topics from Adam's life

It is a brilliant spring day, the last day of May in 2018. I am sitting in my wheelchair dictating this to my computer because my fingers will not operate the keyboard, in a reflective mood collecting impressions and scraps of memory scattered through seventy-three years and guessing the concerns of people who might be curious about a somewhat unusual but not extraordinary life during those years. These notes are organized by topic rather than by date, unlike the usual biographical narrative. But when you think about a life you know well you do not really move forward year-to-year. You explore one theme at a time. It is easy enough to establish a timeline after that, but probably less interesting. (You can have the impression that your life has gone by in a flash. "Where did it all go?" I think this would be true however long you lived: memory supplies items from a selection of times when cued by a topic and presents it not as a long narrative but as individual flashes, and this undermines the sense of duration.) The topics are alphabetical, to block any chronological temptation. If one does not interest you, skip it. (But see "timeline" below.) Here is a list of topics, as active links, and you can jump to those that seem less uninteresting.

Bristol has meant remarkably much to me
career decades as a philosopher
conversation the importance of a particular kind of talking
dad idolizing someone I hardly knew
depression words fail
dogs & cats telepathic contact with a cat, and the rest of the zoo
fitness adventures of a feeble specimen
health after a bad start, things are fine until …
islands some people like them , others do not
joyful moments a few of many times that glow in memory
loyalties competing pulls of different places
marriage one person's history with the institution
myopia a lifetime of not seeing well

music deep attachment to something I am not good at
mysticism and logic competing forces on any philosopher's attitudes
not yet things that amazingly did not yet exist when I was a child
people some curious traits of a few people I have known
Prue the biggest single influence
remorse things I should not have done
romance, passion big forces
sailing why this has been a theme in my life
sexual abuse in academic life I do not think I did enough to fight it
stories many forms of an interest
time years of confusion
timeline what happened when
tongue difficulties with speech
the three lunches getting together with Susanna
war an expectation that disappeared and then came back in a different form

Bristol: Just as you can love a person although they are not the best choice for you, you can love a place although it is not the best place for you to live. I have loved the city of Bristol since the walk I took in the mist before my interview there in 1980. It seemed beautiful and comfortable and somehow for me at that time just right. I went there expecting that it would be a five-year adventure, and stayed twenty years. Part of the reason is that I soon got coupled and had a child. But also, I loved the place and I am still nostalgic about it. Part of it is the Georgian semi-detached and row houses, part of it is the cycling through beautiful countryside on small roads where in a day’s travel you can pass through half a dozen charming and individual villages. And part of it is something mysterious that the West of England has for me, and the East has not. It felt as if I had lived there before, as if everything was distantly familiar. I used to say that there was some powerful chemical blowing in from the Atlantic. And it is true that I have always preferred the west coasts of continents to the east coasts. Perhaps the west to east winds over the oceans really do pick up something.

For the first several years I was very comfortable in the philosophy department there. My situation was peculiar. I had applied for and to everyone's amazement got the chair of philosophy. At the age of thirty-five, which in a humanities subject was almost unknown. These were the days when British departments consisted of a professor appointed permanently plus a body of lecturers of various ranks who in theory took orders from the professor. So I was the boss of all these people who were older than me. I think that a crisis of confidence that British philosophy was going through, combined with a reluctance to appoint someone from Oxford or Cambridge and become a satellite of those powerful departments, led to their preferring to appoint a North American. Of course I did not act like the boss. We ran a democratic department and settled things by majority vote at meetings. This won me more popularity, since the previous professor had dominated the department in continental style, letting his underlings make few decisions and in fact have little information. The department was determined not to let me get away with anything like that, and I had no inclination to try.

All comfortable things come to an end, and a dozen years later I was considerably less popular. Like all British universities at that time, Bristol had to adapt to a much greater number of students in proportion to the faculty. In the classic British system each student met regularly and wrote essays for their own tutor, attended lectures that were not divided into North American-style courses, read on their own through reading lists, and at the end of their studies took exams on the subject in general rather than on the particular topics of tutorials and lectures. This provides a good education for committed students — much less good for those who are not — and can get them through a hefty curriculum in a few years. But it is intense, and needs a lot of teachers in comparison to the students. We had to find a less labour-intensive way of doing things. I had been educated in the North American style, with modular courses each of which ended in an exam whose grade went on to a transcript, so of course that seemed to me the obvious way to go. But not to my colleagues, who wanted to hold on to as much of the tutorial system as they could. So we had many long contentious meetings over several years. (My wise colleague Christopher Williams, who spent all his adult life in a wheelchair as result of polio as a very young man — I think of him often now, appreciating more about how things must have been for him and using him as evidence that wheelchair life can be

good — had strong opinions about these matters, opposed to mine, but would say that none of this mattered because what made the largest difference for the students was the commitment of their teachers, which would have much the same effect whatever the system.) All our curriculum changes were unsatisfactory compromises. These were only some of our troubles. The University was broke. (All British universities were broke.) So there were no new appointments, no new voices or new votes on difficult issues. And autocracy in the past had made the department an unhappy family, inclined to take trivial stands of principle. (An unhappy family composed — mostly — of pleasant well-meaning people.) I got drawn into the quarrels. In most departments there are one or two people who are the focus of most of the fighting. By the end of my time I was one of these two in my department. In all subsequent jobs I have kept to a resolve to have opinions but not to care whether I win or lose. So when Susanna got a job at Yale, I just quit at Bristol and went with her.

Though I loved the place and Edith was born there and there I met Susanna, Bristol was not the best time of my life. The marriage to Sue went wrong. And the creativity in philosophy that I had earlier shown faded. At least it did dramatically in the 80s and began to recover in the 90s, but I did not really become an interesting and original philosopher again until returning to North America in 2000. Too much contentment? I remember when I was new to Bristol someone remarking "this West country air is lovely, but blink twice and you will have retired." This could be entirely a coincidence.

career: I have spent my life doing interesting work in cooperation with intelligent and generally friendly people, creating material that I cared about. And I was paid for this! I can discuss the more normal situation where you work to earn money to be able to do what you really want. But I do not know it from the inside. (Here — web link—is an essay mostly for other philosophers about being a philosophical generalist.)

I began reading philosophy in high school. I was friends with a young man who had just got out of the Navy and was completing his high school diploma. In those days you did not go to high school for this, at least not where I was, but sat in classes with kids ten or

twenty years younger than you. He had been reading Schopenhauer and Nietzsche and the rest, and got me interested. (I am not sure that he ever went to college himself or took his interest much further. We remained in loose contact for a number of years, but his communications were increasingly oracular. Eventually I had an email from his sister saying that he had died.) Soon I was reading Husserl and Bertrand Russell instead.

I had been planning to study medicine, with the ambition of becoming a psychiatrist. I would not have been good at this; possibly this was my family-prompted label for philosophy. But when decision time came I did not like the idea of learning no more mathematics and no more philosophy so I went to McGill and did a joint major in these two subjects. It taught me that I was not a natural mathematician. (I think I could have done better, if I had gone about it the right way. But it would have taken just the right way.) So the spotlight moved from medicine, to mathematics, to philosophy; slowly discovering what I could do well and creatively. After McGill I got a scholarship to do a PhD in philosophy at Princeton.

I studied for 3 1/2 years at Princeton, interrupted for a year by getting married and spending a year in Freiburg in Germany, where I hung out in the logic department and did a lot of reading and talked to the people there, primarily in German. (The logic people were largely mathematicians, so I was still hanging out with this crowd and pretending to be one of them.) Then Princeton offered me a job. I took it, as a career move, although my intentions were to return to Canada. I still had not finished my thesis, but I began teaching. The first course I taught was on Marx, which I chose because I wanted to learn this material and I thought that having finished my dissertation I would be sick of its topic. But I did not finish my dissertation in time, so I had to do both at once. In the end, it was not a very good dissertation, although I got a couple of papers out of it. A few years later I managed to get a sneaky look at the examiners' reports. If they had said it was terrible or that it was brilliant I would have learned something useful, but instead they expressed the boring truth that it was middling and might as well be passed. During the Princeton years I published a number of papers on the borderline between the philosophy of language and logic, and taught a great variety of topics. I was beginning to be the generalist philosopher that I have continued to be. (Well, someone who is

finishing a dissertation in the philosophy of the anthropology of logic and decides to teach a course on Marx is destined to be a generalist.)

Then the marriage ended, as Milly went off to Toronto to study law. So I said to Princeton that they might as well consider me for tenure. Just in time for them to say No. This was less than devastating for me since I had only recently suppressed the intention to return to Canada, in contrast to the effect that parallel events had on some of my contemporaries. (I thought that in some cases this minor setback was the first thing that had not gone well in their lives. An argument for appreciating the difficulty of life early on.)

I got a job at Ottawa. The only job going in Canada that year, I believe. Ottawa was an interesting university: a small Catholic francophone college that had turned itself into a large bilingual secular institution. The bilingual aspect was taken seriously. Every student had to take a certain number of courses in their second language, and every faculty member had eventually to teach a certain number in theirs. In department meetings people switched language in mid sentence. This gave a not very distinguished place an interesting character. There was a small group of young faculty, francophone and anglophone and bilingual, who spent a lot of time together and were generally friendly and stimulating. My second year there I lived with a woman called Carol and her little daughter, now herself the mother of two and a writer of detective fiction. I expected to stay and become a Canadian academic. Then unpredictability struck again. I was invited to apply for the chair of philosophy at Bristol and after consulting with Carol who said I should go for it because we had no future as a couple, I applied, was interviewed, and took the job. By this time my interests had switched from the philosophy of language to the philosophy of mind, and I wrote, mostly at Ottawa, a book arguing that people are innately equipped to think of other people as minds. (The idea had originally come to me while searching for a lost kitten in the rain, seeing other cats and noticing their look of acknowledgement as they saw that I was looking at them. Looking at someone looking at something is a basic innate social/psychological mechanism.) I was not the only person introducing this idea at that time, although I thought I was, and it has become a standard view, taking many forms.

I enjoyed being at Bristol, at least at first, but my work did not progress very well, partly because of the demands of the job. During the twenty years I spent there I wrote a couple of textbooks and a book on decision-making, and despaired of pushing the ideas about everyday understanding of mind further in an interesting way. I began a book developing the theme from a particular angle, but it remained in draft. At the end of this time I was also working in epistemology, which had been the subject of a textbook I wrote in Princeton but where I had not done sustained original work. I left Bristol to follow Susanna when she took up her job at Yale. I improvised with part-time jobs at Michigan and Oklahoma. These finally allow me time to write and I finished the "folk psychology" book, and a little book on the concept of evil. I also developed a line on the concept of knowledge in a couple of articles.

Time to move again. A research job at the University of Alberta came along and I was lucky enough to get it. So for seven years I had reduced teaching and quite a lot of free time to write. The result was a book on how limitations of our thinking ability affect what we can know and what decisions we can make. I also began a little book connecting the structure of our emotions to our capacity to imagine situations. The emphasis was on moral emotions such as shame, regret, and remorse, but also little-discussed emotions and character traits such as priggishness and hypocrisy.

