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This is my third entry of “**what I have learned in the past 4-12 months.**” [The original idea](#); [George Kao’s LearningOrg group](#) (where people can share their updates); [my July 2003 entry](#); [my December 2003 entry](#).

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I'm happy to now have the time to write and to finish my update about what I have learned in the past 4-12 months.

The most significant change may be that I have a way of living I could be happy with for four years, or indefinitely. An aspect of this may be that it is unlikely I could live this way much longer than four years. I live with my 89-year-old grandma and attend classes part time at nearby San Diego State, while having a lot of free time.

Second, I have a general feeling I could be content working part time as a teacher of English composition or literature, and by the time I finish my MA in English and comparative literature, I may already be working in that way. I may however continue to do whatever gives me the most free time. Regardless of what I do, I have found that the university and the study of literature is a sort of church and practice or religion.

Significant events were: (1) Deciding to stay here with my grandma, and not to continue on to Monterey immediately, which seemed to me to be leading to the same old thing; (2) Deciding I would benefit from company and guidance in my study of literature and beginning to see how I liked taking classes at San Diego State; And (3) when three weeks into the semester I paid my money, \$1,200, for my classes and gave myself over to the structure of the courses.

There are things I read in those courses that had I read them earlier might have saved me a lot of grief and wandering. In particular, the writing of British Romantic and early Victorian authors who faced as a group a crisis the same as or similar to the one that led me to research the experience of meaning in life when I was in college.

Also significant is my occasional part-time work facilitating challenge course team building at the nearby [Kroc Center](#). This balances the hours I spend without speaking. When I first saw the Kroc Center I felt it would be an important part of my life.

As in Monterey and New York City, I have made

aquaintances at the swimming pool, but not so many good friends this time, yet. As before, gay men are friendly to me and I don't mind the friendliness. And, there and elsewhere, I have seen women or aspects of women that remind me of Rebecca and Sara and I am amazed how much I love seeing these strangers because of this.

Notes from one swim: relatives, pool, mediocrity, inefficiency. All important parts of my life here. The pool is sensual. I am around mediocrity, and guilty of some. Much about my life is less efficient than it could be, and there is some value in that.

After one of my literature classes when, among other important actions I've forgotten, I had read two poems, *Stars* and *I'm happiest when most away* by Emily Brontë, I left and as I walked away, I felt the kind of joy I long imagined I had felt daily when I was in first, second, or third grade at All Saints' Day School in Carmel Valley. I had wondered if I had been idealizing my past.

It might have had to do with sharing something I valued with people who valued what I was sharing. I got similar feelings from my Spanish presentations, but because those were such a challenge to pull off, the feeling was more of relief. It helped that in the British poetry class there was a strange and pretty dancer.

Even as I walked the suburb something was alive and shimmering. Everywhere I looked I saw what was there, and I saw something else.

But, two days after spring semester classes ended, I left on the train to San Luis Obispo (SLO), thinking I might not ever return to the mediocre backwater of car-devastated culture, waste land, and waste air, and the incessant noise from neighbors abusing their children, apartment dwellers and drivers blasting their music, the roar of cars on the roads and highway, helicopters hovering overhead, and airplanes.

In San Luis Obispo I worked in a hostel. I presented on carfreeness at the SLO greenearth festival. Later on I lived homeless in the hills above Cal Poly State U. before heading up to San Francisco State to take a Shakespeare course. There, homeless again (keep in mind that in April 2003 I made [an affirmation not to pay rent](#)), I slept along the shore of Lake Merced, and acted in a student movie about monsters in that lake, and swam in the ancient SFSU pool on the one day, Friday, when I did not have class during the hour it was open. I visited my friends (George Kao, Bob, and David(s)) in San Francisco, Oakland, and Berkeley, and one of my sisters and parents when they went hiking in Yosemite. I visited Sausalito, Davis, CA, my aunt and her family in Palo Alto, and Pilar, the Huffmans, and my former coworkers in Monterey.

In the end, I came to value having a place to live inside with a grandma I get along with, near a swimming pool I can afford, a part-time job I enjoy in moderation, and a university I can walk to in 20 minutes. I came back, riding the Amtrak through a nighttime brush and palm tree fire north of Ventura, CA.

