

# ROARSHOCK PAGE

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**O**n this ROARSHOCK PAGE publication date, the 9th Day of August, 2016, be it noted that the Death of Jerry Garcia is now old enough to drink. Not that Garcia was particularly known as a drinker, but he did sing songs about whiskey and other strong spirits, and 21 years is a milestone. His Death has gone through its adolescence and has arrived a fully adult Death. Where were you when Jerry died?

## A WONDERMENT WITH TOLKIEN

It was in a mountainous town that I found myself, probably in Europe, probably in the Alps, and it was a lovely summer afternoon, warmer than usual for that high in the mountains, even in the fullness of summer. Though I could not say what town it was, I had a feeling I had been there before, either in dream, or in waking life. It was so familiar there. Standing in a wide drive before an ancient stone building, a warehouse, or perhaps a garage, I became aware of a man beside me. Well-dressed and distinguished looking in an old fashioned and tweedy way, immediately I recognized that he was none other than J. R. R. Tolkien. He nodded politely and said hello, and began talking about his Great Work, and his worries that he had not been clear enough in its execution, so that the roots of the story were not clear. We stood out in the wide court, looking up the High Road where the alpine slopes rose away, narrowing and opening in imagination like a high pass in both the idealized and realized Misty Mountains. Tolkien said his vision was bright and clear, and he feared his words had not conveyed it. We turned and walked in out of the sunlight, through the big open gate of the stone building into what was a garage where mechanics were servicing vintage automobiles. To Tolkien I said that I thought his backstory did get more than a bit complicated, especially the Appendices, and that as a reader, I had never gotten all the way to the bottom of it... His expression looked at first a bit dismayed, then startled, but not displeased, when I clapped him about the shoulder with a hearty laugh, and said he should be proud to have written such a great classic for all time, and that it was a gift and achievement not only for him as author, but for all his readers who were inspired and transformed by his story. And that is where the vision ended.

— D. A. Wilson

## ROARSHOCK IN EUROPE MARCH 2009

A philosophy tour. Observation and thoughts random, and not so random.

The “reason” for this journey (and the “rhyme”), a visit with my grandfather, who is now quite an old man and in declining health. He can hardly hear, or speak, but still he paints masterfully in his own style.

I departed San Francisco on Wednesday night — the night flight to Munich. Arrived Thursday evening Central European Time, the sky heavy with cloud and drizzle. The S-Bahn took me to central Munich (the main station), and from there it was a few blocks to my hotel.

Friday, March 13, I revisit old Munich. In Marienplatz I called Ingrid (my Grandfather Julius’ wife) and arranged my visit for the following day. At 11AM I was in the Marienplatz and once again watched the ancient spectacle of the Glockenspiel with it’s moving figures. Then a short walk to Viktualienmarkt and two glasses of dark Paulaner beer. My spirits lightened, I went into Alter Peter and meditated a while from a pew. A walk back to my small clean room at Hotel Umland where the beer and the fatigue of a long journey sent me quickly napping.

Italy, March 19. I have just departed Venice after three nights and two full days. I am on a train to Milan. From there I take a night train to Amsterdam.

Venice was a walking dream. Ancient, so full of ghosts, and still so full of life. It lives very much on tourism, on the artifacts of its past glory, but a living town thrives on in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. Even in so brief a stay, I could recognize locals, and encountered a number of individuals multiple times. Tourists too were hard to miss. Wandering the narrow allies, or standing in plazas, or on canal bridges, maps in hand, perplexed and glazed expressions on their faces. And that was me when I arrived last Monday night. At dusk, the sky all crimson. I believed I had a room to go to, but I had not received the final email confirmation before I got on the train from Munich. After discovering the waterbus, and buying the expensive transit pass, I made it to my stop — Academia — marveling at each wonder that the public transport passed. Wondering also at the old ladies and working people on their way home from a weekday’s

activities, nonchalant about their common wonders. Once off the boat, I missed the sign at the end of the dock directing me to my pension (I saw the sign the next day) and there was some frantic wandering before I found my home — the elegant Pension Academia. I had comfort and shelter.

(This late afternoon, the Northern Italian countryside looks very much like Northern California, excepting the ancient buildings, the fast efficient train, and everyone about me speaking Italian. I understand why so many Italians have settled in California — it's not unlike their ancestral home.)

— D. A. Wilson

### ROARSHOCK IN EUROPE ADDITIONAL NOTES, PREVIOUS & SUBSEQUENT TRIPS

That was it. No further notes after the 15-hour night train from Milan to Amsterdam. March 2009 was a second journey to Europe. The first at my birthday in October 2006 was the first ever meeting with my grandfather Julius Stürmer and his wife Ingrid. My mom and dad where there too, and we all visited together — my parents and I took a couple of days to drive the Romantic Road of lore and story, and on my birthday Julius took us all out for lunch and a leisurely paddleboat steamer cruise on the Ammersee — and I also travelled alone by train, beginning to explore western Europe.

A third trip “over seas” occurred in May 2010. My last visit with Ingrid and Julius on May 22, his 95th birthday. I brought treats from Alois Dallmayr, thus missed the visit and celebratory toast with the Burgermeister and the Priest, but the three of us had a lovely long visit that spring afternoon. Within the year, they both were gone.

In this present, news and video from Europe show restless times spiked with frequent instances of extreme chaos and terrible violence, and I wager the information transmitted from America looks about the same from over there. It's long past time for a visit, particularly since on my most recent night in Munich in May 2010, I stood on the empty Theresienwiese and reminded myself to remember that I must return to stand on that continent at least every year, if I could. That was over six years ago. The three previous trips were during the decade hiatus of ROARSHOCK PAGE and now we are in a new time of exploration and a moment to go international, according to the map and the way. We hope and plan to greet you, our readers, next on September 14 from the canton of St. Gallen, on the south side of the Bodensee (Lake Constance), indeed, in the little town of Rorschach, Switzerland.

— D. A. Wilson

### AUGUST ALMANAC

08/01	1291	The Old Swiss Confederacy was formed.
	1942	Jerry Garcia was born in San Francisco.
08/02	2016	NEW MOON
08/03	1946	Santa Claus Land amusement park opened in Santa Claus, Indiana.
08/09	1995	Jerry Garcia died in Forest Knolls, CA.
08/13	2016	Return to Aquarius with Phil Lesh & Friends @ Terrapin Crossroads.
08/14	2016	14th Jerry Day @ Jerry Garcia Amphitheater in McLaren Park, San Francisco.
08/15	1969	The Woodstock Music & Art Fair opened in upstate New York.
08/16	1954	<i>Sports Illustrated</i> first issue published.
08/17	1560	The Roman Catholic Church was overthrown and Protestantism established as the national religion in Scotland.
08/18	2016	FULL MOON
08/19	1848	<i>The New York Herald</i> broke the news to the U.S. East Coast of the California gold rush (the rush had started in January).
08/23	79	Mount Vesuvius began stirring, on the feast day of Vulcan, Roman god of fire.
08/26	1789	<i>The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen</i> was approved by National Constituent Assembly of France.
08/28	1957	Ai Weiwei, artist, was born in Beijing.
08/29	1966	The Beatles last concert before paying fans at Candlestick Park in San Francisco.
08/31	2006	Edvard Munch's painting <i>The Scream</i> , stolen on August 22, 2004, was recovered in a raid by Norwegian police.

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