I retired from Alberta and continued with just a little part-time teaching at UBC, where I gave a logic course that has turned into a pretty eccentric online textbook. I am still writing, though how much will now be accomplished is an open question.

conversation: After I had written most of this memo I went back and found all the places I had used the word "conversation". More than I had realized. I use good conversation to mark good relationships, both in my childhood family and in my adult lives. A basic thing that I absorbed from my parents was the importance of talking. You need a background of inconsequential everyday chat to make it possible to raise difficult issues where people have to choose their words carefully, explore their real

disagreements, and discover unexpected similarities. So in a marriage or the connection between parent and child there just has to be lot of talk about ordinary things, to make a space where vital things can be examined. This has been central in my life. It is philosophy, in the broadest sense. But it is also just sanity in human relations. (But when it is clumsy it can be threatening. Why is this person always asking for my reasons for saying things? What is behind his reacting to some of what I say as interesting and not to the rest? I have not always been on the right side of this.)

There is a less comfortable side. It is not a real conversation unless you take the other person seriously. It is a form of contempt to let them say things that are obviously false or to pass off platitudes as deep truths or to refuse to defend what they are saying. And they are not taking you seriously if they do not hold you to the same standards. So real conversation has social and emotional requirements. You have to make an atmosphere where each person can take the other seriously without insulting or quarrelling with them. This is not always easy. In philosophy we are always devising new conversational or argumentative devices to keep things on track, from Plato's dialogues to the disciplined free-for-all of analytical philosophy. In family life one thing that I suspect is essential is that conversations go on a long time, with interruptions. You can stop when the weather gets stormy, and you can use a balmy relaxed moment to introduce something that may seem more important in a larger context. Car trips and country walks are good for this: there is no hurry, you can look at the scenery deciding what and whether to repy, together but not confronting. If we knew more constructively how this works we would be a lot wiser.

Dad: How can someone be so important to you when you know so little about them? There are many basic things I do not know about my father, because by the time I had the right questions for him he was no longer alive. He died when I was sixteen, at forty years of age. ("So young" I remember people saying, and I thought "but he was forty!") It was unexpected and horrifying. Someone came into the house in the middle of the night, shot him sleeping beside my mother and walked out again. No one was ever arrested. My brothers and I were down at the cottage, which we could do because we

had just got drivers' licenses. (So there was only one car in the driveway, which might have made someone think he was alone.) My mother appeared early in the morning and woke me up first and had me help her break the news to my brothers. (My sister Alison was visiting friends in Manitoba.) We were driven into town by the police and saw a lot of them the next weeks, but very few facts emerged.

There were further nasty moments in the following months. There were the lines of cars driving by the house, just to see it. There were taboo subjects with friends. There was the constant speculation about what was going on. There were newspaper headlines. There was studying *Macbeth* that year in school. We left town and went to visit friends in South Dakota for Christmas, in order to be away from well-meaning acquaintances. For years I would avoid telling the story to new friends until they were thoroughly familiar and I could gauge their reactions without imposing a weight on our relationship. But then I realized that there is something in most people's lives that they rarely talk about. Violent deaths, suicides, bankruptcies, jail sentences, abuse. Being less reluctance to mention the topic when it was relevant gave people permission to talk about these things, and there was often something it was a relief for the other person to be able to mention.

There were lots of rumours. Medical corruption, for one thing, associated with black-market drugs, which dad had campaigned against. But this may not be at the heart of the story. There were a couple of local doctors who fingers were pointed at, but without a lot of evidence. One, at any rate, who was a difficult person anyway, saw his life go downhill from that point, perhaps because of the rumours. No names; not without evidence.

People assume that experiences like this will leave deep effects on one's personality. I am not convinced. I suspect that those features of personality that are not set by birth are determined very early in life. (Well, post-traumatic stress is real. But the question is how it chooses who to visit, when invited.) I have always been a cheerful person and I remain cheerful when faced with objectively bad events. (I had a few months of real depression in the 1970s, which for several years would recur for a few weeks at the same time every

year. But it faded.) One immediate effect of my father's murder was to make me a fierce opponent of capital punishment. People convicted of murders also have families; why increase the misery and social damage by making them grieve also? I have no idea if the history has anything to do with my not entirely satisfactory career as a husband and a partner. It might or it might not. There were very few echoes in my academic work until I was writing *On Evil* in 2001. Then to my surprise I found a wealth of opinions and suggestions why people perform, assist with, or permit large and small atrocities, that I had not known I had. In more recent writing there is a strand in what I call the damage project. It looks for continuity between small scale nastiness and major atrocity.

Dad had been born in Beirut, where his parents had eloped from Constantinople/Istanbul. His father, Vagarshak Garibian, known as Stephan, was a self-educated and evidently very intelligent Armenian who had met Kathleen Morton, known as Muffet, when she gave him English lessons. She was of a family of merchants who had been in Constantinople for several generations, always maintaining an English identity although they never went to England. (Their business involved a line of cargo boats sailing up the Danube.) The couple eloped first to Beirut, where their son Stephen, after whom my son is named, was born, and then to Greece, finally ending up in Paris. A few years later Muffet died of a melanoma and Stephen was sent to live with an aunt in England. (Many years later, I went to visit another great-aunt in Düsseldorf, who I had never met before. When she met me she screamed and pointed at my neck. "That mole is exactly like the mole that killed your grandmother, and in exactly the same location." I had it removed. Then I remembered my horrified fascination at age of ten with a copy of the *British Medical Journal* that my father had left lying around, describing an inoperable cancer of the neck. It seems to me now possible that I had picked up my father's horror at the article.) He was at boarding school and then university in England. He went to Cambridge with a classical scholarship but studied medicine. The war had begun by then and they were of course eager to churn out doctors. Sometime earlier his father had remarried. There were no children of this marriage but his father’s second wife, Marcelle, née Coutant, functioned as a step-grandmother to us.

Dad had married at the end of the war, to Prudence Ollivant, pleased to find a respectable middle-class Englishwoman who loved him. Under the influence of his aunt, he was eager to become English. Stephen and Prue had resolved to concentrate on their medical and nursing careers, but Prue soon became pregnant with twins, Tom and me, and Charles arrived only eighteen months later. It was not until I was a parent that I realized the full awfulness of having three boys under the age of two. A doctor and a nurse determined not to conceive, who somehow found they could not prevent the babies. Prue told me much later that dad accused her of sabotaging the contraception. She also said that if Alison had turned out to be yet another boy she thought the marriage would have been in trouble. When Tom and I were about two dad joined the British Army and spent a couple of years with it in Greece. The official line was that this gave a quick route to British citizenship. (Previously he had used a Turkish passport. This meant being classified as an enemy alien with restrictions on his movements during the war. In fact, Prue lost her citizenship on marrying him, and had to reapply for it. It also made it harder to get jobs. A central reason for changing his name to Morton.) But I wonder what the full story was. You have just got married and you leave for couple of years? Not conceiving more children was likely some part of the story. Dad had qualified as a pediatrician — a pediatrician burdened with too many children — but this meant applying for hospital jobs, which were very scarce in the early years of the NHS. The two of them migrated around the south of England for a series of temporary jobs, with baby Alison and unhealthy me, leaving the other two boys with our grandmother. The name change did not solve the problem, and so like a generation of young professionals he left the country. Again this meant absence. He went to Toronto for a year and worked in a hospital there. Then he went out West and accepted a job in Saskatchewan. Driving back to Toronto he passed through Port Arthur (Thunder Bay) and discovered a position in pediatrics there, which he changed his plans and accepted. We all joined him not long after.

Greece and Toronto: not much present. And then in the early years in Port Arthur he was building up a practice and still largely absent for his children. That did not prevent me from idolizing him. I believe this is common for children with invisible parents. Then someone must have told him or he realized by himself that he had three adolescent boys

who were getting little fatherly attention. So for a couple of years he and I built boats and sailed them, and Charles went on house calls with him. Tom had already built a social life for himself and my impression is that his contact with our father did not increase very much during this time. But for me it was a wonderful brief time being close to an interesting, amusing, and intelligent father I could talk with about all kinds of stuff. (Prue and I had had a very conversational relationship from early in my life. I think this has shaped my attitude to family: talking is central.) Then he died, and it all ended.

So I had two or three years of good fathering in my life. Fathers were more absent in those days so this was probably unusual but not extraordinary. But dad had not received much parental attention himself, with a mother who died in his childhood and then being sent off to school. And I separated from Milly in my son Stephen's childhood, so although I made sure that we had a lot of contact after that, there does seem to be a transmitted pattern of less than ideal fathering. I resolved that the pattern should break with Edith, but then that marriage ended when she was eight. I hope the pattern does not continue.

A young man of partly Armenian origin educated in Britain moves to Canada and begins a new life there. You might expect that new life to maintain its British and Armenian qualities. But in fact dad minimized them as much as possible. I think the attitude was that life had been difficult for his family, and indeed the twentieth century had been difficult for most people, and it was best simply to put it all behind you. And I suspect he had seen through English society, its snobbery and implicit racism, and wanted very little to do with it. He would avoid "other" English people as much as he could. He wanted to become as Canadian as possible. One consequence was that there was no effort to connect his children with the languages and cultures he had known. I can both sympathize and regret.

depression Except for a few months in my late twenties, I have never been seriously depressed. I got through those months and the brief aftertastes on their anniversaries for a few years without seeking any help, which was probably a mistake. During this time I began to meditate, and have been fairly serene ever since. (Cause and effect? I take it

as such, but the sequence could be a coincidence.) And in fact I am pretty cheerful through bad times. People close to me have often been depressed, though, for longer and deeper immersions than mine ever were. In fact, I fear my cheerful un-depressed presence has made things worse for them, by making it seem as if there was something deficient in them, and sometimes by trying to cheer them up as if simple cheerfulness, jokes and smiles, could address something with so deep a bite. I take it as a systematic failure of my life and my relations with others that I have not been able to communicate my sense that life has many fine flavours and there are no end of things well worth doing. Not when it would be most valuable to transmit it, at any rate.

It is also a failure of philosophy, in a way. Thinking about means, ends, purposes, values, has a limited impact on how satisfying life feels. I see this as the failure of classical stoicism and related philosophies, and in fact a widespread failure of intelligent human effort. We usually assume now that nothing you can impart with words will fundamentally change someone's grasp of their existence. But I have doubts; I still hope for new ways of tying thinking to speaking. We may find the words yet, or an angel might deliver them to us. I am sure that it would have to be an angel who can laugh. The three signs of health that matter most to me are rejecting the idea that there is something profound about unhappiness, seeing contentment and indeed happiness as based more on calm than on ecstasy, and taking it as one of the most encouraging and endearing aspects of life that it is often so funny. (Many of my stories are meant to connect with this.)

beasts: For some there is a big gulf between humans and other animals. Such people's attitudes to both humans and nonhumans are very different from the attitudes of those of us who do not feel the distinction, and in fact find non-humans in some ways more congenial. People who identify with animals are often vegetarians, though this gives them a complicated attitude to animals who are not veggies. (I have wondered whether miniature elephants would be good companions for humans.) And I conjecture that people who are comfortable with animals are usually more comfortable with small children. Language, planning, self-image, are not so important. I feel closer to many animals than I do to most humans. This is partly a matter of my childhood. (Or is it? Might someone indifferent to non-humans just leave their childhood companions behind

in the past, hardly taking them as important memories? Like the daemons in Pullman. Perhaps.)

