



The
ADVENTURES *of*
KOZAMIOS
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*

Prologue

It was a beautiful day in France as I looked across the Chamonix Valley toward the Mont Blanc. There was not a cloud in the sky or even a breeze in the air. Two friends who had just returned from Lebanon had 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 helping build his Crystal Cave.

As I leaned back on the lichen-covered boulder over the valley the sun was in my face, and I took the pipe from my pocket. This was 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 relaxed and at ease with 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 before 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 rising fast. I heard a voice speak clearly, "You can have drugs or everything else."

1

The Dream

At nine years old, I learned the art of hitchhiking and found no limits to mobility. I lived up a steep hill in Burlingame, a small suburban town south of San Francisco. I didn't like walking up the hill. There was no sidewalk, the road had sharp turns, and the cars moved fast. So, one day, after playing with my friends, I put my thumb out at the bottom of the hill, and the first car picked me up! I was amazed. It worked!

Though I didn't start hitchhiking seriously for a few years, it took only a short time for me to learn I could go anywhere. I didn't need a car, money, or even a destination; as a tow-headed kid, I was like a prize or a shiny object on the sidewalk; you wanted to pick it up to see what it was. It might be valuable, or maybe somebody lost it. All I needed to do was put my thumb out, make eye contact, and I was on my way. By the time I was a teenager, my friends had told me I had a "golden thumb." There was nowhere I couldn't go. I'd been to The City and Santa Cruz, up to the Russian River, across the Bay, and all over town. I knew how to make contact with strangers, and they liked me.

I liked meeting people and wasn't afraid. It wasn't so much courage as the thought of something terrible happening never crossed my mind. As I matured, I mastered the art, realizing people stopped if I made eye contact. Eventually, people would even cross two lanes of traffic to pick me up, especially if they could pull off the road. I refined my strategy, giving people plenty of room to see me, and ensuring they had room to pull over. Sometimes, cars would even turn around, come back, and pick me up! Once I got in the car, I made sure always to

be polite and quiet, never initiating conversations or rolling down the window, just happy to be on another ride.

In 1960, I turned 14. My increased testosterone was making me restless. I had missed the Beats with their bongo drums, cool jazz, red wine, and black berets. The Beats were beaten, smacked down by the dark cultural fear of Allen Ginsberg's sexual poetry and the scare-mongering media manipulation of America in the Fearful Fifties. Nobody wanted to be a beatnik. They were going nowhere fast, and nobody stopped to pick them up. But now that we were in the go-go Sixties, something was happening. Color was back in vogue, skirts were shorter, and the stock market was climbing. The sun was rising again over the American landscape, and somewhere, Owsley Stanley was setting up his psychedelic travel agency, wholesaling LSD from his Harley, dressed like an American Revolutionary soldier. Now, you could take a trip without hitchhiking — or even going anywhere! Neal Cassady had just met Ken Kesey in La Honda, and it was skinny dippin' and acid trippin' down on the Farm. When Dylan came to *The City and The Dead* took the stage at the Fillmore, you could see the chimes of freedom flashing. These were the incorrigible people our parents warned us about. I couldn't wait to become one of them!

I didn't waste any time getting into the act. I started my conversion from straight to hip by reading Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* and cutting classes in high school. I'd meet other friends, go to the beach, or return home and practice my father's signature. My dad did the best he could. He was a single parent of three kids, two in high school and one out of town in college. He was trying to raise us and run the business he owned at the same time.

My sister and I knew that if we weren't feeling well, to tell him before he left for work early each day. "Just write a note, and I'll sign it," he always said. So, when I cut school, I'd leave the house as if walking to school and then circle back. I wrote my note and worked out the most important part — how to sign his signature. He had a bold signature, and I spent hours mastering it. By the end of the school year, the Dean of Boys called my father in to ask which of the

30 sick day notes in my file he had signed. He couldn't say. The forged signatures were perfect.

I was told I was smart but got off to a slow academic start in high school due to my "bad attitude." I didn't know what an attitude was, but I knew I was angry about my parents' divorce. It wreaked havoc in my life, moving back and forth between my parents' houses numerous times. I was so angry that I wanted to make everyone angry and act like I didn't know better. "You're only kidding yourself," my dad would say.

When I was 12, I'd started hitchhiking seriously, up to 10 and 20 miles to visit my mom in The City — or just to get away from home. When I lived with my dad, I'd take the train or a bus into The City on weekends to see my mom until I learned it was faster to hitch. Then, my mom got remarried, so I moved in with her and her husband. I'd flunked 10 of my 12 classes in Burlingame, so the high school in The City made me repeat my first year.

