

THE ADVENTURES OF KOZMOS LOVEJOY EXP



PATRICK O'BRIEN

*The Adventures of Kozmos Lovejoy,
&xp*

Patrick O'Brien

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*"In Spirit I was caught away into the realms of Akasha.
I stood alone within the circle of the sun.
And there I found the secret spring that opens up the
Door to Wisdom and an understanding heart.
I entered in and then I knew."*

*Levi,
The Aquarian Gospel*

*"Renounce fiction and fear. There is nothing to do but write the truth. There is
no other reason to write."*

Jack Kerouac

This memoir is based on my personal experience of real events that took place more than 50 years ago. Though these events are near and dear to my heart, and I remember them well, I can't assure the reader that the dialog is accurate, word for word. In fact, I believe the dialog reflects the integrity and authenticity of the speakers intention and presents an accurate description of the emotions being expressed. I am grateful to everyone who was a part of theses adventures and shared even a moment of their life with me. I changed the names of some and kept the names of those who've passed away. I compressed time and changed some scenes where dialog takes place to keep the story moving. But what's important is that all these events took place, as described to the best of my memory. Yes, even the eagles in Chamonix!

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Prologue

As I looked out across the Chamonix Valley toward the Mont Blanc, the Valle Blanche and the Mer de Glace it was a beautiful day in France. Not a cloud in the sky or even a breeze in the air. Two of my friends who had just returned from Lebanon gifted me a small piece of hashish. "Save it for the right moment," they told me.

It had been at least four years since I'd used any drugs. Since then, my life had been transformed by Spirit. Finally, I had found the peace in my heart that restored my soul and forgiven myself. I felt grateful for all that had transpired over those four years.

Now we were closing Le Camp des Aigles, Pir Vilayat's meditation camp at 8,000 feet in the French National Forest. I'd lived there the past two summers, working in the kitchen, studying with Pir and building his Crystal Cave.

I leaned back on the lichen covered boulder over the valley, the sun in my face, and took the pipe from my pocket. The right moment. Without any particular intention, I lit the pipe and took a hit. It tasted like chocolate and coffee. Within moments, I was totally relaxed and at ease, a deep sense of being at one with everything. I crossed my legs and put my hands on my knees, palms up. Rolling my eyes up to my pineal gland, I took a deep breath and released.

Suddenly, a bird cried loudly. An eagle soared out of the valley not 50 yards in front of me. It was huge, its wingspan, six feet, at least. As it circled upward, riding the thermal, a second eagle appeared and then a third, all moving fast. I heard a voice speak clearly, "You can have drugs or everything else."

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The Spring at Mismalollla

“Hey, why don’t you put your thumb in the wind and hitch down to Vegas?” It was my friend Henry, who I’d known since before high school calling from Denver.

“My folks rented a house in Puerto Vallarta and I’m gonna drive down in my little VW bug. If you can hitch to the airport in Vegas, I’ll meet you there and we can drive down to Vallarta and hang out on the beach! Whaddya think?”

“Far out,” I said, wondering how long it would take for me to get it together. “Lemme look at a map.”

“Forget the map, just get there! You can do it! You’re the man with the Golden Thumb! I’ll meet you at noon in front of United arrivals on Saturday. Be there.” And he hung up.

I packed a duffle bag and threw in my paints, canvas, stretcher boards, staple gun, gesso and brushes. Right behind them came my toothbrush, t-shirts, sandals, and swimming trunks. I needed to see a map, so I walked down Columbus Ave. to the Chevron station near the Wharf and looked quickly at a road map of the western United States.

I realized it wasn’t going to be easy to hitch to Vegas. First, I’d have to get through the City and across the Bay Bridge, and then through Oakland. If I caught a Greyhound bus from San Francisco to Stockton instead, I could get on Highway 99 to Bakersfield and then on to Las Vegas. It would probably take 12 or 15 hours just to drive, so I caught an early morning bus to Modesto and started from there, spent the night at a truck stop in Barstow and hitched into Vegas,

arriving by 10:30 Saturday morning and meeting Henry right on our scheduled time.

Soon, we were on our way to Puerto Vallarta.

