

Samadhi

Short story

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“I have realized that the past and future are real illusions, that they exist in the present, which is what there is and all there is.”

—Alan Watts

It was yesterday. Was it yesterday?

The park was clear. That much Adrian remembered. *If he had a memory.* If, indeed, there was such a thing as *memory*. Because right now he had experienced something called the *eternal now*, and thank the Lord, or Buddha or Moses or whatever there was out there or *in there*, so to speak, that he possessed the terminology of enlightenment.

Even Einstein understood this, or rather not *even* Einstein understood it, but Einstein *got it* and took his place among the other great minds of the huge vast array of great minds coming in time and space throughout what we now term *centuries*, alongside Buddha, Feynman, god knows who else, and God? Even God?

So why not me? Adrian puzzled. *I'm no Einstein, though. Quite dumb really, and before my hair turned white I would've been called a dumb blond if I'd been a female. Unfortunate females,* he mused.

“For us physicists believe the separation between past, present, and future is only a illusion, although a convincing one”, Einstein wrote in 1952.

Adrian had wondered over this before in other texts: Buddhist texts, Zen

texts, the many teachings and writings of all kinds of so-called spiritual leaders and teachers and even the charlatans. It didn't matter. They all harped on one thing over and over: *time did not exist*. Adrian had always tried to understand this. His life had been, as some said, lived on *Indian Time*—whenever he was in the creative process time stretched and expanded and exploded. However in order to live in the so-called *real-world*, Adrian found himself watch-dependent, very time oriented, very exact in fact. He knew when, where and how until suddenly, he did not.

If he had no terminology he would just say he was cracking up. He experienced events as a kaleidoscope of commonality in simultaneous time sequence that he wasn't scientist enough to explain away with quantum physics, or whatever, and even the Bupropion he'd been prescribed for the mild panic attacks would do nothing for that. He'd have to submit to a mental institution, crack up, as F. Scott Fitzgerald described it: *There is another sort of blow that comes from within -- that you don't feel until it's too late to do anything about it, until you realize with finality that in some regard you will never be as good a man again.*

Adrian felt differently from Fitzgerald, in fact the total opposite. He suffered through the realization that he could never be a *bad man* again, that indulging in small minor acts of badness were just impossible because the repercussions were awful and he couldn't stand it. Recapitulation in the form of roaming through time, confronting himself at various junctures, phases, stages and intervals, in

time, (*out of time really because it was a mental construct wasn't it?*), past, present, conjectured future; a constant out of control! And the man he found at say, aged four, (*the Child is the father of the Man* Wordsworth understood so completely in 1802), challenged Adrian. Could he understand understand this even now? Probably not.

His present moment, his present self, whatever that is, felt like the child of his former self, and his former self was totally out of reach. For now.

"May I sit here?" a young woman, much younger than Adrian sat down on the bench next to him, whipped out her iPhone and her iPad and began the digital trek into communication with a reality other than the moment of authenticity she existed in.

"Om. It's all yours," Adrian said, knowing full well this would trip her up.

"What did you say?"

"I said, it's home to anyone who cares to sit here," the sixty-eight year old Adrian said to this young slip of a girl with blond hair, milky skin and nice legs.

"I'm Adrienne," she said, with a caustic little smile, just on the edge of snarkiness but not quite.

"That's unusual," Adrian said.

"Why is that?" she said and began furiously texting on her phone. The phone rang, something from Vampire Weekend, though Adrian wouldn't have known this. She elbowed him accidentally in answering the phone.

“Sorry,” to Adrian. To her caller: “Hey! Yeah, yeah. I am. It’s a glorious day. Sunny, a breeze, the Farmer’s Market is crowded. Not so many dogs, but some terrible folk musicians and a lot of babies. I had some free Tofu. Tofu is so terrible. Why does anybody eat it? Yuck. The only thing saving it is the dipping sauce and you can’t make a meal out of tofu and dipping sauce. My mother’s first husband wrote a song once: *Why are there so few, people who like Tofu?*”

Adrienne laughed and her laughter was like wind chimes and a glass of clear cold water with a rainbow shining through it. Adrian fell in love instantly. It was improbable. It was supposed to be. He was cracking up, going crazy, having a Samadhi experience, a spontaneous of enlightenment that would never leave him alone, and at the same leave him utterly self-contained. Who could you talk to about enlightenment?

