

SIGNS

My first paranormal experience—so far as I had been aware--happened a few hours after the death of our little white west highland terrier Duffy on 2 April 2011. At only 10 years Duffy was in the prime of life, but on Fools Day he got sick from some abnormality. I was sitting with him, reassuring him and fully expecting him to recover. He looked unafraid and even happy with his ears upright and an apparent smile on his face when he passed so imperceptibly that it took me a moment to realize in horror that he was gone. He was such an adorable little companion, white with black eyes and nose and a tail that streamed like a banner when he ran. We felt like we had lost a child.

Judy gave me a lock of his white fur in a small tin container with a sentimental Victorian picture on it of baby angels embracing. The round container is about an inch in diameter with a ridge protruding around it where the halves snap together. I sat catatonic in our family room holding the container in my lap, staring at his empty dog bed a few feet away--where I sat when he died. Before he took to this bed for the last time he went around the house visiting his favorite places. When he sprawled out on his pile of toys as if to embrace them all, stuffed animals squeaked. Finally I set the container down on the coffee table in front of me, got up and went out to the kitchen. Moments later I returned and found the container where I had left it flat on the table, but now it was *balanced upright on its round edge!* I had never even attempted to balance the container on edge that way. It seemed impossible. I called Judy into the room. We tried to balance the container on its round edge, but the ridge where the halves snap together made it impossible at first. It requires a number of careful attempts.

The next morning I was taking a shower, weeping and grieving out loud. This bathroom is where Duffy used to come in and wait to be lifted up so he could see out the window. Now he lifted me. When I stepped out of the shower and started drying myself with a towel, I felt a light scratch down my right calf. I peered down at it and saw a pink scratch on my calf about four inches long. Later, Judy told me that while she was in bed, a white misty light took form at the foot of the bed and came up onto her chest the way Duffy used to do, then dissipated into blackness—three times in succession. She also felt him press against her leg while she sat reading. She experienced a number of such sensations in the bedroom where she used to play with Duffy on the floor most frequently.

While visiting us for Christmas in 2011 our son Dane told us that he was in the kitchen when he heard the familiar sound of Duffy hopping up onto the vinyl sofa in an adjacent room where he used to sit on the arm and look out the window into the back yard. Duffy left behind a sister, Bonnie, who mourned him so much that we acquired a new west highland terrier pup to prolong her life. The two were playing together in the upstairs bedroom one day when Judy took some pictures. In one photo, floating between them close to Bonnie, about six inches off the floor is a translucent orb about the size of a handball, turquoise blue like the room. Since then, a number of times while Judy has been alone in the bedroom she has heard a sound like dog tags clinking against the dog water bowl on the floor near her.

During 2012-13 we watched many paranormal documentaries on television. Amidst abundant evidence of an afterlife we saw video footage of a small dog that ran through a room with a small ghost dog chasing after it. Meanwhile we returned to the practice of our religious faith and began praying regularly. I formally repented of my sins. In the late afternoons Judy began reading aloud to me from books by people about their near-death experiences. She replaced some decorations in our house with religious statues, hung crucifixes in almost every room and three portraits of Jesus, the one painted by the little girl Akiane Kramarik. The girl reported having been taken to Heaven in 1998 at age 4, then she painted the portrait from memory at age 8. Later the little boy Todd Burpo about whom a popular movie was made recounted his visit to Heaven in 2003, likewise at age 4. The little boy selected the portrait by Kramarik among the many shown to him as the only one that actually looks like Jesus.

Our house is set back from the Pacific Ocean behind intervening foliage and beachfront houses. To the left is Pelican Bay and beyond it California. Often a dozen or more pelicans cruise in formation along the coast like a squadron of fighter planes on a mission. One day while a friend was visiting the three of us were in our upstairs bedroom/sitting room looking out at the ocean. I noticed pelicans approaching in the distance. Their unvarying route northward along the shoreline is about a hundred yards away beyond shore

pinetrees, but this time they are turning inland. They tighten formation and glide low to this side of the pines coming straight toward us. The timing is uncanny. Judy is marveling at the signs we have been given just as they cruise into our front yard and through the narrow space between our house and the pines and pass us at eye level—a dozen large gray prehistoric birds with spearpoint faces—so close I look the lead pelican in the eye as he passes and have a feeling of being watched by more than a pelican. In 13 years we had never seen them fly this route before and have not since.

I had developed a habit of reading news and opinion on the Internet every morning for an hour or more, which often stirred me up for hours. The corruption in state and national governments and the propaganda from the universities and the press kept me angry. One night in 2014 as the world news got ever more depressing, I had a vivid dream. It only lasted about three seconds—a single image in black and white: A computer screen appears before me entirely covered with exaggerated jagged static like an old black and white television set. The screen is almost entirely blocking out someone behind it, all but the hair on top and the right edge of his head. Without seeing the face I can tell from the hair and what I feel that without a doubt this is Jesus Christ. This was the first and only time I ever dreamed of Jesus or any other religious figure. I stopped reading news and opinion on the Internet—cold turkey.

One morning soon after that while I stood in the blasting warmth of my shower thinking about all the people suffering around the world—I had a vision. The first in my life. Again, it lasted only a few seconds. Jesus appears right in front of me in a white robe and a scarf around His neck the turquoise color of our bedroom where Judy reads to me under His eyes in the portrait above the window looking out to the ocean and the pelicans. Now suddenly my own face is superimposed on His face—weeping. Now His face is back again, weeping exactly like my superimposed face: The spirit of Jesus is in me and mine is in Him. Calm and gentle, He pulls me to his breast and embraces me like an older brother welcoming a prodigal back home. It all feels natural rather than supernatural, spiritual rather than physical. Afterward it became increasingly momentous the more I thought about it: I was cleansing myself in sorrow, my shower became the River of Life and Jesus baptized me in the Holy Spirit.

Soon after that one morning as I prepared to shave, I had a flashback. Again it lasts only a few seconds, a single image: I am staring out the windshield of my car after coming out of the hospice where my mother has just died of Alzheimer's disease, curled up in fetal position in a crib. The flashback is the view through my windshield: About thirty seagulls take off together all at once and levitate flapping into the sky. This is 27 years ago. My young son Evan sits beside me while I stare out the windshield, shocked by my mother's degeneration into such a degrading death. She had always been such a generous, sweet, and loving person. At the end, I did not know whether she knew I was there. I felt so relieved that her miserable ordeal was finally over that, sobbing my gratitude into the arms of her caretakers, I had not thought of thanking God. The flashback of the seagulls came like Jesus in the shower, occupying the whole visual field for a few seconds. I tend to avoid signs of age by not looking at myself very closely in the mirror. That the memory of the seagulls interposed itself just as I was about to look at myself in the mirror without my glasses on implies that it represented something about me I had not seen.

Back in 1987, I had lost faith in immortality. My worldview got reduced and framed like my windshield by the secularism of my profession—my vehicle for getting ahead in the world—though I retained a belief in God and in Jesus as a moral exemplar. My mother loved the sea, she owned and ran a small motel for years in Cannon Beach and was living at the Oregon coast when her health declined. The seagulls bursting up into the sky in front of me were about 80 miles inland. It is unusual for so many seagulls to congregate in that neighborhood in Portland. We had slammed our doors getting into the car and the birds had not been startled. It was not until I choked out to my son, "I'm trying to figure out what this means," that the seagulls rose up. The timing coincided perfectly, as with the pelicans. Now I recognized that the seagulls had been a consoling sign of my mother's soul taking flight, but at the time I had not even noticed because I was not looking for a sign. I had spent over 20 years as a professional interpreter of signs yet I had not recognized the most significant sign I had ever encountered in my life. In the mirror, 27 years later, I was given the sign again as a comforting reassurance and a lesson.

Another type of sign is an involuntary image that comes to mind recurrently. In the weeks after my vision in the shower, I began to notice an image that occasionally surfaced in the background of my

thoughts. Ironically, it seemed so unimportant that I disregarded its possible significance just as I had disregarded the seagulls. Finally I noticed its persistence and began to pay attention. The image is not a memory because it is something I have never seen. I am looking at myself as a little boy, 4 years of age, standing in front of the congregation assembled for services in the rural Oakville Presbyterian Church. This is over 70 years ago. I am reciting from memory the 23rd Psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd." My perspective is from up in the air above the congregation. Now I understand that this is another reassuring sign. This is how Jesus saw me then and how he sees me now: Except as ye become as a little child ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. He is confirming my spiritual rebirth.

By now I felt impelled to start rereading my Bible. I searched all over the house. It is a zippered Bible with my name on it, given to me by my church when I was a boy as a prize for memorizing verses. Unable to find it anywhere, I began reading now and then in the old worn Bible my grandfather read to me. At that time I was focused on the American literature website I had been building for over five years, working on it for about 4 to 5 hours almost every day. I told Judy I would begin to reread the Bible carefully in a few months, after I had completed the reading for the website. At the moment I was distracted searching for the source of a quotation I was using. In over five years, in attributing thousands of quotations I had never misplaced a source. I searched repeatedly through all the pertinent books without finding it. I just could not believe that I could not find that source. And now, I had also lost my Bible.

Judy helped me search. One night after looking again all over the house, I went to sleep in frustration. I soon woke up in such a panic I cried out loud to Jesus that I had lost my Bible—"I have lost my Way!" I prayed that He would help me find it. Later I woke up again with the thought that I might have put it in the plastic container of mementos in my closet. I thought this awakening must be a sign. I got up in a hurry and opened the container--but it was not there. The next morning I followed our ritual of letting the dogs out into the side yard. Our route takes us past a bookshelf to the left in the corner where we exit the house into the garage. The upper three shelves contain the books from research for my novels about Hollywood. Books I did not intend to look at again. In my searches I had glanced over these books knowing I would never place my Bible in that company but looking there anyway.

Now I am behind Judy following the eager dogs when instead of reaching out to open the door for them she reaches up high to the left and plucks my Bible off the top shelf and turning hands it to me almost without pausing in her stride. The cloud of dust billowing off the Bible is so abundant it seems comical. The dust is not the gray of death—it is brown. I had been reading the Bible of my grandfather Clarence Brown. At age 4, riding with him on his tractor while he prepared a field for planting, I used to watch the harrow behind us churning up a cloud of dust the same color brown, floating across the field toward the church. Up on that obscure shelf, my zipped Bible did not look like a Bible at all. The gold print on its spine has worn off, its zipper was not visible, and it was pushed back between two larger books. Judy said she just responded to an impulse. The books squeezing my Bible almost out of sight are *History of Film* and *Behind the Screen*, recalling my dream of Jesus blocked out by a computer screen.

I understood that allowing Judy to find my Bible rather than me indicated that I should continue to look to her likewise for what she found and read to me from recent books about religious experience. I dusted off my Bible and placed it in a conspicuous location I pass frequently, to make certain I do not lose it again. I told Judy that I planned to read it every day as soon as I finished my website. I was intent upon finding that misplaced source. Early one morning soon after that, half awake, I gathered into my arms some disinfectant spray and sponges and other cleansing items that Judy had left for me on the living room table, to take them up to my bathroom. There is a portrait of Jesus over the doorway from the living room to the entry hall. There is one step up from the living room to the entry. I stubbed my toe under Jesus and toppled forward, dropping my armload and falling flat—cushioned by my knees and forearms. It was a soft landing and did not hurt. Rising up on my knees I looked up to the right at the larger portrait of Jesus on the wall midway up the stairway. This sign had been so obvious I almost laughed. Kneeling there I pointed up the stairway at Jesus in a gesture acknowledging "You got me!"