After a year of living with my mom and her husband, I moved back with my dad, who had also remarried. Fortunately, the school told me if I went to summer school, they'd move me back up to be with all my friends in the class I'd been with before moving. Unfortunately, his new wife was impossible for him to live with. They divorced a year later, and I moved to another high school again. I spent my summers attending summer school and was not a happy camper.

I cut so many classes I had to get my high school degree by taking two courses at the local Junior College that I attended for a couple of years before I enrolled at San Francisco State, where I studied economics — and met Kyleigh, an Amazon blonde with an Irish temper and a body built for action. She loved to wear funny hats and looked great in an army field coat, boots, and berets, which she filled out quite nicely with her long legs and strawberry-blond hair. I bought a motorcycle, and we had a ball together.

Kyleigh and I moved into a three-story Victorian house on 6th Avenue near Golden Gate Park. I'd never met a woman like her. Smart, funny, and beautiful, she was a Celtic warrior. The Celts never distinguished male from female in bat-

tle; they just rode naked into the fray, covered with body paint, to beat hell out of the Saxons. That was Kyleigh without the body paint, naked, throwing magazines at me — or whatever she could get her hands on — for something I had done. It didn't matter what it was. I loved her freedom of expression, and she was the most beautiful naked woman I'd ever seen.

Our neighbors, Mary and Bob, lived in the two-bedroom apartment on the top floor. Mary worked at the post office, while Bob was an astrologer. Bob did my astrology chart and labeled it "Adolf" in the center because I carried Saturn at the Midheaven, as did Hitler. I was not too fond of this interpretation, and to understand, I asked him if he would teach me astrology. He said sure, "But remember there are millions of people born with Saturn at the Midheaven and only one Hitler. So don't take it too seriously." But I did. I came to understand Saturn and became an avid astrologer, delivering positive interpretations to my clients.

I was hungry for knowledge, just not the knowledge they served up in school. I loved reading the I Ching, particularly the Wilhelm Baynes edition with a foreword by Carl Jung, and I was attracted to astrology, mythology, and psychology. I had taken LSD before they made it illegal and knew there was more to life than the material world. I read Marshall McLuhan's book *The Medium is The Massage*. There was a printing error in the title. It should have been "*The Medium is The Message*," but the printer erred, and McLuhan loved the "mistake." He kept it because, like so much of the psychedelic Sixties, it was "right on."

Phrases like "perception is reality" and "what you see is what you get" were not-so-subtle nuances that grew out of the late sixties and early seventies that we create our reality by what we think and how we see it. It was more than positive thinking; it was the beginning of quantum consciousness. We were moving from the slow waves of matter as "the real thing" in the water sign Pisces to the higher frequency vibrations of "the unified field" in the air sign Aquarius. All this was happening with the celestial dawning of the Age of Aquarius that I believed oc-

curred on Feb 4, 1962, when the Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn were all rising through the constellation of Aquarius.

My reality was changing fast. One day, I received a draft notice from the Army. Kyleigh threw a big party for me, and at 4 am, we all went to the draft board, where I boarded a bus to the Oakland Army Terminal to be processed along with a thousand other guys. They rejected only three people; I was one of them. Apparently, a big blister on my leg from racing dirt bikes in the Santa Cruz Mountains was located where my combat boot would cross over it. They told me they'd call me later but I didn't want to go home.

Kyleigh was not excited to see me. "You could have at least stayed away for a while so I could miss you," she said feigning sorrow.

Just like that, I knew it was over.

I moved into The Columbus Hotel in North Beach near the Art Institute and started painting. The Columbus was an old wooden hotel on the cable car line where the Beats had been hangin' out for decades after the war. Now, it was occupied by hippie artists and poets. I found a job at Freddie Khu's Spaghetti Factory Café and Excelsior Coffee House on Green Street just off Grant Avenue, up the hill from Washington Park, in a massive building with an off-street entrance on the side and an open patio in the back. The Spaghetti, as we called it, became my new home, and the characters I met there were my new family.

Freddie, the owner, was a Taurus with a heart of gold and an obsessive desire to acquire. He loved antiques and stored them in the three-story building that housed the Spaghetti. Freddy lived on the top floor like a pack rat, sleeping in an antique poster bed surrounded by antiques stacked and hanging from the ceiling. He'd been a Beatnik in North Beach for at least 15 years and loved it. Now, he owned two restaurants, the buildings that housed them, and a beautiful property in the Sonoma-Napa wine country north of The City. In the summer, you'd find Freddie under the fig tree listening to Vivaldi, eating fresh figs and cream, with his cat on the table.

