

Curing Millennialism and...
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The characters, old and young, in this work of fiction are fictional composites. The virtues and faults inflicted on them by life are....very real.

CHAPTER 1

The classically calligraphed sign on the gate to the multi-building complex said “Grande River School for the Arts and the Expressive Sciences” in bold Grecian letters. Witnessing them were the ghosts inhabiting the sculpted faces of Pioneers from two centuries who were also responsible for the founding of Grande River, British Columbia, Canada. When those ghosts had bodies, they had built the 19th century one room schoolhouse into an institute of higher learning and vibrant expression. A place of education and inspiration, rather than instruction and indoctrination, that sent people out into the ‘civilized’ cities on both coasts. And which, for various times in its history, brought in others from the populated world to Grande River, most of them eventually NOT wanting to create what they had at home with themselves on top.

“Yes it was a golden time,” a man with thinning long straggly white hair blowing in the wind which still defiantly held onto his scalp said with tired but not yet defeated eyes as he looked at the likeness of 19th century Oxford University drop out J. Wilfred Thompson, who had decided to set up an institute far away from the comforts of his blue blood upbringing in Boston. Who valued what a man did rather than the blood line he was spawned from, or how many ‘important’ people said he was great, or artistic. “A great time to be Alive, big A,” the shabbily clad old man carrying a briefcase overloaded with librettos and notes written on paper rather than a tablet continued to the stone face bearing the likeness of Melvin Schwartz. A 20th Brooklyn pianist who had lost his arm fighting Franco, Hitler and Mussolini in Spain, yet somehow gained the ability to teach and inspire a whole new generation of Revolutionaries to fight Fascist, Capitalist and Communist Oppressors with music that was so moving and intense that you couldn’t dance to it. The 21st century admirer of Melvin and J. Wilfred then turned to the bust of Beethoven over the gate. A three dimension likeness of Old Ludwig that (if you let it) looked at and into the soul of anyone entering the gates of the (according to every grant proposal mission statement written from it) Institute for Expanding Enlightenment.

“And...so, why did my generation’s Revolution about peace, love and Passion become so...sterile and passionless?” the Bernie Sanders clone, but certainly not clown, George Dimitropolis gave voice to after saying a silent ‘hey, how are all of us doing now, really?’ to the ghosts of J. Wilfred,

Melvin and Ludwig. His answer came when his glance was captured by a glimpse of himself in the present through the reflection of a mirror on an electric powered construction van. His eyes saw himself as the world saw him. An aged too much to be cool anymore Hippie in a hole-ridden Peace sign bearing surplus Army coat from five lost wars ago, collared faded blue shirt and desert boots older than most of his students. A tired, run down, cynical, big nosed, triple chinned, fun hating but still Bliss seeking 70 year old who welcomed a meaningful death more than a continued frustration-filled life.

A healthy, youthful man of no more than 25 easily lived years (or more accurately , a cool looking mobile corpse) put a new sign up over the old one. It covered the faces of both pioneers who came West, as well as the 'offensively intense and misogynistic' mug of Old Fart Ludwig who inspired both of the former.

"River City Institute of Artistic Technology," George's bloodshot and re-angered eyes read from the 'friendly font' sign. "Ya know, technology is becoming less artistic by the fucking hour," the old fart composer and (when he had an audience other than his dog at home) keyboard performer shot back. "And it's Soul that creates art. And what we need is REAL Intelligence, not more soul-killing, passivity-inducing, 'happy', non-jarring, offensively non-offensive dull out virus spread by Artificial Intelligence. Intelligence that---"

