree necessary for the job I had in mind. When and if Carl came home in an evening, I holed up in the bedroom to do schoolwork while Carl and his friends did what punks do in the livingroom. The friends were noisy and destructive; and Carl didn't get them under control. My education was something else for Carl to sabotage and obstruct.

Carl came home from Vietnam with a box of 35 mm slides. The widow organized a slide-show party. The slides I remember were of a Vietnamese woman strolling on a sidewalk in Saigon. She was slender; and she wore a traditional slender floor length Vietnamese gown. The grocery stores in Chicago's Vietnam-town give away calendars illustrated with similar women, but they're more posed and flirty. Carl's photos were loving. I could see his love for her in them.

Carl's Vietnam souvenirs for me were a pair of black pajamas and two pairs of earrings. The pajamas were made of synthetic satin. They were the peasants' street garb and the Viet Cong military uniform. I wore them as a Halloween costume. The earrings were for pierced ears. They were fashioned of gold into intricate patterns set with semi-precious stones. The stones of one pair were pink and of the other, lavender. Jewelry-making is a cottage industry in Vietnam. The souvenir from Japan was a wall hanging embroidered with a crane, a symbol of peace.

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The widow organized a Friday night out at a university bar before the start of the next school year. Our party crowded around a table. A handsome young man sitting at the bar made eye contact with me all evening. The next morning, I went to work to do time cards. I carried my beach mat and had my bathing suit on under my clothes. It was end-of-summer hot and I was going to spend the day at the lake. When I walked towards the lake, the handsome young man of the night before walked the opposite direction. I thought he kept going, but when I settled on the mat and looked up, he was standing over me. He kept me company and invited me to his apartment to listen to records Tuesday night.

Carl and I had a date with his parents Sunday afternoon to watch a samurai movie at the Japanese cinema in the Francis Parker school auditorium. The auditorium wasn't air-conditioned and it was painfully hot. At the moment a samurai brandished his sword on the screen, Carl turned and pinched me on my upper arm. I said, Ouch. Carl pinched me again.

The marriage was over. I'd been an abused child; and I wouldn't suffer being an abused adult. I'd told Carl when we were first married that he'd make me feel good if he rubbed my upper arm. He never did. He talked a good game, sexually, but he wasn't about giving or receiving sexual pleasure. He left me high-and-dry the entire marriage. Now he gave me pain where he should have given me pleasure.

When we got home, I told Carl that I had a date Tuesday evening. I knew the relationship wouldn't work out, but I was going to keep the date anyway. Carl had the option of moving out or staying in the apartment to see me move on.

Carl was gone when I came home Tuesday night. He moved into the two-room kitchenette apartment of one of the men the widow dated. Carl bumped the man out of his bedroom and slept on his bed while the man slept on the couch. I called the apartment a few weeks later to discuss a business matter with Carl. The man answered the phone; and refused to put Carl on. Carl was in immense emotional pain and couldn't talk to me.

Apparently, Carl curled up in the fetal position on the man's bed and stayed there the first month of the separation. He played victim; and with great malice, he demonized me.

However, the wife of one of his married friends invited me to a girls' party. Except for the wife, all the girls had had sex with Carl the past few weeks. They glared at me; and I left early. Walking home from work by my usual route one evening, I passed Carl sitting in the Alfa at the curb of another university building. He was waiting to pick up another girl on time, like he never did for me. More stories came in. Carl was ploughing through a long list of females. He was a very cute guy; and the widow seems to have kept him on at the shop because he drew in female customers. Carl had the opportunity to line up replacement fools while we were together; and followed through.

He'd transferred to an arts program at a regular university and specialized in photography. Carl admired a Japanese man who won the Pulitzer Prize for photographs of a crash at the Indy 500. Carl took some photos for submission to a national magazine with headquarters in Chicago. He flirted with the young woman who purchased photos. She invited him to dinner in her apartment in a trendy high-rise. Carl invited me to be his date. Another couple and the hostess were the only other people at the table. It was clear the hostess thought Carl was her date. She glared at me for as long as I tolerated being at her table. Carl wasn't a nice guy. He had an abrasive personality and he laughed like a cackling crow. His mother had said she wouldn't have married him. I couldn't see what other people saw in him, but he was a very popular guy.

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One of Carl's long-time friends was in the arts program. Carl moved into his apartment. The friend had a girlfriend from an upscale and distant suburb. She was in an arts program near her home. Carl stole her. Then he dumped her; and she resumed her relationship with Carl's roommate. The roommate had stayed in touch with me; and I met his girlfriend later on. Then she called me and asked if I'd meet her and a friend at a trendy Chicago bar/ restaurant.

She set up the date because her friend needed to talk to me. Her friend Her friend was also from a classy family in an upscale, distant suburb. She was also an art student. She was tall, slender, beautiful, talented and well-off. Carl invited her to a dance at his inner-city school, which was surrounded by black slums. He drove to the far-out suburb to pick her up. He parked the Alfa. He escorted her into the dance. As soon as they got in the door, Carl saw a Japanese girl. Carl went to her. He stayed with her all evening and left with her, stranding the pretty white girl far from home, late on a Saturday night, in a dangerous place, after suburban trains stopped running. The girl wanted to know if Carl ever made me feel like shit.

Making me feel like shit was Carl's specialty. He usually did it by talking about the accomplishments of other girls, pretty blonds with classy families from his neighborhood. He kept it up after we separated. Under cover of wanting a reconciliation, he gave me a ride on his new motorcycle to show-off the home of the girl he'd stolen from his roommate. He rang the doorbell, and in we walked, because he'd gotten to know her family. He didn't mention the part about stealing her and dumping her; and her family was too polite to bring it up.

All the time Carl was telling me he didn't want a divorce, he was telling the girl he abandoned at the art school dance that he wanted to get married.

He was running in the same circles as his roommate. One or the other would invite me along. I had to deal with my insecurities, of which I have one trillion or more. The silver lining of that cloud is that Carl's incestuous circle of friends gossiped. If Carl made girls far above me on the social ladder feel like shit, Carl was the problem. Girls weren't. My insecurities were baseless.

When Carl and I separated, my goal was to get him out of my life. I could not repair cars, so I ceded the cars to him. Our savings were his Army pay; and I ceded it, too. I kept the ratty furniture and the apartment lease and felt like I came out ahead.

We'd gotten a gasoline credit card on the strength of my credit rating. A few days after Carl assumed the fetal position, I came home from work to find a note from Carl on my desk. He wanted my credit card. The implication was that I'd run up a huge debt that Carl would be forced to pay. It was a gasoline credit card before gas stations had convenience stores. Carl had all the cars. What could I charge? How would I run up a debt?

When I left my parents, they pulled themselves together. Both got jobs; and they suffered no more financial problems. When I dumped Carl, he eventually found a paying job. It was in a car repair shop near his friend's apartment in a trendy neighborhood populated by even more pretty co-eds and young professional women. My effect on Carl was good, not bad.

Carl didn't want to get a divorce. He provided two arguments against divorce, same as he provided two arguments for marriage. Argument One is that I'd marry somebody just like him if we divorced. Argument Two is that he'd give me the difference between the GI stipends for unmarried and married students. Carl didn't follow through. He ripped me off again. He was the thief.

When we did divorce, Carl's attorney asked me to sign a waiver. I had to agree that I wouldn't sue Carl for money he made after the divorce.

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At the same time Carl ploughed through a large part of northern Illinois' female population, I settled down with one boyfriend. Carl stayed in touch with me mostly to disrupt my new relationship. Carl said he was going to come over on a day that my boyfriend and I were going out. While we were out, I called the apartment to see if Carl was there. He was; and he was going to kill himself if I didn't reunite with him. My friend called police on another phone. When we got to the apartment, Carl was gone, but police were still there. One of the officers said, no woman is worth dying for.

Same back at you. No man is worth dying for.

Carl had gotten his hands on the Colt 45 he bought at the beginning of the marriage for the alleged purpose of protecting me. He left the gun on the dresser next to my bed when he fled the apartment. He couldn't have said more clearly that he wanted me to kill myself. Back at the beginning, he'd forced the gun on me even when I pointed out that research revealed that a woman's gun was more likely to kill her than protect her from an assailant.

Carl's next ploy was to ask me to go with him to a marriage counselor. However, Carl had several sessions with the counselor before he let me in. Carl had plenty of time to manipulate the counselor. The day of the joint session arrived. The counselor spoke to us separately; then he spoke to us together. In his opinion, Carl and I loved each other deeply. We would reconcile if we submitted to separate, individual psychotherapy. The counselor would work with Carl. He gave me contact information for a psychiatrist on Michigan Avenue. Carl said he'd go if I went. I went. Carl didn't.

The psychiatrist cost \$45 an hour, pre-inflation. I dropped out of college so I could work full-time to pay him. Luckily, a college friend intervened. He directed me to a state institution. The admitting psychiatric social worker wanted to put me in group therapy one-hour a week. I said No. I'd spent a lifetime dealing with other people's problems. I wanted my problems to get center stage.