There have always been animals around. In my childhood there were the vicious and tyrannical bull terrier Belio and the sweet tolerant Labrador Jack. Also a series of Siamese cats. Milly and I had a number of cats: Alfred, Shlomo, Fiordilighi, and briefly Rehabubab.

Alfred is the only living being I have ever had telepathic contact with. He was our first cat, and he was handsome and charming so we told him that he would grow up to be an ambassador. But along came Shlomo as a sick stray kitten who turned into a large, tough, and very intelligent tomcat. (Alfred told me that Shlomo was in trouble outside the door. Alfred was not very bright, but he communicated. See below.) By the time we moved into the countryside near Princeton Alfred had had a nervous breakdown, climbing the same tree every day and screaming at the sky. This ended when we had him neutered. Presumably the impossible rivalry with Shlomo then stopped. After a couple of years we moved back into town and while the other two cats were upset and disoriented Alfred knew he was back in his urban element, and immediately went out to visit nightclubs and coffee shops. But after a few days he did not come back. That was that, we thought. Towns have their dangers. But six months later I woke up in the middle of the night convinced that Alfred had come home, so I went down to open the back door. He was not there so I opened the front door. He was not there, so I made a pot of tea and waited. After an hour he had not appeared so I went to bed. By that time I had woken up enough to realize how silly it was. In the middle of the next day Milly phoned me at the university because the new tenants of the cottage where we had lived in the countryside had called her to say that in the early hours a cat had scratched at the window and insisted on coming in. I went out there and it was Alfred. When he arrived he must have broadcast on all frequencies that he was home and needed to get in. (But it had taken him six months to travel at most 3 miles.) He stayed with us for a few days and then he disappeared again.

There were Bristol cats also. Opal, Grendel, Jammy and her four kittens. (Jammy stayed in England with a friend when I left. She lived many years and died at about the age of twenty.) Towards the end of the Bristol time I became rather appalled by the depredations that cats make among birds and rodents. Earlier in my life this had not bothered me. Years of acting and speaking as a vegetarian may have changed me, but I also attributed it to watching the *Alien* movies and *Jurassic Park* with Edith, getting a sense of what it is like to be hunted down by a large intelligent and implacable predator.

Susanna's commitment to animals in general, as opposed to particular family members, is definitely deeper than mine. (Although I became a vegetarian largely out of outrage at the fate of the world's whales, leading to the reflection that cows and whales are not really very different.) For as long as I have known her she has had dogs. The charming and well-educated Florence (there were others before my time), the high-spirited, devoted and somehow very special Toby, the cantankerous damaged SusieQ, the sage old Reno, the cuddly pugs Junius and Gramps, the noble dachshunds Amos and Baxter, the difficult but recovering little Kip. All my friends also. And these are not really all of them. There are so many dogs in her life because she has a campaign to adopt old dogs from shelters and give them a comfortable last stretch to their lives. She mourns every one, which can be rough.

fitness: Miserable wimp of a child. The afterthought of a pair of twins, suffering from childhood asthma, protected because of my shortsighted eyes, and out-competed by my two healthy brothers. The asthma ended when we moved to Canada, but the lack of interest in anything physical did not. I would hide from sports. The whole family went skiing in the winter and I did that cheerfully though incompetently, and I enjoyed sailing. The way I skied gravity did most of the work and when you sail the wind does the work and you have only to think out how to exploit it. I only began to get in shape in my last couple of years working at Princeton, when I would swim regularly. The next step was when I was in Bristol, with fairly serious cycling. I had a group of friends who would go out on the weekends and spend much of the day on our bikes in the countryside, with a midday break at a country pub. (A number of these people were psychotherapists and

there were a couple of psychiatrists. At the pub, loosened up by a pint, they would begin to tell indiscreet stories about their patients. The only one I remember is of someone whose complications began when in a childhood temper she pointed her finger at her grandmother and said "drop dead", whereupon her grandmother did just that.) Sometime fairly early in this period I went to a conference at Tilburg in the Netherlands. I had decided to cycle part of the way to the conference from where the ferry docked. I took the wrong train to my intended starting point and ended up at the other end of the country. But it is a small country so I chose what turned out to be a very tiring day getting there by a much longer route than I had planned. It rained nonstop.

The expeditions got longer, and eventually I was making cycle trips, mostly alone, lasting several days, often over challenging terrain. I would go into the Welsh mountains regularly. I could go from Bristol to Aberystwyth in one day and come back the next. I had a map of the British Isles on which I marked the routes I had cycled. After a few years England and Wales were fairly well covered.

During these years it gave me quite a lot of satisfaction that I was probably in better shape than the two brothers I once could not compete with.

Stephen and I used to do trips on a tandem that I bought for the purpose. Mostly in the West Country but also on a fine expedition to Normandy. I sold the tandem the year that Stephen became taller than me: he would then be on the front saddle with control of the steering and brakes! We also joined an expedition with a number of other people to Denmark for perhaps two weeks. On two separate bikes this time. This started with an adventure when we got lost cycling from the London train station where we had arrived in Bristol, Paddington, and the other station, Liverpool Street, where we were to catch the train to the Denmark ferry. So we arrived just as the train was leaving, threw the bikes in the cargo wagon of the moving train and jumped in after them. During the trip Stephen crashed and damaged his bicycle, and we left the expedition for half a day to find a place that could repair it. One of our party was quite an old man, but he was always at the front of the pack. One evening we asked exactly how old he was and he said "I am eighty, but when I was only forty I was British 24-hour champion." I did not

know whether to think that this meant that cycling kept you young and healthy or that some people are just very strong throughout their lives.

When I moved to Connecticut with Susanna I continued to cycle and swim. Eventually I moved to Edmonton and Susanna to the hills above Palo Alto. These were the high points of my physical fitness. In California I would cycle from the Santa Clara valley near Stanford located up to the crest of the ridge where Susanna lived, in the beginnings of the Santa Cruz Mountains, down to the sea and then back over again. Not long earlier I would not even have considered this possible. In Alberta I joined a cycling club mostly for their longer expeditions. We did the Jasper to Banff trip once, over three days with one day in a September snowstorm. It was a small group of people and I was the only one finishing. A year later with a larger group I did the "Golden Triangle" route: Banff to Radium Hot Springs to Golden and back to Banff, again over three days. That involved some very serious hill-climbing, particularly on the last day. On that last day I was going downhill at high speed when a bear wandered out in front of me. I narrowly missed him.

All this mountain stuff exploited the fact that I have a wiry physique. My strength has never been particularly great, but my weight-to-strength ratio is good. Hill-climbing cyclists are often built like this. If some athletics teacher when I was in high school had looked at me and seen a long-distance runner, my history might have been different.

I am very very glad I did all this mountain cycling when I could, because only a few months after the Golden Triangle the MS struck and I did no more serious cycling ever. In Connecticut I had learned to ride the unicycle, not extremely well but enough to impress people who do not realize that it is actually easier than it looks. This too ended with the MS. (In the early MS years I would sometimes tell myself that I was riding a unicycle, and the thought made balance easier.) I gave Stephen my good lightweight mountain-conquering bicycle and not long after gave away my unicycle. I kept an about town bicycle for a while, but before long that had become impossible also.

health: Like fitness: weak, strong, weak. You have unstated expectations of how you will be in future years, and you do not realize you have them until it is not like that. I was often ill as a child, mostly with asthma and other breathing complications. As a result I stayed with my parents, and then baby Alison also, in my first few years, travelling around the south of England so that I could be near them and get special attention. My two brothers spent much of this time with their maternal grandmother. (Another reason was that I did not get on with this grandmother. Years later a cousin told me that Granny quarrelled with all of her female grandchildren, and also with me. An honour.) Then the parents moved to a new temporary job in London and bought a crumbling house to renovate, taking only Alison for the first year. The stated reason was no doubt that the house was in no condition for children at first, so I was left with my great-aunt Dorothy, Auntie Dolly, my father's mother's sister. (But combined with the mysterious time in the Army in Greece it does make you wonder whether the marriage needed the absence of quarrelling boys to survive.) Eventually my brothers and I came to London, the earliest time I can remember that we were all three together, and for the first of our two years there dad was also present, before he went off alone to Canada to find a permanent job. (See a pattern?) I spent some time in hospital during this first year, having my tonsils and adenoids removed in the probably mistaken hope that it would help with asthmatic problems. I remember this as fairly bleak, and I also remember several occasions of breathless misery.

The asthma disappeared in Canada. Immediately, as I remember, so that when I returned to England many years later I half expected it to return, but it did not. There was no serious illness for the next fifty years. Lack of fitness, but nothing even slightly wrong. And I was physically young for my age, being mistaken for an undergraduate when I was teaching at Princeton. And still youthful at Bristol. I remember in my first year there asking if I could open an account at the best local bookstore, and the owner saying to me "and will your father pay the bills?" I think this has continued and even now at seventy-three people take me for being ten years or so younger. So I expected this to be continued, and expected that I would have a long healthy retired time before the troubles of old age caught up with me. I never said this to myself in a very explicit way, but I took it for granted.

Then suddenly, at the age of sixty-one, I was ill. It feels as if it happened from one day to the next. After one year in Alberta. I was visiting Stephen in Ottawa and walked across to Hull for an event. (An induction ceremony into the Royal Society of Canada. I accepted membership in order to please the authorities at Alberta, and later let it lapse, largely due to my conviction that it was a completely fake organization.) As I was arriving I noticed that my left leg was dragging. The next few days I felt confused, but ended up in California with Susanna for Christmas, with the legs working under protest and a constant headache and wooziness. We went to Bowen Island in January to look at houses and I made an appointment with a doctor there who said there was nothing wrong. Back in Edmonton my doctor did think something was wrong and gave me an appointment with a neurologist, who could find nothing. The symptoms continued and by early summer I had an appointment with a different neurologist who ordered a MRI and concluded that it must be something called ADEM, which has symptoms like MS but is not due to an autoimmune process and is thus less likely to progress. A couple of years later it was clearly progressing and neurologists agreed that it was definitely ("obviously") MS. So I emerge as a very unusual case, with the odds against it both because of my gender and my age[1]. There is quite a lot of autoimmune disease in my family — Tom's rheumatoid arthritis, Prue's celiac, our cousin Anne's lupus — but no form of it had touched me until then. Canada has a high rate of MS and indeed there are clusters of it in the Edmonton area, so it is a plausible conjecture, not more, that an inherited predisposition combined with something environmental into whose territory I had wandered[2].

1 This assumes that the attack at the age of sixty-one was indeed the very first manifestation. I can think of a number of transient symptoms, ranging from peculiar bright spots in one visual field to the creative decline I experienced in the 1980s, which might be - or might well not be – earlier signs. It is possible – many things are possible – that up until this first obvious attack the damage was in the brain and led to repair and compensation, but that when spinal cord damage occurred it was obvious and irreversible.

