

## Europe on Less than \$5 a Day

# EUROPE ON LESS THAN \$5 A DAY

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### ITINERARY

#### England

June 12-15	London
June 16-17	St. Albans
June 18	Ivinghoe
June 19-20	Charlbury
June 21	Stratford-on-Avon
June 22	Oxford
June 23	Henley-on-Thames
June 24	Bradenham
June 25	Henley-on-Thames
June 26-28	London
June 29	Kemsing
June 30-July 2	Doddington
July 3-4	Dover

#### Belgium

July 5	Oostende
July 6	Gent
July 7	Leuven

#### Holland

July 8	Vaals
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#### Germany

July 9	Nidiggen
July 10	Nieder-Lahnstein
July 11	Lorch
July 12-13	Wiesbaden
July 14-25	Heidelberg
July 26	Mosbach
July 27	Wertheim
July 28-30	Krautheim
July 31	Eberbach
August 1-2	Heidelberg
August 3	Aschaffenburg
August 4	Fulda
August 5	Bad Hersfeld
August 6	Kassell
August 7	Karlshafen
August 8	Vlotho
August 9	Verden
August 10-13	Bremen
August 14	Neustadt

#### Denmark

August 15	Moribo
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#### Norway

August 16-17	Oslo
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### **Sweden**

August 18

Karlstadt

August 19-20

Stockholm

### **Denmark**

August 21

Fakse

### **Germany**

August 22

Hamburg

August 23

Bremen

### **Holland**

August 24

Sneek

August 25-30

Amsterdam

August 31

Hoek van Holland

### **England**

September 1-5

London

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### INTRODUCTION

Most people, when they learn that I spent the summer of 1967 in Europe, tell me that I was fortunate and that it must have been a wonderful experience and how they wished they could have gone or how romantic or quaint it must have been, or how exciting, and some go so far as to suggest that a European tour is a valuable experience. I would not argue with any of these opinions per se, but I am continually disturbed by the superficiality, misconceptions, and ignorance they reflect. Europe for most people, especially those who have not been there, is the grand tour of twenty-two cities in twenty-one days, jetting in between, or the beach at Capri, or skiing in the Alps, or collecting curios and souvenirs in the shops and watching the changing of the guard at every royal palace. Fast and exciting, or quaint and charming, it is for the most part a Europe of imagined things and events and rarely real.

My Europe is a very different one, a Europe of experiences and of people, for several reasons. First, I had only \$250 above the cost of my flight to last from the twelfth of June to the sixth of September, almost three months. Second, I had made the whirlwind tours, staying at the better hotels and eating in fashionable restaurants and I didn't like it. Third, I had lived in Europe for brief periods before and perhaps had a better idea of what I was getting into than most. But rather than explain why and how I feel each of the popular notions of touring Europe is at least partially true, I prefer, simply, to explain my way of touring Europe, that is, to "tell it like it was," and leave value judgments, at least for the moment, to others.

The last question asked by Americans as I left was, "Why are you going?" The first asked by Europeans was always, "Why did you come?" These questions seem to be a good place to begin, and the answer at the time was simple; I didn't know. Perhaps I had a need to believe that life was better somewhere else, a delusion of which I wouldn't want to deprive anyone, and I merely wanted to find that somewhere. This seems to be the reason sex addicts go to Sweden, although many find that country more puritanical than most others. Perhaps it was simply a need to get away, to drop out for a summer, and perhaps there was even a little intellectual curiosity involved. I remember telling my parents, who, it must be admitted, footed a good share of the bill, that I wanted to perfect my German, and I told other people other things, none of them completely true. I was simply possessed by an irrational urge to go to Europe, one way or another; there are times when it is better not to look for reasons, explanations, or abstruse meanings, times when it is better simply to take a trip.

One thing all Americans going to Europe have in common is the need to find a way across the Atlantic. In view of that irrational urge to go, I began in the fall to look into ways of getting there. In a sense all trips begin with that urge and so that is where I am starting my story.

I chose a university charter flight as the cheapest, which I learned later, it was. I would have liked to go on a tramp steamer, but even this, not to mention a luxury liner, was beyond my budget, and the decision had to be made on insufficient evidence in the dead of winter. I was able to put off all other preparation until the last minute, believing, I suppose, that the only real problem was getting there and after that, everything else would take care of itself, a tactic which both caused and saved me a lot of trouble. Other, more industrious travelers reserve rooms in all of the best hotels, or write for reams of literature about everything, or sign up for tours, or take out life insurance, and some just go. I just went. I spent one morning trying to find a suitable rucksack, although I really didn't know how to tell a good one when I saw it or even whether a rucksack would be any better than a suitcase or a duffle bag. What I had to settle for was a Boy Scout Yucca pack without a frame. I had to settle for that because I was in southern New Jersey and in a hurry since I had waited until the last shopping day before I was to leave. New Jersey is not a camper's paradise. In the shops one finds gas lanterns and stoves, air mattresses, wrought iron tables with beach umbrellas, and aluminum lawn furniture-even camping trailers-but no sign of tents sleeping bags, packs, hiking boots, or anything else I might have considered useful. Did I say shops? I meant department stores, enormous, spacious, well-lighted warehouses with piped-in music and mechanical clerks and nothing of practical value. After purchasing the only style of pack available in southern New Jersey in the Boy Scout department (how degrading!) of the third or fourth store I visited, I went home to fill it. I threw in two of everything as far as clothes

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were concerned and made sure everything was wash-and-wear. I put some other things in too, like cigarettes, to fill out the shape of the pack, but forgot to include a toothbrush or flashlight or plastic soap box. Therefore I won't presume to tell future travelers what to take along; rather than whine for fifty pages about how I came to have forty pounds of dead weight and nothing I really needed, I will present my own limited view of a student's Europe, largely devoid of common sense, but full of interesting tales, experiences, and, I hope, perceptions.

Monday evening, June twelfth, I drove with my family to Kennedy International Airport. I have a long-standing prejudice against dirty air, so it was quite natural for me to get a mild headache driving from New Jersey south of New York City to the airport. This rather unpleasant experience recalled all of the grisly stories I had read about London's air and made me wonder if I really wanted to go there. The ticket was already paid for so I decided I did. The terminal was, as I expected, a confused and noisy place with a lot of bewildered and lost people wandering about, myself included. No one seemed to know where I was to go and after half an hour of sitting around, painfully aware that I was the only traveler in sight with a pack, I began to feel out of place. This feeling was hardly reduced by the fact that I didn't recognize anyone from my university. They were there, though, and so was a photographer who, in spite of the fact that few of the people on the flight knew each other, insisted on a group picture, complete with large cloth identification banner. Shortly after nine we boarded the plane, amid the usual poignant farewells, but it was only after an additional hour of wandering around on the runways that we finally managed to get started for Europe.

The flight over would have been pleasant enough if I hadn't smoked a pack of cigarettes in the course of staying awake all night. I knew it was going to be five hours shorter than the average night and the pilot was flying the big four-engine jet like a small schooner in the middle of the Pacific, so there didn't seem to be much point in trying to sleep. In addition, of course, we were blessed with a closed-circuit television movie. The only catch was that it cost something like two dollars to rent headphones to hear the sound, the exact amount I had allotted myself for each day in Europe.

As a result of much tobacco and little sleep, I had a bad headache, as contrasted with the mild one of the night before, and an upset stomach when we landed at London's Heathrow airport around eleven the next morning. The city was beautiful from the air; there was as much green as any other color and the streets formed an irregular and intriguing pattern that was a welcome relief from the regular and endless rectangles that make up most American cities. Unfortunately I wasn't quite up to appreciating it.

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### **PART ONE: ENGLAND**

## **Europe on Less than \$5 a Day**

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### CHAPTER ONE: LONDON

**June 13, 1967**

I had thought I was going to be a hitchhiker in Europe, but I was completely bewildered by the immediate problem confronting me, which was how to get to London. I could see nothing but limited access highways leading from the airport. I had no map and no idea where to go to get one, no one to meet me, and no idea where London was in relation to the airport. I did, on the other hand, have a headache and an upset stomach and a forty-pound pack, so I took a bus in to Victoria Station. There I got up enough nerve to ask about youth hostels, and got the reply that there weren't any from an otherwise charming young woman behind the information counter. In full possession of my usual skepticism, I consulted a phone book and found four youth hostel addresses. With the help of a knowledgeable Arab I called the main office and was told to go there in person to purchase a membership and some essential equipment. The address was 29 John Adams Street, just off Charing Cross. The first information counter I approached was strictly for out-of-town buses and no help at all. The second provided me with five or six bus numbers which would have gotten me there more or less directly, but if the telephones, with their long and short beeps, were confusing, the busses were worse. Already guilt-ridden for my ride into the city, I decided to walk.

When I got there, with the help of several additional sets of directions and as many rest stops, I figured I had made up for that bus ride; it was a very long walk and the first time in nearly ten years that I had actually had a pack on my back. It was, nevertheless, a good introduction to the city and the dangers of left-hand traffic. There I paid two pounds (\$5.60) for a year's membership in the International Youth Hostel Association and got directions to the nearest youth hostel. It might be interesting to note that the membership was good anywhere in the world except the United States, probably because I had contributed to the unfavorable balance of payments by buying it in London. The hostel was in Holland Park, they said, so I consulted an underground plan (subway map) and decided without any qualms to take the tube.

The hostel was, of course, full, so I didn't find a bed, but I did find two girls, Holly and Betty, from a small college in Massachusetts, and a young Londoner named Tim. They explained that all three London hostels were always full in the summer and they were themselves looking for a place to stay. The girls had studied for a semester in Vienna and had been hitchhiking to London since early May. Holly, a short, dark girl, was a little stooped, and a little broad in the hips. She was also a fairly good comedienne of the Jewish type. Betty was, on the other hand, a large blonde girl with "made in New England" stamped, printed, and engraved all over her. Tim was a rather handsome man, twenty years old, of medium height and rather slender, with straight dark hair and a short beard. All three were dressed in faded jeans.

We began our conversation in the lobby of the hostel while Tim wandered out to the telephone and back, looking for a place for us to stay. He finally found a place for the girls and me, and made reservations, assuring us that he could stay at an old girlfriend's flat, if she wasn't out of town. We then went out into the park to eat a late lunch, consisting solely of a brown loaf and cheese, both sliced with a filthy switchblade. After a very short and unsatisfying meal we continued the conversation. I asked Tim why we couldn't sleep in one of the parks and he explained that they were locked and patrolled at night. I then asked him why he needed a place to stay in his hometown. The answer was both involved and interesting, especially from the viewpoint of a novice in the pastime of hitchhiking.

He said he had been living in Spain, on the eastern beaches, with a girlfriend until they decided that Spain, a relatively cheap place to live, was getting too expensive. The only logical thing to do was to go to Greece, where the living was even cheaper. Unfortunately, the political climate in Greece was not favorable to tourists with beards at the time, and Tim was told by the police he could either shave or leave. He left Greece on the second of June, but

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didn't have enough money to take his girlfriend with him, so he started off for England with what money they did have and left the girl safe and sound with the luggage at the villa of a Greek hotel owner they had met, promising to return with more money as soon as possible.

He met Holly and Betty at an all-night bar in Oostende, Belgium, the most popular ferry landing, at least for students, on the continent. The girls were there because they had gotten into town too late to stay at the hostel; a Belgian, they said, had taken them seventy kilometers out of their way because they spoke German and English, but no French. The moral of that story is either to know whether your driver is Flemish or Walloon or carry a good road map, or both. None of the three had much money and none had eaten for some time. After spending most of the night at the bar without being able to buy anything they were turned out onto the streets when the bar closed at six a.m. They hadn't been out long, however, when they smelled freshly baked bread nearby. They followed the aroma through the bone-chilling morning air to a truck loaded with warm, fresh loaves. As soon as a hasty search of the area convinced them there was no one in sight, Tim climbed into the truck and began tossing loaves out to the girls and stuffing them into his own jacket. They were almost finished taking what they could carry when the driver came back, screaming and cursing in Flemish. They dropped the bread and ran, and, being somewhat younger than the driver, got away easily. Still, they had nothing to eat.

Actually, the girls did have enough money to get to their ship and back home, but Tim's problems were just beginning. When they went to the docks later in the morning, he discovered he didn't have enough for the crossing. He was able to return to England only by pleading poverty and allowing the British customs to pay his fare, impounding his passport in return until the debt could be paid. But being in London didn't really solve any problems. He owed his bank money already and he had no job and no connections. His parents were on vacation somewhere in Yugoslavia, so he couldn't even get into his own house. As we were sitting in the park talking, he had enough money for either a meal or a bed for the night, but not both, and no one he could contact except an old girlfriend who might have been out of town or found a new friend since he had last seen her. His situation was not without a little irony, since he used to work for the City of London finding places for down-and-out's, and simply couldn't face going back to his old office with the tables reversed.

Tim finished his story around five in the afternoon and Holly, Betty, and I left him with regret to go to the hostel he had found for us, at 8 Gayfere St. near the Houses of Parliament. It was a shabby place, but, like so many old buildings in London, in the process of being restored by the owner. The price of a bed for the night was fourteen and six, which came, at the time, to about two dollars, while the regular youth hostels in London were only five shillings. I was to share my room with four other men, while the girls would sleep upstairs on couches; even this relatively expensive hostel was overcrowded in the summer.

In the evening we found a small pub and told stories and drank three glasses of wine each, for a total cost again of about two dollars. The cost outraged the girls, but I was only annoyed that I could have bought a bottle for less, if it had been legal to buy bottles for use on the premises. There the girls talked about their school, their stay in Vienna, and their homes, drawing a picture that jarred grotesquely with that of the two of them standing furtively in a Belgian street stashing stolen loaves of bread. After an hour or so we returned to the hostel for the night, but not without contemplating beginning a collection of poster-sized newspaper ads. These usually carried the name of the paper printed at the top and a sensational headline scrawled in crayon or grease pencil below. They were also generally locked in iron grids, and that deterred us for the time being.

We spent an hour or so sitting in the front room of the hostel, which served as a kind of lounge for the guests, and met most of the other guests, all of them Canadian or American students. After going through the usual futile ceremony of asking after long-lost friends we never knew more than casually anyway, we went to bed. I tried to tell myself I was actually in London and had been for most of the day, but I was still too close to America to be able to immerse myself in Europe. I resolved to do better the next day, and perhaps to leave London, even though I liked the girls. I was planning on meeting a friend in London later in the month, but that was hardly an excuse for spending so much time there in itself and the city was entirely too expensive. It was costing me nearly twice as much as I had planned. In addition, I had some notion that the real England, the one I wanted to get to know, was

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somewhere out in the rolling green hills I had seen from the plane. For a time I forgot about art, music, and the theater; what I wanted was to meet people, whatever that meant, and London seemed too big and too busy for that.

### June 14

The next day the girls and I spent most of our time at Madame Tussaud's, the planetarium, and Carnaby Street. The first two were too much like tourist traps and too universally metropolitan to justify seeing them on the terms I had set up for myself, but Carnaby Street was far more than a place where Americans go to watch English girls in miniskirts. To me it was a wonderful expression of the modern British attitude toward the world in general, and betrayed, above all, a tremendously healthy sense of humor about things British. While many of the shops dealt primarily with clothing, most had amusing and ingenious novelties as well. I had been prepared to blame my visit to the notorious street on Holly and Betty, but I quickly discovered I needed no excuse at all. The Union Jack was the most popular motif and could be found on barbeque aprons, throw rugs, towels urging everyone to "keep Britain dry," and pillow cases. One of my favorite shop windows was filled with almost two hundred Union Jack waste baskets, all neatly labeled "British Rubbish." There was an abundance of music, in the Liverpool style, and an ample supply of small cafes where shoppers could talk and show off the things they had bought. And, surprisingly enough, most of the prices were quite reasonable by American standards and the atmosphere was wonderful. We enjoyed a leisurely and inexpensive lunch in one of those small cafes, and spent the rest of the afternoon at Madame Tussaud's and the Planetarium, both interesting, but hardly worth the effort of going.