"----Is happening, cool and the wave of the future," the impish, hunchbacked not yet fired sessional lecturer heard behind him from 28 years 'cool' Ashley Hinton dash Fernandez, who had been promoted from most popular to her peers (and selected faculty members) graduate to Dean within two years. Her genetics were just the right mixture of Black, White and Indigenous to make her seem to be the perfect Barbie bitch for the multiracial 'diverse' pussy-whipped and trained Kens who now over populated the faculty lounge tastefully eating internet ordered eating bean sprouts and plant based burgers. While still somehow holding onto tenure Associate Professor George proudly brought in his cheese, mustard and bologna sandwiches he prepared at home, despite the petitions that such food 'provided offensive odors'. "You know, George," Ashley said as she laid her open palm ever so gently on his angry shoulder, moving it towards his clenched fist. "Maybe you should consider retiring. Take it easy. Enjoy life instead of trying to change it. Because as you know,

overworking yourself to meet deadlines, revolutionize any part of the world and honor your promises to anyone is----”

“----NOT self abuse!” George screamed back. “And intensity is required for ANY kind of positive change, growth or healthy maintenance! “Intensity...I N T E N..”. he sang with a clenched fist through a mouth loaded with more bad teeth than good ones, his double chin accentuated with each letter. “S I T ...and Y. And why you SHOULD ask?” With as little effort as possible, Ashley rolled her eyebrows, with more condescension than any of the Yuppies who had taken over the Hippie Revolution when George embraced the Call to transform the world with radical new musical and philosophical ideas as well as hard work/Work. “Yes, George, but intensity comes in different forms, you know,” she said with absolutely no passion to her meaning or verbage. “And effortless success really IS the best kind, you know,” she asserted with a raised, blister free, freshly manicured index finger shaking into George’s face as if he was a seven year old child, or worse, a seventy year old loser who was being ‘childish’.

Twenty-seven year old Ashley, who had somehow turned from being George’s favorite student to his worst academic enemy and boss, threw out several more credos of the ‘hip and cool’ generation which she was now a year or so older than, including ‘self love is the most important kind of love’.

George barked back, with pity and desperation, a quote from Saint Francis. “It’s better to understand than to be understood, better to love than to be loved, and better to serve than be served. And if you’re not busting your ass trying to part of the solution, you’re for fuck sakes a part of the problem,” he declared with intense reverence and something Ashley didn’t understand, or knew about—Life tested kindness. “Don’t you think and feel that’s true?” Ashley looked away, seeming to take in it all in.

George took in a deep breath, thinking and feeling that finally what he was trying to teach the world, and most particularly Ashley, had sunk in after being blown off temporarily. Yes, the younger generation WOULD inherit, carry on and implement the real message behind all the music and librettos he composed, played and (when there was no one hireable to do so) sung. Yes---a victory! He could die now a fulfilled soul! Without having to look forward to being a ghost overlooking a world that destroyed, discredited or,

worse, ignored all of the Creative Works his had left behind. And, maybe, being reincarnated into a son (or perhaps daughter?) of the students he had taught, inspired and empowered. “Taking turns in trying to pass it on”, according to the 1967 LP of Procol Harum which had never made it to best selling CD or anyone’s hit list on Spotify.

As Ashley turned back towards George, he saw the faces of the daughters he never had, the sons he never spawned, or sons who maybe wanted to become daughters. He envisioned with images, words and smells, a future movie in his mind of them taking on the torch of Enlightenment, Liberation and Empowerment. Until the torch was blown out by two words from Ashley’s perfectly shaped, never been hit or bit by anyone, even herself, lips. “Ok, Boomer.”

With that Ashley slung her weightless shoulder bag containing her lap top over her shoulder. She confidently strolled to the newly built super stereo-system, climate controlled auditorium where a crowd of students were waiting for her. All of them with one hand on their phones and leaning onto each other like stretched out spineless Gumbie cartoon characters who couldn’t stand on their own two feet, their stare fixed on their phones as if waiting for Big Brother, Sister, Brother-Sister or the tally of ‘likes’ from other fellow lost souls to tell them how they should be free thinking individuals.

George schlepped to a sixty year old brick building three code violations away from being condemned, reserved for the few students still attending his class which, according to confirmed rumor, was about to be totally cancelled any ya know, like, day now.

Much of it of course had to do with technology, most of which was connected to that dirty yet now necessary C thing----the computer. Which had programs on it that were always three steps ahead of George and his contemporaries could master, or even understand. Such made George and fellow old farts dependent on the Millennials to do ANYthing. Pushing him into retirement, on THEIR terms.