We rolled a fatty and headed south across the border along Mexico Highway 15. At one point, when we were stopped for road construction, the Mexican flagman signaled that he wanted a cigarette, touching his mouth with his fingers. Traffic started moving, we drove by slowly, I rolled down the window and handed him a joint — all lit up and ready to go. We laughed, hard, rocking and rollin' now, fun on the run! Life was good and getting better.

After driving all day and night, we arrived at a Guadalajara mercado on Sunday afternoon. We grabbed some enchiladas, beans and rice at a groovy little Mexican restaurant, listened to a mariachi band play on the patio, drank a couple of beers, found a hotel, blew a doobie, showered and crashed.

Henry was always prepared with whatever we'd need...cash, car or weed. When we were in eighth grade, he bought a James Bond bulletproof briefcase, went to Chinatown and found a supplier of illegal firecrackers. He filled the briefcase and then sold them back in Burlingame for the Fourth of July celebration! My best friend never ceased to blow my mind! So, it made obvious sense he'd brought plenty of pot for the last leg of our trip from Guadalajara to Vallarta, descending through the Oaxacan mountains to the Pacific Ocean.

Once we got out of Guadalajara and onto the road through the mountains to the beach, the skyline vistas were gorgeous! We could see for miles, and I almost believed I could spot the ocean, though it was hours away. We meandered through green jungle foliage with Henry at the wheel, the windows down and music on his tape deck blasting. It was hard to believe I'd been listening to the cable cars ringing their bells in chilly San Francisco just a couple of days before.

We got to Puerto Vallarta in the afternoon and found the house Henry's parents had rented on a hillside near the church. Ever the dutiful son, Henry acted his part and played out his role politely. After agreeing to meet them for dinner, we headed for the beach for a couple of ice-cold beers, high on life.

It only took a week in Vallarta for me to realize I wasn't going back to San Francisco right away. Why would I? I was in paradise! Henry had to return to the States to finish his last semester at Denver University. But me? I was stayin'.

A couple of days before he left, Henry and I drove down a dirt road and along the beach to Mismalolla, a little village nearby where a famous movie, *Night of the Iguana*, had been filmed earlier in the decade. We learned about a spring up the river, so we walked about a mile through the village, and found a truly beautiful place. Pooled behind a natural stone ledge, the spring flowed out of the ground and into a pool thirty feet across and six or eight feet deep. Above it flowed a small waterfall, surrounded by lush green tropical flowering plants and palm trees...the sound of wild parrots filled the air as a flock of them would fly across the pool. It was gorgeous, not unlike what I imagined Eden to be.

Henry and I looked at each other in silence. Though we hardly knew the meaning of the word, we both understood this to be sacred. Sacred space. It was hot and the pool inviting... so we jumped in. It was deep enough that we couldn't quite stand up, and wide enough that we could swim a few strokes to the waterfall, where we found a small underwater ledge on which to stand. As we did, the flowing water massaged our shoulders. I'm never leaving this place, I thought. It was too beautiful.

"What do you think, Patrick? Have we found paradise?" Henry asked.

I could hardly hear him. I was in another world. "I'm not going back, Henry," I said treading water in the center of the pool. "This is my place. I don't know why, but I know I am meant to be here."

"That's obvious. You're here, aren't you?"

"Yeah, but I mean..." and I drifted off. What could I say? It was like I was in a dream and the whole world was make believe.

A flock of ten or twelve parrots fluttered out of a tree and across the field below the pool. I climbed up on the flat rocks that surrounded the pool and lay on my back, looking up at the snow white clouds against the blue sky. I took a deep breath, letting it all go.

We sat on the rocks quietly for 10 or 15 minutes before we sensed it was time to go.

“Let’s go to the beach and get a beer,” Henry said, “and see if there are any chicks on the beach.”

We headed back along the animal path beside the stream. As we approached the village, no more than a cluster of thatched huts and a few pigs and children running around, I saw a palapa in a clearing maybe 100 feet from the stream. “Hey, Henry, check out that hut over there. Looks abandoned,” I said, walking in that direction.

The palapa stood alone in the meadow, against the edge of a clearing. It was maybe 12 feet by 8 feet with a doorway and no door on the side.

