

Living in The Mission

My years at 2720 Bryant

~ a personal chronology (not necessarily in chronological order) ~

Since I lived in that San Francisco neighborhood for substantially good years of my life, and it's many facets live on within me, it's high time I record those impressions. First impressions when visiting: It felt like visiting another country — **Mexico** or **central/south America!** ... although I'd never been before, yet. It is the main Hispanic district of the city, that I was not very aware of for my first few years in the bay area. I think the first time I went to the Mission may have been early 1988, gathering at a funky bar after an early exhibition with fellow **Academy of Art** painter **James Packard**, and others whose names evade. **The Uptown Bar** was on a side street (**Capp & 17th**) not necessarily easy to find for someone unfamiliar with the area, but I did, possibly with a ride there? It had unusual paintings on the walls, a mix of furniture that didn't match as if from a thrift store, a pool table, high ceilings. It was a DIY art students kind of place, a cheaper mixed setup but comfortably functional dive. The epitome of not slick. I instantly liked it. It was still light out. I think that was either after someone's show, or the **SOMARTs** show for us Fine Art majors, or after the **SOMAR** parking lot daytime exhibition that James arranged called "*The Degenerate Art Show*", (after the German exhibition of 1937 aimed at ridiculing expressionistic art). Yes I think that was it! Brother **Brian** must have helped drive my canvases there and back, but I don't recall him joining at the bar. I might have had one Anchor Steam beer, then left, I wasn't very social yet. That became naturally more frequent during the following years.

[only returning once to The Uptown Bar in 1996, on a **Cacophony Society** event.]

Jim! (with zen in his name)

That was most likely my first actual visit to The Mission other than possibly driving through parts with Brian, not knowing where it was yet. The other times must have been visiting good Minneapolis friend Jim. In January of '88 I ran into him on a winter trip back to the hometown in January. Naturally I stopped in at **MCAD**, and ran into him in the front gallery. It was great to catch up, and turns out he had graduated with plans to move to San Francisco! How auspicious, I was a full-time student downtown at the Academy of Art College, and happy as a Californian. He had good family friends living in the city (North Beach?) So we kept in touch for when he lands out west. We first met at MCAD in 1983, in Frank Dreisbach's philosophy class. After that for a few years I'd marvel at his very far out creativity, mainly sculpture. I can see him now in the welding shop, making the funkiest thing that year at the college — enthusiastically! [that sculpture rusted nicely in his dad's backyard for decades]

Jim's move to the Mission

In his transition, I think it may have been via the *Roommate Referral* service, popular back then for finding places to live in the limited space of that city. [moving into San Francisco was something I failed at then, too intimidating. I stayed with family out in Concord, begrudgingly, because it was too suburban for me and too far. Saving \$, peaceful enough, but just not me. I took **BART** to the city every morning, returning late at night.] Or maybe it was ad in the paper? Regardless, he instantly scored, meeting smilin' surfer **Joe!** moving into **2720 Bryant Street** that is in the heart of The Mission [I met Joe that spring at a brewpub in **Walnut Creek**. Jim invited him and Minneapolis friend **Earl** to join us for pints and live blues. Good times!]

Bicycle, BART, 24th Street

Not recalling when, possibly late spring - early summer, I set out to visit Jim and

check out the pad, for possible moving in! I took my old blue Raleigh *Olympian* 10-speed on the BART train to **24th Street Station**, got up to find an urban cityscape that was very foreign to me, not too unlike **Chinatown**. Busy, with characters abounding, trash strewn loosely everywhere, sounds, smells, sights I hadn't much experience with before. Thinking of a prominent smell was like an open market of bananas, plantains, mangoes and radishes, mingled with truck exhaust and cigarette smoke with burritos cooking. The sound of mariachi music from shops and passing vehicles, the sight of Hispanic people around with very few Caucasians. It was exotic to my younger midwestern mind. I'd been to Northern Europe, but not Mexico or the Mediterranean yet. I was transfixed and intimidated simultaneously. Chinatown was even more far out, but I would wander through weekly for years like an outsider tourist.

Bicycling 24th was a dense ride. So much to take in! Arriving at Jims abode, it's a funky old San Francisco Victorian/Edwardian shotgun flat. The kind with Bay windows — very San Francisco. I love those older style apartments, so opposite of the suburban house I was currently staying in. I was more accustomed to and attracted to older buildings with more character.

I forget the name of the third roommate who was going to move out. Not quite yet, but the question went to me, that when he leaves if I was possibly interested. I felt this area was too edgy for me. It took a few more visits to feel comfortable there.

Ripped Van Winkle

One of the best trips was meeting Jim and Joe at the flat that July, walking to **Dolores Park** (another new place to me in that part of town) to experience my first **San Francisco Mime Troupe** play, and that was the irresistible *Ripped Van Winkle*! The setup : A hippie falls asleep in 1968, waking up 20 years later in 1988. Everything is so different from the 60s. Reagan is president of the USA? All of his friends are no

longer hippies, now they're something called Yuppies?! Drinking something called *decaf*?! The only thing that was the same was that **The Grateful Dead** were still playing concerts! It was a memorable favorite play. [attending SFMT plays becoming tradition every summer, and the main actor was **Ed Holmes**, I later knew from Cacophony Society events. The group that was to characterize much of my 1990s]

Smilin' surfer ...

It was great to meet up with Joe! He became such a great long lifetime friend. Going to concerts like the **Grateful Dead**! (and for following years) He got me a ticket for the **Greek Theater in Berkeley**, 1988, just following **Zero** with **Jerry Garcia** in **Golden Gate Park**, (that was with Brian on his 40th birthday)

Academy of Art College

I was in the throes of my Academy of Art years, developing my qualities rapidly during that time, and breaking out of my hermetic shell. I had been unsuccessfully pursuing a cute, but very wrong blonde from the Midwest. A complete waste of energy. I felt burnt out with caring about relationships and focused on artworks instead. Wisely.

This meant holing up in the painting studio, having good social times with the few other late hours painter's like **Jon Weiss**, **Gary Comoglio**, to name a few fellow diehards. Otherwise I was a reticent kid. An introverted, shy, serious art student who didn't loosen up easily.

Moving to the Mission, and hanging with Jim and Joe was very good for me. Moving in was smooth, again with brother Bri's good help. He had a construction van. Great to not ride BART to the suburbs every last train, and become very accustomed to the best bike routes to the Academy and back. To have an old Bay Area Edwardian flat, with bay windows, high ceilings, old early century details, and living with great friends, who encouraged creativity. Sold! Plus very affordable rent. I think the entire

2720 Bryant flat was just under \$800 per month — yes, that was split three ways!
[recently looking up the same place, is now estimated around \$4k a month!]

I actually always considered it as a Victorian, until recently looking it up as technically an Edwardian, built in 1914. Now it's a 2 bedroom condo, and the external paint job is beige, after being blue, white, orange and purple during our last years there.

Urban Environment

It was a tough area, in a reputedly rough neighborhood overall then; The Mission. Gang warfare was frequent but I and roommates were ignored, fortunately. Except for the car break-ins the roomies had to deal with. Windows broken, with not much to steal. I would hear reports of shootings in the region, and would occasionally hear it, followed by police cars, lights and sirens flashing. Urban realities.

Trash was a constant problem, as soon as I swept the sidewalk out front, winds would land more down that Bryant Street corridor, within hours the mess returns! It was constant. The older next door neighbor was always cleaning. I guess he was retired and had the time. He seemed resigned to expect it.

The urban energy was very high. Nonstop traffic, on foot, cars, busses, with Spanish spoken everywhere, and written on shops and signs. Fascinating to essentially a foreigner, and I felt kind of like an expatriate, yet it's European style bay window architecture made it feel like San Francisco. The majority of the city has the signature look of rows of old bay windows of apartment buildings in rows, clustered side by side, with little space to expand. Some of the oldest buildings are in the Mission. In fact the oldest is **Mission Dolores on 16th & Dolores**, but that is an historic church with old graves, not apartments. Fascinating to visit occasionally, with its antique Spanish touches, with old Irish and Scottish gravestones. But I didn't go there often.

A Few Local Features

I was on **25th**, near the busy main artery of 24th. So many restaurants, taquerias, and

markets — mostly Hispanic. With spectacular murals! Colorful, some political, depicting class struggles and histories, with cultural pride. I found them to be fascinating, as an outsider, a Minnesota Scandinavian by contrast.

Galeria de la Raza was active on the corner of 24th & Bryant — just one block up. Very active was the art billboard on the Bryant Street side, that had a new display every few months. There were some striking displays up, and now I regret not taking photos, at least a few of the best ones. [There might be a book published featuring some? Seems like it might make a great calendar. I did find a YouTube video showing a time lapse of them from 1974 and on.]

El Puerto Alegre, The bar and restaurant down the street on the northwest corner of 25th & Bryant, with a tropical mural, just checked, the place is still there! But not the mural. I never went in, but really late at night I would drift off to the sound of mariachi music from its open doors and windows, sometimes I think it was live. It gave me a pleasant foreign mood. A characteristic that stayed with me as distinctly Mission.

The corner stores

Across the street on the corner was a small convenience store run by friendly older couple from **El Salvador**. I went there occasionally for the Sunday *Chronicle*, and a few items, but they didn't carry much, and were not open late. I was/am a late night person. So I preferred the slightly larger corner store on **Florida Street**, a couple of short blocks over, run by the friendliest guy from Jordan, who always said "Hi boss!", when I walked in. He often had TV on, with shows like early *Star Trek*. "I like Captain Kirk", he'd say with middle eastern accent. He was a neighborhood personality. I spent years going there for staples like eggs, milk, flour (I made a lot of Swedish pancakes), maple syrup, and he kept quality ales stocked! I spent seven years going there semi-weekly, as a regular.

Other later night stores were on 24th. I found myself going there in desperate times around midnight, with only small change on me, going there for sustenance. It would be a struggling decision making time; is it going to be a small carton of milk? kipper snacks? peanut butter? The kippers usually won, their tins possibly lead lined, with mercury in the fish. Ugh. Desperation can be unhealthy.

Food /taquerias!

Several inexpensive taquerias kept us going! serving big San Francisco burritos, and then only around \$2 for a massive ones! Being young in my twenties, made it easy to practically inhale them, between bike rides, drumming, and exploring painting for hours, the rice and beans protein was essential. Mostly ordering a "*vegetariano burrito, por favor*". I was not veggie yet, trying all manner of meats when I could spend an extra dollar. Jim was more adventurous than I, scarfing down brain and tongue burritos! *Vegetariano burritos* were less expensive and most commonly ordered. I was far from being vegan too, so I had loads of queso. The main places have probably changed hands, and names, with some long gone. Near home was **Taqueria San Francisco**, an easy name to remember, on 24th & **York**. Other names evade me, but nearby on 24th **El Farolito** is still there now, but probably not the same place I frequented with the stark yellow plastic bench tables. (remembering the El Farolito on Mission Street, famous for being open in the wee hours after bars closed. Still there!) Some of the surrounding taquerias were **Taqueria San Jose**, near 24th BART station, **La Taqueria** on Mission, **El Toro**, on 17th, and **Pancho Villa** on 16th . In the 90s, my favorite burritos were on the outskirts of the Mission. On **Church** near **Market** was **Azteca**, with my favorite quality burritos. On 16th, the same owners of **Maya** taqueria, on **Guerrero**. Excellent quality — inexpensive too, with options to choose green or red tortillas — spinach or tomato. Their black beans and brown rice were the best! In **Noe Valley** was a fav for decades, but research shows it gone.

Local Restaurants

I didn't go often, being poor in funds, but nearby was **Saint Francis Soda Fountain** — a vintage diner from the late 1940s, preserved except for the prices, down to the seating, the counter with shiny chrome equipment, menu style, and American diner food served. Their milkshakes were the rage, and I think they made their own ice cream. It was fun to go with Brian who had a special affinity for mid-century designs. He loved it! I went with friends for an occasional treat. [In '93 I hosted a Cacophony Society event with friend **Peter Doty**! He as *Dwayne Newtron*, I as *Fjord Maltdown*. Starting a late night walk, with malts there then up back sidewalks to **Bernal Hill**, and on to Noe Valley. Fun event!]

Roosevelts Tamale Parlor was a unique little restaurant with delicious tamales. with old photos of President Roosevelt dominant. It was also on 24th, right around the corner from Bryant Street. I went only a few times with friends, because it was a restaurant and not a quick stop taqueria.

Mr Pizza Man opened around 1991, and was great for getting a late night slice. On 24th near **Folsom**.

The Cuban restaurant near **Capp**? 24th St, and was fantastic! Again, back then I made only a few visits to restaurants. Memorable were the fried plantains. (okay, this is making me hungry!)

I never went there but passed by frequently, was **Los Gitarros** restaurant on 24th @ **South Van Ness** with guitars on the sign. [later roommate **Matt** went there. A guitarist who just couldn't resist!]

Shops and Markets on 24th

The open markets of vegetables and fruits could be great, for mangos, bananas, pomegranates, corn, and more. Eventually I got into the organic produce mentality in the 90s, preferring **Rainbow Grocery** food co-op over on **15th & Valencia**. [which

moved to its present location in 1996] That was a tougher part of the Mission back then. I would get broccoli, brown rice and granola from there, bicycling, returning with a backpack full of things to cook. (making up for unhealthy poor dinners) Joe turned me on to Rainbow, after being impressed by his bounty.

I think in '91 a small corner store opened on 24th & Folsom, specializing in quality organic and bulk staples. I started going there instead of trekking to Rainbow. [that same corner later became the site of the first **Philz Coffee**. A high quality, huge success in the 21st century)

Mexican bakeries were scattered around the Mission. One around 24th & Alabama was one for occasional pumpkin pastries. Most of the goods are too sugar coated for my tastes. The decor was wildly Mexican. Color of Mexico's flag. Rows of bizarre *tchotches*, of bizarre cookie jars of cartoon sheriff pigs with outrageous facial expressions. I should have bought one for the apartment or family gift.

Murals

Everywhere! A defining characteristic of the heart of the Mission. Vibrant, colorful, very Hispanic, from refined to unrefined. Most are definitely well done by expert muralists, from well done primitive styles to extremely realistic (realism transferred from photographs obviously) to vividly conjured scenarios in semi-realistic style, with symbolism telling stories. The one around **Treat & 24th** was particularly impressive. Richly colored, depicting class struggles of Hispanics from the Aztecs to modern day. That was a newly painted one by 1990.

Balmy Alley, just a short hop from the apartment, between **Harrison** and Treat, and between 25th and 24th, has every style of mural. It's an impressive daytime stroll, walking through a living art gallery, with not much division between art and its environment.

Other notable murals, the one near South Van Ness on 24th of Carnival characters.

Not a favorite, from being so obviously translated from photographs, and with sunbleached colors. Not the best spot in the sun? Or its painted quality?