That morning I began reading my Bible—the Source--every day before going to work on my website. I stopped looking for the website source, reversed my priorities and stepped up higher. I had to watch my step. I had more spiritual cleansing to do, in particular of self-importance. My fall into a knowledge of sin

illustrates the coexistent forces of free will and divine providence: At age 75, half awake with my arms full, had I fallen on the stairway I could have broken my neck.

One night after recovering my Bible I had a dream that may or may not have been a sign. I had been having variations of the same dream for several years, the same one I had as a boy, that I was late for school. In my dream as an elementary school student, when I arrived late I found myself alone and the school was a golden tower of ancient columns I climbed into the sky. In my dream while working on the website for the last 5 and a half years, I am still a professor and I am late in leaving to teach a class at the university: My car is up on wheels, I cannot find the text I need for the class, there is too much traffic, I arrive but cannot find the classroom, or something else. There is always a clock that shows just barely enough time to get there—I am in a panic with time running out! I hurry as fast as I can but I never do make it to class. During my 32 years of teaching I had a dread of being late and missed only one class, when the clock in the faculty lunchroom had not been changed from standard to daylight savings time. These recent lateness dreams expressed the anxiety I felt about getting the American literature website finished and online as soon as possible.

The version of the dream I had after recovering my Bible was a kind of resolution, though I have continued to have less stressful versions of the lateness dream. This dream took place entirely at the bookcase where Judy found my Bible. I am alone and approaching the bookcase from the opposite side, right to left, rather than following Judy left to right. I look up to the top shelf and in the spot where Judy found my Bible, between *History of Film* and *Behind the Screen*, there is a paperback copy of Thomas Pynchon's atheist novel *The Crying of Lot 49* with the title on the spine in clear black and white. In all my lateness dreams *Lot 49* has always been the book I am supposed to be teaching. In this dream I see it up there on the top shelf (elevated by society) among the Hollywood books, but I do not reach up for it because I do not have to teach it anymore.

As a professor of American literature I felt professionally obligated to teach some writers with whom I do not agree with scholarly objectivity, because of their cultural and literary importance. I tried to teach so that, as a rule, students could not detect my own political or religious beliefs. Pynchon epitomizes Postmodernist characteristics and I taught his *Lot 49* many times—the antithesis of my own beliefs and aesthetics. At last, now that the American literature website is almost complete, including coverage of Pynchon, I do not have to teach an Atheist vision anymore. In this dream of emancipation *Lot 49* is located where it belongs, gathering dust in Hollywood.

Judy has developed a personal relationship with Jesus. She often looks up at Him above the bedroom window when she prays. One day looking up at Him while singing along with Randy Travis, "Here I Am to Worship," just as she reached a peak of devotional feeling--the portrait tilted slightly to the right. Judy is obsessive about balance when hanging pictures and she had been especially careful months before when hanging this sacred portrait. However, she has not corrected the tilt of Jesus. When she told me about this sign, I believed her. And yet, despite all that I had seen myself, I also felt a little undertow of skepticism. We talked about the signs we had been given, then about issues in the current voter's pamphlet, noticing that the ruling political party in this state was dedicating itself to increasing its monopoly of the government rather than improving the economy for the people. I grew angry talking about the politicians. On my way downstairs to begin the working day I paused at the portrait of Jesus on the wall of the stairway and apologized for losing my temper, as I too often do.

This portrait, identical to the one in the bedroom, is hung about a foot above eye level: A strikingly charismatic bearded young man looking directly at you, head about a foot high, visible down to His chest draped by the radiant white robe. The background is dark like the spiritual dimension to most humans. The right side of His face seems to be illuminated by an invisible source, as if from a candle out of sight. Symbolically, however, He *is* the light. The perspective depicts the enlightenment of coming to recognize Jesus as more than a man. His dark hair is swept back all around the face and neck and the trimmed beard and mustache are biblical, as is the pure white robe open enough at the neck to reveal hair on the chest. This is a masculine Jesus. He has the blue eyes common to Jews in the tribe of Judea, a burnished look to an olive complexion and a face projecting strength, authority, and mystery. The left side of His face is in

such deep shadow that the left eye is barely discernable except in bright light, especially when the sun is beaming down from on high through the skylight above the stairway.

The portrait expresses the paradox of the Trinity: God is the mystery with the barely discernible eye, Jesus is His manifestation as the light, and the Holy Spirit is invisible. As I speak the word *angry* in my apology, His right eye begins to turn red. The red at the inner corner of the eye spreads into the white. He looks angrier and angrier. I must be hallucinating. As if in response to my skeptical thought, the whole red eye begins to oscillate laterally back and forth. I stare hard at the angry eye trying to be certain that this is actually happening. The eye oscillates faster as if insisting *BELIEVE YOUR EYES!* I am so stunned I just keep on gawking at the eye oscillating even faster into a *furios blur!*

Feeling obtuse, I finally turn away in awe. After a moment I understood that Jesus was sharing my own anger, just as He had shared my sorrow in the shower. I thought He was directing me with his eye to go on down and get back to work on my website, still putting my words before His. However, in accord with my new priorities, before going to work I read my Bible. What I happened to be reading that day included a passage depicting the anger of Jesus at politicians and leaders, as he denounces the scribes and Pharisees to their faces, repeatedly condemning them as hypocrites. (*Matthew 23:13-39*) On other occasions also, my reading in the Bible on a given day has revealed parallels, responded to issues, and answered questions I had just been discussing with Judy.

The self-portrait by Rembrandt in middle-age that hangs in an alcove of the old art museum in Munich has eyes that seem to follow you wherever you move. This is a rare quality in portraits and most of them were painted by Rembrandt. As you enter the alcove, his self-portrait looks like a cheerful Dutchman with rosy cheeks and head wrapped in a turban. As you move toward him, however, his eyes begin to look troubled rather than cheerful. Then hurt. The closer you get the sadder his eyes become, until up very close they look deep in sorrow. In this portrait the face of Jesus changes expression with changing light and also *changes while you look at it!* His eye often *moves* in response to my feelings, sometimes looking bloodshot, sometimes appearing to water in empathy. Usually I avoid looking at His eye as I busily pass by going downstairs because His expressions are so intimate and moving and the whole idea is so incredible, I am actually afraid that He will speak to me. His left eye increases in hypnotic power the more discernible it becomes. The portrait is realistic, symbolic, paradoxical, interactive, magnetic and apparently supernatural. After all, it was painted by an 8-year-old child.

As Judy read more religious books and prayed more frequently, she felt that she was being rewarded in small ways, as if a path was opened for her when driving in traffic, for example. One day when she arrived at the dentist's office and told the women behind the counter she had lost her green appointment slip, one of them said "I have it." The woman had noticed it on the ground in the parking lot of the local Fred Meyer supermarket and picked it up because it was green like the appointment slips in her office. The regional population here is about 14,000 with additional shoppers from California.

More recently, Judy felt impelled by Jesus to bead necklaces with crosses on them and give them away. She had done a little beading long ago in high school, now suddenly it became a passion. She felt that Jesus kept her up when she wanted to sleep to make more necklaces and that he suggested color combinations. She made over 100 necklaces in three weeks—necklaces, then bracelets as well, in crystals of many colors, glass pearls, and olive wood beads from Bethlehem. When I got an infection, she prayed to Jesus that if He would help me heal she would fast for three days, but then she did not start fasting right away. The next morning she prayed that if when she weighed herself she had lost at least a pound, she would take that as a sign that, yes, she should fast. She found she had lost over a pound. She looked up at the portrait of Jesus above the window and asked, "Is that really a *sign*?" Jesus winked.

Judy has a lighthearted personality and likes to joke around, even with Jesus. She laughs at herself for trying to make deals with Him and jokes about various ways she might be able to sneak into Heaven. She apologizes to His portrait when she feels she might have gone too far. I am too serious about all this to imagine myself joking with Jesus. Judy thinks He must have a sense of humor, since He created so many funny people and animals like the duck-billed platypus. He loves children, is reported to enjoy playing with them and relates to believers as His children. Playfulness is evidence of a sense of humor. Well, yes, I must

concede. After all, He *winked* at her. Nevertheless, to me His face in the portrait looks more serious and even stern than playful. I incline to think that in religious experience humor is displaced by awe, humility, wonder, love, and spiritual ecstasy. On my way downstairs I stop and look up into His eye. An eyelid appears--*it is closing over the eye!* Before the eye winks shut I run away downstairs like a scared little kid as fast as I can go! Then I collapse into a chair, laughing at myself. After recovering from the shock I call back, "I hope you enjoyed that. I did."

On the whole, however, Jesus could not be more serious. One night I woke up angry about something involving my website. Righteous anger is one thing, wrath is another. I have had a bad temper all my life. Although it has improved, when something goes wrong unexpectedly that is beyond my control and stops my work I am still inclined on occasion to burst into a rage. The morning after my latest outburst, Judy called me to the portrait on the stairway. The whole portrait has become a moving picture. The shadowed side of the face begins to turn red, then the face separates into two beings. The shadowed side glowers under a heavy dark brow and turns as red as a furnace with the fire inside so intense it shows through the iron--so hot it burns away and reveals in its place the smaller head of Satan in flickering orange and yellow flames. Then it turns a dark blood red. Blood runs down the face, covering Satan and putting out the fire. The light side of the portrait--the whole face of Jesus--grows brighter and remains steadfast throughout the event--emphasizing that He remains loyal and everlastingly present.

Afterward I recalled that the eyes did not look angry at us. He was showing me what happens when I get very angry: God is blotted out by anger, the opposite of faith. Anger opens us to evil. The blood of Jesus redeemed the human race from such evil and puts it out. Every time I allow myself to get furious I am implicating myself in the crucifixion. This sign was a "chastening." It took me days to recover. I felt awful. But the afterimage in my mind from this painful sign was Jesus at full length in his white robe standing alone like an eternal torch in the darkness, inducing a love such as I had as a child when my father saved my life once, and I felt like he would always be there.

Judy gave away necklaces to our plumber, our gardener, and our window repairman to give to their wives, mothers, and others. During the week before Christmas of 2014 she gave away necklaces to women employed at our doctor's and at our dentist's offices, 10 necklaces with crosses and 4 without them to nonbelievers. That same day I had an appointment with my doctor. My lab test results were good except for high blood pressure at 148 over 92. A week before when I went into the emergency room with the infection it was 156 over 106. My doctor told me to keep a log of my blood pressure and to come in to his office twice a week to have it checked. I did not want him to tell me to take blood pressure medicine. About 10 years before, he prescribed some and it lowered my blood pressure into the 50s, I got dizzy and could barely stand. He lowered the dosage but it still weakened me and so I went off that too. One of my neighbors, who has a different doctor, had the same experience.

When I got home I started taking my own blood pressure. I thought my pressure was high now because I had an infection, I was on antibiotics, and I was stressed over the website and the Christmas season. In the past I had been able to lower my systolic blood pressure 15 points in 15 minutes by using relaxation techniques. This time, however, I felt anxiety mount as I applied the cuff. Every time I measured it, the numbers went up. Finally I lay down for awhile. When I got up and measured it again, it had elevated even higher to 179 over 120. I had lost the ability to lower my blood pressure. I was afraid to measure it anymore. I was not going to be able to keep an accurate log.