I can join the circuit of other would-be gurus and charge large sums of money to talk to groups about Samadhi and enlightenment or whatnot and make downloads available to vast numbers of people like who I used to be who really crave some kind of significance other than the bland realization that their existence really doesn’t matter except as it participates in some kind of---

“Why is that unusual?” Adrienne interrupted his babbling mind.

“What?”

“When I told you my name you said “that’s unusual.” Why?”

“Oh. Yes. You have a great memory.”

“I can multi-task, if that’s what you mean.”

“Who knows? I never am sure what I mean. However, it’s true of me, I cannot multi-task. It made me a total loser on the job front.”

“What did you do to earn a living?”

“What *did* I do? You are assuming because of my age I am done with doing, but I am not. I am still doing it.”

“I’m sorry. So, what is it?”

“I make art objects out of cut glass, glass I find, glass I recycle, whatever. I have an art studio. I am an artist. I make hanging sculptures out of glass, but I also paint and I draw and I do some things with clay. My pieces get a high price. I have plenty of money. But I can only concentrate on one piece at a time, one thing at a time, one—“

“Excuse me. I have to get this,” Adrienne said. “Hi! No! Oh My God, that’s hilarious!” *pause, pause*. “Oh sure, oh sure, of course! Where are you guys? Oh, hey, yah I’m going over there now, I’ll meet you!”

Adrienne ignored Adrian and had no clue she’d interrupted him mid-sentence. He was an older man; it didn’t matter. She picked her toys up, threw them into the large brightly colored satchel and hurried off. Suddenly there, suddenly gone and no chance to marvel at the fact they both had the same name.

How did this all start? Adrian remembered the day it all began. He’d been doing daily meditation for over thirty years—it was a day like many others: Meditation, Breakfast, Walk; into the studio to work. On that day, a gorgeous day

in August, the city humming quietly in the sun and breeze and 75 degree weather, after breakfast, his mind suddenly ticked over—some vital force with a voice he didn't recognize seized his brain. *Simultaneous interplay between action and reaction*, played inside his head recurrently, *form and function, open your eyes and ears! Constant change!*

Adrian wanted to stop the babble, even if the babble made sense, he couldn't stand it. He wanted to be inside the song of creation, not witnessing it. As soon as this desire was born he found himself plunged into what he could only call now, *a new normal*.

From Adrian's Journal:

Tuesday. Even though I recognize I am in, what I am coming reluctantly to accept, is a permanent state of something that feels awful—and wonderful, at the same time—some kind of consciousness of awakening—although it feels like I am dreaming. I've been devouring all this stuff trying to configure my life and find out what the fuck is going on and sometimes I think it's Samadhi and sometimes I am convinced I am going crazy in the old-fashioned sense and I probably need even more drugs than Dr. Ruby has already prescribed and maybe even shock treatment. And that old question, am I suicidal? A danger to myself and/or others? How the fuck should I know? But I just had that showing at the Pop Up Gallery in Wicker Park and made a bundle so I can afford a vacation and some time off and I already went to Iceland last year. It wasn't exotic enough. I think

maybe Russia. I am absolutely positive I can find a skinny, gorgeous Russian girl to marry me and come here because she wants a U.S. visa so badly and before she dumps me for a younger, more sexy and athletic version I can get plenty of fucking out of the way. Right? Even at sixty-eight I can do it. I don't need Viagra. I might need a tranquilizer afterward though.

Adrian's parents had died a long time ago. He was an adult orphan. His brother Peter committed suicide at age forty-seven when was diagnosed with a brain tumor leaving behind a wife and four children. Adrian was able to support them until Peter's wife, Laurie, got a job selling real estate in a company owned by some version of a mid-western tycoon in Wichita, Kansas, where she took the kids.

"Wichita? Why there," Adrian asked Laurie.

"Why not there?" Laurie's voice rose slightly in pitch, as if she were about to get hysterical. *Perhaps she was in a manic phase?* Adrian mused. "Peter and I stayed there for a couple of days on our way out to San Francisco, with the kids—remember? We all drove across country. I liked it. I like that the headline for the local newspaper, The Wichita Eagle, is about a boy being pulled from a ditch. You know?"

Adrian nodded but he did not know. How could he? Chicago was everything he needed. The city, the people; the art community he was part of, the

connections he made, the money, his beloved bungalow, the energy and noise comforted him. Climbing out of ditches did not sound good.

“Won’t it boring for the kids after Chicago?”

“Of course not! There’s plenty of outdoor activities and anyway, the schools are better and it’s safe.”

“There are often drugs in these backwater places.”