## What I have learned & Housekeeping

I also want to do the housekeeping: Dialog with the body, check to see if I have affirmations, and to see what I have learned.

I *have* changed and learned things. I used to wonder if that were possible—though I must have been wondering about a more fundamental kind of change... yes, that was wondering regarding the possibility of or existence of personal growth.

Below I have grouped my notes about what I have learned or accomplished.

### Academics

Academically, I managed to write papers. I memorized Shakespeare's Sonnet 33 as a result of revising the [paper \(PDF\)](#) I wrote on it. Someone (a Lyndon LaRouche Youth Corps member) asked me to recite it and then criticized my recital (it was rather mechanical). I memorized (to a varying degree of quality) three five-minute presentations for Spanish classes last semester (the goal is natural speaking, not memorization, however). This is significant because when I was in a choir in Brooklyn I couldn't be troubled to memorize the words to the songs, thinking it too difficult (really, I had other priorities). Soon I again begin Spanish classes over my level. After I finish this, I will write letters to people I need to write to, then I will be studying Spanish. School starts January 24th.

It is significant that, in applying to the SDSU MA program, I took the time to revise two of my papers and my statement of purpose until I considered them to be very near my best effort. They are [here](#). To critique them now, they have the style of a computer program meant to be as efficient as possible. They don't draw me in or get me to read them. But were I to read them, I would know my time wasn't being wasted with extra words or disorganization, and that the meaning of every phrase had been considered.

I have filed my papers (of all kinds) in a filing cabinet with labels on the folders. Previously I would have a pile or a xerox box with paper in it.

### Music

I went to one practice for a large choir of a very large Baptist church nearby, but was not excited by it. I looked into choirs on campus, but they required time and paying for another credit. I did get some of my piano music and I played a little on a good electric piano they have at the Kroc Center. I could ask for my violin and keyboard to be sent out. While I would probably play them from time to time, I usually feel I have plenty to keep me busy.

### Diet and the Homeless Experiment

I continue to learn to eat and gather wild plants. Recently green things have been growing in San Diego. I gather dandelion greens and mallow—a new discovery. My local branch of the library has a good edible plants book that I plan to study more. There is fennel. There is carob (I don't eat it as much these days). There were figs (encrusted with the black particulate matter that pervades the air here most of the year), and now oranges and tangerines far better than any I've ever paid for, and later avocados to pick as well.

This has been an interesting year because I finally read through Roy Walford's books (see [below](#)). I now own my own copies. Because of his influence I stopped eating and stopped exercising. Not really, but I played with those two

things in ways I would never have considered before.

The basic change was going from believing I needed to exercise to maintain health and that I needed to eat to maintain my exercising. Walford supports the thesis that exercise does not have the potential to prolong life or health that restricting calories while maintaining optimal nutrition does—slowing, not increasing metabolism.

So, though a few days earlier I had the feeling that I would not fast though I knew it was good for me, I took my reading and walked one Saturday several miles to Cowles Mountain and found a spot in the shade of a boulder and stayed there all day, playing hermit, occasionally watching the foot traffic on the trail below, or looking out over the smog-tinted suburban landscape.

The next day, though it took me more than an hour, I made the basic recipe Walford gives in *The 120 Year Diet* for dinner, and followed his recipe for breakfast as well. I did that for a week before I began to vary it. If I wanted to eat other things, I made sure I made and ate his recipes first.

The behavior changes that have stayed with me so far (more or less) are: cooking with a wide variety of vegetables, as opposed to one or two main vegetables; rarely cooking large amounts of rice, polenta, potatoes, or grains; taking opportunities to go without eating; not being as afraid not to exercise, as long as I don't eat as much.

When I stopped working at the hostel in San Luis Obispo, and moved into the hills, I also began to work on eating only once a day. I ate between mid-afternoon and evening, and cooked using fire in my hobostove, on top of a picnic grill, under huge eucalyptus trees, overlooking the mountains that lead away from the city towards the ocean. It is a beautiful location. There was a water spigot and picnic tables. This situation worked because campus was mostly deserted that summer.

I was contemplating staying homeless rather than returning to San Diego. I was also trying out and refining a lifestyle I had thought about since high school. I knew the importance to me of eating good meals and of cooking and I was trying to fit that in. During the day I read. One book was Christopher Alexander's *A pattern language*. I had a library card for the city library. I found a place I could take a shower on weekdays. I thought I might stay there for a month or longer practicing doing nothing but living this simple way, reading, and eating once a day.

