

ROARSHOCK PAGE

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The last weeks of 2017 roar in with the last-but-one issue of ROARSHOCK PAGE for Volume 10, wherein we find a new installment from the sometimes series called California Street Sketches.

CALIFORNIA STREET SKETCHES LABYRINTH

A.. A... imagined he was in the Labyrinth at the top of Nob Hill next to California Street sometime during the existence of San Francisco. He wasn't sure if this meditative walk was really present, a past memory, or a future precognition. He was not sure if he was the Author of a yarn sitting at a high rise desk somewhere else along California Street researching and writing. Perhaps that was a fancy of his meditating mind that he was a character in the Story of the Labyrinth as interpreted by his own meta-self, but he also thought maybe he was some totally other guy far away in time and place with no knowledge of Labyrinth or meditation, or overarching creators of creation. Someone who called bullshit on all mystical notions and multiple levels of dimensions of reality. All that was not clearly and literally "true" rejected out of hand when only solids were perceived and the smoke and mirrors behind the veils of form were not noticed at all. The mystery of existence understood not as a journey through Labyrinth, but as a specific game of cards the outcome of which being determined by the luck of the draw and the skill with which the hand was played. Alternative outcomes can only be considered in so far as they remain within the realm of mathematical probability. Whoever this literal fellow might be or might have been, he was certainly not A.. A... of California Street fame imagining himself in Labyrinth.

What visions whirling, what stories unfolding in cosmic drama within and without. He had expected solitude and calmness of mind rather than a churning chaos of realities and fantasies. It felt like a maze, but A.. A... knew that the single path of Labyrinth was different than multiple branches and sometimes dead ends encountered in a maze, but how could a single path exist in multiverse?

Labyrinth was first built at Knossos by Daedalus for King Minos of Crete as a cage to imprison the Minotaur. So cunning was the design the Daedalus himself could

barley escape it. That first Labyrinth was a maze, not a singular path, but it occurred to A.. A... that every maze that could be trans-versed, passed through and escaped, was actually a singular path however complicated it may seem. Stephen Daedalus, a fictional version of the Author of *Ulysses* (who also previously appeared in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*), makes his Labyrinth journey through the maze of Dublin on a fictional June 16, 1904 arriving at the center in the home of Leopold and Molly Bloom before disappearing out into the night. Here comes everybody in James Joyce's last book *Finnegans Wake* and the Labyrinth contained within the maze expands across dreams and all the times and dimensions of dream space. A.. A... long admired the brilliance of the drunken Irishman and ingenious punster. "The pun is the highest form of humor." Joyce reportedly had said. A.. A... always admired Joyce's fierce dedication to his work and absolute certainty of his own greatness. He, with great dignity, lived off patronage and lived large because he *knew* he was a Great Man doing world changing work.

A.. A... had known since childhood that he was a poet. As he grew up he learned he was either not a driven enough, or great enough, poet to attract rich patrons who would support him (his father had once took him aside and pointedly told him that he *did not* have a patron and had better find a regular job), so he spent much more time working unrelated jobs to pay his rent, feed and educate his children. However, the more he studied the Jazz Age scene, the more he learned of the skepticism with which some of Joyce's contemporaries had viewed his dignified begging to support his extravagant lifestyle. A.. A... also realized in his own life as time went on the insights, knowledge and deepening of his poetic understanding gained in every job and situation of his checkered career in the mundane world.



This trip through Labyrinth was not calming and focusing his mind on a singular path of a particular color. Unlike a seated meditation concentrating on a mantra or the flow of breath, this slow walk was sending his imagination soaring with James Joyce and the Lost Generation, with a descendant of Stephen Daedalus (Joyce's creation) through the sprawling malls of Dublin, California over there beyond the East Bay hills, south of the mighty peaks of Mount Diablo. Daedalus was the father of Icarus and fashioned wings for them both from feathers and wax, but Icarus flew too high — the heat of the sun melting the wax — and he fell into the sea and drowned.

The Labyrinths of California Street were laid out at Grace Cathedral (direct descendant of San Francisco's Grace Church, founded 1849) replicating the medieval labyrinth of Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Chartres in France. Among its enthusiasts was Phil Lesh — noted sacred geography student — who featured it on an album of his work called *There and Back Again* (2002), and that thought landed at the furry feet of Bilbo Baggins and the road of Middle Earth that goes on forever, curling clear, or lost in grey haze like rings of Professor Tolkien's pipe weed smoke.

Back from reverie, A.. A... was walking along California Street having just topped the hill, passing Grace Cathedral at about half past four on a cold December morning. Shuffling along towards him and passing by was the Old Man of the Mountain. For at least a quarter century A.. A... had seen him go there and back again up and down California Street (only the Smiley Guy of Polk Street was a longer tenured homeless presence in the neighborhood). With a rush of revelation, A.. A... realized that the Old Man of the Mountain was walking a personal Labyrinth, just like he always did, up and down the steep slopes of California Street.

Labyrinth, maze, sacred geography, all existing everywhere in all times and spaces, accessible to any and all.

— D. A. Wilson



DECEMBER ALMANAC

12/03	2017	FULL COLD MOON
12/04	1881	First edition of <i>The Los Angeles Times</i> was published.
12/06	1768	First edition of <i>Encyclopædia Britannica</i> was published.
	1877	First edition of <i>The Washington Post</i> was published.
12/07	1941	Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.
12/08	1943	Jim Morrison born in Melbourne, Florida.
12/12	2017	CHANUKAH BEGINS
12/15	1791	United States Bill of Rights became law.
12/17	1538	Bishop of Rome Pope Paul III excommunicated King Henry VIII of England.
12/18	2017	NEW MOON
12/19	1986	Mikhail Gorbachev released Andrei Sakharov and wife from exile in Gorky.
12/20	1946	<i>It's a Wonderful Life</i> film released in NYC
	2017	CHANUKAH ENDS
12/21	1620	Mayflower Pilgrims landed on coast now known as Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts.
	2017	WINTER SOLSTICE NORTH EARTH
12/22	609	Muhammad claimed his first revelation.
12/23	1893	<i>Hansel and Gretel</i> by Engelbert Humperdinck first performed @ Hoftheater in Weimar, conducted by Richard Strauss.
12/25	2017	CHRISTMAS DAY
12/26	1871	Gilbert and Sullivan's first collaboration, their lost opera, <i>Thespis</i> premiered.
12/27	1978	Spain became a democracy after 40 years of fascist dictatorship.
12/29	1916	<i>A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man</i> by James Joyce first US book publication.
12/31	2017	NEW YEAR'S EVE

<http://roarshock.net/december.html>

Calling for Contributions! ROARSHOCK PAGE invites submissions of art, photographs, poetry, and micro-prose, to be considered for inclusion in future issues.

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