



"Each time entities move out of a comfort zone into new areas, they shall find themselves moving in states of daring and adventure and that very kind of consciousness allows doors to open for them." C.A.C.

DOOR 1 - ARIES

A Beginning

Anza Borrego Desert, California 1966 (Age 24)

It was a warm summer day as I prepared to leave for the desert. I had made arrangements to meet friends, Joe and Gretchen, at the Ironwood Motel close to Borrego Springs on Saturday. Deciding to leave a day early, I packed a few items to camp out for one night. I didn't figure I would need many supplies. I loaded a glass gallon of water into my Volkswagen van. To the collection of supplies, I added my favorite red quilt ski jacket with black imitation fur attached to the hood. Also, I added a flashlight, a banana, and a book, "Ship of Fools". It was something to read if I got bored. I was now ready for the eighty-mile journey that would change my perspective of myself.

I had lost my ability to function effectively at work. My heart felt shredded into tiny pieces for weeks prior to this. I did not know why I felt so much emotional pain. For hours, I would sit at the beach, motionless and mindless, unaware of time or the sound of the waves on the beach. Still, no answer came. This strange emotional pain stayed like it had laid a claim on my life. I searched for a logical explanation and none came forward.

In an attempt to resolve whatever was bothering me, I took a week's vacation. The vacation was a disaster. My mom and step-dad decided to come for a visit. They didn't knock but just entered our house. My husband, Lory, was furious. But that wasn't all. In the four days they visited, they trimmed and killed the plants in our patio. They threw away the fifty ancient, valuable bottles we had collected over the last four years of our trips to the Anza Borrego Desert. My mother was extremely critical of Lory when he deposited rags to be washed on the back porch so he wouldn't track in

any grease from cleaning up the garage. They were rude to our friends, Joe and Gretchen. I apologized to them. After all, they knew not what they did.

Adding to it all, when I returned to work after my vacation, the City Manager, John Mamaux, came by desk asking for a report. I was hesitant as to which report he wanted. I handed one to him without smiling. John nodded that it was the right one. That, perhaps, was my mistake. I did not smile. He took the report and immediately went to the City Engineer, Toby Thornton. I could hear John from my desk. "Tell her to leave! I don't care what you say to her, just tell her to leave!" After John returned to his office, I approached Toby, saying, "That's O.K. Toby. I understand. I'll give my two weeks notice." Toby died several months later.

I was out of a job I loved. I worked for the City of Carlsbad in the Building Department processing building permits. Also, I was the Water Department cashier. I kept the books for the street bonds, called the 1911 Act. I filled in as the Secretary for the City Council meetings, took the monthly minutes for the Park and Recreation Department. I also relieved the receptionist and helped transfer data to the new computer system. I knew I needed to move on but that's not what I wanted.

I was twenty-four years old and, since I could no longer function as I had, I hoped this trip to the desert would give answers, answers I could accept. I continued to work a week after giving my notice. During this time a new girl was hired. I was to start training her the following Monday after I returned from the desert. My friends, Joe and Gretchen, had agreed to meet me on Saturday at the Ironwood Motel, close to Borrego Springs.

I had this really strange feeling that Joe would make everything right. I knew it was illogical. Yet, in the state I was, I felt it was true.

I left Carlsbad, California at 3 p.m. with the sun still high in the sky. As I rolled out of the city, I was already wet with perspiration dripping off my forehead and hair. I rolled down both windows in hopes of decreasing the stifling heat in the Volkswagen. There was no air-conditioning. I drove toward the desert heading east on Highway 78, over the Coastal Range Mountains. I passed through fruit orchards on either side of the road. I could smell the ripened fruit on the trees ready to be picked. Soon, I relaxed into the familiar scenery of the winding road.

As I drove, I reflected on the things in my life that made me feel grateful. I felt my marriage with Lory was good. We seldom argued. I admired Lory's ability to master his environment. I also felt lucky to have my driver's license. I had flunked the Driver's Ed Class in high school. Several of my friends tried to help me but they always took me to a place that had a 'Y' in the road. Even though I knew which direction I wanted to go, my whole body would freeze, making it impossible for me to turn the wheel in either direction. Invariably, I would go straight, no matter what was there.