That night I awoke in the dark with my heart pounding--*my heart is out of control!* I had not had a night terror attack since I started praying. I had been feeling protected at night and sleeping well, but now I plunged into such a panic I woke up Judy for support. She said later that after I woke her up and then went roaming around the house she tried to get up to comfort me but felt held back in the bed. Prayer calmed me down, lowering my blood pressure. In the morning I had scratches on my back--three parallel clawlike scratches about 8 inches long and a gouge over an inch long deep enough to bleed. It was not anatomically possible for me to have made them myself. Judy and I had seen many documentaries in which three parallel clawlike scratches on the back were interpreted to have been made by hostile spirits as a signature warning. The number 3 refers to the Holy Trinity. People with religious symbols in their house are more likely to get scratched than those without them.

In a sense I asked for this attack. I had prayed asking to be taught more lessons. Judy thought that both of us were already being attacked in various ways, but I was finding it difficult to believe. Now I no longer doubt it. We have seen that spirits routinely raise numbers on the scientific instruments of ghost hunters, drain their batteries, incite panic and so on. In the middle of the night I got “jumped” the moment I woke up—deceived about my blood pressure and flooded with fear. Only by having such an experience myself could I fully appreciate the reality and deceptive power of demonic forces.

Among over 80 books about paranormal experiences that Judy has read aloud to me completely or in part during 2013-January 2015, only one has been exposed as a fraud: At the age of 6 in 2004 little Alex Malarkey was in a car accident with his father Kevin. He remained in a coma for 2 months, paralyzed so completely he still cannot lift his head. His father was not seriously injured. In 2009 Alex became the first child to have Christopher Reeve surgery that permits him to breathe without a ventilator. Wanting attention, he claimed to have visited Heaven while in the coma. His father, a Christian therapist in Ohio, encouraged his son to tell his story in a book, which he then published in his own name, *The Boy Who Came Back from Heaven* (2010). Soon after the book was published Alex confessed to his pastor, who advised him to remain silent because the book was “doing a lot of good.” His mother Beth expressed skepticism in a blog post and in 2014 Alex confessed on the website *Pulpit and Pen*. He has received no profits from the book whatsoever. His parents are now divorced.

Most accounts of the afterlife we have read are in remarkable agreement. However, some accounts assert dogmas particular to one denomination that exclude members of other denominations from salvation. Recently we read one such account by Dr. Gloria Polo, a dentist in Bogota, Colombia, called *Struck by Lightning* (2009). As a young woman in Bogota she had claimed to be a Catholic but she lived a very sinful life and often exclaimed “May I be struck by lightning” until one day in 1995 she got struck by lightning. Her contraceptive IUD was a good conductor of electricity: “The lightening bolt entered my shoulder, burning my whole body inside and out; in short, my flesh disappeared, including my breasts. It left a hole in my left breast. The flesh of my abdomen, of my legs and my ribs, all disappeared; it carbonized my liver, gravely burned my kidneys and lungs...carbonized and pulverized my ovaries, which became like two raisins...and came out through the right foot...I remained in cardiac arrest, almost lifeless, with my body jumping due to the electricity that was still present.” Yet she made a miraculous recovery and became a preacher.

On a Sunday, the day after Judy finished reading Gloria Polo’s account and we discussed what we considered her “malarkey”—our phone rang. The operator had a heavy accent. Someone in Bogota, Colombia was trying to use one of our credit cards. We had never used that card, had never used a credit card outside the United States, have never been to Bogota, and have no connection to Bogota. In this context Bogota suggests bogus. The amount of the attempted fraud was only 3 dollars. This sign called our attention to 3 instances of falsehood in contrast to the Holy Trinity: Alex Malarkey, Gloria Olds and whoever tried to use our credit in Bogota. The low amount of the attempted credit card fraud is a moral measure of the others: Alex confessed and repented and Gloria Polo is mostly creditable.

Judy had a dream about her charity: She has lost her purse containing \$10,000, prays to Jesus to help her find it and posts an ad. We are out driving in the countryside. We pass a farm where she has been before. She sees her purse hanging up high in a big tree. Now she remembers that she hung it up in that tree herself. We turn around and stop and when she gets to the tree a farmer is descending a ladder with her purse. When he hands it over to Judy his wife says there must be a reward because according to the ad there was \$10,000 in the purse, but the farmer says there was no reward offered. Judy looks into the purse, finds much of the money gone but is not upset and gives the farmer a reward of several hundred dollars. This is not the black purse she usually carries, but her brown leather purse with the shoulder strap and the big flap like a saddlebag, the purse she never snaps shut. The dream is easy for us to interpret together because of the familiar Christian images: The tree is very big like the Tree of Life, the cross of Jesus is sometimes called a “tree,” the ladder (to Heaven) evokes the biblical story of Jacob, and money is often a metaphor in the Bible. \$10,000 is roughly the amount of money Judy has recently given in charity. At first she feels a sense of loss, but then she turns around, realizing that she has made a spiritual investment in Jesus. She no longer feels any loss and increases her charity.

I am working on an AmerLit website document, copying quotations from critics analyzing the novel *Mardi* by Herman Melville. To check on a detail I am scrolling up the quotations about one page above where I am typing when I notice a white gap—half a sentence is missing from the analysis by James E. Miller, Jr.! Then I see that roughly one whole page has disappeared from the middle of the typed document! If I am being attacked, this means that anything anywhere in my website documents can be deleted at any time without my even knowing. *How much have I lost already?* I yell to Judy for help. When she starts to search a window comes up saying the computer has had an “incident” and do we want the missing words restored? But the computer is able to produce only a blank page. Judy searches and discovers a duplicate of the *Mardi* document, titled r.doc. R is a computer language. The letter *r* is believed to have originated in an Egyptian hieroglyph meaning “head.”

This second version of the *Mardi* analyses, edited by “head.doc,” restores the complete document. The original document lost the last half paragraph of Miller’s quotations—the most accurate analysis—a set of quotations by Howard Vincent and the first half of a set from Richard Brodhead. I was inserting the Brodhead quotations among sets by other critics when I noticed the missing material. Judy pointed out that if I was attacked, a lot more damage probably would have been done, the lost material would not have been restored in the duplication, and it would have deleted the name of Christ. The retained part of the sentence that got cut in half after the dash, beginning the bloc of missing material, affirms Jesus Christ: “Serenia is the true land of Alma (Christ) and contrasts vividly with the island which claims Alma--”

The false island is analogous to false interpretation. Brodhead’s analysis is not false, but by trying to *broaden* my coverage by quoting Brodhead—*broad-head*—I was “taking away” or distracting from the essential truth in Miller. The idea of taking away was expressed by literally taking away part of the Miller quotations. Having got my attention, “Head.doc” restored the Brodhead quotations because they do not subvert the essential truth: Most significantly, I had intended to broaden my coverage even further by going on to quote extensively from H. Bruce Franklin, whose book on Melville’s mythology is both incisive in many perceptions and false in its overall interpretation. At the time he wrote his book Franklin was a Communist with an Atheist agenda. This sign stopped me from misleading readers by quoting Franklin at all, taking away from Miller by adding too much false interpretation.

On Sunday, 22 February 2015, after sleeping peacefully I awoke a few minutes before 3 in the morning. As soon as I rose into consciousness without a thought in my head I plunged into despair—as if the worst thing I could imagine had happened. I still had no thoughts in my head except an awareness that I was being attacked again—emotionally “jumped” before I could think. In my experience getting jumped differs from a mere anxiety attack in being: (1) immediate in both coming and going; (2) unconnected to the moods preceding and following—discontinuous; (3) all emotion empty of rational content. (4) At the moment of plunging into despair I saw an image of something coming down onto my face like a thick black sleeping mask with no eyeholes. As I had done before when under attack, I spoke out in a loud voice: “I am protected by our Lord Jesus Christ!” At once the mask of despair was gone. I did not feel a sense of grace, just an absence of any negative feelings at all. I was not disturbed again that night.

Our old car battery went dead in our garage conveniently, on a morning when I had time to get it replaced without stress, rather than elsewhere or when we had an emergency. A storm broke off a branch of a big pine tree in front of our house, about 8 inches in diameter at the base, and the wind carried it over the fence about 10 feet from the breakage and conveniently leaned it against the neighbor’s side of the fence in a vertical position convenient for a chainsaw, without breaking any of the intervening branches or snapping any in a thicket of twigs and without damaging anything. Also, I made a working copy of my website general index that mysteriously rearranged itself, redirecting my procedure more efficiently.

Leaving the grocery store one morning I drove past an unshaven man with a dog and he held up a sign that said “Please Help.” I pulled over nearby, walked back and handed him a 20-dollar bill. Returning to my car I looked back. He had disappeared. The day after the next I found a 20-dollar bill in the street in front of our house. Soon afterward, the next time Judy went out and gave away jewelry a well-dressed woman insisted that she accept money for her selection. Judy explained that she was doing this for charity and did not want any payment, but the woman got so insistent Judy yielded. Seeing this, another woman insisted that Judy accept payment. Each woman handed her a 20-dollar bill.

The eye of Jesus responds every time I look into it now, at least twice a day. Judy and I have speculated about what exactly is happening when we have these paranormal interactions with the portraits. I got an answer one morning while I sat with a cup of coffee trying to calm down after I lost control of my emotions again. While I sat there angry at myself, staring at the end of the bed three feet away, the blanket covering the bed began to move. The blanket rippled as if someone invisible sat down on it, except that it did not sink with the weight. The presence was spiritual. He was showing me that He was here beside me, as He had promised. I noticed a demarcation between the motionless near edge of the blanket and the middle of the blanket that kept rippling. The physical blanket was not rippling. I was seeing a vision that overlaid the physical blanket. The skeptic may dismiss such experiences as “hallucinations” but cannot explain the extreme coincidences, aptness, complexity, and significance of the narrative they form—nor the external events and other people involved in them.

One morning after I had been rereading the book of *Exodus* for several days and troubling over the numerous animal sacrifices and all the blood symbolism, His portrait on the stairway reminded me that such sacrifices had not been necessary since His crucifixion almost 2,000 years ago. The bottom of His eye filled up with bright red like a bowl used in the ritual sacrifices of animals filling up with blood. His blood had replaced the blood of animals. He became the one and only sacrificial Lamb. On another morning Judy and I lamented the persecutions of Christians by our courts and government. We got angry about it. Afterward on the stairway wall His eye had a sunburst of flaming red around it and a patch of red seemed to be a wound in the white of the eye. Then it turned watery. Gradually the red wound faded and the white gleamed pure and clear. I understood this to mean that He shared our pain and anger, that it was righteous controlled anger and our vision was clear. There are disputes over the exact dating of His birth and crucifixion, but 2,000 years seems like a long enough time to give human beings to wise up. If the end of time is coming soon, the anniversary of His crucifixion seems appropriate.