After returning to the hostel, Holly gave me a cheese sandwich and an orange in return for a pack of cigarettes. "You'll be sorry you gave me these when you run out," she said. I told her I was planning to quit smoking when I ran out and at the time I actually believed it, even after she told me she and Betty had been trying to do just that ever since they had left Vienna. In the lobby we met a Canadian who had dropped out of Dartmouth after a year and a half, worked and traveled in Europe, and was looking for work in London. His home was on the Canadian side of Niagara Falls. He said he had just been to Spain and swore he would never go back. He had reasons. He had ridden a motorcycle down and ruined a wheel on those impossible roads everyone talks about. It took him three days to get it repaired; three days in country Hemingway would have loved. When he finally got into a city, he learned a hard lesson about Spanish police. He was standing on a sidewalk with a guitar and case when a policeman asked him, "What's inside the case?" "A guitar," he answered, but the policeman wasn't satisfied and asked him to open it. While he was fumbling in his pockets for the key and cursing himself for having locked the case, several more policemen with machine guns approached. The police were beginning to suspect either that he had stolen the guitar or that there was something highly illegal inside the case. Within a few minutes there were five or six policemen surrounding him, all of them pointing their machine guns at his head and threatening to arrest him on the spot. He finally found the key and opened the case in spite of his by that time violent shaking, but if he hadn't he would have gone straight to jail. The Canadian made a point of telling us as well that his was by no means an exceptional experience. The word is that Spanish police are both numerous and aggressive and eager to arrest students, especially British and American.

During that conversation an older man, very thin and short, walked in and out of the lounge in baggy pants, most of the time with the fly part way open. He must have been at least fifty - hardly in the hosteling age bracket, but apparently he had been at the hostel for several months. I left the lounge to look for the kitchen, which was in the basement, and found him there with a pretty Irish girl who was attending Queen's College. She said he was crazy, but however she meant it, he knew his classical music and had read quite a lot. He was also able to express himself better than most people who would be considered sane. He had the habit of sleeping until nine or ten and then spending the rest of the day puttering around the hostel. His only diversion, as far as I know, was conversing with another man of about the same age, whom he called the Leftenant. The two made quite a pair with the Leftenant singing off key and the small man criticizing that, and everything else he did too. According to the Irish girl, the Leftenant was supposed to be crazy too, but as far as I was concerned they were simply members in one of England's thoroughly English institutions, the pensioners and bums. They are perhaps the friendliest and most interesting social class. I had only to sit on a park bench or a pub stool to meet one, and the encounter usually left me with a lively local history and an animated if misguided insight into the social ills plaguing England. Had I

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known this at the time, I might have spent more time with the two of them, but their favorite writers were the leftists of the thirties I had never heard of and these and other tastes succeeded in putting me off.

The Irish girl (Northern Irish, actually, and never to be confused with the southern variety upon penalty of boorishness and even physical retribution) was one of five in the hostel attending Queens College. All of them, but she in particular, had a musical (and infectious) way of speaking, which is supposed to be peculiar to Northern Ireland and extreme western Scotland. She was, of course, also young, pretty, and extremely kind, and I wanted to talk to her as much as possible, just to hear the sound of her voice, but I was finding London rather expensive and decided to leave for a while and return later in the month to meet my friend.

London was also a sanctuary of sorts from the world I had originally intended to enter, that of the student hitchhiker, and although Tim's story fired me with enthusiasm, the feeling that I was totally unprepared for that kind of world convinced me I ought to stay in London at least one more day.

### June 15

True to form, I nearly subverted this decision, just as I had foiled my original intention to hitchhike from the moment I got off the plane. The idea was to squeeze myself into one of the regular hostels by getting there just in time to take advantage of a cancellation or, if possible, actually make a reservation for the night in the morning. Of course, I nearly overslept the latter possibility. Youth Hostels are closed between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. partly to clean up, but mainly to force members out into the countryside. This works nicely when the sun is shining and you feel like traveling, but it forces most hostelers into the nearest pub when it's raining, or into despair when they are trying to book reservations. I got a call in to the Earls Court hostel just before ten and was greatly relieved until I was told there were no vacancies and I would have to take my chances with a cancellation in the evening. That left me with seven hours of free time and no fixed plans. I should have been elated. It was my third day in London and I had done nothing constructive. In fact, I had done almost nothing at all. I should have gone to the National Gallery, or the Tate, or gone into the city itself for a look at the tower and the other curiosities it was supposed to offer. Instead I took an abbreviated walking tour from the south end of the Houses of Parliament across the Thames and north to Westminster bridge, where I crossed back over. On the bridge I passed some men carrying movie equipment, which interested me not a little. I then wandered over to the American Express office on the Haymarket to look at all the funny Americans with money and to cash a traveler's check.

One of the first things the impoverished traveler discovers is an almost innate dislike for people who look and act like they have more money than they need. These consist of those who sign up for American Express tours, live in hotels, travel by car or plane, and wear expensive and/or clean clothes. I cashed a ten dollar check and felt extravagant and impoverished at the same time.

It was only three when I left the Haymarket, so I went back to the Gayfere hostel and talked to the thin old man, who had his fly down again, until four-thirty. By that time I was rather bored and any excuse to get away would have been good enough, so I left for Earls Court, with the idea of finding a bit to eat on the way. I got there shortly before five after nearly missing the tube stop and found a long line of shaggy students with packs and duffle bags waiting to go in. Standing near the end of the line was a prim, well-dressed girl with a small, stylish suitcase. She looked like she had just stepped out of a beauty parlor on her way to a screen test or a modeling session. Just to pass the time she was asking some of the more eligible-looking males a few questions about the hostel. The last was whether there was a curfew. There was, and apparently 11:30 was just too early for her because as soon as she heard that, she walked off without another word. I booked a bed at that hostel for June 26-28, which was the best I could do and still five days after my friend would arrive. Just to make sure I could get in I also booked for September 3-5.

Since I hadn't had time to eat on the way to the hostel, I bought an orange for sixpence on the way back at a store that was about to close. While I was eating it in the lounge, I was approached by a boy from California who looked about eighteen at the most. He was trying to get into an acting academy and writing poetry on the side. I

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asked him what he had read and gave him a list of five or six poets I knew, getting a negative response for each one. He had about as much knowledge of the drama, but did go to as many concerts and plays in London as he could. I decided he might come to something if he ever got around to reading other poets but I didn't think much of his ideas at the time.

I left him to go up to Holly's room after I had finished eating. I found Betty alone, writing letters. Holly, of course, was getting ready to take a bath. The small room had two sets of bunk beds and two small studio couches, but looked presentable in spite of the crowding. Holly came in shortly, wearing just a slip, but left immediately for the tub. Betty bent back to her letters, scattered over most of the small coffee table in front of her couch. In a minute or two two Irish girls came in, or began to wander in and out, and one of the wardens, or clerks, added to a fruitless but pleasant session of repartee' about the attitudes of men toward women and women toward men, after which Holly, Betty, and I went out for tea. Most English restaurants and cafes close at six. It is almost impossible for this reason to get any kind of nonalcoholic beverage in the evening. Finally, we found a Wimpy Bar, the European version of the hamburger stand, and entered, totally ignorant of the two shilling cover charge, so we ended up getting tea and chips and, of all things, hamburgers. Coming back to the hostel we found a newsstand where the headline posters had not been locked in their grills for the night. Holly wasn't able to control the urge, and stole two.

The lounge, when we got there, was full of quite a collection of Americans. One was a New Yorker who had been a Good Humor Man and a student at McGill University, in Canada. Holly and Betty showed off their posters and eventually everyone got to bed, I earlier than most. The next day was going to be hard and long if I actually did have the courage to leave the city. I hoped that I did, although I had no real idea where I would go. North and west seemed the most profitable directions, and the most logical, but aside from a vague sense of literary duty to go to Stratford, I was completely without any goal.

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### CHAPTER TWO: A PILGRIMAGE TO STRATFORD

#### June 16

It was the sixteenth of June when I left London. One of my three prized summer months was half over. I started off at ten in the morning, acutely aware of the pack on my back, both because it was heavy and because it was rather conspicuous. I stopped by the American Express office to check for mail that wasn't there and then rode the tube out to High Barnet, the northernmost stop. I hadn't been able to find Holly or Betty to say good-bye or to get the hosteling book they had said I could have. The map I had was on too large a scale to do me any good and I was terribly naive about the whole thing. I had everything with me in a pack and no better idea of where I was going than the night before. I got out at the tube station and started walking and looking timidly for a place to hitch a ride. The fact of the matter was that I had never hitchhiked before in my life and had only common sense to tell me how to go about it. I walked for about two hours and finally stopped at a pub around noon. It was a nice-looking place at a crossroads and I figured I could hitch a ride from the crossroads after a beer and a light snack.

The first thing I did when I got in was take the pack off and hide it in a corner. Nevertheless, the Irishman who was tending bar saw it and had a beer out for me before I could get to a stool. He wouldn't hear of my paying for it and before I was finished with that he had another waiting. Then another customer saw to it I was able to follow them with a pint of Guinness extra stout and another gave me half a cheese sandwich, which tasted very good after the long walk and the beer. We talked of the relative merits of England and America, with timely comments on Ireland thrown in by the bartender, and expressed a few opinions on sports, English and American. It was generally agreed that cricket was deadly boring for everyone but the players and former players and that football, or soccer, was probably the best game in the world, although I stuck up for American style football. The Irishman insisted that I look around his pub, which was 200 years old, when I got there, and tell him what I thought of it. I liked it very much, for, like most pubs, it had that vaguely ancient look, but was well kept and neat and clean. I didn't ask him to explain the difference between a public room and a bar or between licensed and unlicensed premises, because about the time I came back from the tour it was two o'clock and time to close for the afternoon. I was persuaded to take a free bottle of stout with me and the man who had given me the sandwich offered a ride to a major roundabout where I could hitch another ride north.

This, due to my own stupidity, is not what happened. There are two schools of hitchhiking; those who tell you it's an art and those who tell you it's 90% luck. Most hitchhikers belong to one or the other or both, depending on their luck. There are definitely certain fine points of technique of which I was not aware on the first day. Most of them were matters of common sense, but a few were particular national idiosyncrasies of the English. A woman at the High Barnet station had told me that in England the lorries provided most of the rides and cars relatively few. For the most part, she was right. But lorries require a lot of stopping distance and a strong wide shoulder where they can pull off the road. The best place to catch one is generally after a stop of some kind and before stopping on the road is prohibited. This is generally about two hundred yards or less. Next, it is best to stand where every car passing will be headed in the direction you want to go - hence after, and not before a stop or a turn off. In addition, it is helpful to look neat. In England it helps to look like a public school boy, especially on weekends. One rule that might sound silly is, don't walk. The more you walk, the further you get from the best stopping place and the less likely it becomes that anyone would be able to stop even if he wanted to. Well, I stood for an hour just past the roundabout before I noticed a turnoff about a hundred yards up the road, and after a public school boy just ahead of me had gotten a ride. So I walked. And one turn-off led to another until I had walked about ten miles. It was getting on toward evening when I got the next ride with a young man in an open TR-3 for four miles. I walked another four miles, caught a bus for about two, then walked two and a half miles out of St. Albans looking for a hostel that was practically in town. Some kind of luck was with me though, even if the directions in the hostel manual had let me down. I got to a pub to ask directions, and within minutes I had a ride back to the hostel.

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When I got there, a woman told me it was closed for the night and I couldn't get in. It was just after ten and the best she would do was to tell me of two other hostels about twenty miles away. Walking away, however, I met a man with a handsome dog who insisted upon going back with me to get me into the place. He turned out to be one of the higher-ups in the hostel organization and the woman just a warden. He got me into the hostel, a church hall with stage and lines on the floor for games, which I found I was to share with an English Boy Scout trying for Queen's Scout. He planned on doing a ten-mile hike on the next day, and camping out one night. He was also planning to attend the 1967 world jamboree in Idaho. On reflection I have to admit that everyone I met, even the old lady who ran the hostel, was rather nice and I felt very guilty using my own sleeping bag instead of the sheet sleeping required by the hostel. Really, it was the severe penalty of expulsion from the association and the fear of being caught that motivated any feelings of guilt I might have had, since my own sleeping bag seemed perfectly acceptable to me. Still, 10:30 was a little early for me to be going to bed and lying awake until twelve gave me plenty of time to reflect on my crime.

### June 17

I woke up around seven and the first thing I thought of was how to get up and packed without letting the scout see my sleeping bag. I lay in bed contemplating this problem until the warden stuck her head in the door and called something like "Rise and shine!" waking the scout immediately. I stayed in bed until he left for breakfast, then got out and packed as fast as I could. When I got to the kitchen, he was cooking bacon and eggs and the warden was opening the small store from which I had to choose my breakfast. About the only thing she had was cereal, so that's what I ate, always with one eye on the eggs and bacon across the table from me. The kitchen was large, old, and dirty. The hot water heater was a tiny gas affair mounted on the wall just in front of the tap and practically useless since the water it provided was alternately scalding hot and freezing cold. One of the disadvantages of hostel living is that each guest has a chore to do in the morning before he leaves. In large hostels this is essential to maintaining a neat and clean establishment, but in the smaller hostels where the warden is easily capable of keeping the place himself it is really nothing more than a gesture. I had to sweep the kitchen floor that morning.

After sweeping up and telling the warden I would be back in the evening either to stay or to move on, I walked about two miles out of town with the scout. Hiking was much more pleasant without the pack and the walk was interesting. The scout had a very good map that indicated all of the footpaths as well as the roads and the elevations. Footpaths, at least in England, are public thoroughfares which must be kept open and clear for the use of hikers and even cyclists, although they generally cross over private property. After walking away from the town until ten o'clock, I headed back and left the scout to himself. I wasn't about to walk ten miles just for the fun of it after my experience the day before and he was planning to do just that, and camp out over night, too, for Queen's Scout, a goal that I, who never made First Glass scout in the States and didn't care, hardly sympathized with.

When I got back to town the hostel was, of course, closed for the day so I walked up to the main street to look for a restaurant. The place had the look of a resort, for, from one end of town to the other, the street was lined with hotels, restaurants, and fashionable shops. The prices posted in the windows were very disturbing, but I finally swallowed my sense of economy and ate in a medium-priced cafe where I got a reasonable meal for five shillings, about twice as much as I would have liked.

By this time I was fed up with walking, although I had been on my feet only four and one half days. After lunch I began to look around for a cycle shop, although I had a long history of cramps in my knees and hadn't been on a bike in at least six years. There were only two or three shops in town and the first had nothing under 10£, then \$28. The second was several miles away in one of the residential districts, and I had no choice but to walk it. When I got there the place was closed, although the hours posted on the door showed very plainly that it should have been open. Just inside the window was a plain, but good-looking black bicycle for seven pounds that looked like what I wanted. Finally, I found a phone number on the door where the owner claimed he could be reached if needed, but when I walked another quarter of a mile to the nearest pay phone I could get no answer. After an hour of lounging about, he finally did show up and sold me the bike, which looked decent, as far as I could tell. Of course I didn't

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know much about bicycles and even less about things to check on used ones. At any rate, I was happy when I left the shop and it was a real pleasure to ride back to the hostel.

