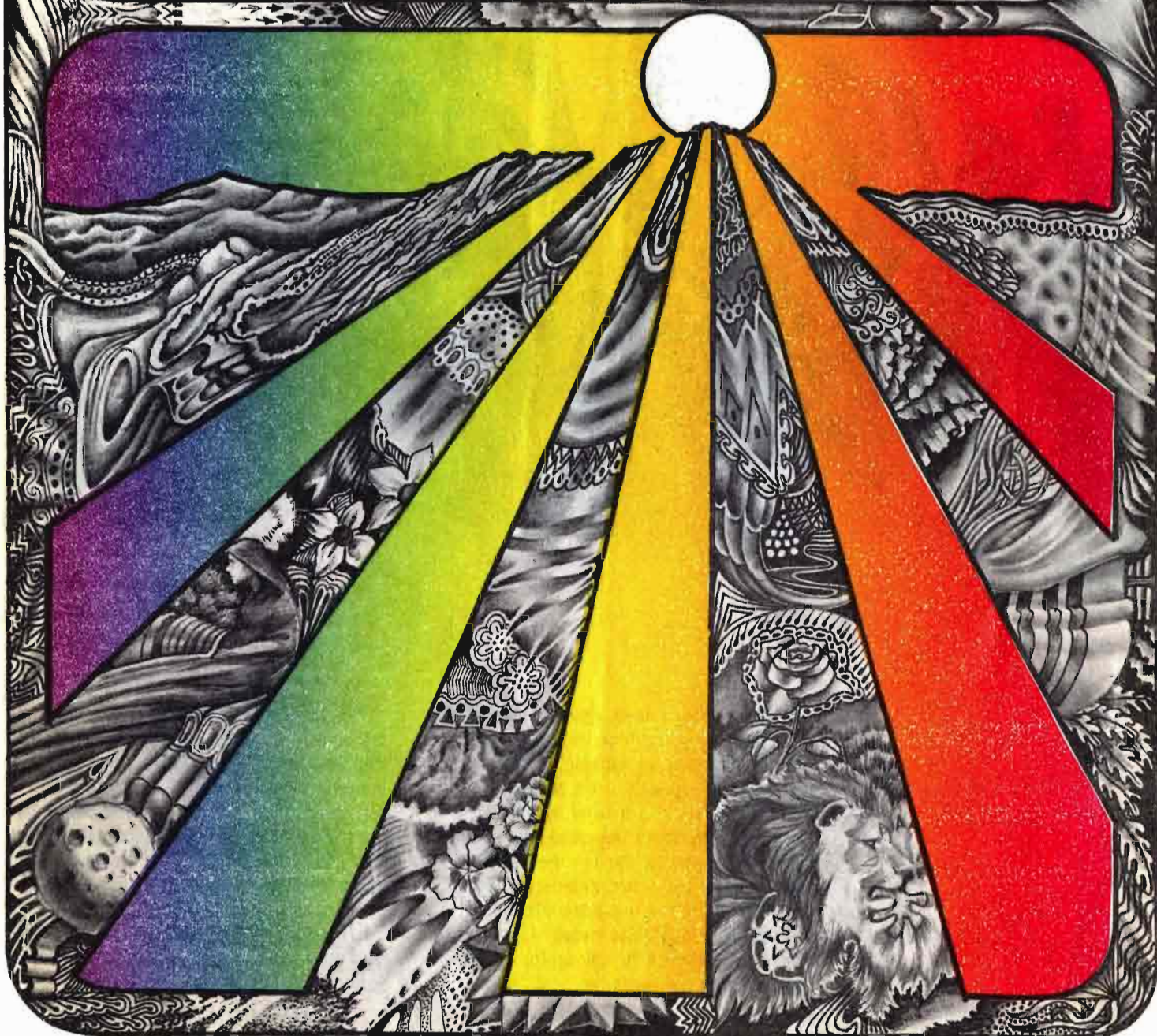


FREE

# RAZAFUL







I need a hero. I need someone I want to be like. You may think I'm crazy, but I'm not. You may be thinking, "Why don't you be yourself?" It's because everyone's "self" is molded by their environment, the books they read, the music they listen to, the TV, their school, their parents, and a million other things. Even though all this has gone into me, I still feel like I don't like myself. I need someone to respect, to look up to. I need someone who can teach me.

You know how people hire guitar teachers or language teachers? I need a teacher like that who can teach me how to live and how to love. At one time the Dead and Robert Hunter were my heroes, but I would never admit it if you asked me. I don't really know why. I guess I was a little ashamed of it because I knew how foolish it seemed. But I'd always catch myself, fists clenched and raised high during the show like they had just scored the winning goal for my team.

They were great, but I couldn't go home with them after the show. I'd always leave feeling like a loser. That is why I feel like I still need a hero.

I want to know someone who is worth being like. I don't want a hero I can't get to know personally. There are lots of people like that - they're too cool, rich, or busy for me. I need someone who can make me and everybody feel loved, feel like we're "in." You know what I mean?

I don't need a dead hero. There are lots of those out there. Dead heroes start dead religions. That's not what I want. I need a hero who's alive ... who can teach me how to live ... who can teach me the answers to real problems .... I'd like to know how to feed and clothe myself without having it become the focus of my whole life. Jobs are so draining ....

I need someone whose people will stick together, even more than deadheads stick together. They would always be together, and there'd be no "going home" after the shows. We would even want to be together. Jobs wouldn't separate us. Our hero's wisdom would keep us together. We'd be living in victory all the time ... victory over the system. You know the way it is; you know what I mean. That's the way the whole world is and we wouldn't be like it. We'd be different. Our hero would have a different way, something new and special.

All I got to do is find him. If I don't there's no reason for going on living. It's either that or a nine-to-five job until I die of AIDS, or cancer, or some heart disease.

When I find him, I won't be ashamed to bring him home to meet my parents. He wouldn't look like them or even act like them, of course. But we'd have a truly good conscience about what we had been out doing the whole time.

I need time to find him. The world puts me under so much pressure, but there has got to be time.

It's funny ... it sounds like I'm hoping for something too good to be true. But I know that's not right. Years ago, when I first started thinking about it, I was out hitchhiking and an old man drove me 1200 miles to the door of some people he knew. They were young; some were old. They were happy but they didn't hide it when they were sad. They lived together all the time. They loved each other, I mean,

really loved each other. You could feel it. They worked together ... too hard for me ... but they had a reason to work so hard. They said they had a hero. They said that he lived there in their midst.