There were more scattered around, on shop walls and municipal buildings . **The Womens Building on 18th** is one of the best stunners of the entire 'hood! Another fantastic Aztec design near a tiny park somewhere beyond Mission Street at maybe 22nd? Some locations evade my distant memory. Maya Taqueria had very cool Mayan scenes — pyramids, headdressed characters, on large walls where I'd sit down and savor a quality tostada amongst. (spacious, with upstairs seating as an option. I'm puzzled why it was never packed.) **Carlos Santana** was prominently mural sized near the BART station. The colorful grade school with sign language painted all around its perimeters, on 22nd and Capp. with so many more to list.

There was a mural center just south of **Army Street** (**Cesar Chavez St** now, definitely a much better name) not far from Bryant called **Precita Eyes Murals**, on **Precita Park**. Not far over was **The Beatles house** mural, also at the foot of **Bernal Heights**, a fantastic nearby area. Which leads me to this next paragraph...

Bernal Heights

Visible just south of the heart of the Mission where I lived was **Bernal Hill** — a landmark feature. Attracted to steep bike rides, I thrived on charging up Folsom, getting steep south of **Precita**, and up to the top. A real workout on my old Raleigh 10-speed. I could make it up, but not without straining. It was a joy from up high, emerging from the residential height to pop out to open views. It's a park up there, often of brown grasses and reddish rocky chert. With views of **Twin Peaks**, and the southeast part of the city — including **Candlestick Point**, **Noe Valley**, hills of the **Castro**, part of downtown, and of course my neighborhood, with the main streets radiating with dramatic perspective.. Folsom in the centerpiece of perspective, South Van Ness, Mission, **Valencia**, the big blocky hospital on Army (Cesar Chavez).

To the right of the main streets of Folsom, Harrison, Bryant, **Potrero**, the freeway, and **Potrero Hill**. Much to visually absorb! Night or day, I'd get up there as a quick workout, rewarded by the views, and workout for lungs, heart, legs muscles! I'd spend hours gazing at the details, often sketching it. So great to have access to so close by. I regularly took advantage, explore the trails, then zoom back home and get back to work on paintings. It was a charmed lifestyle!

(Other bike rides deserve their own essay. I'll cover a few more ahead.)

Art work

This was an art pad, with Jim and I constantly creating new works. It was always changing and improving. Jim is refreshingly inspired and inspiring, with his open minded charismatic creativity. It's his personality! Conjuring things unexpected, as unique forms of sculptural painting and drawing, and painterly sculpture. *Fine Art Furniture* became his main showcased functional *forte*, and excellently crafted, wildly imaginative works. Everyone was impressed. He influenced me, freeing up creative possibilities. I was taking myself and artwork too seriously at the time when I was at the Academy. Trying to be successful in the fine arts arena as some kind of stoic Nordic artist, which kind of worked for a series I made in 1990, but eventually that morphed into something else with a slow evolution. It took some loosening up socially before I returned to my real love for psychedelia. Also irreverent, random dream imagery. Surrealism— or *semi-realism* might be a fit label.

"Anxious Visions"

In late 1990 here was a magnificent surrealist art exhibition at the **Berkeley art museum** across the street from the sprawling University. The show was called *Anxious Visions*, displaying Surrealist artworks from the 1920s 30s and 40s, and worth repeating visits. Work by **Max Ernst**, **Remedios Varos**, **Man Ray**, and so many more. I went maybe 3 times, and was wowed every trip. Several Cacophony Society

members would be there too. **Ronn, Seb, Lance, Kevin, P, Nancy, Jayson, Louis, Annie, Steve, Melmoth, Louise**, and more. I'd run into them there. This show helped open me back up to surrealist creativity and away from the serious, stoic attempts at fitting in with current postmodernism, which seemed to be anti-surrealism, anti-illustrative. Cacophony Society socializing helped to keep things surprising and refreshed. My artwork didn't necessarily succeed, but those influences changed my painting and drawing styles. I always had paintings in progress at the Bryant pad, and my sketchbooks were filled up rapidly. I was a busy artist /explorer during those years. Jim and I both refer our Mission time as the *Boho years*. A lot of artmaking as priority, not much income, affordable rent, a semi-tough neighborhood, and youthfulness — in our mid-twenties. Socially I was a real stiff for most of my younger years, intimidated by talking to people, but I was improving into the 90s, which turned out to be my favorite decade for several reasons. Being free from a real career, or in a serious relationship or with kids. A peak age in peak form.

The Job

Other than sporadic art sales and gigs, my income was mainly from part-time home remodeling for Brians contractor business, **Construct Builders**. Remodeling houses in the **Lafayette, Orinda, Oakland, Berkeley, Albany** areas, with a rare gig in San Francisco (the city's bureaucracy made it more difficult to even want to bother). It was hard labor, rewarding for the accomplishments but not the money as much. Bri had a tricky juggling act financially. I got annoyed a few times too often about the pay. It was mainly a survival job, not a first choice. Brian was right when he said I'm not fit for that line of work. Fortunately my overhead was relatively low, and Brian really helped me with several favors, like moving my paintings to shows, and treating me to food, entertainment, and we had such great times! I was okay at construction, but I learned quite a bit of details on building things. It certainly helped with making sturdy

professional grade stretcher bars for canvases. As a result they are still sturdy several decades later, and not what we'd call "*potato chips*".

Painting

Wherever I live, I paint wherever that is. I couldn't afford a separate art atelier, so my residence had to do. Especially after not having the Academy studio anymore. I got to work. The Mission years were among my most prolific.

I wrote about my Nordic series of 1990, and more about that year from June on, here:

<https://dean-gustafson.com/autobiographical/June-1990.pdf>

And this of part of 1991 captures essential qualities of my art-making there and then:

<https://dean-gustafson.com/artwork-essays/PRE-ECLIPTIC%20PAINTING.pdf>

I summarized 1991, covering peak experiences of my Mission years:

<https://dean-gustafson.com/autobiographical/1991.pdf>

And 1994:

<https://dean-gustafson.com/autobiographical/1994.pdf>

[Those cover details I'd write in here, and would be kind of redundant to repeat in this already long memoir. I'll try to cover things that weren't included in previous essays]

The following paragraphs on the **York Theater** are from this on movie theaters:

<https://dean-gustafson.com/autobiographical/Movie-theaters-sf.pdf>

The York Theater

Starting with the York Theater, because I lived so close in the 80s, when it was actively a quality repertory cinema house (it changed drastically a few years later and shut down for a while in the 90s). An old 1920's movie palace, with tasteful touches of art deco throughout, not too much, but splendidous, especially the large *fluer de lys* on its cieling! The 1920s gave us that style, with some more ostentatious than others. This was a nice old style theater.

Roommates Jim, Joe and I would have the monthly movie calendar on the fridge, and would scope out must-see's and go! Among the few most memorable ones were *Creature from the Black Lagoon* in old school 3D, with 3D glasses supplied! (might have gone with Jim and Brian to that one?) The effects that were most effective were the underwater scenes — the bubbles rising felt real, and during attack scenes, the lunging spikes seemed to punch you in the forehead! I think most of us flinched back during those parts!

Andrei Rublev by Tarkovsky. An epic historical Russian film from the 60s. The first full length showing in the city. I went with Joe, and the first half was so long and remarkable that we started to leave, not knowing it's intermission! And returned back to our seats to soak in part two. I was blown away! And there were more, some were movies Bri turned me on to, but as videos on his TV, deserving big theater screen viewings. Far superior! The York was great, and it brought the artsy crowds deeper into the Mission district when it was rougher neighborhood. I went solo many times, to get my European cinema fixes., Bergman, Fellini, Tarkovski, Godard, *et al.*

2720 Bryant, the flat

It was an antique flat — distinguished from a typical apartment from being on its own floor — was in the middle story of three. It was 3 bedroom, with a living room and kitchen, pantry, and separate toilet room from shower and sink room (typical in these old flats). A small shed-like room extended beyond a back door, to a wooden staircase with a stoop out back. We never used the yard, it seemed like an unwritten rule that it's for whoever inhabits the ground floor flat. I would use the garden hose back there to clean mud off the bicycle after muddy trail rides, but that was about it.

Neighbors

Upstairs was a pleasant woman from El Salvador, and roommates who I wasn't

acquainted. They seemed likely subletted, or temporary renters.

Downstairs was a cool couple— **Kristine** and (I forget his name) After living there for a few years, they moved not long after I moved in. She was a Swedish-American and looked it, I think from **Southern California**. Replaced by a guys from the central valley, who were friendly enough, but hung a Confederate flag in the front window! So we just shrugged at that. Possibly a way to intimate burglary? They were there from 1990-93. Then a Mexican family after. Nice but with a language barrier. (My Spanish was limited to ordering burritos, with conversations too fast I couldn't keep up with.) Next door on the right was an elderly couple. The old guy was often out sweeping trash from the sidewalk. I tried but the trash tends to blow down Bryant from busy 24th Street too easily, making for nonstop entropy. He kept to himself, not saying anything, but with a short wave and smile. I'm thinking they bought that house long ago, and have seen many changes around there. We were just more temporary renters. To our left was a large family with kids, and I think might have been from the **Philippines**? Friendly, with more language differences, so not much more than a simple "hi "was exchanged.

Also across the street I spotted **Juliana**, a fellow Academy student who lived there for awhile (with boyfriend?) She came over to see the recent post-academy artworks I'd been doing. Turns out she has epilepsy, needing to be around somebody in case of seizures. What a drag to live with that, I thought. I offered my help, but never needed it? She showed up at my big solo show at **Fort Mason** in 1992. Didn't see her around after that, and hope she's okay now.

Across the street was a real nutter, he lived in an inherited house, was a drinker who spoke unhinged at surprising hours., and was an awful keyboardist! Cranking it amplified, sometimes after midnight. A few times I dared ask him to stop, on weekdays before I had to shlep my way to BART to do construction work. Ugh! He wasn't entirely unreasonable, but difficult. A few times he'd be up on his roof, yelling

drunken comments like "*I got my eye on you, so watch it!*", I'd wave back and holler "*careful ! don't fall!*"

Yep, the neighborhood loony.

The high school

We had a high school a few buildings to our right, and at first the kids drove me crazy on our front steps, too noisy for me the night person, in the front bedroom, and they cranked rap on a boombox and left trash behind. I'd go out and ask them to keep things nicer, but in the spirit of being high school kids was met with resistance, naturally. I eventually asked the principal of the school to keep them off our stoop, but even that didn't change things. By 1990 the new neighbors downstairs had the solution — douse the steps with water! I was never up early enough, or clever enough to do that, thinking it's slippery dangerous, but not different from rainwater.

Fortunately by '91 it was no longer a high school, but a center for young mothers — prematurely young. There were Hispanic teenage girls pushing strollers there. They don't get rowdy on our front steps, trashing the place.

Homebrew! with friends in the Mission

I gained friends who lived all over town, with some who also lived in the Mission. Joe met the love of his life **Jane**, at the small coffee and pastry stop nearby 24th Street BART station where she was working. They started going out in late 1989. Jane and her sister **Ann** lived on **23rd & Bartlett**, just beyond Mission Street, and I visited them in the summer of 1990 to learn how to brew quality homebrewed ale! Ann's guy **Lawrence** was also there for brewing a stout. Yum! They had **Dylan** playing, *Blood On The Tracks* on a pleasantly cloudy weekend afternoon, a nice laid back gathering with good friends for this activity, perfect vibes for brewing beer. It smells wonderful, of roasted barley boiling like a great vat of tea. I took notes and really focused on how to do this right. -- and I did! Bicycling to the **San Francisco Home Brew** store way over

on **Taraval St.** in the outer south part of the **Outer Sunset** district, picking up virtually the identical ingredients, biking back with a backpack full of malt/hops/yeast, setting to work, making the flat smell wonderfully of roasted barley malt. A new monthly tradition (replacing baking "death bread", as Joe called it) after that first batch turned out exquisitely better than expected! That first stout was never ever topped, and maybe it was the times. I named this *Rune Stout*, drawing a runic label for it. It was a year of identifying with my Nordic heritage, so it made sense.

Brewing craft ales became a regular thing. Joe and I would point out the two different homebrew supply shop owners styles. He'd ask "*did you get the scientist or the laid-back blues guy?*" We preferred the latter approach. Know your stuff, but get into a groove... the vibes matter. Good results showed this to be evident!

Jane and... Jane?

When Jane started visiting Joe at the Bryant flat, I enjoyed her charismatic character instantly! One evening in late 1989 I answered a knock on the door, so I put my paintbrush down, walking down our second story flight of stairs, opening the door to see not one but *two* smiling Janes in the semi-dark!? Looking for Joe who wasn't in yet. I felt dumbfounded. Soon, the quizzical nature of those moments were demystified. Jane has a twin sister! that was **Ann!** After spending a little time with both, they're easy to tell apart. Less so in the dim glow of night time out front for the first time !

I will never forget their identical smiling faces that evening.

More details about the flat

Bay windows, a very San Francisco thing, exotic, antique, in rows, with Greek pillars. Vertically stacked on hillsides. We were on a level street, and still quite a San Francisco looking block the details inside were kind of simple compared with the rich and fanciful Victorians. Still nice with early century touches. Mass produced

around 1914-20, wainscoting patterns, ceiling light ornamentation, old fireplace (long sealed up, and out of commission) mantelpiece, not much more that was ornate. A basic yet solid old Edwardian, rented out by the landlord from **Canada**, a mostly hands-off kind of invisible landlord except for emergencies, whose name was **John Tracey**. (It's possible I still have the lease in a folder). Joe first got the place around 1984. A time when I could have (should have?) moved to San Francisco, but I was staying with Brian in the east bay, then in '85-'86 busy exploring Europe. Realizing SF is the place for me.

The railing for the steep stairs was made of wood, at its top was capped with a square of rosewood looking wood, with what appeared to be an old cigarette burn, made a small pit. The things we remember! Along the top was a large bolt in the wall, painted over, once used as a mechanical crank, pulled from upstairs to unlock the door, negating need to climb down and up the stairs for guests or for someone carrying groceries. A good bygone idea. (I've seen operable ones elsewhere). At the top of the staircase was a fence like low wall where Jim and I kept our bicycles leaning. Joe had his hanging up in the back shed area, beyond the kitchen, with a gas stove. (the vintage fancy **O'Keefe and Merritt** had to be replaced, sadly with a plain new stove. I think was a **Magic Chef**, but not vintage)

A basic fridge, boring patterned linoleum floor, simple kitchen table with bachelor clutter. A small pantry for dry staples and dishware.

Joe had the biggest room, and every glimpse in there showed the space of a casual surfer Oscar Madison. I'm no Felix Unger, neither is Jim, but not that far off of a balance between the two.

"I jus' dunno"

When moving in, was a subletting temporary from **France**. for Joe's room, away for a month? Jim found the back door broken into! Kicked open destroying the wood next

to the deadbolt. Nothing taken away, so what was the motive?