It was nearly five when I got there, so I was able to get in almost immediately and eat supper. After I had eaten and cleaned up, six or seven men and a woman came in. In the common room three or four of us traded stories. The room itself was simply the stage area of the main hall, closed off from the men's dormitory only by the curtain. We sat around a long, rough table, smoking everything from pipes to hand-rolled cigarettes. One young man started things off by explaining that he worked for the railroad. He wore a dark blazer and a railroad cap and said that wearing such an outfit he could sleep free in stations without being disturbed by the police. I was dubious, since Tim had told me that the stations were cleared each night, but he assured us that he did it regularly when on vacation without any trouble. The next man to speak was a tall blonde New Zealander with a long, handsome beard. He and his wife had traveled from New Zealand to London in four months, mostly by hitchhiking. They went to Thailand by tramp steamer and rode busses in that country without having to pay. He said when the conductor asked for the fare they would signal that their pockets were empty and they were simply made to stand for the remainder of the trip by the Thais, who were too polite to think of throwing them off. In India they had traveled by train, fourth class, of course, and slept in the stations at night. This was the prerogative of the first class passengers only, but because they were white the Indian officials never dared to ask them to leave. Once into Pakistan, they began to hitchhike, with remarkable luck. One of their first rides was a wealthy Pakistani who insisted that they spend the night at his villa. He gave them a good meal and plenty of free American cigarettes, then sent them up to the guest suite for the night. The next day they were served a fruit drink with snow in it. The New Zealander went out to the balcony to see where it came from and discovered that the nearest mountains were at least one hundred miles away. Shortly after this surprise and many thanks they continued their trip to the Holy Land through Turkey.

Mention of the Holy Land got a rise out of an elderly pipe-smoking man who had served there with the occupation after the war. He laid down his Guardian and told how once he had been walking in the desert in civilian clothes when he was attacked by a band of Arabs. They took him for a Jew and led him to a more private place, where they immediately began digging his grave. After three hours of interrogation he finally convinced them he was British by producing his Christian prayer book, which had a cross on the cover. They asked him to tea instead of completing their plans for executing him. By the time the retired officer had finished his story it was 10:30 and time for bed.

When the warden came in and ordered us off, I remembered for the first time since morning that I still didn't have the proper sleeping bag. Unfortunately, buying one at that time would have entailed a confession that I had not had one the night before, but with a little stealth and a mild case of the shakes I managed to get into bed unobserved and relieved. All but two of us were ready to get to sleep almost immediately. One, an Italian, read a newspaper, oblivious to the wishes of the others and a second read a book to occupy himself while the lights were still on. At last he laid the paper aside and we all got to sleep.

### June 18

I woke at five the next day, but dozed until seven, the earliest that noise may be made in a dormitory. When I did get up, there was one other man awake, but I got my sleeping bag rolled without anyone noticing, which was lucky for me. I ate early, before the rest, and drank tea until the others came. While waiting I decided to go on to Stratford-on-Avon, some seventy miles away. I had heard the night before that the southwest corner of England and all of Wales were quite hilly and hard-going by bike compared to the midlands. The cycling party had also talked as though seventy miles was an easy day's ride. I was sure I could do it if they could, although I didn't know the first thing about distance cycling. In fact, I was completely at a loss how to fasten my pack to the bicycle. I knew, by some accident or other, that it wasn't good to cycle with a load on your back, but I couldn't find a reasonable alternative until I could get some sort of luggage rack or saddle bags. I was still putting off starting while the others ate breakfast. Three cyclists, a boy, a heavy-set man, and a thin man who seemed a bit stupid made

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joking passes at the warden, an elderly lady, and the New Zealander came in and started helping himself to bread, butter, and other things for which I and the others had had to pay. I didn't mind that, but I didn't want him to be embarrassed (caught) either, and I thought perhaps he didn't know he was supposed to pay, so I told him. It made no difference. He was no more stealthy about it than if he had owned the whole place, which for a man with a wife traveling for a pound a day would be unlikely. I noticed, too, at breakfast, that half the seat of his jeans was nothing but spotty darning.

I saw the retired officer heading out on the road, so I got my things together and headed out too, since it was already nine. Just outside the door, the New Zealander and his wife were rolling cigarettes and needed a light. We smoked a cigarette each together and he told me there were 125 Americans at Stratford the night before. The idea of a party that large put me off for a moment. Group activities always either scare or bore me, but I decided I still wanted to go. I got started after the cigarette, riding through beautiful green rolling hills with the pack and sleeping bag on my back. I rested several times and walked up most of the hills on the way to Luton, which was not really on my way at all, and drank the last of my free Guinness by the road, too. At Luton I had the option of going to Stratford or choosing a less ambitious destination. My cowardly side got the better of me and I decided to go to Ivinghoe for the night, since I found cycling not so easy as I expected and the one gear on my cycle not large enough to accommodate high speed. Neither was the gear ratio practical for riding up hills, while the pedals were superfluous going down any respectable grade. I also had considerable trouble with the seat, which was not high enough and wouldn't support my weight and the pack's without swiveling a bit, until I found a wrench at a garage in Luton. I ate lunch in a small town on the Ivinghoe road and experimented with mounting the pack and sleeping bag on the bike. I tried several ways before I strapped the pack upright to the back of the seat and jammed the sleeping bag between the two. The solution was temporary and haphazard, but it let me travel comfortably, allowing for my general fatigue.

After eating I met an old man who suggested that I go to a nearby hill about a mile away to get a good view of the countryside. Being by nature a fool, I walked the bike up the hill. And the view, I decided, was worth it, although I never seemed to have any conception of the proper amount of work to be invested in anything that was worthwhile. At any rate, it was a broad, beautiful view of the countryside and I botched my first photograph there. The area in the viewfinder, I later discovered, is about half that of the negative, so details in panoramic shots look more like dots than objects. My only consolation was the long downhill ride into Ivinghoe. I coasted nearly three quarters of the way. Then, too, the hostel, being on the main road in the middle of town, by the church and across from the green, was easy to find. I parked my bike there at three o'clock, two hours before the proper time to open. I sat for a while on a bench on the green, watching some local boys admiring each other's motorcycles as they stood beside my bike. One of them had seen me put my camera in the pack, which was still mounted on the back. Feeling distrustful, but not wanting to insult anyone, I invented an excuse to go to the bike and walk it to the bench where I was sitting. That done, I watched as a younger boy tried to get on one of the cycles. The owner wouldn't let him, but the owner of the other cycle drove him around for a while to make him happy.

After getting settled in the hostel, I walked around the village, which was not large. On the way to cook some supper I met a man named Fancis in the hostel garden. We got to talking and as soon as I mentioned I had a bicycle he was on the way to the cycle shed to have a look at it. He quickly decided it needed some work, a conclusion I had already reached myself, so we wheeled it down to his house, which was more a cycle shop than anything else. He put a luggage rack on the back and two patches on the aging rear tire, fixed a hole in the front made by a tack in his drive, adjusted the saddle and brakes and oiled the whole thing. He was quite friendly and talkative and refused to charge me a penny for the work. He said he took charge of the hostel occasionally and had dropped out of Oxford because he couldn't get the marks to graduate. He was quite a fellow and only a severe pain in my stomach convinced me to go back to the hostel to cook supper, which I fixed and ate alone. After a skimpy meal I met the two other hostellers staying there, an air force man who worked at London Airport and an income tax civil servant from Oxford. The air force man planned to go to the States to visit relatives and intended to tour by bus while he was there. How he wanted to travel was his own affair, but I gave him my opinion of American busses, for what it was worth, trying at the same time not to discourage him too much. Of course I hoped he would go, but without expecting any luxury or ease in travel unless he was prepared to pay for it. Both men detested cricket, which, they said, could last as long as five days for one match. The rest of the evening was passed in small talk and

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we got to bed at the usual time, although the two Englishmen did discuss the problems and frustrations of trying to serve the public for a few minutes after the lights were out.

### June 19

I fixed a good breakfast and got off before ten, headed for Oxford. I tried to stay off the main roads, which made the trip longer, but more pleasant. My route was a circle around the city to the south and the west, although I had hoped to cross the motorway and pass to the east. My detour cost me an extra day, but it also rewarded me with a series of quiet tree-shaded lanes that made cycling a pleasure. By two I was five miles outside Oxford and had pretty well decided to skirt the city for a hostel further north. I stopped at a bus stop that had a bench to rest and was soon joined by an old pensioner who used to work at the Morris car factory just south of Oxford. The main thing wrong with England, according to him, was greed. We had a good talk, and then I went to a nearby cafe for tea. I had been drinking a lot of water from a quart soda bottle I had saved from lunch the day before and smoking too much, too. I drank too much tea at the shop, about one shilling's worth from a pot that held about two and one half cups, and felt bloated before I left. But I did overhear an interesting conversation about the evils of slander between two men who had been involved in local government. The one with a beard had taken a sailor who was hitchhiking a fairly long distance when he got to his destination and asked the sailor to get out and find another ride. The sailor refused, a scuffle ensued, and somehow the whole thing got into court. The bearded man, who was well respected, presented his case against the sailor, who answered by saying that the man had tried to interfere with him. It was a lie, but it stuck; the man was investigated and almost lost his job, although his record was clean and good.

I realized before I got to Oxford that the hostel there was closed on Mondays, which was an even better argument than the hour at which I would have arrived for riding on. I went up to Islip and rode north to Woodstock before turning west to Charlbury, the nearest hostel open Monday night. On the way I was on a high plateau, with a good view of the country-side, so I indulged in some pictures, which suffered from the same problem as my first. One was of two girls on horseback who would pass me going uphill while I would pass them going down. After passing Woodstock, I was caught in a thunderstorm. I found shelter in a bus stop shed until it stopped, then went on. But within minutes it was at it again, so I parked in a gully under some stubby trees. Nearby some sheep were doing the same thing. Finally, I gave up and rode in the rain. It did, at least, keep the bugs away. Bugs, by the way, swarm all over English roads. They are small, so motorists and even pedestrians rarely notice them, but a man on a bicycle is going too fast for them to get out of the way and has no protection to keep them from collecting on his body.

I stopped a few times in villages to ask how far it was to Charlbury. Most of them weren't on my map and the roads didn't give the mileage to my destination. The people kept telling me it was a long way, especially in the rain, although I later discovered I had only five or six miles to go. I found that amusing in view of the thirty or forty miles I had ridden up and down hills already that day. So I plodded on until my chain broke about a mile from the hostel. Great. Well, I made it all right and went straight about fixing a stew for supper, trying to forget that I had a broken chain and would lose the next day getting it fixed.

Later I met a couple from Oxford University, who took me down to a nice pub called the Bell. I noticed the date 1700 over the door when we went in. I had a Tom Collins, by an-other name, while we compared educational institutions and my stomach was burning up the rest of the night. After eleven, back at the hostel, some boys came in with the warden and made a little noise, but neither that nor my stomach, which was close to earning an ulcer, kept me awake long.

### June 20

Early the next morning I saw off the two from Oxford and talked a little with two Americans who had made some of the racket the night before. At nine I went down to a garage to have my chain fixed. The boy who did the work was a little on the dull side and he got the back wheel crooked when he tightened the chain. For the

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next hour I wandered around looking for a place to spend the day, which was cold and cloudy, with intermittent drizzle. Finally I went into another pub called the Bull, got a cup of tea, which is rare for pubs, and began to write letters. There was a pensioner there, quite as common in pubs as on park benches, and the owner and his wife. Soon a big bearded man came in who turned out to be a German from Frankfurt. We talked for a while and he had his first try at darts. He was surprisingly good. He had spent his spring trying to hitchhike to Nord Gap in Norway and spent quite a few nights in hastily built igloos as a result of the sparse traffic and the bitter cold. On his worst day, he said, he got one ride for six kilometers all day. He had also worked in a hostel in Copenhagen and spent a lot of time bumming around. His English was adequate, and I found when he didn't know the English I knew the German, which reassured me about my projected trip to Germany. He surprised me by being interested in Baroque music, and far more knowledgeable in the period than I. That might have been because he was a violinist. At two-thirty I walked with him to the road to Oxford, which was his destination for the day, and wished him luck at getting a ride in the rain.

After that, I spent a little time on the green, but it was too cold and wet, so I walked around the village and bought some groceries. I went up to the hostel a little early at four-thirty and wrote letters and cooked dinner. I spent the evening at the pub, except for one brief trip to the hostel to sign in. Both the conversation and the beer were pleasant, but the talk made England seem very much like America in its problems and the direction the way of life seemed to be taking. Still, England seemed to be a little more hospitable. The German, for example, stayed at the pub the night before until it was too late to go up to the hostel, so he and the owner sat around drinking and talking until after four in the morning. Even so, the warden was angry with him for not coming up. He said he would have taken the man in gladly with no problem and no fuss.

I myself got up to the hostel and into bed half an hour early, but an hour later the warden called up the stairs to ask me if I wanted to come down for a cup of coffee. I should have accepted, but I wanted to start early the next day, so I declined and got to sleep a bit later. But not before I heartily regretted the decision. After all, one of my major excuses for coming to Europe *was* to talk to every sort person I could find. I was clearly falling down on this self-appointed task. Still, inertia easily kept me in bed.

### June 21

When I woke up, my watch had stopped. I'd been having trouble with it ever since the rain caught up with me, but I had thought it was running again. Rather than bother the warden for the time at God knows what hour, I rode down to the village, where there was a clock in one of the store windows. I got there at 7:00 a.m. As it was, I didn't get off till nine, but I got into Stratford-on-Avon around noon, so I really couldn't complain. The road was rather hilly, but I kept at it until eleven-thirty, when I stopped at a small cafe. There was a sign over the door to the kitchen that I almost bought: Two children about three years old were pulling the fronts of their shorts out and looking down; "Oh, there is a difference!" was the caption. Incidentally, because of my ragged appearance and the accent I had picked up from the Irish girls in London I was first taken for a Welshman there. That was the first of many wrong guesses about my nationality that led me to wonder what the difference was between me and every other American traveler.

Stratford was a tourist trap. I went crazy there and spent five shillings to go canoeing for an hour on the Avon, but the canoes were good and the river very attractive. I also bought a standing-room-only ticket to As You Like It, again for five shillings, before heading out to the hostel, which was big, and later crowded and impersonal, possessing no atmosphere of its own whatsoever. I met a number of Americans there, none of them interesting, and went to the play in the evening. While waiting for the bus some of us tried to hitch a ride into town. There was one man fifty yards up the road and a couple of girls about twenty-five yards down from the group of three I was in. The girls, of course, got the only ride, although the rule is generally that the first passed are the first picked up. The rest of us had to take the bus.

The Royal Shakespeare Company was great. Dorothy Tutin, as Rosalind, was magnificent. The staging was well-handled. It consisted of two backdrops and two fully mechanized tree branches that could be swung

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soundlessly into any position desired. As a result, scene changes were rapid and smooth and did not in the least harm the continuity of the play. The music, too, was excellent. Lutes and recorders were actually played, and played well, by actors on stage. I went to bed feeling very fortunate to have seen the play there.

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### CHAPTER THREE: THE LABYRINTH TO LONDON

#### June 22

I slept late at Stratford, but after a hasty breakfast, I got out of the hostel around nine-forty, which was none too early to suit me. The place seemed to have no atmosphere of its own and seemed to borrow what it did have from the archetypal Salvation Army soup kitchen. The gallery of pictures surrounding the member's kitchen featured hoards of grinning hostlers serving soup from gigantic urns and engaged in other aspects of mob feeding and seemed to embody the heart and soul of the shabby Victorian mansion and most of its inhabitants. I probably did the people there a grave injustice in not trying to get to know some of them, but it did not, at the time, seem worth the effort. In other words, I didn't in the least mind leaving, at least not until I got out onto the road.

I was still rather proud of my three-hour ride from Charlbury to Stratford, but as I rode south, confident of my ability to travel by bicycle, the luggage frame for my pack rubbed against the rear tire no what I did, slowing my progress considerably. I tried to fix that, with some success, at a garage around two after I had gone about twenty-five miles on my way to Oxford, my next destination, and I was dead. I had been fighting a headwind and going uphill at the same time. But even the divide I crossed somewhere along the way didn't account for all my problems. I discovered that my rear brake had been half way on after I had been riding around in Oxford for an hour or so looking for the hostel. I had reason to believe it had been on all day, since it was the slipping luggage rack that was jamming it into the tire.