“Far out, man,” Henry said as he approached. “I don’t think anybody lives here.”

“Me neither.” I stuck my head in the door. On my left there was a loft and a ladder going up to it. To the right was a rickety counter with what looked like a small clay oven.

“Far out!” He climbed up the ladder. “It’s like a sleeping loft up here. I don’t think anybody lives here.”

I smiled. “Me neither. Not yet, anyhow.”

“No, you got to be kidding, Patrick. Let’s go to the beach!”

I walked outside and looked around the hut. I could live here and paint like Gauguin, I thought. Henry was 50 yards ahead, almost to the edge of the village, when he called out. “Come on! Let’s get to the beach and go swimming!”

As we walked through the village, the watchful women were chattering among themselves. The children stopped playing and looked at us as we walked by. The women stopped talking, their silence deafening. “Hola,” I said to one of the little girls. She ran away and grabbed a woman’s skirt. I smiled. “Buenos Dias, Senora.”

She looked me in the eyes. “Buenos Dias.” It was more formal than friendly, but she wasn’t unfriendly, either.

We didn't know what else to say, so we walked on and were at the beach in about 10 minutes. We headed into the surf, where we swam and caught some small waves. After about 20 minutes in the water, we headed back up to the small taco stand and ordered fish tacos, chips and cold beer.

After we sat down, Henry looked at me and cocked his head. "I don't know about you, man, but if you are thinking about living in that palapa, you gotta be outta your mind. Did you see those women? Bummer, man. They were not friendly. And where will you shit? What will you drink? Who do you think you are, Paul Gauguin?"

"Maybe," I said. "In fact, Paul Gauguin came to mind up there."

He shook his head in disbelief. "Well, if anyone could pull it off, it would be you, Patrick," he said, lifting his beer and shaking his head. "Here's to Paul Gauguin and painting the parrots!"

"Really? Do you think I could pull it off? What about you going back alone? Are you ok with that?"

"Alone? I was born alone! In two months, I'll be out of college and in the army. I'm going for the 10th Mountain Division and am gonna be skiin' my ass off around the world while you're down here painting parrots. J. Paul Gauguin... or whatever. Patrick Gauguin! I'll just tell people I knew you when. Meanwhile, don't get bummed out about me. I'm free, brother, free as a bird...like those parrots!"

After we finished our tacos, I asked one of the waiters, an albino with pink eyes, if he knew who owned the palapa. "I do," he said. When I asked him how much he'd rent it for, he said "one thousand pesos a month." I gave him a thousand pesos on the spot. I never knew if he owned it or not. I didn't care. All I knew is that I had a grass hut in the jungle, and I was going to stay and paint there.

Later, we drove up the coast, laughing again about our lives and how bitchin' it was that we made it down to Vallarta together. Henry was excited about getting back to DU, earning his degree and joining the army. He wasn't worried

about Vietnam. He'd spent weekends teaching skiing in Vail and was confident he'd be enlisting with the 10th Mountain Division. There wasn't a lot of snow in Nam, so he figured he wouldn't be there.

The next day, Henry and I drove from Puerto Vallarta to Mismalollla with my bag of paints and he helped me carry my stuff up to the palapa. As we walked through the village, pigs and chickens scattering beneath our sandaled feet, Henry could only shake his head and smile. He could not believe I was going to live out here in the Mexican jungle. The same women and children we saw before watched us walk past.

It took about 20 minutes to get to the palapa. We dropped my stuff and continued about another half-mile to the spring. When I saw the spring again, I knew this was going to be my heaven on earth. The pool was tucked into a forest of deep green vines and shaded by trees on the cliffs surrounding it. I could sit in the shade or lie in the sun like a lizard, with not a sound or a soul to disturb me, except the birds and the sound of falling water. I was surrounded by Eden.

We jumped into the water to cool off. As I swam around to get underneath the waterfall, I could feel my body loosening up from all the traveling and stress of getting out of the City. Henry was doing somersaults and swimming back and forth across the pond as the waterfall massaged my shoulders. We hung out for about 15 minutes before we walked back to the beach. As we passed the palapa, I checked on my duffle bag and figured it would be safe. It all felt so good.