Suspecting the sublet guy maybe didn't have keys and broke in? His sheepish response to this odd break-in,

"You know, I jus' dunno. "

Yeah, right!

Jim and I spent years mimicking that Frenchman... *"you know, I jus' dunno"*, as an indication that *"yes, I know. but I ain't telling!"*

More Mission friends

Jane and Ann's sister **Mary** and soon spouse **Brewster** lived in a neat old house a few blocks up, **20th** and Florida Street? Are really amazing people, who held Thursday night dinners at their home. They invited me a few times and it was a really nice time! Mary was excited about their vintage cast iron printing press, that must've been a bear to move and install! (they soon after opened **the San Francisco Center for the Book**, over on Potrero Hill. And the ambitious and valuable online **Archive!** Impressive!

Richard, Academy friend, art director, artist extraordinaire, Tai Chi instructor, and **Sketch Pistol** lives (yes, still!) on **Juri Street** near Valencia. Other Academy colleagues, **Ian**, lived in the **Southern Exposure** studio building on 17th near Folsom. A wide variety of artists live-in studios. Later I knew **Pepe Ozan**, from *Desert Siteworks* (1993) who made fantastic installation sculptures. Afterwards in '95, Academy friend **Jason** moved into the quonset hut on **Shotwell** around **15th**. A unique industrial structure for the area.

Friends of Jim, **Jannike** and **Marshall**, had a few places, one near Precita Park, moving to a different home on Potrero.

Lory is good friends with Joe and Jane, who I think lived in the same building as Jane and Ann, invited me to her birthday party. Fun! We made folded newspaper hats and painted with acrylics. She was involved in learning how to play a Berimbau.

Fascinated I was able to try it out! And the tight metal that you strike with a bow, snapped! Ugh! But she said that is common, and comes from ripping a radial car tire open, so while laborious, are cheap, as in free. She had a berimbau making instructor, and assured me it's no problem. At her party was **Juliet**, who became an instant artist friend. She lived in a beautiful Victorian up on Dolores & 25th. High quality digs, she was steeped in various high quality decorative painting projects.

Bikes stolen

I might remember more Mission dwellers, I forgot the name but a fellow Academy student had his bicycle stolen right in the apartment on Shotwell & 25th, as he turned around to fetch something from the kitchen. It happened right behind his back, in the daytime, taking seconds! Argh!

Joe had his old mountain bike stolen from his car while parked on Bartlett, in '92 before we were going to team up for a **Marin County** supermoon ride up the **Railroad Grade trail up Mt Tamalpais**. (great ride I'll get back to large later on. Brian joined for his first mountain bike ride!)

Smilin' Surfer Joe moves in with Jane

After his 30th birthday in '91, he moves out, claiming reluctance to leave the space he'd been in so long. Bummed that he went, but still nearby, so we continued doing things for years, actually make that decades after!

I expected Jim to take that sweet room, but he was content with his quiet, dark central bedroom, so *cowabunga!* I'm getting the twice as large nicer room with a fantastic view of **Twin Peaks!** I move in there that September. Looking for a roommate through *Roommate Referral*, a few okay candidates fell through. Then **Matt** shows up, great fellow! A musician, songwriter with enthusiasm for creativity. He's in! Plus he's really into a local band we both love. **Josef Brinkmann and The Conspiracy Of Equals**. I just discovered them at **Paradise Lounge** in Somar, but he

has known them for years. We had a good bond, and Jim too. In retrospect I should have paid more for the larger room, but that's just the way it's been equally split. Including the power bill. We all shared one telephone, between three of us! This was sometimes a problem, but not that different from growing up with a large family. [unheard of nowadays, everyone must have their own phone. This Smart phone lifestyle we're currently trapped by takes over too much, imo.]

The Answering Machine

In the living room was our one old answering machine using a continuous loop cassette tape, being the commonly used technology in the 80s, before ubiquitous digital technology took over. Anyway, we had creative fun making messages, especially me. I would record snippets of songs from my collection. In 1990, my Nordic appropriation year, we'd team up reciting short passages from *The Poetic Edda* (new volume I bought at **The Booksmith** in the **Haight**), sounding rousing with three of us reciting loudly in unison, lines like:

*"Of Ymir's flesh, Earth was shaped,
Of his blood the briny sea.
Of his hair, the trees,
The hills of his bones,
And of his skull, the SKY!"*

We had fun recording these rants like a small gang of rowdy pirate Vikings! (should have preserved them onto other cassettes)

My life changed with the new room

I really took advantage of the new room, using every square foot, and my painting and drawing improved! While I did make some favorites in the old room and living room, now I have space and more light! Great! I returned to bigger canvases, and setting up a drawing table with that view in front of me was awesome! I loved it.

The view of Twin Peaks is always changing, from crystal clear, to — my favorite — the avalanche of fog, enshrouding the hillside like thick white whipped cream in slow motion. Endlessly fascinating, that was my TV! I did appreciate this view from the back stoop, but this was nicer.

The living room

We didn't watch TV very often, so the old television set got dusty in the living room, and covered in dead ficus leaves from the plant near the window. Maybe it was Jim who scored a VCR, so we had a few videos showing occasionally. I got into catching up with *Star Trek: the Next Generation*, after **Sebastian** from the art Academy /Cacophony got me into the *Borg* cliffhanger summer of '90. *Twin Peaks* that spring. *Ren & Stimpy* in '91 one stoned night. Jim had *Cinema Paradiso*. I had vhs tapes of old Grateful Dead, Pink Floyd footage, Roger Waters *The Wall in Berlin*, and Todd Rundgren *The Ever Popular Tortured Artist Effect*. (taped at Brians.)

A creative wreck room

The drum kit was setup in the living room with plenty of art. Having a loud drumset had the roommates blessings. Jim had a cello he'd get out occasionally. Paintings of mine — large paintings, were displayed and stacked up, along with Jims paintings and sculptures with painting integrated — large sculptures. It had a nice old mantelpiece over a pre-existing fireplace long sealed up. The bay windows, and one wall heater, not optimally placed to heat the bedrooms.

The paint job was dingy off-white, with dark brown trim throughout the place, adding its antique feel. Ugly brown wall-to-wall carpeting proves forgiving to spills — good for renting. The side patterns below the wainscoting were vintage Edwardian.

It was a good artist pad. Hanging artwork it wasn't exactly predictable where the studs were, so I had to tap on the walls to find them. Even that turned out to be difficult, due to the densely arranged slats of thinner wood that the plaster adhered to. Being a

house remodeler, I could repair the walls easily with ease. The landlord didn't show up very often, so we did our own minor repair work to the place. Jim really knows carpentry tools, with skills built up from his apprenticeship crafting fine art furniture. I think he started doing that in 1990, at a master's woodworking shop around 17th near Alabama Street. It paid off when he soon started creating some of the most striking and original sculptural furniture. With structure, color and textures that are out of this world!

Socially

Friends, girlfriends, gatherings, parties. We had them all. I started off there as a solitary hermit. Shy, studious, and guarded. A serious art student who labored to get somewhere. I didn't know exactly what that was, but I found artistic inspiration along my way that was so diverse, as if I was a split artist personality 7 ways. This went against the style of sticking with one style of art to be recognized by galleries. I was eager to do it all — surrealism, abstract, romantic realism, whimsical illustration, big bold painting, tiny intimate drawings. I focused more on aiming for a stoic Nordic-German style in my final year at the Academy. Sketchbook habits helped keep my inspirations honest, and my socializing in San Francisco — a town where overlapping social circles is common. Someone you know from one association, always knows another set of people, etc, and so forth. I knew people from the Academy at first, then through Jim and Joe, then Cacophony Society, Free Band, work, galleries... I loosened up living in the Mission. **Karlin** was a friend of Joe's, then Jim and I. She'd visit, then we'd get to a concert, hikes, movie, drinks. She was a hoot! She lived in **San Rafael**, a deadhead, who had a *Turtles For Peace* sticker on her car! This was earlier on... she didn't visit much anymore by 1991.

Jim had good friends visiting, one regular was **Earl** also from Minneapolis. He moved to San Francisco about 1990, across town. Interesting guy, we had good visits, going

out to eat, concerts, trading Grateful Dead cassettes. One time, we both had taped *Portland 5/19/74* sections from the **KPFA Grateful Dead hour** hosted by **David Gans**. He had it cranked on Jims boombox in the kitchen. I cued up the same *China Cat Sunflower > I Know You Rider* from the same source I had also taped, and it was remarkably well synched, echoing through the flat! That was a detail that stands out.

The Projects

The time Earl and Jim walked too closely to **The Projects**, a set of poverty stricken apartments on Treat and Army Streets. I believe they were cutting across the small park nearby at night when they heard a threatening voice, like "*it's a good night for killing some white boys*". A place to avoid at all times of day or night. Some streets change from peaceful to violent only a block over. The distant gunshots heard from Bryant were most likely from there.

Other friends of Jim including another Minnesotan **Tim Nelson**. Living in the **Marina district** with his wife **Kristy** until they moved to **Fairfax** about 1991. We had a fun visit when they just were moving in. **Chris Nelson** was Tims brother, who visited a few times in '94, and even bought one of my early big paintings! He had a house in Concord.

Other friends of Jim and Joe's would crash in the living room. Good socializing! Forgetting their names. One charismatic friend of Jim was visiting from Minneapolis, who's first trip to San Francisco, he called it "*the new Atlantis*"

Parties

I threw a few fun glogg parties. The first in '89 I wrote about at the end of this essay.

https://dean-gustafson.com/autobiographical/1989-Part_Two.pdf

(also includes the earthquake, and more Mission details)

At the end of 1990, I had quadruple the amount of friends from over a great year of

Cacophony Society events! (more of my impressions on that group here)

https://dean-gustafson.com/autobiographical/Cacophony_memoirs.pdf

Glögg!

1990, I threw a much bigger **glögg** party! On the coldest December night of the year, to a full flat. It was a smashing success! We went through three batches of glögg, the last was with the booze scored at a corner store. We ran out before expected. It was a fine evening! Friends absolutely loved the coziness of glugg on a freezing night. The aroma of cinnamon, orange, and rum filled the rooms. **Ronn** sank into the sofa, totally content. **Phil B, Nancy, Brian** (naturally), **Jill, Joe, Jim, Larry** and **Jerry of Burning Man, Annie, P, Lance**, and Academy students **Ian**, and a young lady **Kimberly** who I focused on too much that night, ignoring many guests as a result.

Another social folly of mine was I became attached to the ambient glow of the long neon rods I had in the window of the living room. During the party I wanted the neon to provide ambient lighting not the stark overhead light. So whenever someone turned that on, I would flick it back off. This happened a few times until I realized this was annoying of me. I was not an advanced host. Also focusing too much on the cute young lady I had the crush on, at the exclusion of the guests. It still was a Nordic success! Jill brought more Scandinavian snacks, and it was really her glögg party too, inviting more cacophonists than I.

I had another glögg party at the end of 1991, smaller and mellower, not as memorable, and what I remember was new roommate Matt wasn't into alcohol much, (though his event *nom de plume* was **Matt Von Sydow!**) I didn't want to impose a booze oriented party on him. It ended fairly early. I was focused more on my new steady sweetheart, the widely loved and respected Sicilian San Francisco born and raised diva, and intelligent, cultural, literate beauty, **P!**

I became a very fortunate fellow just as I moved into the larger Joe's room...

GF...for me?!

I had only a few passing flings, with no relationship for years. Keenly wary of too much involvement, threatening my freedom. Pursuing the wrong women for me, with headaches dealing with their head trips was something I avoided. I wasn't clicking with my peers. P is different. To good advantage. We were a hot item, and far from similar in looks, tastes and styles made for a more exotic connection.

I spent more time at her fabulous home, the revered center of socializing. San Francisco party central — **1907 Golden Gate**.

The Regular Bike Route There...

For the remainder of my years at the Bryant pad, I would ride over to P's by bicycle, dry or raining, most every Friday or Saturday nights, and late, after she was done working on whatever gig she had, either catering or writing. This would usually be around midnight. We were both late night people, especially her. I had the construction work most weekdays, interrupting regular late hours. Weekends were for experiencing the beauty of the wee small hours, and the dreamyness associated. I didn't drive until into my 30s, with no income strong enough to support it, but mainly I was kind of a snobbish, self-righteous environmentalist. I saw that *cars kill everything* — air, water, land, the cityscape of space, animals, people, etc. They are dangerous! I was pro-health, which drove P nuts as a smoker. We didn't see eye to eye on such issues.

My bike route was one of avoiding hills — if that can be believed in San Francisco — purely with the goal to not be all sweaty when seeing my sweetie! (otherwise the steeper the better) I would usually take **25th** to **Valencia**, then **18th** to **Church**, crossing **Market**, do a short jog on **Duboce** or **Hermann**, **Steiner**, **Waller** or **Haight**, **Scott**, to **Page** (one slope), to **Divisadero** to **Mcalister**, and over to **Baker** with another slope up to the corner of **Golden Gate & Baker**.

The key to the front door was entrusted to me, the entry foyer opened to the doors of the other apartments, four total? I forgot. **1903, 1905?**, and **1907** — the upstairs. I would carry my bicycle up the stairs, and would love it when the occasion allowed her time to wait at the top of the stairs, looking ravishing with her full black hair, in colorful skirt, voluptuous figure, wonderful scent, with *the* smile! I would lift her off the ground in enthusiastic romantic glee, kiss for awhile, then proceed to the living room and catch up over a very late dinner. I was a lucky guy.

We didn't have an awful lot in common, but art and classical music. She preferred soloists and chamber music vs orchestral. We enjoyed some Cacophony society events and Burning Man. Centerpieces of our early 1990s, that dominated my Mission years.

Other things like **Robyn Hitchcock** songs were at the forefront of my consciousness. This lasted quite a stretch. I'm still following Robyn's career. Then his songs were the soundtrack of my San Francisco 1990s — but not at P's. That was **Debussy, Faure, Ravel, Poulenc, Shostokovich, Deodat de Severac**, solo pianists, and flamenco music in the cd stacks next to the boombox in the lushly antique living room. The place always transported me. Such detail! Sounds I associate with that time and place.

The portrait

In 1993 I made a sketch, then in 1994 a painting of P at the top of the stairs, written about in this summary:

https://dean-gustafson.com/artwork-essays/portrait_of_P.pdf

So I'd spend at least one night a weekend there average, often two. This was my 1991-1994. Colorful, young, love-filled years of my life. Including art exhibitions she helped me get! P is still working hard to keep artists in the city. So important, and honorable of her.

She didn't visit me very often, for good reason. I had the narrowest sleeping mat for

one, we usually forgot to stock up on tp, and it was at least two bus rides away, and I was so anti-cigarette, she didn't have anywhere to smoke, except outside.

Yep, we were different alright.

Jim went through a number of relationships until he met **Misako**. Before then, I most remember **Roxanne**, who was cool, and I thought a good fit for Jim, but I guess not.