My own blindness to street signs caused most of my trouble in finding the hostel, but not all. It was an undistinguished building on a narrow, short lane above the city, and the directions in the hostel book were at best amiguous. When I got in around eight, I didn't have enough English money to stay the night, but the clerk was kind enough to take American money and I got enough change to go to a pub for a snack and a beer. It never entered my mind what I was going to do for money the next day, although, of course, it should have. I watched a couple playing darts at a pub I had passed at least four times in looking for the hostel, but they were pretty bad, so I went back to the hostel. I wanted to do some wash and some writing, but the common room was infested by noisy Americans, so I headed off to bed around ten. If my anti-American attitude seems puzzling, the best I can do to explain it is to say that I was intent on becoming immersed in the European way of life and thought, and I hardly appreciated intrusions by Americans who insisted on moving through Europe protected and immunized from alien habits by their portable capsules of American pop culture.

#### June 23

I got up at eight and left the hostel half an hour later after doing my chore. On my way out of Oxford I wandered through the university and finally found a towpath along the Thames. I ate a small breakfast consisting of an orange and a few biscuits and jam I had bought at a grocery along the way at a total cost of about two shillings. Then I headed down the river and up to London. The towpath soon became uneven, merely an extension in places of the fields along the river. Just after passing the Sandford lock, I met a herd of bulls, grazing and watering and quite thoroughly blocking the path. I passed through them slowly and cautiously, but I still got a lot of cold stares reminding me that I had no business among them. After I emerged from the herd without incident, the path was almost completely overgrown. Enormous fields of yellow flowed into the brush on the banks of the river and I had only a slight parting of the grass along which to pick my way. I got off my bicycle and began to walk, stopping from time to time to pick my pant legs free of seeds and other prickly things. I had thought that towpaths were by

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law public paths, but it was looking very much like I was trespassing. The gloom generated by this thought was quickly compounded by a light drizzle that accompanied me all the way to Radley. Radley was announced by a shed and dock belonging to some rowing club and a narrow road leading away from the river. After deciding I was still on the right planet, I mounted my dripping bicycle and rode off in search of a road to London. I found a likely-looking highway and the pub where I ate lunch at the same time.

After lunch I took a look at my map. I saw that I was at a bend on the Thames that would take me well out of my way if I were to follow it. I also saw that I was near a highway that would take me straight to Henley and a youth hostel. The morning had been bad enough to make me take the road even though the weather seemed to be clearing. I was still having trouble with my luggage rack and it continued to slip down and lock the rear brake. At least that was my diagnosis at the time. Around three it started to rain again. I was at the crest of a hill, disturbed at the prospect of going down the regular lane instead of the cycle path (which was strangely absent) when a man on a tractor offered me a machine shed within ten yards of where I was standing, but just until the rain let up. Fine. I stayed until four-thirty, when the rain seemed to subside, but quickly discovered my rear tire was flat and returned to the shed. After half an hour of examining the tube I couldn't find the leak, so I put everything back together and pumped it up again. It seemed to hold, but I knew I couldn't get far on it and decided to hike the seven remaining miles into Henley. In the rain. For the first half of my little hike there was no footpath, which meant I had to walk on the far right of the road, into the traffic, so I could see what was coming. The lorries were pretty good about moving over, and using turn signals to get the next driver to move over too, but nobody thought of stopping. At the crest of one hill I found a pub and decided to take a break. The owner refused to cash even a ten dollar traveler's check. I finally persuaded him, after working out the rate of exchange, to sell me a hot meat pie for a dollar and give me change for fourteen shillings. That was the last of my American money. Later I stopped at a bus shelter and smoked my last American cigarette. I had toyed with the idea of quitting and hoped that economic necessity would force a decision.

Fortunately, the hostel was easy to find, for I was tired after pushing a bicycle most of the twenty-five miles from Oxford and sopping wet after doing most of it in the rain. Between the meat pie and my first pack of English cigarettes, I had spent most of my dollar. I got into the hostel by promising to pay the four shillings in the morning and went to bed with less than three.

### June 24

At around five-thirty the next morning (I was too groggy to read my watch with any precision) some nut got up and dressed, making plenty of noise in the process. Still, I managed to sleep until eight, when I got up and went in search of a little breakfast and some money. The breakfast was the easy part. For money I had to wait around downtown until nine. After getting a fresh financial start, I paid for my night's lodging and went off, leaving my hostel card, as I discovered later, to look for a place to fix my bicycle. That cost me a pound and kept me around Henley until noon. If it had been a simple flat tire I could have done the job myself much cheaper, but I discovered that the luggage rack that had been locking my brake had also been forcing the fender into the tire and it was that that had caused the flat. In other words, I needed a new tire as well as a tube and I figured I might as well let a shop do the work if it was going to cost me fourteen shillings or so anyway. While waiting, I found a pub and talked for a while with a postman. Later I was accosted by a man who wanted to know something about driver's licenses for three-wheeled vehicles in the States. He was of the opinion that making them legally equivalent to motorcycles was sheer madness and I tended to agree with him. That was, of course how they did it in England, so I could see that the matter might have concerned him, but why he had to stop me in the street for a foreign opinion was and is beyond me. At the time I resented being spotted as an American for the same reason that I resented other Americans and I was glad to get rid of him and pick up my bicycle.

The Windsor road coming out of Henley was backed up over a mile with traffic going to the Thames for some boating event.

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There was to be a regatta on the next Wednesday, but I had no idea what all the fuss was about at the time. Around one o'clock it started to rain. I got to Windsor around two and got a distant view of the castle. There was a note on the hostel door informing me it was full, but in hopes of a cancellation and because of the rain I spent most of the afternoon at a grocery store a few doors down the street. The owner was a very pleasant young man and I enjoyed talking with him about his business and his family. At five I went down to the hostel and was told they wouldn't have any room for me. I checked the map and found the nearest hostel likely to have room was a Bradenham, eighteen miles away in the opposite direction from London. As usual, I took the long way and nearly ended up on a motorway at High Wycombe. I made my first pub stop only an hour after I started. The bartender was talking dogs with a man who wanted a big watchdog that would bite, instead of just making a lot of noise. I wondered what he would have thought if I had rolled out my sleeping bag in one of his fields and I began to resent private property. I made my second pub stop around nine, just after my run-in with the motorway. There I got my first close look at billiards. One of the two players was average, but the other seemed extremely good to me. It was the exception when he missed a shot, and he generally put two balls down at once. It was raining again when I left the second pub, but it took me just half an hour to get to the hostel, a small country church the hostel association had rented for the summer. I had made the trip in four and a half hours, including stops and detours. Once again I was tired and wet on arrival, but this time I was slightly shaken as well. On the largely uphill road to High Wycombe I had encountered an eight percent downgrade on a winding road. My bicycle, which didn't have the best control, due to a shot front end and a very high center of gravity, got away from me and I ran into an embankment. Messy, but hardly serious.

At the hostel I found, first of all, that I'd misplaced my card, and second, a man I had met at Henley the night before. He was acting as warden and let me stay, but I could have been in trouble - or a field - for the night as easily as not. We talked with two girls from Edinborough until nearly midnight. No one was really gifted at debate, the girls, at eighteen or so being too young, and the man being a bit eccentric, with a peculiar turn of thought and a strange sort of logic which made it hard to talk with him. There were quite a few younger people there, including several who wanted to take an all-night hike, rain or no rain. It took quite a while before everyone got quieted down for the night.

### June 25

The sun was actually shining when I got up in the morning. There was a good map in the common room, so I traced out a route that would keep me off the main roads on the way back to Henley to pick up my card. I only hoped they had it. I called from a phone booth at ten after stopping a woman on the street for change. I found out they did have the card and that I could spend the night there if I wanted to sleep on a cot in the common room. I thought about trying again at Windsor after picking up my card and even kicked myself for not booking there, but decided not to worry about it until the time came for a decision. Along the way I bought a bottle of milk from a milkman's son who was helping his father deliver and talked to him for a few minutes.

I got to Henley around eleven, after two hours of leisurely travel, with nothing to do until five and no place to go until the pubs opened at noon, since it was Sunday. I spent the first hour on a park bench doing nothing and the next two in a pub writing, then left to put my bicycle in the shed at the hostel which, incidentally, was also a church, belonging to the Society of Friends. It was raining again. At the hostel, though, I met a London boy and we went for coffee to pass the time until the hostel opened. At the coffee shop we met one of the girls who had been at Bradenham the night before. So the three of us talked and drank coffee till five. Most of the talk was about films and American and English geography. I did most of the talking, getting in shape for teaching, perhaps and using the films of Bergman and Fellini as my subject matter.

Back at the hostel I got my card straightened out, dried some clothes on a gas heater, and ate a meager supper. Most of the people at the hostel were Germans who were rowing down the Thames from Oxford to London. The idea captured my imagination immediately, so I talked a lot with them and didn't do badly, in spite of the Berlin dialect, which was a bit difficult at times. The London boy, another eager young idealist and British patriot, insisted on letting me sleep in a bed, taking the cot that was to be mine for himself. Nice kid. I gave him a couple of pure years before he would be spoiled and mean and nasty like the rest of us. He was planning to cycle south on the next

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day. It looked like rough country on the map and he wasn't used to the exercise. I wished him luck, though. After supper, I went to a pub with one of the girls I had met at Bradenham. The other had gone home to attend church and was to come back later. She lived in St. Albans, so it was no minor excursion.

When we got back, the London boy, Mike, told me he had been looking for me to go to a pub. It was only ten, so I offered to go again, but he invited me to a cup of tea instead. At the same time, three English girls had made some spaghetti and had far too much of it, so I got a generous helping of that, too. Everyone was in a wonderful mood. Perhaps it wore off from the Germans, who seemed to have a knack for joking around at times, but it was quite pleasant and even the rather poorly cooked spaghetti tasted good. It was ten-thirty before we finished up and the warden, who was a wonderful and a good-looking woman with five children, came in to suggest that we might be cleaning up and heading off to bed. Still, it took us nearly until eleven to get there and even then the joking continued, coming mostly from the Germans. When the lights were finally turned out, some of the girls next door continued to talk, so the Germans began shining flashlights like searchlights back and forth along the glassed-in partition above the temporary wall between the dormitories. The girls were, of course, suitably disappointed when they stopped. A few more jokes and we managed to quiet down and get to sleep, I with the hope that my German was better than I had feared.

### June 26

Things started off promptly and cheerfully at seven the morning. The Germans were a great group and I enjoyed discussing and quipping with them about the weather, which changed from rain to sunshine several times before I set out. Breakfast was enjoyable and cheerful, with more bantering, and I was on familiar terms with everyone at the hostel. Mike, the two girls I had met at Bradenham, and I left together and I walked with the girls about a mile out of town up a steep hill I would have had to walk up anyway. At the top I set out for London in earnest and left the girls behind.

It was a pleasant trip, except for the wind, which was against me most of the way. The weather was stormy, or, rather, threatening, with brief periods of light rain, but I made good time because the land, once I passed Slough, was relatively flat. There was also a special cycle path from Heathrow Airport most of the way into the urban area of greater London.

When I got into the city around two I made the mistake of leaving the A-4, the route I had followed most of the day, and it took me an hour to find the hostel, which was in an area of London I had visited only by tube, but also very close to the A-4. I was about a mile from the hostel when I stopped to ask an old man for directions to Earls Court. He gave them to me and added, as though it were important to him, that he had been there once himself. The narrowness of his horizons came as quite a shock to me, although it really shouldn't have. I did, however, feel quite fortunate that mine were a bit broader.

At the hostel, which was in many ways like the one in Stratford-on-Avon, I got cleaned up, as far as was possible, and fixed supper. A German student offered me some bread, but a Swede gave me some that he was about to throw away instead. I ate with the German, then, after a hasty attempt at trimming my beard, set out for the President hotel to check up on that friend.

The place looked rather plush to me after the hostels I had stayed in, but Jennifer was not in, which decreased my pleasure, or rather augmented my disgust, in what looked like ostentation to me at the time. The hotel was really a middle class affair, but I wrote Jennifer a note saying I was suitably impressed and left to spend the rest of the evening talking about Shakespeare with the German, who impressed me as being quite intelligent, and quite a scholar, although he seemed to me to take his studies far too seriously. Nevertheless, it was a pleasure talking to him, and his English was of a quality which allowed us to speak almost completely in that language.

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By the way, "the flesh is very strong," as they say, and I continued to smoke (Players No. 6) although I had run out of those I had brought with me. But, to bed (11:30 PM).

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### CHAPTER FOUR: LONDON DOUBLETAKE

#### June 27

In the morning I ate breakfast with a Swede and his wife and enjoyed their company, although only the man spoke fluent English. I met them again while washing some of my filthier clothes in the washing and drying room, a facility rarely to be found in an English hostel.

I wandered around the city for several hours after leaving the hostel and finally went to the American Express office, where I had a letter from my future wife. In the mail room I met an American girl I had seen the night before at the hostel. American Express offices serve as meeting places for friends as well as post offices, and she was waiting for a man she had met in Paris. This would not have been unusual had they arranged a meeting, but they had not and she was there in the faint hope that he really was in London, as he had promised, and that he would come for mail while she was there. In any other situation they might have exchanged addresses, but hitchhiking is almost as uncertain as the whims of those who practice it and such exchanges are rarely the impetus for even a single letter. I sat down beside her and talked from eleven to twelve-thirty. Then I went out for lunch, promising to bring back a sandwich. She didn't dare leave even for a minute, for fear of missing her friend. I found a cheap sandwich shop a few blocks away, ate two, and brought a third back for the girl. When I got down to the mail room she was gone. I considered eating the third sandwich, but decided to look for her first. On an impulse I checked for mail again before I went upstairs and found three more letters that had just been sorted, two from my parents and another from Jonnae, then my fiancée. I went upstairs to read my mail and found the girl sitting on the stairs up to the second floor offices. I gave her the remaining sandwich reluctantly and she told me she had been asked not to sit on the floor in the mail room and tended to get dizzy if she tried to stand for more than a quarter of an hour. I took one look at her bulging rucksack and another at her skimpy, frail frame and wondered just how she managed to hitchhike all over Europe without collapsing completely. I sat down beside her, but we were soon asked to move off the steps, the reason being that it created a fire hazard to sit there, so we sat on the floor by the exit, keeping our mouths shut tight just to be on the safe side. Around one-thirty her friend showed up. A wild embrace ensued and I decided it was time to move on. Just outside the door an English woman was passing out anti-Vietnam literature, which I accepted and began to read.

While standing against the side of the building I was discovered by the young poet from the Gayfere Hostel. He asked me to wait for him until he completed an errand, and we went for a cup of tea when he returned. We talked music and theater and the cinema, but I still found him too opinionated for my taste. He did have a good knowledge of things going on in London and attended cultural events regularly. Still, his primary interest was his own poetry and he was soon diagramming an idea he was working on for a complicated poetic structure on a napkin. I asked him what poem it was for, and he said it was only a model and could be used for almost any collection of ideas or images, shrugging off my suggestion that content and other traditional concerns of the poet might be at least as important as his ingenious structure. We were at it until three, after which I bought some groceries, wandered around some more, and went back to the hostel.

I was early, so I joined the group sitting on the front steps waiting for the hostel to open. We were soon accosted by two young men passing out leaflets for Billy Graham. I should have expected it, since I had seen enormous billboards and bumper stickers shouting, "Billy's Back," throughout my travels and we were only a few blocks from the hall in which the "crusade" was being held. The leaflets were quickly accepted by some young American girls who decided, knowing little enough about them, to attend one of his sessions at Earls Court.