That afternoon, I went back to Vallarta with Henry. We joined his family for dinner, and he left the next day for Denver, but not before we blew a final doobie together on the beach. As he drove away, I missed him and suddenly felt very alone. Reality brought me back when I realized I didn't have much money, so I walked to the telegraph office and sent Steamo a telegram telling him I'd be a few more weeks and asking if he could please send me \$100 to get back to San Francisco.

Afterward, I stopped by the mercado and bought some water, fresh fruit, cheese, tortillas and a nylon bag to carry it all. I was almost skipping as I headed

out of town and back to my palapa. I put out my thumb and caught a ride on the back of a flatbed truck full of chickens. When I arrived in Mismalolla, I went for a swim in the ocean before heading through the village to my new home and my paints. A grass hut! In the jungle! Near a pure, freshwater spring where I'd found Paradise in the primordial jungles of Mexico!

It was quiet as I walked through the meadow to the palapa. Very few people knew of the spring. I was almost always surprised when someone would walk by the palapa, asking for directions. One day, a couple of American guys walked past; they had trapped an armadillo and built a cage out of dry sticks. These jungle hippies had also trapped a one-eyed iguana, right here in the land of The Night of the Iguana. They were cool and fun so I invited them to stay with me. For the next couple of days, the iguana lived with me in the palapa, hanging out on a rafter, while my guests camped in the clearing. I never saw the iguana move but noticed it in different places around the ceiling rafters. It was kind of freaky to have an iguana sleeping in rafters of the palapa, but I just forgot about it when I went to sleep; it hardly moved and didn't make any noise. I couldn't even tell it was there, but when I saw it, it was very cool. They only stayed a couple of days before heading south to Rio Tomatlan.

With the exception of an occasional hiker and the parrots who fluttered in flocks mornings and evenings life was quiet in the jungle. I'd wake up in the early morning to the sound of parrots in the trees, hike up to the spring and swim. Sometimes I would walk further upstream, but nothing was nearly as beautiful as the spring...it was truly a gem in the jungle. Later in the day I'd the walk down to the taco stand on the beach and paddle out on the old taco stand surfboard to the Arcos, huge rocks high above the water, and paddle around them and snorkel. I was in heaven, living in the jungle, in a grass hut, with parrots flying everywhere. I was more alive than I could ever remember. Every day, I'd paint jungle scenes, sometimes just painting over the same canvas and carving the thick wet paint with a pallet knife. I didn't like covering over my previous work, but I didn't have a lot of canvas, so it was all I could do. I was painting in the moment.

My life was beautiful. This is it. This must be how Gauguin felt in Tahiti.

I didn't know how long I could stay. I was running out of paint, it was pretty rough camping with no drinking water, and I didn't have a filter for the stream. But I was having my Gauguin moment, and I loved it. I also loved being free in this sacred little space, where the stars at night were majestic and magical.

One morning, I climbed down the ladder and felt the soft, sandy clay beneath my feet. I walked to the doorway and stepped out into the pristine morning. I could hear the roosters crowing in the village as I walked into the clearing, the already hot Mexican sun on my back. When I turned to face it, my heart opened to the blazing light, and took a deep breath. Suddenly I thought, Where are my paints? Let's paint!

After stretching a fresh canvas I went inside to cut up some pineapple. Then, thinking I heard girls laughing outside, I looked out the door. Across the clearing were two young women, a blonde and brunette, dressed in cut-off Levis and sandals. They looked American. The brunette wore a turquoise halter top, and the blonde a white Mexican blouse. They laughed as they walked up the trail.

"Hey," I called out, "are you Americans?"

My question startled them; they stopped in their tracks. They looked at each other, then at me. "Yeah. We are," the brunette said.

Amazing... two cool looking American girls, in the jungle! Since I stood there with a pineapple and a knife in my hand, I asked, "Would you like some pineapple?"

They looked at each other again, giggled, shrugged their shoulders and looked back at me. "Sure!"

As they approached the palapa, I set the pineapple down and wiped my hands with some stream water I kept inside. I smiled. "Hi, I'm Patrick. Welcome to my palapa."

"Very cool.

"I'm Julie," the blonde said reaching out to shake my hand and peeking behind me.