2 Of course there are many other factors that may be or more likely are not relevant. I had a persistent nausea for several years which ended at about the time the MS began. I had some mercury fillings replaced about a year earlier. That fall I had got less regular exercise because I was working hard and my favourite swimming pool was closed. I had a serious deficit of vitamin B-12, not uncommon among vegans. My neurologist casts doubt on the heredity plus environment theory by citing studies which suggest that, in Alberta at least, what look like environmentally induced clusters are really the results of shared genes.

During the first year I walked with a stick if I was going any distance, such as around the lake on Bowen. In the second year the same distance would take two sticks. And in the third year two sticks would only get me a fraction of the distance. I would walk with the old dog Reno from the Fernie Road house down the path to the lake and along to the picnic area, rest for a good while and then struggle back. It was not unusual for me to fall coming up the hill on the way home and take some time to recover. Still, during this time I did some physically demanding things, in particular maintaining the ditches at the side of the road. After that I was using a walker for most things for a couple of years. Then I got a scooter which gave me the freedom of the neighbourhood around my West End apartment again. Getting from the scooter into a coffee shop or restaurant could be pretty dicey though. We got me a wheelchair in 2014 — so this must have been eight years in — for going to movies and the like, but it complemented the walker and the scooter which I still used. I fell in late April 2015 and broke my hip, so that I spent a month in hospital and a month in a rehab place. After that it was wheelchair all the time. I moved from my apartment to an "independent living" place, Tapestry, in May 2016 in order to get care when I need it. I am sure this was the right decision.

It might be interesting to try to say what it feels like. (When I was a child I would wonder whether there was a way of showing people what things look like through my myopic eyes, whether simply looking through strong and cloudy classes would be enough.) At the beginning I used to say that it was like wearing heavy ski boots — hard to pick up your feet and they do not always go where you want them to — and that it was like wearing gloves because sensation was much reduced but not eliminated. (Like weighted gloves, hard to control) Years later, sensation is not a lot less than then, but control is very much less. And weakness: first thing in the morning or when I am overheated or have not been taking my medication my limbs will simply not do what I ask them and easily get very tired. Putting a cup of water into the microwave and lifting it out afterwards at breakfast time feels like lifting a serious weight. There are also deficits of proprioception, your brain’s information about the position of your limbs and the tension of your muscles. Most proprioception is unconscious, so lack of it impinges on you partly with illusions of where your limbs are and lack of fine control over them. This shows up particularly with balance. Sensation and control are in fact mixed, particularly for the

hands, as you feel things by moving your skin around them. (Proprioception must come into this also.) These days, the lack of strength and control is particularly annoying with the legs. I get into bed, with the aid of a helper and some equipment, and then cannot move in bed by using my legs so that all changes of position have to be done by my arms and shoulders. To get my body to a sitting position on the side of the bed in the morning I often push my head against a vertical pole beside the bed and flex my neck to bring myself into position. During the night the legs want to move into different positions and often jerk upwards convulsively, particularly the right leg which I then force down with the left leg and my right arm. This takes some effort and by the time it is over I am awake enough that sleep will take a while to return.

The progression of the thing is very hard to keep track of. You have good and bad days, and on the bad days you think "this is the way it is going to be all the time soon". These are succeeded by a period of good days and you think "that was just a blip; I am continuing as I was." You are not exactly as you were but an almost undetectable amount below it, so that over months you find yourself less and less capable without really noticing the steady slow descending slope behind the erratic up-and-down. Eight months ago I would go a very short way using a walker with someone following behind with the wheelchair ready for me to drop down into it, moving more by force of my arms than my legs and using my upper body to lift and swing the legs forward. That is impossible for me now. My arms are adequate for helping me transfer from the wheelchair into bed, with the help of the height-adjustable hospital bed I have just got, and from the wheelchair to the bench in my shower and to the seat of the exercise machine that I use for a very short time on many days. (Six months ago it was twenty minutes most days, now it is some six minutes in each of three or four sessions during a week.) A time will come when transfers and other ways of taking care of myself are too difficult, and then I will need more care than they can give me at Tapestry. I am hoping to finish some writing projects before then. (I write with dictation software, correcting it by clicking on an on-screen keyboard with the mouse.) I do not expect there is a lot of life beyond that point.

These are not good developments and are often physically unpleasant (though not as nasty as the effect of many people's diseases). But I am cheerful, not at all depressed. One thing I find as remarkable about myself as other people do is how readily I have adjusted to a very restricted life. I sometimes think that my unhealthy and myopic childhood is part of the story. I am returning to a sense of diminished capacity that I lived with for my first few years.

islands: I have always liked islands. When Susanna and I met we found we shared this taste. We have visited many islands together, the Scillies, Catalina, the whole bay of islands in New Zealand, beautiful Rottnest with its grim history. When we moved to Vancouver we looked at Bowen Island as a more affordable place where Susanna would have space for dogs, and immediately loved it. We owned a house there together for several years and Susanna still lives on the island, which is at the heart of its life. For new arrivals it has the advantage that it is of limited size and population, so you can learn it without having invested decades in discovering the people and the geography. And it is an island.

joyful moments: There have been many. I take satisfaction in a good variety of things. Some moments are particularly luminous, though. I remember one afternoon when I was a child on a holiday in France watching new dragonflies dry their wings and cautiously fly off. A glowing memory that has somehow stuck with me. Probably no more beautiful than many other experiences, and perhaps I remember it so vividly because I was happy for some other reason. Sailing with my father, in stormy weather on safe little Loon Lake, always in danger of capsize but not worrying about it. Anchoring with my father south of Fort William and in a bay on the Sibley Peninsula (not safe at all). Walking with Milly on a warm May day in Paris in 1968 having just received a letter saying my first article had been accepted. Stephen's birth. Edith's birth. (I find the birth of children very moving, especially when they are mine.) Driving with Stephen from Thunder Bay to the east, having a picnic on a little island in a river with the nice little dog Artemis. Walking along the beach in Pembroke with Edith and Isabel, swinging them by their

arms. Inventing narrative games with Edith when she was a toddler, in the hammock strung in the garden of the Somerset Street house. Teaching Edith to ride a bicycle in High Kingsdown and "Lois Lane". The many things she and I did together during my years in the Bellevue Crescent apartment: movies, bike rides, trips. (These were not the best years either for her or for me, she facing her parents' separation while wrestling with basic issues of who she was, me trying to put a new life together for myself. But our times together were special.) The three lunches. Riding up the old La Honda road to skyline. Cycling at the ridge of the river valley near Edmonton and looking down on a V of migrating geese. There are so many.

loyalties: Nations, regions, peoples. These give labels we apply to ourselves and our friends. I am not unusual in being suspicious of the fact of such labelling while doing a fair amount of it myself. I value my identity as a Canadian and I thought of the West of England as a home for many years. When I have lived in the States my lack of identification with my surroundings has bothered me. (I find I can talk to my colleagues easily — philosophers are philosophers, wherever — but I have more problems with my neighbours. Too many topics one does not dare to approach. This does not happen to me in Canada or Britain.) Although the Armenian influence on my life is minimal, just the knowledge that I have Armenian ancestors is enough to produce a bias that sometimes I must guard against.

When I moved to Edmonton in 2004 I had been out of Canada for thirty years, except for frequent short visits and the two years in Ottawa. And I had never lived in the West. But it felt immediately like coming home, though a new place and a generation later.

I spent late childhood and my teenage years in northern Ontario. Culturally rather different from southern Ontario and in some ways more like Manitoba; a high proportion of immigrants; nature and severe weather very close and impossible to ignore. My first car was an Austin mini that I bought in Port Arthur in the middle of winter and then drove to southern Ontario and on to Princeton. There were two of us driving. Because the other driver was headed for southern Ontario we did not go directly into the States for the

shortest and safest route to New Jersey but went east on Canadian roads. We even took the more northerly route around Lake Superior, further from its moderating influence, in spite of the severely cold weather. And we drove overnight! The gas line of the car kept freezing, bringing us to a halt. This could easily have been fatal but somehow we arrived. Even in a large robust car this would have been a very Canadian experience, struggling with the snow and the cold all the way.

This is as good a place as any to tell the Jamie Tappenden story. In the spring of 2001 I visited at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Soon after arriving I met the young philosopher of mathematics — actually a philosopher of the history of mathematics — Jamie Tappenden. He was surprised to discover that I was Canadian, in fact came from northern Ontario. This is where he also grew up, in a little town on the north shore of Lake Superior. Flash back now some forty years. In the summer I was sixteen a friend and I had the foolish idea that we would make some money by going through the little towns north of Lake Superior selling encyclopedias. It was a foolish idea because the people did not need them, we knew they did not need them, and they probably knew that we knew they did not need them. I sold one set and my friend sold none. So I had some knowledge of these places. We returned to Port Arthur and set out on an equally foolish expedition of driving to Mexico in a tiny three cylinder car without adequate papers.

Back to the main thread. A couple of days before I left Ann Arbor I had lunch with Jamie and I asked him how he came to be an academic, let alone someone working in such a recondite area, from a background in a remote area short of good schools and libraries and so on. He said "My interest in ideas was formed by reading a set of Britannica*s that someone had managed to sell my mother against her better judgement a few months before I was born. That was really the dominant influence on my development." And the dates work!

A few years later I ran into Jamie at a meeting of the American Philosophical Association. He was walking with our common PhD advisor Paul Benacerraf. When he saw me he

began to tell Paul the story. But suddenly he stopped and asked "Adam, have you told me the whole story? Are you really my father?" The answer has to be no, unfortunately.

marriage: Your life is rarely the way you imagined it will be. I expected a domestically quiet life where I would be happily married to one person for a long time, would be faithful to her as she would be to me, and that we would help each other raise children and accomplish our other aims in life. Naivety, innocence. Instead I have been married three times, the first two for just ten years each. I have had to work at staying in touch with my children from outside their main homes. And there has been a fair amount of unfaithfulness inflicted and suffered.

Many of the standard generalizations do not seem true to me. Or any rate they have not been manifested in my life. I grew up with a stereotype of men who need to exert willpower to remain faithful and women to whom it comes much more easily. I just have not seen this. Good and bad behaviour, at any rate in the sense of behaviour that encourages and challenges stability, have seemed to me evenly distributed; they vary tremendously from person to person and couple to couple and I do not see much of a pattern. No details: these are other people's lives also.

My adulthood was lived through an unstable combination of early feminism, scepticism about traditional ethics, and inexperience. Many people my age married early in life before they knew anything non-mechanical about sex, and then became very curious about what they might be missing. Since we were very often each other's first sexual partners, we were often missing a lot. I think that things are different now. People marry or form long-term couples later in life; they wait longer to have children; they have come a little further in thinking through what spouses can expect of each other; they do not expect miracles. One consequence is that people often find their way into a state that is in some ways nearer the contract that held between couples several generations ago, though free-er and more equal than it was inbetween. Perhaps that is too optimistic.

There was a lot of affection in my first two marriages, until near their ends. Milly and I are still on very good terms, and the deep affection between Susanna and me has never gone away, even when things have been difficult. (Sue, now, that's a different story with different personalities, but the first years were good.) And passion, at times. Passion also for people I had more sense than to marry. I wishfor later generations the opportunity of not marrying until they are well into their lives.