His eye is always alert—fluidly expressive from the instant I start looking at it. His constancy is both comforting and a bit disturbing, since I am not used to feeling observed all the time. When I am very tired or under stress the right side of the iris is bloodshot like porcelain that is cracked to pieces but holding together. Redness appears in the white of the eye and spreads around it intensifying expressions of pain or anger, whereas pink softens His eye with tenderness and love. When pink spreads and deepens throughout the white it sometimes appears that He has been weeping. Sometimes, two rows of what appear to be tears descend one after the other like transparent double theater curtains, scalloped waves of sorrow flowing down. One night His whole eye looked red and swollen almost shut like the eye of a boxer who has taken a beating without yet fighting back. On another occasion when Judy expressed sadness over the many souls being lost in the world, a tear ran down His cheek.

He has only winked at me once with a lid like a window blind closing all the way down. A number of times the opaque lid has come down only about a fourth of the way in a partial wink expressing shared pleasure at something good that has happened. As a rule the eyelid is transparent. His usual greeting is to wink partially one or more times with a transparent eyelid. A slow partial wink looks affectionate. The more subtle the liquid transformation, the more gentle and intimate the look. When I am on my way to bed at night, He is understated so as not to disturb my sleep with perplexity about what He meant. At times it seems to be simply a look to show me that He is always there for me. Every gaze is nuanced and in trying to process my perceptions I always feel overloaded and have to turn away regretting that I am missing something more. Only once have I noticed the iris move sideways, watching me go. His whole eye morphs without transition from one shape into another. More than once the pupil has resembled a celestial body in deep space—an aperture into Eternity.

The morning I saw that Dane had posted the REVIEWS of recent novels online, the iris with the pupil in the center like a target seemed to pulse with approval. Often several characteristics appear in the eye at once and there are too many feelings to read. Several times when I have gotten confused, the eye has simplified into sharp focus with the white standing out very clear, like wiping the slate clean and reassuring me. Otherwise the simplest look to read is when His eye narrows and curves with a smile. Once after I marveled at how varied His expressions are, He showed me many different looks in rapid succession, conveying a suprahuman capacity for being in many states at once. In one look, the iris had a thin red circle around it, adding to the impression of a target, like a hoop of blood or pain with deep Eternity beyond the

pupil. All of these expressions seen up close on the stairway are very personal, but when I look up at the portrait from the bottom of the stairs at a distance of about 15 feet, He seems to be seeing everything in the world. Abraham Lincoln expressed this belief in his Farewell Address at Springfield (1861): “Trusting in Him who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good...”

The first several times I looked up at the portrait from the bottom of the stairs I was disturbed to see His iris glowing fiercely red like a fiery ember. The opposite of my expectation, His eye looked *demonic*! Then I put on my bifocals. With improved vision, I saw His eye truly. Atheists argue that if God existed He would not allow injustice and suffering. They blame Him for not giving them a perfect world. But what have they ever given Him in return for giving them life? By giving humans free will God allowed them to ignore Him and do whatever they will. Atheists are parasites ignorant of their Host. Humans choose to do the evil in the world. Life is a moral test and history shows that most humans are inclined to be selfish and shortsighted. Many even want to be God themselves—especially politicians, bureaucrats, and liberal professors. Atheists never put on bifocals.

When my copy of the website general index got mysteriously rearranged, I felt redirected to proofread the QUOTATIONS section before proofreading the NOVELS section. In doing so I discovered that there were not as many errors as I anticipated. My five-page list of corrections pertained mostly to improving the quality, placement or size of the photographs. Most of the other corrections involved centering headings or poems. There were only a few instances of two quotations run together as one. When Dane got the REVIEWS online, I intended to proofread them, wait for Dane to make corrections, then send him the corrections in the QUOTATIONS. This would take weeks. Judy showed me on her computer that the REVIEWS were now online and I went to my computer to proceed. However, my computer gave me the HOME PAGE but would link only to BIOGRAPHY, my own NOVELS, and ABOUT THE SITE. When he checked it out, Dane found that the Acrobat program had “dis-installed” itself, so that I could not read documents in PDF. He could not explain how this could happen. Dane is a computer network engineer by profession and he has never heard of this happening before.

This was a stop sign. I did not need to make corrections now and I should move ahead and get the whole website up, then make corrections later. I was redirected to proofread the difficult QUOTATIONS section before the NOVELS section so that I would see that the corrections to be made were not very important. This set me up to accept the minor imperfections and move on. I wanted every page to be as perfect as in a book. The way headings sometimes get isolated at the bottom of pages still bothers me. Preserving the link to my BIOGRAPHY and my NOVELS implied that I am a novelist first and that I should get back to writing novels as soon as I can. An uncanny aspect of this sign is what happened to ABOUT THE SITE. It should have come up a blank page like the other documents in PDF. Instead, my explanation of the website got replaced by the eagle, the globe, and the words American Literature—images from the HOME PAGE. The site is not about me. In being such a perfectionist about corrections I was acting out of pride. The purpose of the site is to provide information to the public as soon as possible.

At age 13 our terrier Bonnie developed health problems and during surgery additional problems were discovered. All were treated *just in time* to prevent serious consequences. The morning after the surgery Bonnie was recovering well and a package arrived in the mail. In the bedroom under the eyes of the Jesus portrait Judy opened the package and pulled out a bedside clock she had ordered. She inserted a battery. When she began to set the correct time, she saw that the clock was *already set to the exact time*—to the minute. Perfect timing is often a persuasive characteristic of signs.

One morning I expressed difficulty transcending my sorrow at the moral decline in America. His eye at first showed the flaming redness of pain all around but not inside the clear white. Then the white softened into pink. His eye swelled almost shut again like the eye of a boxer not yet fighting back. But then it shaped itself into a fierce almighty eye scowling down upon the world from a high place. Momentarily it shrank again into a human eye, relaxing into a tender gaze—intimate and reassuring—showing me that I may transcend this world by anticipating the next: Like a transparent veil His eyelid slowly descended and partially winked, the iris stood out like a target and the dark pupil in the center enlarged--opening to the maximum, taking in available light--because the world is getting darker. His pupil floated in space like a dark earth. In His sight, the end is coming soon.

Just after July 4th 2015 both Judy and I caught the flu. I had a night of stomach pain and mental distress. In the morning I told Judy that I felt like Jesus was punishing me for something. She assured me that she did not think so. She said that she thought from her experiences that He usually does not simply heal us from natural illnesses and injuries, especially if we caused them ourselves, that they are among the “trials and tribulations” we all must experience because life is a moral test. One day she got impatient changing lanes and wrenched her back swerving from slight collision with a truck, which led to painful arthritis. I probably contracted the flu virus by not being cautious enough when I went to the grocery store and I made myself more susceptible by overworking after I began to feel pain in my back. We agreed that in the past Jesus had helped both of us by *reducing the effects* of illness and injury.

Once after consulting a specialist who said I might have to undergo surgery, I recovered from a rotator cup injury in a few weeks. And in the course of my life I have narrowly escaped serious injury or death a number of times. Once just before we got married Judy was driving about 30 miles an hour on a country road when suddenly around a curve she had to swerve to miss a black cat crossing in front of her. She went airborne and felt suddenly calm and crashed into the trunk of a big tree. The car was demolished. She crawled out a smashed window and walked until she got help. A police officer told her she must have stomped on the accelerator instead of the brake. He estimated that the car was going about 50 miles an hour when it hit the tree. He was amazed she survived. Judy suffered only a shattered left wrist and broken glass embedded in her thigh. Her face was untouched.

The next day I felt better. That night I was upstairs thinking about what to say when I looked into His eye before going to bed. I decided to thank Him for teaching me more about how He operates. At the exact moment of that thought the house entry hall and upstairs landing *lit up brighter!* I happened to be looking out a doorway and saw it. The light fixture hanging up high in the entry hall contains 6 flame lightbulbs on candles about 2 inches tall. Two of the bulbs have been dead for years and we have never gotten around to replacing them. The increased illumination was from the two dead bulbs coming to life with perfect timing—*reborn!* The candles of the flame lightbulbs are light turquoise, the same color as the scarf Jesus wore around his neck when he came to me in the shower and the same as the walls of our bedroom where His portrait hangs. He is the light. The fixture is about level with my head when I stand on the stairs looking up at His portrait. It is shaped like a large glass *plumb*, a weight in fishing and in carpentry—both applicable to Jesus. As a carpenter, He would have used a plumb on a line to reveal what is true. As a fisher of men He used a plumb on this occasion to illuminate. To *plumb* means to test, to measure depth, to examine closely. To *be* plumb is to be absolutely right.

By early August 2015 enough of the American literature website had gone up online that I felt impelled to start informing home schoolers and others that this material was becoming available. I sent out 4 e-mails, then decided I should consult my Editor before sending out any more. In response His eye displayed a thin red circle around the iris again, a thin circle of red slightly jagged on the outside edge like blood smeared outward or flickers of flame. This additional circle made His eye resemble a target. This time, however, there was an opening in the lower left of the circle—it was incomplete, like the website. For the first time in looking at the portrait I felt that my attention was *directed* to specific details: (1) The target was incomplete and (2) there was a red mark on the white of the eye to the right of the iris, in the same position as the red gouge that appeared in an earlier sign, when it indicated that He felt wounded by events in the world. This time, however, the red mark was lighter in color, not deep, and resembled a bruise that would soon heal. I felt awful. I had aimed to please Him, but had hurt Him instead. He was disappointed that I had not consulted Him before sending out any e-mails. He wants me to stay focused on the target and finish putting up the website. It was easy to interpret this because of His previous signs that redirected me when I was being premature. The red circle around the iris reflects the militant spirit of the website in response to the enemies of American literature. I have sent no more e-mails.

One night after Dane had put up online another set of analyses I got jumped again. This time I partially woke up between 2 and 3 feeling an itch on my scrotum. I reached down and scratched it and immediately leapt to the conclusion that something must be wrong with my prostate or something—a fear common to old men. When I realized that I had no evidence of that, I wondered why I felt so fearful. I had recently had an annual physical exam with lab tests and a satisfactory reading on my prostate. Nevertheless, I lay there in the dark feeling that something was wrong. An itch is such a commonplace and trivial event that I did not

suspect that I had been jumped. To be safe, however, I spoke out loud, "I am protected by our Lord Jesus Christ." I was not afraid of demonic spirits, I did feel protected, but I remained afraid of some physical problem. I got up and walked around the central atrium on the ground floor of the house for 20 minutes and detected nothing wrong, yet I felt depressed. In the morning I asked Him whether I had been jumped again by a demonic spirit. His pupil swelled darkly until the whole iris had turned black.

A sign may take years to manifest. Almost 40 years ago I designed a stained glass window for the middle panel of a door in my house in Portland that we replaced and brought with us to Brookings. When we built an extension to the master bedroom on the second floor of this house to get a panoramic view of the ocean, Judy designed the new room with a place for the stained glass window in the corner where it would be the first window in the room to access the rising sun in the morning. At a stained glass shop in Portland I had selected a piece of turquoise glass I liked so much that I designed the window to display that piece of turquoise glass like an Impressionist painting of the sky as seen through pale mottled foliage. The sky is framed by a band of gold stained glass like an oval halo about one inch wide that touches all four sides of the window. Twined around the top and right side of the gold oval frame is a vine of ivy with five leaves clustered at the top and two more spaced apart down the right side. I had no symbolism in mind. For almost a quarter century while I lived in the Portland house, during my long self-centered phase, the window framed an empty sky.