But unlike his contemporaries, George was not ready for life as an observer and consumer. No, that rocking chair with a comfy pillow and generous supply of milk, cookies and under-spiced meat loaf the younger generation had put on his porch would be rammed up the asses of anyone who tried to

put him there. Yes, each generation did outdo the previous one with technological smarts dating back to the days when old hunters using wooden tip spears bawked against 'the yungins' for putting sharpened stones on the business end of their weaponry. And complained that if the wheel was overused, it would lead to a world where no one had the initiative or strength to carry the game from the woods to the campfire. But never had such changes in technology initiated such changes in assignment of work, or depriving of older generations to be innovative, useful and, more importantly Alive, Big A. That state of Enlightened struggle in 'the yungins' now being what George considered to be a toxin that was killing them, and which would eventually kill the world at large. With...yes, someone 'up there' in control of all of these 'advancements'. Someone who George hoped he would find and neutralize, after of course he would find the e mail from the new 'Dean' containing the code to get through the electronically controlled doors on the lecture hall in 'Old (now 'new') Main' on his newly issued 'I'll work with you when I WANT to not when you NEED me to' phone.

CHAPTER 2

The copper wiring in the circular lobby of the ‘Going for Baroque’ building (aka Old Main) was as much outside the walls as behind it. The stench of asbestos and moldy wood lingered in the air for whoever decided to take in a deep enough breath. But the acoustics were unmatched, as anyone could hear what was playing in ‘the pit’ with total clarity. And just enough echo to make what was played by musicians in that unseeable foxhole interesting and enduring, designed to allow a musician or musicians to be heard but not seen. As long as George had anything to say about it, the music was judged, and appreciated, for the musical sounds they were sending out into the otherwise silent universe rather than the attire worn by the performer(s) or the anatomy under it.

But as George entered the hallway of Old Main, there was nothing but Silence bouncing against the dust coated walls. Yet with the ears inside his head, George could hear the masterpieces played by the music students he had instructed, coached and finally taught there over the last twenty years. Pieces he had composed and some he didn’t, which they performed better than he could.

“Hey, Bob Dylan wrote music and lyrics centuries ahead of his time, but his voice grumbled out melodies that kept shifting keys, hitting by accident or maybe intent the ones that irritated the ears of the listener most,” George told himself, recalling the first ‘True Revolution 60s’ album he put together back in the 80s where he was the lead and often only singer. But the only way it got played on any radio stations was after his student, Kathrine Clarke, let the lyrics and music flow over her ever so perfect vocal cords. And it took Lawrence Hartunian’s long as a Grinch ET fingers to play the 13 note span on the 88s to play his next composition, ‘Promethian Fire SUNatas.’ Those selections playing between his ears were replaced by something in that always present but frequently ignored phenomenon called ‘the real world now’.

Looking toward its source, George’s eyes became caught somehow in the slow whirling of the fan that blew warm air downward. Such carried with it visiting ghosts from the horse and buggy days. He allowed himself to hear in his head Beethoven’s voice and music, to the now driving tempo of the fan. But such was replaced by something else. George’s outer acoustical

sound gathering organs on either side of his head and the vibration receptors in his gut detected something very 'real and now' coming from the still concealed pit.

It sounded...different. A mixture of old and new sound transcending into music. The beat that kept changing, not allowing you didn't to dance, sway or bob your head to. It invited you to soar to higher dimensions of thought, introspection and discovery. It seemed to be a logical roadmap to the top of Olympus such as what Bach provided as well as a dare to jump off the cliffs that invited and somehow forced you to fly. Indeed, this indescribable music, played by instruments George could not identify, made him recall those flying experiences he had when he visited the Huya Aniya, aka 'dreamland' while (presumably) in REM sleep. In that dimension, which felt like being half awake and half asleep, he was able to somehow float around the room, slither out the window, the fly above the trees in his yard and the rest of the neighborhood. Until of course a pair of Jehovah's witnesses or the meter reader from the Electric Company came a knocking at the front door. Feeling himself levitating above the floor and hopping in mid air float, George looked at the bust of Beethoven just outside the pit. He felt his Master, adopted Uncle and friend say 'yes, it's me in there in that, where I was assigned to be reincarnated'.