The social worker arranged for me to see a psychiatry resident one hour a week. I asked him if there's any difference between talking to a friend and talking to a psychiatrist. He said no. I had friends to talk to and had no talk left over for him. He yawned. He persisted for a year, and when I said I was through, he cut me loose. At the last session, he said, The only thing wrong with you is that you come quickly to ideas that most people never get to.

I needed the record for my second divorce. The psychiatrist had to justify spending the state's money on therapy for a person who didn't need it. The record said I wasn't assertive enough, but there was hope for me. Not assertive? I'm usually the most assertive person in the room. However, despite all the problems in my childhood, I was raised genteel. Hysterical, bossy, domineering, ball-busting, etc. aren't synonyms of assertiveness. The psychiatrist was from a foreign country. He was culture-bound and judged me by the women of his homeland.

I didn't conform to my boyfriend's expectations, either. He consulted a psychologist friend, hoping to get a negative assessment of me. The psychologist said my childhood had made me mature faster than average, and at age 24, I had the maturity of a middle-aged woman. Indeed, despite my trillion or more self-doubts, most people seem like self-indulgent two-year-olds to me.

The psychotherapy was helpful in that I rode a bus to sessions. During one bus ride, I contemplated what I'd say; and I burst into tears. The other passengers comforted me while I sobbed.

I was still working at the university, but had moved to an apartment with male roommates near my school. One of the roommates called the psychiatrist because he thought I was going to commit suicide. Suicide was the furthest thing from my mind. I dreamed about killing black boys who stole my purse.

A week or two later, my roommate's mother, a beautiful and kind woman, got in her car, drove into oncoming traffic, accelerated, and died in the wreck. Her children were grown. Her husband was having an affair with his office manager, a plain, older woman.

We all have feelers that pick up vibrations in the environment. We just don't always know from whom the vibrations come.

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I thought divorce would eliminate Carl from life, but no, several people suffered a compulsion to call me with updates.

Carl bought a seat on one of the world's financial markets and became rich. He hung out with a quartet of wholesale LSD dealers while the law picked them off one-by-one. The quartet was two couples of beautiful people. The men went to prison first, here in the US. One of the girls went to prison in Mexico. The other girl hid in a commune in northern California for while. Then she moved to Los Angeles and starred in porn movies. She and Carl were a couple. I'd met her. She was beautiful and nuts. She and Carl moved to a tropical island and built houses side-by-side on the slope of a volcano. Shortly after I asked Carl for my share of GI bill money and half the proceeds from his sale of the exotic car, the volcano erupted and took down the houses.

Carl wouldn't contribute to my education, but he put his niece and nephews through upscale universities. Carl wouldn't pay back the money he owed me, let alone the respect, but he did contribute generously to one or more Japanese-American civic organizations. He didn't support me or make a home and family with me. He was consistent on family annihilation throughout his life. Carl is low profile on the internet. The only search return was a list of drivers who didn't place in the trials for a car race. I once beat him in a race on the winding roads of a Chicago park. He didn't bank the curves.

When Carl and I separated, he said he'd cut me dead if we crossed paths thereafter. He didn't follow through for several years, He followed through the last two times I saw him. In the first of the two times, he was behind the wheel of a Corvette with a pretty white girl at his side. He had to wait at a stop sign while I crossed the street. He made no sign of recognition.

I was pregnant with my second child when I last saw Carl. The sighting occurred in an ethnic restaurant in the ethnic neighborhood where I lived. The friends Carl met through the widow liked to sample ethnic restaurants in working-class neighborhood. He came into the restaurant with a group of them. He saw me but made no sign of recognition. However, he spent the evening making himself the center of attention. His abrasive talk and raucous laugh were a constant annoyance. I felt bumped down the social ladder yet again, but I also felt like I dodged a bullet.

Linda didn't socialize with Carl, but she stayed in touch with me longer than other friends. Carl's mother died at the hands of a hit-and-run driver when she was in her 80s, a year after Carl's father died peacefully. Her funeral was at the Buddhist temple where I met Carl. Linda's mother was active in the temple. Linda called me at her mother's request to explain the puzzling funeral arrangements.

All arrangements were by Carl's decree. The death was not to be announced in newspapers. The temple congregation was barred from the ceremony. The grandchildren were also barred from the ceremony. The only people at the ceremony were Carl, his older sister, and his younger brother.

The arrangements revealed that Carl had usurped his sister's position as eldest survivor. He practically extinguished his brother. He eclipsed and gained dominance over both siblings. He took total possession of their mother.

By then, I was an expert and connoisseur of people with mommy issues and in competition with a first-born sibling. Carl fit the pattern. Narcopaths lack a conscience. Paranoia fills the hole allotted to a conscience is in healthy minds.

I thought of several explanations for the lack of a published death notice. Carl might have thought I pored through obituaries so I could barge into a family funeral and make a scene about the money he owed me. Carl might have borrowed money from the Japanese mobster to buy his seat on the international financial market and didn't pay the money back. Carl's mother had mentioned that the Buddhist reverend visited the family home when Carl was five. After the reverend observed Carl a while, he remarked that Carl would grow up to be a genius or a criminal.

Maybe Carl squelched a death notice in the paper because turning his mother into dust by cremation didn't satisfy Carl. Maybe he wanted to punish her for birthing other children by making her an absolute nothing. It took two to make Carl's siblings. Carl could have blamed his father for them, but male solidarity kept him from it. Men have each others' backs