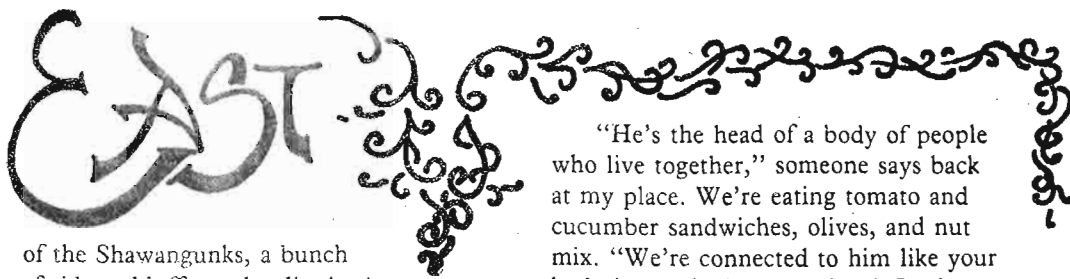
To be honest with you, I could feel his presence or his love or something in those I'd met living there. But it seemed too good to be true. I didn't stick around long enough to meet him. To be really honest, the love and commitment they talked about was what really scared me away. I left, not knowing really why it scared me so much.

But now I do. Their hero wanted me to give up all my other heroes. That's what scared me. That's what I didn't understand. A hero is someone who can save you if you get in trouble. He can help you out of a difficult problem. If your hero can't do that, he's just one of those idols people talk about all the time. That's what my heroes turned out to be. I had to give them all up. I'm really grateful I did.

The hero I met is Yahshua. He and his people have been meeting people like me for years. And they have stuck together. They are out meeting people like you.

The second time I met him, I didn't let that deal go down. Don't you.





of the Shawangunks, a bunch of ridges, bluffs, and palisades in upstate New York, New Paltz sits quietly in their shadow like a little dog tied to a picket fence. It's a one-horse town with twenty or so odd bars and restaurants and a state university like Sodom and Gomorrah. I'm back in town, walking around like Lot, recovering from a stint as a condo pitchman down at Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina, and an all-night drive back home. Two strangers with back packs moseying down Church Street toward the Cloud House catch my eye and we collide in the August shade of a life-sized John Lennon in full "Pepper" regalia sticking out one of its upper windows.

"Hey, what's happening?" I ask. "You guys want to smoke a joint?"

A little silence. A grin. One of them says, "Ah, that's OK. We don't smoke anymore."

"Where are you from?" I wonder out loud.

"We're from a community up in Vermont."

"Oh yeah? What's that like? What are you into?" I'm busy conjuring up visions of their scene. Probably a couple hundred acre farm, bunches of animals and kids, ramshackle sheds and gobs of trees -- a simple, rough-hewn life -- roosters crowing outside the window; frogs a-chunking down by the pond; cutesy, white steeples down the valley; dandelions by the millions; people hanging out, laughing, talking; everyone as easy-going as a pint of Ben & Jerry's. I'll head up there some time and check it out.

The curly-haired back packer says, "We all live together. We work with each other and share everything we own. We follow the teachings of the Messiah."

"Really? Which one?"

They both laugh. "We can understand why you ask that. There seem to be a lot of them out here. You can read their books and be spiritual, but we follow Yahshua."

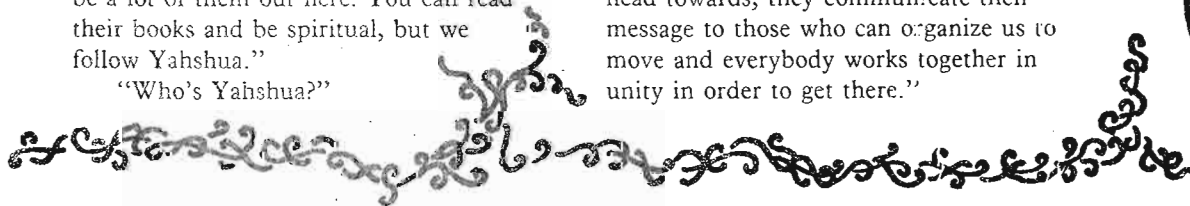
"Who's Yahshua?"

"He's the head of a body of people who live together," someone says back at my place. We're eating tomato and cucumber sandwiches, olives, and nut mix. "We're connected to him like your body is attached to your head. In the same way as your body has many different parts, so does our Community. Some people are like eyes: they see what others can do well and they can see problems. They can even see things far off down the road. They have vision for what direction we need to go in and how to get there. Some people are like ears: they listen to people, they are able to hear people's hearts. They listen for God's voice so when he speaks, they can know what he is saying. Some people are constantly encouraging, talking about what is happening in the Community, singing, speaking, and even teaching about all the wonderful things that go on in our life together."

What a relief that must be to not have to be everything myself; to not have to feel the pressure of having to be good at all the things I see others being good at. Who am I? I wonder. Why am I always competing? Why can't I just be glad when other people are better at something than me? I don't want to be that way. I want to be grateful just to be alive. "How do you guys all get along without competing?"

"Basically, by respecting each other. We have all kinds of different people. Some of us do two or three different things, some of us do only one. Some people stand out immediately and attract much attention, others do the things they do and hardly ever get recognized. You'd think that the people who don't get a lot of attention would get jealous of those who are noticed, but more honor is given to those parts of the body that are less likely to be recognized.

"We also have a common cause and we're totally for one another. We sense that others feel that way about us and that makes us love them. The different parts work together in coordination and the body is able to move and work. The eyes may see something we need to head towards; they communicate their message to those who can organize us to move and everybody works together in unity in order to get there."





"Do you have anybody that doesn't fit in?"

"No, everyone's needed. There's a place for anyone who wants to be a part of the body. But on our own, it's not easy to find out where we fit in. Others have to help us to be who we are. We go through a healing process. We are a hospital, or better yet a healing environment.

"The world has hurt us in many ways and has left many scars deep down inside of us. Every unkind word that was ever said to us has gone into our souls and left its mark there. And every unkind deed that was ever done to us has effected us deeply in our spirits. They are all remembered, stored away deep inside of us -- twisting and bending us to the left or the right unconsciously. Of course our minds may cast out the unkind words that were spoken, but our spirits absorb every word. You can see them written in our faces and in our eyes, in the line of our mouth, and in the set of our chin, in the way we walk, and the way we speak.

"Others have hurt us so often that now we walk around with our guards up. We have learned to protect ourselves from injuries and have built walls to keep others at a safe distance. We're defensive, intimidated, and worthless. Or we're proud, aggressive, and overconfident, depending on how we've learned to cope with other people.

"Living with others in a healing environment restores us to health. All the mangled, withered, diseased, and crippled parts of us come to the light. Our guilt and shame are removed when we are forgiven for our wrongs and the hurts of our past are resolved. Kind words and kind deeds strengthen us so that we can love others in return.

"Sometimes our wounds have gone so deeply into us that we need to lie down on the operating table and submit to the surgeon's scalpel. Those whom we trust, delicately cut away the infected areas from our heart and remove the things that have long poisoned our relationships. Though the surgery is painful, our life is changed and we come into a greater fullness than ever before."

Maybe that's what I need ... help. Someone to take all the junk out of me. I'm so insecure, cynical, and unable to express what I'm really feeling. How's that ever going to change?