Freddie bought large lots of outrageous antique furniture from Butterfields at auctions that included junk. He stored the junk on the second floor and used the best antique furnishings to furnish his big house in the wine country, and decorated his restaurants with the rest. Freddie loved his stuff, his buildings, and his restaurants.

Steamo, the bookkeeper, was Freddie's main man. He kept the books at both restaurants, keeping things legal, controlling the cash, and making sure it all funneled to Freddie, even if most of it never reached the bank! From his chicken wire cage above the pantry, Steamo, a Scorpio, kept the peace between the pot-smoking hippies in the kitchen and the flaming gay, pill-popping drama queens on the floor. He also made sure paychecks were dispersed on time. If it weren't for Steamo, there never could have been a Spaghetti Factory. He worked mornings and was gone by 2 pm when the kitchen staff started drifting in to make the sauces, soups, and salad dressings. If you were hungover and lucky, he might find you in the park or bump in to you on the street, and take you to breakfast at noon for eggs and coffee. He cared about everybody and shook his head a lot. He knew who was coming and who was going.

Ed ran the kitchen. Though he didn't cook the food, he served it. Joe cooked the sauces and daily special before Ed got there. Ed made sure everything was ready at showtime when the orders started coming in. He kept the place hoppin' when it was time to pour five sauces on twenty or thirty plates at a time, maintaining control of which waiter received what order and the flow of people and plates. After all, it was a Factory! The waiters didn't always like Ed's decisions, but hey knew it was easier to hand their disputes to Ed than to fight it out with Irving and the other drama queens, on the floor.

Ed and his wife Joanie were the King and Queen of the Spaghetti. Ed was a quiet Cancer, and Joanie an exuberant Leo. He was low-key and perceptive, while she was flamboyant and always on stage. Together, they were living proof that opposites attract.

Joanie loved life. She didn't waste a lot of time on people or things she didn't like or understand. She was fully always engaged, and though sometimes insecure about herself, she seldom let it show. Mick Jagger was her idol. "Now that's a Leo man," she'd say. (What is it about Leos that they like each other so much?) She also talked fast. Even if she wasn't right, you couldn't tell because she was off and riding a new topic by the time you figured out the errors of her ways. Joanie was very good at whatever she did. She loved to collect little bits of spirit art buttons, pins, rings, and things and put them all over her house, on the dashboard of her car, and pinned to her blouse. On weekends, she waited tables in the attached Flamenco dance hall with her Aquarian soul sister and dancer, Maria. They were a matched set of raven-haired beauties running drinks from the bar to the dance floor.

Blaine worked the kitchen with Ed, keeping order amid the waiters clamoring for their plates and the dishwasher trying to keep up with the turnover! A creative, fun-loving photographer and passionate printmaker, he audited classes on photography and film at the Art Institute when he wasn't off chasing the light or developing the perfect print.

Angel, Garrett, and Julian ran the bar. Angel was a perfect student of Meher Baba, a Perfect Master, or Avatar, who lived in silence and wrote books for 44 years until he died earlier in 1969. The slogan "Don't worry, be happy" traveled everywhere Angel went, pinned to his shirt with a picture of Meher Baba. Angel loved his job, wife, kids, and his Volkswagen bus. With his Gemini electric hair sprawled over his shoulders, he stocked the bar during the day and made sure everything was perfect before it opened. Then he turned it over to Garrett, a sophisticated Libra, who kept peace at the bar and talked it up with the ladies, ensuring they knew where he lived and that he got their phone numbers. Julian, as his name might suggest, was a literary Capricorn slightly preoccupied with writing a book. He tended bar to pay the bills, had a girlfriend, and kept to himself. He knew a lot more than he said.

When the doors opened at the Spaghetti, it was controlled chaos with wall-to-wall people and chairs hanging from the ceiling. Collages of wine labels and magazine pictures, coated with lacquer, covered the tabletops. The walls were adorned with impressionist posters and large oil paintings. Murals of hip city life, painted by the staff, covered the walls. Outrageous statues were on the floor everywhere, including a knight in shining armor and a fat woman in 1890s garb. A marble and brass fountain stood inside the front door of the dining room with a fountain angel dancing on a pin. Cushions were placed around a bench for patrons to sit as they waited for their table to be ready.