Joe with Jane turned out fabulously. Moved in together, married in '96, had great kids great family, still together. We had great times in the Mission years and beyond. Of Cacophony events, concerts, Burning Man, movies, dinners, hikes.

Some of the hikes with Joe stand out as favorites. And bike rides!

Hikes and bike rides— and bikes stolen

In 1992 my old Raleigh *Olympian* I had since dad bought for me in the summer of 1983, I'd been riding it at all times of year, daily. It meant the world to me, having grown with it during formative college years. It was getting rickety in the gears that needed replacement every other year at least. The chain slipped upon first pedaling, so I knew it was my bike being stolen as I heard that sound from behind me, relaxing in Golden Gate Park on a nice afternoon with P. A guy quietly took my bike off the grass behind me, I heard the chain slip, bolted up chasing the guy, but slipped and fell on the grass and the guy got away on my old trusty Raleigh. He didn't have a shirt on, probably very poor, darker skinned, and now he had my faulty bike with skipping chain. I was *furious* — full of venom. I was too attached to it, nine years of riding daily. So many memories, dad, Minneapolis, California, San Francisco all over on that thing. It was my horse— with me as the horsepower. This was a bad day.

Or was it? Soon after that day, it was obviously time to graduate to a mountain bike! I had savings, from a marbleizing job I did for clients of Brian in Orinda. Found a sale at **Valencia Cyclery**, and bought a beautiful emerald green **Specialized** mountain bike! It took getting accustomed to the different handle bar position and gear shifting, all

advanced to the times, designed to be easier. After riding around the city on it, finding hills are easier to climb in the lower gears. I spent a month loving this bike. Until I locked it with the rigid **Kryptonite** U- shaped lock in front of the main **library** during a performance event on a stage at the **civic center plaza**, with **Bonnie Raitt**, and **Little Feat**. This was *Columbus Day* 1992. Crowded, in public view, I never suspected my bike could be stolen at all. But it was. I returned after the music ended to find the lock, shattered on the ground, and no mountain bike. This was not my year for bicycles. Two bikes stolen! I flagged down police officers who didn't seem to care. I was all distraught, while they see this all the time. Jaded, passive city police. They file report, hand me a copy. I took BART back, seriously downtrodden.

The next day Brian has good news. A client in Lafayette offered to pay us with two brand new **Fila** brand mountain bikes, just for assembling two for them! The scoop was, they had business dealings with Fila, with a warehouse of goods, mountain bikes included that were tried then liquidated. Too much competition by the bigger mtn bike companies during a boom. They heard the bad news from Brian about my new bike theft, and conjured this deal. Sweet! Bri gets the same bike model too. We assembled theirs in just over an hour, took our boxed bikes to the Concord house. Assembly of ours and *viola!* I'm back in the saddle again! Good solid mtn bikes, but not as quality as the Specialized, nor as beautiful. But new, felt great to ride. I knew I had customizing to do ahead. Better tires, and engraving runes in the metal frame.

Full moon up Mt Tamalpais

(as mentioned previously) With Brian joining! I'd already gone up a few times with the first mtn bike. **Railroad Grade** is an easy zigzagging wide fire road that used to have a small train chug up and down its gently climbing slopes.

Joe was planning to join us, but his old trusty mtn bike was stolen while it was in his car for about one hour in front of their apartment on Bartlett Street in the afternoon!

Bummer. (though led to a better bike! Like me that summer.)

Jim and his romantic interest at the time (forgot her name. A sporty young lady) Jim didn't have a mtn bike, but installed fatter tires on his 10-speed. It worked great!

Driving separately, we met at the **Mountain Inn** parking lot. A very familiar location over my years of hiking Marin. We aimed to go up at dusk then down under the light of the forecasted super moon, largest of the remainder of the 20th century. Hyperbole or not, it was a perfect evening. Brian did perfectly up the mountain, for someone who hasn't ridden a bike in years was impressive. We had that fantastic moonlight on the way back! A memorable time

Bicycling the Marin headlands

With Joe, I explored the **Rodeo Beach trail**, crossing the city to the bridge became a regular ride for years more. I was always up for that route. Getting to the bridge, charging across town, to the park, to **Arguello** to the **Presidio**, to the bridge, under the tunnel, around the path to the western sidewalk on weekends, zooming across, astounded by the span, views of the ocean, stopping halfway to look down, sometimes watching a ship going through the famous **Golden Gate**. Continuing to the end, passed through the gate, down the swoop to the parking lot, and up to the road heading up up up, west. The upper peak where the road splits, begins a trailhead that cascades alongside the hillside, in cool shade and verdant with plantlife. Rolling downhill with a great view of the valley and ocean. Below passing an open archery range. Crossing the road, the trail going through overgrowth, along a creek, flowing to a small lagoon I hear ocean waves and seagulls, approach Rodeo Beach. A wonderful, intimate beach with small pebbles not sand. Close inspection reveals a beach of Serpentine pebbles of green ground round by centuries of the sea. You can hear the waves act as nature's tumbler. A special beach. I'd been there in 1984, introduced by Brian.

Now with Joe was a favorite mtn bike destination we rode several times after I scored a mtn bike. [Joe and Jane got married on Rodeo Beach, 1996. A perfect April day. I was honored to participate!]

Hikes with Joe

Joe knew where to hike in Marin, and how to do it right. Long hikes that when lingering after twilight meant being immersed in the most spectacular sunset colors. Why leave when it starts to get the most awesome?! Just have flashlights, and enjoy returning at dark. This is so Joe! We took some epic hikes.

One that stands out was along **Ridgecrest** on the western edge of Mt Tamalpais. This must have been 1991 when he was still a roommate at the Bryant pad. The trail along and above **Stinson Beach/Bolinas** is astonishing in its scope. Some of the trails are out in the open, we took a forested route. That was my first hike there with Joe — very impressive. The sunset we experienced seemed to represent eternity of colorful rich bliss — with no psychedelics! We were high on the workout of the trails, views and colors. This was a time when Joe turned me on to the sublime album *If I Could Only Remember My Name* by **David Crosby**, with a cast of favorite musicians, including **Jerry Garcia, Phil Lesh**, and the host more of California musicians we love.

The song *Laughing* encapsulates what that sunset felt like. Every time I hear it culls that magic hike vibe, and the colorful 90s I experienced during that time and place. Under eternity, 27 years old living in the Mission district, San Francisco, California, West coast, the edge of the North American continent on the Pacific Ocean, planet **Earth**.

Other hikes during that time

With Joe ,we'd aim for **Muir Beach**, the next one over to the north from Rodeo Beach, taking our time to descend the long trail from the hills above. Open space hills at first with dramatic views, going down into thick forest, which made returning with

flashlight essential. Those were great late afternoons into evenings. We returned a few times more over the decades.

I missed out on the hot springs

Heard raves when Joe showed Jim, about the hot springs that exist in a narrow cove in Marin that can only be accessed at the very lowest tide. I guess it's a precarious climb at night to the roughshod **Steep Ravine beach** before getting as far as **Stinson Beach**. They would usually have to go around 4am, not a good time for me, going to sleep by then, so I missed out. I understand it became popular after word got out, with a few only fit at a time. They went a few times in 1989-90 and that was it.

Hikes with Jim

Showing my discovery of the steep, obscure **Zigzag Trail** out of **Mill Valley** is memorable. (when it still had a small permoplast skull I modeled, found on the trail in '88 . It sat on a Redwood stump for a few years.) I'd been going there regularly since '87. I showed a few friends over those years. One time I led **Amelia**, an Academy student and Cacophony Society member, and good friend of the esteemed **Ethyl Ketone**. I described the bike ride to her, she was up for it, but turned out to be too much for her. This was '90 or '91. She made it but it was easy to see she suffered. Especially by the time we got to the **Zigzag Trail** on foot. Steep and technically difficult, I put her through the wringer. She didn't complain, however I should have known better. We could have turned around miles before. Later she would mention in half jesting, "*Dean led me on a bike ride all the way up to Oregon and back.*" Similarly, I rode there with Janes friend **Vaunie**, turning into a moody ride for her. The ferry rides back across the bay from **Sausalito** were nice though.

Music

I am always associating music with every time and place. It calls up the times I

discovered and played often. I mentioned Robyn Hitchcock, and I am sure that's who I played the most when living there. I became a real completist, seeking all of his rare EP's, B-sides, and unique pressings. I was obsessed! Now I know all of his released and more. In 1990 the album *Eye* was the thing. By 1991 when *Perspex Island* came out, I was disappointed not finding it on vinyl LP. Same with other albums in the early 90s, and I was a record player type. So resorted to having to buy the factory cassettes of these must-have albums, begrudgingly. The age when CD was king, and vinyl was rarely presse. Ah, but I could buy great used records! So I did with my limited income.

I finally got a cd player in 1992, from Brian! I couldn't afford one for years. So now I didn't have to buy cassettes which sounded dull when factory made, and would wear out faster than Maxell's made as home recorded copies.

Other album releases where I couldn't find on vinyl. *2nd Wind* by **Todd Rundgren**. One I was eager to buy on day one of release, but cd and cassette only. That still never got a vinyl re-release. In July 1990 the *2nd Wind sessions* at **The Palace of Fine Arts Theater** was a highlight. Going with Brian, Jim, Joe and Jane was an amazing event! The detailed exhibition of Todd ephemera in the lobby was a surprise bonus! **Pink Floyd** *The Division Bell* — a big album of 1994.. Pity it was nowhere found on vinyl for 20 years. *Respect* by Robyn H. I got the cd instantly in 1992. Great songs, but with shrill digital mastering. **The Soft Boys** 1976-1981. A fab collection from **Rykodisk** in 1994. I had that on much of the time. So many more, cd's of **Steve Tibbetts**; *The Fall Of Us All*. **Gary Lucas**; *Skeleton At The Feast* — one of my first cd's, **Pam** gave me in early '92. Fascinating! Jim had **Tom Waits**; *The Black Rider*. I had *Bone Machine*. **Grateful Dead**; *Infrared Roses*, was a favorite early cd. I had started to get tapes of cd released only before I had a player. Grateful Dead, *One* and *Two from the vault* were impressive!

Noteworthy albums of the Bryant Street years...

I found a factory cassette of *From The Ladle To The Grave* by **Boiled In Lead**, from Minneapolis. In summer 1990 we had that tape cranked all that season. *The Microorganism* was the standout track. Specializing in celtic roots, but has Slavic polyrhythms, Indian inflections, and folk songs, and some feature Steve Tibbetts. Reminds me of summer of '90, Joe and I caught their gig at **DNA Lounge**, South of Market, then that tape (later on vinyl) topped off the first desert Burning Man.

Bo Hanson, *Lord of the Rings*. Swedish progressive, spacey!

The Residents *Eskimo*. Very interesting tribal album.

Olivier Messiaen, *Turangalila Symphony*. Astonishing music

Jeff Beck *Guitar Shop*, .[more on this in pt two of 1989]

Grateful Dead *Anthem Of The Sun*. A rediscovery., and **Jefferson Airplane**, etc..

(These are only a few . I should write separate music paragraphs into its own essay.)

Jim had some gems. *I, Jonathan* by **Jonathan Richman**. He had the cd, I got reacquainted with his songs, now with *Rooming House on Venice Beach*, and *I Was Dancing in a Lesbian Bar*. New favs!

One night Jim he was over the top with glee over the Japanese girl band pop trio **Shonen Knife!** (I think he may have just seen them, live at Slims?) They are a hoot! Singing about ice cream and public baths. Fun!

Jim had a wall rack he made for cassette tapes. Recalling ones by **Billy Bragg**, **The Replacements**, **Butthole Surfers**, **Meat Puppets**, etc. [I later acquired that handy rack in '96. He was liquidating stuff before moving from Oakland to Minneapolis with new wife Misako.]

Grateful Dead cassettes dominated for the most part taped from the *KPFA GD hour*, or the annual marathons I have fond memories of tuning in to all day long.

Other specifically Mission finds; around the corner on 25th, walking back to the flat,

I spot a stack of records left to take. I can't resist expecting useless trash, but there were some vintage **Dean Martin** records in good condition!, such as *Cha Cha de Amor*, and other Capitol records in mono. Score! This lp made waves with Bri, Craig, **Pam**, and Cacophonists like **Chandler**!

Drumming

I was drummer in **The Haight Ashbury Free Band**, our specialty then was "out" free jazz improvisation. A *carte blanche* expression for this wild drum soloist, and playing in the living room was such a joy. I always only played between 12 noon- 2pm, no exceptions. usually for 20-45 minutes. I never received one complaint.

My drumming essay describes much more:

<https://dean-gustafson.com/autobiographical/DRUMS%20by%20Dean.pdf>

Free Band was then mainly **Nick the** keyboardist, and who started and maintained it all. **David**, saxophonist and flute, sometimes bass. **Michael** the bass player. **Rick** on clarinets and sax, and poetry rants. **Dan** the sax player got me involved after my Burning Man drumming, he invited me to a practice. Others too numerous to mention would come and go. Oh, and **Peter the Hippie** was an honorable member, even though he wasn't a musician— more for dancing enhancements.

The first practice space I was part of was in the Mission, at **Shotwell Dance Studio** on 17th, run by **Mary Ellen**, a fun character who was part of the Free Band that spring of '91. I didn't have a car, so either Nick or Michael would generously pick me up with the drums. Otherwise mainly our Sunday afternoon sessions would be at Nicks in the Haight at **46 Belvedere Street**, known as *Free Band Headquarters*.

We had adventurous times conjuring our unique chemistry of musical *Out* jazz band chaos, then afterwards we'd congregate at **Blue Front** for dinner. *Falafelville* as Nick called it. (ah! how I miss that place and time. A separate memoir needs to be written) Oh yeah, and tastes good with sauerkraut.

Carnivale, Cinco de Mayo, Dia de los Muertos ... and Visitors!

These events either started or ended right in front of our building. *Carnivale* was the most incredible start, early in the morning, around Memorial Day weekend. The sound of parade in preparation is a noisy affair, waking me up, but what a way to be awoken! The sounds of drums and horns, looking out the window seeing colorful floats, wildly costumed characters, women in skimpy revealing garb, some just wearing feathers, groups of drummers gathering forces. Bryant Street closed to car traffic as a staging area for the parade up a block up 24th. Wow, it was as if we had Rio in our front door!

One time, it might have been 1990 — Jim and I were thrilled by the spectacle out front, and after gawking at the scenery (especially the barely dressed ladies) we flung the windows wide open and drummed with the jamming outside! That was a hot flow of morning moments,,.. Then we got out to enjoy the parade!

1991 good Minneapolis family friend and culturally interested **Pam**,* was in town! Brian, and Academy friend Jason came over to check out the parade. In fact we joined in! In those years when it was open to get in the street and dance along! The lines blurred between spectators and the parade itself. Bri stayed on the sidewalk, as he was not in the mood to be in the parade as much as appreciate it. We had a blast dancing with the Trinidad steel drum float. It was alive with rhythm and colors! A wild, sunny afternoon ... and with a lot of bare female skin!