"Healing takes a long time. We're all like seeds. Each one of us has a hard outer shell, a hull that protects the tiny germ of life that's hidden away inside. The seed can sit for years, all alone, unaffected by everything that goes on around it. It could stay in a drawer, or in a yellowing envelope, or between the cracks of the floor for almost forever. But given the right environment, the right moisture and warmth, the seed will begin to grow. The warmth of the sun and the moisture of the soil will start to penetrate the seed's outer shell. Slowly, almost invisibly, it begins to weaken and dissolve until the life hidden inside sprouts forth. A shoot unfurls its stock and runners reach out to the soil to take root.

"The reason all this happens is because of the foundation our lives are built on. We live according to the things that our Creator has spoken to us and in keeping with the things he has established long ago in the past. The voice of our heart and the thoughts of our conscience are in harmony with the things that are in the heart of our Creator, because we trust him and have submitted our entire lives to him.

"We see this as the beginning of a new society here on the earth -- a new culture, a new nation, a new government, a new race of people (a tribal people) ... a taste of the life of the new age. What is happening here will one day fill the earth with people whose concern is for others above themselves. Come and see."

"Don't worry, I'm coming," I said to them.

What I found is the very life they were talking about. Now it's my life, too. Come and see.

Aharon

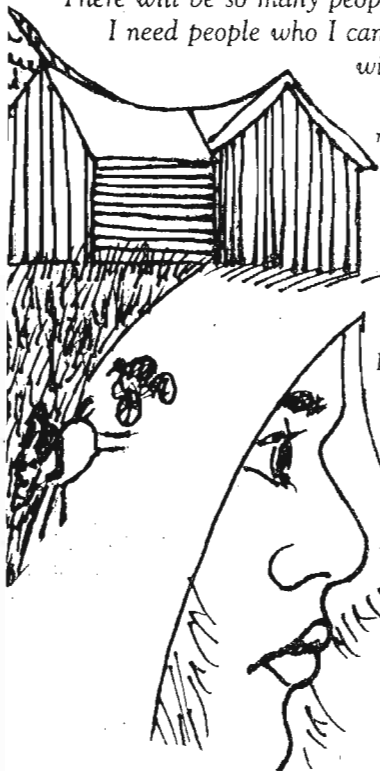
march 24th

Here I am on my way to Hampton, finally FREE from my parents. I left a note for them before I left. I assured them of my love and I told them I'd be back April 4th to go back to school. I'm not sure if I'll go back though. I can't wait to get to Hampton.

I don't want to be  
with these people  
I am driving with  
anymore. There  
is so much  
tension  
between the four of us.

I thought I'd  
be so happy once I  
left home, but I'm  
still not happy.

I guess I'll be happy  
once I get to Virginia.  
There will be so many people like me there.  
I need people who I can relate to and who  
will love me for who I am.



march 26th

We've been in Hampton for almost two days now.  
People are piling in. There are people everywhere.  
I ran into Jodi last night. I was so glad. I left the people  
I drove here with and hung out with Jodi.

Last night I spent the night with her and a bunch of people I had never  
seen before. We stayed at the Days Inn.

I felt so insecure.

I was so scared that these people would find out somehow that I had only been to three shows in  
my life. I tried to somehow act cool enough so that this question wouldn't even  
enter their minds. I was also so scared that they would find out that I had never done  
coke or heroin or ecstasy.

What would they THINK of me? I thought.

This one guy asked me if I wanted a hubba.

I practically broke out in a sweat.

I didn't know what a hubba was.

I told him 'no' to be safe. I get so mad at myself sometimes.

Why can't I be cool, laid back? I get so deep into what people think of me sometimes.  
It drives me crazy.

Maybe I'll start doing heroin and ecstasy so I can get this way.

I don't know. I'm just glad I have a ticket for tonight's show.

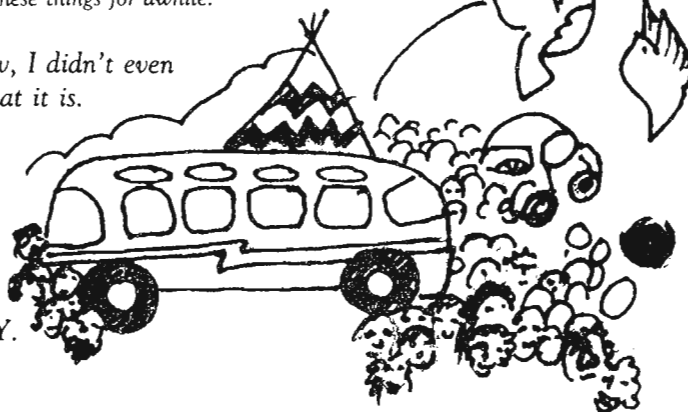
It'll get my mind off all these things for awhile.

march 27th

Tonight when I was in the show, I didn't even  
get into the music. I don't know what it is.

I think maybe I was too self conscious  
Somehow the dead didn't sound as  
wonderful as I was used to hearing  
them.

They sounded so mechanical or  
something. I don't know, maybe it  
was just me. I just want to be HAPPY.





april 4th

I haven't written for a while because it is so hard to find time. I am in Hartford now. In New Jersey I met a guy who I am now travelling with. I've decided that I'm not going back to New Hampshire to my parents' house. I will be going out to California after the east coast is over.

Today I was walking around the park and back and forth to hotels with my boyfriend. Whenever I would be walking with him, hand in hand, I would feel like I was on top of the world.

But then later we split up for a couple of hours, so he could go make some deals while I got our tickets. When I walk by myself, I pretend to be secure in who I am, but ... I feel so INSECURE.

I get so deep into myself and how I am walking and what I am wearing, it drives me crazy.

There always seems to be someone else, another deadhead who I want to be just like.

I am never content in who I am. Who am I ANYWAY?