“Wichita is not backwater. It’s a small city surrounded with rural communities and farms. There’s a sense of caring, of kinship.”

“I’m your next of kin.”

“That’s not what I mean.”

“What do you mean?”

“I don’t know Adrian but this is my life and we’re leaving.”

“Blood is thicker than water. You’ll find out later.”

“I doubt that. I don’t know what you mean anyway.”

The four children, far from being grateful to Adrian for all those years he spent as an involved, caring and supportive Uncle, hated his guts and felt angry toward him, displacing their anger at their father’s suicide. Laurie did nothing to dispel that—she hated him too. Being good produced bad results. He’d never had kids of his own and his own short-lived marriage in his forties was a total disaster. The woman was a meth user. When she finally quit she developed Diabetes that shut her kidneys down. She died on dialysis one day when Adrian

was in Rhode Island exhibiting his work at a gallery there. Back in Chicago he rushed to the hospital; she was already lying on a slab in the cold room. Looking at her bluish body he tried to find a way to mourn and feel sad but all he could feel was relief.

Was he cold? Was that it? Did he lack something? Missing a chip somewhere? He hated going all over the parental thing and so he avoided this—even though roaming recapitulation seemed to have overtaken much of his waking hours. He just couldn't think about his parents and his brother right now. He needed a stiff drink but he hadn't drunk in years. Marijuana was out—it made his heart race and he became paranoid. Meditation helped but as soon as he came out of it he was back into the endless loop of mind babble until then came *this*—whatever it was. This altered perception that somehow he was everything and everything was him and a leaf on a tree became his body and his body became the tree. He tried talking himself out of this nonsense but nada—wouldn't give, nothing would budge. He felt stuck in Samadhi or whatever it was.

Marrying an impossibly skinny Russian girl with long legs might be the ticket. Small apple breasts, rounded cheeks with pointed chin, slightly lacking in self-esteem—what was he? Some kind of cruel male opportunist? *Here I claim to be a compassionate Buddhist and I am really just a fucking dirty old man in a Bodhidharma T-shirt. How is this Samadhi?*

At the same time he thought this he noticed a tiny little bird somewhere near his left foot—a cute and harmless little thing, but he swore out of this bird's

mouth came the phrase: *Give it all up. Accept yourself as you are. Love the self because the self is all.*

So love myself as a horny, nasty old guy with a hard on for Russian chicks? He asked, in his mind of course. He knew better than to say this out loud to a tiny little bird in the middle of the petite little park by his house.

Of course not you fool! Stop seeing the sexual need as some kind of impediment. It is what it is! You can masturbate. You can fly to Russian. You can go back to the Abbey on retreat. What matter? You can be me if you want!

You're too small, Adrian thought to the bird, *I'd rather be something bigger.*

Like an ugly black crow? The bird asked, and flew away.

Oh shit, Adrian thought, *I blew that exchange.* There were no crows in sight but a passing mother with a little child in a stroller walking by. The baby looked directly at him—must have been no more than 6 months old—and thought—Adrian was sure of it—*oh, get over yourself Adrian. You're taking it all too seriously. It's all a cosmic joke! Ha ha ha!*

This was when Adrian decided that Samadhi was not the problem—he was fucking out of his God damned mind. Going to Russia was a definite plan but before that he ought to call up Ruby and ask for a referral to a Cognitive Therapist.

There's travel and then there's suicide.

Adrian woke with a start, unsure of whether that sentence came from inside or outside of this head, but these days the demarcation between *in and out* was getting less and less. Which was which? Was his head, his *mind*, really the whole world, or the other way around? *Le monde est mon esprit et mon esprit est le monde*. The thought in French stuck with him the entire day and finally at four o'clock he had no choice but to call his friend, a Buddhist monk in a monastery in Rhode Island where he had been making regular retreats for twenty or more years. Tenzin Michael Goring had been a student of John Daido Looi, both of them gentle, kind amazingly compassionate men with a kind of strength of practice and understanding Adrian could only wish for. Tenzin Michael was busy teaching a class, so he left a message with the young monk who answered the phone.

“Oh yes, I recognize your name. I’m new here,” the monk told him.

“Wonderful. Could you just let Tenzin know I called?”

“Of course. You know he is going on retreat tomorrow for three months. I’ll try to see if he can call this evening. Is it—urgent?”

“Yes—no—I don’t know. Maybe it’s urgent, I can’t tell. It would be good to chat with him. I’m older than the hills you know so not much time to discuss these things before I am – well—off into the ether!”