[* Pam is great! Who has a unique cultural sense and appreciation. Always fun to show her around town. Who arrived in time for Robyn Hitchcock at The Kennel Club on Divisadero. May 21st 1991. Most everyone was there from my citywide tribes]

Dia De Los Muertos

Day of the Dead, November 2nd, is a hugely popular event in the heart of The Mission.

It would start sometimes around 24th and Mission (or elsewhere?) proceeding down 24th Street, down around a street like Harrison, up Balmy Alley (with the murals, remember?), back on 24th and often back on Bryant. The biggest difference from other parades is we the people are it. Not a spectators event, with good reasons. It's about honoring those who are deceased. Everyone on Earth experiences that loss, and the enormous effect on us. The tradition goes back centuries in Central American countries, and as The Mission became the primary Mexican neighborhood of San Francisco, makes it a perfect setting.

The activity consists of carrying a candle for your deceased loved ones in the procession. Some hold a picture of them up. It's quite beautiful, some are somber, while some are festive with drumming going on, in festive masks on and white face paint and dark eyes. I prefer the more quiet aspects. It is a long, slow walk down the crowded streets. So there are sections near drums and horns, and with quieter sections.

Most memorable was **1990-93**, when I didn't miss them. [I did return to the event a good handful of times. Until 2010 joining next-generation Mission dwellers nephew **Kim** and his gang of good friends. Active years around there.] I have a blue pinstriped suitcoat that I wore in '92, and it still has spilled candle wax on it from the walk. I usually went alone, at my own pace. I think in 1991 I was joined by Dhaivyd, Jason and Matt? We went to the Halloween party that night. (details found in this memoir about that eventful year, on pages 20-21)

<https://dean-gustafson.com/autobiographical/1991.pdf>

Some years ended up at culminating art shrines all the way up on 17th, while others ended up on the park on 25th & Treat, a place I'd never dare wander at night. This was the only time it felt safe enough. With crowds, and festive shrines by artists displayed around the grounds. Impressive! Sacred candlelight with plenty of Mexican skulls art, brightly painted.

The Day Of The Dead event is pre-Columbian in origins, going back centuries before any Europeans arrived. In San Francisco it is mostly white people actively participating. I don't think any groups of demographics are ever excluded. It's just interesting and moving, with Caucasians making up more of the cities population? It has received criticism, even from within. I kind of understand how it might feel like the Europeans descendants tend to take over and eventually spoil things.

More events

Bill Clinton rally in the Mission days before the election day 1992, outside the 24th Street BART station. I naturally easily stopped by, joining the big optimistic crowd. Hearing parents telling their kids, "*that's the next president of the United States!*" The only president of the USA I ever saw in person, but wasn't elected yet. We were confident he'd win, in a good turn of events. I heard him from half the block down Mission Street, doing the energetic politicians speech about jobs, the economy, etc.

Racial issues

Seeing "*Yanqui Go Home*" in large visible lettering on the side of Bernal Hill sent a message to us of European descent. It's easy to write it off as bitter immigrants, but the whole region was native territory for centuries before the USA existed and Europeans invaded this land. So even though this will never reverse, it makes sense if using a sense of historical injustice. I didn't feel particularly victimized or particularly welcome. Just another artist free spirited young neo-hippy diy grunge dude. Not some conservative whose main interest is commerce and control.

I never had any negative interactions with the Hispanic gangs. Just an awful lot of tough "prison house" stares as I walked by. The tough emotionless gaze. The early 90s trend among urban youth was that stare, and in low hanging pants. Comical and quixotic to us older folks (16-18 years old is very different than 27-30) **Hip Hop** and **Rap** music was the ubiquitous sound going against the grain of us rock music folks.

I'd fantasize bigger louder car systems with the sound of **Phil Lesh's** bass shaking the sidewalks, windows and everything! , versus the repetitious thumping of Hip-hop., heard blasted from boomboxes and loud car stereo systems as an inner Mission sound that was as unavoidable as the frequent wailing of high pitched car alarms (which doesn't really stop thieves). I didn't drive then and the roommates learned to leave nothing inside, and don't lock the doors unless you prefer smashed windows.

The last roommate we took in was a mellow writer, and bookstore worker **Casey**, who had a **VW bus**, with nothing inside except for a prominent figurine of the **Virgin Mary** affixed to the dashboard. Its very Catholic in the Hispanic community. He was not religious at all, but that was a clever guard against probable break-ins in the superstitious Mission!

Personnel change. *The San Francisco shuffle*

Roommate Matt moved out in '93. Sad to have him go. It must be that turning 30 transition itch kicking in, as he's a year older. Jim and I were the only ones there for awhile, but even with such cheap rent was still a strain on our limited incomes to not have that third roommate. Adding up regarding the power bills and rent, but I didn't really think about how affordable that really was. So I traipsed my way up to the Haight to the *Roommate Referral* center (where I ran into **Eva**, violinist from The Conspiracy Of Equals who was there doing the same thing) groaning at the prospect of the judging ahead from both sides looking for a good fit. RR was an essential service for, as Jim called "*doing the San Francisco shuffle*", back before the Internet removed any need for an office to sign up at. I think that is how Jim connected with Joe? Matt is a lifelong friend, found through that service. would we have similar luck? We had a few interviews, agreeing on Casey, who is a nice mellow intelligent book loving fellow, but after awhile didn't feel like an actual friend *per se*. I didn't contribute to that harmony much. It was probably turning 30 that I started to get

selfish about the space, not necessarily copacetic towards roommates. Jim met Misako, who became fiancée and she was always over. I became cross about her typewriter sound when trying to sleep. (I should have discovered earplugs) I let myself get disturbed by the sudden loud dinner parties Sunday nights by Casey and friends. I wasn't told or invited, so I got passive aggressive. He has every right, and I should have been encouraging instead, but I got touchy. Signs I was ready to move on, getting older and wanting more control of our lives. I was getting fed up with the same old scene. Outgrowing it you might say. 1994 brought big changes. Written about here :

<https://dean-gustafson.com/autobiographical/1994.pdf>

The year I finally started making money! Deciding on European travel instead of seeking more work and moving into my own place. I was sure to work that out later. I sensed the urgency to see **Paris** and much more while I was still young and resilient. (Much of that story is in the link above.) and Wow, am I ever glad I did that trip! Especially now that I truly can't.

[I am not writing chronologically, so this isn't coming to a close quite yet.]

Differences

For drumming in the living room, Casey requested I give a warning first. Fair enough, and I requested the same about dinner parties next to my room late. Fair, but showing a disconnect between different roommates personalities. Jim was like a mediator, amicable and likeable by both of us. Really Jim has a great attitude. Me, not so much. I used to get annoyed by noisy roommates waking me up early, hard shoes on the kitchen floor drove me crazy. Yet I didn't keep conventional hours, and I should have bought earplugs.

I even got into a row with Matt one evening, when I gave him too much grief over leaving the front door unlocked when he went to the store a block away. Based on

hearsay of locals having thieves enter through front doors, grabbing bicycles and running off. But it's a mellow night, I was there in the back room. I didn't want to lose another bike, so I got freaked out, and not very diplomatically. Afterwards we both left apologetic notes on each others doors. Sensitive artists! Signs of needing my our own living spaces as we head into our 30s.

The only theft at the flat

Before Casey moved in, Jim connected with a sweet young woman from the deep south, who stayed in the front room for a week, while looking for a place. She was a young deadhead, and enjoyed talking about the GD with me. She had a cd of *American Beauty* (I had the lp and tape) requesting to play it on my system. Clear sounding! Jim thought she'd be a good roommate. I vetoed that, feeling she would not last. This was extra apparently the right intuitive choice. Returning home after work, I have an eagle eye for any subtle changes in my room.

There are missing cassettes! Shuffled around to make it less noticeable, and these were Grateful Dead concert tapes. I put two and two together. Our visitor must have taken them. It was a small violation, but I was furious! I would have gladly copied them, but no, she had to be sneaky and physically remove them from my room. Confrontation brought sheepish apologies, and bs excuses about she planned to return them. But why the sly replacements? Why not ask first? I don't think she felt comfortable there after that folly, and soon moved on. She was a disappointment. Especially after I discovered later that she still had one tape not returned! Cassette #2 of *2/13/70 Fillmore East*, a longtime favorite! Arg! (fortunately better copies were available a couple years later. but still!)

The Forum

Meanwhile by '94 Jim got involved in *The Forum*. Sounding like a group to help one move past personal psychological obstacles. Inviting everyone to an introductory

lecture. I didn't give it much thought, thinking okay, that should be interesting. Before it happened, I was at P's, and casually mentioned it as something upcoming that Jim is into, "this thing called *The Forum*"

Her eyes widened in that look of horror of something very very wrong was experienced. "That's *EST!*" then she told me of their history, and how they brainwash people like a business yuppie religion. *The Forum* is an offshoot of *est*. When she wrote a critical article on them in the eighties, they swooped in and blocked it from publication. She continued to tell more about the bs of Erhardt, etc. Now I had reasons for cynical skepticism, so I resisted. Jim was all gaga about what they did for him. Some kind of breaking you down emotionally, as a kind of refurbishment process to "breakthroughs" they call it. I wasn't talking very nicely about it to Jim, and I could have been kinder. If he benefits, I should be supportive. Joe, Matt and Casey went. They went, politely curiously, declined further interest, and that was that. I was more resistant. Jim's friend **Larry**, who he shared a woodworking shop, I thought was a charismatic fellow. He had a really neat wood shop was in his garage up 14th Street towards **Corona Heights** that Jim shared. I stopped by once for a checking it out. Nice woodshop setup!

Back at Bryant, visiting, he started in with talk of "*Dean, don't you wish you could communicate with others more directly with no barriers at all?*"

My reply,

"Nope."

I felt this guy was like a greasy salesman, insinuating I didn't live with a good enough attitude. Plus I knew about the benefits of indoctrinating others in their system. This made me view it all as a disingenuous tactic, serving their yuppie status. I'd developed a thick hide from religious coercion in my youth while staying in Alaska for a short while. Embracing the stubborn swede stereotype, and those were my "bohemian" style years. The San Francisco Cacophony Society helped bolster my sense of irreverence,

and the Forum sounded like it had less than 0.0001% of that mentality.

Meanwhile, Jim was fired up about this! It must have freed up a side of him that felt right. I wasn't necessarily being a supportive friend. I was critical instead.

Jims new sweetheart

One day while I was painting a scene of a pumpkin growing near the ocean at sunset (**Half Moon Bay** styled), Jim introduced me to his new sweetheart, Misako (already mentioned a few paragraphs above) from Japan. Super sweet, cute, and seemed perfect for Jim! Those were fun moments, and I enjoyed their company. She's Japanese and has the fun accent, as we appreciated her affected mispronunciations of things. Like "giter" was a guitar.

Anyway, they met through *the Forum*, adding extra emphasis of its personal importance for Jim.

Open Studios

(I did mention this isn't necessarily written in chronological order, right?)

Autumn 1992, Jim and I set up the flat as an art exhibit! It was a nice way to clear clutter away temporarily. Piling stuff in the back shed room and pantry for that weekend. The place looking great, set up to display our art.

I drew a flyer with our view of Twin Peaks out back. We paid to be listed in the city wide official *Open Studios* catalog, and have small pieces in the show at good old SoMarts. Not bad, but turned out to be a long, boring weekend, waiting for people to show up, around one or two every couple hours, to not spend much time — because there are more in the neighborhood — scurrying in, glanced around, gave compliments, and left. Maybe ten minutes total, before another hour passed. Friends made appearances, helping to give the day a kick of energy. Juliet, (who I recently met at Lory's birthday party at Joe and Janes, on Bartlett St) is a real artist, showing up with a friend was great. **Jayson, Dan**, I know from *Cacophony*, and *Burning Man*

(Dan got me in the Free Band) showed up, for almost an hour each, absorbing the art work, savoring it all with appreciation.

Other than that, it felt like it was kind of a waste of time and energy, better spent working on art, not worrying about acceptance or sales. The point of making the art is so separate from exhibits and promotion. I hated the drudgery of prep of presentation,.making slides, getting ready to be judged by snooty gallery directors, etc, *ad nauseum*. Creating the work was *the actual joy!*

Painting in my room

I was always happy living with my creations in place of having a studio elsewhere. At the Academy painting studio, (on the third floor of the fine arts building on **Sutter & Mason**) was a place I spent as much time at as possible, and I took advantage!

Painting at the Bryant pad, I made good progress. I was fresh out of college, driven. I lived for it. A big disciplinary painting major joy was the ritual custom of putting on favorite music, and focusing on oil painting day into late night. I made some strong artworks in those Mission years, that gave me good momentum that lasted decades. I began painting in the front bedroom I inhabited while an Academy of Art student, only painting in my bedroom between semesters, and after graduating. (end of 1990) I made some good works in there. Smaller easel sized paintings — using my mom's old lightweight easel she had since the 1930s in her high school years. Sentiment runs high about that object. In 1989 was the year I started painting Nordic themes. The old *Svafnir* portrait was from a dream I had of an ancient viking came to life on the canvas. A strong enough dream to get me to attempt to paint — so I did December '89, after classes ended. I kept development of the Viking themes, and now some from that era think of me as a Nordic artist. Well I definitely indulged that content for about two years. I wrote more about that peak in this 1990 memoir :

<https://dean-gustafson.com/autobiographical/June-1990.pdf>

Graduated! next up,...

Flash to 1991, after graduating. I was determined to make solid art of museum quality. Not sure if I achieved that, but it was a good proactive goal. I set to work, making good stretchers for quality canvas.

Memorably I made this, another dream derived inspiration, covered in this writeup:

<https://dean-gustafson.com/artwork-essays/PRE-ECLIPTIC%20PAINTING.pdf>

That was a productive time, I didn't have the Academy studio to labor in, but home.

This was better! Nobody watching my progress (different merits were gained from that environment) but now my own time, later than around 10-midnight, closing hours. Among the work I've already written about, here are more links to essays covering the paintings, including essential points about those times and place, ... here's from 1993:

"The Ocean"

https://dean-gustafson.com/artwork-essays/painting_the_ocean.pdf

"Keeping Time (in the desert)"

<https://dean-gustafson.com/artwork-essays/KEEPING%20TIME.pdf>

and from 1994, the "Portrait of P, at the top of the stairs"

https://dean-gustafson.com/artwork-essays/portrait_of_P.pdf

"View From The Bryant Pad"

<https://dean-gustafson.com/artwork-essays/VIEW%20FROM%20THE%20BRYANT%20PAD.pdf>

Growing pot

In my *View From The Bryant Pad* essay, I described the pot plant I had growing out on the stoop. On one of P's visits when it was bursting with resin-laden buds, she was delighted at the quality and suggested I leave it out in the sun on the stoop. Ach, but I returned one afternoon to find it pulled, stolen! I was furious, until remembering that I'm not into reefer. But P was, who fortunately had her own harvest growing up at

1907 Golden Gate. Still I enjoyed growing as a challenge. It could have been a neighbor who wanted it, or possibly the landlord or his workers knew it's illegal and wanted it out? But I was never notified. So *ces't la vie*. Hey its immortalized in that little painting!