After I started working at the City of Carlsbad, the Chief of Police and City Manager offered me a ride as I was walking back to work from lunch break. They teasingly commented on me being a 'pick-up'. Even though I knew it was not meant to be derogatory, my whole body went into panic. That night, I told Lory that I was going to get my driver's license the next day. In spite of his objection, he drove me to DMV the next afternoon. The event was disastrous. The use of the clutch was beyond my skill level

and the licensing driver and I bounced in the car, way too much, before even leaving the parking spot.

Two weeks later, a friend offered me her car to use in the driver's test, as it had an automatic transmission. I was thrilled when I passed the test. For the next year, I practiced learning to drive with a clutch, going back and forth to work. On more than one occasion, the people that knew me would pull off to the side and stop, allowing me to pass. This trip to the desert would be my first long drive out of the city on my own.

Reflecting, I thought it strange I should have such a difficult time getting my driver's license. After all, I drove a tractor with a clutch when I was eight years old on my Uncle's farm. Yes, there was the time when I was thirteen that I drove ninety miles an hour up Burnside Boulevard in Portland, Oregon in the early morning hours. I came to a 'Y' in the road. My body froze that time, also, but I told the passenger to grab the wheel and go in the direction he chose. He did and there was no mishap. It did add a few white hairs to his twenty-one year old scalp. But, I didn't give it much thought at the time. I felt it was just a one-time freak occurrence.

On another occasion, when I was 16, I drove my brother's car. It was the day he was to get married. We were in downtown Portland, Oregon, during the Christmas rush-hour traffic. All I needed to do was drive around the block once and he would pick up his tuxedo and meet me in front of the store. As it happened, the streets were closed to two-way traffic, so I was unable to go around the block as planned. Consequently, I knew I was heading for the freeway. At every stoplight, a police car stopped right next to me. Fortunately, the slow traffic allowed enough time for

my brother to run a 100-yard sprint to catch up with me and take over the driving. We were not late for his wedding.

I was very grateful for my driver's license. After all, I would not be able to be driving right now. True, I haven't had a passenger in the car for the several years since I've had my license. But, that was O.K. Even my husband, Lory, said, "This is a trip you need to take by yourself."

As I drove over the crest of the last hill down into the wide expanse of the desert, I marveled at its many faces. I watched as a shadow of a cloud danced across the scene in front me. It moved quickly across the mounds and gullies that wind and water had carved in the desert. As the cloud moved, the shadow it created disappeared. It allowed the sun to shine through, as if taking off a mask.

As I continued to drive, I watched the air shimmering above the ground. It looked as if its spirit was ready to transform itself. It seemed almost like a shape shifter with the intention of becoming more than it was.

I sensed how much the desert was reflected in my own makeup. Perhaps I, too, have many faces. I felt like there was a giant windstorm within me. I questioned why such a windstorm would be allowed that would sandblast my very being into shreds without any apparent reason I could discern. I remembered the incredible flash floods of the rainy season in spring where a wall of ten to twenty feet of water would come rushing down out of the narrows of the canyon after a rainstorm and sweep over acres of desert. Perhaps I, too, had a flash flood building inside of me. I was determined to find that place I felt I had mastered so effectively and piece my heart back together and, once again, to function as I had always done.

I passed the Ironwood Motel where I would meet Joe and Gretchen, the following day. I marveled at how it could stay in business. It was situated in the middle of nowhere, with only a handful of desert tourists taking advantage of its 58 air-conditioned units.

Continuing another five miles, I passed the road on my left that Lory and I usually took to our camping spot by a large cave. Since it was always isolated, I continued on several more miles before turning to the right toward the Fish Creek Mountains off of Highway 78, onto the road where most people camped. It felt safer not to be alone.

