

Aviano Air Base, Italy
E-Comms again

11 August 1997

They are discussing end-of-year budget constraints and end-of-year 601s for equipment and wish-list items. Everyone looks exhausted. Me, I'm gonna write a few lines while they discuss what color to paint the rocks around the Unit flagpole. Big officer decisions. Spoke to an old friend on the phone yesterday. She said, "I wish you'd hurry up and publish something so I could buy it. I just like to start my day with 10-to-15 minutes of your words."

I replied, "You say that because you love me." "Even if I absolutely hated you, I would still love your writing." I did not have an answer for her. I don't love a thing about anything I write. No one can know that. I don't write for anyone. I just write. The old dream barely lives. But it lives like a raven with a broken wing.

Claut, Italy
roadside sit

22 August 1997
black top down under the blue

Is there anyone who trusts less than I do? Anyone more faithless? Anyone more suspicious? Does anyone else wonder what is at the heart of every spoken word? Does anyone else question everything about existence? Does anyone else try to sneak into the hidden, the underneath, places of spoken language? Does anyone else only feel comfort in the written word? Does anyone else force their eyes opened at the risk of blindness? Does anyone really care about others? Or am I all alone on this anthill?

© Anthill

Walking through this life,
we search for meaning.
Anything that can

last forever. Only to find
the one thing unending –
the quest itself.

Lonely paths crossing
into forever. Leaving behind
chances untaken,
promises unkept,
mistakes unforgiven,
and hearts unloved.

Then, handed down to the
next traveler. That she may
make it farther than -
we ever dared.

Piancavallo, Italy
Barcis bridge

30 August 1997

Looking up at the stars tonight, I wondered if my love is not like the light of each twinkle dancing down from the heavens. Though I see the light, the star has been dead millions of years. When someone acknowledges my love, do they know it has been dead a long time?

Another boring meeting...

3 September 1997

Nothing to say lately. A period of silence consumes me. Much passes me by. I care not to speak or comment. I am either blind or very dumb. If I am both,

well, god help me. I will make a fine doorstep for old and broken library doors.

Polcenigo, Italy

13 November 1997

On the bridge/Livenza below/snowy mountain ridge argues with the heavens –

I've really begun to wonder what I am doing with life. The questions itself represents /implies a distinct dissatisfaction, else who'd ask? The end of military servitude nears. Ownership of my life will be returned to me. Comes my second emancipation. Then?

I am uncertain. But that doesn't undo me. I have always found comfort in the comfort of uncertainty, having the choices available to me. I do wonder that if by staying so long in service that the chance to get published has passed. Could I live wholly knowing my military service truly was a sacrifice of self? Then let Taps play refrain.

Or was it really just a silly dream anyway? It is hard to accept it was just a discount dream. A frivolous hope. Writing was all I ever really wanted to do (after the *Yankees* didn't call). These days, I am unpracticed: time to country takes all. Why'd I stay so long? Will the dream awaken when the uniform falls away like a snake's burden?

And if I never do rise to meet the higher purpose of existence, will I be just another dream-failure who longed for starry skies but lacked wings? Than why the dream? No! Why the starry sky?

In the end, I will be the sum of all my choices; to either rejoice then or lament. I do at times wish I'd never heard a poetic verse that'd lighted the darkness in my soul. Best if I'd never heard a line of Classical prose. I'd have stayed simple and never threw my questions to a sky I could not touch. But what then could I have painted my aches with? I color by no number - only heart-sky.

I only know that the love of words has ruined me. Unless in them a compromise exists. What am I so dreadfully lacking that draws me over and over to the skyline's edge? And if the only dialogue I ever master is on this cursed page, than that is all I get. So be it. I shall pray twice to St. Fu

Sacile, Italy

26 November 1997

black table. black chair. Black-ink night.

I realize now, early days of my time in those places, where wounds were cast upon wounds, when I'd spent so much time tending them so they might close, they didn't. It wasn't until much later that I realized they were not closed, nor healed, nor addressed.

That a transformation of childhood darkness had turned into scars that then grew into the heart. Long after ravaging body and mind. I must now tend to those heart-wounds with wisdom and patience. Not to reclaim some lost youth but to salvage what's left of my days. A man must look inside - at the dead he carries.

Learning to gracefully see the fallen in a gentle vision and to grasp with all the compassion in me, why it was that I had been left behind. To learn what?

Italy

A deep forest

30 November 1997
of half-night

© The Lion Creeps Tonight

Lying in bed. Still
as stone. Listen -
to her cries,
her struggles,
her whispers,

her room next door.

I pray to be a lion.

But I cannot rise. I

cannot roar. I have no

claw. I am a boy this

night. And the lion has come.

Dressed in darkness.

The devourer of years.

Simple, clawless entry,

into those who forget.

Forget never to sleep,

when the lions creep.

Polcenigo, Italy

3 December 1997

©I woke. All the leaves

fallen. Autumn sighed.

Her applause had died.

Gray sullen sky - grieves.

Gorgazzo, Italy

13 December 1997

A voice of distant ages in the mist of roaring waves. Floating. Settling gently in a heavily greened forest. Trees, tall and silent, reach upward into the brightness of day. Their tops caressed by spring-borne winds, carrying ocean mists into a valley deep and lush. Soft-colored petals. Palettes of morning hue graced by the swirling kiss of heaven: moving, dancing across rolling verdant lands cut

by a sparkling river – rolling diamonds towards fields of immovable stone.

Water trickles over, carrying the mist-whisper, seeping clear river life, beneath the ash and the stone. Bringing life upwards to meet the dew.

Where a robin awaits, seizing forth to carry the last remnant of a whisper into sky, across the emerald oceans, landing upon a wooden sill, to sing softly, softly sing. I awake to the promise. A simple note in a symphony of life.

Sacile, Italy

16 December 1997

I came home today. Tired. Didn't have the energy to cook a meal. I made soup. Poured it into a bowl. Set it on the black table. I lit a candle and ate by its timid light. The room was cold. The rising steam dissipated. I dropped in a few crackers. Head in my left hand, I stared into the bowl, steam caressing my face. With a silver spoon I drowned the crackers. Bubbles rising. Exploding into the steam. Into the silence of this cursed night. I carry it well – don't I?

Pordenoné, Italy

20 December 1997

I have come to the Christmas market to pick-up a few things for a few people. In spite of the chill it was quite busy. I find the holiday season is still like the old days – at least in Europe. Simple gifts are acceptable. They don't believe in going into debt for presents that really took no thought at all. Price tags here don't equate with one's care or love. Love is better shown in all that we make.

I used to give poems but nobody understood them – they said. I said poetry is like a beautiful woman. Better to *experience* than to understand. Beauty needs no explaining, just like snowflakes falling on a giggling girl's tongue. Do you even remember that joy? Was ever a better gift? It was poetry of life and joy. Even if it was only a moment that lived long as a snowflake – it lives and the ticklish joy was never forgotten. These are the first gifts of innocence. Was ever a better gift?

Buon Natalé da Bella Italia