George decided to come down to the ground, and moved closer to the nearly pitch black pit. Huddled into its dark recesses was a long haired performer, which in this time could be more likely male than female, with not a strand being grey or white in the long topknot. Playing on a keyboard, creating orchestral tones through and a computer George didn't recognize, with sounds that felt even more real than real life instruments. With some of the Zappian riffs resembling...yes...what George had composed in the past, or put on paper inside his head. "Ludwig!" he called out to the sole performer, sensing the same intensity coming out of the player's hands. "Time to come out," he said, then slipped into a chuckle with humor induced by the playing of the music. "I think the world can handle a female Beethoven now," he said, considering that the player could have a vagina rather than penis between the spindly black skinny jean covered legs. "Even if you have to squat at the piss bucket you put by the piano and only shower when it rains hard and you can't get a cab," he said, sniffing that this incarnation of...Something the world needed hadn't bathed in at least a week. "Come out" he beckoned. "And let me identify who you are so...we can work together this time and..."

The figure playing stopped, apparently startled by George's giving voice and physical presence to his being there. With a hoodie over its bowed head, he or she packed up its supplies and scurried out of the pit, past George, knocking him to the floor en route to the open door to the lecture hall and disappearing into it. George felt himself collided into a herd of... 'them'. Millennials who were there to take George's course for an easy, lazy A rather than a hard earned and life sustaining B, or a letter beyond the grading alphabet. Such was policy he had reluctantly given into give for the "get an award as the winner without having to play the game" generation so he would have SOME enrollment in his "Real Revolution through Music" course. The herd of co-dependent Snowflakes who he hoped, yet again, to turn into expansively and independently thinking Fireballs shuffled into the lecture hall like a slime mold, as if herded in by the head asshole and/or idiot.

On his way to the new podium in the eighty year old room, George observed the faces of the students whose stares were held captive by their phones. From that position of what used to be authority and respect, he could not identify who the Beethoven from the pit was. He perused whatever faces he could get a clear view of in the dimly lit room to see who was there 'to make a difference' in the world and who was there to get an easy credit towards getting a certificate, recalling that the ratio of the former to the latter was getting smaller each year. But for the moment, life, as it was, demanded that he see who HE was, or was being assigned to be. "You know the rules, George," Ashley said from behind him, startling him with a forceful whisper. "Those who can't do, teach," she smirked. "And those who can't teach cool classes teach this one, very temporarily of course." She whipped out an envelope from inside her black leather jacket, slapping it onto George's palms. "Complaints about your expressive, culturally inappropriate and offensive, like, everything. Nothing, like, ya know, personal."

With that Ashley turned her overly scarfed neck around and power marched out of the lecture hall to the tempo of high heels on the hard wooden floor. Leaving George even closer to being 'cancelled', or as it used to be called in the better times, banished to an ever more distant district of Siberia. Leaving him with one Mission now. To find the cure for the diseases afflicting Moscow, working with and finding a younger exile whose Vision, along with George's, could save all of Russia...And the world.

CHAPTER 3

So far Life had taught George some lessons he had to reluctantly learn. Such as that it was easier, cheaper and more reliable to have a phone connected to a satellite in space than a cord leading from the wall. That paying bills on line, on a linear-thinking computer that never thought in circles and parallel curves like he did, rather than with checks sent in the mail and never cashed till 2 months after arrival, was the only sure-fire way to pay the phone, electric and credit card bills on time. And that to open up people's souls, you have to get them to laugh before you can make, or inspire, them to think.