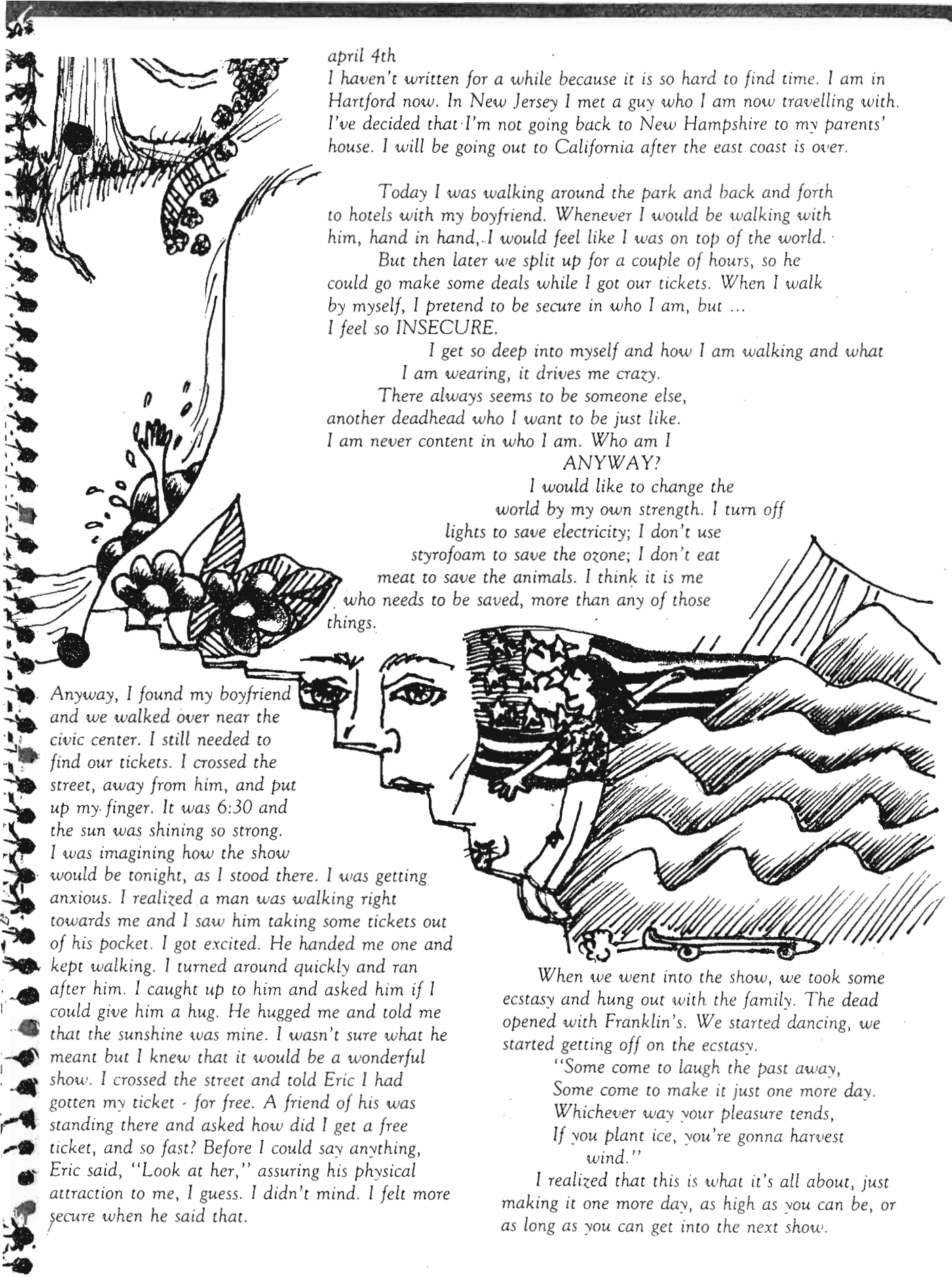
I would like to change the world by my own strength. I turn off lights to save electricity; I don't use styrofoam to save the ozone; I don't eat meat to save the animals. I think it is me who needs to be saved, more than any of those things.

Anyway, I found my boyfriend and we walked over near the civic center. I still needed to find our tickets. I crossed the street, away from him, and put up my finger. It was 6:30 and the sun was shining so strong. I was imagining how the show would be tonight, as I stood there. I was getting anxious. I realized a man was walking right towards me and I saw him taking some tickets out of his pocket. I got excited. He handed me one and kept walking. I turned around quickly and ran after him. I caught up to him and asked him if I could give him a hug. He hugged me and told me that the sunshine was mine. I wasn't sure what he meant but I knew that it would be a wonderful show. I crossed the street and told Eric I had gotten my ticket - for free. A friend of his was standing there and asked how did I get a free ticket, and so fast? Before I could say anything, Eric said, "Look at her," assuring his physical attraction to me, I guess. I didn't mind. I felt more secure when he said that.

When we went into the show, we took some ecstasy and hung out with the family. The dead opened with Franklin's. We started dancing, we started getting off on the ecstasy.

"Some come to laugh the past away,  
Some come to make it just one more day.  
Whichever way your pleasure tends,  
If you plant ice, you're gonna harvest  
wind."

I realized that this is what it's all about, just making it one more day, as high as you can be, or as long as you can get into the next show.



Somehow in me deep down, this made me sad. I ignored this pain in my heart though because, to be honest with myself, I don't know where else I'd go. This is the only place where I feel at home or where people want the same things I do, I think. What else would I do? I took some more x so I wouldn't get so down. I feel so good when I'm real high. I don't ever want to come down. I love everyone so much when I'm like this. Why can't it always be this way?

The show ended and I couldn't find my Birks. They are the only shoes I have, so I panicked. I ended up finding them right where I left them.

april 5th

Sameach, Heemin, and Tohorah were at the show today. There were others, too, from the Community.

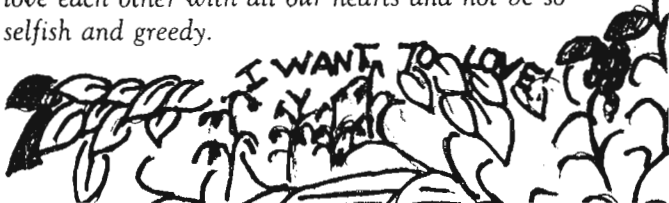
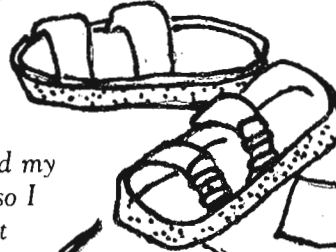
I met some more of them today, some of their wives. Somehow I am intrigued by them. But I'm not sure what it is. They are so kind to me everytime they see me. I'm scared. I'd like to talk to them and even be with them, I think, but I'm just scared. I don't know what I should do or what I shouldn't do. I think deep down in my heart, I want to be with them but I'm scared to listen to my heart. Almost everytime I can think of, that I've gone by what's in my heart, I've been hurt.

I've learned instead to go by peoples' outward appearances, what they wear, how they hold themselves, how laid-back and cool they are. I usually favor people who always seem to have it together, (unless they get real high) people who do heroin, liquid, ecstasy, and mushrooms. Sometimes I just wonder if they will die tonight or make it through until tomorrow or when they will do it again. I just wish that there was some way that we could all be together, maybe even with the music, but without the drugs. Some way that we could all love each other with all our hearts and not be so selfish and greedy.

may 26th

A lot of things have happened since I last wrote. I never made it to California. My dad came to find me at Worcester and brought me home. Sometime around the twentieth of May I went to visit the community in Vermont, the people whom I had met in Hampton and Hartford. I realized the first time I visited their home that what I had sensed in the depths of my heart when I first met them was right. I had sensed that they truly loved one another, that they lived so close to one another, that they shared everything, their lives, their possessions, their hearts. They actually shared their hearts with one another. There were no superficial friendships. No one kept up a certain image. It seemed that all barriers were broken down and somehow they were given the power to love one another with ALL THEIR HEARTS.

I WANT TO LOVE





feb 13th

I've been living here for eight months now.  
What I saw when I first came here continues  
to be a part of my everyday life.

Much healing is coming to me through  
my brothers and sisters. I need to be healed of so  
much. Everything I learned in the world

I learned wrong.

I learned how to think  
wrong.

I learned how to love .  
wrong.

I am learning everything new, as if  
for the first time.

My friends are so gentle and  
patient  
with my condition.