I did supper as quickly as I could and rushed off to Russell Square to see Jennifer, a long-time friend from the States. I got there around six-thirty and she was down fifteen minutes later, looking very good. At first I felt

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estranged, an interesting effect of living on different social levels and having different approaches to traveling. Our common ground, of course, was our past and future in the United States, and once we took ourselves back to the U.S. conversationally the separation ceased to exist. She was engaged to a man I remembered only vaguely from my Norfolk, Virginia, days as "Beaver." She called him "Fink." We went to the most authentic-looking pub I could find and had a drink each. She drank only sherry, which amused me. Then we began to walk about the city, mostly along Regent St. and talk as she looked in the shop windows. We went to Carnaby St. and she decided she had to have a "Carnaby St." sign, so we went to Piccadilly Circus, where we found one at the third souvenir stand we tried. The others were sold out. Because I laughed when she bought it, she made me carry the sign in my breast pocket, where it was plainly visible, not that I really minded. Instead of going directly to the hotel, we sat in Russell Square and talked nearly until eleven, only half an hour before the hostel closed. In the lobby I said good-night hurriedly and promised to call in the morning. I stood on the underground platform for some time wondering if another train would come and when it did it was painfully slow. I just barely made it to the door by eleven-thirty. The warden met me there, with the keys in his hand to lock up. On the stairs I met the German poet, who said he had been looking for me and was leaving in the morning. I told him again that I had enjoyed talking to him and said good-night.

### June 28

I woke up at seven the next morning but lay in bed to avoid waking anyone else until seven-thirty. I had disturbed enough sleep by coming in late the night before. I finally got to the President Hotel at nine and Jennifer came down immediately. She had been waiting for some time. Even so, we sat in Russell Square for an hour and a half before we went back up to get her things to go to the airport. She was terribly nervous the whole time, partly because she had neglected to confirm her reservation, as I had advised her the night before. She had actually been taken off her flight, but had managed to get back on when she finally called the terminal earlier in the morning. In addition to that, she seemed extremely eager to go one minute and in a mood to go cycling around Europe with me the next. It seems the less familiar people are with bicycles the more romantic the idea of traveling on one sounds to them. Of course, there was also the distinct possibility she would never see me again, although she was going to be earning enough money to visit me and knew I would always be happy to see her - as long as she knocked first.

After I got Jennifer on her bus to the airport, I walked past Buckingham Palace to the American Express office. There I found a surprise which would have taken a long time to catch up with me had it come one day later. Enclosed in a letter from home was a note from the man who had sold me my bicycle, informing me that I had given him a ten dollar check instead of a twenty. So I spent the rest of the afternoon picking up the international hostel book and making arrangements to send him a Postal Order for the amount I owed him. I hoped my mistake didn't color his opinion of Americans and told him so, although I was afraid that it would.

At the hostel I ran into a man from the Billy Graham crusade who introduced himself as Allan Godson. He asked me to go to the service with him that night after supper. I had no other plans and had never seen that sort of service before, so I agreed. I found him in the hall, after some difficulty, and, after some difficulty, we found seats. He had an American girl with him who was on her way to Kenya as a social worker, sponsored by her church. I found the service conventional, commercial, and vaguely revolting. The only bright spot centered around a group of Vietnam demonstrators who were hustled out because they wanted to know how Graham's support of the war fit into his program of brotherly love. The energy and dispatch with which they were removed struck me as being more embarrassing to the spirit of the crusade than their relatively unobtrusive presence had been. Nevertheless, Graham displayed at least a practical understanding of mass psychology, and although I was not at all impressed with him or his approach to religion, a significant number of people came forward to profess their new-found faith when he asked them to and I was sure they were quite sincere. I was glad for them, but I found the whole business intellectually bankrupt, which might have been too harsh a judgment, and so was left in my agnostic rut.

After the service Mr. Godson, ex-Cambridge football star and full-time Christian, took us to a restaurant where he bought us an Italian rice dish, which he found sufficiently lacking in quality to make an embarrassing fuss with the waitress about it, banana splits, and tea. He had a strength of conviction that was simply amazing, but did not seem to have the mind to discuss the touchy problems and implications of his faith. He had, though, all he

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needed, which was belief that his religion worked for him. When we were able to find a common ground for discussion, he was logical, sincere, receptive, and intelligent. He must, I believed, have been an excellent minister, although he was not without faults. The most noticeable was a tendency to be a name-dropper in the sports world. I saw this when he called our attention to several men and women in the cafe who were playing in the tournament at Wimbledon and later forced himself on them with small talk. He was, in short, a typical Christian paradox, making his concessions both to society and sincere religion, and I wondered to what extent even he was aware of this continual dilution of his Christian life. I did, however, enjoy his company and his hospitality. As we walked to the hostel, he told me of his restaurant and Christian coffee house in Liverpool. We stood talking at the hostel door until eleven-thirty, when I had to go in.

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### CHAPTER FIVE: THE ROAD TO THE SEA

#### June 29

From time to time the single traveler experiences a strange and bewildered feeling. I sensed it in London before I left for Stratford-on-Avon, again when I left London for Europe, and was destined to experience it many times in the course of the summer. My three-day reservation at the Earls Court hostel had come to an end. I had the option of finding another place in London and staying longer, perhaps even getting a job and staying the summer, or moving on. Even if I decided to move, I could tour the rest of Britain or go to the continent. I had no commitments and no pressing desire to go anywhere in particular. Finally, my ambivalence was overcome by a kind of homing instinct. I had, as I have said, lived in Germany for several years. I had also spent a month as the guest of an aristocratic German couple in an idyllic Austrian valley a few years before. The continent became my destination because I wanted, in a real sense, to go home -home especially to Heidelberg, where I had graduated from high school.

After making the decision (seemingly in my sleep) to move on, I got up at eight with the intention of going either to Dover or in that general direction. I knew well that I had woefully neglected what London had to offer. I had been to no museums or art galleries. I had seen no plays there; neither had I attended a single concert. Still, I thought I had arrived at an accurate sense of part of the city through my walks and conversations, and I knew I would be returning in late August. My oversights were not yet irreparable.

I had distant hopes of going all of the way in one day until I realized it was going to take me most of the morning just to get out of London. My decision to leave the city seemed to be subverted or at least complicated by miles of West End streets. Still, I was making better time than the busses and most of the lorries and that was some consolation. This idea, along with two others, occupied most of my thoughts as I threaded my way through the dense left-hand-driving traffic. I wondered, as I watched the buildings flow past, where the western slums were. If I was riding through them, they were certainly no worse than the eastern half of the city described in an Iris Murdoch novel as "contingent" on the city itself. They were certainly much better than any American slums I had seen in Washington, New York, or Chicago. My third, and overriding, concern was my rather uncooperative bicycle. After realizing that I was expending entirely too much energy fighting mechanical friction in addition to the headwind I had come to expect, I investigated and discovered my luggage rack had set out to ruin another tire. I had never priced luggage racks. Common sense told me they couldn't be much, but intuition and a mild persecution complex convinced me they would be more than I could afford, whatever that was. In Greenwich, on the outskirts of greater London, I held my breath and stopped at a cycle shop. They had some flimsy carriers for a pound or so, but the only one sturdy enough to hold all of my junk came to nineteen and six. In my passion for round numbers I quickly converted that to two pounds and two pounds to an astronomical five dollars and forty cents - almost enough money for expenses for three days, excluding the cigarettes I was still smoking. I bought one, put it on, shrugged my shoulders, and continued my trip to the continent trying to contain contradictory feelings of (economic) foreboding and (romantic) confidence. At the first intersection in open country I met two American hitchhikers and went to the irrational extreme of proposing a race to Dover. I never met them again but I have no doubt that they got there first.

The wind was traveling the same road in the other direction, or seemed to be. Before long I gave up, exhausted, and stopped at a restaurant to take a break. After a good meal and an hour or so of cigarettes and procrastination I got back on the road and soon found myself on a six-lane limited access highway. There had been no warning signs and opportunity to pull off. As soon as I could, I got off and looked at my rather inadequate map.

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That was the most direct and only major road to Dover and, although I was legally permitted to ride on it, I had no particular desire to do so. The alternative was a rather circuitous detour, either to the north or the south. The southern route looked shorter, so I took it as soon as I could.

Even with the change of direction, the wind managed to continue to harass me and I discovered an additional problem. At the time I thought the rain west of London had mucked up the grease in the rear axle. I stopped for some oil and it seemed to help, but not enough to keep me from heading for the nearest hostel remotely in the right direction. I therefore rode to Kemsing, arriving around two-thirty, two and a half hours before the hostel would open for the night. The grounds were protected by a formidable array of "No Trespassing" signs that were both unusual for hostels and vaguely disturbing.

While circling the grounds warily after I had taken the liberty of invading the cycle shed and leaving my bicycle there, I met a Frenchman from Paris named Fullais. I invited him to explore the town below the hostel with me in search of a pub, forgetting they were closed between two and six. I found him an interesting and enjoyable companion in spite of a slight difficulty in communication. He spoke serviceable English, but I spoke no French. On discovering that the pubs were indeed closed, we walked back to within fifty yards of the hostel building and sat down in front of the "No Trespassing" sign posted at the side of the drive. The sign was written in English, French, German, and Dutch. The German seemed rather badly translated, as though someone had gotten the words out of a pocket dictionary and put them together, so I asked Fullais about the French. He agreed immediately that whoever had written the sign was not at home in that language either. Immediately after that, the warden ran out of the house and loudly ordered us off of the premises until five. It seemed there was a sign we had already passed that had fallen down somehow.

On our next circuit around the village we found two Dutch cyclists sitting on the lawn in front of one of the pubs. We joined them and found them good company as well. English was the common language, however, so Fullais, who did not speak it well, felt (and was) left out. At five, the four of us went back to the hostel and found the warden's wife, who checked us in, extremely congenial. After supper we played table tennis. For some reason other than skill, I won every game I played. I must explain that because of a bad eye I have very little depth perception and that is essential to judging the speed and position of the ball in such a fast sport. Nevertheless, my performance won me Fullais' sincere admiration, something it is usually very difficult for an American to win from a Frenchman. For a while I watched one of the Dutchmen play with one of the two Danes also staying at the hostel. I noticed that the count was kept in English and thought I might not have so much trouble with languages in Scandinavia as I had thought, not that I planned on going.

After I showed the Danes, who were in their middle teens and relatively new to hosteling, how to make up their beds with sheet sleeping bags, the two Dutchmen, Fullais, and I went down to a pub for a few drinks. Fullais and I noticed the dart board was free and agreed to play. It was his first time and my third or fourth, so I won in this game too, although not by much, since good throws for each of us were more a matter of luck than anything else. During our last game, Fullais tried some English bitter, my favorite English beer, and drank it down like everyday fare. Then we went back to the hostel immersed in an amateurish discussion of similarities between French and English. After finding myself in the strange and enjoyable position of introducing a Frenchman to some of the English customs that had been almost as foreign to me, I knew I would have at least one friend and mentor in Paris, his home, if I ever got there.

### June 30

We all slept late the next day, and Fullais and I delayed our departure still longer with a conversation at the front door with the warden. We talked about hosteling and the boys who visited him there, and he turned out to be quite a congenial host. I had one question I asked him that had bothered me for several days. I had seen a number of signs saying "Pilgrim's way." I asked if these referred to the route taken by Chaucer's pilgrims from London to Canterbury. He said that it was an established route at that time and was most likely the one followed in the Canterbury Tales. Since I was an English student, the next logical question was if it were if it were still passable by

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bicycle. I was going in the general direction of Canterbury anyway. Unfortunately it was not, and I suppose that is the kind of sad information I ought to be passing on. For those who are particularly interested and inspired by historical and literary monuments, however, it should be noted that the hostel in Kemsing is only a few hundred yards from the ancient "Pilgrim's Way."

Fullais and I walked to the main street of Kemsing together before he headed for London and I for Dover, more or less. Determined to enjoy the country without being run down by a lorrie, I managed to stay off the main highways for some time, and took great pleasure in the narrow roads and the intense green of the rolling hills. But it was inevitable, I suppose, that I should sooner or later find myself on a class "A" road and I was on one, running scared, before ten. I was forced to stop from time to time to correct various mechanical ailments on my aging bicycle - begging oil from one garage, a bolt from the next, and generally suffering from anxiety and depression. I wasted a lot of time and cigarettes and not a little money at a road-side coach stop and finally quit for the day at Doddington around four.

Sitting in a field just outside the town were two Danes who had spent the night before at the hostel there. They said they had liked it and we shared travel information, cigarettes, and bread for over an hour. They wanted to go to London for the night, a distance of more than sixty miles, and expected to get there by nine. It wasn't impossible if they were good cyclists, since they had to average just fifteen miles per hour (a good ten-speed cycle will allow twenty miles per hour when the cyclist is in good condition), but I told them all the London hostels were probably full and showed them some alternatives on my map. In return they told me there was a prevailing wind coming in from the sea in the Low Countries during the summer. Since they had come from Denmark through Germany, Holland, and Belgium, it had given them considerable trouble on their trip. They also told me that Belgium and Holland had the best cycle paths they had encountered. With these factors in mind, I decided I could probably get through Belgium into Germany in very short order. At ten past five they started for London, still optimistic, and I followed their directions up to the Doddington hostel along a steep road I had to walk up most of the way. It took a good half an hour.

I found things most friendly there. The hostel was on a hill and was owned privately by a club that rented it to the hostel association in the summer. That kind of arrangement, generally made with churches rather than secular organizations, is the exception rather than the rule, but it made a happy combination in Doddington. There was a well-kept lawn tennis court on the grounds and one of the residents had fastened a Union Jack to the top of a tall pine next to the court. The buildings were, with two exceptions, wooden cabins. These were kitchens, dormitories, and game rooms. The stone buildings were the main hostel building and men's dormitory and the adjoining main women's dormitory. After fixing a minimal supper - I was broke again - I played table tennis with three girls from Stoke-on-Trent who were down to pick strawberries during their holiday. They were all eighteen years old and all waiting for the results of their examinations to find out if they would be able to go on to a university. We had an enjoyable series of games lasting until ten and talked until twenty past, when I left for the men's dormitory in the main building, believing I would have to turn in at ten-thirty. The girls were, by the way, as interested in my background as I was in theirs, which seemed to be the case generally with people I met in England.

One of the diversions offered by the Doddington hostel is the opportunity to watch good tennis. Right after supper and before I met the girls I saw a match between a young man who tended to be rash and careless, and another, a past Wimbledon star, who was slowed down with age but very careful and precise. This battle between agility and accuracy was a surprisingly even match which was extremely interesting to watch. Of course, there is something rather compelling simply in watching good lawn tennis in England under the Union Jack, especially for a foreigner.

### July 1

I got up the next day at eight and rode all the way to Faversham to cash a traveler's check. Had I known at the time that I had gone half the distance to Canterbury, I probably would have completed my own private pilgrimage instead of returning to Doddington. When I got back, the hostel was closed, so I spent an hour and a half at the Chequer Inn, a small pub, and the only one, down in the village. There I watched some interesting and

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vaguely disgusting people. First there were those who, unlike myself, had enough money to play innumerable games on the pinball machine or provide the patrons with hours of music from the gaudy American juke box, or simply throw it away on the slot machines. I watched one woman passing drinks through an open window to her under-age daughter outside. Then there was the young married woman who dragged two small children into the pub. She was wearing a tent mini-dress with a tight waist just below the bosom that made her look pregnant. She was slender and the combination of the dress and her terrible posture made her look deformed and very small-chested. Her husband, tall and big, but more muscular than fat, let her drink by herself or wait on the children while he played the pinball machine. The wife put her money in the juke box.