From May to October, it was standing room only every night of the week, while during the winter, the place filled on weekends. The dining room smelled like garlic, parmesan cheese, beer, wine, espresso coffee, and spaghetti sauce. The floor staff was as crazy as the night, with rock and roll, Baroque, electric country, and even opera music blaring; and gay waiters frolicking and putting it on for each other. All the waiters were gay, and the kitchen staffed with pot-smoking hippies wearing headbands and beads. The whole place seemed to dance in a strangely choreographed chaos. Watching the waiters from the bar, I wondered if I could even work there. But the night I was looking for a job, somebody didn't show up, and I found my family, working there for two years.

I bought a book by Swiss therapist Carl Jung, *Man and His Symbols*. Published just a few years earlier, the photographs of myths and symbols got my attention. They meant something to me beyond poetry and literature. They were a guide to divine human consciousness and maybe the meaning of life as an open-ended experience rather than a journey in search of a destination. I wanted to go further, dive deeper, and connect with the inexplicable mystery of human nature. The divine invisible played a big part in Jung's concept of reality and mythology, so I said a simple prayer. "God, if you exist, I want to know!"

The Summer of Love had come and gone. I could hear Dylan singing, "he not busy being born is busy dying." I needed to get "busy being born." I saw a photo in Life magazine of a shirtless hippie with a braided ponytail meditating on the

rim of a canyon in the Southwest. I thought that's where I want to be, not knowing I would meet him in New Mexico one day.

Later, while stretching a canvas, I imagined a black-haired yogi wearing only a loincloth in a lotus pose. His eternally youthful, androgynous face inspired me. As I painted him, I felt like I was painting a portrait from memory. I never finished that painting and don't know where it is today. However, during the painting of "The Guru," I had a dream...

I found myself at a long medieval banquet table. Gold, silver, and crystal settings adorned the table, but only two were seated. Crystal goblets held wine and water, and platters were piled high with fruit, nuts, meat, bread, cheese, and desserts. It was a scene of complete, absolute abundance. Across from me, beyond the silver candelabras, sat a beautiful young girl about my age. Her eyes and hair were dark, and her smile sweet, innocent, and beautiful. We made eye contact, and she smiled like she knew me.

A joyous, vibrant figure stood at the end of the table, a young man slightly older than me, likely in his late 20s. His energy danced. He was sinuously muscular, his taut body clothed with a light linen robe over his shoulder and waist. His hair fell across his shoulders. I could tell from his laughter and smile he was clear, confident, powerful, and loving.

Then, it all dawned on me: I was seated at a banquet with Jesus at the end of the table, and he was laughing! He was the light of the mystical Christ, the essential nature of the divine human. This Christ was an esoteric symbol that lived in my consciousness, not unlike the mystical Christ I had read about in *Man and His Symbols*, a loadstar of divine presence as real as anything I could touch, taste, see, hear, or smell. Yet, he did not seem to exist as a material being. It was so beautiful. Nothing about it was religious, just the essential nature of love and joy manifest in human form, the embodiment of the Christ light, laughing and loving like nothing I'd ever seen before.

Then I woke up. My prayer had been answered in a way I could not have imagined. I didn't put the prayer and The Dream together right away. I didn't

even remember the prayer, in fact. I was just in awe. Soon, though, I forgot about The Dream. But couldn't forget the girl. Who was she?

2

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, whom I'd known since before high school, calling from Denver.

"My folks rented a house in Puerto Vallarta, and I'm driving 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 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. 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 glanced at a western United States road map. I realized it would take a lot of work to hitch to Vegas. First, I'd have to get through The City 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, 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 schedule.

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, a Mexican flagman signaled that he wanted a cigarette, touching his mouth with his fingers. As traffic started moving, we drove by slowly, and I rolled down the window, handing him a joint — all lit up and ready to go! We laughed hard, rocking and rolling, having fun on the road! Life was good and getting better.

After driving all day and night, we arrived at a Guadalajara mercado on Sunday afternoon, grabbed some enchiladas 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'd bought a James Bond bulletproof briefcase, went to Chinatown, and found a supplier of illegal firecrackers. He filled the briefcase and sold them all before 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 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 heard the cable cars ringing bells in chilly San Francisco just a few days before.

In the afternoon, we got to Puerto Vallarta and found Henry's parents' rented house 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 to the beach for a couple of ice-cold beers, high on life.