Pulling off the asphalt onto the dirt road, I looked into the rear view mirror, as if I needed to look into the past, and could see the dust billowing up behind me. The road led to the hill and then curved to the left around the base of it. Passing one of the large wind-carved canyons in the hill, I reminisced about the perfection in nature I had seen in the desert. In this particular canyon there were small round balls of rock sitting one on top of the other within small crevices of the canyon walls. They seemed to be fashioned with care beyond the human imagination. I had seen rocks carved in the shape of baked bread that littered a large area of terrain, fashioned by weather alone. I also knew that ten to twenty footwalls of water from heavy rains could burst out at the lowest point of any one of these canyons and flood the surrounding desert. This was August and there were no rains.

The road continued through the parched land. Suddenly before me, there was a "Y" in the road. A choice had to be made: to turn and go around the mountain to the left or to turn to the right. I needed to maneuver this 'Y' in the road. My body froze.

I knew, then, that Lory was right. I drove straight ahead. I was incapable of steering the van in either direction. The Volkswagen Van pulled up onto the large boulders, trying its best to get to the top of the mound. The engine died and I removed the key. I sat behind the wheel thinking, "Wow! I did it this time. Where did the road go? What kind of freak am I that I can't make a simple decision like which way to turn?" I opened the door to see what kind of damage I had done.

The boulders were big and difficult to walk on with the flip-flops I was wearing. Cautiously, I walked around the uneven boulders surrounding the van. The back end was wedged between enough large boulders where the tires were hidden from view. The right front tire was perched high on a rounded boulder and the left front, wedged and held in place in the crevice of two other boulders at a tilted angle.

There would be no moving the van without a great deal of work with heavy equipment, and then, it would be questionable if the van could be driven. Fortunately, I had brought a jug of water with me. It took both hands to open the side door. Applying a lot of pressure, it finally slid open. The jug fell, shattering onto the rocks, spilling its precious contents over the heated boulders causing them to steam instantly.

Discouraged, I searched the rest of the contents of the van to see if there were any jugs of water left in the van from prior trips. I found a plastic jug that had approximately one cup of old water left in it. I knew it wouldn't taste very good, but at least it was water. I checked out the flashlight and found it needed new batteries so I tossed it back. I took my book, *Ship of Fools*, and went in search of a place to spend the night, dumbfounded that

there were no other campers in the area. Perhaps, I thought, someone would come through on a dune buggy before the night was over. After all, it was only Friday night.

The sun began setting in the west appearing larger through the heated atmosphere. There was a unique spectacle happened that I could not explain. It was as if there were hundreds of fireworks going off in the distance but without design, just flashes of different colored lights going in random directions, seemingly hundreds at a time. I wondered if it had something to do with the electrical energy being exchanged between the heated Earth and the cooler atmosphere, but it was unlike any lightening I had seen in the past. The light show kept me entertained until I fell asleep.

I awoke to the sunrise Saturday morning, again disappointed that this popular camping spot was vacant of people. Sizing up the situation, I knew hiking in flip-flops could prove a problem, especially if they came loose or broke as I knew they could. I didn't want to take a chance of hiking barefoot. I found some tape in the van and taped them to my ankles. I tied a string to the plastic jug so I could hang it on my shoulder, keeping my hands free. I zipped up my ski jacket with the book inside remembering a comment Lory had made, "If you ever get stuck out here, be sure to cover yourself from head to foot to preserve your body fluids."

My guess was that the Ironwood Motel was about twenty-five miles away. I could be there within five hours if I walked five miles an hour. I pulled my hood over my head and set out. I retraced my tire tracks on the road. As the sun rose higher in the sky, I could feel the heat pulling water out of my body, soaking my jacket and my hair with perspiration. After three hours of hiking, I realized, I not

only didn't cover fifteen miles, but that I couldn't afford to lose any more moisture.