I slept in different places, including on top of some of the surrounding mountains when I had felt like going for a hike. One convenient and favorite spot was just down from the large cement "P" on the hill that the GBLT group would paint in rainbow colors and then the frat boys would paint white again. Some people could see me as they walked up and down that hill, but there weren't many, and I was partly hidden in the tall grass. There were horses, deer, and fox in the field. Eventually the horses ate the tall grass. Some nights it got cold and I stuffed my bivy sack with newspaper I brought up from campus. This whole trip I did not use a sleeping bag.

I got antsy after about two weeks, and took off just in time to make it to San Francisco the Friday before that Shakespeare course I knew of started. On the way, I spent the night in Monterey in a place I had dreamed of sleeping

in for years—under pine trees, at the top of a quarry near where I used to live. But I caught the 5 a.m. bus north and visited no one that time.

The first night at least, I spent with my friend Bob in the Mission District. A night or two later, I had gone to my first SFSU class and found what would be my favorite sleeping spot there—in the reeds by the shore of Lake Merced about as far from the surrounding roads that I could get. It was foggier there, and sometimes misted, but that made it warmer than San Luis Obispo was. Often the eucalyptus trees dripped in the fog. The cormorants flew back and forth from their tree to the water and made their strange noise. There were some mosquitos.

At this time I began to eat much less, partly because it took me a while to find decent places to obtain food nearby. I learned that, when eating little, I would get lethargic in mid-afternoon, and often fall asleep for a while. But after that nap I would be fine again, and could concentrate on my reading. Usually I weigh around 180 lbs.. I had a locker in the locker room there, where there was a scale, and at one point I weighed close to 170 lbs.

At both Cal Poly and San Francisco State, I ate what I could find, often from what grocers threw out. I ate alright. Cal Poly has a natural foods store close to it, and SFSU has a grocery store nearby though hardly anyone, even the students it seems, knows about it. Bigger stores often lock their dumpsters or use trash compactors. Generally I don't like eating bread. Once I got hungry and had enough time on my hands and no kitchen, however, I loved the sourdough I could get at SFSU. Finding where the leftover sourdough was tossed effectively ended the Calorie Restriction part of my Calorie Restriction Optimal Nutrition experiment at SFSU. When I'm eating very little it is hard to resist food if I know where to find it.

There is some precedent for this. When I lived in Monterey before I went to college in 1996, on my early morning explorations I found a bakery that put out all its old bread and pastries for the trash in the morning. I think I had a high cholesterol test from a physical then, because I did eat a lot of croissants, some filled with chocolate. At that time, I was also bicycling back and forth to my jobs for two hours each day.

Almost everywhere I went, like Davis, CA, and especially Berkeley, food and sometimes very good bread in large quantities could be found. I thought I would leave scavenging behind as I returned to San Diego, but my first afternoon back I walked by a dumpster of a kosher bakery not 300 meters from where I live. There was a bag full of not-too-old challah right on top.

At the nice store across the highway, which has a good but not organic bulk section, they now have a sign on their dumpster asking people not to take what they've thrown away.

I also resisted sleeping inside at first and would trek to Lake Murray, past that store, and sleep on a hill by the lake. That neighborhood is Del Cerro. The mayor lives there.

For two, maybe three months I harvested primarily from an endless quantity of bagels. I contemplated building a house of bagels. But I realized that had to stop, and decided the only way to do so was to get food I'd rather eat

than bagels. So I ordered 110lbs of oats, kamut, 7-grain, 9-grain, flaxseed, and buckwheat (all organic but the 7- and 9-grain, and maybe the flax) from [Walton Feed](#) for \$117, \$48 of which went to shipping. I also got a manual Marga/Shule brand grain roller for \$40. So far it has worked, and I am happier and healthier now. I cannot easily walk to the store across the highway or to a co-op, but there is a good ethnic market just up the seven lanes of asphalt from the Kroc Center. If it weren't for that market I would be much less happy with my food situation out here. Often free fruit and vegetables can be found there.

I also have a one-gallon jug of good mustard I got from the Smart and Final nearby. Sometimes when I'm hungry I eat cabbage and mustard.