We all have similar conditions  
because

We all grew up in the same perverse,  
corrupt society; no matter which side of the  
country or which side of the world we came from

We all have the same  
fallen

nature, we all have been affected

by the

fall  
of  
man.

Before I came here I didn't even know if I  
believed in God. I wasn't raised in a religious  
family. No one ever taught me that I should love  
my creator, no one ever taught me

HOW TO LOVE.

I was taught how to read, how to play sports, how  
to dress, but no one ever taught me how to love.

I have come into a life now in which the most  
important thing to us, above all others, is that we  
would love one another. We have countless oppor-  
tunities all day long, everyday, to love one another.

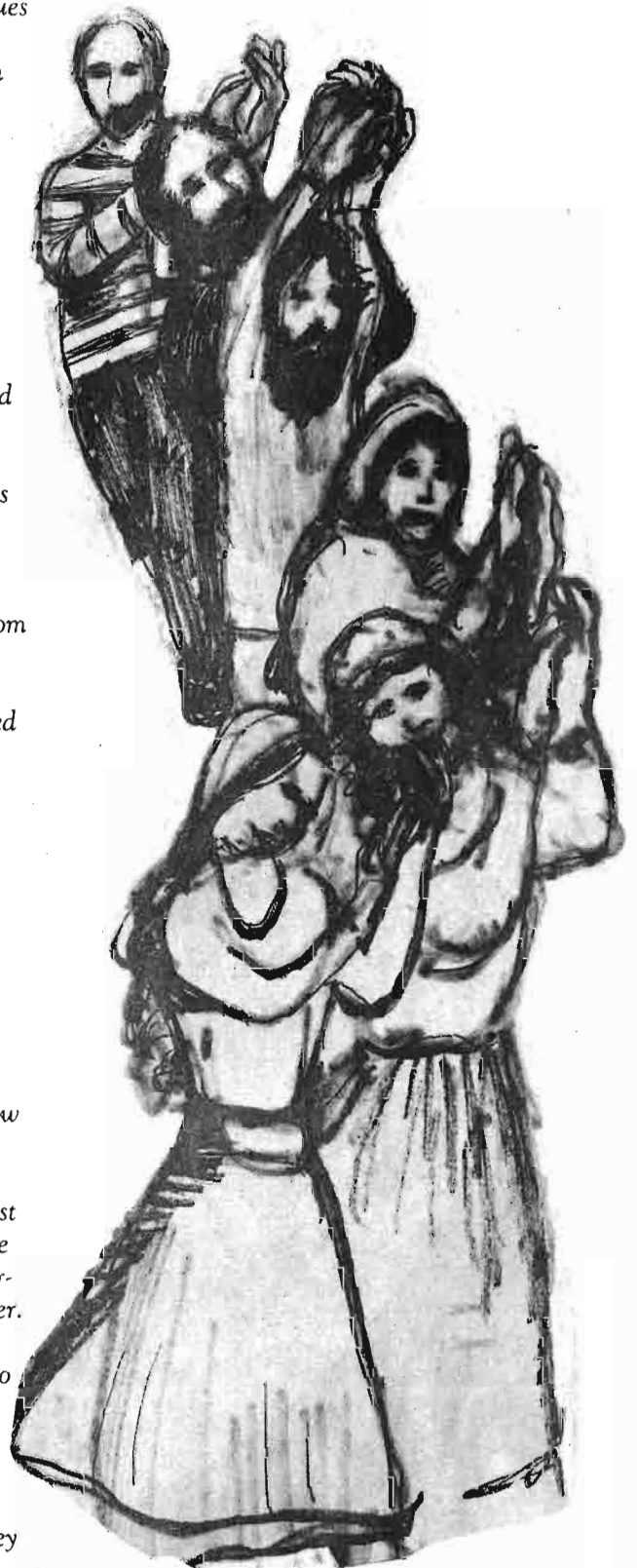
This is the life I've always wanted.

People living together and giving all they've got to  
one another, giving their whole heart to one  
another, day and night.


I am so thankful that I am finally happy.

I have peace now.

I know who my friends are and I know they  
will never leave me.







WONDERFUL A WORD is "grateful!" Just the sound of it makes you feel good.

Think back to a time when you were very young, when you were just learning how to swim. You got in too deep and you were going under. Then just when you thought it was all over, the lifeguard jumped in and saved you. Remember how the rest of the summer you could not keep your eyes off him? He was your hero. You were so grateful that he saw your struggle and came to help you.

Or remember your second grade teacher? She took so much extra time to help you learn to read. She didn't need to do it, but she saw you needed help. You were so grateful for her kindness. You always wanted to do something to repay her, but the flowers you put on her desk each morning could not even come close to expressing your gratitude.

Perhaps it is something else. There are friends who are very dear to you, and times that warm

your heart ... but these are rare. There aren't really that many moments in your life when you were truly grateful. It is too bad, because the ones you remember are so good.

One time at a show in Worcester a few years ago, a guy just walked up to you and gave you a ticket. That was one night you were very grateful. Once inside, you forgot all about it, but afterwards you remembered and always wanted to get in touch with him again.

It's easy to forget times like that.

It is not easy to stay grateful for long....

But notice this:



*Grateful --*

*appreciative of benefits received, thankful, filled with gratitude, indebted to...*

*We all love the word "grateful." But the ability to actually "be grateful" is often out of our reach.*

"There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, UNGRATEFUL, unholy, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God...have nothing to do with them."

This quote comes from the Bible. A prophet is speaking of a time to come when mankind will exhibit these qualities. It is going to be a terrible time. One reason why it will be so terrible is that most people will be ungrateful. Now, this is not something that we, in this generation, consider to be so terrible. We never even think much about being grateful. Yet, somehow a person who is "ungrateful" is to be avoided at all cost. Why is this?





Someone might say, "I will be grateful when I am dead." (Maybe that is where the name THE GRATEFUL DEAD came from.) Life is so messed up, being dead could be something to be grateful for. Or is it only the speculation of a short-sighted man? For how does he really know what death holds? Will there be anything there to be grateful for?

But if the prophet says that we are to avoid the ungrateful, then we better start searching for SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE, who has SOMETHING to be grateful for. We had better look to see if there is ANYTHING in this life to be GRATEFUL for. If there is nothing in life to be grateful for, there will surely be nothing in death. The grateful living are the ones who will be the grateful dead. Some living and grateful people can be found here. You are welcome to join us.





I was ten years old when my parents got divorced, and that caused a lot of anger, hatred, and confusion in me. By twelve, I was fed up. I saw all the injustice in the world, and I wanted out. ♦ I didn't want to be like everyone else, and end up with two children, a nice house, a car, and a husband who would eventually leave me. I began to totally rebel against all of society's norms. I hated myself so much because I never felt like anyone loved me.

let me find  
something real

My friends were a lot like me - unhappy, rebellious children. They were mostly older though, around fifteen or sixteen. I wanted to be just like them. I wanted to have their freedom and independence. So I began doing the drugs they did when I was twelve. I loved it, because it made me happy and I escaped reality; I could be anyone, or do anything, and nothing could hurt me.