When I look back on the marriages and the non-marriages, I am puzzled. Such a lot that I still do not understand. Sometimes it has taken years to realize that I have no idea what was going on. (1991-2 has now become a complete mystery to me.) I used to say that the longer you are with someone the less you understand them. You become more puzzled, because you have been exposed to more evidence and it does not fit your earlier idealizing picture. I still think this is a factor in the way people come to seem more mysterious than they were. But I now think there is also another factor. We move the goalposts. When things are going well we do not ask too many questions, but when we are frustrated or quarrelling or disagreeing we want to know exactly what the other person's motives are. (It is like the way that we ignore how much we do not understand about others in everyday life as long as things are going cooperatively, but as soon as someone is disruptive or malicious we want more detail about why they acted that way. How they *could* act that way. So evil always seems more puzzling than good, although we are equally in the dark, or rather the half-light, about both.)

Susanna and I have been conversationally and emotionally close from the very beginning. We can talk about anything and we share many attitudes. But we have often, in fact usually, not been spatially close. I doubt that in our twenty-two years together we have been steadily under the same roof for more than a couple of months. Sometimes we have lived in different countries. And we have always maintained separate dwellings. Now I live in this Tapestry place and Susanna lives on Bowen Island, not far away but definitely not here, spending some three days a week with me. The most interesting form this took was in Connecticut, where we had two small houses, back-to-back, separated by her dog-infested yard and my dog-free yard which were joined by a hedge with a gate in it. We would work separately all day and then decide where to eat dinner and where to

spend the night. It worked, and is a model of the separate-but-close relationship we both think is ideal.

myopia: I have been very myopic (shortsighted, nearsighted) since birth. Extremely in one eye and extraordinarily in the other. Focus on the tip of my nose with the better one and focus on individual eyelashes with the other. I did not get my first glasses until I was five and I could not have seen much about people's faces until then. Vocal expressiveness is still more important to me than facial, and what someone's voice sounds like is a more important attribute than their appearance. Even with glasses a lot of facial interaction was difficult, and I had to sit in the front row of a classroom in order to read the blackboard.

A terrific relief to get contact lenses at fourteen. They were very new then and my father took me to be fitted by a visiting contact lens representative. The lenses arrived in the mail a month later and I had to remember or discover all by mysel how to insert and remove them. Frightening. But then I could sit at the back of the class with the bad boys, which was a lot more fun. And I could interact with people's faces. This had a disadvantage, though. They could see my face, and I could see them reacting to it, which I found disturbing. For years after, until sometime in my 30s, I was more comfortable not looking at people in conversation, although I realized that they usually did not like this. (At Princeton I was tutor to a blind student. He would come and we would talk for an hour. When the next student came in it would be ten minutes before I would realize with an uncomfortable shock "this one can see me". A student at Ottawa once told me that throughout the first class he thought I was blind.) I was almost forty when I began to work hard at looking at people when I spoke to them. I still found the balance between staring and losing contact hard to manage.

At the age of seventy-one I had a cataract operation on each eye. The cataracts were not very advanced, but the MS was making it hard to manage the contact lenses so this was a good solution. The procedure involves implanting an artificial lens; one does not then need contacts or glasses. I found, as others have, that I could see better than I ever had

in my life. The nervous system was apparently flexible enough to adapt to unprecedentedly better data. Not only was I free of inserting and removing contact lenses, I did not have the constant slight irritation and the burden on subtle eye movements that they bring. (Remember that my contacts were particularly thick.) So suddenly I found it very easy to play a more normal role in the conversational exchange of glances. This came easily, without thinking about it. It is interesting that the instinct was lurking, waiting for the opportunity to be used.

music: A lifelong commitment to something I am not good at. As a child I liked people, especially my mother, singing to me. What child does not? My mother used to sing to me often when we were driving in the car. I think the next serious musical influence was early in our days in Port Arthur, when I used to play through my mother's collection of scratchy old 78s. Two in particular stick in my memory. Both Mozart: the oboe quartet, played by Goossens and the famous though slightly infantile Eine Kleine Nachtmusik. But I was not thought to be very musical, and correctly since I sang badly and showed no aptitude for playing an instrument. My twin Tom sang well and had music lessons. (Recorder and then piano? Neither lasted long.) Eventually he became good at improvising and picking out tunes on the piano, which he still has a talent for. Not me. But I did sit down at the piano in the basement of the house on Farrand Street and pick out a few tunes and "compose" strange contrapuntal fragments that consisted of a few repetitive motifs played simultaneously. At about the same time my father began giving my mother long-play records of classical symphonies, which I would listen to. And my friend Richard and I would borrow records from the library, often 19th-century music, with a preference for things we thought loud and disruptive, and play them at high volume. Later I began to buy my own records, and the choice developed in the direction of Baroque music and chamber music. I had a set of Beethoven late quartets, which I listened to intensively. (Very musical people tell me how difficult they find them, in contrast for example to early and middle Beethoven quartets, which it took me a long time to have any feel for. Another sign of approaching music from a peculiar angle.)

My mother offered me piano lessons. I refused for a perverse reason. As an over-intellectual little lad I knew that pianos were equally tempered and that equal temperament is not the really correct tuning you can obtain on stringed instruments and woodwinds. So I thought it would mis-educate my ear. But this was silly. My ear was nowhere near a state where it could absorb anything so sophisticated. And I must have known it, really.

In college I went to concerts, heard opera for the first time, and listened to a lot more recorded music. It meant a lot to me, and the self-deception of having some musical skill developed. In graduate school, in the interlude when Milly and I went to Freiburg for a year, I took clarinet lessons. I really wanted to play the oboe. It was not just that Mozart recording from my childhood, but I had realized that the voices that stood out for me in orchestral music were the double reeds. However everyone told me that the oboe was very difficult to play and someone like me should not attempt it, so I tackled the clarinet as a second-best. I made a little progress, for example in reading music, but did not like the sound I was supposed to aim at. That too now seems to me just silly: it is a fine sound, though not what I was focused on. When I was back in Princeton I rented and then bought an oboe and took lessons. I had a succession of teachers and played the instrument, the same instrument, for forty years. I mastered the oboe in the sense of playing in tune, except at one point in the upper register, which might have been the fault of the instrument since I could hear it and sense well what it should have been, as well as producing a nice tone. I think that I found it less difficult than its reputation would suggest. (One advantage of the oboe for amateurs is that when you screw up people will say "well, it *is* a difficult instrument".) But I never played well. The trouble was basic musicality rather than the instrument. Keeping accurate time, or sometimes even very roughly acceptable time, was always difficult. This is a particular hazard when playing with people, and instruments like this are basically social creatures, whose sound has evolved to combine with other instruments. I played in amateur orchestras, which gives the invaluable experience of hearing complicated music from the inside, and in small groups. For years in Bristol I went to the Hotwells music Association and reduced my fellow players to desperate annoyance. But it was interesting. Years before, just before going to Bristol, I twice went to the summer camp of the Canadian Amateur

Musicians Association, a really admirable institution, which was for me the site of many disasters.

The main musical events in Bristol life were the visits of the Welsh National Opera, and the yearly Bath festival. I used to ride my bicycle to concerts at the Bath festival. I would usually take the back roads because they were safer and more interestingly winding and sloped, but sometimes this meant that I did not arrive in time. In 1997 I had to rush to get to a string quartet concert, and arrived out of breath and in no shape to concentrate on difficult music. The first half of the program was a quartet by Xenakis: very abstract, with slides and micro-tones. I paid attention to this but felt that my concentration was all used up so I decided not to put much effort into the quartet by Milton Babbitt that took up the second half. I fished a notebook out of my pocket and began to write drafts of a couple of letters. The man seated next to me gave me a dirty look. At the end of the performance I had a dilemma. It would be rude not to applaud at all but hypocritical to applaud enthusiastically since I had not really been listening. I applauded halfheartedly. The man next to me gave me an even dirtier look. Then the performers turned to applaud the composer. It was the man next to me! Perhaps the only performance his quartet would ever get and he found himself seated next to someone writing letters throughout it.

I continued to play and occasionally have lessons on returning to North America. I did not stop until the MS had made it too difficult for the fingers. By now I knew that I would always be a terrible player. I used to say that I played the oboe the way many people play golf: very badly, but loving it. The Florence Foster Jenkins of the oboe.

Music has been a theme in several of my closer relationships. Particularly the better ones. Milly and I loved many of the same works, and went to the opera together in New York and Freiburg. We had a contract that I would not play Brahms when she was in the house if she would not play Mahler when I was in the house. Carol became a more than competent flute player. In fact we met when she needed someone to play beginners music with. Little did I know that before long she would be uncomfortable playing with me because she was so much better. Susanna is vastly better equipped musically that I

am. She can sing harmony and plays several instruments. Although there is no comparison of our skills, she likes a lot of what I regard as third-rate music. Perhaps this is just jealousy. If you cannot win on ability you may try winning on taste.

After I had given up the oboe I still went to many concerts. Particularly chamber music. And I tried to develop a sense of key structure, which is basic to classical chamber music. Partly out of rivalry with Susanna, I suspect, I spent a summer doing little but training my ear to identify to identify particular pitches and keys. I had a sort of a breakthrough and increased my skill at this. I wrote up a mini-essay on the results, which may or may not be useful to anyone else.

mysticism and logic: Human beings are just a stage in the evolution of intelligence, a stage in evolution generally. They understand the world somewhat better than their ancestors a couple of million years ago, but not that much better, and if they do not screw things up completely they will be succeeded by creatures that understand the world better than they do. This is the biological argument for taking our current conception of things with a grain of salt. (It is an argument *using* our current conception of things. That is interesting.) On the other hand tackling any problem, intellectual or practical, you have to use the best tools you can find, and the best tools for understanding that we can find are science, mathematics, and the general resource of putting many heads together. (I will not defend this here.) So we have reasons both for thinking scientifically and for taking this thinking as tentative. But what else can we do?

I have been scientifically well-informed since I was a teenager, a reader of science magazines and high-level expositions, a competent though not gifted mathematician, and have long had many scientist friends. As an undergraduate I hung out with the physics majors more than the philosophers or the mathematicians, and had a general grasp of their topics. So I know the stuff. But I do not think it is the final word. It is obviously not the final word.