The young monk laughed in a very smart way.

“I’ll let him know.”

Michael and Adrian were the same age, give or take maybe a year or two, but Michael had taken vows as a young man, whereas Adrian dithered and ultimately chose the artistic career. Did he regret it? Hard to say.

Had he made the right choice to call Michael rather than Ruby? Wasn't this a spiritual malaise not a mental-emotional thing? He was in the throes of something he had no reference for and even with all the meditating and reading and studying he'd done for an entire life, practically, he was coming unhinged. His sense of reality had lifted off and flown into the black hole and he was left alone with something else. How could he get grounded with nothing there to ground him and no way to achieve it?

Another phone call came in for Adrian while he was in the workshop. His housekeeper, Natalie, who came twice a week to clean off the surface debris and walk his dog, answered the call. He never brought his cell phone into the workshop and his computer and other devices he banned from his working hours.

"Someone named Isabel is calling."

His niece. Surprisingly. He hadn't heard from Isabel for over five years. After Peter's funeral Isabel seemed to be the one to repress the anger. She didn't shout it or hurl nasty, cruel remarks at him to make him suffer for still being alive after the death of their father, she simply walked away in a total cocoon of silence. There was no liberation or opening in her silence—it was conclusive. Her younger sister Crista screamed: "Why did God let this happen to him instead of

you!” the day after the funeral, as he packed his small weekender bag and left the house.

“Hello, Uncle Adrian.”

“Hello.” He wasn’t going to give away any more than he had to. Meditation for forty years taught him that.

“I’m —I’m really sorry I missed your birthday. It was August 10th wasn’t it?”

“No biggie. I missed it too.”

“How old were— are you?”

“Sixty-eight.”

“Wow.”

Pause.

“Dad would’ve been sixty-five now, right?”

“Sixty-four— I’m— I was four years older than him.”

“I see. Well—“

He cleared his throat to give her time to gather her thoughts. He already had an inkling of what was coming.

“You know mom—mom is not doing too well.”

“Oh? I haven’t heard from Laurie—your mom, in years—or you guys either as a matter of fact. What’s up?”

“She had a stroke last spring and then another one this fall and now she’s probably going to need care—you know, round the clock. Ronnie and me are taking care of her now, in our house, but I work full time, teaching, Ronnie is still

at the warehouse but they cut back his hours and Joey and Sarah are both costing us a fortune. Joey is attending community college cause we can't afford a full four year university for him yet and Sarah has to get braces and might need an operation for her scoliosis, so—“

“Let me make this easy on you. How much do you guys need?”

“I don't know. I hadn't thought of it like that.”

“How had you thought of it?”

“Look, Adrian, this isn't easy for me.”

“I don't hold any grudges Isabel—I'm not built like that. I am happy to help you any way I can. The whole family. I have a good income and quite a healthy IRA. I'm doing fine. How much do you need?”

“I haven't worked that out. Let me and Ronnie sit down and—“

“How about I pay a visit to Kansas? I'll see my grand nieces and nephews—we'll have a sort of family reunion or something—maybe get the other three to come around—Thanksgiving maybe? Then we can all reconnect and I can work out something that'll help you all. How's that?”

“Let me talk to Ronnie and—the others-- and get back to you.”

“Okay. Isabel, just help me here—I'm trying to figure out—why did you call?”

“I didn't call for money. I just wanted you to know how mom is. That's all.”

“But—I'd like to do something about it. What can I do to help?”

“I don't know, Adrian. Maybe take her to live with you?”

There was the pause that launched a thousand depressions from both ends.

“Oh. Oh boy. Let **me** think about that, hon.”

“Okay.”

“I’d be very happy and willing to devote some money to find a good care facility for your mom, or maybe pay for a full time care giver, but I’m not sure I’d be the one to care for her myself. I mean—she and I were never that close, you know, and I’m not sure—“

“That’s okay Uncle Adrian. I understand. Let me talk to Ronnie and get back to you.”

“Sure.”

“In the meantime let me contribute something to the kids—like for Sarah’s braces and Joey’s college fund? Please?”

“Sure Uncle Adrian. I gotta go.”

“Should I send the check to you? You guys still at the same address on Muncie Drive?”

“No.”

“Oh?”

“They foreclosed on our house. We had to take an apartment in town.”

“So what’s the new address?” Adrian reached across the table for his pen and pad.

“Uncle Adrian, I gotta go. Thanks for talking.” And Isabel clicked off just as Tenzin Michael returned his call.