In 2004 when we enlarged the master bedroom, designed by Judy in a classical Greek style, we set a statue on the shelf of the stained glass window—the Winged Victory of Samothrace. Since then Judy has changed the décor. Yesterday for our wedding anniversary she gave me a statue of Jesus standing with his hands outstretched and palms up in a familiar posture of acceptance, welcoming and love, like a parent holding out his arms to embrace a child. He appears to have stepped down out of the sky through the gold oval halo. His head is centered in the halo. He is wearing a robe the turquoise color of the room, of the candles in our entry hall light fixture and of His scarf when He baptized me in my shower. The graceful contour of his body on the right side is aligned with the contour of the ivy vine twined around the right side of the halo. There are seven leaves of ivy in the window just as there are seven seals in the book of Revelation, one of many sevens recurrent in Christian symbolism. An ivy leaf has three points, evoking the Trinity. It is also shaped like a heart and is a traditional symbol of eternal love extending into the afterlife. Christ Himself has been symbolized as a vine of ivy. In the center of the top of the white window frame around the stained glass is a decorative white plaster clamshell. Judy special ordered clamshells to top all the windows of the room as part of an ocean motif, but as it happens, the clamshell is a traditional symbol of Christian baptism. Baptismal fonts are sometimes real clamshells.

Judy and I first met in 1973. I had been divorced for two years and her first marriage was just then breaking up. We were introduced at the house of a friend. When we reached out to shake hands, as our fingers touched they set off a little explosion of sparks. At the time, neither of us took this as a sign. We laughed about it and afterward we went out on a few dates. Then I left for a sabbatical in Europe. When I returned after 6 months we dated a few times, but then my two sons moved in with me and for various reasons we did not resume dating until 1991. We married in 1994. For awhile afterward, on some occasions when I kissed her, she got a slight electric shock. We teased each other about which of us was responsible. I owned a rental property just below Lewis & Clark College with my son Dane, a good investment because of its location, but a nightmare previously occupied by Satanists who trashed it. The old house required expensive remodeling and the partly forested yard had gone wild, requiring constant hard labor to restore and maintain. All our succession of renters, mostly young people, kept making it worse. Some left without paying rent. We lost money on the property every month. To avoid bankruptcy Judy and I worked ourselves to exhaustion almost every day for 9 years and were greatly relieved when we finally sold it to the college in 2000. That is how we could afford to buy this house.

Yesterday on the news, 30 August 2015, I saw hoards of migrants pouring into Europe to escape from Islamic terrorists who are murdering Christians and ethnic minorities and taking women and girls as sex slaves. I asked Judy to send a donation to World Help, an organization flying in food to refugees starving in Iraq. The computer she uses to shop and to make donations over the Internet is in the left front corner of our upstairs bedroom, where she has a view of the ocean under the eyes of the Jesus portrait. She sat down there to make a donation but could not find the credit card she used for that purpose. Her large swivel office

chair is crowded by the sofa in that corner of the room, surrounded by stacks of paperwork and the like, with two frisky terriers romping about the room. She keeps that credit card in a drawer of the desk and never takes it anywhere else. She had just been using the card and yet now she could not find it. As we searched all over the house Judy got so frustrated she grew increasingly angry, exclaiming that she did not deserve this. Finally she gave up the search and collapsed on the sofa, exasperated. After her anger subsided, she felt prompted to look under her computer desk chair. A clean washcloth had fallen directly under her chair, out of sight without getting down close to it. A thought came into her mind like an order, Look under the washcloth. She looked and--*there it was!* She looked up at me and I said, "Now thank Him." Looking up at the portrait, "I already did," she said. I had just finished reading the book of *Job* and saw the parallel to his complaint to God that he was righteous and did not deserve to suffer. Judy acknowledged that she had not given Him credit, that her unrighteous anger had blocked Him out, or covered him up. The *wash*-cloth implied that her repentance had cleansed her and restored her credit. It had been right there within her reach all this time.

We are comparing notes on promptings: When she is prompted, Judy does not hear a voice in her mind, she has a *thought* directing her: Look under the washcloth. She *knows* the thought did not originate with herself. I simply feel a strong inclination that I have learned to follow. It feels just like it always has when I think of something, when I have assumed that I originate everything I think. I do not know when I am being prompted, I have *faith* that I am. The more faith I have, the more I surrender my own will, the more I open myself up and pray for signs, the more promptings I receive. The day before yesterday our gardener lost a small part from his pruning equipment in the leaves of our yard. Judy had a thought directing her and pointed out the small part from a distance of about 10 feet. She is prompted every day, especially while she is making necklaces with crosses on them. In fact, she feels incapable of making them alone. She has never had this talent before and credits Him for her most beautiful creations. I am often prompted in the middle of the night. I started this entry at about 3 am. Last night at about the same time, after "completing" the website document on SYMBOL, pertinent additional examples kept popping into my head that I had overlooked. I got out of bed over a dozen times. This is not uncommon for writers, but after so many paranormal experiences I have learned to give credit where it is due.

A few months ago I had a dream starring President Obama. All my life I have enjoyed remembering and interpreting dreams. I used to have memorable dreams almost every night, both nightmares and dreams of climbing a golden tower and of flying. But for years now, I have been able to remember only an occasional dream, such as the one with Jesus blocked out by a computer screen displaying static. Since Jesus appeared to me in my shower and superimposed my face on His I have understood that He is inside me now. Therefore, now, when on a rare occasion I remember a dream I know it is a sign. In this dream I am sitting by myself at some outdoor public event. President Obama walks over and sits down in the chair beside me. I am not surprised by this. He smiles aside at me and casually extends his hand. He has a fantastic smile. He is in a silky dark suit and tie that make him look stylish. He is slender and perfectly tailored and his movements are as smooth as an oiled machine--one of the most powerful leaders in the World, yet the strongest impression he conveys is weakness. The hand he offers me is limp. The President acts so friendly that my hand rises. I feel a compulsion to be respectful and to love my neighbor. But then a force stops my hand. I try, and try again--but something holds me back. I am left with a feeling that he is not really very important. I am giving too much credence to this World.

In a dream the other night I am standing alone on what seems to be the second floor of a darkened mall. Then my Uncle Bob Hillis, now deceased, comes walking past me without looking aside or noticing me. There is a shadow between us walking along beside him--like the shadow of a child. I love my Uncle Bob. I panic as he walks past and away without even noticing me. I lunge for him--*Uncle Bob!* He recognizes me as I embrace him and he hugs me back. Somehow over his shoulder I see a strange looking eye, weeping. To my great surprise it is *not* the eye of Uncle Bob. It is the eye I had seen in the portrait, the eye that evokes the eyes of elephants, whales, and pelicans--the eye of the Almighty who created all Nature and remains within it. I had difficulty understanding this sign and discussed it with Judy. I told her Uncle Bob was the happiest man I have ever known. He had a cherubic face and curly blond hair and he was always upbeat. Even at the wake of my also happy Aunt Bertha he was cheerful because he had so much faith they would be reunited. At the outbreak of World War II in the Pacific my parents broke up when I was 3 and Uncle Bob stepped in and acted as my father when he had a leave from the Navy. Later while I

was a teenager in Portland he sold me my first 3 used cars at cost. My Uncle Bob was an honest car, taxicab, and motorcycle dealer. He represented Happiness and he provided me with Vehicles.

The shadow is an archetypal motif in literature, usually representing the repressed self. In this dream my shadow is between me and Happiness. I have to move beyond it. The vehicle is love. The shadow is myself as a child feeling abandoned by my father. Apparently I have never fully recovered. Judy pointed out the succession of abandonments in my life that began when my parents broke up. The eye is weeping because it makes Jesus sad to see my isolation and my sorrow at the state of the World. If I embrace and trust Him as much as I did my Uncle Bob, I can be happy. His power to bless me with Happiness in this corrupt World is manifest in the Almighty eye as distinct from the more human eye of Jesus as the personification of transcending this World in the afterlife: "I will guide thee with mine eye." (*Psalms* 32.8)

I came across this line from *Psalms* just two days after dreaming of the Almighty eye looking down at me from over the shoulder of Uncle Bob. The aptness and timing make this discovery a sign to me that validates all the guidance I am receiving from the eye of Jesus above the stairway. While I was analyzing the dream with Judy, trying to understand the meaning of the Almighty eye, I had a rare experience of *knowing* that I was being prompted: The image of the Almighty eye came into my mind from my memory of its appearance before in the portrait and united with its image now in my memory of the dream. I *saw* the approaching Almighty eye and the linking of the two identical images. I was allowed to witness the process of a prompting. Normally when I think of such a connection between images, say in a novel, it just *happens* in my mind. This time I watched the connection take place as if it was coming from outside of me. In the instant that I saw the two images of the Almighty eye unite in my mind I understood its meaning—I had an epiphany and felt so moved that I burst into tears. This experience of connection was all internal like my normal experiences—and so are my paranormal visions of Jesus in the portrait. The portrait is like a mirror of my soul, reflecting Jesus within me.

About a week after I took the last in a series of anti-biotic pills, recovering from a stomach infection I got from eating nuts, during the night I woke up with abdominal pain again. I feared a recurrence. I decided that this must be a virus instead, since I had been experiencing the random pains and achy teeth that accompanied viruses in the recent past. Furthermore, Judy had the same symptoms. Previously such stomach pains faded away within 12 hours. This time they faded away within only about 4 hours. In the morning I felt that Jesus had withdrawn his protection for just long enough to convey a message, much as he conveyed a message to Judy by withdrawing until she got over being angry at losing her credit card. I had recently hurt Judy's feelings by overreacting to a few minor flaws she found on the website. I had already been given signs indicating that I should disengage from the process of putting documents online, that my emotions were not constructive. I was getting in the way. I should have faith in Judy, in Dane—and in Jesus. But on this occasion I spoke harshly to Judy in a burst of angry complaining--"bellyaching." Jesus loves Judy. When I hurt her feelings, I hurt Jesus. I needed to stop bellyaching.

After I added this sign to my testimony yesterday, I felt rebuked. I had lost control of my emotions again and disappointed Jesus. I felt awful. Although I no longer felt any flu symptoms, I felt still sick. I had to keep lying down. I had no appetite and lost interest in everything. After a restless night I woke up in a state of catatonic depression. I was a bellyacher. I needed to stop complaining and shut up. That meant that I could no longer be outspoken in conversations with Judy, or even in prayer. I prayed for guidance and discussed the sign with Judy. She said she felt urgently prompted to tell me that my interpretation was incorrect. I got sick in the natural course of life and Jesus helped me by reducing the pain from the usual 12 to only 4 hours. Sickness weakens us and we become more vulnerable to demonic influences. Depression weakens us still more. I got jumped in the moment of interpreting the sign. My recognition that I been unfair to Judy and the previous signs that I should stop involving myself emotionally in the process of putting documents online predisposed me to feeling in the wrong. My attention got riveted on the negative "bellyache" rather than on the relief from it. Since I believed this fixation came from Jesus I believed He was rebuking me. This deception caused my depression, stopped me from continuing in my religious work, punished me, discouraged me from discussing with Judy the evil in the world, and temporarily inhibited my prayers. Judy assured me that I do not "bellyache" and that Jesus does not cause depression—just the opposite. Why would he want to confuse me and stop my work for Him? I prayed, thanking Jesus for the

lesson and saying, Let's turn this attack around to your advantage. On my way downstairs to make this entry in my testimony, He gave me a crafty look of approval.