It only took a week in Vallarta to realize I wasn't returning 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 along the beach to Mismalolla, a little village nearby where a famous movie, *Night of the Iguana*, had been filmed a few years earlier. We learned about a spring up the river, so we walked half a mile through the village and found an incredible spring pooled behind a natural stone ledge. Totally isolated, the spring flowed from the ground into a pool thirty feet across and six or eight feet deep. Above it poured a small waterfall, surrounded by lush green tropical flowering plants and palm trees. The sound of wild parrots filled the air as flocks flew 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 word's meaning, we understood it to be sacred. 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 to 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 gorgeous.

"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 know I'm 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? s like I was in a dream, and this jungle 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 surrounding the pool and lay on my back, looking 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 Henry said it was time to go. "Let's go to the beach and get a beer," he 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 with 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 on the side.

"Far out, man," Henry said as he approached. "I don't think anybody lives here."

"Me neither," I said, sticking my head through the doorway. On my left, a loft and a ladder were going up to it. To the right was a rickety counter with 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 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.

I 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, swam, and caught some small waves. After about 20 minutes in the water, we returned 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. "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! I'll be out of college and in the army in two months. I'm going for the 10th Mountain Division and will be skiin' my ass off around the world while you're painting parrots. J. Paul Gauguin... or whatever. Patrick Gauguin! I'll 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 was that I had a grass hut in the jungle where I could stay and paint.

Later, as we drove back up the coast to Vallarta, we laughed again about our lives and how bitchin' it was that we made it down to Vallarta together. Henry was excited about returning to DU, earning his degree, and joining the army. He wasn't worried about Vietnam. He had spent weekends teaching skiing in Vail and was confident he'd be enlisting with the 10th Mountain Division. Nam had no snow, so he figured he wouldn't be there.

The next day, Henry and I drove from Puerto Vallarta to Mismalolla where he helped carry my paint bag and other stuff to the palapa. Henry could only shake his head and smile as we walked through the village with pigs and chickens scat-

tering at our sandaled feet. He could not believe I would 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 off my stuff and continued about another half-mile to the spring. When I saw the spring again, I knew this would be my heaven on earth. The pool was tucked into a jungle of deep green vines and shaded by trees surrounding it. I could sit in the shade or lie in the sun like a lizard, with no sound or soul to disturb me except the birds and falling water.

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, swimming back and forth across the pond as the waterfall massaged my shoulders. We hung out for about 15 minutes before returning to the beach. As we passed the palapa, I checked on my duffle 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 only after 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 water, fresh fruit, cheese, tortillas, and a nylon carrying bag. I almost skipped as I headed out of town and returned to my palapa. I put out my thumb and caught a ride on the back of a flatbed truck full of caged chickens. When I arrived in Mismalolla, I went swimming 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 only one eye, the iguana appeared to be quite cautious. It lived with me in the palapa for the next few days, 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 freaky having an iguana sleeping in the rafters of the palapa, but I forgot about it when I went to sleep. After all, 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 few days before packing their iguana and armadillo and heading south to Rio Tomatlan.

Except for 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 indeed a gem in the jungle. Later in the day, I'd walk down to the taco stand on the beach and paddle out on their old surfboard to Los Arcos, two huge rocks high above the water, paddle around them, and snorkel. I was in heaven, living in the jungle, in a grass hut, with parrots flying everywhere. I felt more aware and alive than I could ever remember. I'd paint jungle scenes every day, sometimes just painting over the same canvas and carving the thick, wet paint with a pallet knife. It felt uncomfortable covering over my previous work, but I didn't have a lot of canvas, and it was all I could do.

Life was beautiful. This is the life, I thought. 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 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. As I walked to the doorway and stepped out into the pristine morning I could hear the roosters crowing in the village. I walked into the clearing, with the already hot Mexican sun on my back. When I turned to face it, my heart opened to the blazing light, and I 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. In the clearing were two young women, a blonde and a 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 and 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, 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. I smiled. "Hi, I'm Patrick. Welcome to my palapa."

"Very cool." said the brunette.

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

The brunette smiled. "Hi! I'm Valerie."

"Nice ta meet cha," I said with a friendly grin. I could tell we were going to get along. They were about 20 years old — if that — and very fun-loving and animated. They looked like they could break out into laughter at any moment.

"Come on in. I don't have any furniture, but we can sit on the loft and eat this pineapple." I said. We climbed the ladder and sat on the loft's edge, swinging our feet. "Are you on your way to the spring?" I asked.