“Adrian?” the timbre of Tenzin’s voice brought something like a tidal wave of emotion, memory and feeling into Adrian’s solar plexus. He could hardly breathe. Who was this man to do this to him? His teacher. His friend. His reserved cohort from another galaxy, the memory of time distant, the present precarious, something had been ripped up and thrown away and something else had floated onto his brain or into his brain, something flimsy and sacred and totally unrealizable. This fried up concoction of thoughts and events flooded his thinking like the water of the lake flooded his ears and nose when he was a boy learning how to swim.

“Tenzin—“ was all he could say, “I’m—“

“What’s going on Adrian? Don’t we have you down for a retreat later in the year?”

“I think so. I hope so.”

“Good. What are you doing now?”

“Working on some pieces. Thinking about combining large plexi -glass sculptures with the cut colored glass—“

“Good. Good. But Adrian. You sound like you’re drowning.”

“I am. I think I’m having—an event.”

“An event?”

“Some kind of meshing of time and space. An absence of understanding the demarcations between past, present and--“ Adrian went on to tell him about how he experienced events as a kaleidoscope of commonality in simultaneous time sequence. “I’m not a scientist, I can’t explain this away with quantum physics, or whatever, and Bupropion isn’t helping. It’s the first time I’ve ever taken any kind of prescription medication for this—this sort of thing. Am I cracking up? Is this a spiritual break through—you know, a one-off kind of thing? Samadhi?”

“You need to go see a Doctor.”

“I did see a Doctor.”

“I mean a medical doctor, not a psychiatrist, Adrian.”

“I saw both, Tenzin, and I came back with a drawer full of pills, none of which I can take because they interrupt my art and my meditation practice. I become dysfunctional on psychotropic medication.”

“Well, I am saying,” Tenzin continued, his voice deep and rolling and calm, always calm, “that perhaps this is a **purely medical** condition and not something—psychological.”

“What about spiritual? A spiritual breakthrough?”

“What do you mean, Adrian? These things are so rare, and anyway, not reliable, really, don’t you think?”

At this Adrian felt a wave of anxiety and panic that scared the shit out of him.

“A doctor?” he asked Tenzin again, as if it were necessary to keep asking in order to stall the inevitable, which would mean the end of this iterating phone conversation.

“I mean a regular doctor. There are all kinds of things these days—people experience symptoms, they confuse that with spiritual awakening or awareness or God knows what. You know what I mean?”

“You’re telling me I am not sufficiently in touch with myself to know—“

“I just mean it wouldn’t hurt to go see a doctor. What’s the big deal? Get everything checked out. And then get yourself ready for the retreat. I am going into a complete silent retreat then but you can talk with some of our newer Monks; they’ll be here.”

“I want to talk with you.”

“I can’t Adrian. I have this commitment I will fulfill. You understand.”

“All right.”

“So, see your doctor and then let me know. Before I go into retreat—like in a week, but no later, all right?”

“All right.”

Adrian hung up confused, angry, depressed and totally incensed that his teacher and his friend could be so out to lunch. What the fuck happened to him?

A doctor!

Adrian laughed. It brought him back to a present moment. Being angry--okay—it was normal, he couldn't confuse that with anything else, could he? Anger was anger—it put him square into what he'd call *the real world*.

The real world is an angry bitch, he reasoned, the real world is an angry bitch in heat, on wheels, yo mothah—whatever. The real world is to be in touch with the real most perfectly awful moment—the moment of this. This is the moment. I am angry. I am not insane. I am not insane. It's just my anger! And I have a right to it, don't I god damn it?

Adrian thought now that he was sufficiently worked up into the totality of the moment of pure anger it would be a perfect time for angry meditation. In fact, as he walked out of his studio and into his house and the little storage room he'd converted many years ago into a meditation room, he surmised that actually he might start teaching classes again only this time instead of bullshitting about eternal peace and the moment of now or acceptance or refraining or any of the other shit he'd been doing for thirty years now, he would focus on this: *let's be fucking angry! Let's beat the pillow with anger, fury, rage, annoyance, antagonism, resentment, wrath--let's get our fucking dander up!*

Back in the recesses of his old brain (not the Reptilian one but the one that investigated life before he became a Buddhist—the pre-Buddhist, mystical Christian, former Jew-boy post adolescent), he recalled Arthur Janov and his Primal Scream Therapy. A trauma-based therapy that made use of felt experiences rather than remembered experience, Janov was convinced that

circumcision created a permanent trauma around the penis for boys, he taught ways to re imagine or re-experience the pains of childhood through screaming and acting on the emotion-based impulse coming through the body.