More artwork to write about yet

I have more to write specifically about, including the Viking ship series, eclipse of '91, a few surreal pieces such as *Pangea*, *Neuropath*, *Stones of the Sky*: the triptych I salvaged, *Ephemeral Self Allegory*, *Nocturnal Descendance of Ephemeral Time*, the earthquake series, final primordial alchemy painting, prototypes mostly lost, the wing, and more odds and ends... and hundreds of sketchbook pages, which was the real playground of exploration. I was a busy artist!

Jim painted anywhere but his room, wisely, he didn't have many windows. He took over the back shed room next to the back door. Sometimes to use toxic products like polyurethane. Whew, what a toxic smell! Otherwise painting in oils and acrylics, applying dyes to wood of his fine art furniture — of outstanding quality craftsmanship and creativity. It was a joy to see his final products! This was an energizing environment to be a young artist in.

Back to my process. I had these perfect nights painting away with my trusty stereo on low volume. I would get into a rhythm, laying out the chosen paint colors on my messy piece of glass palette, with paint tubes of quality **Winsor & Newton**, either gifted to me from P and Pam, (*Emerald Green* was a fav) or splurged on from sales at local art supply stores (**Flax, SF Art Supplies, Michaels**) New brushes were handled with extra care. I bought from Flax (Market & Valencia) a good plastic container for inverting brushes in solvent. This made for better long-brush longevity. The new environmentally better **Turpenoid Natural** became my brush cleaner of choice.

I would back up to view paintings progress from a slightly longer distance by stepping

out on the back stoop to look into my back window. Seeing the work progress from even a slightly farther distance of a few more feet made a difference. I remember viewing the partially finished *Stones Of The Sky*, realizing how it should be a triptych. Then making this happen. I was grateful for that back window view through the windows. Something lacking in my old front room, and living room. My evolution as a painter started to show. A satisfactory feeling!

The capstan era

Back then cassette tapes were the norm. I had drawers full. A solid vintage 70s **Pioneer** tape deck, with solid wood sides, like a piece of quality integrated furniture. It lasted a few years until the band stretched, the gears of the counter started to get stuck, and I had to switch for a newer model. Cassettes were easiest for painting to. Flipping records was frequently done too, but trickier with paint on hands to do so every 22 minutes or so. I had plenty of Grateful Dead — still an obsession! Jim made a wall rack that housed hundreds of tapes neatly. He isn't even a deadhead! He had a boombox with a tape player in the kitchen, useful cooking before I had the room off the kitchen.

Parents, family visits

Once in 1991, with Brian driving. Dad was intimidated by Bay area freeways, so rarely went to the city. On rare occasions they wanted brunch at the **Cliff House**, going a few times in the 80s, without me because it was always too early. In '93 I joined them there! Taking my bicycle, because I was a monster on the mountain bike! We had a nice brunch with the beautiful view of the ocean from our table. (The antique style rooms are long gone after the remodel in the 21st century.) I then talked them into meeting me up on Twin Peaks, because the best views are from up there, and it was a nice clear day. It worked out. It's possible Brian was driving? But I think this time it was just dad and mom. I'm glad they made it! Mom took a photo of me in my

Guatemalan shirt, beaming away, with the urban backdrop below, energized by the exuberant bike ride up. A sparkling beauty of a San Francisco day.

Joni and friends visited a few times! In '89 and '92? Her skiing friend **Darien** lived nearby me, so that was good, but I never crossed paths with her around the 'hood.

Other times visitors include **Uncle Walt & Aunt Melba** after meeting me at the Academy and treated to Japanese restaurant **Tempura** on **Powell Street**. (Walt made the comment about Twin Peaks, "looks like a pair of Dolly Partons! "funny!")

Craig came by a few times. Sometimes around our ski trips to **Tahoe**. One time at the flat with Bri, he had his watch collection in a padded case. Wow! Magnificent riches in tow, odd triangular watches from the 40s and 50s. This was possibly 1990, when he gave me a superb self-winding **Bulova!** Not a lot of Mission visits, but was always fab!

Gary visited in '90 and '93, Brian drove him over, then we went to the Ocean. **Grant**, and his new wife **Lori**, (1990, when mom getting chemo)

Nephew Kim and the mtn bike ride to Tam

(moving and eventually owning a condo on Bartlett years later!) In '94 I took him on a mountain bike ride all the way across town, over the bridge, around the mountain to **Ross, Phoenix Lake** to the **Eldridge Grade trail**, up up up to the top. I have been accustomed to this now since '92. I asked if he was into mountain biking. He said yes! Based on his Massachusetts upbringing., they have mountains there so I figured he'd beat me up! Boy, was I wrong. He had a hard time keeping up, and that slowed us down. I should have known better, it was a major struggle. He's 10 years younger than me, putting him around 19-20. I couldn't keep up at that age. It takes a few years to develop the stamina. We had to race down the narrow way down to catch the ferry on time. I had to really push him to make it. The poor dude — but did mention in jest that he'll get me back for that! He has a good spirit. We could have turned around at **Sausalito** instead, keeping it leisurely, but no. Uncle Dean is hardcore.

Continuing the topic of Bicycles

My main transportation mode before I was interested in driving. I was in my anti-car mentality. Going up hills was a joyous challenge! The way I'd focus on cranking the pedals down in low gears, feeling as one with my velocipede. Up the longest steepest grades. No matter how tough, I always made it to the top. On mountain trails, I transformed into some kind of a bird-panther-serpent-mammal. When good friend **Dhaivyd** moved to **Fairfax** from **St Paul Minnesota**, I rode all the way there and back in 1992. Not a small ride. This got me into regular rides across the bridge and up Mt Tam! I got when I'd time it from the Bryant pad to the top in three hours! This was by 1992-93, and I kept going that way in the decades following. Another *raison d'être*!

Twin Peaks rides

In the city I thrived on weekly riding to Twin Peak.. . for years! Usually up 25th to Noe Valley, charging my way up **Clipper Street**. A long haul uphill. Over to the rest of the winding road up, and that section was easy. I took to the smaller third peak, which was just south of the famous two, but I liked the unique unpopulated destination. I'd enjoy the views with my heart pumping healthier from the calisthenic climb. triumphant! I would sometimes go up with Joe on spontaneous calls. Good times!

Otherwise, Bernal Hill and Potrero Hill and up to Noe Valley were the other proximal bicycling destinations from the Mission.

I wrote about Bernal Hill earlier, and in my 1991 memoir. Potrero Hill, just across the freeway has steepness. I loved riding up and down **Vermont Street** is a lesser known winding street like the famed **Lombard**, that is a main tourist destination in North Beac.. I would enjoy riding my bike down that too! Going back to 1984.

Riding up to Noe Valley has several steep options. **Hill Street** will kick your ass! I sputtered out on that one a few times. **21st** is a tremendous grade, from Church Street

on up (later on, the **Tom and Jerry Christmas house** was a fantastic feature in the middle of 21st Street every December! that sadly ended a few years ago)

Taking 20th to the top of **Dolores Park** was a frequent ride. Great views of the city from along the top. Then zooming down Church Street, avoiding stopping near the footbridge from the dangerous reputation that lingers in the shadows. In reverse was a great workout climb.

Otherwise 25th up from **Guerrero** was a beast I would relish in flying up rapidly!

[Other bike rides deserve their own separate writings.]

South of Army/Chavez was more Mission that stretched out a good ways, eventually reaching the tougher **Excelsior** district. I would only traverse that way to get to specialty shops, and to **City College**. There was a good drum store down that way I rode to for some well needed parts. The home brew supplies shop was west of City College, so I'd ride that way to do a round trip with the least resistance. **Cafe Commons** was on Mission Street just a few blocks west of Bernal Heights, that Vaunie worked at in '92. I stopped in a couple times. Academy colleague and Conspiracy Of Equals fan **Miriam** lived around **30th & Mission**. Otherwise I didn't know much of that area for years.

Bicycle shops

Valencia Cyclery was a go-to in the Mission as bicycling the city became more popular. I would use them for parts and repairs, until I found some of the shop staff to be condescending knowitalls. (not the deadhead who I saw at shows until 2019! cool, quiet fellow) Not knowing what the freewheel was called, was met with eye rolling snickering. FTS I thought, and relied on the better staff up in Noe Valley on **Diamond Street**, (Diamond Bicycles?). Sometimes relying on **American Cyclery** in the Haight. I really burned through the parts, riding as much as I did.

Bicycle repair work

If you're going to ride so often with a limited artists budget, then your own repairman skills are needed. I got into changing tires, chains and gears. Things wear and tear down after taking such a beating, over potholes in the city, and bumpy rocks on the fire roads in the wild. I enjoyed gearhead days, getting the toolbox out and changing freewheel and chain, tightening brakes, changing tires, etc... It was usually while cranking the **Meat Puppets**. This was my bicycle repair band!

Walking To BART

To work, on 25th usually, passing the corner store, the dangerous park, the small bar next to the phone company, called **The Phone Box** (used to be on Capp?), Bay windows, to Mission Street, with the fancy aged light green Victorian on the southeast corner there was **O'Shaughnessy florist**. Turn right with the busyness buzzing around me, others walking to catch the train too.

There were buskers at busy stations of all sorts, and the most original in style was a fantastic classical violinist who played exquisite **Mozart**, delighting us commuters as we swiped our magnetic tickets through the portals. However this guy had long dreadlocks tied up on his head, and wore womens lingerie in fishnet stockings! Bold. Living nearby, I'd see him walking 25th. He was performing at the 1994 **SOMARTs** Burning Man event and exhibition that I had paintings in. Later finding out he goes by the name **Thoth**, later moved to **NYC**, with a documentary made about him there.

Streetlight Records, Noe Valley, 24th Street.

A good destination for a stroll up 24th, the main drag. Picking up some long favored gems, **Frank Zappa**, Robyn Hitchcock, Todd Rundgren, including **the Soft Boys** compilation by **Rykodisk**. **Debussy** piano volumes performed by **Martin Jones** (mainly for P, but would tape them for myself. I still enjoy those cds)

On 20th off of Dolores used to be **Manzanita Books**. A funky old used bookstore with a cool owner, **Wayne**. I'd stop in, find a book or record (with a small selection of used lp's) Chat with Wayne about whatever intellectual whim was brought up, then mosey on home with my finds. He had a small pamphlet made covering a tour of the *Bookstores of the Mission*. It must have been a few years back, before so many closed down forever during this Internet age. I think his store closed by '95. Sad to see it gone. I have a thing for used bookstores. The antique paper scent brings me back.

Friends bad move nearby

Some accounts are already written about in other essays, including Academy artist friend **Jason**. I don't think I mentioned when Jason and his sweetheart at the time (1993) moved into a solid first floor flat on Treat Street and 25th, lasting only one month. The difference from one block to another can make or break you. This was for a good price, affordable for the young couple of artists. Excited about their new pad, but terrorized by the tough tenants of *The Projects* just down the same block. Blowing dynamite on their doorstep, any time of day. Puncturing their car tires from the sides, making them useless for repairs. To smashing their gated windows. Too bad, it's probably okay there after *The Projects* were redone a few years later.

My music studio flop (1992)

I wrote about drumming in the living room, and I was in the Haight Ashbury Free Band performing improvised "out" jazz. Jim has a natural musical talent, singing, occasionally cello, and acoustic guitar. Matt is an accomplished songwriter /guitarist, and recording artist! He asked Jim and I to participate in a recording session he had booked a studio for a few miles up towards SOMA. The night before with Matt and Jim in the living room, I beat out a beat on a box for a few bars to his song, and I was in! Confidence high, and I learned later was too unreasonably high.

The following was a weeknight after work, Jim drove me and my drumkit to the

studio, set up in the very nice isolated studio environment. I was given headphones to play with the existing unfinished track. I had only working experience with live bands all playing together at once in real time. Even in my teenage rock bands, we really loved **The Beatles** (very studio-centered) but I'd only recorded live. I was unprepared for this method — intimidated, to the point where I lost control of the beat, the feel, and the timing was awful. I felt the pressure of the studio time ticking, and got worse as I went through a few takes. Hearing the playback was humiliating. Matt was still supportive (a true gent) He started to conduct my timing in the studio room, with the producer patiently working the board through the window, who has probably seen this collapse of abilities before.

After a short time, Matt's friend Mike C. (an accomplished recording artist — particularly in years ahead) multi-instrumentalist, took over on the drums and played a very grooving relaxed non-nervous fitting drum part that clicked. Nice! They were understanding and supportive, but I was unfortunately feeling hard on myself.

Exhausted by this time, I ended up napping in the hallway as they wrapped recording up. Jim sounded great as a lead vocalist. Actually I was sulking in my phony nap, when I should have bucked up and showed interest in the recording process. I let my fragile young ego to feel bruised. Well *wah wah fucking wah*. It is no big deal to fail on a very first professional recording studio experience. I was exhausted at the end of a day doing construction work. However, when I'm creatively interested in something enough, I'm energized, not drained. I felt like a bringdown that evening. Packing up, I was being a gloomy gus.

The following day Matt demanded that I accept being paid for my time and drumset use. I figured since I failed to deliver, I shouldn't accept, but he cut me a check., demanding I accept it as a payment for my time, attempt, and drums use for the hour.

"In Defense Of The Vulnerable Man"

The name of his album, on cassette only, with my painting '*Vulnerable Man*' gracing

the cover, and guiding the title concept. This was an honor! I got nothing but support about my studio night. Otherwise, I thought Matt was being too sympathetic. Yet now knowing that feeling of studio performance burn, I did gain a new respect for studio recording. I should have paid good attention to everything, but blew that chance. or the chance wasn't timed well. Regardless, details involved of recording music are an amazing art form!

"You're The Pits" <https://youtu.be/6mcYv1wq13s>

I did another studio recording in early '94, laying down a drum track for **Peter** "the Hippie" **Doty** on his brilliant parody *You're The Pits*. Good fun! I made a mistake in a moment in the recording, but Peter liked it. He said it added to the "pits" quality to leave the mistake in!

He later paid me with a hit of LSD. Classic!