A lasting result of all this seems to be greater complacency with regard to eating. I know I don't need to eat. I know it is good not to eat. The books I read on indigenous peoples (see [below](#)) corroborate the idea that humans can be fine and healthy going long periods of time eating very little. You'll also read how the indigenous peoples eat and eat and eat when they are so fortunate to have found food. (*Savages* and *La Relación*)

And in fact, especially after my one-small-meal-a-day routine at SFSU, I had a feeling that my blood sugar (or something) flattened. I could eat or not eat and it almost didn't matter energy- or affect-wise.

I did note, as the CRON people mention, a flattening of affect the less I ate. And as I consumed the sourdough, I would be merry.

As recently as a month ago I wrote "occasional overeating" on the eating disorder section of a medical form for a dentist. But now that my grains are here, I could say infrequent. I can't be too self-sure about the way I eat though. There was one recent time that I remember overeating, when I got too large a package of corn tortillas because none smaller were available, and I really wanted some.

I control this usually by not buying things that I like to eat and eat and eat. I must roll or soak or cook or some combination of that to eat what I have sitting around. When I want something different, I can buy a few figs or dates at a time from the market. I can collect oranges, etc.

As often as five times a week I eat two eggs or nearly one half gallon of Alta Deena buttermilk in a day. Maybe once every three months I eat cow or calf liver. When I visit my relatives I usually eat some meat. My grandma sometimes feeds me a bit of doctored sweatshop chicken from the nearby big chain market, and sometimes some ham that I doubt has been treated any better.

To return to the homeless experiment, I also got to be familiar with a few others who had either adopted a homeless or semi-homeless way or who were headed that way willingly or not. One old guy at SFSU, whom I avoided until we ended up riding a streetcar together, said he could tell I was one of "the brethren." I hoped it wasn't that obvious. He lived in a trailer parked somewhere, audited a class at SFSU, and for that could use the 24-hour computer lab where he practiced trading currency futures. He only did this when the lab wasn't crowded.

One or two guys who sometimes stayed at the hostel didn't want to be homeless but eventually were.

At Cal Poly there was a thin, 40-year-old wispy-black-

haired ascetic-looking guy working, he said, on an adult screenplay. We kept the same hours, arriving at the college library before it opened, leaving as it closed, and sometimes we were in the 24-hour campus snack room together.

There were also two of those types with beards and green jackets (brothers of Jesus or something?) who drove up in a VW van to that snack room every evening as the library closed to microwave some eggs.

There were the guys in the housebikes in [Davis](#).

And [Michael Washington](#).

In the hills above UC Berkeley there were remnants of and gear stashes from at least five people's sleeping places.

### **Dialog with the body**

I think I'm doing O.K. by you. I got off that bagel kick. I've resolved or at least lessened my shoulder issue. I did have a mole I was worried about removed. Now that I see a possible role for myself in civilization, I will probably get health insurance. I will be getting a physical.

I continue to do dance exercises. I do bits of the [TTP Kata](#) frequently, combined with Chi Gung, ballet, and other exercises, as well as strength training. I often do the stand-like-a-tree meditation and the GRACE part of the Kata before I swim. I run attention around my body and make at least an effort to visit all my parts, to wish you well, and to see if you need help. It would be good to spend more time on this.

I figured out a problem with my freestyle stroke that was messing up my shoulder. I was pulling deep; now I pull close to the body. This is a significant discovery as it appears I can now swim reasonably powerful freestyle for 30 minutes or an hour. I had been at the point where I rarely swam that stroke.

When I extend my right shoulder as far as I can in the stroke there is a rolling or knocking of tendons. It feels good to do, but it is related to the problem. Maybe I should not sleep with that shoulder under me.

My left wrist has something like a sprain it has been recovering from. I'm not sure how I hurt it.

I did, in San Luis Obispo, meet a young man, not much older than I, with multiple sclerosis. I was talking carfree strategy with him as he has been an activist there. He needed caregivers to help him with most everything and lives in a rare and beautiful trailer park just a block or two from downtown. His helpers are nice women, and he is attractive.

Another guy I know has a bone marrow problem and has many fewer red blood cells than most people. He looks fine but cannot run very fast for very long.

I feel the poison in the air and food and other places and know it is worse for living here how I do. I could be elsewhere. I could be more careful in what I eat and breathe, and in what deteriorating, toxic, or irritating substances I am around.