Since my 30s I have been a regular meditator. At first the then fashionable TM, later an improvised routine of my own devising, and much later the practices of a Zen group I fell in with on Bowen Island. The Zen practices seemed rather like what I had worked out for myself. Now I am back to improvising my own techniques. I credit all this with calm and sanity, often in difficult times. It also has a tendency to generate mystical feelings. A sense of unity with something that is not you, and a sense of everything being all right in the long run. These are not directly inconsistent with science or a scientific point of view, though there are legitimate questions about whether there can be any intelligible content to them. I feel torn, between consequences of practices that are in the middle of my life and the implications of beliefs that are as solid as anything I can formulate. I probably should not feel torn. There is something right about each. But not knowing the limited truth relative to our limited minds is not always comfortable. That is just the way it is.

not yet: Things that did not exist when I was a child. Jet airliners, television (introduced in England when I was a child but not yet in Canada when we arrived, so we could tell other children about it), credit cards (I got my first one around 1970, and they were not common then), transistors (radios and music equipment used vacuum tubes), digital computers (PCs did not exist until I was in my 30s), email, the internet, cell phones, nuclear power (seen as the way of the future when I was a teenager, and now faded into disappointment), solar energy, DNA technology, satellites, spaceflight of any kind, lasers, seatbelts. Many other things, I am sure. These were new to us and we had not anticipated many of them. But we had expected that in our lifetimes there would be flying cars, fusion power, wealth for everyone, an end to most diseases (so "a cure" for cancer). The pattern is pretty clear: you underestimate the problems of turning science into technology, and you have no idea what fundamental physical discoveries will be made. (How could you?) Of a piece with underestimating engineering difficulties is underestimating how hard social problems will be to solve. If it would be much better for everyone to act in a certain way, then eventually they will see this and act in that way, won't they?

Devices for recorded music are interesting. When I was a child there were only 78 rpm records. It took three or more to record a symphony on both sides of each. When I was a teenager long play recordings, 33 rpm, came in, and the same length could be got on the front and back of a recording. Eventually CDs appeared, but not till I was in my 40s. We all expected that they or similar gadgets would persist, but now they are disappearing in the face of a variety of digital media. (CDs bore the roots of their own obsolescence, as we might have seen, because they were digital and there is no limit to the ways in which digits can be preserved and reproduced.) Large reel to reel tape recorders were the only kind until perhaps the 1970s. I had a reel to reel in the 60s; it is a mystery to me now what I used it for.

There were nuns in voluminous black habits. Women rarely wore trousers. On special occasions women wore veils. (Not opaque Islamic veils but network spidery veils that made their faces visible but untouchable. Like the bridal veils that are not unknown even as I write.) A fair proportion of men wore a tie and solid leather shoes at all times. When I was a small child men regularly wore hats; that had changed by the time I was a teenager.

Fewer women worked, especially middle-class women. In some occupations a woman had to resign from her job if she got married. There were fewer female doctors, lawyers, business people, scientists, professors. Not at all unknown but definitely fewer. Our long idyllic summer holidays at the lake, sailing, canoeing, taking swimming lessons, and with long sessions on rainy days and in the evenings sitting around playing cards and games and talking, were made possible or at any rate much easier because our mothers did not have jobs. They came down to the summer cottages with their children, looked after them, arranged swimming lessons and so on, and enjoyed the company of other mothers, while the fathers worked in town and commuted to the cottages evenings or weekends. The mothers got to swim and sail and canoe also, mind you.

Long-distance train journeys, sometimes involving sleeping cars, were common. (The trip from Montréal to Thunder Bay, which I first did when we immigrated in 1954 and regularly took to university years later, took twenty-four hours. All the way across the

country took four days or so.) These were much more interesting than travelling by plane. Lots of scenery, and real conversation among the passengers. People crossed the Atlantic by boat not as a luxury but as the regular way of getting to the other side.

Society has also changed in ways that we would never have imagined. Attitudes to gay people were completely different when I was a child. (Northern Ontario was not at the forefront of developments, but I think this would be true throughout the world. Things can move fast.) Male homosexuality was seen as awful and disgusting, perhaps even by some people who were dismayed to find it in themselves. Female homosexuality was seen as ridiculous, with an image of clumsy deliberately unattractive women. I am not sure when this changed. The first stable gay couple I knew was in the late 70s. I do not think I was aware of any particular woman as gay until sometime in the 80s. Attitudes to sex in general were changing from the middle of the 60s for the next twenty years. Sex between unmarried people became normal, and sex before marriage came to be desirable. It would be foolish to marry someone you had never been to bed with. I think that the decentering of marriage made room for gay sex in the range of normal behaviour. And then gay marriage became conceivable. So if in a short-term full-circle we now made marriage central for lovers again it would include gay lovers.

I do not know if there was more racism, but it was differently distributed, both in society and within people's minds. Thinking in terms of races was almost universal, although the connotations of taking someone to be one race or another varied a bit. You met clearly racist attitudes in people throughout society, whatever their education or position. And the attitudes were overt; they were not chased down into unacknowledged parts of belief and personality as they are now

All this may seem unremarkable. But you have to to have lived through the past generation to feel the difference in the atmosphere.

people: Here are some admirable people I have known. (Besides the people in my families.) I have chosen them for their interesting paradoxical qualities rather than for fame or accomplishment.

Gordon Reece earned his living teaching mathematics to engineers. He had a PhD in applied mathematics and was a mathematically sophisticated and extraordinarily numerate person, but not an original mathematician. He had wanted to be a classicist rather than a mathematician but yielded to family pressure to do something apparently more practical. (His father was a Hebrew scholar, so the scholarly mentality was in the family.) He was an expert on the mathematics of heat transfer and a creator of election-forecasting models that outperformed those made by the specialists. His parents were Jewish refugees from Germany in the late 30s and eked out a subsistence living in England. There are two interesting features of his life that I want to mention.

First, his marriage. Gordon was gay all his life but he was happily married for years, not because he was in hiding but because as he said "she was a really nice person, and the sex was good." His wife died of cancer and he raised their two daughters alone. The younger was quite young when he became a single parent so he filled this role for quite a long time. As an adult she would send him a Mother's Day card every year. A few years later Gordon resumed his gay identity, cheerfully and eventually in a committed relationship. This reveals a possibility beyond the *Brokeback Mountain* warnings. The half of humanity you are attracted to may be determined by something deep and un-persuadable, but love is a more individual and flexible thing.

The other remarkable fact about Gordon is that he learned to speak four times. The first time as an infant, of course. He learned English and a fair amount of German as first languages. He was good at languages and could survive in a number of them. He had strange opinions about language, though. He would insist that all Slavic languages were essentially the same and if you could speak one of them there was no need to learn the others. In early middle-age he had a benign but growing brain tumour that had to be removed. On recovering from the operation he could not speak English but could produce a halting German. His English was very reduced, and he had to learn it again. Years later

he fell off the wall of a castle in France and while lucky to survive was hospitalized for a long time with the consequences of a concussion. Again he could not speak, and had to learn again, as if the episode had renewed the earlier damage. Yet later, he had attack of meningitis, with the same result: inability to produce the sounds of English which had to be laboriously relearned. In the end he was as extraordinarily articulate as ever, in a slow and halting way. I take this, as much as his marriage, as a tribute to human flexibility.

Christopher Williams lived his entire adult life in a wheelchair, from probably his very early 20s to his middle 60s. He had been a teenage convert to Catholicism, and like many converts he was especially committed. He was in Rome studying (training? preparing?) to be a priest when the polio struck. His order said "you're out; we can't handle a disabled priest." That would have made most people into instant atheists, but Christopher became extra devout, and found a strange sanity in the fact that he was living his second-choice life, as an academic instead of as a priest. He was a philosopher, though, so his doctrines were rather tempered with idiosyncratic careful thinking. He was for example gay, and would say "well, the Pope's wrong about *that*." The polio had made both legs unusable, and from birth one of his arms did not work properly. He drove a car adapted to his use, with gear changes, steering, acceleration, and turn signals all operated with his right hand. Most of the time this worked well enough, but sometimes it was terrifying.

There were many stories of Christopher's patience the face of his disability. He lived by himself in a country village, where he had recruited a team of people to assist him. But they were not there all the time. He had a sling mounted on a track in in the ceiling that would lift him out of bed and over to the toilet and then to where he could get dressed. One day it jammed and he spent all day hanging in the air until someone happened to pass by. His precarious driving once resulted in his car overturning. He was not hurt but sat suspended upside down by the seat belt again for a couple of hours until he was noticed.

Now that I live my life from a wheelchair I often think back to what Christopher accomplished and put up with. He is proof that it is possible. I also find myself doing

things, for example making a particular face while moving my shoulders in order to rearrange my legs, and suddenly remember observing exactly the same in him. Suddenly you see from the inside why that is just what you will do in that context.

Paul Benacerraf, much celebrated philosopher of mathematics. Much celebrated also for having written very little, so a higher-order renown for being so celebrated while producing so little. Encouragement for those who would rather perish than publish less-than-careful stuff. But I shall remark not on his work but on his rootedness or lack of it and his way of writing.

Paul came of an international family. France, Venezuela, the United States. The family is originally from North Africa. Members of the family have been prominent in Venezuelan cultural life and there was a family presence in Paris. His brother was a Harvard immunologist who won a Nobel Prize, and there are other eminent Benacerrafs in several countries. So you might expect an indifference about place, as long as it is culturally rich. But in fact Paul went to school in Princeton New Jersey, was an undergraduate and a graduate student at Princeton University, and taught there all his career. So the family wanders and he maintains the connections, but his own life has been focused on a few square miles.

Paul's small output makes sense when you consider his mode of composition. Most people do intellectual work by thinking about a problem, not knowing what to say, and then doing whatever works for them — long walks, bike rides, conversations, or whatever — while possibilities, solutions, and objections run around in their head until finally the whole mess takes some shape. Not Paul. When he has to address a problem in order to produce a contribution he sits in front of a keyboard and stares at it. Eventually a word or two appears, and then he is stuck for sometimes quite a while. Eventually more words appear, though he is conscious of no thoughts running through his mind, and later, often much much later, the work is completed. I cannot believe that strategies, solutions, and objections are not somewhere in his mind, but he is not consciously aware of them, and thus cannot plan his work in some ways that everyone else does or consult

with others in the way that everyone else does. It is remarkable that anything at all got done.

Kathy Wilkes was a thoroughly respectable philosopher, contributing to the philosophy of mind and playing a role in refocusing it as much on the brain as on purely psychological descriptions. But her real importance was as a supporter of dissident intellectuals in Eastern Europe near and just after the end of the Cold War. This began in the 1980s when she took to travelling to Czechoslovakia to support a group of philosophers who would give informal seminars on topics not allowed by the authorities. Her presence would add a small element of safety, as it would be an international scandal if she were beaten up or arrested. She was well-connected in the English establishment: although she herself was moderately left-wing her family was aristocratic and of influence in the Conservative party, and this gave another strand of protection and influence, which she had no hesitation in using. She eventually helped some of these intellectuals emigrate to Western Europe. Later she was a founder and organizer of the annual summer school in the philosophy of science in Dubrovnik. When Dubrovnik was besieged by the Serbs she was present throughout the shelling and had some evidence that there was a plot to assassinate her in particular. Such things would not prevent her from doing what she felt she had to.

I had known Kathy when she was a graduate student at Princeton. (During my teaching time there, after my studying time there.) After her PhD she got a job at St. Hilda's College in Oxford. Then when I went to Bristol I got in touch with her. Our friendship survived my slow realization that she had no emotional interest in men, though she was a good friend to people of all kinds. I would take the train from Bristol to Oxford, have a meal with her and talk for a while and then cycle back to Bristol. Sometimes I would go one day, stay at St. Hilda’s, and come back the next. There was a strain between us at some point in the early 90s because the Dubrovnik experience was making her what I thought of as a Croatian nationalist, with as I saw it unbalanced Pro-Croatian views. (As I saw it, everyone was committing atrocities and there was no point putting different awful things on scales of a balance. It is hard to maintain this view if you are nearer the

action.) But after the Dubrovnik crisis I went to Oxford specifically to talk her through the trauma. I hope I was some help.