The 17 to 25 year olds who would inherit the world he was still in, and hoped would make it to another generation, took to their seats on their own time, opening up their lap tops to take notes, or perhaps google facts faster than he could spout them out from the podium. From atop that 2 foot 'mountain', laid down his briefcase of compositions and notes preserved for eternity on paper rather than electrical cyber-circuits on the floor next to him. Yes, common and universal ground would evoke both thinking and feeling now! A joke and battle cry based in common experience that is now part of the universally shared North American genetic memory was called for! He cleared his throat, felt the fire in his gut (rather than the chi in his solar shakra) and then boldly blasted out with a boldly extended fist of commitment to the death, and beyond... "We are gathered here today to do battle with the fire in our bellies and the commitment in our souls to revolutionize music and the world, not because it's easy but because it's haaard!" he declared in his best JFK voice. Indeed, he felt from his arthritic feet to his balding head the commitment of the youngest and perhaps most hard working President in American history. He felt his stare being held captive by the ghosts of JFK, Beethoven and his own hard working father floating above the heads of the students.

After feeling a 'thumbs up' from the ancestors who had inspired him to 'if you did good today, you gotta do great tomorrow' with every task he took on, or was assigned to do, George gazed at the congregation of comfortable souls he so much wanted to turn into struggling ones. "Huh" they seemed to be saying with their confused and condescending 'too cool or too afraid to sweat or struggle' faces through partially open jaws. "The new North American battle cry," he thought to himself, but didn't give voice to, at least not this time.

Self observing his own miscalculation that anything that happened more than 10 years ago was as irrelevant to anyone under 30 world as what band was on top of the cyber-charts now was to anyone over 50, the masochistic workaholic New York CITY raised progeny of countless generations of Greek Spartans pulled back his determined ‘come back victorious behind your shield or over it’ lips. “A JFK act out and credo,” he explained, still getting inquisitive ‘what the fuck planet did this Boomer idiot come from’ looks from those who were still looking at him, and not their phones or computer screens. “John Fitzgerald Kennedy,” he explained, moving aside from the podium, so as to expose more of himself to the students, and vice versa. “The youngest and most enthusiastic, hard working and...yeah on occasion... mistake making and when he had to...admitting to his mistakes Presidents in the 20th century. Or maybe any century,” he explained. “Whose original inauguration speech was ‘ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for you, fellow citizens of the world!’ The ‘fellow citizens of the world part’ censored by of course the American Capitalist Industrial Military Complex,” he related with a small chuckle. He got even more of those ‘do we have to know this for the exam or, like, ya know, for anything that’s, like, relevant to us’ stares. “JFK, who was a BIG fan of music!” he pressed with a clenched fist. “And a patron of the Arts! Who encouraged, with money, a whole lot of artistic expressions that are still relevant today!” he exclaimed. “Like...” George bolted out into a rendition of the theme song to ‘Camelot’ unapologetically. “Where once it never rained till after sundown...” (ets)Not caring whose ears he offended by his non-autotuned voice or whose sensibilities were ‘jarred’ but being loud and expressed with unbridled maximal expression of the Mind, Heart and Spirit. Or giving a ‘damn, fuck or fudge’ about how much his, ‘like so yesterday’, Old New Yawk accent came through intermittently through an inspired King Arthur’s English accent.

The sung rather than spoken told of the legendary (and perhaps according to some archeologists, real) Kingdom of King Arthur where everyone gave their abilities (and not just conveniences) and took according to their needs (and not greedy or comfort seeking wants). Such was, in Georges’ experience anyway, Alive for a brief period back in the late 1960s, and in more rural locations of the US the 1970s, peaking for 2 years in each location before it was subdued, ignored or irreversibly commercialized. By the second chorus of the popular Broadway tune, George’s ears heard musical accompaniment to his off key voice in thirds, fifths then floating

seventh harmonic riffs on real instruments. Played on flute, then guitar, then trumpet. Then, as he continued, instruments the 'never played any instruments on a keyboard unless it was an electric piano' 'fifty years behind or a hundred years ahead'' Citizen-Professor-Maestro didn't recognize. Then human choral tones that sounded like human voices. One by one, the millennial audience began to listen to George's lyrics, some of them even bobbing their heads with the tune. And, even more important, a few put their hands on their chin in 'soon someday to be free thinking ahead of the crowd and therefore exiled from it professorial' manner, absorbing the words to the timeless anthem of hope and commitment.