At the grocery store Judy noticed a woman about her age at the end of one of the aisles. The woman had a plant in her cart about to burst into full bloom. For some reason Judy felt impelled to compliment her plant, "That's going to be a beautiful plant." The woman looked up and said, "Isn't it wonderful that God gives us such beautiful flowers to enjoy." "Yes, it is," Judy agreed. Then the woman exclaimed, "And it was on sale for half the price." Judy smiled and said, "I think Jesus wants you to have it." The woman lit up with joy and embraced and hugged Judy. As they parted she said, "God bless your day." And Judy replied, "And you too." Judy felt so surprised that she had approached the woman and so moved by the experience she thought she had been prompted.

The *next day*, while relaxing in our bedroom we listened to a tape of albums by the religious rock band Third Day, a reference to the resurrection of Jesus. After the tape ended, we prepared to go downstairs for the evening. Judy usually turns off the tape player at this point, but for some reason this time she went ahead and started closing the window shutters. After more than 2 minutes, to our surprise--*another song began!* The album tape had ended. Yet now we were hearing a tender love song to Jesus sung by the Third Day--about *embracing*. We looked at each other in amazement. Judy could find no reference to this song on our albums. We had never heard it before. I recalled my dream of hugging Uncle Bob who became the Almighty, and Jesus superimposing my face on His and embracing me. Although this song was being sung to Jesus, it was also a tender love song from Jesus to Judy, consisting mainly of the refrain, "Don't let me go, / Hold me close to where you are."

On 9/11 of 2015, lightning struck a giant crane at the Grand Mosque in Mecca, where Muslims are preparing for their annual pilgrimage, killing 107 and injuring 238. An abnormal thunderstorm generated high winds that broke windows, shook cars, uprooted trees and tossed billboards around. The court of the Mosque is being expanded to accommodate 2.2 million worshippers and the main crane toppled after being in place for 3-4 years. An unidentified engineer declared, "It was not a technical issue at all. I can only say that what happened was beyond the power of humans. It was an act of God." The crane belonged to the Saudi Binladen Group, a company owned by the family of Osama bin Laden, the al Qaeda leader who attacked America on 9/11 of 2001. The day before lightning struck the Grand Mosque, a rainbow appeared in America starting at Ground Zero.

Yesterday I wrote an analysis of the 1949 film adaptation of *The Great Gatsby*. I pointed out that the script appears to affirm faith in God when a character refers to the eyes of Dr. Eckleberg on the billboard by saying "sees all, knows all." But another character says the apparent movement of the eyes is only an "optical illusion." This is consistent with the Atheism expressed in the novel in a scene after the death of Myrtle. This morning when I stopped on the way downstairs to consult my Editor, the iris of His eye moved slightly back and forth several times, enough to validate my analysis and to confirm that God does indeed see all and know all. A skeptic will call all the signs I have experienced optical illusions. But these experiences are more than optical, they include other people, external events, perfect timing, physical manifestations, and a linked chain of "coincidences" no skeptic could explain. A skeptic is unlikely to read this testimony because it contradicts his mindset with persuasive evidence. This is especially true of liberal professors, who are too cowardly to be openminded.

After more than 6 years of work building the American literature website, when I had only a little bit left to do except proofreading, I thanked my Editor for all His guidance and the red circle making a target appeared around His iris as it had before, but this time the circle was complete—the target attained. He has faith in me as I have in Him. Then His eye narrowed curving into a look of warm congratulation. You can tell a face is smiling from the look of just one eye.

The day before yesterday I completed my work on the website except for proofreading and returned to writing fiction again. I had not looked at my unpublished novel *Snake River* for 35 years, but I had thought about it and had been given promptings—insights as to how to improve it. Yesterday I revised the first chapter and found that the two main scenes should be cut. This would require a complete rewrite. I rewrote the first page and planned the new chapter. I was surprised by how unsatisfactory the prose was but I am

objective in revision and always enjoy making improvements. Late in the afternoon I got tired and took a nap. At my age it often takes over an hour to recover from a nap, which drains as well as refreshes. On this occasion I got awakened by our terrier Murphy barking to be let outside. I took the dogs out, feeling weak and irritable. Then I took them upstairs to the bedroom and sat with Judy.

Judy asked me how the revision had gone. In my irritability I told her what was wrong with the first chapter: The narrative was unfocused, the two main scenes did not belong in the novel, there was too much detail, the prose was terrible. I went on a roll criticizing myself for bad writing and the more upset I got the more I exaggerated. I said it had come as a shock to see how bad a writer I was. I did not really believe that, but I *felt* bad. I sank into a depression and had to go back downstairs and take another nap. When I woke up I felt like a really bad writer. I went to bed early in a pit of despair. I woke up in the middle of the night feeling worse. I had the irrational thought that by giving me promptings Jesus was taking over my writing and in effect stealing my soul. On the contrary, my creative process is informed by spiritual unity with Jesus. Evil tries to separate us from Good. I recalled the motif of signs that urged embracing Jesus: “Don’t let me go...” Then I prayed and recited the 23rd Psalm aloud. In the past it has taken me days to recover from such a depression, but last night a peace came over me and I slept. This morning I felt chastened but otherwise normal. Judy told me she had thought I was being attacked and had prayed for me. We agreed that negative thinking opens a door to attack. I came down and read my daily three chapters in the Bible, which today just happened to include *Proverbs* 25: 28--“He that hath no rule over his spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.”

That day I continued revising in good humor, realizing that the whole *Snake* will have to be rewritten—it will be reborn, sloughing off its old skin. Once again I was not expecting an attack and did not know I had been until I recovered. Once again I made myself vulnerable with negative thinking. Once again I learned something from the experience: (1) I still need to develop more control over my emotions; (2) I am still underestimating the danger of evil spirits; (3) my writing has improved during the last 35 years; (4) I had been overestimating the quality of the writing in the draft of *Snake River*, thinking myself better than I was—foolish pride that is embarrassing. What has stayed with me as the primary lesson is the need for humility, evident to me in the shocking contrast between my writing 30 years ago and now. When I wrote the draft I had not matured enough to have a precise focus, a vision of totality, an ability to select the most essential details, or an effective prose style—but I thought it was great. Years later, my first two published novels contain the frame of a vision as expressed in the stained glass window of the halo entwined by the vine, God is implicit throughout, Jesus is brought into the frame at the end of *Hollyworld* and now He is informing the rewrite of *Snake River*.

Since I began the rewriting the most common expression from the portrait is an encouragement: the inner corner of the eye extends like an arrow pointing in the direction of my computer downstairs, often with an equal sign inside it. The equal sign I understand to mean that I am equal to the task and that we are equally participants in the creative process, though I am not His equal. One day He expressed a sense of shared accomplishment with an eye that evoked the biblical term *cunning*. Another time I expressed concern that as a fiction writer I had to identify with evil characters. That morning I was taken aback to see that His eyebrow was about three times as large as usual and black as a fake mustache—then it returned to normal--indicating that in rendering evil characters I was merely playing a role and not being adversely influenced. Half a dozen times now after I prayed that He reduce Judy’s back pain from arthritis a small red crucifix has appeared in the inner white of His eye, indicating that pain is part of her moral testing and growth as a Christian. Later, He did reduce her pain, as He does regularly. He gave me the same sign after I got upset over the website. Later, He assured me that my problem would be solved: His eye opened wide to about twice its normal size, shrank with an enlarged pupil, opened twice as large again, then relaxed into a look of loving reassurance. I felt that He was saying, I see your problem, I am adjusting my sight accordingly, I am watching over you—it will be all right.

Then I got jumped again. Judy and I believe we are being attacked more than most people because of the work we are doing: Judy has made over a thousand necklaces this past year, I am writing this testimony, I have almost got the complete website online, and I am about a third of the way through the revision of *Snake River*. On Thanksgiving 2015 and the days before and after, we both were moderately sick with a flu bug that affected the nerves, causing “restless leg syndrome” in her and twitches in my right hand. The

night after Thanksgiving night I woke up after about four hours of sleep with a lot of twitching in my hand. I have been conditioned to believe that such things are always natural, though by now I have seen lots of documentary evidence that evil spirits are able to cause pains, heart attacks and even suicide. In this instance, I noticed that the twitching in my hand increased the more I worried about it. I freaked out *again*. Was this the onset of palsy? At one point during the night an image came into my mind that I did not process until the next morning, the only dream image from that night that I recall—the typical cartoon drawing of a demon. It was a thin line drawing in red with a slightly flaming edge to the line exactly like the circle around the iris of Jesus in the portrait that has appeared several times and like the crucifix that has appeared often. The color red suggests that the drawings were made with His blood.

The most emphatic lesson of this attack is the power that evil spirits have to *deceive*: (1) After all that I have written in this testimony about getting attacked, in this instance I did not recognize that I was being attacked for hours!—*even after Jesus gave me the image of a demon!* For hours I assumed it was natural. A thought came into my mind that I did not originate: that Jesus was displeased with me. As if He was the cause of twitching in my hand rather than the demon. I even spoke aloud the speculation that when I have completed the work I am doing, He will be done with me and toss me in the wastebasket. My soul subverted this lie by making it absurd with the wastebasket image. I made this mistake before. I know very well that Jesus does not cause suffering. His earlier sign lighting up our entry hall chandelier was a vivid acknowledgement that I had learned that lesson already. Nevertheless I was deceived *again*. (2) Waking up in the middle of the night I was only half conscious, at my most vulnerable, feeling weak and sick, with a symptom I had experienced previously from the flu. Apparently, the instant I woke up the natural twitch in my hand got multiplied. For most of the night thereafter the twitching frightened me. Fear, depression and anger are forms of darkness that shut out the light of Jesus. Eventually I was able to defend myself with prayer and by morning the twitching had stopped.

My weakening eyesight began to make me feel that I am not seeing the portrait clearly enough. His eye is sometimes watery and blurred by feelings. I wondered if there was a blur in my own eyes. For two days I tried looking at the portrait on the stairway with my bifocals on, just as I do looking up from the bottom of the stairs. With my glasses on the portrait looks flat and nothing moves. At the bottom of the stairs the bifocals correct a false impression that Christ is demonic, that He is responsible for the evils in the world, as His red eye may suggest when He is seen from a distance. It is an improved objective perception. The bifocals are a metaphor of corrected sight. In contrast, the view from up on the stairway is elevated, close and spiritual. I am seeing Him with *inner sight*--in visions--rather than objectively. The distinction is traditional as exemplified by blind seers such as Homer, Milton, and Joyce. It is a theme of *Wise Blood* by Flannery O'Connor. With bifocals on I gain objectivity but lose that inner sight. On the third day I resumed my practice of looking at the portrait from up on the stairway without my glasses on and once again the portrait came alive and His eye welcomed me back. This experience demonstrates that to see the portrait move the observer must have faith and a personal relationship with Jesus.

For weeks now almost every morning when I go down the stairs to begin work on the revision of *Snake River* I have been encouraged by the inner corner of His eye forming an arrow pointing down toward my computer, usually containing or preceded by an equal sign. There have been slight differences in the configuration that I have not been able to understand. Finally, however, I have realized that the two lines of the equal sign have extended into the two sides of the arrow, forming an arrowhead. The arrowhead recalls the red circle around His iris that formed a target. Together we are like an arrow-*head* aiming for a target that will be the perfected novel. It has been very difficult for me to assimilate the concept of creative unity with Jesus. When writing I am usually not aware of any influence upon me at all. But there have been moments when an idea occurs to me that comes with an awareness that it is a gift or contribution. These experiences are comparable to the connection I was shown in a previous sign between the Almighty eye in a dream of my uncle Bob and the same image appearing in the portrait.