**By the time thirteen came, I was a mess.** I was high all the time. I couldn't handle being straight, because I hated myself so much. I tried to kill myself many times, but always failed. This made me feel even more worthless. I became hateful and bitter and totally consumed with anger. "Why is God doing this to me?" was what I wanted to know.

I'd do some drugs and be happy for a while; I'd come down and want to die. It was an endless

cycle. Every time I fell in love, I always got hurt. My emotions went through such a whirlwind of ups and downs, that I finally got worn out. Then I built up a wall around my heart that was so strong nothing could phase me. It allowed me to walk around totally emotionless - never laughing, never crying, just like a zombie.



At fifteen, I ran away. That only got me into more trouble. When I got back home, I quit doing drugs for a while through the help of one of my friends, Janet. She was a real friend.

**When I was sixteen,** I met Paul. He was nineteen, and different from all the other guys I knew. He was so sensitive and caring. We really loved each other a lot. We decided we'd get married, once he finished college.

As our relationship grew, however, so did our fights. Every time we talked, we fought. It was hopeless - my dream of love, happiness, and friendship was completely shattered in less than a year. That's when I really flipped out.

I started acting wild again. I knew it would really hurt him to see me kill myself on drugs because of him. I began hanging around bars and clubs, getting to know the "in" people of Boston's music scene. I'd go out with my friends and do lots of cocaine and act cool. I felt so important; a tough-looking seventeen year old, hanging around with the musicians in the bands.

When Paul found out I was with all these guys doing coke, he got really mad. We fought and fought until we stopped going out. That made me do more drugs and drink more. I'd sit in my bedroom with a bottle of alcohol and a few lines of coke and my worries would all go away.

I hated drugs. I hated my life. I knew my entire existence was one big lie. I acted one way to look cool, but inside I was totally lonely and empty. I always hoped that some day one of these guys would fall in love with me.

About a year later I wanted out, so I became a Deadhead. My first show was paradise; I smoked angel dust and got scared for awhile. But then everything turned purple. The music came alive, and I actually felt happy. People talked to me. They were so neat. They seemed like a huge family.

I started to look more and more like a Deadhead. I wore tie-dyes and Indian skirts. I wanted so badly to fit into the life of unity they all seemed to have.

**At my last show I got fed up.** I realized that this unity and love wasn't the unity and love I wanted. I wanted something lasting, not just one show after another. I flipped out. The show was awful. I still hadn't found what I was looking for. I sat backstage and cried. I said, "O God, please let me die. I can't go on like this anymore. Let me die, or let me have something real."

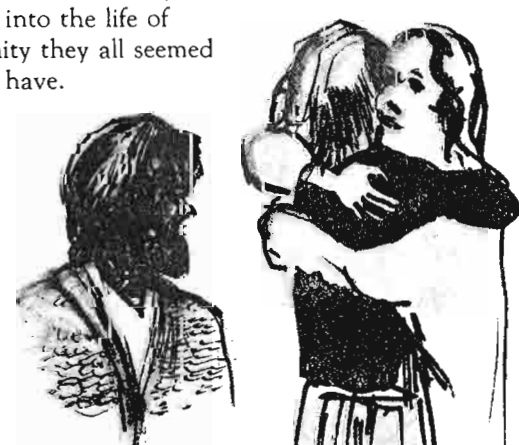
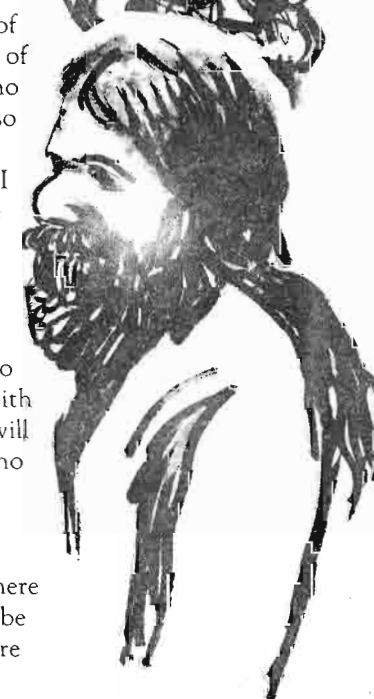
Less than fifteen minutes later, I received a freepaper. From then on, my life completely changed. In that paper I found a hope for a life filled with true friendship, love, and happiness. I visited the Community off and on for two months. Every time I left, I cried.

My eyes saw the love these people had. I could hardly believe it was true. I moved in on August nineteenth and on August twentieth I was baptised. Since then, all my heart's desires have been fulfilled. I have found my true freedom, happiness, and peace. My life is so wonderful. Only through Yahshua, could I have found such love. Because of him I can live a life of love with people who also love me. I am so thankful for what God has given me. I am thankful for the friendships that I have.

Do you have a dream to find a life filled with unity? Do you desire to live with many people who will love you? People who are there for you always? People who won't ever leave?

Do you believe there is a greater love to be found? I know where to find it.

Come visit, see the life waiting for you.



*Lebanah*



# Y

The curse came.

It broke over their heads like a storm, like a thunderhead gathering at sundown. In the night, when the air is still and heavy, the hushed sky rips apart with a crash. Men and women lie awake in their beds waiting for morning, while on every side the night is shred like paper.

# A

It came like a vulture landing, like a big shadow sweeping the brown grass. He sidles and circles the corpse, stands erect to see better, and stretches his naked neck to the full. Hopping closer, he stretches forward, pecks, and leaps back. He watches for a second more; no movement. Then he croaks once and throws himself on the body. Into its flank he strikes his heavy beak. He flaps for balance and thrusts backwards with feet and wings to strip the skin from the ribs and belly.

# H

The curse ... no oath or damning word, but the unseen passage of a whole land into a brutal and pitiless spiritdom.

# S

**The summer sun dries up every pool** and stream and almost every river. It drives the desperate frogs deep into the mud cracks and forces the storks to feed on locusts. It kills the food plants and wilts the fig trees over the heads of the panting herds.

# H

A choking dust falls like rain, seared in the whirlwinds of a thousand day drought. Overhead a sky of bronze gleams as if heated by a torch and underneath the scorched earth lies blackened like an iron pan on an open flame.

# U

Come harvest-time, little grows. The wheat is blighted, blasted by fungus that makes the golden fields look like moonscapes. One afternoon, hail stones like marbles break the stalks in two, followed by a beating rain that bows the grain heads down into the mud.

# A

It had never been so before. The friendship of their God had always been on their land and his promised help had always preserved them from disaster. No enemy had ever overrun them like this. Generations before, one of their fathers had walked with their God. He had listened to the voice of his con-

science and had obeyed what he knew was right. The trust he felt in his God was unshakable. He believed whatever he said. He trusted him to such a degree that his God came to know his heart. They had an intimate friendship with one another. Even when tested to see if his obedience was true, he worshipped God supremely and gave him the uttermost sacrifice, his son, the essence of his heart. Because of his pure trust, his son was spared and his obedience won the promised protection for his land and for his descendants.