While singing, George looked up and saw that the musical and vocal accompaniment was not coming from his head this time, but it a computer. It was operated by, none other than Tom Ranselhoff, who was, according to the straggly hair on its (now identified by facial structure as 'his') head and foul smelling body odor blown in by the fan in back of the room, the sloveny 'geek who will never get a date' attire, the 'incarnation' of Ludwig von Beethoven. The player from the pit and seen but not heard sound recordist at most community function in town kept playing innovative riffs to the original version of 'Camelot', then went beyond it. With variations that invited then forced George to become less 'regular' and 'according to the written page' in his musical expression. Then, at the Mandate of 'Ludwig the Second', or whoever his name was or needed to be now, and the ghost of Ludwig von Beethoven the First, George stopped singing. He allowed the young cyber Maestro to improvise on his own, with riffs that were....different. Some felt inappropriate to George of course. They were simplistic and certainly non-traditional, which could be called 'immature'. But they contained an element that even the most 'sensitive' commercial hist blasted at you when you went into every store in town didn't contain....sincerity.

Such aroused eyerolls from at least half of Ludwig II's 'co-creator millennials'. They no doubt were writing entries on their phones and tablets to each other, competing for who could give the most artistically biting and therefore 'creative' attacks on Tom's work and his old fart albatross, Professor George in a still 'cool to be cruel' world. But some were listening. And some added their own instrumentation from their lap tops, though slower at the keyboards than the totally absorbed in his work 'band' leader.

George looked from one face to another, indulging in his habit of projecting what kind of humanoid each of the students would evolve, or devolve, into. But there was one thing that was as certain as any scientific fact, even in a world of false facts and ‘fluid’ science. Ludwig II . aka Tom Ranselhoff in this lifetime, had an appreciation of frozen in time past and the yet to be defined present. He seemed to know his own generation. Everyone in town, even George, knew him to be the smartest computer whiz in River City or any of the towns within fifty miles.

Though over the hill and half way into the abyss of death according to his doctors and every ‘retired’ friend in River City and relative still lingering in New York, George still had much to say. With printed words, music and filmed images. Having been long on productivity but short of acknowledgement, George needed a translator of his messages who could convert them into distributable products other than self-published books, non-autotuned music and grammatically correct but not visually ‘wowwing’ videos whose dwindling viewership was approaching zero. Yes, this was a good day. No, a GREAT day. Particularly when Ludwig II brought his interpretation of Camelot to a musically whimsical conclusion according to the guidance and strict instruction of the third brain which had evolved between George and this Old Souled youth. The aged third generation Spartan heard that special real world, but never creatable by AI sound of....Eternal Now Silence louder than ever before. At that magic moment, Ludwig II looked up at George, extending his hand to him to continue the lecture.

“So,” George said, after feeling his lips break into a smile so wide that it seemed to break the petrified wood in his aging cheeks. “We, some of us anyway, enough of us anyway, are ready to ‘have a good time living the hard life’?” he offered to the mixture of confused, condescending and no doubt ‘offended so I will have to have him cancelled’ millennials.

“Working Man’s Dead,” Ludwig II, as Tom, related to his ‘we don’t need to know about anything more than ten year old music colleagues’ by way of explanation. “Gerry Garcia and Robert Hunter.”

“Which we will build on and go beyond, on our own terms in this class!” George added. “On EACH of our own terms, since as Isaac Stern said, the thing that makes ANY music Great is that there is Life big L in it! And

music is Alive, big A if we are in charge of the AI, and not the other way around!” he declared.