"Yep," they both said, laughing and shaking their heads. "We were there a couple of weeks ago," Valerie said.

"We're on our way to Rio Tomatlan to camp for a while and couldn't drive through Mismalolla without stopping at the spring," Julie said. "Have you been here long? I don't remember seeing anyone here last time we walked by."

"Just a week or so," I said, finishing the pineapple and sharing the damp cloth to wipe our hands.

Valerie sat beside me. I could feel her relaxed, radiant energy. She had a casual way about her. Julie was on the other side of her, with the three of us sitting in a row along the edge of the loft.

Valerie pulled a joint out of her halter top. "Wanna share a doobie?" she asked.

"Far out!" I said, laughing. No wonder they were so giggly and happy. Valerie giggled, and Julie bobbed her head, smiling. They were so at ease. Wow, I thought, these girls are hip.

Valerie lit the doobie and handed it to me. I took a hit. As I gave it back to her, I looked into her eyes, and My God! She was the girl in *The Dream*! She looked at me quizzically, her head slightly cocked.

I handed her the doobie. "Wow, that's good stuff," I said, trying to hide my shock.

She took a hit, handed it to Julie, and then looked back at me. "Yeah, we got it from the Michoacán Indians."

I was still in shock. "Wow! Far out." I was mesmerized by both the pot and the memory of *The Dream*. I tried not to let it show. Too late. She'd felt my energy shift and now looked at me slightly differently.

Julie could feel the growing connection. She handed the doobie to me around Valerie and asked, "Wanna come up to the spring with us?"

"Yeah, I'd love to."

I took another toke and handed it to Valerie.

Valerie looked at me with a beautiful smile and radiant light in her eyes. Her innocence was pervasive. I felt overcome by her pure sense of joy and knew that

something huge had just happened to me. Does she know? I thought. No way. No way could she know.

I smiled back. "Wow, this is a surprise. I just met two wonderful American girls in the Jalisco jungle, and now we're getting high! What a treat!"

As I climbed down the ladder, I looked at Valerie again.

"There are no accidents," she said, her tan cheeks bursting widely in happiness, her brilliant white teeth flashing. "We're all here for a purpose."

"Then let's go cool off in the spring," Julie said as she stepped off the ladder. We laughed as we walked up the path, knowing that our meeting was no coincidence. We were all three free-wheeling, fun-loving California hippies who loved traveling and living in the moment. As we walked along, Valerie mentioned she once lived in Topanga Canyon, near Malibu, with a house full of hippies who hung out with Timothy Leary and musicians. Julie was street-smart, tough, and loving with an edge. I'd learn she could trust no one except Valerie. They were tight.

When we got to the spring, we all three jumped in. And after a while, I had a moment with Valerie while Julie was sunbathing on the rocks.

We'd been chatting about who we were and where we'd been. After a pause, she said, "When we were sitting on the loft smoking that doobie, I kinda felt like something happened to you. I don't know what it was, but it seemed like you were taken aback, and something shifted. Do you know what I'm talking about?"

"Yeah," I said. "I do. I had a dream before I left San Francisco, and you were in it." I said, surprising her. "The whole dream flashed when I looked at you in the palapa. You were the girl in *The Dream* sitting across from me at the banquet table, or rather, you *are* the girl in *The Dream*."

"Wow! Tell me about it!"

"It's pretty far out," I said, excited that all this was happening. "I was sitting at this large wooden banquet table set for a feast with gold, silver, crystal goblets, and candelabras. You sat across from me with a wonderful smile as if you knew

me. At the end of the table was a vibrant man, about 30 years old, dressed in a tunic with his arms out, blessing the Feast. He had a beautiful, joyous smile. I thought he was Jesus, yet unlike any Jesus I had ever seen. He was happy, loving, and just a cool dude, a laughing, loving Jesus."

I raised my eyebrows and cocked my head slightly, surrendering to the weight of it all. I bit my lip and let it sink in.

Valerie took a breath and looked past me as she exhaled, seeing Julie across the pool, lying on the flat rocks in the sun.

Valerie looked back at me and smiled.

"That's a beautiful dream, Patrick." She said quietly.

I sensed a shift in her energy.