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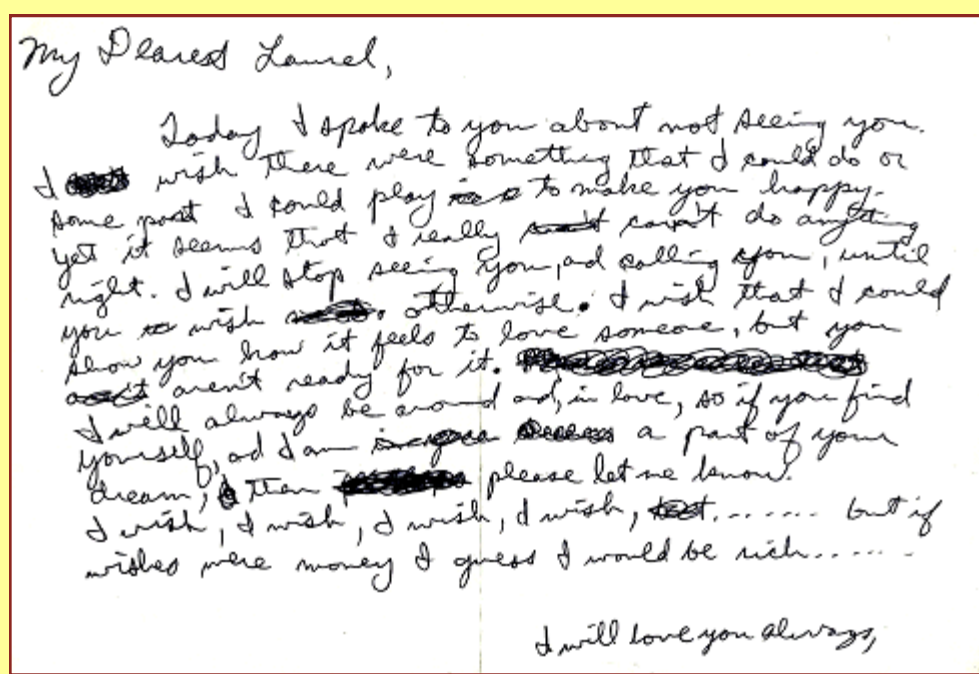
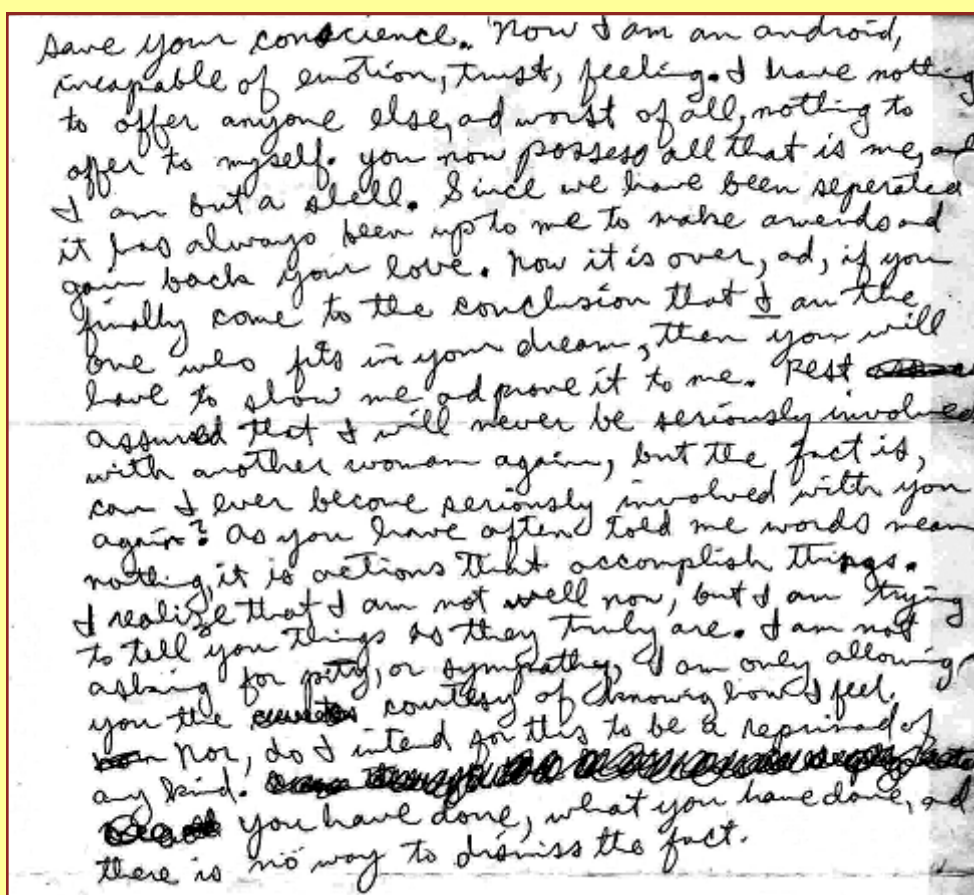
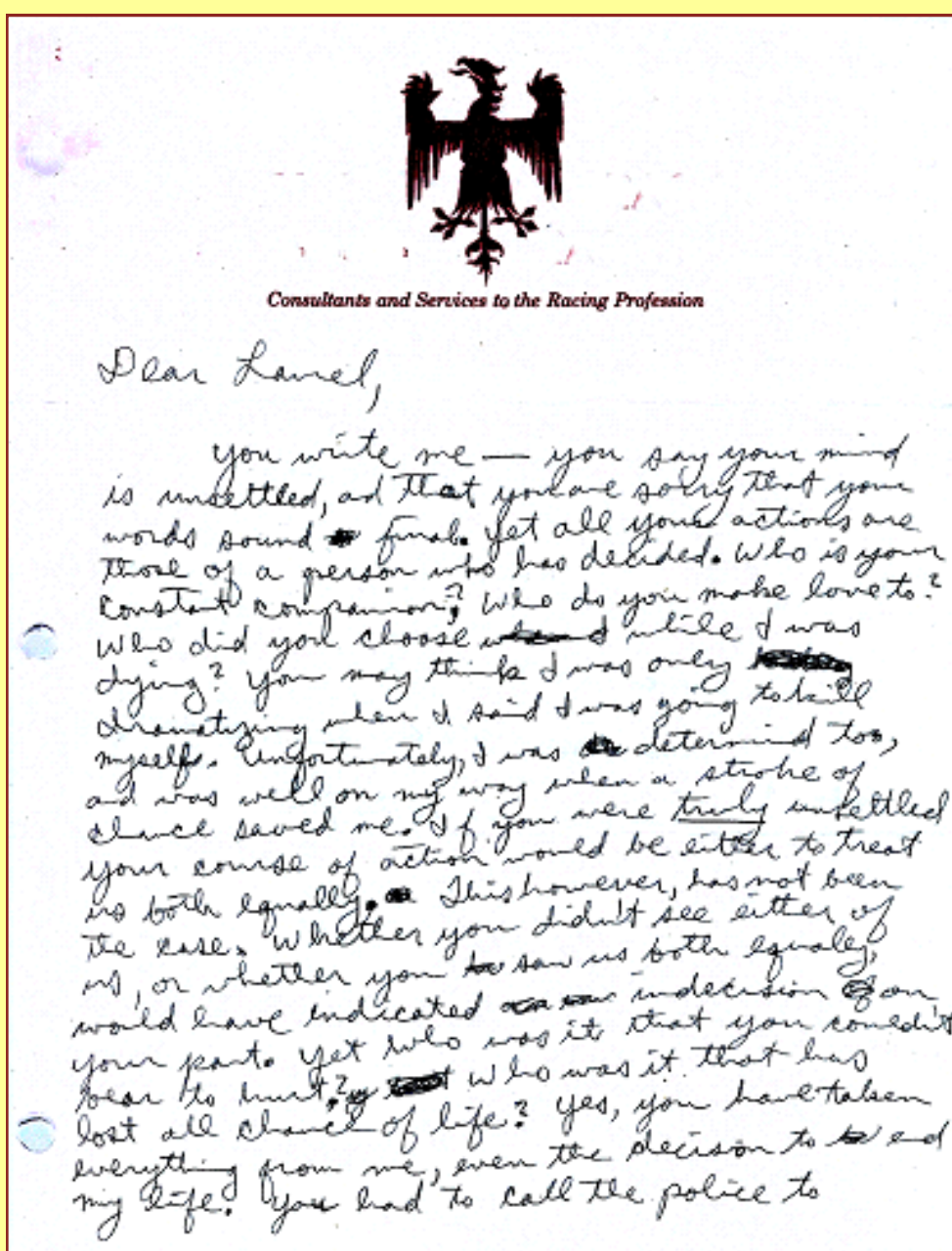
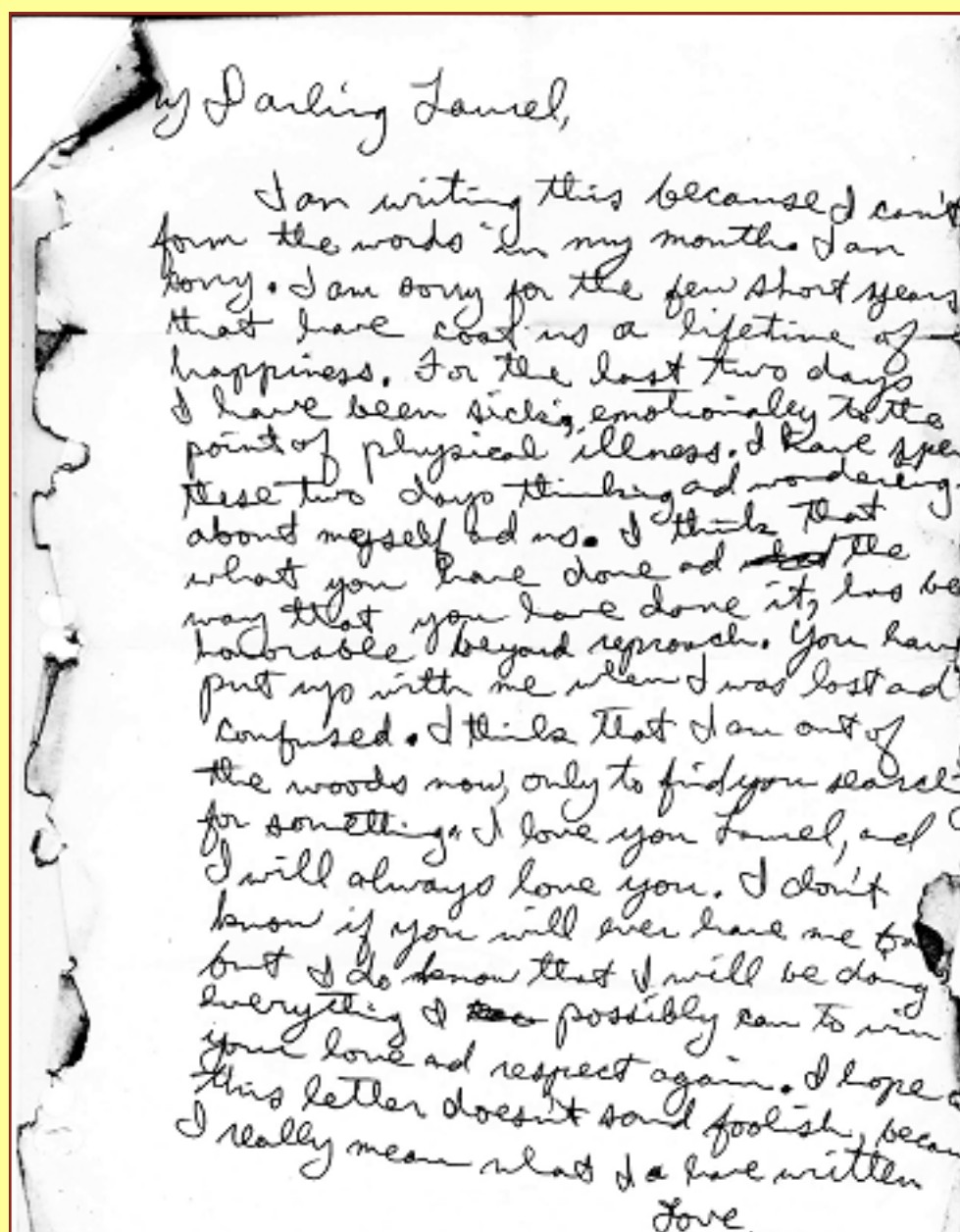
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Carl wrote me three letters during the first months of separation. They document his emotional rollercoaster ride. I'm posting them for scientific purposes only. Click on the pages to access more readable files.