Should this soft keyboard I have break and not be replaceable, I may not be able to write and work like I do, due to aggravation of RSI/carpal tunnel.

Some of what I do with my computer, like shuffling through many windows to find the one I need, feels primitive. If the objects I work with could hang in space—

I was concerned about my left testicle. I looked into it online, and it may be a sort of epididymitis. It seems to be exacerbated if I sit too much, and when I do not do that, not a problem.

I need to focus on you more, and sit here less.

My eyes, you are doing alright, in spite of looking at my Dell UltraSharp 1504FPa Flat Panel a lot.

When I spend more hours reading, things are not so bad.

This break I worked to obtain and set up a monochrome Sony Clié handheld (PEG-SJ20) that lets me look up Spanish words in a Spanish-Spanish dictionary, and read books, without using a keyboard and while laying flat on my back in the dark.

I can bend over and uncompress my spine in a cascade of rattles or pops. As long as I do my varied exercises neither neck nor spine bothers me too much. Though I pay attention to my posture, lots of time at the computer disturbs my shoulders. Walford recommends a good chair. Good posture on a flat-bottomed chair or sitting on the floor might work. The main issue seems to be... simply sitting here. There. I just added another seat cushion, allowing my shoulders more room not to hunch.

What about my internal organs? I will keep trying to listen to you, to pay attention to you, though I cannot hold you in my hand, and to be kinder to my digestive system in particular. To breathe deeply. "My entire being is vital, balanced, and healthy."

Here is something we already know but that I may want to read more carefully, or at least not forget where it is: [Personal Chemistry and the Healthy Body](#) by G. Weinberg.

And that Thomas Jefferson quote which we had to memorize in high school:

Leave all the afternoon for exercise and recreation, which are as necessary as reading. I will say rather more necessary because health is worth more than learning.

[letter to his cousin John Garland Jefferson, June 11, 1790.]

Though what Doc Favazza taught us was: "Exercise and recreation are as necessary as reading. I will say rather more necessary because health is worth more than learning."

### **Social change, justice affirmations**

I did call the police on my grandma's neighbors for abusing their children/grandchildren. I had already gone over to talk to them.

I'm not doing much else other than what I want to do.

Making [little cards advertising carfree websites](#), including carfreeuniverse.org, has made me happy. Now when I get to talking with someone I can give them a way of knowing more about what I'm up to. Related to this, I did organize a [booth and workshop](#) on "transitioning to carfree living and environments" at the SLO greenearth festival.

My presentations in Spanish class, especially the one on Ecuador, related to justice. I am more informed about world and Latin-American politics than I was six months ago. I am now more inclined to follow George Monbiot's views (more on that [below](#)) than the libertarian perspective—

ive.

This awareness may not have affected my behavior, except for the links I've added to carfreeuniverse and the Spanish presentations I may publish there, as well as my telling people about Monbiot's *Manifesto* and his other work.

I started a yahoo group for all my relatives.

I finally went to a neighborhood association meeting with my grandma. There was a tall, young, beautiful woman there to address the old folks and the homeowners. My age or not much older, perhaps, she is the CEO of the College Area Business Improvement District and could say to one man who complained about a neglected dirt lot where a gas station had been, "I should be able to get it paved."

### Relationships with people

I spend time with my relatives (but not my immediate family, who usually remain east) on holidays, and with my grandma and her cat from day to day. I visited most of my Monterey and Bay Area friends and relatives. I spend time with teachers and students on campus. I've made some friends from my web site, including some I got to eat dinner with an hour's walk west of here. Some of them I'd met earlier at Earth Day in Balboa Park. I was also happy to meet again Twelve Tribes members whom I'd hung out with on the Mall in Washington D.C..

To understate, I pay attention when it seems a woman might be interested in me. But the way I live, the way I am, and the kind of people I like mean—especially here where friendship involves the car—it stays at that. I can't conceive of it being another way, for now. Intimate heterosexual relationships generally require an identity different from the one I now enjoy. I'm here to study and to spend some time. I am satisfied combining reading, writing, and programming with a bit of discussing Fear Factor with my grandma or the ants in the locker room with Tony the manager, and saying hello and goodbye to my fellow swimmers y mis profesoras.