Brief return to psychedelics

In the era of **Terrance McKenna** writing about psilocybin and the evolution of consciousness, who a few friends enjoyed, I was in good company to return to tripping on acid. I got a hit from a good source in 1993, and I took it wary that it could go weird. It was beautiful! I was in my room, appreciating every detail about it. The walls, woodwork, the view! My music collection, etc. I then went to Free Band practice, which in that summer took place in **Hidden Studios**. With small soundproofed rooms that **Larry The O** rented for his band. Free Band could use it on Sundays. Located not far away from me, I would ride the bike to Chavez going east, through the tangled bike trails under the complex layers of freeways, towards the industry zone of warehouses, near the sewage plant. Getting access from Nick and I'm in. I was a confident acid tripper, getting into drumming. I loved it! Nobody could tell. Meanwhile the buzz is feeling like tamboura's twanging in the center of my brain. I also felt the threatening spectre of a potential bad trip hanging behind a shoulder

like a demon to avoid. A fascinating sense of awareness.

The next was in **Nevada**, In the Black Rock desert during *Desert Siteworks*, a good artists alternative to Burning Man. That was... trippy!

Other times with Jason at the Academy of Sciences, the perfect place to be psychedelic! Afterwards we enjoyed a fogged in Golden Gate park.. with sharpened minds.

In 1994 my final trip was also my final Grateful Dead concert. With Jason, we drove down to Shoreline in his orange vw bus [a couple years later became my bus]

Then Psilocybin in 1992 at Shoreline for the GD. with Vaunie, Jane and Joe. It's always good times with Joe and Jane!

Playing guitar

I think I already wrote memories about acoustic guitar playing in the 1994 memoir. Unsure what to add to that here but it did start at the Bryant pad, using Jim's acoustic Yamaha, with both Jason and Jim, we'd get Jims Beatles songbook out, diving into vocal harmonies. Now that was addictive! I started playing guitar seriously at the age of 30. Also 1994, I had v-drums briefly setup, from **Alex** electric violinist of **Yes No Maybe**. Met via Burning Man, jammed a few times but didn't after moving.

More Matt memories

It was great to discover our mutual music interests! He's also big into all things Beatles. It was fun to share my bootleg tapes of the fab four, making copies for friends like Matt! Appreciative. He bought the book *The Complete Beatles Recording Sessions*. A chronological outline of what they recorded and when. It was something we totally nerded over obsessively. (I found my own copy a decade later) Unfortunately not long after that splurge, he brought it somewhere one evening, and taking a cab back, realizing he left it in the cab. He couldn't track the cabbie down, so, bummer! A fellow Swede! He rarely joined for Cacophony events, yet enjoyed hearing about

them later. He did join me for a Burning Man event out at **Lake Merced**. We rode bicycles there and back for an afternoon event.

Then he made it to **Burning Man '92!** In **The Black Rock Desert, Nevada**. That was an amazing time! Jim made it too. It seemed that everyone I knew in SF was there that year.

Notable Burning Man '92 desert memories:

Pam made it there from Minnesota! I made my first large sundial out of rocks from nearby **Trego Springs**. It worked! A small airplane tried landing on the softer than usual playa sand, and flipped upside down! Fortunately seat belts saved the few passengers from harm. The playa was too soft for bicycling, so my brand new mtn bike was useless out there. Brian hauled it in his Jeep. I didn't want my drum kit this time. (been there, drummed that) I turned 29 the night of the burn. Freezing cold temperatures shut everyone in their tents early. Only Pam and I stayed up around the campfire. I spent more time with P this time. Brewster and Mary had the first ever wedding at that event!

The first year when outsiders invaded with new problems. A wired, probably drunk stranger was driving recklessly too close to our tent! need for **Danger Ranger** and crew to step in. **Kimric** took his keys and threw them out onto the darkness of the desert night. I seriously doubt they could be found until morning. anyway, that was the year realizing it's not our intimate event anymore.

Time times

I was enjoying my life after the Academy, painting, drawing and Cacophony/Burning Man. With a stunning steady sweetheart, even though we were from world's apart, we clicked on certain levels and she enriched my life. Betwixt 1991-1994, I'd read all of **Proust**. I savored those volumes for nearly three years, underlined interesting paragraphs and sentences in my thick softcover **Montcrieff** translations. It gave me

time to think about time. I became very interested in literature about the nature of time. Non-fiction and fictional alike. This fascination with *Time* entered my paintings. Incorporating empty watchcases, and using words like "ephemeral" in the titles. I made giant anamorphic sundials, for *Burning Man '92* and *Desert Siteworks' 93*. Researching at the main **Civic Center** library where I used to spend time at, discovering fascinating knowledge, poring over encyclopedias, making xerox copies of pertinent pages, the old pre-internet way.

Galleries

I mentioned **Galleria de la Raza**, the Hispanic gallery up on 24th. **Enrique Chagoya** was the artist there I remember the name of. He gave a talk at the Academy that was interesting, representing the galeria that I was proud to live nearby, but never pursued exhibiting there. Not being Hispanic made that difference.

The other gallery on **22nd** and Bryant that is long gone now. I can't trace the name online, but had circus imagery as the mural. It was a happening place with monthly openings, I attended a few. I tried talking with the French owner, but was too standoffish. P went in with my slides, and the guy dismissed my work as "*stealing from Rembrandts palette.*" A compliment or slight? I felt the latter and didn't bother returning.

I was in a few small galleries in the early 90s, **A Gallery**, 1990, South of Market (Eva from **Dusseldorf** ran it. She was from the Academy) ; **Architects and Heroes**, 1993 — a hybrid art gallery/hair salon, I showed at their Powell Street location downtown. ; **Railway Spine** gallery, 1994, also SoMar (**Lordan Bunch** ran it, a successful painter from the Academy) ; **Somarts** (good old **South of market Cultural Center**) shown there in group shows for years. Annual Academy of Art shows, to Burning Man events, Open Studios and beyond. The real crown was my solo retrospective exhibit at **Bayfront Gallery**, at **Fort Mason**, on the pier over the waters of the bay, July 1992.

These were not financially successful, yet I forged on as professionally as I could be. Because I am generally interested to prepare and present well. [in my 1991 essay, it's described how I got that show.]

Museums

I spent an awful lot of great times in the local art museums **SFMOMA** before it had its own building, connected with the Civic Center on **Van Ness** near the City hall. So many exhibits! (this little summary is no match for a more comprehensive essay to come) The old **De Young** in GGP, I got to know that permanent collection well, special exhibits too. The **CAS** of course. And the **Legion Of Honor**. All contributing to the richness of those years.

Venues, Cafes, Bars, Landmarks

A few that are long gone are worth recording here, as historical documentation,..., personal history, etc.

On the way up Bernal Heights, on **Corbett**, just west of **Precita Park**, stood the **Beatles house**. Fab! *Yellow Submarine* styled mural on the face of this house, standing out amidst the surrounding plain facades. As a lifetime long Beatles freak, this was awesome! I heard parents let their teenage daughter take the house painting over, then left up for decades! Jim showed me in '89, another Beatles freak. Ownership must have changed around '91, because when looking forward to showing a friend, (probably Matt when he moved in, that was '91) found it painted over! Only a floating cartoon head of John Lennon remained near the front door. That mural was maintained well over time. I mourned its passing, as a piece of old free-spirited San Francisco.

Precita Eyes Murals center was not far away. Right on **Precita Park** — a long narrow park between two streets, south of Army/Cesar Chavez Street (old names stick in old memory banks). I spent time passing through on the way up Bernal Hill, usually on

bicycle, otherwise on foot with friends on nice night walks up to the views. Had some memorable walks up there with Matt late at night.

I figured out the labyrinth of staircases that zigzag their way up the hill, for that 1993 Cacophony event I threw with Peter. That was fun!

Café Cozzolino

On the corner of Folsom and Precita, a nice little Italian restaurant opened, around 1992? Fortunately they would post 2 for 1 coupons in the old **SF Guardian** - the free paper found all over the city in streetcorner news boxes and cafe's. I would find, cut the coupon out and use to dine out with P. We were both usually broke. A side effect of living the creative free-spirited lifestyle. **Café Cozzolino** was its name. I dug their gnocchi dishes.

Research shows it permanently closed around 2012. Probably victim to the rising costs of living in SF, harder for a restaurant far off the beaten path. (special thanks to the original owners for making it possible for young artists like me to take his Sicilian sweetheart out for good Italian food!)

Concerts probably not been mentioned in other essays, and their associations

(Trying to not repeat what has already been covered elsewhere.)

Zero at Slims, 1992? With **Dave Rim**, who I met at a house construction job in the city that Brian took on after meeting **Jo**, at a Cacophony meeting in '91. Dave lived there, cranking the Dead, so we had that in common with tape trade ops! He was a big fan of **Steve Kimock** who I'd seen years before but didn't sink in. We went to that show, and he raved (justifiably) about his guitar voice speaking to us. I was impressed!

Robyn Hitchcock & The Egyptians. 1992-93. I was in the thick of my following Robyn H's catalog, and those were the final years with his trio— the Egyptians. I caught them at **Slims, GAMH, Rough Trade Records** (in the Haight), and the

Warfield. Supporting their albums for A&M, *Perspex Island* and *Respect*. both helped characterize my years in the back room. Great gigs with The Egyptians! In '94 he was solo again at the GAMH (**Great American Music Hall**, probably my favorite venue). Fine with me, I dug it all.

Steve Howe, solo at the GAMH. ('92?) A truly fabulous solo guitar show — I went with Joe! (Karlin might have joined us too?)

Steve Tibbetts and **Marc Anderson**, 1992, GAMH. A must! I am an old Minnesota Tibbetts fan, he rarely tours (it had been seven years) I went with Jason of the Academy. Good to see percussionist master Marc Anderson on the ticket and marquee! Deservedly.

Josef Brinkmann and the Conspiracy of Equals.

1991-92. More of every gig I could make it to. **Paradise Lounge, Bottom Of The Hill, I-Beam, Last Day Saloon, Kennel Club**, etc. Matt would usually be there. Great favorite local band!

Straw coyotes

Dhaivyd's group of fine musicians that were active from 1992-94. A relatively large folk group, with **Dhaivyd** on percussion and vocals. **Kirk**, guitar, vocals **Kwame**, guitar, vocals. **Deborah**, vocals. **Deanna**, vocals, flute. **Adam**, guitar, vocals. I want to elaborate more, but for now I'll say their sound was a good part of those Bryant years. I was at gigs in '92 when they were called **New Grass Spirits**. First was at a Halloween party at the house where Dhaivyd lived in the forested town of Fairfax. I went with Jim, and we picked up Tim who recently moved to Fairfax. They performed their polished repertoire right in the living room, who were so good it kept everyone in rapt attention. Instead of being just a party, it was a living room concert! Costumed on Halloween made it even more fun. Memory of meeting Kirk. I had my wild primitive Cacophony mask there, and passing a joint around I decided sure! Rarely do I toke. Kirk exclaimed while I was passing it to him, "*Smokin' with the alien!*"

Over the next few years, I attended several Straw Coyotes gigs. At the **Owl and the Monkey** in the **Inner Sunset**. **Sacred Grounds** on **Hayes**. **Cafe Picaro**, before it became a restaurant. on 16th in the **Mission** (a café with books everywhere) **Bottom of the Hill**, Cafe (*changed names*) on **Baker & McAlister**. **Mill Valley...** etc.

Neil Young, Concord Pavilion 1993. Brian scored tickets from the radio for under 10\$ each! The only time I was in new roommate Caseys vw bus, he drove a few of us there. Jayson from Cacophony was also there. Great show ! Neil with Booker T & the MG's! alternating acoustic with electric.

Grateful Dead, Shoreline and Oakland coliseum. Mardi Gras 1993 stands out. I took P, to her only Dead concert. Enjoying the spectacle of the elaborate floats, (new president Clinton had a sax in one hand with a joint in the other!) Ornette Coleman warmed up and sat in! Otherwise she complained that the music was too simple. Ah well, coming from the classical music angle. I enjoyed it all.

There are more live music experiences listed in other relevant essays. Pink Floyd, Jefferson Airplane, GD, Todd Rundgren, Bowie, Meat Puppets, The Mekons, etc.

I could write and add more and more details, but possibly repeating myself. More might be added after awhile, as new old memories emerge out of the blue - green - purples - turquoise... . *Surprise!*

Conclusions

Formative years. Freedom to create, roam, stay up late. Financially they were strained, but inexpensive meant affordable. Jim calls it the *bohemians years*. The years when creativity meant everything. My ego was bloated at times. Imbalanced. There was a sense of noncompliance as a virtue. Of doing your own thing, uncompromisingly, helps the individual artist form a stronger path. Plus, the irreverent Cacophony Society I was part of made subversion fun! Freeing me up from my over seriously artist mentality, that often didn't work well.

I was busy, but it was playful busy, art/music /bicycling /hiking/loving! I had a cultural, intellectual, social, sensuous, sexy, mature diva of a sweetheart in the thick of those years. I had loving family across the bay I visited weekly, a job with brother Brian that may have not been good profit but paid my frugal bills, and good building skills that aided me for life. Fantastic lifelong friends and unique communities of overlapping social circles. A drive to draw something daily — now that I have scanned every decent sketchbook page, the inventory, diversity, and evolution is rather staggering really. I made thousands sketchbook artworks worth framing.

In strong physical shape — no hill too steep to climb or ride a bicycle up. Enjoyed turning more vegetarian. Catching the best of Bay area concerts. Soaking in culture and nature like a good dharma not-bum, but a proactive busy finder of inspiration.

So why did I ever get anxieties? Proust has a quote that we were highly amused by, "*Without neurosis there can be no great artist.*"

I wore the neurotic badge proudly. Ha ha, right? Now I'm not sure that is always true. I take it to mean to be obsessed with projects lends to an imbalanced state. This was me. I guess with aging we lose some sense of nervous apprehension. Those were years of developing ego— not always balanced. Some regret, I have a few, not many.

This was living!

Life after Bryant Street

I had such a good run of years in my twenties, that I didn't realize were so fortunate until they were over. Struggling to find a decent apartment after 1994 ended became the struggle of my life.

In 1996 I found a place, with roommates. **1197 South Van Ness**. Lory is a good friend of Joe and Jane, looking for a roommate, and she's great! An excellent room, older, higher ceilings, grandiose, a real Victorian. Score!

The other roommates made it feel more like a boarding house than home. I did enjoy

plenty of that time and flat. In fact I connected with my future wife then. She moved in with me that summer, and we had a most magical year. That's another story, but part of my Mission experience. We moved to the **Richmond district** on **Fulton** right across the road from **Golden Gate Park**. A heavenly locale near the Ocean too! I still identified with The Mission. Years later, nephew Kim moved there, around the start of the techie trend. Working in Silicon Valley, living in the city. It ended up transforming the city to higher rents, driving lower incomes out. It's just a pattern that's happened before during the gold rush— just that the local tech industry keeps thriving. Now you have to have a great income to rent an apartment in the Mission. A far cry from my years there. It transformed within a few years, yet still garnered creativity. The Valencia Street corridor became hopping with good businesses, fun features, better quality, yeh, if you *can* afford it. I would enjoy the newer bars, restaurants, cafes, theater groups, and **City College**, Mission campus— I attended in 2009. A much different Mission from my years. I still enjoyed different qualities, in fact spent many good times there, preferably living near the ocean. I should write separately about that Mission. Sure, some things were still there, just not much.