An abandoned railroad track ran parallel to the road and was built with culverts underneath it to protect it from the flash floods. The culverts were round steel tubes almost four feet in diameter and twenty feet long. Again, I remembered Lory saying, "If you ever get stuck out in the desert, stay in one of these culverts during the heat of the day. The temperatures are almost twenty degrees less than in the sun." I began to wonder if he knew I would get stuck out here.

Dripping wet with perspiration and with the plastic jug of limited water and my book, I crawled down into the coolness of the culvert glad to see that there were no strange varmints that inhabited it. It was refreshing, complete with a slight breeze. I knew then, if I were going to hike out, it would have to be at night. I shed my jacket and decided I would leave it behind, as I wouldn't need it at night.

Saturday passed slowly as I felt the heat rise in the culvert. I'd sip on the putrid tasting water from the plastic jug trying to make it last. There was less in the jug than I had thought and, in spite of the few sips I had taken, it was soon empty.

My ears were open for any kind of vehicle noise. I felt sure there would be jeeps or dune buggies out on this well-traveled and popular road. After all, it was Saturday. None came. I tried reading, but found it hard to focus on the story of a ship full of fools. I welcomed the setting sun so I could start out on my nightly trek.

Fortunately the moon lit the desert with its soft non-threatening light. I could not only make out the road, but also the trails of the Sidewinder snakes and their zigzag

pattern on the road. I also watched for the big furry tarantulas, sometimes the size of a large orange. They also populated this desert.

After hiking for several hours, I saw what looked like a house light at the base of the hill. I knew there was no house there. I wondered if it was an illusion. I resisted the temptation to leave the road and hike towards that unknown light. Even with that thought, I searched unsuccessfully for an indication of a road that might lead to the house.

Keeping my eyes peeled, I wished I had boots instead of flip-flops taped to my ankles. I could feel every rock and pebble in the road. I continued to hike until the sun came up. It didn't seem like I had covered much ground. The hill on my left was my landmark but it still loomed large to me. I felt I should be a lot further away from where I had started and closer to Highway 78.

Discouraged over this, I also noticed that I had come upon the last of the culverts. After today, there would be no more safety from the heat. I made myself comfortable in the long open tube, and fell asleep instantly.

Weakened by the long hike and with the heat and the lack of water, I slept most of Sunday. I was surprised when I awoke with the setting sun. Once more, I headed out. This time I was empty handed.

Amazed and without knowing what had happened, I lifted my head off the ground later and saw it was still dark out. I started berating myself, *"Sue, what are you doing lying on the road? You are supposed to be hiking! This is your last chance and like a dumb shit, I'm lying down! Get your ass up and start walking!"*

I pulled myself together and started again. Before I knew it, I again found myself on the ground, not knowing

why, and not recognizing that I had lost consciousness. *"It's still dark out. I was walking and now I'm not. What is happening here? I hope I'm still heading in the right direction. If I fell down it would seem I would fall in the direction I was walking."*

Pulling myself together once more, I got up. On instinct, I tried to focus harder on each step, pushing myself to move faster. I didn't feel like there was any reason for being so weak. Soon, I felt myself getting my second wind. Again I pushed forward, only to awaken and find myself lying on the road. This was too odd for me to reason out an explanation.

I thought, *"Hey God, if I'm dead, I sure hope you'll let me know. This is crazy. I'm walking one minute and the next I'm flat on my face. You can't say I'm not doing everything possible to make it. Why am I even trying?"* I paused in my thinking. A purpose seemed to surface in my thoughts. I shook my head, saying "No".

My next thought was, *"O.K. So I made a promise that I would help that girl in her next life. She was so sensitive, but who am I to think I can help anyone. I can't even stay walking let alone help myself. Besides, it doesn't mean I have to keep every promise I've ever made. Well, Sue, quit whining and get back to your hike."*

I started off once more, waking up three more times while it was still dark, but continuing to push myself to move further down the road. (Later, the Sheriff's told me that I had passed out a total of nine times based on the imprints in the sand within the nine miles I covered, but most I did not remember.)