Time passed. Years turned into centuries. Men lost the relationship with their God that their forefather had had. They drifted away from having an intimate friendship with him, and grew dissatisfied with his thoughts. Instead of walking uprightly in accordance with his laws, they became bent over in slavery to a burdensome facsimile of it. Never content with what their God provided, they created other gods for themselves to accomodate their lusts. Loyalty and faithfulness to him were replaced by arrogance and restlessness. The whole nation turned away from obedience and trust into reaching and grasping for anything that would fill up their barren lives.

**Children roamed the streets of the cities** looking for pleasure. They acted as though they had no fathers or mothers. Sons treated their fathers with contempt and daughters scorned their mothers. A man's enemies were those in his own household. Thieves robbed their own and prostitutes plied their trade openly without shame. Anger and murder filled their homes and streets like a plague until no one trusted anyone else.

All around them were the diseased, the deformed, the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the lame, the crippled, the paralyzed, and the demon possessed. The stench of the land was a rotting sore; there was no wholeness, no soundness, no justice.

The curse changed what was once fruitful into a parched wasteland, a mere husk, a stale hunk of rock-hard bread. The thirsty and starving wandered through it, looking for help, but there was none. Society was like a market place, a vain fair where men hawked their conscience and dignity for a night of cheap thrills. Their daughters

# Y

were like whores, their sons like drunkards. It had permeated every area of society, like oil soaking into a rag.

Then he came.

He grew up in their midst like a tender shoot. And like the root of a plant surviving in the desert, he sprouted up among them. His life was like a young sprig growing out of an ancient stump.

He was a simple, child-like man who listened when people spoke to him. His ears were attuned to the afflictions of their hearts and he responded with the truth he knew in his own. It was painful for him to look upon the plight of his people. Never had he seen so much sickness or corruption in all levels of society or so many religious hypocrites or pretenders or lawless men. Though many had grown dull to the effects of the curse and had conformed to the abnormal society around them, he felt keenly every intrusion of the curse into even the smallest areas of their lives. It made him sad to see how calloused people's hearts were, how little they cared for one another, and how they despised the needy and poor among them. It also made him burn with anger to see how men had substituted customs and traditions for the relationship with their God that men like their forefather had once had. The lies that held so many around him in bondage, weren't able to hinder his belief in his God and his faith in his God's promises.

**He was unpretentious;** a humble man who didn't pride himself on his looks or his intelligence or his accomplishments. He didn't get his security from all the things he did or was naturally good at doing. If a matter came to his attention, he didn't make a snap judgment on it like all the clever ones about him (those who lived in the false authority of their cursed rightness). Instead, he waited to hear what was right in his own heart and by his intuition and conscience he spoke. In the fear of God he judged with justice the poor of the land. For although many looked poor and needy, he knew who truly was and who wasn't. And though the curse was over everyone in his society, he could only lift it off the necks of the poor and humble, for they

alone were the only ones who would receive his help. None of the proud or self-exalted would ever listen to him.

He lived as innocently as a child. He spoke simply with straightforwardness. He wasn't concerned about the world's standards -- what was fashionable or what was popular. His likes and dislikes weren't petty and self-interested. Rather his satisfaction and good pleasure came from carrying out the deeds that his God had given him to do. And he was unable to do anything without him.

One thing for sure, he wasn't complicated. It wasn't hard to follow what he said. It didn't take a lot of complex reasoning to decipher his sayings and no one had to be a genius to follow him. In his own words, the way to reverse the effects of the curse is simple and clear:

*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.*

'The only difficulty in understanding his words comes about when the twisted human heart makes things complex. Nothing he said was said to be daring or to show off. All he wanted to do was tell people the truth.

Those who were child-like could hear the truth. Those who weren't complicated could hear his voice. The simple and the needy weren't deaf to him; they responded. The truth he knew was the overwhelming reality of his God's presence in his life and his promises to his people.

**He came to start a new Israel,** a new society free from the curse. He came as a prophet, as one who felt the heartbeat of his God and heard his intimate thoughts. Though he was the son of God, it wasn't as the son that he walked the earth. He lived and breathed

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and walked the earth as the son of man, who had left behind all his divine privileges and rights. He hungered and suffered and endured trial as a man. He wasn't God one minute when things got hard and he needed an escape, and man the next when things got easier. He was a man all the time. He had to suffer like the rest of us. It was something real. It surrounded his life at all times like night around a star.

Every which way he turned, the cries of his people reached his ears. They were always around him, always in need. When the enemy's lies bent people's backs to the ground so they couldn't even straighten up, he felt sorry for them and reached out to heal them. When everyone clamored to make him king, as much as he loved them, he moved away from them. They had been walked over so many times before, they'd follow just about anyone, not just him, but anyone who'd give them a free piece of bread. It got so bad, he couldn't even be with them. He didn't withdraw into mysticism or retreat to the desert. Nor did he go on pretending that everything was OK. It was as though their whole society had been turned upside down and shaken up, and there was nothing they could do to get it back aright. All they could do was blame him. And all he could do was stand and take it.

Like an umbrella of protection, he lived for those who clung to him. Beneath his covering was the shelter they needed from the storm. And at his side was the safety they longed for, far from the approach and slime of this world's vultures.

Then he died.

To break the curse, he died. To break its sway, he suffered death as one under its power. He faced it unflinchingly, knowing that his God would rescue him. And very shortly after that, he was alive again, resurgent, brimming over with victory. He filled all those who had sought after him and those who had remained at his side with the very same spirit that he had that overcame death. The very same life that had been in him was now in them. And though their demonstration passed away, long ago, it is once again here on earth.