I look forward to more involved relationships with living people. A lot of meaning, and maybe growth, comes from there.

### Looking to the future

What should my affirmations for the next 6 - 12 months be? What is my outlook for times further ahead than that?

I should take a long vacation from the computer. Once I publish this, I will probably go back to working on carfreeuniverse only one day per week (Saturday). There is a lot I want to do, and I like doing it, but it isn't good to sit here so much. I'll be doing more reading soon, and then I get to avoid the computer.

I should spend more time listening to my body.

As often happens when I have a lot of one thing I like (oats in this case), I need to eat more diversely.

I will do well in my courses, and read Spanish literature.

I had thought of trying to work for Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth (CTY) programs this summer, but I won't be ready to apply in time. It is good to leave here in the summer (there is more smog and desert sun then), but

I'm not sure I will.

Long term I would like to be more among like-minded people. I wonder how true that is. I have thought about going back to Earthaven or NYC. I really have no idea. I would like to be where the air is cleaner and there are less cars.

If I weren't taking literature classes with part of my time, I would take dance classes again.

Well, nothing too ground-breaking in those plans. Maybe that is a sign of contentness or complacency.

I will likely begin entering into more teaching-type roles at SDSU. First as a tutor in English composition classes, then as a teacher of those classes. At the moment I'm not immediately enthusiastic about that. It requires effort and commitment and it is about them, not me. I guess I prefer to remain free to follow any whim. And I would prefer that by following whims I could continue fine. If it weren't something to do in addition to my other classes, I would be fine with it, as I use the classes to get my requisite time-with-people for the week. More pushes on time-with-self.

But, as with the facilitation of the challenge course, once I drag myself away from my whim-following, I have a good, meaningful time. I expect it will be more so in the composition classes, because I don't find helping people to climb up poles and cross wires or work through ground activities to be as meaningful as composition and literature.

I should move on some basic environmental household-improvement tasks since I can be fairly certain of being here a while. I should make a compost pile. While the weeds are good to eat, maybe I should grow something besides them. I may not start "shitting in buckets and growing stuff in it" like I think the [deadthings](#) do, but at least I've been pissing in the bushes out back, not in the drinking water.

### I remember reading:

In addition to what I mention at the end, the following stand out:

*Bonfire of the Vanities* by Tom Wolfe, which took me back to NYC and showed me more of it.

*Alive* by Piers Paul Read. A soccer team is in a plane crash in the Andes, and some survive. This is about a real event. At the time I read it I felt I would be like the curly-haired guy who became passive and useless. But who knows.

*The Rule of Four* by Ian Caldwell and Dustin Thomason. I went to high school with these guys. Their book, something along the lines of the *Da Vinci Code* (which I have not read) was on the bestseller list for 14 weeks I think it was. My mom sent me the copy. I got turned off a few pages into it, but later on I read the rest, and it is a decent book. It got me thinking... Thomason and Davin Quinn (also a writer involved in the project) are now (or were) in medical school. Thomason lives in NYC (maybe that's Cornell?), Quinn is at Harvard. I swam with Quinn and Caldwell. Caldwell went to Princeton. It's always interesting for me to learn from those who did well with the way things are. I see we have a lot of the same questions. A theme in the book is balancing life work and relationships.

I loved the reality of the ending. The cocktail party had fine elements and depth that reminded me of Pope's *Rape of the Lock*. It isn't a classic, but these guys come from a background similar to mine, and that means there is a lot for me to relate to in what they have to say. At the same time it is about a lot of what I have wanted to leave. And many of my concerns may not have occurred to them. On the other hand, a work like *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë amazed me with how complete it seemed in terms of addressing the questions of living.

[An inquiry into living while walking the roads of America, Mexico, and beyond](#) by Jeffrey Sawyer.

A [Vonnegut essay](#). One about the importance of noting [If this isn't nice, I don't know what nice is!](#) and also,

Bill Gates says, "Wait till you can see what your computer can become." But it's you who should be doing the becoming. What you can become is the miracle you were born to work—not the damn fool computer.

In my [Vision Research Project](#) you will see the influence of Joseph Campbell and Goethe's *Faust*.

Of what I read for classwork, what stands out the most?