“But which has limited use and distribution unless we are...life balanced,” George heard from the entrance of the lecture hall. “And that we above all have to live happy lives to make anyone else happy,” a tall 40 year old man clad in a faux leather jacket, pressed blue shirt with no tie and shiny hipster boots continued in a suave, pathologically assured voice. With an upward chin, absorbing the light from above, which he snapped on with a click of a remote control, he strolled forward into the room. He sported a handsome face in which all features were sized ‘perfect’ as he advanced his way to the podium. The tall, handsome (and to George at least) stranger absorbed the applause of awe and admiration from all the Millennials, including Tom. Their young faces were stunned as if gazing at a god rather than a mortal who reeked of ‘Silicon Valley chic and sharp’ “Like I said in my TED talks,” the visitor said as he worked his way to the podium, standing next to George from it, the foot difference in height making the Old Professor both look and feel twenty feet smaller. “Life and work balance is the key to...happiness. Along with some other formulas we should all know,” he declared to a captive audience of Millennials.

George’s eyes were fixed on the woman who suddenly appeared behind him. Ashley, his once most promising and beloved student and now all powerful boss, displayed yet another colorful scarf around her neck. It flowed down to her size super small waist around what looked like an extra layer of breasts she had grown in the last half hour. She motioned ever so ‘Oprah like’ for George to move aside as the cyber-god, or perhaps even a robot created by humans who envisioned themselves as gods, stood next to him.

“He’s a special guest, who came all this way to River City to speak to all of you,” Ashley said by way of explanation to the students. “Who I know you will all listen to attentively,” she continued, lasering the mandate to George with a condescending, threatening and pity infused stare.

“Eh,...sure, we’ll all...listen,” George conceded, thinking himself to be the Canadian Bernie Sanders who, by mandate and law based in morality rather than political agendas, understood that the only way to discredit Hitler was to let him rant on and on till the toxic thoughts in his mind were exposed or, perhaps, a small amount of truth amongst his lies would find its way to the

table and be incorporated into applicable Truth big T. “Fifteen minutes, as I know every TED talk lasts for ten,” the five foot four homely Professor said to the suave, confident, charismatic six foot tall ‘star’ who he didn’t recognize, but knew now that he should know. “Okay?” he said to Ashley.

With a tasteful aristocratic nod, Ashley, the 28 year old ‘queen’ of her generation agreed, took a seat in the back row of the lecture hall, opening up her computer to take notes, while taking pictures of the event. George sat on one of the many empty chairs in the front row, pulling out a legal pad and three pens to take down everything this surprise celebrity guest lecture said, or meant.

The man, who introduced himself as Lance Goodwin (for ‘anyone who has been hiding in a cabin in the woods without wifi for the last ten years’), had a voice which was so soothing that it penetrated through everyone he spoke to. With a hypnotic effect that invited you into his world. He strolled while he pontificated, in dancelike movements and minimal use of his hands. “You are a new generation,” he said to the kids, as one of them somehow. “Who have an obligation to not make the same mistakes that the generations before you made.” He turned to George. “Right?”

“Right and correct,” George noted, recalling the failures of the ‘People’s Revolution that serves all the People’ from his generation, and how the Peace and Love Movement of the 60s and 70s got corrupted long before Disco.

“And there were the dark 50s, when even thinking you wanted to be Socialist put you in jail, and when competition was king, you were number one or number nothing,” Lance related. “And the way to teach how to be a good human being was to beat it into kids with a stick, or convince anyone who didn’t obey any of the rules that they would pay for it with an eternity in hell. And the only way to be right and good was to be white, straight, rich and Christian,” he went on. “Correct?” the superstar and (given the way the lassies and gay lads were gawking at him) superstud said, turning to George. “Yeah...” George agreed. “It was a dark time,” the Old Timer who refused to admit that his time was up lamented. “But if we study what happened then, and before then, the way it really happened and why, we can be sure it doesn’t happen again. Which---”

“---Won’t happen again!” Lance interjected turning to the audience, seeming to be to the audience the 30 or 40 something too cool to have to ever sweat success model of what a millennial aspired to become. With a perfect body, perfect voice and perfectly designed goals which were as easy to achieve as saying ‘MicroSOFT’. “If we follow these new rules for a new generation and a new, harmonic, organic and sustainable future.” He snapped his fingers, which pulled down the screen over the blackboard on which George had pre-written musical bars to be filled according to discoveries made during the discovery welcoming lecture. He pressed a button on his phone, turning the brightly lit room pitch black. From the projection booth in the back of the room, images of green eco-systems and happy faces onto the screen. The key point messages were printed in friendly fond, elaborated on by Lance in Ted Talk manner with non-jarring music that hypnotized the viewer rather than woke them up to higher consciousnesses.