"I feel like I am there with you right now. I didn't tell you much about me when we chatted just a few minutes ago, but this dream..." She stopped and looked away again, then back at me. "...it changes everything. I feel it calling me. As I said in the palapa, there are no accidents. But this, well, I never expected it..." She looked right into my eyes. I could feel her soul's presence. "You see, when I was living in Topanga..." She stopped and started again. "I feel close to you, and we've hardly met. But I must tell you this dream means a lot to me. It's so beautiful." She was holding back, searching for words, then she said. "You see, I was reborn in the light of the cosmic Christ in the ocean at Laguna Beach almost a year ago." She stopped again for a moment, organizing her thoughts. She took a breath, and I could feel her opening up.

"I had been living a wildlife in Topanga," she said. "I mean, it was crazy. We were taking a lot of LSD, and one morning, after not sleeping for days, I woke up on the beach in Laguna, and these hippies... Jesus freaks...were having a baptismal in the waves, and I knew I was dying inside and couldn't go on living like I was. They were beautiful and in love with life, Jesus, and each other. They were laughing and loving each other. I knew I had to join them in the water, and I did. I was baptized in the Name of Jesus the Christ, the Essene Master. Have you heard of the Essenes or the Essene Gospel of Peace?"

"No," I said, shaking my head.

"It doesn't matter. You'll remember," she said, looking through me with love as she relived this story. She took a breath and looked right through me, into my soul.

"Anyhow, it's by the grace of God that we've met here at this spring in the jungle, Patrick. It's not by accident, that's for sure. Not only were you blessed by this dream, but I am blessed by it, too. I understand why we met. What do you think it means?"

Julie was still dozing in the sun across the pool. I wasn't sure if she could hear us, but I felt her presence. Asleep or not, she was aware of us and gave us the space to have this conversation.

"I think it means that we're meant to be together," I said, slightly overwhelmed and not knowing what to say. "I've never been baptized, and I'm not a Christian in any religious sense of the word, though I do remember feeling so lost living in San Francisco in a little hotel room with only a bed, a hot plate, a sink, and my easel that I said a little prayer. 'God, if you exist, I want to know'. Religion had always been so phony, yet I wanted to feel more alive.

"I began painting someone I'd never seen before. A guru, I guess, sitting cross-legged. He had black hair down to his shoulders and large brown eyes. I'd been living a passionate life filled with psychedelics. It was fun, but when this painting started coming out of the canvas, it surprised me, and it was only a short time later that I had The Dream, but when The Dream came, I never remembered thinking this. All I could remember was thinking was, who is that girl?"

I took a breath. This was big, and it was moving fast. I felt the connection.

"This is not about me, Patrick. You've been blessed with a direct connect to the Divine. God has answered your prayer in a dream, and I'm the messenger, not the message. I'm so blessed to be here with you. I've studied a lot since I was baptized, and Jesus has brought us together to share a Feast of Knowledge, a feast I have been gathering and preparing for that I can share with you.

She stopped and relaxed. She took a deep breath and moved into a full lotus yoga posture with both legs crossed and her feet on opposite thighs. She placed her hands on her knees and touched her index fingers to her thumbs with her palms up, straightening her spine and smiling with her eyes closed. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Julie lying on her stomach, looking at us, not moving. I felt the presence of the Christ energy. I sat in the stillness until Valerie opened her eyes with a blissful, relaxed smile.

"I'll teach you what I've learned, Patrick," she said in a new tone and cadence.

She began speaking quietly, telling me she was a devoted student of Paramahansa Yogananda, founder of the Self Realization Fellowship, who came to the United States in 1920. Yogananda brought with him the highest form of yoga meditation, kriya yoga. He also explained the many parallels between the true teachings of Krishna and the Christ and how Yogananda's unitive, divine message found its way to hundreds of thousands of people through his tireless writings and teaching for decades in America. "Yogananda embraced the Gnostic and Essene teachings of Jesus," Valerie said. "Teachings that preceded the teachings in the New Testament of the Bible."

She took Yogananda's book, *Autobiography of a Yogi*, from her backpack and showed me some of the pictures of Yogananda's teachers. At the sight of one, I was stunned. It was the Guru, the man I had painted in San Francisco. His name was Babaji. In the book, he looked exactly as I'd painted him meticulously. She told me he was an etheric teacher often seen by his closest devotees in India, yet he did not have a physical presence. He'd been coming to devotees etherically for sixteen or seventeen centuries.

"Babaji's essence is so powerful and divine that all one needs to do is utter his name with complete devotion and faith, and that person will receive an instant spiritual blessing." She said. "It's not something done often; the blessing is only bestowed when it is most needed."

No wonder I'd never forget that face!