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Carl told me the gist of his parents’ story when we were still in high school. I learned more while I lived with Carl’s parents. They were typical of their generation of Japanese-Americans. Their parents were peasant farmers who emigrated to the US when they were young adults around the time of World War I. They acquired West Coast farmland and settled down to grow market crops and have babies. Their babies were born on US soil, which made them US citizens.

In Japanese, the numbers one, two, three are ichi, ni, san. The word sei means person, more or less. The first generation of migrants from Japan knew themselves as Isei, short for ichi-sei. Their children are Nisei, short for ni-ichi-sei, and Carl’s generation, the grandchildren, are Sansei.

The Isei didn’t come to the US to be American or to blend with Americans. Isei came to the US for land, which was in short supply in Japan. Poor farmers acquire children instead of slaves to help with fieldwork, but children are a nuisance until they can actually help. The Isei sent their Nisei back to Japan to live with relatives to get them out from under foot and so they’d grow up Japanese. The Nisei returned to the US in the years before World War II, when they could be useful to their parents.

Japan bombed Pearl Harbor; and US government saw Isei and Nisei as a national threat, positioned on the West Coast to wave in their aggressive compatriots. US officials threw up Army-like barracks in the US interior to house Japanese-Americans and sent them notices to report to embarkation stations. Before the reporting date, real estate speculators went door-to-door and offered the farmers pennies-on-the-dollar for their land. Most farmers sold out because they didn’t know if they’d ever come back.

Interned Japanese-Americans became a burden on US resources; and government officials wanted to release them back into civilian life. Release was contingent on swearing allegiance to the US. Carl’s mother ‘Ellie’ made a federal case of it. She said she was born in the US. She was as American as everyone else born in the US. Nobody else born in the US had to make a formal declaration of allegiance to roam free; therefore, she refused to declare allegiance. If I remember, correctly, she eventually got her way. She had US officials over a barrel. They wanted to close the camps to save money; and they had to keep a camp open just for her.

Carl’s parents fell in love in the camp. US government officials handed out \$50 to each person at release. Fifty dollars paid for a train ride to Chicago and one-month’s rent. ‘Don’ came to Chicago first. The owner of a small shop hired him. The owner passed the shop to Don when he retired.

Most Japanese-American interns returned to California. The ones who came to Chicago were too angry to look at white Californians, and suffered too much nostalgia for their lost farms. Two or so decades after V-J day, a Japanese-American organization sued US government for reparations. The payout was small and didn’t ease troubled minds.

Most Japanese-Chicagoans settled in two enclaves. One in the Edgewater community north of Uptown. The other on the Near North Side. Linda’s family were the oddballs who settled on the Near West Side. Carl’s family was among several that settled on the edge of a black slum further away from Japanese-Chicago. The black community engrossed the Japanese community; and the Japanese-Americans then moved even further away from the enclave. There weren’t enough of them to build a Buddhist temple of their own; and they communed with Edgewaterites.

Don and Ellie each had a story of egalitarianism. When Ellie returned to California from Japan it was her job to deliver fresh fruits and vegetables to the kitchen door of a mansion in Sacramento. The rich family’s daughter saw her and made friends.

When I read reviews of Bridge to the Sun to refresh my memory, two years ago, I was surprised that the heroine was from Tennessee and met the hero at the Japanese Embassy in Washington, DC. I thought the heroine was a Sacramento debutante and met the hero at the Japanese Consulate in San Francisco. I’m fully capable of getting things wrong; but I think I got these facts wrong because Ellie said Bridge to the Sun was about her rich white friend.

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Don's story of equality started in Japan. Don lived in Japan during a short time period when Christian missionaries tried to educate ignorant peasants and democratize the whole country. So, Don went to a one-room country school when the relatives didn't need his help. One of his schoolmates avoided work by going up a hillside and stretching out. He slept, but he also looked at the natural world around him.

His malingering continued for many months or years. He began to see a pattern in the natural world around him. He told the schoolmaster about it. The schoolmaster helped him write up his observations, and sent the paper to a Japanese university. The university took the young man on. A prestigious US university got wind of his scientific breakthroughs and stole him for its greater glory. They built him a laboratory on some vacant land in the heart of the campus. They gave him technicians and graduate students to fulfill his visions. He wasn't exceptionally good at the details; but he was very good at seeing the whole of things. His obituary was quite long. His helpers said that if he said something was out there to be found, they'd find it.

Don called him Doc. He lived nearby. The two men and their wives visited back and forth frequently.

Carl's father was known affectionately as Kamikaze Don because of his behavior behind the wheel of his car.

World War II weighed heavily on the minds of Nisei and Sansei. A boy in the high school Linda and I attended ran through the halls screaming Bonzai, like Japanese kamikaze pilots screamed as they steered their planes into the decks of US battleships. Linda became increasingly obsessed by the atomic bombs US pilots dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki that sterilized Japanese girls.

Don dealt with his driving style by donating generously to the Policemen's Benevolent Association and sticking the decal at the lower left hand corner of his rear windshield, where cops were most likely to see it. He also let officers choose expensive items from a catalog; and sold them the items at the wholesale price. Don and Ellie said your friends should be people who can do you favors.

Don's bribes to police officers might have done me more good than him. Cops never noticed thieves chipping away at the brick wall of his shop to make a hole large enough to climb through and steal his wealth. Nor did police protect his shop when blacks rioted around his shop. Nor did cops prevent or act swiftly when a young black man robbed Don at gunpoint, shot him and left him for dead. Luckily, Carl made one of his rare visits to the shop and got his father to the hospital in time.

Carl and I had been separated a long time and I didn't know about the shooting until one of his friends called me. In the meantime, I was first in a left-hand turn lane near the shop when the light changed. The driver of the first car in the lane going the opposite direction waved me through. Moments after I turned, police pulled me over. They were behind the generous driver and they were pissed. I went to court to fight the ticket. The officers were in the court to get as many convictions as possible. But they left the room and didn't come back before my case was called. I got off. When Carl's friend called me about the shooting, I knew why. I was still married and still had a Japanese name. The cops I assumed I was family, and not the demon who abandoned Don's son.

Most people who heard my Japanese name didn't know I got it by marriage, not by birth; and they'd study my face looking for Asian features, of which I have none.

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Don was 100% American regarding the manufacture of cars. He bought only American, and he favored Oldsmobile. He taught me to drive in the Volvo Carl and I brought back from the West Coast. Ellie rode in the backseat. She said she was honoring me in a way she never honored her own children. She wouldn't get in the car with them. Ellie sat in the front seat when I had to drive on an expressway to visit the wife of Carl's Army buddy.

Carl's parents got me through Carl's war on me while I got Carl through the war in Vietnam. Don kept a china cabinet drawer stocked with cartons of Benson & Hedges cigarettes. Ellie stocked another drawer with chocolate-covered cherries. They were the only two items I could get in my mouth most days.

I'm ashamed of some of what I did in their house. Somebody gave me a cat. The cat disdained the litter box and pissed all over my things, including mementos of the first 18 years of my life. I was angry at the cat, and I wondered what was the use of the litter box. Instead of carrying it down to the garbage bin outside, I dumped it in the toilet. Maybe nobody knew. The sewer was blocked and backed up, but nobody pointed the finger at me. A crew had to come with a backhoe to fix the pipe. They dug into the tree lawn next to the curb. The roots of a giant tree also endangered the pipe. Chicago claims to own tree lawns and the trees on them despite historic principles of common law. It's possible Don and Ellie didn't have to pay out of pocket to clear their sewer. I paid them for room and board, so the cost would have come out of my pocket.

Don and Ellie were friends with the family that owned the Chinese laundry down the street. They took me to visit. They wanted to show me the owners' slave. He slept on a cot in the store room. The slave's story continued. He married a Chinese girl when he traveled back to China the year before. He saved enough money to buy her a plane ticket to Chicago. She was pregnant when she left China for a fearsome strange land; and she miscarried the baby when she arrived in Chicago. She was the first of two young women I knew of who lost their babies to miscarriage when they were under emotional stress.

Asian people are racist. Korean people were to Japan what African-Americans were to the US, and maybe even more untouchable. They cleaned toilets and butchered meat. Though most white people can't tell Asians apart, Japanese people saw white when they regarded the Ainu tribe on Hokkaido Island. They marginalized the Ainu, thinking they were bastard children of European sailors and Asian girls.

Don and Ellie socialized extensively with Jewish-Chicagoans; and exchanged favors with them. Carl's parents were also surreptitiously anti-Semitic. They used a secret word when they wanted to dish on Jews. Ku-ichi. Ku means ten. Ichi means one. Ten minus one is Ju.

Carl's parents had two words for blacks. One polite and the other an equivalent of the N word. The polite word is kudosan. Kudo means black. I don't remember the Japanese N word. The polite word for whites is hakojin. Hako probably means white. Jin is probably another word for person.

Carl's parents didn't tell me a Japanese pejorative for Koreans. Japanese people expressed their contempt by exclaiming, Karai, when they were served spicy hot food. Karai probably means Korean. Koreans were known for spicy food.