I left the pub around noon and spent a wasteful but pleasant afternoon writing and lounging about. The tennis I watched back at the hostel was not, in general, as good as the day before. The young men were completely unable to place their returns and the old men unable to reach them anyway. Some Frenchmen came late in the afternoon. Their English was not very good, though, and they tended to stay together. I spent the evening trying to talk to an Italian who, true to the stereotype, was rather impatient with what halting conversation we managed, but the evening as a whole was rather boring compared to most. The warden had piped FM music through the ground floor of the main building, but the hostel, unlike the night before, was too full and too noisy for anybody to hear it. In spite of the fact that no one was enjoying any one else's conversation, we stayed up quite late. I made a half-hearted attempt to talk to the warden, but it was impossible to hold his attention in the competition between hostlers and private guests. Finally I gave up and wrote a letter home saying I would stall as long as possible to allow mail to catch up with me at Oostende after I crossed the channel. I also decided to spend one more day at Doddington on the assumption that the Dover hostel would not be as good.

### July 2

Sleeping late was getting to be a habit, strongly recommended and practiced by the English hostellers, but a lucky habit on the next morning. At a very late breakfast I met two girls from Kent University at Canterbury, a new school with about one thousand students and plans for another two thousand. I also had the privilege of seeing my three friends from Stoke-on-Trent go off to church in mini-dresses, one of them quite short. I spent the morning with the girls from Kent University and the afternoon with them in the company of one of their boyfriends.

In the morning we walked through the formal gardens of a nearby estate and were lucky we weren't caught trespassing. The gardens were to be opened to the public later in the day at two but we were there from ten to twelve and uninvited. After leaving the estate we visited the adjacent Doddington Church, which is one of the many English houses of worship frequented more by tourists than Christians. After a brief look at the church that revealed nothing particularly interesting or unusual, we went down to the pub to meet the boyfriend, who was not with us up to this time. Later we walked two miles east to Newnham, looking for something to do, but ended up taking a nap just inside the gates of another entrance to the same estate we had visited that morning.. This time it was not so quiet, since it was open and people were constantly driving in and out. We slept well in spite of the stares and commotion and didn't start back to the hostel until after five.

On the way back I talked with the unattached and, of course, less attractive girl. She was a first year student at the university, short and pudgy, but not really ugly. She wasn't much of a conversationalist either, even with the help of leading questions. At any rate, I managed to discover that the two girls were to spend their holiday picking strawberries, too. We sampled some on the way back and they weren't bad. Still, it didn't sound like much of a vacation to me. They told me some enterprising soul once managed to make thirty-two pounds at it in one season - over \$850 - and some kind of record - which might have made it worthwhile, but it still sounded like work to me. We also decided that a large body of water visible from the hostel to the north was the Swale, partly with the help of a map and partly with the help of the kind man who had named the house across from the hostel "Swale View." It didn't seem nearly as far away as it should have been according to the map.

At supper I began to talk, as best I could, with a Frenchman, and ended up playing table tennis with him a little later. The game room was soon filled with French, and later by the three girls I had first met there, two Pat's and a Sheila. Soon I was batting the ball around with three Frenchmen and soon after that I got tired of the whole

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thing. The French seemed incapable of trying to do well at the game, with the exception of the first one I had met, who was, unlike his friends, tall, dark, thin, and extremely quick. The others wanted to talk with one of the Pats, the blonde one, of course, more than they wanted to play the game. Later the game room was invaded by a party of Americans who were cycling through Europe. This surprised me until I learned that they were doing around twenty-five miles a day and taking trains the rest of the way to make up time. The Americans were loud and the French louder. Except for the calm emanating from a pipe-smoking Englishman who was evidently leading the American party, the entire hostel was consumed by the boisterous confusion generated by the hostellers. Nor was the longed-for lights-out at ten-thirty observed until a full hour later.

### July 3

I got up the next day at seven-thirty and sat around waiting for the warden to come back from some errand or other, only to find out he had nothing to sell me for breakfast. So I left early, around eight-thirty, after throwing some things up in the attic for him.

I was determined to cycle to Dover without having to do it on any main roads and it cost me quite a lot of time and mileage. But I stuck with it as much as possible and had a rather enjoyable day as a result - and a pint and a half of free beer to top it off. After a few hours of trying to go due east on winding roads, a neat trick in itself when none of them is on the map, I reached a main highway going to Canterbury at another intersection with the "Pilgrim's Way." Since I needed directions for the way to the Canterbury - Dover road, I took the highway and stopped at the first convenient pub. There I got into a conversation with a middle-aged man who identified himself as a builder. The owner and his wife joined in and the three of them went to great lengths, through various anecdotes and second-hand experiences, to convince me that socialism had ruined England. They had one story of a sixty-eight-year-old pensioner who drank away his income until his wife threw him out of the house. There was no place he could turn because he was not sick, or a criminal, but merely an old man headed for ruin. It seemed to everyone there that in a highly socialized state like Britain there ought to have been some provision for people like that. Of course there wasn't, and that was a great evil, since young men, they said, could often make better money at the employment exchange than at a steady job. I knew, however, that it was rare for any one to get more than twelve pounds on welfare and many jobs started at over fifteen pounds a week. At the same pub they had another there-must-be-something-wrong-with-the-system story about a young soldier who had been stationed in Aden. While under orders not to fire on the natives, he watched the rebels shoot down two majors and run back and forth over the bodies with lorries. Unable to control himself, the young man had killed four rebels with his sub-machine gun, then found the guns of his comrades trained on him. He was arrested and shipped to England for reassignment to Germany on the same day. As soon as I could, I got my directions to the Dover road and left the armchair politics at the pub.

Before long I was back on the winding country roads, with the same problems I had had before, and enjoying it very much. After getting reoriented at a small grocery I was soon on the Dover road and looking for lunch and a way of paralleling the main highway on back roads. I stopped at a pub in search of both and met a British engineer who had done a lot of oil work in North Africa. It was his opinion that the United States was a progressive industrial power because it was rich and if it couldn't do something it could always pay to have it done by somebody else. He later told me he believed the Peace Corps was very closely tied to the CIA and blamed this for the mistrust, sometimes violent, that Africans sometimes had for it. I would have believed him easily at the time. I was cynical enough about American foreign relations to believe almost anything, but I told him I thought it would be difficult to consider even this sort of thing as foul play and that the trouble was that the United States couldn't, assuming he was right, be any more tactful about spying than it was. With the engineer was a short, balding, blustery man with a stuttering problem. He worked for a coal mine at Bridge, near Canterbury. Between the two of them I got some more free beer and fairly good directions to Dover.

Nevertheless, I missed an unmarked turn and got off the route. By watching the sun and riding into a wind I believed to be coming in from the sea, I kept myself headed in the right general direction, however, and rode confidently with some exhilaration over the huge rolling hills, through farm and grazing country that seemed to

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slope up to the sea. When I again met the main road just outside Dover, the steady rise ended in a descent through a narrow valley. After a long ride down to the town I found one of the two hostels, luckily the one that still had space for the night, around six. I found that it was the best hostel I had seen in terms of accommodation and the worst in terms of atmosphere. I ordered breakfast for the following morning, just to see what it would be like and, to avoid paying the self-cooking fee in addition to the cost of a prepared meal, I went to a fish-and-chips bar for supper. After one shilling nine pence of steak pie and chips I was full and contented and only hoped the breakfast at the hostel would be worth the three shillings I had paid for it.

After supper I went down to the harbor, which was manmade and looked it. The white cliffs were still there and looking healthy, so I left them after half an hour or so and went back to the hostel. For some reason I made no real attempt to talk to anyone. I had a slight headache and was tired, so I let everyone ignore me and went by myself to a pub around nine for beer and more cheap cigarettes. I found a man who would talk to me there, but nothing interesting was said. Only the same old business of pubs versus American bars and, of course, taxes. The man had been to New England on business, so he knew more what he was talking about than most, but his views were the standard ones. Everyone in England felt that taxes were too high, if not exorbitant. We talked, too, about pensioners and the man, who could not have been much over forty, thought they didn't have a bad lot, while I felt it should have been a rather boring life without anything to do but wander about talking to cyclists on park benches and at bus stops or hanging around pubs when they were open.

### July 4

The next day was the fourth of July and a very strange one for me in the "mother" country. The breakfast at the hostel was good, and pure English - corn flakes, spaghetti, and bacon with tea - but hardly worth three shillings. At the table I talked to a Dutchman who was going to hitchhike along the southern coast to Land's End. After doing my chore, I met a Cambridge man who was going to the Middle East to do archeological work. He was traveling by bicycle! He was training to be a medic, having just finished with the university, and had been assigned as medic for an expedition. We cycled down to the docks together and parted there, since he was leaving for Oostende that morning and I was waiting one more day to give my mail a better chance of reaching me. I wasted the rest of the day in cafes and bicycle shops, spending money.

I bought a pair of saddle bags, which I badly needed to replace my awkward pack, for the universal price of two pounds, and ate enough food to last me a week. I also bought some scissors to trim my beard and a spanner and pin for the pedals on my cycle, which were coming loose. I had found that one of the pins had a bad case of stripped threads, but the replacement got the cycle back in good working order. One of my more frivolous purchases was a Guardian. I practically read it through, feeling almost obligated to read it before I left England, and I had to admit, as I had been told, that it was a fine paper. The articles were signed and still seemed to be less biased than the wire service copy in the States.

I cooked my own supper at the hostel Saturday night, sharing the members' kitchen with a German I had met at Stratford-on-Avon and a Scottish girl, among others. The German, who called himself Rollo, was the son of a Russian father and a German mother and could not get German citizenship, or any other for that matter, through his mother because of idiosyncrasies of German law. At least that is what he told me and he obviously enjoyed his role of man-without-a-country very much. He was short, dark, and chubby, somewhere between twenty-five and thirty years old, and looked faintly Russian, although German was the only language he spoke. He had taken his situation to heart and traveled extensively throughout Europe by hitchhiking and hosteling. I was certain he had no steady job and he was not young enough to be a student. He never, in fact, went beyond the Volksschule and was neither particularly well educated nor very bright. As a result, my conversations with him were difficult and I didn't believe it was solely the fault of my insufficient German. Partially to escape him I went again to the pub I had visited the night before. Things were pretty dull until I called attention to a large dog sleeping behind the bar, when the patrons went into the conventional routine of petting and calling and talking about him until the sport had been run into the ground. Then an old man and his friends began a series of local stories which were too private to be of much immediate interest to me until I learned the background behind them. Most of them, however, involved

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hoarding or stealing lead during the Second World War, when it was very scarce and quite valuable. I left for the hostel around ten, in order to get to bed by half past.

There was another party of American cyclists staying in my dormitory, following the same pattern as the last. This group was somewhat younger than the other and had a twenty-three-year-old leader who had a flair for being authoritative, superior, and at times dictatorial. He was, in other words, one of those soft-skinned, hairless wonders from southern California who need leadership positions to fill out their normally flat-chested egos. After the leader had tucked in the kiddies, I began to slide into sleep contemplating my last day in England and my adventures to come on the continent. I was jarred back to consciousness by screams from the adjacent women's dormitory, scuffling in the hall, and screams from another women's dormitory. There were more footsteps on the stairs in the hall, knocks on doors followed by murmured inquiries, and finally choruses of girlish giggles and a final thumping of several men going downstairs again. All was quiet again by eleven. I found out in the morning that two men had run into the hostel and hidden in the girls' dormitories. What they were doing in there I didn't know or care, but the commotion they caused, and the noisy chatter, most of it in French among the girls, was reason enough, to my mind, for sending them off to jail for the night.

July 5

The sun rose with the good-guy leader, who was at it by 7:00 a.m. One of the boys had misplaced his passport and his mentor was full of kind advice as to which saddlebag ought to be unpacked first and how the clothes could be taken out without getting mussed, not to mention a list of fifty places that ought to be searched and the inevitable lecture on the difficulty and delay involved in getting a new one from the American embassy in London and how the boy ought to be more careful in the future. Finally a Dutchman saved the day by finding the lost document lying in plain sight on his bed.

I ate a tedious breakfast with Rollo and met him again on the ferry. I had, by this time, become very annoyed at his use of the familiar, rather than the polite, form of the second person in addressing me. I used the polite "Sie" resolutely when talking to him, but it did no good. He must have been deaf as well as stupid.

I was told by several people that I had my choice of either the car or the pedestrian ferry. Since the first departure, at eleven-thirty, was for pedestrians, I chose that, and found myself having to take several freight lifts and make special arrangements for the bicycle. The price, the same for either ferry, was outrageous. Two pounds five shillings for me and nine shillings for the bicycle. But there wasn't too much I could do about it. After I paid my fare, I walked the bike to a place where I could pick it up after going through customs. For some reason no one thought there was anything to declare on it, so all I had to do was let the officials check my passport and then do the best I could to see to it that both I and the bicycle got on the ferry. My getting on was simple, but after putting the bike where I was told to on the dock, I watched it sit there until five or ten minutes before we were to get under way. It was practically the last thing aboard.

Rollo was, if anything, worse on the ferry than he had been at the hostel. During a mild crossing that took just three hours, I spent most of the time practicing my German with him without really communicating. I got one short reprieve when I went below for a small, but expensive, meal. When I came back up on deck he showed me his passport, which was two-thirds filled with visas, and told me he had a full one at home. Then he went on to tell me the best way to hitchhike out of Belgium, although he knew I was a cyclist. He warned me about the Belgian prejudice against Germans and told a story about one time when, having been turned down in his request to sleep in a barn by a Walloon, he went across the road to a Flemish farmer who would surely have done the same had Rollo not told him how the Walloon had slighted him.

Provided with an excellent opportunity to show up his neighbor, the Flemish farmer gave Rollo not only the free use of his barn, but also a free supper. He also told with great delight how he had been picked up on the road to Rome by a Belgian who had mistaken his small German flag (a common and generally useful device in hitchhiking) for the Belgian. Of course the man was furious, but he was far angrier when he picked Rollo up on the way back because of the name mistake.

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One of his ideas that made some sense was that hitchhiking would be almost impossible within five years because of the unfortunate incidents that sometimes happened. I had knowledge of the attitudes toward hitchhiking in the States, and that corroborated Rollo's intuition. As we pointed out to each other what a great pity the end of hitchhiking would be, I made the mistake of telling him I was writing a journal. He chimed in immediately with the news that he had a diary he wanted to collaborate with an author on. With his experiences it could have been fascinating, but he explained that it was a purely factual account of the relative luck he had had getting rides in various countries and contained no material on people or the places he had visited. I wondered why.

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### **PART TWO: HEIMKEHR**

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### CHAPTER SIX: BELGIUM AND HOLLAND

As the ferry approached the coast, the city of Oostende was practically indistinguishable from the thin tan line on the horizon that formed the low Belgian coast. Then suddenly we were approaching a harbor and then we were docked. There was very little opportunity or time for the lengthy gazing and chattering about the developing skyline of New York City and no tedious, winding passage up a muddy river to a city like Bremerhaven or Hamburg. As soon as we docked I said good-bye to Rollo and went in search of my bicycle. I found it easily and cleared customs with even less trouble, but when I tried to leave the pier I was stopped by a gatekeeper who asked me politely in Flemish for some kind of ticket or other I was supposed to have gotten on the ferry. I tried to reason with him in both German and English, but he understood neither. Finally he let me pass out of sheer frustration and I rode out into the city on a sunny and cheerful afternoon, bound for my European *Heimat*, Heidelberg, Germany. But of course before I could get there I had to visit several other countries.

I had no map of the city and, partly because of language difficulties, had to make do with a small-scale map of the entire country. I had no idea where the youth hostel, called a *Jeugdherberg* as in Holland, was, but I found it inside an hour with the help of several sets of directions rendered in Flemish, German, and English and got a good look at the city as well, mostly by accident. Oostende, while not large, was a city like any other. Most of the streets were, in the European fashion, made of cobblestone, which made cycling rather uncomfortable, and I ran into a large outdoor market where shoppers were competing vigorously with heavy car and bicycle traffic, but basically it conformed to the standard specifications for a seaport city, wherever it might be. In addition to this disappointing lack of local color, a large number of the people spoke English or German and most of them seemed curiously international in behavior and dress, as though there were no such thing as a Belgian *per se*. Actually, I was prepared to find this international atmosphere, as well as to understand it, better than those going to Europe for the first time. Europe is, after all, a collection of nations, and not zoos. Anyone looking for freaks and curiosities in an animated fairy tale or Ripley museum is bound to be disappointed if not enlightened.