For much of her life Kathy had very serious back pain, which she self-medicated largely with alcohol. She was very good at maintaining an appearance of control when there was a lot of alcohol in her system. So good at it, in fact, that it took me years to realize that this was the explanation of some otherwise puzzling behaviour. Eventually the price was general organ failure. In the year after I had left the country I had a message from a friend of hers that it would be a very good idea to be in touch immediately. I wrote her a long letter but did not make a special transatlantic trip. She died soon after, and I wish I had gone.

Three of these four people were gay. Is there a connection? I suspect that there is. They were not locked into nuclear families and friendships with a range of people were important to them. They knew well that conventional moral views could be mistaken. They knew that everyone is different. To this you have to add social sense, live thinking, and affection for individual people, characteristics that are spread evenly among all of us.

Prue: Prudence Frances Ollivant, nonconforming daughter of a very respectable upper-middle-class English family: bishops, authors, painters, military officers. She wrote poetry, read unauthorized books, thought for herself. I think the family despaired of getting her into a suitable marriage and sent her to a finishing school in Switzerland and then to a domestic college in Edinburgh, then they finally allowed her to study nursing at the beginning of the war. There she increased the despair of her family by falling in love with and even marrying a young Armenian doctor. They produced a clutch of children, and then she persuaded him to leave the country and emigrate to Canada.

Though she had a romantic and even sentimental attitude to life, she had an annoying reasonableness as a mother: she was sure right behaviour was obvious once one thought about it, so if you were bad she would sit you down and patiently try to explain all the reasons not to act that way. Unfortunately, she was not a very good arguer, and

eventually in frustration you would think "just beat me, please, and stop all this torrent of confusing words." But talk was central, conversation was the way of relating to people.

She loved the northern Ontario woods and became as Canadian as she could, though keeping her classy manner while being completely unaware of it. When her husband died suddenly she decided that life in a faraway place without a supportive family was preferable to the claustrophobia of going back to England, so stayed. She resumed her nursing career, and eventually twice functioned as invaluable resident grandmother while her daughter in law and later her daughter were returning to education. This was a practical feminism, helping women in her life. She stayed in touch with her sons' exes, sometimes to the sons' annoyance.

As she got older her eccentricities if anything increased. (Milly, who loved and admired her, would describe certain habits as "Peruvian".) So all her friends had an equal stock of admiring and ridiculing stories. As she got older her language also became more convoluted, and I found conversation increasingly difficult. I suspect that some postmenopausal difficulty in finding the word she wanted was part of the issue, and determined to produce the articulate sentence she had designed in her head she would reorder the words in the hope that the missing noun or verb would appear in due course, even if not in the place where English grammar would put it. (Her granddaughter Chandra, also extremely fond of her, would say "Granny, you are talking German".) We had one miraculous day-long conversation, driving from the south of England to Scotland a few months before she died, when this barrier disappeared and we talked with the ease that I remember from when I was a child.

When she was about fifty she would tell people that she intended to end her life on her seventieth birthday. (People of her generation thought of strokes rather than Alzheimer's as the great peril of old age, as they can strike without warning leaving you without the power to decide your own future.) As this time approached we naturally did not remind her of this. My sister Alison once said to me that Prue was finding being an older woman not as unpleasant as she had expected. Shortly after, Prue said to me, just out of the blue, "you know, I have not forgotten. When the time comes …" And then years after

that she raised the topic again. "And I know how I shall do it. A glass of gin in a blizzard would do nicely." (Hypothermia is said to be a very gentle way to go.) She was eighty-nine and after a heart attack was not looking forward to the future when in the morning after the last blizzard of the winter she was found outside with a glass in her hand. At her memorial outsiders said how noble and public spirited she was, while family members told irreverent stories. It is a sign of the times that when I tell people about this they do not say sadly “how tragic" but with admiration "what a tough lady".

When her children were independent, she gave away much of her money and lived a very frugal life. We knew that she had bought a house or two for needy people, but it was a surprise to me that she had been the anonymous donor who made the initial gift for the Thunder Bay Foundation, which has since attracted more money and now is central to charity and social change in the city.

remorse: When as a philosopher I have written about the emotion of remorse I have not been short of examples from my own life. Remorse, though contrasting with regret, does not have to focus on the violation of some deeply held moral principle; the essence is a characteristic retrospective shudder. How could I have done *that*? (Just as when you find atrocities incomprehensible you wonder not *why* the people acted as they did but *how* they could have.) Of course my acts looked different at the time.

No one remembers all the wrong things they have done, or fully appreciates which ones were worse than others, and self-deception is powerful even after years. Some things I wish I had been made to reflect more about are comparatively minor. A middle sized crime that for some reason sticks in my mind and haunts me: forcing out a vulnerable tenant who lived in the attic apartment of the first house I ever owned, in Ottawa in 1979, I am sure I have done many things that are equally wrong that do not stay with me this way.

I squirm when I think of incidents of sexual forcefulness, though surely less blatant than in many men's lives. One in particular seems to be a borderline case of what we would

now call date rape, manoeuvring somebody into bed not by literal force but definitely against her first choice. A kind of situational blackmail.

I have three times been the other man in the breakup of a couple. In each case I persuaded myself that it was a bad relationship and that I was helping the woman escape. But I was profiting from what I was telling myself. In each case she was also complicit, but I should not have accepted the role and instead have encouraged her to take her own life in hand for herself. And, discussed separately, there is my comparatively mild reaction to colleagues' abuse of their power over students.

romance, passion: My sexual awakening was late in life, in my early 20s. Interest in girls early in my teenage years paused for several yearsafter my father's sudden death. I think this gave me more female friends that I would otherwise have had. Milly and I got together when we were both undergraduates and were a couple during our graduate student days. I suspect that we both thought of ourselves as somewhat damaged people who were unlikely to experience grand passion. (I certainly thought that of myself.) So we settled for a sensible sibling-like relationship that provided a safe haven for both of us. We were good friends, in spite of sometimes fierce quarrels. And we had a child who we were both devoted to. In this safe space we healed, but predictably when passion entered our lives it was not for each other. I often think that it was a pity that we did not meet fifteen years later, when we had each had time to outgrow our troubles. But it is impossible to know.

sailing: It’s boats and bicycles, for me. Both involve getting outside and exercising in the weather, sometimes in a lot of weather. Both usually mean sharing the activity with others, though both can be solitary, but neither has to be a team sport or competitive. I am lacking something almost universal in humanity, all interest in team competition. (In high school I would read the sports pages of newspapers so that I could keep up conversationally, but they had no intrinsic interest for me.) For a long time I suspected that my lack of interest in team sports was due to to a deeply unsocial mentality. Since

then I have learned that I actually enjoy a variety of human company, with the proviso that I wish nearly all social interactions took half as much time. So that is not the reason. But there are many ways of getting out actively into the weather. Boats are deeply hooked into my mind for family reasons.

I do not know where or when my father learned to sail, but it was obviously important to him. And it was something he and I used to do together. Soon after arriving in Canada he bought a little – tiny – folding sailboat which we carried in the back of the car to various lakes. Then when we had the cottage at Loon Lake he had a boat-builder make from plans a 10½ foot foot Cadet dinghy which we sailed at Loon. (It was called *Laika* after the unfortunate dog sent up in Sputnik II.) Then on a trip to England we three boys went to a boat show and brought back the idea of catamarans, so that winter he and I made a 17 foot Jumpahead catamaran in the basement. We made the two hulls separately and then transferred them outside when the snow had melted and joined them together. There was a lot of carpentry in this: we had ordered a kit but it was little more than a box full of wood. (We had finished the boat one evening except for a pair of hatch covers, a tiny job, and to celebrate this we went out to dinner. After months of work it was a couple of years before the hatch covers were completed. You should always finish a job before considering it done.) He and I took a boat-camping tour of Thunder Bay that summer, surfing down big waves towards the north of the bay. We spent the nights (two? three?) in sleeping bags on the deck. One morning there was a large moose eating water lilies right beside where we had anchored the boat.

I had built a boat, so I assumed I was good with my hands and had an aptitude for carpentry. It took me a long time to realize that all the judgement and technique was my father's, and I had just held things in place while he worked. After he died, sailing was a symbol of what we had done together, and important to me for that reason. (The day before he died I was sailing the Cadet on Loon Lake and went very near to the cottage of someone who was later rumoured to have had a hand in his death. In the irrational way that these things work I was long haunted by the possibility that this had been a taunt with fatal consequences.)

For all these reasons sailing became a loaded symbolic thing for me. I would read books about sailing, in all kinds of vessels from dinghies to windjammers. When I was bored in class I would design yachts in the margins of notebooks. Years later, when I had a time of writing down dreams and seeing what patterns there might be, I noticed that I had only to meet an interesting woman at a party and that night I would dream that she and I were on a boat and it was in danger of capsize. Even now, boats figure in my dreams. I had many sailing fantasies, which included the idea of owning a real cruising boat. But these are expensive so in my twenties I bought a little boat with a cabin, designed for sailing on medium-sized inland lakes, such as Lake of the Woods, and sailed it on Lake Superior. (She was called *Washoe* after the chimpanzee who learned sign language.) This was not a good idea. Lake Superior is rough, strong winds blow up very quickly, and the water is very cold. I did not even have an inflatable life raft. I remember one trip out onto the lake with Milly, infant Stephen, and my twin Tom. A storm brew up and we headed for the nearest safe place. Only Tom knew the danger that we were in. After that I sailed *Washoe* on Loon Lake and later the Ottawa River, both of which would have been better sailed in a dinghy. Sometime during this period I read a book called *Heavy Weather Sailing*, designed to help yachtsmen survive hurricanes and the like. In the middle of the book there is a series of photos of enormous waves taken from the decks of boats. These got into my imagination and terrified me. But, still, in Bristol I bought a sturdy dinghy that I intended eventually to sail in the Severn estuary. I never sailed it in anything fiercer than a small lake. Just as well, because it was gradually dawning on me that there are ways in which I am not suited for sailing in difficult conditions. Simple physical clumsiness is the most basic of these, but there is also a lack of physical resilience, of the ability to function when cold and short of sleep or food. (Yet the interest continued: on holiday with Susanna I used to take her out in rented sailboats and usually managed to terrify her.)

sexual abuse in academic life: Anyone who has been around universities in the second half of the twentieth century has seen a fair amount of it. Mostly male academics exercising what they took to be a perk of the job. It was certainly present when I was a faculty member at Princeton, and existed at **Bristol** when I was chair. It touches the lives

of other people I have mentioned in this document, though I shall not make connections explicit. The Bristol cases are the more important ones to mention because I was in charge or in a position of influence and did not eliminate what I did consider to be a dark fault of the system. There were two colleagues concerned, and in each case I spoke to them and remonstrated and expressed opinions. But in neither case did I threaten drastic action. If I had, would the rest of the department, the university administration, and the union have backed me up? Perhaps, and perhaps not; I do not think that either possibility is obvious. And it is a sign that things have changed somewhat that it was not obvious. But I never put it to the test. I did pride myself on setting up ways in which my meetings with my students would be unproblematic and nonthreatening, but I did little to spread this attitude through the department.

stories: I write a lot, and fairly easily. Academic nonfiction, that is. I care about style here, even though clarity and argument are actually more important. I read a lot of fiction, and very quickly, if I do not force myself to go slowly. These used to combine: I would sit at typewriter or computer and write, with a novel open on my lap, reading a page or a chapter when the word or sentence or paragraph that I wanted did not come to me. This slowed down the writing a lot. And the style of the novel tended to transfer to the prose I was producing. Henry James is very bad for your academic writing. And my nonfiction writing is rich in examples: real worked-out examples involving real people, or at any rate people as you find them in fiction. (A reviewer of my *Disasters and Dilemmas* wrote "if Morton's life is anything like his examples, it must make Woody Allen's look simple".) So I would often have a notebook where I wrote down plots or themes for possible novels. But I never wrote them. When the time came there was always another philosophical project that took priority. (Of course another reason might be that plots and themes are nothing compared to the real work of developing a germ into a whole book.) The storytelling impulse has found different outlets.