Monday morning arrived. The sun was already high in the sky when I gained consciousness. Lying flat on the ground, I tried unsuccessfully to move. I could only move

my eyes. It felt like I had no life in my body. I wondered if I was dead or just paralyzed.

Approximately an hour passed in this condition. Slowly, I found I could turn my head. I saw that I was lying on a knoll that rose a few feet higher than where I was positioned. I heard ocean waves that sounded like it was just on the other side of the knoll. Laughing inside, I knew it was just an auditory illusion. The more I listened; the more it became a challenge to prove its deception. I challenged myself to crawl up to the top.

After what seemed hours, I began to get movement in my limbs. I managed to crawl the extra few feet to the top. There was no ocean. I struggled to get in a sitting position in order to scan the surrounding desert. I was shocked that I couldn't tell if I had come up the road or down. In fact I wasn't even close to the road. It looked like I had gone straight when in fact the road turned. I judged it to be approximately twenty-five feet away. Yes, it was true: one more decision, similar to the 'Y' in the road that I was unable to maneuver. The rise in the knoll had stopped me. Trying several times to stand up unsuccessfully, I settled back on the ground wondering, once again, if I was dead.

I had no fear of dying. Perhaps I already had died, and I had just awakened in spirit and not yet realized the fact. I tried to reason that if I were actually dead, I would see someone, anyone, to lead me across the chasm. That wasn't happening.

My thoughts turned to reflect on my hike of the past two nights. I was surprised at how hard I had worked to survive. Even so, I felt I had done everything in my power to fulfill whatever destiny I had here on earth and I knew that God could not deny that fact. Also, I felt none would miss me. Yes, I had not yet finished training the new girl to

take my place. I knew she would get along just fine. Just the same, it seemed an odd way to go.

The sun continued to rise in the sky and I could feel my tongue getting larger from lack of water. My lips were chapped and I struggled to keep my mouth wet with moisture, thinking how much I took water for granted.

Suddenly, I heard a train just beyond where I was sitting. I knew it was another illusion, similar to the ocean I had heard earlier. I remembered being told that these railroad tracks had been abandoned for at least ten years. Even so, I watched the train move down the tracks. Half-heartedly, I waved my hand at it, feeling foolish for responding to this new illusion.

The illusion, however, stopped seventy-five feet down the tracks and slowly began to back up. I refused to believe it. Aloud, I said to myself, "Can this be real? Is that train stopping for me? Am I supposed to get on an illusion and let it take me back to civilization? How could I explain to people about the illusive train? Well, if I'm dead, somebody will let me know eventually."

The next thing I heard was the conductor saying, "What are you doing out here?" I replied in a quiet voice, "My Volkswagen got stuck down the road and I've been trying to get back to the highway." My voice was weak but the conductor seemed to be able to hear me.

"When did you get stuck?" His voice was gruff and I knew, illusion or not, he was irritated I was taking up his time. I answered, "Friday night. Can I ride with you?"

"Yeah, I guess so. It's against the rules but come on." I managed to get up and took three steps before falling down again. Again, I struggled to get up and take four steps, this time catching myself before I hit the ground. On

the third try, I made it the distance and grabbed hold of the railing by the steps, settling myself on the first step.

The conductor shifted the gears and the train started moving forward. As impatient as the conductor was, he was also curious. "You've been out here since Friday, eh?" Not waiting for confirmation, he added, "You've been hiking since Friday?"

I nodded my head asking. "Do you happen to have any water I could drink?" The conductor, in his blue overalls and cap, looked to be in his fifties. He turned and poured some water into a small paper cup.

I asked him, "Are you just an illusion or is this train real?" Laughing he replied, "No, this is a gypsum train. We haul gypsum from the mine up in the back hills." Handing the water to me, he said, "There's a house about 100 yards from the tracks up the ways here. I'll let you off there. The people will be able to help you."

Disappointed, I said, "I can't walk any further." Rejection is always hard to deal with in all its forms. "Can't I go with you?" The cup was small and I asked him for more. He took the cup and refilled it handing it back to me, saying, "We don't have any facilities at the base. It's against the rules for us to pick up anyone out here."