When I got to the hostel, I had difficulty recognizing it. About a block from the beach, it was a modern building that looked very much like a luxury apartment building or a small resort hotel. I was further surprised to find that it was already open, although it was not yet four o'clock. The warden, called affectionately the *Herbergsvater*, spoke at least four languages more or less fluently, but was more interested in efficiency and order than in maintaining a friendly atmosphere. One of the rules that awakened my predisposition against regimentation was that luggage had to be kept in lockers in the basement at all times. While this no doubt prevented a lot of petty thievery, it also proved to be a considerable nuisance. I later found it was the customary arrangement in European hostels and eventually accustomed myself to it. A more distasteful regimentation was imposed at exactly nine o'clock, when everyone took part in a mandatory tour of the dormitories. The men tramped noisily up one stairway to the even floors while the women climbed an intertwining staircase leading to the odd floors. The tour itself, given by the warden's assistants, was both boring and superfluous. Of course, the dormitories were closed up until nine, probably to discourage theft and to encourage additional sightseeing after supper. Just before lights out, at some ridiculous hour like ten o'clock, the Al Hirt version of something like "Taps" was piped over the PA system, repeated *ad nauseum*, and everyone was hustled upstairs.

#### July 6

As is to be expected, a large proportion of the hostellers were Americans, but an equally large proportion were Australian, a fact that never really ceased to amaze me.

I tried to find some mail, both at the hostel and at the Post Office in general delivery, but there was none,

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so I mailed the letters I had written the evening before and, disgusted with the hostel and eager to push on, left town.

It was a pleasant day, but the wind was terrible. I made very little progress at first, but managed to spend plenty of money on food. I took secondary roads to Brugge and there I decided to go to Gent for the night. On my way out of Brugge, however, the axle to which the pedals were fastened sheered off in the middle of an intersection. I coasted to the curb and shrugged my shoulders for the benefit of several men watching from a bus shelter a few yards away. I walked out into the street to pick up my pedal and looked at my watch. It was three-thirty and I figured I had had it for the day, but one of the men told me there was a cycle shop in the neighborhood. I found the shop fifty yards down the street and left my cycle there to be repaired as soon as possible. Meanwhile I had checked the location of the Brugge hostel, which was luckily nearby, and reconciled myself to spending the night there. To my surprise, the job was done in half an hour for a total cost of 70F, or \$1.40, and after an interesting conversation in German with a shopkeeper nearby I was on my way again.

I rode straight through to Gent without stopping, but it took three hours because I missed a turn and had to travel ten or fifteen kilometers on cobblestone country roads. The secondary roads had had good cycle paths but on the smaller roads I had a choice between deteriorating cobblestone in the middle and mud on the sides.

Gent was a lovely old town with well-manicured parks and broad, tree-lined boulevards. I asked directions to the hostel once at a news stand in the center of town and, after getting lost, again at a bar, where I was rewarded with a free beer by a man who assumed that because he could understand my German I could understand his Flemish. Of course I couldn't, but I nodded when I caught a word and smiled a lot, and I enjoyed the beer.

The hostel, when I found it, was a large massive affair, with its entrance on a large paved court which could be reached only through an archway cut through the buildings facing the street. Parked in front was a small stationwagon with an Australian license. This hostel was much more friendly than the last and the hostellers were, unlike the young people at Oostende, once again more experienced. How could an Australian in Europe avoid it? One of the Australians, a large, but rather good-looking blonde girl, had an interesting story about a hostel in Italy.

She had checked in and found that the warden spoke no English. The girl was tired and dirty, after three days of not being able to wash up, so she wrote "WC," the universal symbol for rest rooms, on a scrap of paper. The woman pointed out a side door but when she went out, the girl found herself in a courtyard bereft of any possibility of privacy. At one end of the yard were toilet facilities of the most primitive sort, but in the middle she saw a huge washtub under a faucet. She looked around to make sure no one was looking. It had been a long time since she had bathed, so she took off her shoes and started to wash her feet. She couldn't get them very far into the water because she was wearing tight slacks that couldn't be rolled up. Still, she couldn't resist the water. She looked around again and, finding the courtyard empty, stripped down to her bra and briefs - scanties, as she called them - and began to bathe. Before long, an Italian matron type appeared out of nowhere and started to run around screaming and cursing in Italian. She grabbed the girl's clothes and threw them in the middle of the street outside the courtyard, then ran off to tell the warden about the shameless hosteller. Meanwhile the girl gathered up her courage and ran out into the street, grabbed her clothes, and ran back inside to dress. Fortunately she wasn't seen, but she was thrown out of the hostel by the indignant warden.

Among the other hostellers was a young American from California, about eighteen or twenty, with a small handlebar moustache and thin, long hair that curled up at the ends. He reminded me vaguely of a turn-of-the-century barber more than anything else and, although he impressed me as being neither tremendously experienced nor particularly bright, he was a friendly and a pleasant young man.

I was filthy and tired, but after an hour or so of conversation I decided to forego the cold showers and go straight to bed.

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### July 7

I ate breakfast in the dining hall, although I stuck to my own bread and marmalade, rather than pay for the hostel breakfast which amounted to the same thing, with a tremendous cup, or basin, of coffee instead of the chocolate milk (called cacao in Europe) that I bought from the warden. After breakfast the warden let me go without doing a chore. I walked to the main road with two Americans who were hitchhiking. When we reached it, we met a short Japanese boy who had slept at the hostel with us. He was carrying a strange pack that resembled in shape and size a footlocker more than anything else. The sight of it, especially on so small a man, was awe-inspiring.

I set out from there in the general direction of Brussels on a good road running parallel to the Oostende-Brussel Autostrade, then switched to a poorer road to Vilvoorde to avoid the city. I had nothing against Brussels and would have gone there had I not been in such a hurry to get to Germany. Not being able to speak the native language was getting on my nerves anyway, and I had no desire to drive far enough south to get into the French-speaking Walloon section of the country where even my pitiful knowledge of Dutch would be more a handicap than a virtue. The third, and deciding factor was the thought of riding in city traffic and trying to get out of the city without getting on the Autostrade by mistake. Belgian road signs were far from the best and it was quite likely that the only signs to towns that were on my map would take me straight to the Autostrade and leave me stranded there without an alternative route. I was making good time and was very proud of my progress, especially in view of a certain soreness, attributable to cobblestones, lingering from the day before. After Vilvoorde I was in trouble. I broke down into my old habit of stopping at shops along the way. This was perhaps precipitated by a stop I made just before reaching Aalst to avoid cycling in the rain storm that sprang up around ten in the morning. Of course I left the shop before it was over and caught the worst of it on the road as usual. I found that I was taking cigarette breaks and all sorts of other breaks at the slightest excuse later in the day.

I had to take some bad roads to get around the Brussels Airport and after that found myself on a main highway without a cycle path. It was getting late and the second day of riding on cobblestones had made sitting on the saddle nearly intolerable. I stopped at a bar at Kraainem, where I met the main road to Leuven and soon stopped for supper to give myself a longer respite. I had had visions of riding all the way to Diest when I started out in the morning, but had by that time compromised my goal and settled for Leuven. Neither that nor supper helped. One of my frustrations was that from Gent to the place I stopped for supper I met very few people who spoke either German or English. The woman at the restaurant spoke both, but while that cheered me a little, it didn't help the soreness.

At the hostel in Leuven, a moderately sized building of yellow stucco, I met a Belgian who spoke a number of languages and had a great interest in the arts and particularly in the cinema. We spent nearly an hour before supper discussing Albee's *Virginia Woolf*, by Nichols, Antonioni's *Blow-up*, and Pellini, Richardson, Cocteau, *et al.* The man was in his early or middle twenties, with a small moustache and a round face, accentuated by rimless glasses. He looked sensual and active, but also very Belgian. He was on his way to visit friends in Switzerland and then to southern France. I was somewhat amused at the emotion with which he spoke, but understood, since he told me he thought the most important thing for a writer was to be, first of all, a man, with a man's feelings and desires. I quite agreed, though with less vehemence. He recommended Henry Miller to me as a writer with real honesty of feeling and then we got into a discussion about the Flemish cinema. The main problem in Belgium was the limited Flemish audience and the relatively small financial base for films in Belgium. A simple count of the relative number of people speaking Flemish, as compared to English, French, or German will illustrate his point rather well. The audience is so small that unless subtitles are used or the film is dubbed, it is difficult to find a producer, and the technical quality of the film suffers as a result.

The rest of the evening passed without event, except for a minor pillow fight among the Belgians after lights out.

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July 8

The next morning breakfast was interesting, almost ritualistic. Nothing was touched until everyone was seated at the table. One man asked for a moment of silence and after-ward everyone began to eat. Coffee was poured by one or two people at each table and everyone helped himself to the bread, jam, butter, and chocolate. The last was a soft milk chocolate of about the same consistency as freshly made cake icing and was spread like jam on the bread. When the meal was finished, everyone paused for another moment of silence, which was not, as far as I could tell, quite as sincere as one might think, although it was requested by an individual hosteler at each table and not by the warden or some figure of authority. Then everyone helped to clean up.

After breakfast I talked with an Englishman who was on his way to visit his fiancée near Stuttgart. He was an avid tennis fan and interesting to talk to, although a little insensitive to my desire, plainly stated, to get an early start for the Dutch border at Vaals and on to Aachen, Germany. His primary gripe was the fifty pounds maximum currency that could be taken out of England. Although it amounted to almost \$140, and would have been plenty for me for well over a month, that amount was intolerable for anyone who, as he did, had car expenses as well as the minimal hostel fees.

I had trouble getting on the right road and out of the city, although that was rarely a problem, and made good time on the road for about an hour. Then it started to rain. I stopped at a grocery store just past Tienen and spent another half an hour with the owner. When I left he gave me a one-liter bottle with a good stopper for water to replace my first one, which I had left at Dover. It slipped off the bicycle and broke about five kilometers down the road. By noon I had made it to St. Truiden, half way to the border from Leuven. It was raining again and I was pleased with my progress, so I stopped there for lunch. On the road a bolt supporting my luggage carrier had come loose, but I was able to fix it quickly without having to borrow any tools. The cycle was not without problems, especially when ridden over cobblestones for long periods of time, but I was already thoroughly convinced that, in spite of the constant attention mine required, cycling was by far the best way to travel in Europe. At the cafe where I stopped for lunch there was a strange sound, something like rapid auction commentary but clearly based on different musical intervals coming over the radio. If it was music, it was a sort I had never heard before, although apparently related to yodeling. I had brought my lunch of jam and bread with me, so I ordered some coffee there and ate my own food.

When I left the café it was still cloudy, but not raining. It soon started again, however, and didn't really stop until I got to Maastricht. I didn't realize, in spite of the higher and increasingly hillier countryside, that I was at the Dutch frontier until I was across it. No one seemed to notice me, so I kept right on going, without even changing any money, not that I had much.

The next twenty-four kilometers were pure hell. I had already gone eighty kilometers that day and had never really recovered from Thursday's cobblestones. I found myself cycling very slowly, with the fear firmly planted that if I ever got off the damned thing I would never get back on. Somehow I still managed to get to Vaals, which is right on the German border, across from Aachen. I changed one hundred Belgian Francs into Dutch currency for the hostel before I knew I could have crossed into Germany and stayed at the hostel in Aachen. I was really too tired to care. Almost exactly one hundred kilometers in one day was a record for me and the roads hadn't been the best.

The hostel was nice, except for the men's dormitory, which was a kind of barracks attached to the main building. I got there just in time for supper, for which I was happy enough to pay. The same sort of ceremony accompanied this meal as breakfast in Leuven, except that the warden was in charge. Almost all the hostelers were Dutch and I was disappointed that I didn't get a chance to speak German during the meal. Apparently no one around me understood or spoke it. Two girls next to me were Scots. They seemed a bit young to be traveling on their own, but they might well have been older than they looked. After supper I checked in and sat around the dining room, doing nothing in particular, until the evening tea was served, something which I hadn't found in other hostels. During this evening snack period I talked, if it could be called that, to the two Scottish girls. One of them who spoke French managed to print Fullais Regis' address for me so I could read it, but most of the time the two talked

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about boys and I just listened, pretending to concentrate on my journal.. One was afraid she would lose face if she got back from vacation before her boyfriend did. I've forgotten the logic behind that one, but I remember that it was rather intricate and dependent on a number of tenuous assumptions. After I drank my tea, I washed some clothes and went to bed. I was about the only one who did. I fell asleep amid the general din around twenty past eleven.

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### CHAPTER SEVEN: UP THE EIFEL AND DOWN TO THE RHEIN

#### July 9

The Dutch, it seems, are just as imaginative as the Belgians about their bread-and-tea continental breakfasts. At the table were bread, cheese, luncheon, date nut bread and chips of chocolate, to be used in the same way as the Belgian chocolate sauce. These, with the addition of the usual tea, butter, and jam, made a most interesting meal.

My watch was working again when I left the hostel around nine. I crossed the border into Germany as soon as I had changed some money and wandered aimlessly around Aachen for an hour or so, getting used to being back. I bought a copy of *Die Zeit* to see what was going on in the country and finally pedaled off to the east, determined not to hurry.

Hurrying, I soon discovered, was out of the question. In spite of generally excellent facilities for cyclists, Germany does sometimes, like England and the United States, forget to mark any route from one city to another except the Autobahn. Even my circuitous route out of Aachen was made with great haste, though, compared with the snail's pace I maintained for the rest of the day. After treating myself to a full dinner at noon, I ran into the first real grade, proof that I was indeed back in Germany, and that the "Low Countries" truly deserve the name. Actually, things started to get steep as soon as I crossed the border, but I managed to compound the routine difficulties of cycling by picking a scenic highway that wound its way upward through a national park to the highest point in the Eifel. During the two hour walk I was even passed by a pedestrian, and that, even as a novice cyclist, hurt my pride. At the top was a little knoll with a bench, occupied by the pedestrian. He looked very much like a character, in a spy film, dressed in his tan trench coat and hunched over his transistorized short wave radio. I reflected that some people would go a long way to get good radio reception and then told him, "*Guten Tag.*" He returned the greeting and asked me to look back the way I had come. He explained that, although there was a light mist covering the lower country around us, on a clear day one could see Holland, Belgium, and Luxemburg. Then he showed me where Köln, Düsseldorf, Bonn, and Koblenz were hiding behind the fog. Before I left him with his radio he gave me directions to Nidiggen, a reasonable stopping place on the way to Wiesbaden, where there was an American Express office and, I hoped, mail.

The way down was very pleasant because it was down. About two kilometers from the *Jugendherberge*, though, I saw what I thought was a fortress or castle (*Burg*) and took a picture of it. Further up the road a Dutch cyclist from Maastricht explained to me that my "*Burg*" was the town itself. Joy. We walked up the mountain together, talking in German until out of sheer frustration we switched to English. At the top, before we parted, he showed me a small plaque fastened to one of the posts supporting the town sign. The shield held a small youth hostel emblem and an arrow pointing up a narrow country road. It was only one kilometer to the hostel.

Another large, modern hostel, which doubles as a nursery. (The minimum hosteling age in Germany is six.) On the front steps stood four or five German scouts of some sort singing with guitar accompaniment. I stood for some time in the yard listening. Some of the songs were really German, but most were German translations of Bob Dylan and the Beatles. On the inside, younger scouts were playing a hazardous game of soccer on the linoleum tile with a hard rubber washer. The hard rubber puck didn't seem to bother anyone as it flew around the room, but the teen-aged scouts did object to the noise the younger boys made as they played.