A lot of what I read by John Keats, which wasn't a huge amount. His work is beautiful. I wrote one of my papers on his *Ode on a Grecian Urn*. The imagery in *The Eve of Saint Agnes* is intensely unforgettable; I cry remembering the moon through stained glass on that cold night.

Wordsworth gives more depth to any sort of integral (Wilberian) view of things. His work stays more in the cerebral side of me, but I only read a little of him as well. His imagery of skating one night as a boy in his *Prelude* I think it was called, has me there.

William Blake's visual work has marked me more than his poetry. Except again, of all the poets I read, with perhaps the exception of Keats and Shakespeare, philosophically he seems furthest along the integral spectrum.

Christina Rossetti's *The Goblin Market*. You should read it. I wrote two commentaries on it ([1](#), [2](#)).

Emily Brontë's *I'm Happiest When Most Away* (1838):

I'm happiest when most away  
I can bear my soul from its home of clay  
On a windy night when the moon is bright  
And the eye can wander through worlds of light—

When I am not and none beside—  
Nor earth nor sea nor cloudless sky—  
But only spirit wandering wide  
Through infinite immensity

I don't want to begin to mention Shakespeare. I'll say *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. I recommend the Arden Edition, and particularly Harold F. Brooks' *Introduction*. There is great poetry in MND. The volume of work written about Shakespeare's work is staggering, and some of it I looked at broadens hugely what his work means to me. I need to re-read *King Lear*. I need to read *Hamlet*. It is an entire other world, which, while I spend hours fiddling as I add a new feature to carfreeuniverse, I am leaving unexplored.

Studying literature is an activity where personal growth might occur. I'm not sure where literature-expanded

awareness and emotional range lead. It is not the same as experiencing the actual horror, and actual life, which is, I think, the attraction to some people of becoming a doctor. There you (can) choose to be in some of the most intense life situations.

If studying literature is that great why did I spend much of my break working on carfreeuniverse and not on applying to work for CTY?

There are areas of life where I know I could make a difference by petitioning and working with others to make things better. The website is one place where I can make things better without having to persuade someone else to follow my vision of how things should be. I like making it a good place to publish things. There is a lot I want to publish. I may still be able to find an opportunity like CTY for the summer.

### *Rhetoric and Writing Studies*

What I read for the RWS classes I considered taking emphasized the differences between cultures that have and do not have written language. The use of visible symbols to represent units of sound required a level of abstraction that some say led to much of the other developments in ancient Greece. The sound-based writing system required more abstraction than a pictographic writing system. Twenty-some symbols can be combined to represent much of what can be expressed in language.

The idea of sound as force also stays with me (Walter J.? Ong). There is no question that sound can be violence.

In oral cultures anything that was to last had to be constructed so that it would be remembered. Knowledge is what can be recalled.

It is interesting to think about how I would construct something verbally if I knew it had to be remembered without the aid of writing.

There is a lot more here to wonder about. These notes are just a crude placeholder.

The indigenous peoples described in the books below do not have writing or have only recently learned it.

We are serving technology. While I cannot mate with my computer, computers mate with us. We may be causing species to go extinct, but other forms are proliferating like never before—not to suggest there is balance there.

### *Carlyle's Sartor Resartus and the secular priest*

I read this on page 1063 of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature v. 2* (2000):

Each [Walter Pater and Matthew Arnold] in his own way argues that culture—the intensely serious appreciation of great works of literature—provides the kind of immanence and meaning that people once found in religion.

Here are some other quotes I collected in one of my [commentaries](#):

Prophets of Nature, we to them will speak  
A lasting inspiration, sanctified  
By reason, blest by faith: what we have loved  
Others will love, and we will teach them how,  
Instruct them how the mind of Man becomes  
A thousand times more beautiful than the earth

On which he dwells, above this Frame of things  
(Which 'mid all revolutions in the hopes  
And fears of Men doth still remain unchanged)  
In beauty exalted, as it is itself  
Of quality and fabric more divine.

[the last 10 lines of Wordsworth's *The Prelude*]

Men of Letters are a perpetual Priesthood, from  
age to age, teaching all Men that God is still  
present in their life.... In the true Literary Man,  
there is thus ever, acknowledged or not by the  
world, a sacredness.