Carl may have jilted me in favor of military service during the Vietnam War because of stories his parents told about a famous Nisei battalion in World War II. Nisei boys in the internment camps took offense when the US questioned their loyalty. They petitioned the US to let them prove their loyalty by letting them fight in the war. The US established a unit for them (442nd??) and deployed it to Italy, where the Japanese boys suffered the highest number of casualties and earned many medals.

To pull aside the curtain of propaganda is to see that Japanese boys proved their loyalty to their American compatriots by killing their compatriots' European cousins. The US Army didn't test the Niseis' loyalty by sending them to Asia to kill their own Asian cousins. Nor did the US Army give Carl a gun and order him to kill Asians.

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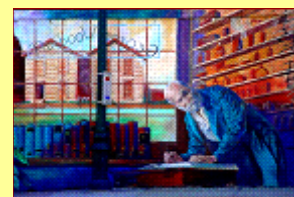
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Not all Nisei who were sent to Japan to grow up Japanese returned to the US before Pearl Harbor. Japan's propagand machine employed a Nisei woman known as Tokyo Rose to broadcast honey-sweet, spirit-sapping trash to US soldiers in the Pacific theater of war. An actress playing Tokyo Rose appears in Bridge to the Sun for a moment or two. She appears to highlight the honorability of the Tennessee heroine who refused a command to do what Tokyo Rose did.

Though Tokyo Rose was a traitor, she repatriated to the US after the war. The legal argument is that she was a US citizen who was in the wrong place and the wrong time through no fault of her own. Her West Coast family settled in Chicago when they left their internment camp. They owned a store on Belmont west of Clark, south side of street, where they sold Asian imports. It was the place to buy rice bowls, soup bowls, chopsticks, soup ladles, tatami mats, zoris, and paper lanterns, every item encouraging Americans to think well of Japanese people.

Carl's bachelor uncle, who lived with Carl's grandmother in San Francisco had also been in Japan at the time of Pearl Harbor. Then, if not before, he was drafted into the Imperial Army and deployed to China to intimidate and injure innocent Chinese people. He, too, repatriated to the US with the same argument as Tokyo Rose.

Carl's uncle gave us a box of 35 mm slides for a wedding gift. The race car widow organized another viewing party when Carl came home from Vietnam. The photos were of pages in a traditional Japanese wedding present named The Book of Spring. The pages are pornography that makes the Kama Sutra look like a Sunday School primer. The only pictures I remember are a series that involve an octopus and a woman in traditional Japanese dress and hairdo. On a chaise longue. In a garden.

Most of the viewing party guests were couples. The room steamed up though it was a cool autumn day. Couple after couple disappeared into the back rooms of the apartment. Carl and I didn't. Carl wasn't sexual. He saw people in a more utilitarian way. Not even pornography turned him on.

A Chicago novelist, Saul Bellow, who's also a winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, wrote a non-fiction piece about his experience in Japan forty or more years after World War II. He rode a train to a resort town to attend a writers' conference. The other passengers were middle-aged couples going to the same resort. The couples were stereotypical placid Japanese most of the trip, but as the train got closer, the couples became raucous and grinned ear-to-ear. The resort was known for pornographic entertainment.

Human beings are engineered for simple and efficient reproduction. To get turned on, they need only the stimulus of another person's gentle touch, loving sounds and the body odor typical of their gene pool. So why do people resort to pornography and voyeurism?

Children who live close to animals learn about sex early in life; and some of them experiment. They can become jaded. They can develop aversions. Most people, urban and rural, are pressured to extend the family another generation and, possibly, into the territory of other people. They can become perverse and sadistic. Many peasants are not nice people, despite all the nursery rhymes, fairy tales, myths, novels, National Geographic spreads, movies and songs.

The Book of Spring slides were in the trunk where I put the Vietnam letters, the cassettes, and the medals. I asked Carl to take the trunk when he left. Because Carl didn't have a healthy libido any of the years I knew him, and because he did have issues with his older sister and his mother, I'm not sure he really did plough through the many females he flaunted moments after we separated. I think he used the slides to tease girls. I wondered why the girls glared at me at the party. I thought I was out of the picture. Why not glare at each other? Did Carl demonize me all that badly, or did they glare because they imagined, wrongly, that Carl gave me pleasure he didn't give them?

A few days after the girl party, there was a knock at the door. The young man said, Your husband is screwing my girlfriend. Do you want revenge sex?

Carl messed with a lot of people when I cut him loose.

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In the latter half of the 1800s, Japan sent its equivalent of Nazi boots into China. They were a vanguard for Japanese peasants who wanted Chinese land.

Japan and England are essentially the same. They're pastoral islands with an arrogant upper crust that gets into fights with counterparts of the same race on the mainland. The difference between Japan and England is in the inheritance of farmland.

I'm not sure if Japanese peasants own land outright or by leaseholds. By lease or title, farmland was divided equally among all children when parents died. A farm of 64 acres became 8 farms of 8 acres if the parents had eight children. A farm of 8 acres became 8 farms of one acre if the children had eight grandchildren each. Then a farm of one acre became tiny plots of land unable to support a family.

The Japanese plan of inheritance was guaranteed to breed an army as hungry for land as for food; and every soldier fatalistic.

The last 25% of Cradle of Conquerors, a book about the Asian horde, carries the story forward to the situation that brought on World Wars I and II. By then, the horde had conquered all Asia. Despite stories of the Mongols' dissipation, we have no proof of it. Asian governments might be their proxies; and Western governments might be bought, might be puppets on a string. We don't have the scorecard. We don't know the players.

The lesson to be learned from the following excerpt is to think of national leaders as punks. They're no different than the neighborhood gangbangers. Don't think of them as gods to whom you must bow down. They don't have your best interests in mind.

On October 5, 1860, Mongolian cavalry and some Chinese infantry barred the approaches to the imperial capital. But the Allies (French and British, Chinese and ubiquitous Indians) pierced the lines and advanced along the Imperial Canal over the magnificent Imperial Highway.

China apologized for iniquities inflicted upon English subjects. The British Ambassador received the freedom of the city of Peking; China ceded Kowloon Peninsula; Tientsin was opened to English trade; the Chinese Government undertook not to interfere with the immigration of its subjects to British colonies and the enlistment of Chinese personnel into English service. In addition China had to pay another \$88,000,000.

On the following day, October 25, French Plenipotentiary Baron Gros had himself carried up the steps of the Court of Decency in a palanquin, and Prince Kung Jesin signed another treaty giving France \$8,000,000 in cash, and authorizing Chinese citizens to board French ships for immigration overseas.

Both France and England needed industrious, frugal coolies for their colonies. They would keep drawing upon China's inexhaustible resources of manpower, unconcerned over ethical, social, and economic implications.

In each year that passed after Commodore Perry unlocked the gates of their country the Japanese made up for at least seven years of the Western lead in technical prowess and military skill. The younger generation of the warrior caste read Western military and naval textbooks and armament manuals, and studied the patterns of the latest conflagrations in the technicalized world; budding Japanese industry gave weapons top priority in its blueprints.

In the wake of foreign naval intruders came business agents who offered the Japanese many objects that had accounted for Western superiority. The business agents were followed by foreign experts who offered to train the rejuvenated military forces of Japan. The Japanese may have been wondering about the attitude of Westerners who sold the keys to conquest as if they were merchandise. But they did not express their amazement, and accepted training and tuition with such politeness and circumstantial display of gratitude that the men from abroad trusted that their disciples would always be docile tools.

Germany, looking for short cuts to colonial expansion, dispatched instructors to Japanese military academies. Italy, not yet in the race for overseas dominions, sent artillery experts. Austrian arms manufacturers sponsored a cannon factory in Osaka, and in 1875 a new 90-mm. bronze-barreled field cannon was introduced in the Austro-Hungarian and the Japanese armies simultaneously.

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In 1876, Japan forced an impotent Korean Government to open its ports to Japanese shipping, in a manner reminiscent of the actions which had terminated Japan's isolation. The Russian Government showed little concern about a possible establishment of the Island Empire on the Asiatic mainland, but trusted that it would control the entire coast opposite Japan long before Japan could become a great power. The Western nations did not see the handwriting on the wall, and either ignored or acclaimed the islanders' teachability.

English, French, and German industrialists sold Armstrong, Hotchkiss, Canet, and Krupp products to Tokyo, including rapid-fire pieces and siege equipment of up to 320 mm, caliber.

The "opening" of Korean ports was followed by small-scale landings on the Korean coast and the establishment of Japanese garrisons in the southern part of the country.

Under the terms of an ancient compact the King of Korea was the vassal of the Chinese Emperor. The Korean Government, torn by upheavals, rediscovered Chinese suzerainty and asked Peking to restore law and order. Peking wearily shifted small Manchurian garrisons into Korea.

Japan countered by recognizing a puppet government of Korea, headed by a refugee of dubious repute, and, upon this "government's" request, reinforced its own troops in Korea for the sake of law and order.