The messages included:

“Self Love is the most important and only real kind of Love. Only after you love yourself and are happy can you be of use to anyone else.”

George felt himself turning over in his soon to come grave at that self-serving selfish statement, wanting but unable to correct it by saying that hard earned ‘Self Respect’ is more important than self love. He rose up, preparing to challenge that toxic falsehood. But Lance was way ahead of him with the next slide, pushing George down back into his chair without being seen by anyone else. He was pressed down so hard that the pain in his overexerted legs, arms and heart prevented him from rising again. And when he attempted to do so, Lance’s overly muscled arm, no doubt made stronger by some kind of demonic possession or orders from ‘the top’ of the mortal food command chain, discouraged any success at George rising up.

“We must value who we are, not what we do,” the next credo. Followed by: “To work to exhaustion for yourself or anyone else is self abuse.”

“If you’re struggling too hard and it feels stressful, you’re doing something wrong or doing the right thing the wrong way.”

“You are entitled to not deliver on promises you made or not meet deadlines if it becomes stressful.”

“Honoring your word is for masochistic idiots or fools.”

“Effortless success is the best kind.”

“You are entitled to not hear what you don’t want to hear or what triggers stress in you.”

“Work-life balance is the key to a happy life, with the emphasis on life, not work”

“More play than work. Seek want to’s, avoid all have to’s.”

“Pain is to be avoided, not welcomed.”

”Taking on challenge you don’t feel comfortable with is following the footsteps of your self abusive father or sadistic mother.”

And finally... “If it hurts or causes you any stress, stop doing it.”

The music ended gradually and the lights went up just as non-abruptly.

The end of the ‘talk’, George heard music. Even more hypnotic than Lance’s. From none other than Ludwig II’s lap top, appended by him giving the guru a thumbs up. Then standing up and leading the group in a round of applause.

Lance looked to George, with a warm smile, which felt more like a smirk if you looked hard enough into it. “They’re all yours now,” he said, after which he walked away.

“To the safety of sterility the crowd was refined,’ the line from Phil Ochs back in the 70s, came to George’s mind. He pushed himself up off the chair, determined to not be kept down, and looked at the soul dead faces of the students in front of him, including a Ludwig II who had been recruited by, in effect, the devil. He thought of opening up their closed minds and recently re-toxified souls with a joke, But, as he knew, ‘if it’s not offensive to someone at some time, it’ ain’t comedy’. And these newly ‘assured’ young minds and re-killed souls would cancel him very quickly for anything real he had to and must say to them. Still the stress embracing and challenging required masochistic workaholic Crusader he had to say, and do, something.

The rest of the lecture, delivered without his usual expressively worded 'offensive triggers' but with language that indicated his disagreement with the new Lance commandments, fell on deaf ears, and a walk out from most of the students, including Tom, which emptied the room. Such was followed by the entry of a proud and happy Ashley. She handed him a pink slip. "You don't have to work anymore. With a healthy retirement package. With an economically happy severance package. Enjoy it!" she said with friendly millennial smile.

"Not possible," he said to walking away from this challenge and opportunity.

She hesitated, pulled in her carefully made-up red lips, then from her one foot and larger totem pole higher vantage point and looked down at George. She laid her never been blistered or did a hard day's work in her life hands on his shoulder. "Well, me and everyone else here are sorry to hear that," she said with pity in her voice, her gentle touch on his shoulder assuring him that if he dared to rise up against the 'New Movement', he would be pushed down harder than Lance's bear like manicured claws had done.

Such of course only fueled George's resolve to Cure the Millennial Disease, any way possible. And to not give up hope for the Cause or Ludwig II.

For full read, please contact **mjpolitis@yahoo.com** to make arrangements or if you do not get a reply within 36 hours, please contact **george@overlandpress.com**