Recently, for example, I was looking for a good place to insert a passage of dialogue. When I found an apt place for the passage I noticed that its juxtaposition with the following paragraph generated multiple new implications that enlarged its significance. I had the distinct feeling that I was led to this discovery. In another case, the two main characters are standing on Hells Canyon Dam in dialogue. One said "What else are you not telling me?" Later, since they are standing on a dam, the perfect improvement came to mind:

“What are you holding back?” I was given both the line and the feeling that it was provided by my Co-author. I might have thought of it eventually on my own, but I have learned that some of my best creative ideas *if not all of them* have a divine source. This knowledge of being helped has been reinforced by the extreme facility of my writing now, the speed of progress, the small number of changes needed after one revision, and a sense that everything now is pertinent and even “perfect.” People forget that Jesus is the supreme artist. His parables are the most influential ever written.

On about 3 January 2016 I had a dream that Judy fell down our stairway. On 6 January she fell down two steps into our garage. I look up and see Judy come falling down from the upstairs landing like she got pushed down—and the dream ends with her in mid-air. I recognized the dream as a sign because (1) I no longer remember dreams unless they are signs; (2) in the dream I was standing on the stairway in the exact place I stand twice a day and am given a vision of Jesus guiding me with His eye; (3) the dream lasted only about two seconds, sparing me the horror of witnessing her fall all the way down the stairs, perhaps knocking into me on her way down, breaking her neck perhaps—such as would have happened if the dream had been an attack. The dream proved to be a warning and a promise. (4) Just as in the dream Jesus stopped Judy from falling down the stairway in mid-air, He stopped that from happening in reality.

In 2002 Judy had fallen down the 7-inch step from our dining room into the living room when one of our dogs cut in front of her just as she was stepping down with her left foot. She was carrying a potted plant and sprained her left ankle when she fell. She went to the hospital, hobbled on crutches for two days and was able to walk again without pain in a week to ten days. This time she was taking out a bag of garbage to the garage and stepped down 5 inches with her left foot to the wooden platform serving as a step. Her left foot turned outward onto its side, then stepping down quickly for balance her right foot also turned outward onto its side—which seems unnatural--her knees buckled, she fell forward onto her knees and pitched down onto her hands on the cement garage floor.

She was wearing tennis shoes. The wooden platform is covered by an oval braided rug. There was nothing for her feet to snag on. There was no dog involved. Judy said she had a sensation of getting pushed behind her knees. The swelling on her left ankle was the size of half a tennis ball with an arc of bruise under it. The whole foot and all her toes got swollen and red and then bluish. Judy thought at first her ankle might be broken. This time, rather than go to the hospital, she trusted in Jesus. This was the evening of 6 January. The pain diminished rapidly. By the morning of 10 January, the swelling had diminished to the size of half a ping pong ball, nearly all the bruising was gone and Judy had little pain. She was walking normally. After four to five days she felt more pain, the amount she would expect to feel at that stage after a severe sprain. Jesus reduced the worst pain that would normally be felt for a number of days and then allowed Judy to feel the increase to reveal what he had done, to demonstrate his power.

Judy and I caution each other all the time to hold onto the handrails going down stairs, especially our carpeted main stairway of a dozen steps. She fell on the main stairway once when one of our dogs cut her off there, but suffered no injury of consequence. My dream prompted me to warn Judy to take particular care, which she did. She fell nevertheless. The dream is evidence of predestination. Judy was destined to fall down again, for whatever reasons in the divine plan. Judy believes she was attacked by a demonic spirit and that it was a moral test, giving her an opportunity to demonstrate that she would not blame Jesus, and that she would accept the trials and tribulations of being a Christian. By now Judy and I believe that because of the work we are doing we are in constant danger of attack, but that we are so well protected we are unaware of it. Occasional mild or mitigated attacks teach us that there is constant warfare going on in the spiritual dimension in and around us and they teach us to rely on Jesus. They dispel complacency and teach us to focus increasingly on the spiritual dimension.

Judy almost never takes out garbage. That is my chore. Jesus expressed mercy and love by prompting her to take out some garbage so that she would fall not on the long main stairway but on the two steps into the garage. Then He reduced her pain and healed her ankle quickly. Lessons include: (1) do not expect to understand all the reasons for events; (2) do not expect prayers to be answered immediately; (3) trust in Jesus; (4) He wants to help us and to demonstrate His love and power.

My routine is to have coffee with Judy and the puppies in the upstairs bedroom until about ten o'clock, then to begin my work day after taking the puppies outside. I always feel a strong moral compulsion and sometimes inspiration to go to work. However, one morning recently when I knew that Judy wanted me to stay with her longer, I did so for something over half an hour. Afterward when I went down the stairs to start writing and stopped to consult the portrait of Jesus, I was startled to see all the dark pink around and under His eye, over ten times the amount I had ever seen before. The eye itself was a soft pink surrounded by dark pink and under the eye it looked as if a dark pink marker pen had underlined His expression of love for both Judy and me a dozen times into a solid mass.

At ten o'clock about a week later, when I got up to take the puppies outside Judy once again asked me to come back and sit with her awhile longer. I got provoked by Murphy's barking and when I hesitated to assent Judy withdrew her request. Afterward when I went down the stairs, Jesus looked happy in the portrait and the inner corner of His eye formed the arrow pointing downstairs toward my computer, which has become our routine. It has taken me months to recognize that the arrow also resembles the point of a pen or a quill. More important than the writing, however, is its source--the spiritual union implied by the convergence of lines. There are many details to see in His eye, I can only absorb a few at one time and I think I am directed to those specific details He intends me to notice. Still, I always feel I am missing a lot.

On this particular day, when I started work on the revision of *Snake River* I soon lost the ability to make judgments and had to quit and go take a nap. Almost every day for about four months I had written with great facility believing that I am being informed and guided by Jesus. On this occasion I felt like He had withdrawn from me, essentially blaming Him. This was the opening for another attack. The only reason I could think of was that I had not agreed to sit longer with Judy as I did before. I did not believe this could have been an attack because Jesus would not allow such interference in His own work. After I woke up from my nap I felt terrible. I have never suffered from writer's block but now for the first time in my life I felt that I couldn't write anymore. Later I noticed that I had flu symptoms. If Jesus was going to withdraw He would not have shown me a happy face and the encouraging arrow in His eye. I had the flu. I got jumped and *deceived again!* The next day I resumed writing as before.

Heavy rains caused a large branch to break off one of our pine trees without damaging our *south* fence. A couple of years ago a storm caused a large branch to break off one of our pine trees without damaging our *north* fence. Both big trees stand close to fences and both branches were about 8 inches in diameter at the base. The first branch somehow got blown through a thicket of unbroken twigs and over our fence and upended in our neighbor's driveway. This second branch broke at the base and remained hinged to the tree so that it did not damage our fence, falling across a narrow street without hitting anyone or anything except a ladder leaning up against our neighbor's fence across the street. If the ladder had not been there, the tree would have missed the neighbor's fence. The tip of the branch hit the ladder, which broke the tops of two vertical boards in the neighbor's fence. Our gardener responded immediately to each call and disposed of each branch within an hour. Our neighbor to the north was pleased, but our neighbor to the south came to our front gate hysterical, declaring that she was calling her attorney even after Judy offered to pay for the damage, which we are not obligated to do by law. The situation proved to be another moral test that Judy passed when she felt prompted to suppress her anger and walk away from the woman. A skeptic will see nothing supernatural in such "coincidences," whereas Judy and I see an ongoing pattern of signs and proofs of protection, mitigation, moral testing, and spiritual education. Symmetry, parallelism, repetition, and apparent coincidence are often characteristics of signs. We believe our neighbor got prompted to lean that ladder against her fence at exactly the spot where it would get hit by the tip of our falling branch.

Several times in the past I have had a minor occasional twitching in my hands, most recently in the right hand. I have interpreted this as one effect of a flu virus. In at least one instance I believe the effect was exaggerated when I got jumped by an evil spirit. Sunday of last week the worrisome twitching returned. Was it serious? I told Jesus that if I still had the symptom in the morning I would make an appointment to see a doctor for a diagnosis. In the morning (1) I got an appointment to see a doctor only four hours later, whereas it usually takes days or weeks; (2) my doctor was unavailable and I was seen by the other doctor in his clinic, who had never seen me before; (3) this doctor diagnosed the problem as a calcium deficiency common in older people, curable in two or three days by taking calcium in gum drops; (4) the doctor occasionally has the same ailment himself. Jesus cured my worry quickly by arranging this ideal set of

circumstances. This is an example of why He is considered the Great Physician. He does this sort of thing for Judy and I repeatedly. Judy says that virtually *every time* she drives to the grocery-variety store, the largest in our region where it is often difficult to find a parking slot, she finds one close to the front door. She has not applied for a disabled permit, although the arthritis pain in her back is often disabling.

Judy has been reading aloud to me from *Jesus Calling* (2004), devotions for every day of the year, a bestseller by Sarah Young, who paraphrases the Bible by translating passages from it into the voice of Jesus speaking in the first person. When she opened the new copy of this book, Judy noticed that the top corner of *one* page was slightly bent, from about a quarter of an inch wide at the top slanting down to about three quarters of an inch long. It was not bent over and is not a sharply bent corner, it looks as if it was bent over and then *bent back in place*. This page for February 10 contains lines that speak to me: “Because I am omnipotent, I am able to *bend* time and events in your favor. You will find that you can accomplish more in less time after you have given yourself to Me in rich communion. Also, as you align yourself with My perspective, you can sort out what is important and what is not...To avoid doing meaningless works, stay in continual communication with Me. I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you.” (Luke 10:41; Psalm 32:8) His eye is upon me visibly when I look at His portrait twice a day and it moves. Alignment with His perspective is imaged by the equal sign in the inner corner of His eye that converges into an arrowhead.

10 February 2016 is the *same day* I completed the revision of *Snake River*. I began the revision on about 1 October 2015 and completed it on 10 February, except for the final proofreading. It took me 14 years to complete the first draft of *Snake River* at 549 pages and just over 4 months to completely rewrite it, cutting most of the characters and scenes and reducing the length to what looks to be about 200 pages. Most of the draft turned out to be “meaningless work.” I lacked the perspective and maturity necessary to write coherently and well. I tried to work on the revision every day except Sundays for as long as possible each day to sustain the continuity and momentum of the process. I was able to compose at the word processor with minimal revision that has consisted mostly of adding details. I have had no awareness that I am being influenced by Jesus as I write, except in recognizing that insights are coming to me with a facility that is far beyond my previous capacity. I have indeed been able to “sort out what is important and what is not” and have been able to “accomplish more in less time”—to an astonishing extent. All along He has shown me “the way I should go,” prompting me to the best aesthetic judgments and giving me creative ideas—metaphors, names of characters and so on.