How did the puppet government square itself with the Korean people?
 How does your government square itself with you?

I'm not privy to the inner workings of Japan or any other country, including my own. I think names like Japan, Korea, China, Russia, Germany, England, etc. are relatively meaningless terms. At the top of each nation are people who have no nation, but only a wish to dominate and subjugate other people. Their homelands are their counting houses and casinos.

The US news and entertainment industry is an instrument of American gods and as fickle as ancient people knew their gods to be.

In the 1940s, when war financiers wanted to make money on slaughter in Asia, American movie producers newscasters stirred up hate against Japanese people. The war ended. Financiers had to be paid back. Import-export businesses had to flourish to create taxable income. Japanese people had to be rehabilitated in the American mind to promote foreign trade. Rehabilitation had to proceed carefully, to avoid exposing the propaganda machine.

Bridge to the Sun is one in a series of movies crafted to clean up Japan's image. The movie acknowledges that Japan's military-industrial executives are demons from hell, and likewise many soldiers, just like the movies and newsreels said during the war. But, the movie imagines that the average peasant was a good person and an innocent victim of his leaders, as if the same couldn't be said of American Average Joes. Americans should forget about Pearl Harbor and all subsequent grievous offenses by Japanese people, because Americans gave as good as they got at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Time to shake hands and be friends.

The movie presents the Emperor of Japan as a nice guy and as much a victim as the peasants of the military-industrial complex. Therefore, the peasants shouldn't lose faith in and question their government. To powder the nose and put blush on the cheeks of the new face of Japan, the movie imagines that a few good guys arose within the complex, worthy of American admiration. One of them made sweet love to an American girl. Twenty years later, the Tokyo Rose of the Vietnam War and her English boyfriend showed off their pubic hair in public and told us to Make Love Not War.

In the meantime, hordes of the Mongols' American cousins surged across the border, where American troops should have been to do what the troops of a democracy are supposed to do.

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In the 1980s, the music component of the American propaganda industry put on two events for benevolent purposes. The Concert for Bangladesh raised money to feed starving South Asians. South Asians are past and present enemies of China. By feeding Bengals in the 1980s instead of letting them suffer the consequences of their excessive reproductivity, our high-minded minstrels paved the way for the current Bengal invasion of Burma. And the media dares to guilt-trip innocent Burmese people for resisting invasion.

Farm Aid was the other big 1980s event. It occurred because international financiers threw US farmers into bankruptcy; and bought their properties cheap. The goal (of the financiers, not the minstrels) was to consolidate and create giant factory farms.

The news didn't mention that giant farms would be identical to the feudal estates and southern plantations of days gone by. Slavery, peonage and serfdom would again become the norm. Americans are too spoiled for farm work and essentially obsolete. Imported slaves would work out better than natives.

The news said it was a Japanese stunt, a foreign land grab of US soil, but the news-entertainment complex didn't dial back the guilt-tripping of Americans for alleged offenses against Isei and Nisei and injuries to the sacred status of Sansei.

Carl's parents influenced their children to get rich by any means for the purpose of one-upping and putting-down whites. Don and Ellie meant me no harm, though the cigarettes and candy could have killed me.



Japanese people
Heck, Johann Georg (died 1857) (artist)
Plate 22 in Bilder - Atlas zum Conversations - Lexicon. Ikonographische Encyklopaedie ...
Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus (1850)
davidrumsey.com. image 12190349.jp2

Cradle of conquerors: Siberia. 1st edition (774 pages)
Lessner, Erwin Christian (1898-1959)
Garden City (NY): Doubleday (1955)
<https://archive.org/details/cradleofconquero007603mbp>

Japan at the Midcentury. Leaves From Life
Axling, William
New York: American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (1955)
printed in Japan

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Officers of the Japanese army at Peking, China (Boxer Rebellion)
Graves, Carleton H. (died 1943)
Philadelphia : C.H. Graves, publisher (copyright 1902)
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2006689660/>

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Ainu Feast
page 32 in Starr, Frederick
The Ainu Group At the Saint Louis Exposition
Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company (copyright 1904)

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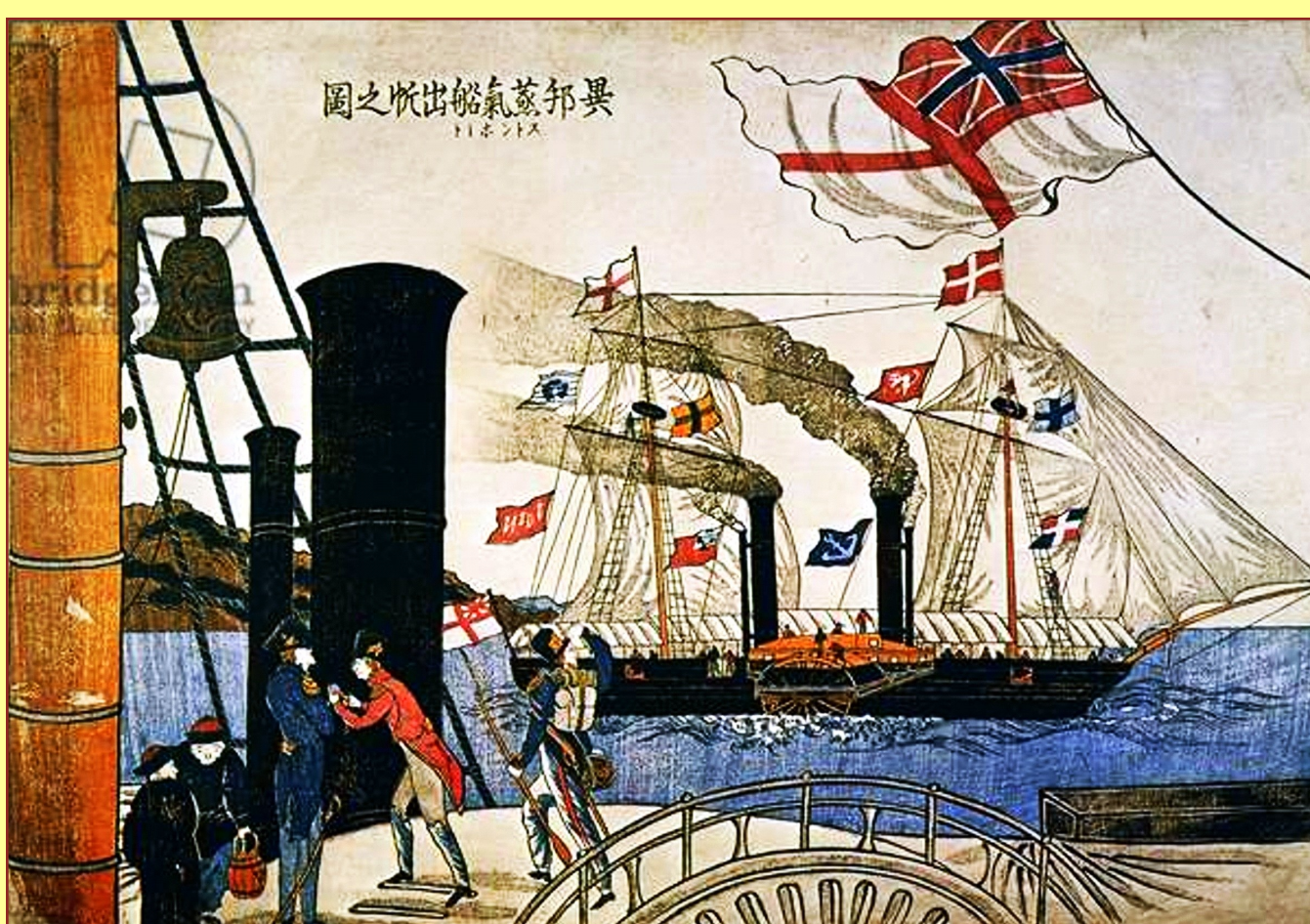
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Plan of Nagasaki, Hizen Province, Japan
Bunkindo (artist) (1802, 1821)
University of British Columbia, Vancouver
Japanese Maps of the Tokugawa Era
<http://resolve.library.ubc.ca/cgi-bin/catsearch?bid=2804227>



Nagasaki Harbour
Keiga, Kawahara & workshop (artists) (circa 1833-1836)
in the collections of the Rijksmuseum, Holland



Foreign steamships in Nagasaki Harbor, Japan (circa 1850)
bridgemanimages.com. image GCL3142458