I knew what he wasn't saying was that he could lose his job. I let it go. Perhaps, if I drank enough of those little tiny cups of water, I could at least make it ten feet. Maybe even twenty feet if I pushed myself hard enough. But 100 yards, that was 300 feet. I wasn't going to beg for my life so I relaxed and watched the desert pass by beneath my feet. I had no desire to control my fate and knew whatever happened had to be O.K.

I asked for another drink of water. The Conductor asked, "How long has been since you've had any water?" Replying, I said, "Since Saturday. The glass jug broke when I opened the van's door on Friday. I had a little bit in a plastic jug but it tasted bad."

The Conductor frowned. "You shouldn't drink a lot at first. Too much is not good all at once. Your system has to get used to it." The train started slowing down. Way off in the distance, I could see a small house. I knew there would be no way I could make that far. As it pulled to a stop, I looked up at him and said, "Please."

Agitated, the Conductor said, "I'll have hell to pay for this but O.K." The train once again picked up speed, heading for its destination. Within a short time, we pulled into the gypsum plant where there were large buildings and unloading docks for the train.

Dismounting from my step, my legs were not very steady. I sat down before I fell down and waited. I was glad to be where there were real buildings. They created shade.

The Conductor finished putting things in order and returned to where I was sitting. Come on, let's go up to the office."

I rose from my sitting position and took three steps before my legs buckled again. The Conductor grabbed my arm and soon, another mineworker was at my side, taking my other arm. I didn't like being this incapacitated. I put all my effort into maneuvering each foot as we walked toward the office and up the stairs. I was seated in a chair across from the foreman who sat behind his desk. It felt ominous, at best. I didn't know what to expect. Perhaps this was the hell that the Conductor had talked about and none of the other was real.

“So, you got your car stuck in the desert.” His blue eyes were piercing and his voice impatient. I felt defensive. “I’m sorry. My van got stuck on some boulders and I couldn’t get it out. I don’t want to be any trouble for you.” My voice sounded hoarse and weak. I wasn’t sure if he could hear me.

“Who should we call to come and pick you up?” The foreman had his pencil and pad ready to jot the number down. On instinct, I said, “Joe Crum.” I added, “I don’t know his number. He lives in Oceanside, California.”

“How do you spell that?” Pulling out a telephone directory, and then putting it back. “It’s spelled CRUMB.” Later, I realized I had misspelled Joe’s last name. Calling information, the foreman asked for the telephone number of Joe Crumb but the operator came back with the fact that there was no such listing. “Is there someone else we can call?”

I gave him our home phone to call Lory but there was no answer. The Foreman was exasperated at this point and quickly dialed the local Sheriff’s Office at Plaster City. “I guess you’ll have to wait at the Sheriff’s Office until someone can be reached to pick you up. Meanwhile, I’ll have Ed, the conductor, walk you over to my trailer.” The Conductor and the other mineworker came and escorted me to a trailer located on the grounds. The trailer belonged to the Foreman and his wife and daughter.

It seemed a long distance to the trailer along a dusty trail. Once in sight of it, I noticed the window blinds were closed to keep the heat out. The foreman’s wife met me at the door and, as I entered, I noticed how cool it was with a swamp cooler running at the rear window. The wife and daughter welcomed me to have a seat on the couch. It felt good to sit on the soft cushions. I noticed right away that the daughter was handicapped, but I responded to her, as if

she was normal, explaining how I had got stuck in a pile of rocks and couldn't get it out. The mother was anxious to explain her daughter's condition but I ignored it as if she felt the same way I did. I told the mother she had a beautiful daughter. Still, I wondered if I was alive. All my senses felt slow and methodical and soon I dozed off.

In time, the Sheriffs from Plaster City arrived and they drove me to the Court House located there. Several reporters were there, one taking photos, and some asking me questions. I was oblivious to their purposes. I thought they were part of the Sheriff's Office, so it seemed important to answer all the questions as honestly as I could.