As a child I used to tell long improvised stories to the other kids, particularly in the summers in the shared "bunkhouse" at the Loon Lake cottage after lights out. Then when I was a parent I would make up interminable sagas during long car rides. Stephen and I

used to drive from Princeton to Toronto to Thunder Bay, each leg at least a day, and during this time one or two stories would be stretched out with digressions and cliffhangers so that they lasted the trip. I also wrote up stories for Stephen and sent them to him. A different child in a different country: I would make up car stories for Edith. In fact both Edith and her sister Isabel would insist on stories during drives, often about an incompetent doctor called Dr. Darekill and the tangles his attempts to cover up his disasters caused. At some point Edith and Isabel came to demand stories so insistently that I began to refuse, and in fact the storytelling impulse just dried up under the strain. (I remember taking Edith and her friend Tom Berry to French conversation classes — which I think had no effect on them at all — and telling them stories as we went along. I particularly remember doing this during a terrific windstorm one day. I believe this was after the time of the car sagas.)

Towards the end of the Bristol time I became fascinated by the minisaga format. Exactly 50 words, with a beginning middle and end. I wrote a few. Then when Susanna was at Stanford I decided to write out such tiny stories in a dedicated notebook with a dedicated fountain pen. The stories found their own size, generally from one to four pages, 1000 to 2000 words, and soon outgrew the notebook and the pen. Now there are some fifty stories that I am happy with, and more that I am less happy with. On a variety of topics and with a variety of tones and styles. They are not great literature, but most are well written and some are carefully thought out. I have put them on my website which is probably all the publishing they are going to get. Anyone who knows about them can find them.

Time: Sometime in high school I wrote a metaphysical essay on time. I argued that human beings *can* travel in time, but they are restricted to moving forwards at a constant rate. I am still confused about time, in both a practical and theoretical way. I have never written about it again because I find the topic too difficult. And I am just terrible at keeping track of what day it is, what year it is, sometimes what century it is. I do not remember what I have to do the next day. It is very annoying to Susanna that I do not keep track of her tasks and appointments. The things just not stay in my mind,

though many other things do. The struggle to keep time in music might be a miniature version of this. It is an unworried way to be, without the pressure of the immediate schedule. I have to concentrate to make myself take account of the long-term schedule, which now includes things that I must do soon if I am to do them at all.

When I think about death my central attitude is that we face it with the human sense of before and after, but this is incomplete and partly illusory. If we are connected with anything more fundamental, *if,* it does not work like this.

timeline: just in case you want dates and sequence

Vagarshak (Stephan) Garibian 189X – 1960
Kathleen (Muffet) Morton 189X – 1928
Prudence Morton, Prue, born Ollivant 1917 - 2006
Stephen Ardashes Morton Garibian ("Garibian " dropped about 1948) 1921 – 1961
move to Canada 1955 [Port Arthur, now part of Thunder Bay. Farrand St., cottage on Loon Lake]
McGill 1963-1966
Princeton 1966-1968, 1969-1971 [Dickenson St., Butler Tract, Mount Lucas Rd, Edwards Pl.]
marriage to Milly 1968
Stephen 1971
divorce 1976
Ottawa 1979-1980 [rue S. Patrice, Stanley Ave.]
Bristol 1980-2000 [Somerset St., Bellevue Crescent, Worral Rd.]
Edith 1984
marriage to Sue 1985
divorce 1992
meet Susanna 1995
marriage 1996
move to Connecticut 2000 [Parker Pl., Nelson St.]

Edmonton 2005 – 2012 [Whyte Ave.]
MS 2006
to Bowen 2007 [Fernie Rd.]
retirement, Vancouver 2012 [Panorama Place, Tapestry, Amica]

tongue: Speech has never been easy, though I am a very verbal person. When I was a toddler I would throw tantrums because no one could understand what I said. (The problems later in life are semantic rather than phonetic.) When we moved to Canada it took me much longer than my siblings to sound anything like the other children around us. My interpretation is that my brain declared that it had been hard enough learning to speak in the first place and it was damned if it was going to go through it again. When I moved to Bristol my Midatlantic voice made many people suppose I was Irish. And on returning to Canada twenty-five years later, few of the people I meet take me at first for Canadian. Unlike my twin, I have never able to imitate people's voices. And I am not good at acquiring a plausible accent in another language. When we were children we were often in a French-speaking environment and as a result I internalized a sense of what the language should sound like, together with the realization that what came out of my mouth was very different. This set up a long-term embarrassment about speaking French, which I tackled in my late 40s and partially overcame.

I do not know whether the source of these difficulties is neurological, possibly together with my myopia a consequence of being the runt of a pair of twins. Or it might be anatomical. I have long had the impression that my tongue is shorter than average.

One strange consequence is that although I often hear music very vividly in my head, my efforts to produce what I can hear usually mystify other people. ("I heard a Beethoven Sonata on the radio and I am looking for a recording of it. But I am not sure what number it is." "No problem, Sir, just hum me a few bars.” "That is not a Beethoven Sonata. I am not even sure it is music.")

In spite of this I have become pretty good at French, and can survive in German. I learned a little Mandarin at one point. When travelling I learn enough of the local language to survive, and I often learn a few words of the language of people I am associating with. I am good at learning syntax, on the edge of competence at learning vocabulary, but terrible at learning pronunciation. It would not be surprising if there was some connection with the problematic fascination with music.

(An observation about accents, with practical consequences: If somebody sounds foreign or unnatural we notice more about other faults in their language. Conversely, if someone sounds good we tend not even to notice small grammatical mistakes. So even though a clumsy accent is no barrier to communication, people are less likely to judge you as competent in the language.)

travel: In my final year as an undergraduate at McGill I was talking to my best professor in the philosophy department (the only good one, in fact: André Gombay) who was describing the advantages of being an academic. "You will not earn a lot of money" he said "but you will see the world". Most of my generation of academics did not see the world. Jobs were so scarce that when they secured one they held onto it and did not take the risk of moving. But I have lived and worked in Canada, the United States, Britain, and New Zealand. And my work has taken me to China, Australia, France, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, and Taiwan. All of these were satisfying non-tourist visits where you get some sense of how people live. (There were many tourist visits to beaches, skiable mountains, and famous cities besides all this.) This has been to a large extent just luck, but also visibility in my subject plus a suitable mentality.

The mentality may be hereditary or historical. The Morton*s had travelled from East Anglia to Constantinople and several generations later scattered to the four corners. I have met Mortons of this tribe living in Australia, New Zealand, and Taiwan. Grandfather Garibian was a traveller from necessity. Like all Armenians in Turkey he had good reasons to leave and after that he went to Lebanon, Greece, and finally France. My parents were migrants from Britain to Canada, and as a result as children we often crossed the Atlantic

— by boat in the early days — to see family in England and France. Family holidays were typically in France, but there was one in Switzerland. This may not be an extraordinary amount of travelling but it certainly made me open to the idea of living my own life wherever it would take me. The Atlantic-crossing habit obviously continued, since I went to England in my middle 30s, returned to North America in my middle 50s, and am now in my home country of Canada again. My voice and manner are neither purely Canadian nor purely English. They are sufficiently in between that people from either side will be sure that I am not one of them. I am sure that I have done more travelling than any of my siblings, but Alison and Tom have spent longer in France, and both are good at languages.

the three lunches: Life in Bristol was not at its best. I was unhappily single, having broken up with two girlfriends and a wife in the past couple of years. My apartment was not really satisfactory. But I had been having good conversations in the philosophy-classics-history common room with a new hire in classics, Susanna. I was interested and so I emailed inviting her to lunch. Halfway through the lunch she revealed that she was married. So I instantly changed my manner. It was still a good conversation. A little while later she sent me an email, suggesting a second lunch. Then she said "I saw you change tack, but there is something I need to tell you. This is the summer that I leave him." I did not volunteer to be the other man; I suggested that these are things you should do for your sake, not because someone is persuading you. And it was probably during this second lunch that I had a vivid feeling of sudden dislocation, of the floor opening or scenery changing or music moving to an unexpected key. Then I went off on a camping expedition in the Gower Peninsula with Edith and her friends and her friends' parents. During that time I sat with the mother of one of her friends with our legs over the edge of a cliff and explained the situation to her. She pointed out that this might be the strictly correct course, but if I wanted to be in the picture when the dust had settled then I had better do something symbolic beforehand. So we had lunch number three. She still planned to make an escape and a life on her own, and I was transparent that I would be as supportive as I could without being the guy with the dynamite. Then it all happened,

and I was taken by everyone to be the guy with the dynamite all the same. In retrospect I do not mind.

We were in close touch but living apart for the next couple of months. We took a holiday together in Greece. In the fall we began living together. We each sold our places and it was a buyer's market at that time so we should have had no problem finding a place to buy together. But it took us six months, living in temporary places with most of our possessions in storage, until we bought a house that we had earlier made a higher offer on which the optimistic sellers had refused at that time. We got married on the first anniversary of lunch number one.

war: We all grew up expecting nuclear war. I remember my mother sitting me down sometime in the middle 50s and explaining that we might be wiped out very soon so that we should be nice to one another in the short time we had left. I suspect Thunder Bay was full of people who wanted to be way from large population centres for reasons of safety. (And a lot of people had escaped from the catastrophes in Europe.) And, a tiny but telling incident, I was at Loon Lake one summer's day around 1960 when a gas pipeline on the other side of the lake blew up, billowing dirt and smoke high into the air. I thought "well, that's it, finally." The awareness of this possibility receded when I became an adult, and although the dangers may be just as great they are not so large in public consciousness. My children grew up with no such expectation. But in their adulthood it has been replaced by expectation of ecological and climate catastrophe. I take it for granted that this will actually happen, so that by the time that people would be getting used to it and discounting it, it will be all around and inescapable.

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