Dream realms of 2720 Bryant

Since leaving that old flat, I have the most dreams of it than any other place I've lived. In these dreams, familiar details mingle with new rooms that are impossible to have there in real life. Often Jim is still present. It's like time travel but in alternate parallel realms. The old building and those times certainly have made impressions!

- Dean Gustafson, March 2025

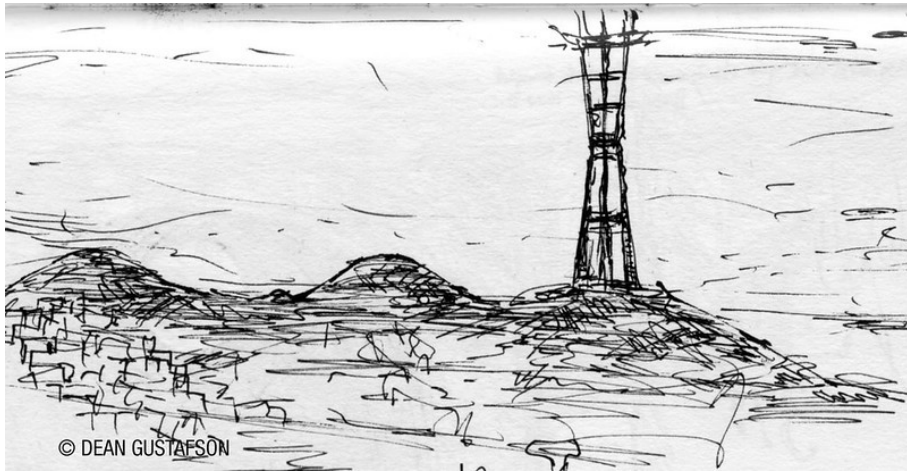
A few sketchbook pages



front view out the bedroom window. 1990



the living room, 1990



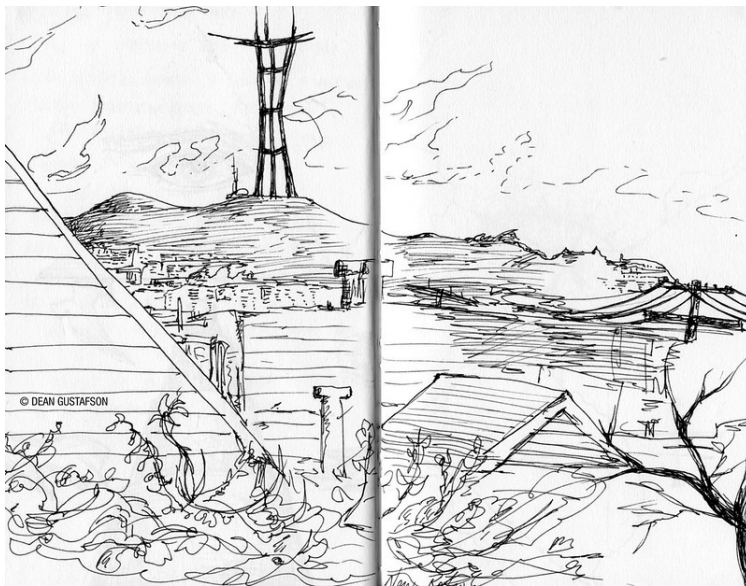
the view from the back, 1989



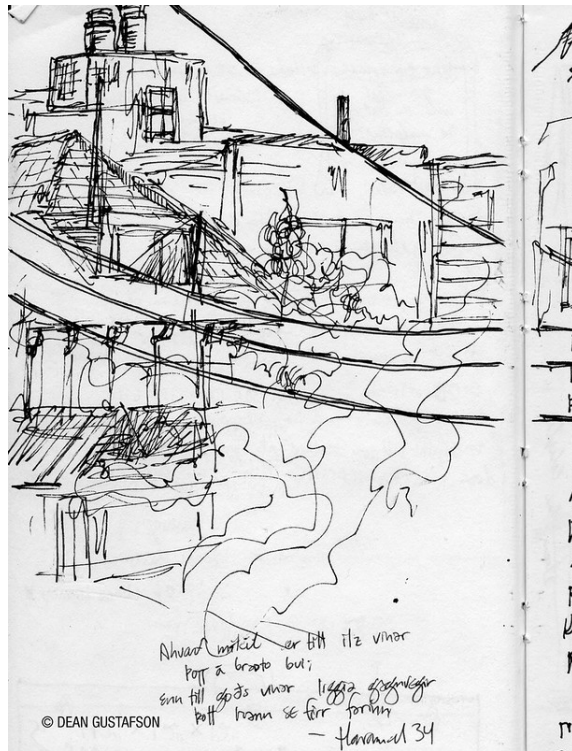
front window view of the corner store, 1990



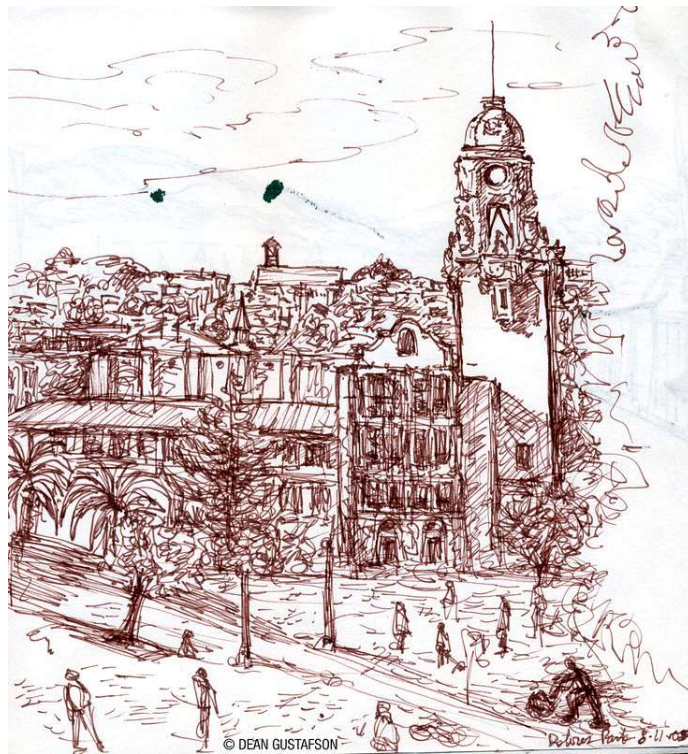
front bedroom, 1989



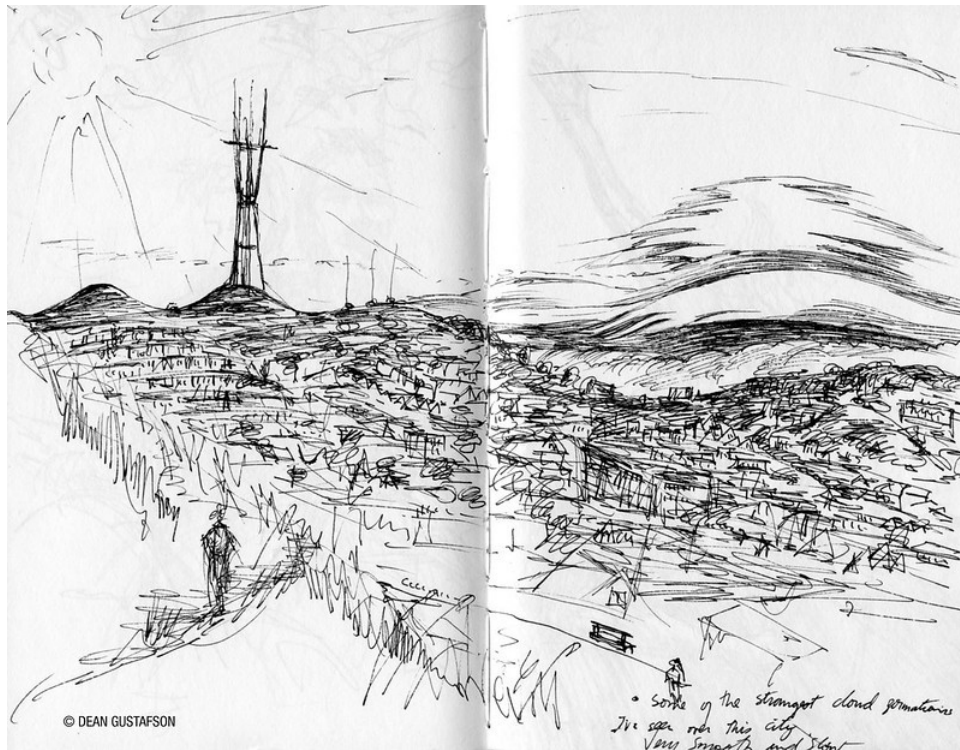
back bedroom view, 1991



from the living room window, 1990



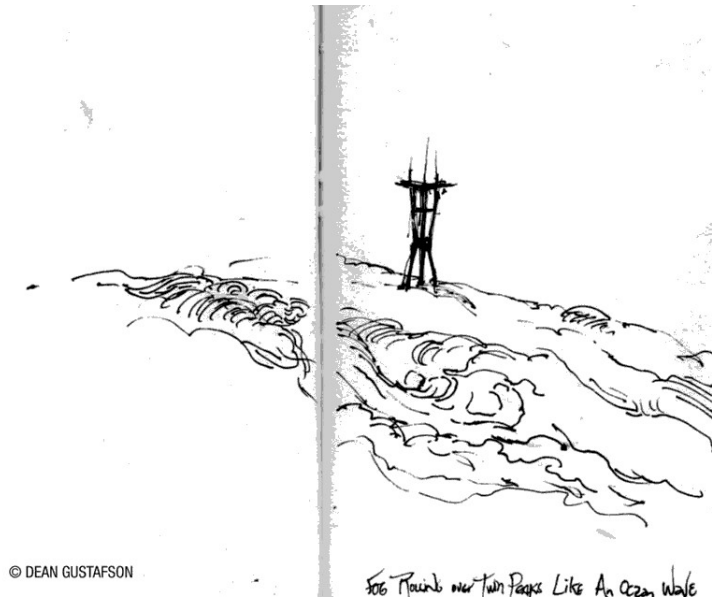
from Dolores Park, 1992



from Bernal Hill, 1994



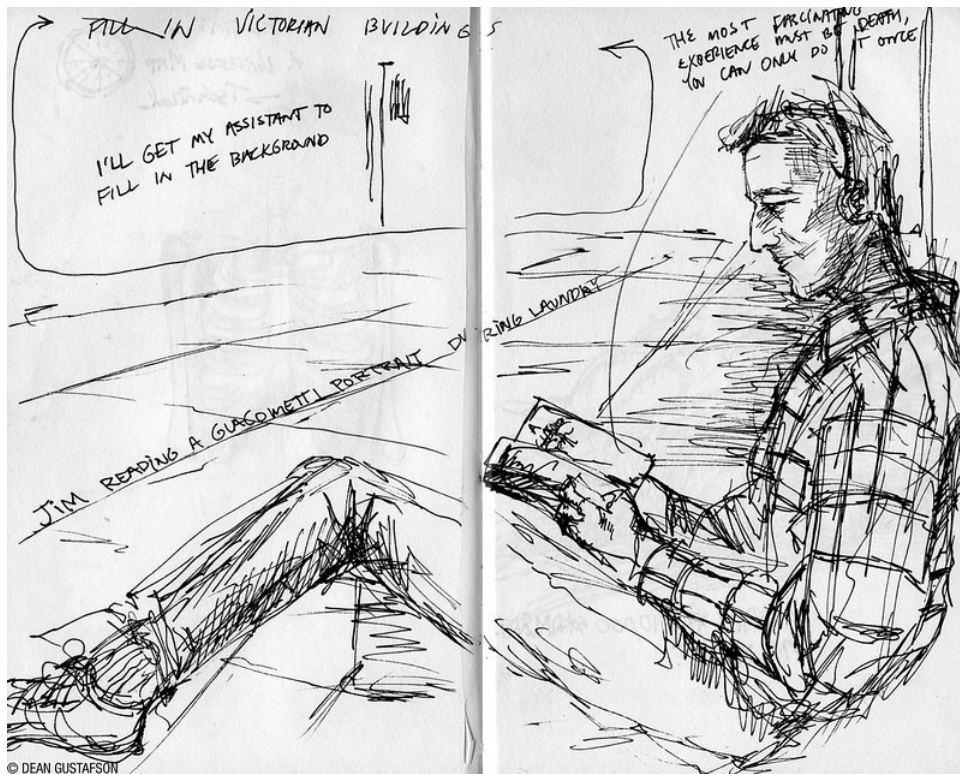
Twin Peaks, back view. 1989



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Fog Rains over Twin Peaks Like An Ocean Wave

back view of fog rolling over Twin Peaks, 1993



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Jim reading outside of the laundromat, 1989



View out back, 1989

— Links, to overlapping memoirs —

"It all rolls into one"

Links to relevant memoirs, including these specific 2720 Bryant Street years :

Paintings : View From The Bryant Pad

<https://dean-gustafson.com/artwork-essays/VIEW%20FROM%20THE%20BRYANT%20PAD.pdf>

Pre-Ecliptic Painting

<https://dean-gustafson.com/artwork-essays/PRE-ECLIPTIC%20PAINTING.pdf>

Painting The Ocean

https://dean-gustafson.com/artwork-essays/painting_the_ocean.pdf

Painting of P

https://dean-gustafson.com/artwork-essays/portrait_of_P.pdf

Keeping Time

<https://dean-gustafson.com/artwork-essays/KEEPING%20TIME.pdf>

Eikthyrnir

<https://dean-gustafson.com/artwork-essays/Eikthyrnir-painting.pdf>

Viking Ship series

https://dean-gustafson.com/artwork-essays/Nordic_ships.pdf

Viking ship painting, and 1990:

<https://dean-gustafson.com/autobiographical/June-1990.pdf>

1989 (parts one and two)

https://dean-gustafson.com/autobiographical/1989_Part-One.pdf

https://dean-gustafson.com/autobiographical/1989-Part_Two.pdf

1991

<https://dean-gustafson.com/autobiographical/1991.pdf>

1994

<https://dean-gustafson.com/autobiographical/1994.pdf>

Variety of San Francisco impressions

<https://dean-gustafson.com/autobiographical/SF-impressions-Part-One.pdf>

Movie Theaters

<https://dean-gustafson.com/autobiographical/Movie-theaters-sf.pdf>

Ocean Beach

https://dean-gustafson.com/autobiographical/Ocean_Beach.pdf

The San Francisco Cacophony Society

https://dean-gustafson.com/autobiographical/Cacophony_memoirs.pdf

... with more to write, particularly about artwork.

- DG -