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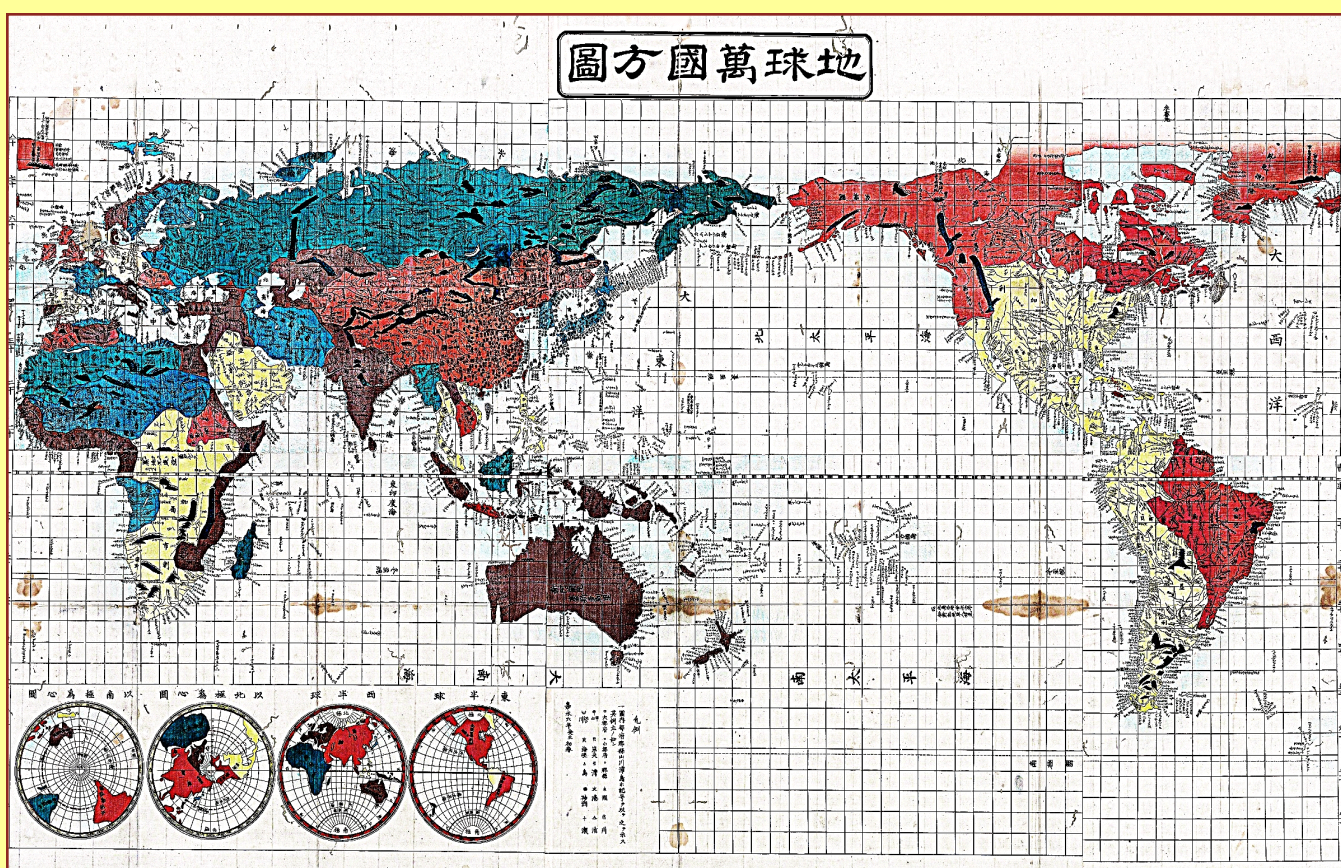
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Square map of the countries on the globe
Nakajima, Suido (1852)
University of British Columbia, Vancouver
Japanese Maps of the Tokugawa Era
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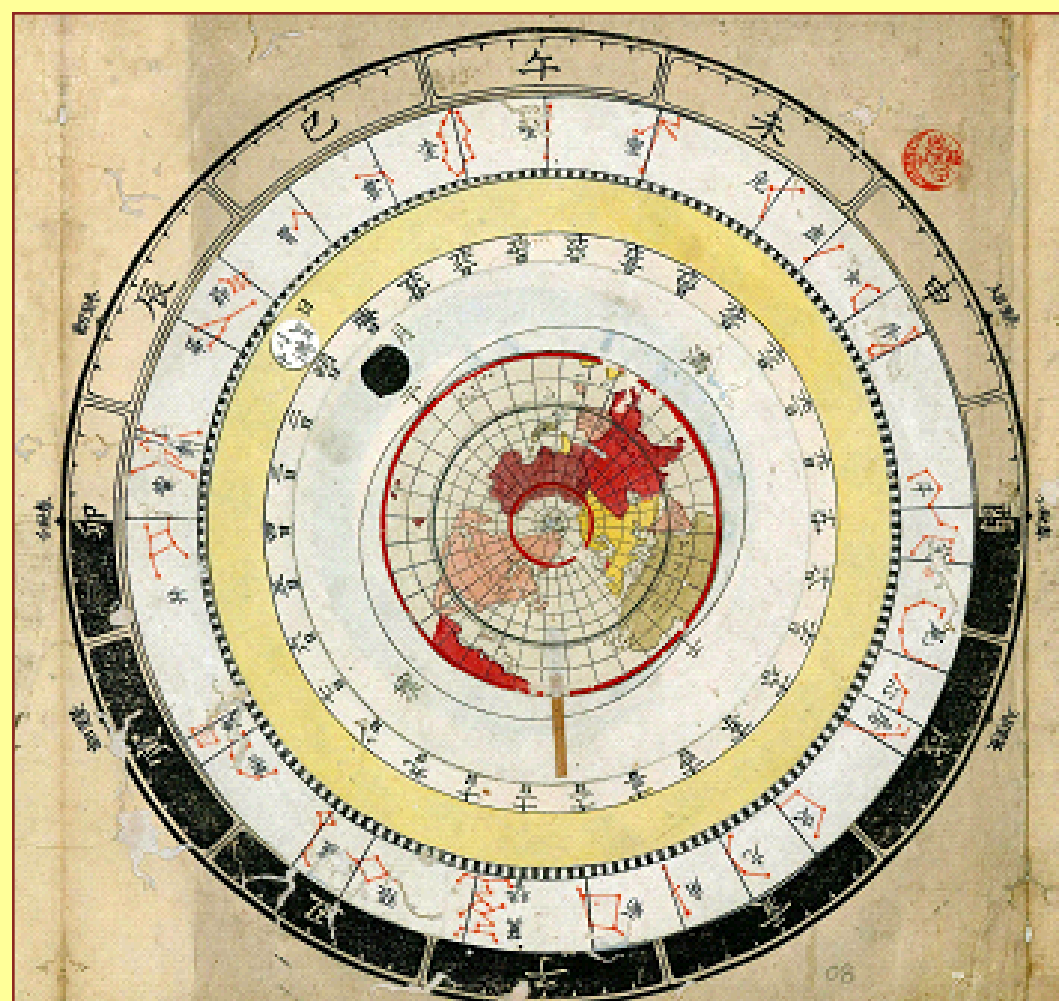
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Planisphere of the Heaven
The northern hemisphere of the earth with the North Pole as bull's eye. An astronomical, navigational chart with moveable parts
Iwahashi, Yoshitaka (artist)
University of British Columbia, Vancouver
Japanese Maps of the Tokugawa Era
<http://resolve.library.ubc.ca/cgi-bin/catsearch?bid=2804191>