The revision I completed on 10 February has proved to be the essential narrative. I felt so amazed by the facility of the process that I underestimated how much enhancement and refinement there would be in the “final proofreading.” I am currently nearing the end of the second revision and have added many details, metaphors, and improvements in precision and style—thanks to Jesus. One of His best lines is “He’s lost without his King.” For another example, the symbol of the sturgeon has been elucidated for me by Jesus. Also, at the end, the honking and the black deputy were His ideas.

Jesus has repeatedly conveyed to me the nature of our relationship—both spiritual and creative—using the inner corner of His right eye in the portrait above the stairway. The tear duct in that corner of the eye sometimes lengthens almost to the bridge of the nose. I am still learning the meanings of the various shapes that extension takes. Sometimes the parallel lines do not converge and I must infer why, considering daily events and my state of mind. Usually the lines converge. It has taken me months to recognize the implications of the convergence image. I have always thought of the rubber raft in *Snake River* as rounded at both ends, but recently I have been prompted to notice that some rubber rafts have a prow—a “point.” So far then, Jesus has used the inner corner of His eye to evoke: (1) equal participation; (2) convergence; (3) arrowhead; (4) pen; and (5) raft. I missed the raft implication even after He made the tear duct resemble a raft by literally deepening it and raising the edges like a surround. I still didn’t get it. The other day He resorted to placing a raft rounded at both ends inside the “arrowhead” with the point, suggesting a raft with a prow. A raft on a river has become a metaphor of our relationship. (7 March 2016)

I have continued to be troubled by the fact that without my bifocals on, from the bottom of the stairs the eye of Jesus looks demonic. It is (1) red, (2) deformed, (3) not human, (4) shocking, and (5) frightening. It is difficult to see clearly with my weakened eyesight and so disturbing I have avoided looking at it. A few

weeks ago, however, it appeared in the background of my consciousness. I still could not see it clearly and asked for more clarity. I now see that this eye is the opposite of demonic. It is not aggressive, it has receded from evil into a small slit about half its normal size. The red in and around the eye is righteous anger at the satanic forces currently prevailing in the world, especially the persecution and martyrdom of Christians. It is also red from weeping. It is not human because it expresses the divine sorrow and pity of Jesus for all the lost souls and all those suffering. This is the eye of Sorrows. Jesus is omnipresent and feels all emotions at once. He has been empathizing with us all for 2,000 years. This is the saddest eye you will ever see. When she saw it, Judy cried. It makes you feel, How much longer will He tolerate this world?

After I asked for more clarity to understand the red eye, I was given an experience to feel as well as an image to analyze. Our sweet little white dog Bonnie is nearing 15 years of age, the average lifespan of west highland terriers, and is losing some of her capacities. She weighs 24 pounds and has difficulty hopping up and down stairs now. I carry her up or down the stairway about 8 times a day. I adore this little dog. She remains healthy in general, but several times she has wandered around whimpering and screaming because she drank too much water. On those occasions and once when she choked on a treat, we have prayed for help and believe the prayers were answered promptly. This time, however, when she started whimpering and squealing in pain we knew she had not had too much water and we did not know what was the matter. Judy rubbed her stomach and I carried her outside and up again and I followed her around consoling but nothing helped. The little dog squealed for about half an hour before finally vomiting. We thought it was over. But then it resumed and went on until she vomited again. Then it resumed and went on until she vomited a third time. After that she was just fine. We still do not know what was wrong, she may simply have overeaten. My empathy for her is so strong that I was in agony the whole time she suffered. I was so drained I couldn't eat and collapsed in bed. The next morning I could barely stand and it took half the day to recover. All this over a dog with a belly ache that lasted about an hour, whereas Jesus is still suffering incomparably more for the entire human race two millennia after his crucifixion. To empathize with His red eye I must try to multiply the intensity and duration of my own suffering toward infinity. But I can barely even look at it for a few seconds.

Several years ago I got bit by a spider on the top of my right foot, probably while I slept. I don't know what kind of spider it was, but a bite by the brown recluse spider common in this region can be fatal. Two bite mark holes were visible and the inflammation suggested that the spider was poisonous. Yet there was never any pain at all, no swelling developed, and I soon forgot about it. Over the years since I have been reminded of the bite by slight itching and occasional reddening of the pink scar, a shiny patch like a mild burn scar, about the size of a fingerprint and vaguely rectangular. I have consistently resisted calling this a sign because it could have been natural, though odd. The scar is about the size and shape of a spike like those driven into the feet in crucifixions. I have been reminded of this every time the scar has itched a little. And every time I have contrasted my own little bite and the lack of pain with the crucifixion and suffering of Jesus. If the healing of the spider bite was not a sign, it has had the same effect as one. I have been moved to add this episode to my testimony by the recent appearance of a nearly matching pink shiny patch on the top of my other foot, with no evident cause.

More attacks: During the night of 11 April 2016 I was troubled by the return of an occasional twitch in my right hand—at least 4 times. I thought I had corrected the calcium deficiency a doctor diagnosed as the cause. At first I speculated that the twitch could also be a symptom of the flu, but I rejected that notion. In my entire life, twitches have never been a symptom of the flu. Instead I told Jesus that from now on whenever I got a twitch I would consider it another attack by an evil spirit, and that when twitching stopped I would thank Him for protection. I keep reminding myself that I asked for this. Soon after I started having paranormal experiences in 2011 and had my first attack, I asked Jesus to give me more lessons. I said I was open to anything as long as I could work the next day. I had faith that He would protect me from serious harm and I wanted to give Him the opportunity to educate people using my testimony. I repeated that commitment a few days ago.

The following night (12 April 2016) I learned that an attack is possible even when speaking the name of God in a prayer. I woke up between three and four o'clock in a state of intense anxiety, with no evident cause. I felt like my blood pressure was way up, yet I had not been having a nightmare, nor any dream that I could recall. I had a strong continuous feeling in my right hand that a twitch was coming and I was kept

awake in dread for about an hour. My worst attack has included an electrical charge through the nerves of my right hand and demonic possession. Any twitch might signal a recurrence. My right hand is my writing hand. Soon after waking I prayed for relief and got it. I felt a peace come over me and was able to relax, but then fear returned and I grew anxious again. My fear, my insufficient faith, opened the door to attack. I was so sleepy I was barely awake and too feeble-minded to think. In my confusion I repeated the mistakes I have made in the past. Just as I began another prayer for peace my right hand twitched for the *only* time all night. That shocked me because I thought being in prayer would protect me. Once again I was *vulnerable* due to *fear* and *deceived*. Once again I mistakenly attributed the attack to Jesus giving me a sign, since I did not believe demonic attack was possible during a prayer. Once again I lost confidence in my ability to read signs and, therefore, once again I felt as though I would not be able to continue writing my testimony. “Jesus told me that the sixth arena where spiritual warfare is waged is in the realm of the mind. He said that if the devil can interfere with a person’s thought patterns, he has won a most important battle.” (Mary Baxter, *A Divine Revelation of the Spirit Realm*, 2000: 97-98) In the morning Judy told me that she also felt she had been attacked, with increased arthritic pain in her back. We are both doing work every day that provokes attacks to punish and discourage us.

The following night (13 April) I woke up at three o’clock feeling jumped. For about an hour I felt sensations that precede a twitch not only in my right hand but also in my left hand and my left leg. I prayed and I never had a twitch all night. It felt like something kept trying to push through my nerves with enough energy to cause a twitch somewhere in my body but it got blocked everywhere. Later I found that I was in fact having a slight recurrence of the flu, which could have made me weak and more susceptible to attack, but my vulnerability has been increased the most by obsessing about twitches. By allowing the sensations preceding a twitch Jesus (1) dramatized once again the reality of ongoing warfare in the spiritual dimension, (2) cautioned me against opening a door to the enemy with my thoughts, (3) demonstrated his power to defeat evil, and (4) proved that He should always be trusted absolutely.

The following night (14 April) I woke up soon after three o’clock, this time before getting jumped. This time I was awake and had a few moments to prepare. Had I not been awakened I believe I would have been possessed again. Within moments of waking I felt a rise of intense anxiety similar to what I felt the night before, but this night I had time to concentrate on defending myself. I tried to have no fear. I had faith that Jesus would not allow any serious harm to me. I called upon Him for help and began to pray repeatedly. A feeling came over me like I imagine it might feel to get zapped by a stun gun at very low voltage. I was not physically paralyzed, but I did not want to move. Jesus advises, Be still. Something was happening to me from the outside and I did not want to make it worse by moving. For over half an hour only my lips moved. The high anxiety was constant and unchanging throughout that time and I felt disappointed that my prayers had not diminished or stopped it. I was tempted to feel annoyed, but this time I controlled my emotions. I kept praying for peace and at four o’clock, as if on a schedule, the anxiety finally began to decrease. Within ten minutes it felt like the episode was over. To shake off the trauma I got up and walked for twenty minutes, after which I was able to fall asleep until morning.

I was attacked on four successive nights. Judy thinks Satan is very pissed off at me because every time he attacks me I celebrate his defeat in this testimony. Also he hates our American literature web site and my novel, both of which are nearing completion. Jesus is teaching me how to defend myself. In the first place, as the Bible says, to deflect attack you must “armor yourself” against evil—lying, cheating, envying, lust, selfishness and so on. Most people do not get attacked because Satan is pleased by their conduct. The armor is Christian virtue. When I described this experience to Judy I said it was as if I was surrounded by guardian angels holding up shields the way Roman soldiers did against a shower of arrows. Jesus was protecting me during all the time I was praying to Him to protect me—and before. Through these recent attacks, He is teaching me spiritual warfare: (1) Armor yourself, (2) do not fear, (3) speak the name of Jesus, (4) trust Him and pray, (5) be patient and endure.

The following night (15 April), after four successive attacks, I offered to experience another, to see what would happen. I was spared. I had a restful sleep, yet the next day I felt very tired and was glad there had not been another attack. I had three nights of relative peace. However, several times during the day on Sunday, 17 April, I felt a slight pulse in the thumb of my right hand, less than a twitch. The next evening on 18 April I had a series of them. I continue to have occasional mild symptoms of the flu, a rare sneeze,

fatigue and the slight pang of a headache now and then, but I am taking calcium supplements and am in good health overall with no other negative symptoms.

On the night of 19 April I told Jesus that I felt another attack coming on. I said I was open to another lesson and asked that I be awakened before three o'clock in order to prepare myself. I woke up at about five minutes to three. This attack of intense anxiety was similar to the one on 14 April except that this one was twice as long and this time instead of not wanting to move, I did not want to stop praying. Instead of praying repeatedly, I prayed aloud almost incessantly for over one hour, thanking Jesus for protection. I got up and kept praying while I went to the bathroom and put away the dishes in the dishwasher. This time I felt less oppressive pressure. A number of times I felt a sudden pang of dread out of proportion to what I was thinking. I had faith the attack would end at four o'clock and it did. I had no twitches at all, only occasional faint pulses in the thumb of my right hand. My writing hand has become a message center. When I feel a pulse I am being reminded that I am under attack *all the time* for my writing and am being defended *all the time*. I am also being warned to expect an attack of exceptional intensity. There are worse places I could be getting the message. Jesus is being gentle with me. Poor Judy experienced unusual back pain the day of 19 April when her usual remedies failed her for some reason. Many people are coping with terrible pain. I feel ashamed to appear to be complaining about mere harassment, but without Jesus it would be a great deal worse than a nuisance. I have felt a number of pulses while typing this account.

Michael Hollister (20 April 2016)