"Yoga means union," she continued. "It's from the same Sanskrit word that means "to yoke," like yoking an ox. We use the breath to signal the body and tune into the electromagnetic energy that surrounds us...our aura, it's called. This is how Jesus "went into the mountain," the place of stillness within. We enter the stillness and stop the mind by breathing, stretching, and holding a posture. This posture is called the Full Lotus.

"I learned hatha yoga from *The Complete Illustrated Book of Yoga* by Swami Vishnudevananda. Mastering the full lotus posture allows you to meditate on stillness for extended periods.

"By alternating our breath in the nostrils," she explained, "we open energy channels that activate the two nerves in the spine that run from our sacrum at the base of the spine to the crown of our head." She was getting precise. I saw in her eyes and heard in her voice a deep sense of commitment and power. "When these nerves vibrate at a certain frequency, they cause energetic wheels to spin along the spine. These energy centers are called 'chakras.' They are like little brains that enhance consciousness to move our awareness beyond time and space into higher dimensions."

In less than an hour at the spring, Valerie had laid out and explained the Feast of Knowledge from The Dream. I found myself occupying a new world well over my head. I was in a slightly altered state. It was almost too much for me to believe. I didn't know what she would say next, but it all intuitively made sense. We'd spent an hour talking while Julie slept in what was now shade. I shared a few more bits about my past while she shared about the Essene Jesus, the Age of Aquarius, Yogananda, and Babaji.

Later that afternoon, as we walked back to the palapa silently, we all knew something significant had happened. We shared a three-way hug at the palapa, and Valerie kissed my cheek as she left. They walked down the trail to her Volkswagen bug parked at the beach and drove back to their jungle camp site a few miles south. Valerie left her copy of *Autobiography of a Yogi* for me to read, and we planned on meeting the following day at the beach in Mismalolla.

Walking to the back of the palapa, I picked up the canvases I'd stretched earlier and put them inside. I couldn't paint. I could hardly sit still. I didn't know what to do. My life had shifted completely. I'd had a dream and met the woman from The Dream who had shared her personal experience of Jesus as a spiritual Presence. My prayer had been answered by a mysterious power that existed within me, knew me, and was now known by me. I'd connected with a living, loving, divine intelligence that communicated through action, people, dreams, and serendipity. This loving intelligence gifted me a spiritual knowledge feast through a dream woman I met at a spring in the primordial jungles of Mexico. "There are no accidents," she'd said.

What was I to do but give thanks? I lifted my eyes to the billowing white clouds floating across the blue sky and declared, with words I'd never used before, "Most Holy and Divine Presence, thank you. You've found me and answered my prayer. Thank you." Then, I wondered, what's my name?

Clear as crystal, I heard, "Kozmos Lovejoy, Exp."

What?! A smile came to my lips, and I started to chuckle. That certainly lightened things up! This God had a sense of humor! No wonder Jesus was laughing in The Dream.

"How do I spell that?" I wondered.

The letters "K-O-Z-M-O-S L-O-V-E-J-O-Y, E-X-P" crawled across my mind, and I knew EXP meant expanding, kinda like an attorney that uses ESQ as a title. I liked it.

Still, I didn't know whether to laugh or what. This was unbelievable. I wouldn't have believed it was happening if it hadn't happened to me. How could I tell people I was Kozmos Lovejoy, Exp?

Who would have believed me? I didn't tell a lot of people right away. Over the years, many people came to know me as Kozmos or Koz. Some have even called me LJ and Moji.

I read *the Autobiography of a Yogi* until darkness stopped me. I read about the magical, mysterious, cosmic life of Paramahansa Yogananda, his teachers, and his

purpose. I learned more about Babaji, the historic wisdom teacher known for thousands of years in Southern India. I read how Yogananda taught Kriya Yoga to tens of thousands of people, honoring the mystical Christ in all his teachings. Yogananda was a practical, yet mystical man who viewed the Second Coming of Christ as the return of the Light of Christ manifesting within everyone everywhere, all at once, constantly reminding the reader of Jesus' words, "And greater things shall you do, for I go unto my Father." Yogananda also wrote, as was written in *The Aquarian Gospel*, that Jesus traveled to Egypt, India, and the Far East, where he practiced yoga meditation with the great sages during the 'lost years' not recorded in the Christian Bible.

This was the beginning of the New Age for me. This was the dawning of the Age of Aquarius, resonating at the deepest level of my being. I felt the Christ light in my heart of hearts. The Jesus of my dream was a laughing, loving Jesus—with no fear, guilt, or shame, but awe-inspiring love and joy.