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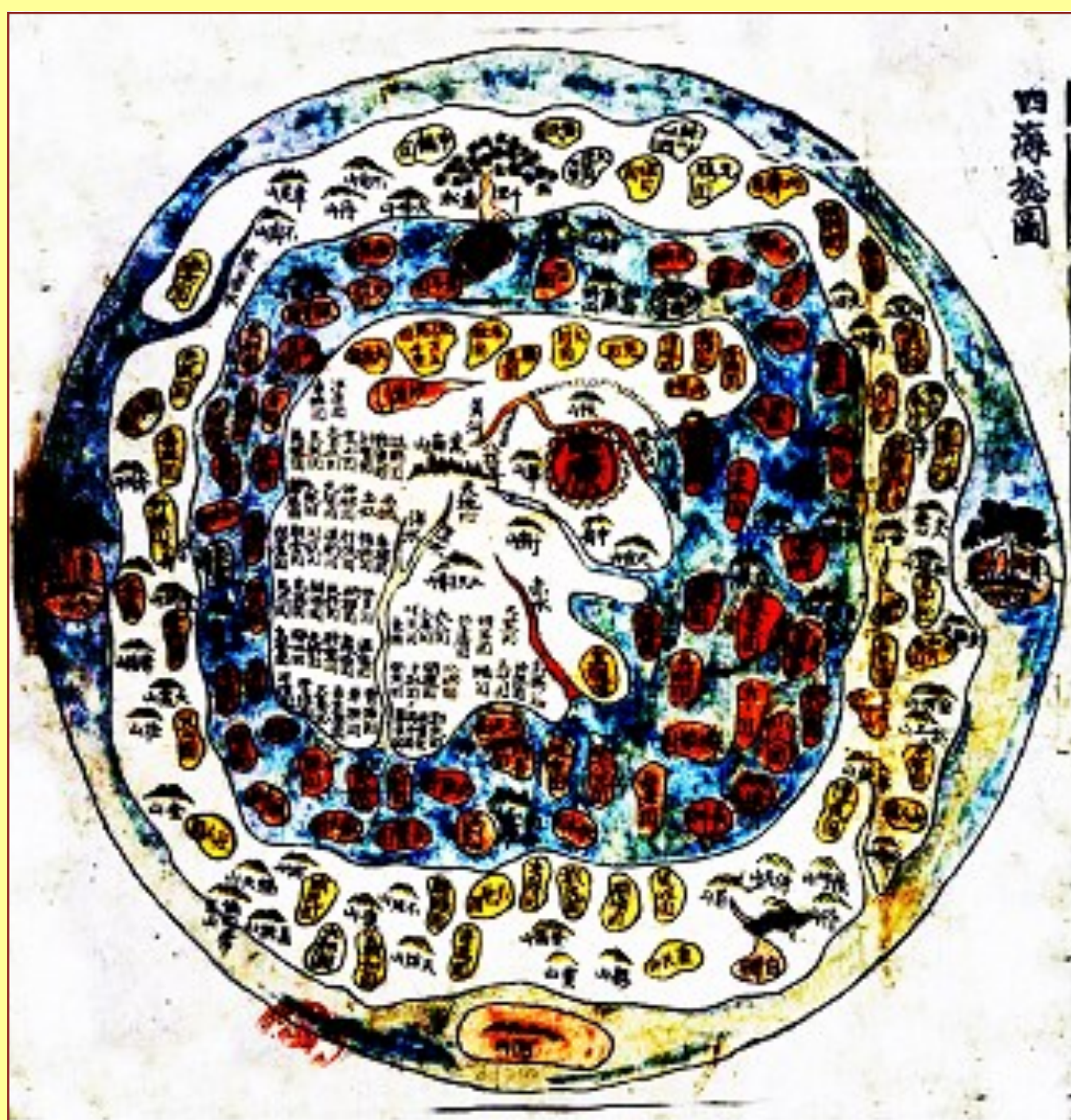
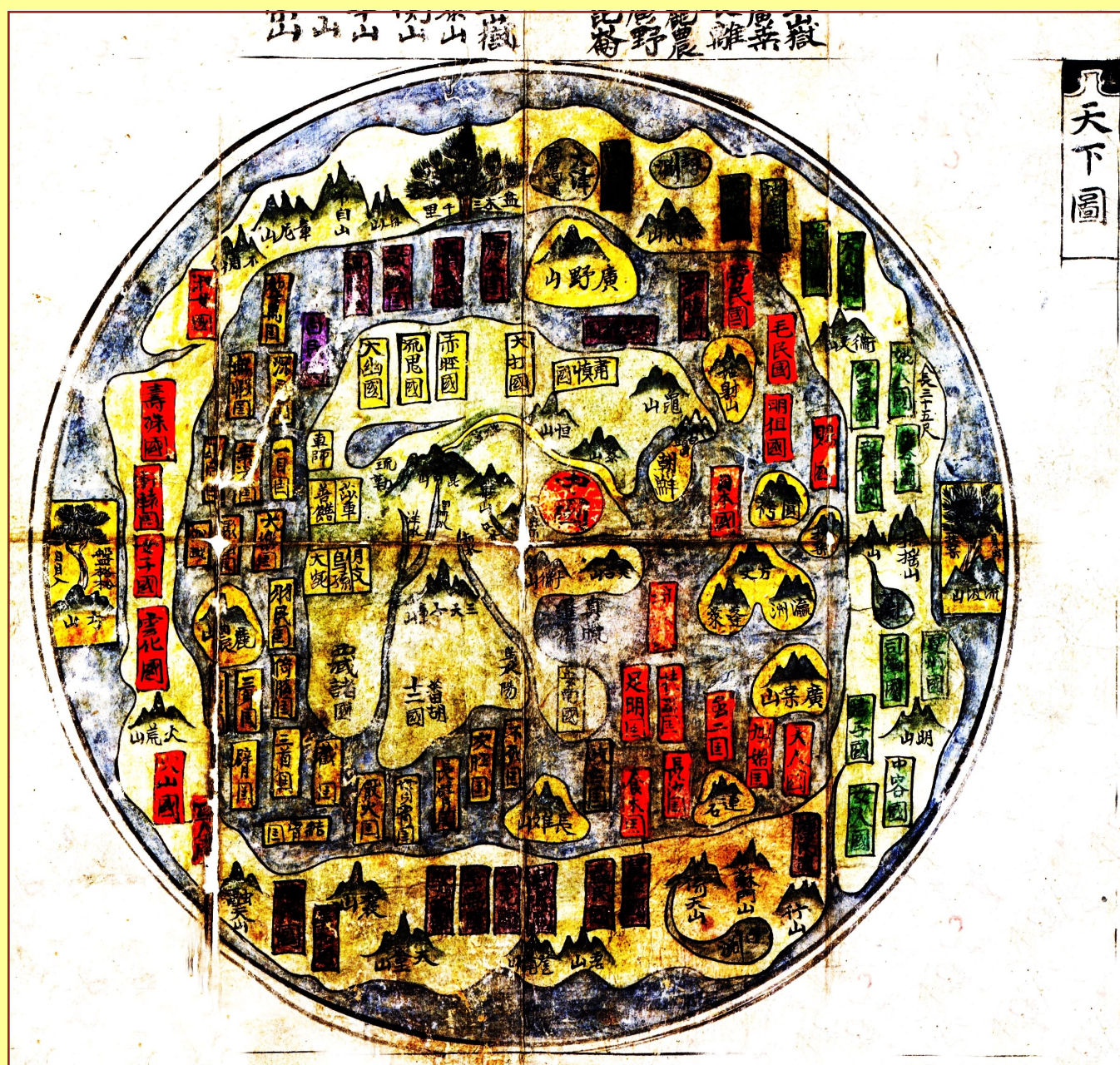
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The first mention of geographical maps in the history of Japan occurred in connection with land reforms. The tendency for vested interests to constantly acquire land at the expense of the crown and the peasants is a recurring problem in the early history of the country. Maps were drawn when efforts were made to correct the evil. Emperor Kokuho introduced reforms in the Taika Period (AD 645-649) to correct abuses of land holdings and irrigation rights. Maps were drawn in the Nara Period (AD 710-784) to restrain the landed classes when Taika reforms failed and noble families acquired vast domains. More maps were drawn in AD 796 in an attempt to restrain powerful interests, but their estates continued to grow in the AD 800s.

Japan's first world map came from China circa AD 835 after originating in India. It's known as Map of the Five Indies; and it was drawn from a Buddhist perspective. In AD 1365, a priest named Zyukai drew a Map of the Five Indies that was preserved in the Horyuji Temple at Nara. In AD 1542, Portuguese traders arrived in Japan. In AD 1549, Jesuit missionaries began work in Japan. They sent maps to Europe. European maps came to Japan and influenced Japanese mapmaking. In AD 1596, a map of Japan, Korea and the Asian mainland was painted on a fan to commemorate Japan's invasion of Korea. In the years AD 1652-1655, in the spirit of Gulliver and Robinson Crusoe, Japan published the narrations and maps of Japanese sailors who were blown off course and found themselves in strange lands. The sailors were sometimes put in prison for violating Japan's isolation law, but the narratives gave Japanese people a closer look at the world.

Beans, George H. (1894-1978) (author)
A list of Japanese maps of the Tokugawa era
Jenkintown (PA): Tall Tree Library (1951)
in ebook format at website of University of British Columbia Library

In the AD 1600s, Korean mapmakers had more information about the world. They altered Buddhist maps of the Five Indies and named them maps of the World Beneath the Heavens. The maps squeeze the whole world into a circle. Place-name labels mix mythological and real places. Some of the names are Land of people with deep-set eyes; Mountain of man's origin; Land without sunshine; Land of the elder dragon; Land of women; Land of polite women; Land of black people; Mountain of waiting; Land of rat's name; Land full of people; Land where people do not die; Land where it is hard to live; Land of people with animal heads; Land of bean-men (men small and round as beans); Land of cross-legged people; Land of long-armed people; Land of fire haters; land of three-headed people; Uninteresting land. The map names 145 lands, with India as number 145. Additional labels report that there are 84,000 lands in the four quarters of the earth, surrounded by an endless sea. [translations by Hulbert, H.B. (author). An Ancient Map of the World. pages 600-605 in Bulletin of the American Geographical Society (1904 October)]

Asian Religious Mappamundi
http://www.myoldmaps.com/late-medieval-maps-1300/231-go-tenjiku-zu-asian/
http://www.myoldmaps.com/late-medieval-maps-1300/231b-chonhado-maps/231-chonhado.pdf

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Map of All Nations
published in Nagasaki (Japan) circa 1600-1699
University of British Columbia, Vancouver
Japanese Maps of the Tokugawa Era
<http://resolve.library.ubc.ca/cgi-bin/catsearch?bid=2804079>

(end, Don and Eleanor)

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US Immigration Law: The Case Against Immigration
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Department of Labor naturalization class (1912-1932)
www.loc.gov



The Founders' World
thumb: Chapultepec
from Bolton, Herbert E. (author). Spanish Borderlands
Yale University Press (1921)



My World/ Actual Immigrants
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