I waited for a few hours on the bench after Lory had been contacted. Joe had come along in case it was possible that the Volkswagen Van could be driven home. It wasn't possible. It seemed good to see them both when they arrived. I was still in a state of mind thinking that perhaps this was all an illusion. The Sheriffs had explained that a healthy 190-pound male could not survive more than three hours in the heat that I experienced without water. It did seem unreal. Perhaps I had died and not a single person was willing to let me know for sure.

On the drive home, I was silent, as were Lory and Joe. Lory did comment that he had come out to the desert to search for me. After he arrived and was driving around, an Eagle had dived at him three different times. Lory came to the conclusion that it was a sign that he shouldn't search any further. He felt the Eagle was telling him to return home, and that the journey I had taken was for my own good. I didn't question the wisdom of what he said. I was too numb and still not sure if what I was experiencing was real. I was non-communicative.

Perhaps, I thought, this is way dead people act if they don't move on into other dimensions. They just sit and stare at the world they no longer belong to. Probably, people only talk when there is enough energy to communicate. I did not want to communicate.

Arriving home, I took a shower and slept the rest of the night. In the morning, I got dressed and went to work, even though my legs were still weak. I didn't talk much but I did my best to explain the office procedures to the girl taking my place. I was glad I could fulfill my commitment, as unreal as it seemed. Few of my fellow employees commented on the headlines that sparked all the major and local newspapers that day. Perhaps they hadn't seen them yet. In fact, I didn't know about them until many days later.

Lory's mother arrived the next day take me to the doctor for a checkup. I never questioned Lory's mother. I had always stood in awe of her, efficient and competent in everything, from cooking to being one who always exuded love. Once at the doctor's office and blood tests were taken, the doctor reported to Lory's mom that I would be admitted immediately as I had hardly any red cell count in my blood. Still in a mind fog and wondering if I was dead, I didn't question this diagnose.

Perhaps, what I felt was still true and these men of science would prove it. The next day, the doctor brought in several doctors to observe that I was not only alive, which seemed to surprise them, but that I was also cognizant. I felt embarrassed. I was given intravenous feeding and antibiotics. For the next five days, I sat on the hospital patio in the sunshine with a blank mind, absorbing the rays, trusting they would make me healthy once more whether I was dead or alive.

During this time, Lory moved us from Carlsbad to Escondido to be closer to his employment as a mechanic as I was no longer employed at the City of Carlsbad. Regretfully, everyone I had worked with at the City of assumed I contracted Hepatitis from the putrid water from the plastic jug. Dead or alive, I was ready to go home on the sixth day. The employees at the City had to have an immune shot for Hepatitis. The doctor informed me it would take several months before I would feel back to normal.

Upon arriving at our new residence, I knew I had to remember my past. Something was there that I sensed was the reason for this ordeal and I had to acknowledge it. I kept the curtains closed and seldom went outside. The phone rang off the hook from reporters and radio announcers wanting an interview, and I refused all of them. The mail had an abundance of religious flyers addressed to me. I could only stand for a short period of time. Lory came home every lunch hour to check on my progress. I did not know how to communicate anything I was feeling.

Before the end of the first month at home, the memories began to flow through me like a flash flood. For the next two months the cascading waters of memories overtook me. I would find myself crying, followed by laughter. It all felt like an air of unreality that was so overwhelming and unbelievable. Had I left my senses behind me?

I soon recognized, however, that if I had not blocked out the experiences I was remembering, I would not have been capable of growing into adulthood, let alone, be able to function properly within society. The retrieval of my blocked memories meant that I had built a bridge between the past and the future. Based on this belief, I decided that

it was not necessary to either believe or disbelieve them. After all, they were just memories. They were of a past that was dead. Now that I remembered them, they would no longer be in control of my actions, my emotions, my body or my life. If they were false, they would disappear. If they were real, I would find a way to confront and overcome them. I was willing to allow that to happen. As it occurred, all the locked doors in memories hallway, had been torn off their hinges and removed, never to return.