Oh yes, Adrian recalled, John Lennon screaming, and singing to his mother: "Half of what I say is meaningless, but I say it just to reach you, Julia, Julia, Julia.." Oh Lord, Adrian thought, a sudden bolt of terrible sadness overtaking him creating a huge wave of loneliness, I've forgotten who I am. Where did I get lost? All this Buddhism—my practice—it's fine—it's nice—it's good, even, but it's not cutting through the—through the PAIN!

Adrian screamed the word PAIN out loud, doubled over with a real sense of pain and panic, halfway between his workshop and his little bungalow house he'd rented for twenty years. Perhaps he would die now, (he was certainly old enough, he reasoned), but probably not, that would be too easy. He might be destined to hang around and become a babbling idiot in a home, or worse, a useless old guy with skinny legs wandering around conjuring sexual fantasies about the beautiful young girls he'd see on the street.

Oh the city, oh the city! How awful it is! How beautiful! What a cornucopia of possibility none of which I can partake of! Suffering is the blockage or repression of Pain! So my Samadhi is just that—Pain! Pain! Pain!

It was not Samadhi, however, it was the opposite. Adrian knew he was fooling himself, and that self-delusion only felt right for about one second. The height of Divine Consciousness is to lose all human consciousness and in that

case, aren't you dead? Adrian sat down on the beautiful flagstones he and Monica God, a girlfriend now deceased (physically) from his long-dead past when girlfriends like Monica were possible, had laid these stones by hand, picking out the beautiful yellow and reddish and green stones surrounded with hand picked bushes and flowers and landscaping. Monica claimed God as her last name (somewhat blasphemous in view of her Jewish upbringing) but her real name was Gold. However, she legally changed her last name to God with some effort on the part of her lawyer husband Marty Gold, who died in a car crash two months before Adrian met Monica at a bar in Ukranian Village. She was fat but the skin was golden and soft and without wrinkles. Like golden pillows, he told her. *I want to lie down in the Golden Pillows of your soft skin*, he told her. And of course she let him. He buried himself in there for a period of time.

But Monica had too many problems and he couldn't handle it. She wanted babies. She was forty-seven. Adrian was fifty-five at that point—childless and content to remain so.

“But I can conceive!” she told him! “My ovaries are still shooting out sticks! Or whatever you call it.”

“Eggs.”

“Yes, eggs!”

Adrian took himself to bed in the middle of the day, something he never did unless he was terribly sick. The last two times were when he had Influenza in

2009, (after that he got a flu shot), and when he had a bout of Prostate Cancer in 2011, which he recovered from completely and thank God could still get it up. But for whom? The girls had long since gone past him, even his success and money couldn't really buy the sweet young things he craved, and the older women saw him as self-centered and judgmental, which he vociferously denied to their faces, but in private admitted was probably true. No amount of meditation could dissipate his anger though, and only now did he realize that if he were ever to really experience Samadhi, he would have to do it in the afterlife, because it sure wasn't happening here.

So Adrian took himself to bed in midday. The sun was high. It was August. The day was beautiful—80 degrees with a slight breeze. He left a couple of projects near completion in the studio and flopped down onto his soft duvet and the posture-pedic mattress with tremendous relief. It was over. Whatever was bothering him would go away on its own, and if not, he could bury it in sleep for a short period of time.

Adrian drifted off into some kind of sleep, listening to *Omsom*, a program on his iPad. Himalayan Chimes and the low, soft voice of Steve Horton Smith, clinical hypnotherapist, warning never to play this recording while operating a moving vehicle, be sure to consult physician before using this recording—like what? Adrian jerked fully awake just as he was drifting off. Is this stuff dangerous? He read the title: *Forget Bad Relationships*.

Oh fucking hell! Adrian screamed aloud to the sheep painting by his friend Loral on the wall opposite his bed: two sheep on their sides in a muted green background possibly asleep or dead. It always made him sleepy just to look at it but now he was wide awake. The assumption was that nothing would kill Samadhi because the Eternal Now was always there. He was stuck with it.

Damn.

Adrian padded into the kitchen barefoot in T-shirt and briefs to make himself a good strong cup of coffee.

The soft voice in his head, The Narrator, speaking out everything he was doing moment to moment, became the passion that moved him from moment to moment and a good strong cup of coffee was about as good as it gets.

For now.