[from the fifth lecture of Thomas Carlyle's *On Heroes  
and Hero Worship* as quoted on p. 1062 NAELv2 (2000)]

Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, at least the parts I read, *The  
Everlasting No*, *Center of Indifference*, *The Everlasting  
Yea*, and *Natural Supernaturalism* is a good presentation  
and resolution of the existential crisis that I looked into in  
my paper, [The experience of Meaning in Life from a psy-  
chological perspective](#).

When I first read the first quote I mention in this sec-  
tion, I questioned why no one had told me earlier. It  
seemed like the editors of the anthology, and perhaps all  
the literature professors, had an inside secret about where  
the true religion for our time was to be found. Meanwhile  
the religious fundamentalists make a lot of noise, and it is  
easy to think they are the only show in town. I think I had  
seen or felt a similar understanding when reading Joseph  
Campbell though.

I haven't thought a lot about this realization for months  
now. It was important at the time. I believe they're right.  
But an aspect of the communal experience may be lacking.  
To some extent religion is what is socially recognized as  
valuable in addition to what individuals recognize as valu-  
able. I can read Shakespeare criticism alone in the library  
and appreciate it. But it means more to do that among oth-  
ers who appreciate it—such as while I'm taking a  
Shakespeare class. By religion I'm talking about tools that  
help us to live a meaningful life. This is another placehold-  
er for an idea that could be developed further.

## Finances

From my years of part time work I have about \$5,000  
left. I think I had twelve thousands when I quit the job I  
had in April, 2003. My dad has offered to pay for my  
schooling, but that may not be necessary. I'm spending  
Roth IRA money. I did not like having money sitting  
around that I wasn't doing anything with. My dad spends  
time with his money. When it comes time to save up  
money again, if it does, I will look for a more currency-  
neutral place to sit the stuff. Maybe in [Everbank](#). Or a Ry-  
dex fund. But I do not particularly value time spent man-  
aging money.

I realized that by using the U.S. dollar for transactions,  
or by holding it, people support the U.S. government. One  
of the predictions on [longbets.org](#) is that at some time in  
the future governments will not collect taxes, they will just  
print what money they want based on what they believe  
the circulation levels of their currency will allow. Maybe  
governments already do that. You can bet, as occurred in  
Ecuador, that those with political and economic power

protect their assets by keeping them in a currency or sub-  
stance other than the one they're devaluing.

I am working on a donations page for [carfreeuniverse](#)  
to make it easy for authors to inform people how to donate  
to them. It may be a while before I finish it however, and I  
don't have any plans to live off the income. At least I (and  
other authors) won't have to wonder about what might  
happen if we did have such a page!

## The most important things I have to tell you about are:

**Roy Walford** and his [books](#) about calorie restriction  
and optimal nutrition (CRON). Walford has changed how I  
think about diet, metabolism, and exercise.

**George Monbiot's** *The age of consent: A manifesto  
for a new world order* (2003), and along with that:  
*Poisoned arrows* (1989), *Amazon watershed* (1991), *No  
man's land* (1994), his essay on the [empathetic principle](#),  
Joe Kane's *Savages* (1995) and *Running the Amazon*  
(1989), and anthropological books on the Huaorani of  
Amazonian Ecuador, especially *Trekking through history*  
(2002) by Laura M. Rival. Also Álar Núñez Cabeza de Va-  
ca's *La relación* (1542), and Chinua Achebe's *Things fall  
apart* (1959).

Monbiot's *Manifesto* proposes a solution to the prob-  
lems facing the world today. From other authors I have  
read who describe the problem I have not heard a vision  
that addresses the global imbalance of power. Monbiot's is  
a start. Amartya Sen's *Development as freedom* (1999)  
and the work of Paulo Freire may also be helpful to me.

In the other books I mentioned, the authors visit and  
write in an engaging way about the people who already live  
as an integral part of a sustainable environment as nomads  
and food forest dwellers. These people are being des-  
troyed, while others—economads and ecovillage dwellers,  
originating among the destroyers—are attempting to de-  
velop lifeways that integrate global and indigenous culture.

## The details

Everything else of note can be found by looking at what  
I published on [carfreeuniverse](#) between the last update and  
now:

- [the important documents](#)
- [my poetry](#). I like [Scarves Wrap Necks](#) and [what no one does](#).
- [all of the documents](#)
- [the images \(and PDFs\)](#)
- [everything \(includes links, images, discussion items\)](#)
- [others' work I published](#)