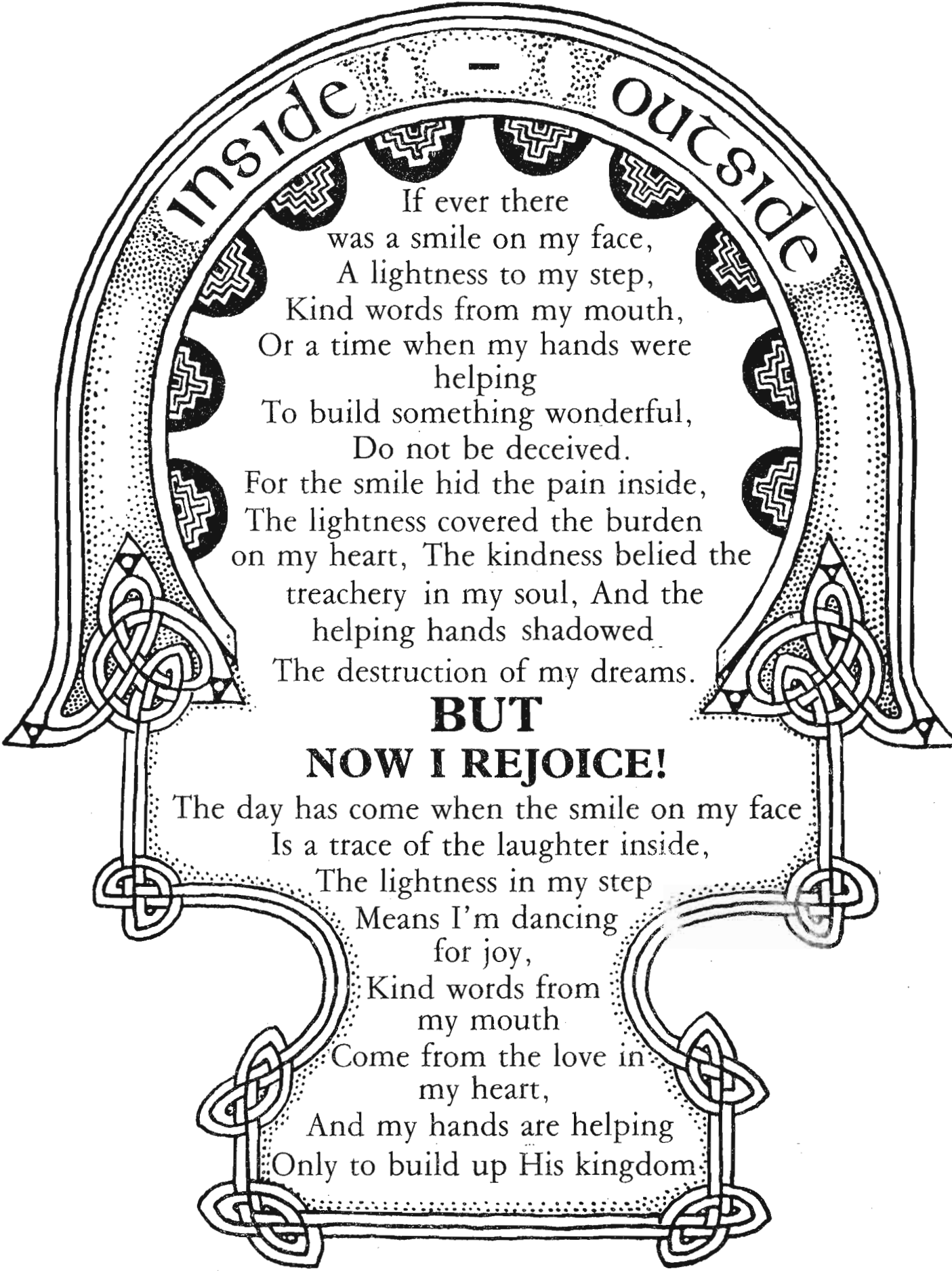
His life was a social life, an overflowing river that flowed out of his heart toward others. His words and actions teemed with life and he poured it out generously like water. In him was a rich, lavish, endless, and inexhaustible supply of life. It brimmed over in every direction, in every situation, to every kind of person, stimulating and quickening them with kindness and hospitality. He had enough life in himself to be able to go on and on and on. Every bit of it that he had, he freely gave away to others. What he didn't need to sustain himself, he extravagantly wasted on those around him. He cheered them up when they were discouraged, he consoled them when they were depressed, he wastefully squandered all that he had upon them in order to keep them till the day when they, too, would be doing the same thing.

Now that same life is here among us. It is a blessed life. Like a day in early springtime, a day of melting ice. When you walk from town past fields still patched with old snow, it is warm in the sun. Though neither lilac or apple are yet in bloom, their branches are silently filling up with the swell of the first sap. On that day rivulets collide and advance, trickles flow steadily through the blond grass, sweet-tasting brooks surge into cold lakes, and out of them flow swelling torrents. It's like water flowing, all day long, fed with snow and heat, dew and moonlight. It's a wide, sure water, a river, always and forever.

It's like finding something for the first time ... another person to talk to and be comfortable with. It's like being happy and lightheaded and wanting to run forever all at the same time. And being together with them, close by their side -- sitting and talking or just sitting quietly, knowing each other is there. And telling them everything that's on your heart until they are breathing softly. The peace of that, the quiet strength of that rest.

It's like ... our hero.





Inside — Outside

If ever there  
was a smile on my face,  
A lightness to my step,  
Kind words from my mouth,  
Or a time when my hands were  
helping  
To build something wonderful,  
Do not be deceived.  
For the smile hid the pain inside,  
The lightness covered the burden  
on my heart, The kindness belied the  
treachery in my soul, And the  
helping hands shadowed  
The destruction of my dreams.

**BUT  
NOW I REJOICE!**

The day has come when the smile on my face  
Is a trace of the laughter inside,  
The lightness in my step  
Means I'm dancing  
for joy,  
Kind words from  
my mouth  
Come from the love in  
my heart,  
And my hands are helping  
Only to build up His kingdom.

*"When the inside is like the outside, and the outside is like the inside,  
then I will return." — Yahshua*



# WHO WE ARE

We used to be desperately lonely, even though most of us had a lot of friends. Some of us were successful in what we did, and some of us were failures beyond hope. We came from everywhere and we have done everything trying to make sense out of our lives. But no matter what we did, we were left feeling dirty inside. We were scarred deeply from the effects of mistrust and hurtful relationships. We strove for acceptance, money, and whatever else could give us comfort. Some of us had dreams of a better life, but most of us had given up the struggle, settling instead for compromise and consent to "the way things are." We were lost, scattered, without direction, doing our own thing.

Then we heard a voice that spoke to us right where we were, exposing the emptiness of our lives. This voice matched up fully to the longing of our hearts. Somehow a lifetime of being unable to trust was shattered by this voice of hope. It came from a people who had their dirty con-

science washed clean. They had a clean slate and an absolutely new life. This new life they eagerly offered to all who wanted it.

So now we have a life together. We no longer have to be separated by race, education, appearance, position, status, or where we came from. Instead our days are filled with seeking not only our own welfare, but also the welfare of others. This new life has given us the power to care.

We hate the war, strife, hatred, starvation, murder, injustice, greed, and selfishness that is leading the whole world to destruction. We want to see all of this come to an end. But we are convinced that the demonstration of our new life together is what will bring about the end of this age. We want many, many more people to hear the voice of hope we've heard, to come and see the life. This life we speak of in this pamphlet is what you were born for. Your whole life you have been trying to find it. We are thrilled to be able to invite you to come and see that it's real.

## HOW TO REACH US

Our addresses and phone numbers are listed below. Feel free to call or come see us anytime, day or night. Our homes are open to you for a day or to stay.

The Common Sense Store  
P. O. Box 443 - Cross Street  
Island Pond, Vermont 05846  
(802) 723-9708

Willow Acre  
P.O. Box 110 - on Route 5  
Westminster Station, Vermont 05159  
(802) 722-3169

92 Melville Avenue  
Dorchester, Massachusetts 02124  
(617) 282-8402

The Old School House  
P. O. Box 587  
Barrington Passage, Nova Scotia B0W 1G0  
(902) 637-3130

Tabitha's Place  
Communaute de Sus  
Navarrenx 64190  
FRANCE  
(011) 33-59-66-1428