Someone yelled, "*Essen!*" and suddenly all of the loneliness I had been storing up since I left England came over me. I wandered around the lobby, looking at doors that might lead to a dining room, but, while I found the kitchen, I found only one room reserved for a group. I went in anyway, but was told to go to the kitchen again.

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There I found a special meal being prepared for me. I hesitated in the kitchen, my tray in hand, until a girl met me and took me back to the dining room. I wondered what the special treatment was all about. Apparently I was eating with some group. At least a tall handsome man in his late forties kept order among the others, who were mostly in their middle teens, and made announcements about the next day's travel. Whether the group was in sole possession of the room I didn't know. I only know that I felt somewhat out of place among the younger children, who were chattering in a dialect I couldn't begin to understand. The girl who had led me to the room filled my emptied cup of cocoa when I had no intention of asking, and after the meal the older man introduced himself to me and told me I didn't have to help clean up the table. By that time my loneliness had been replaced by a feeling of security mixed with helplessness. No one had ever waited on me before and it felt very strange, especially in a hostel, where everyone is expected to do his share.

The old city of Nidiggen was destroyed in the war, but has since been very well restored. I went there after supper with the same group at the invitation of the older man and his wife. While we ate ice cream at an ice cream parlor on the main street I learned a few things about the group. The children, at fourteen and fifteen, had graduated from the *Volksschule* and most, having come to the end of their formal education, would soon be working. Only a few would go on to the *Gymnasia*. During an extremely pleasant conversation, in German, I talked with the instructor and his wife about his service in the *Luftwaffe* and his imprisonment in an American P.O.W. camp in Bavaria during the war. We talked about music and discussed the Vietnam war. It gave me quite a lift to be able to make myself understood in German after struggling during the meal with the dialect the children spoke.

After returning to the hostel we all went back to the dining room, where the entire group consumed a full hour in singing old *Volklieder* together. I could never imagine a similar group of American incorrigibles singing "Home On The Range" etc. together, but it was a rather impressive demonstration that there is still some feeling for "die Heimat" in Germany, if no where else. Later in the dormitory, of course, the boys proved themselves to be normal, average teenage misfits. There was a great deal of talk about visiting the girls, and two girls actually did come to the door of the men's dorm, but nothing was really done about all that brave talk. One boy, in fact, kept suggesting that they keep reasonably quiet, so I could get to sleep. Perhaps this too was all part of the plot to visit the girls without getting caught, but his counsel was completely ignored. I didn't mind. Since I was only six years ahead of them, I listened intently, with the conviction that I had definitely lost something in the interim. It was well past eleven before they settled down and I began to think about one of the girls in the group. She was a tall blonde and rather mature, sexually, for fifteen. Because she had been staring at me all evening, I wondered what I represented to her; a bearded hobo, or an older man, or merely some strange foreigner - perhaps all three. She was, at any rate, a very handsome girl, and I'm afraid I stared at her too. She was at the same time well-formed and slender, delicate and wiry; her straight blonde hair and big brown eyes, bronze skin and attractive outfit, made her so inviting that the idea that she was only fifteen was thoroughly disturbing.

### July 10

I was up bright and early the next morning to say good-bye to the teacher and his wife. I ate early with a couple of Dutch girls and started off for the Rhein valley. It was downhill again most of the way, so I got down to the Rhein around two in the afternoon at Sinzig and rode down to Koblenz, where I crossed the river. I had stopped along the way, so I got there in the middle of the rush hour. As in London, I was delighted to make better time in the traffic than the cars. Still, "Pride goeth before a fall," they say, and just as I reached the other side of the bridge I experienced a kind of wrenching thud somewhere just behind me, like in the rear axle. I was lucky. The hostel at Nieder-Lahnstein was not far down the road. I coasted down the hill to the hostel on my crippled bicycle and took a good look at the rear axle in the hostel yard. The hub had been torn open and was spewing out bearings as fast as I could have put them back in. More fun. It was too late to get it fixed, so I had a couple of beers instead.

At the hostel, which was a very old stone building well off the street, I met a number of Englishmen and an Iowan who was teaching music theory at Philadelphia College. The warden, or *Herbergvater*, as the Germans call

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him, seemed to be a southern European. In contrast to his blonde wife, who spoke German fluidly if not grammatically, he spoke German that was noticeably worse than mine. About the time a group of at least thirty German school children between the ages of eight and ten came in, I went out for those beers mentioned above. At the *Gasthaus* I selected there was a lengthy news broadcast on television, followed by an informative program on the relevance of Marx to contemporary Germany.

Back at the hostel the children were impossible. So was the noise level. After mending a pair of pants that were long overdue I was invited to a small common room upstairs where the door was shut tight so a number of the older hostlers could listen to an Englishman playing guitar. He was good, but even with the door closed he could barely be heard over the din downstairs. As I sat there I reflected on my day. The morning had been consumed in soaking up the mood (*Gefühl*) of Germany on a pleasant ride across a plateau and down the Ahr valley past the vineyards. In the afternoon not even the rush hour traffic could hide the beautiful hills and majestic castles that line the river. It struck me that one of the great strengths of Germany is the fact that not even modern life, with all of its noise and bustle, has been able to obscure those hills and castles that bridge the centuries between the present and the time of the *Nibelungen*.

When I got back downstairs the children were worse than ever. Their leader, dressed in what I had supposed was the costume Bavarians reserved for the eyes of rich tourists, was big, beer-bellied, and loud. He prowled around the darkened room shining a flashlight from time to time in someone's eyes to see who was still awake and choosing noisy or restless children to be sent out to sit in the washroom as punishment. Since noise was made only behind his back, he was rather haphazard in his selection. It was well past eleven when the brats finally shut up and called it a night.

### July 11

At six-thirty the brats were at it again. I did my best to sleep until seven, but it was no use. The rest of us had to wait till the group was gone before we could eat breakfast, not that we wanted to share the meal with them anyway. When things calmed down I enjoyed a pleasant meal with three English boys. When I went up to the office to retrieve my card, I asked the warden's wife for it in German. She answered in very poor English, which she no doubt wanted to practice. Still, I found it condescending, since I had made it a point to meet the people of Germany on their own terms, in their own life-style, and in their own language. I asked her about cycle shops, *Gasthauser*, morning chores, and the hostel closing time, all with the same result. Had such a thing happened to me before or after I might not have taken offense, but it didn't.

I walked my bike to a nearby cycle shop after breakfast and found that the man couldn't fix it there, so I walked to another on the road south along the Rhein, where I was told I would have to leave it for a day or two. I told the woman I would like to fix it myself if I might buy the parts. She said I would still have to wait till eleven, when her husband would return to the shop I left the bike there and wandered down to the river bank to wait. Just before eleven I returned to the shop and bought the parts. Then I looked around for a place to work. Obviously, I couldn't do it on the sidewalk, so I walked the bike south about a block, where I found a gravel parking lot. There I replaced the retainers and bearings, greased them and put everything back together, adding, no doubt, enough grit from the gravel to insure a speedy return of the problem. When I had finished, a woman came out of a nearby house and offered me the use of her sink to clean up. I accepted gratefully and soon both the bicycle and I were renewed and ready to continue the journey.

A few miles out of town I was hailed by a man who told me he had just gotten out of prison. He said his brother had been killed three years before on a construction site in London and asked for a cigarette. Then he came to the point. He complained that he had no work and no connections through which he might obtain work. In other words, he had no money. I told him that I didn't either, but gave him ten *pfennigs*, knowing full well he would spend it on a beer. He was short, deeply tanned, poorly dressed, and in need of a shave. I figured a beer or two would do him about as much good as anything else. Besides, bums are very good sources for short story material.

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### CHAPTER EIGHT: LAST LEG

After I had been on the road about two hours, taking photographs as I went, I ran into three of the Englishmen who had stayed in Nieder-Lahnstein the night before. They were hiking to the hostel at Kamp, where I met them. They hadn't bothered to check and, unfortunately for them, the hostel had not yet opened for the summer vacation, which starts in the middle of July for most schools in Germany. We went into a restaurant to plan strategy and spent forty *pfennigs* each for a small glass of beer. The map showed another hostel at Oberwesel, about ten kilometers upstream on the other side, but there was no bridge across the Rhein between Koblenz, fifty kilometers to the north, and Geisenheim, at least forty kilometers to the south. They decided to look for a ferry across and I went on toward Lorch.

It was a beautiful day, but hot, and as the day wore on I found myself pedaling slower and stopping for drinks more often. Still, I got to Lorch around six-thirty. There were only four people there before me, two German cyclists and two Frenchmen traveling by car. I thought I had finally found a hostel with a little peace and quiet when two school groups came in around eight. They were traveling together in the hope that the German children would pick up some English from the English group, which was led by a Catholic priest, a doctor, and assorted instructors and sisters, who hoped, in turn, that their charges would develop good German accents. I amused myself by piddling around and watching the children. I talked a little with some of the instructors, English and German, but really wasn't in the mood. In spite of the children, the evening was, on the whole, uneventful. There was a lot of noise and fuss made over one of the English boys who dressed himself as a girl, with fairly convincing results, but by that time I was too interested in getting to bed to take much notice.

#### July 12

I was awakened the next morning at seven by a gong the English group used to call the children to meals. I rose lethargically, assuming I would have to wait again for the children to eat. I spent half an hour cleaning up and packing, then went to breakfast. Even so, I had to wait until eight-thirty to get into the kitchen to clean up. I got off around nine, with the two Germans about five minutes ahead of me. On my way down to the main road I passed through the children as they walked to their bus, which couldn't make the climb. They were singing some song I remembered vaguely from my Boy Scout days, but they took the time to wave and say good-bye. The whole scene looked like something straight out of a Walt Disney film, except for my beard.

A few kilometers out of town I passed the Germans, but they caught up with me in Rudesheim when I ran into a detour on which bicycles were not allowed to travel. I met them while I was back-tracking, looking for an alternate route along the river. Together we found an older road, a little further inland, and cycled all the way to Wiesbaden together. We stopped once to fix one of their cycles and again for some cokes. We parted just outside Wiesbaden and I headed off alone again, in search of the American Express office downtown.

I found myself almost immediately on another access road for an *Autobahn*. I finally circumvented that problem by riding through a construction site and ate a cheap lunch across the street from an American Air Force base on the outskirts of the city (Wiesbaden-Innenstadt, as opposed to Wiesbaden-Frauenstein or Wiesbaden-Schierstein or half a dozen others). After traveling in Europe and meeting only occasional American tourists, I was bothered by the presence of the Air Force. Uniformed Americans in the streets, American licenses on the cars, and American English supplanting the German dialects I had become accustomed to hearing around me; these things were extremely distasteful to me. I had lived in the American community in Heidelberg and seen the belligerence, disdain, and anxiety my countrymen showed in their relationships with their hosts. Quietly brewing in the back of my mind was the idea that if Americans were not willing to respect and associate with Germans freely they had no

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business being there. I found I resented the Americans in Wiesbaden and I wondered, in view of that, how the Germans themselves felt. Going to the American Express office with an attitude like that virtually assured that I would find no mail when I arrived. I didn't. In contrast, the hostel was easy to find and did have a place for me.

Just before supper I got a rather disturbing report of what it would be like, and true at that. After waiting for twenty minutes while groups were served fried eggs, wurst, etc., those of us who were individual travelers received a kind of thin vegetable broth with a big pile of poorly cooked rice in it and nothing to drink. And that pittance for DM1.80. Only my introduction to two Glasgow boys who were to enter the university in the fall saved the meal. In spite of their plans to study science, both had a strong interest in the performing arts and had seen all of the major British companies a number of times. For boys of seventeen and eighteen they were quite impressive, although the picture they painted of the general quality and popularity of the arts in Scotland was rather dismal.

Later I met an American from New York City who was doing a Ph.D. in international relations at Stockholm. He was with his Swedish girlfriend, Kristina, who spoke very good English. She was slender, blond, and generally attractive, except for her prominent lips and large teeth, one of which was capped with gold. The young man was tall, thin, and dark. The glasses he wore, with his smile, gave him a pleasant, intelligent air. He, too, had a lively interest in the arts and told an interesting story about Edward Albee before he became famous. The conversation was just getting started when we were chased up to bed around ten.

In my dormitory room I met a University of Michigan student who was a Japanese American from Baltimore. Like myself, he had an interest in doing films, but since we had little time before "lights out," he left for the washroom as soon as I came in. I had just finished making up my bunk when a Dutchman from Amsterdam came in, drunk. For the next half hour he made a noisy clown of himself, carrying on an extended conversation with two Italians in bad English mixed with German and Dutch. He begged them to drive him to the Köln Autobahn, insisted on having the drapes drawn, snored very loudly in spite of being wide awake, and complained of the noise when the Michigan student came back in. In short, he was impossible.

Someone finally shouted, "Shut up or I'll punch you in the mouth.

"I don't speak so good English," was his reply.

"You understand me damn well and if you don't shut, up I'll punch you in the mouth. I know you'll understand that. This is the second night you've kept me up.

That pretty well settled things. A few more "Good-nights" from the Dutchman and several loud grunts and everything was quiet.

### July 13

At seven sharp the warden was in the room throwing open the drapes and shouting us a "*Guten Morgen*," which was nice, since I could have slept those twenty minutes I had to wait for breakfast. On second thought, I could have skipped the meal entirely. DM 1.20 for three Brötchen, jam and butter, and a small cup of the weakest coffee I have ever had. I bought a bottle of Cacao to wash the bread and coffee down just as the New Yorker and his girlfriend made the mistake of ordering the same thing in English. Although Kristina spoke Swedish, English, and French, neither spoke much German. The fat *Putzfrau* type behind the counter let loose at them in German about how it was "*eine Sache der Höflichkeit und Erziehung*" to speak German in Germany. She went on to say that her son had been thrown out of an English hostel the year before because he asked the warden if he spoke German. I got myself tangled up in the German side of the argument long enough to get the Cacao for them and tell the woman it just wasn't that way everywhere in England. I refrained from asking what else her son had done, although it might have been interesting.

I talked with the two until nine, when I went back to the American Express office. Again there was no mail for me. I wandered back toward the hostel and stopped at a cafe to get out of the already hot sun. There I was charged eighty pfennigs for a 0.2 liter Coke. I wondered how much the waitress was making on the side, since I could have bought twice as much at any grocery store for less, but I let it go. I bought some *Brötchen* and another

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Coke at a second shop and snacked in the park on Wilhelmstraße. I read the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* for a while, half watching a Grandmother and mother cope with two playful children squirming on the next bench. The children's grammar was atrocious and I was surprised that neither of the women made any effort to correct it.

On the way back to the hostel I had a small lunch and bought a copy of *Katz und Maus*, by Gunter Grass, not trusting the hostellers to be sufficiently interesting until late in the evening. They weren't, but I spent the afternoon at the hostel with a couple of American teenagers anyway. They were going to "see" Europe in one month and were trying to rent motorcycles for the purpose. Both were very American in dress (sloppy and extremely informal) and outlook. They also exuded the kind of naiveté that only a recent American high school graduate can claim. I showed them some of the places in Europe that I liked on a map and talked with them about nothing in particular until four, when I took off to get some parts for my bicycle.

When I came back I bought *Brötchen*, jam, and a Coke from a shop across the street rather than pay for another rotten meal at the hostel. I learned that one of the Americans was thinking about a career in the Air Force, although when I pressed him about Vietnam, for the sake of argument, his views were rather superficial. He tried manfully to be sophisticated and deliberate, but fell pretty far short. Maybe the university could do something for him. It would take time.

Around seven the New Yorker, whose name, I discovered, was Bob, and Kristina came back with a very interesting character. They had met a Scot named Sim, or something like that, at a used car lot after they had signed the papers on a car he said was no good. The salesman wanted forty-five dollars for it and the Scot said it needed a transmission seal and a lot of other work and wasn't worth twenty. Sim said he couldn't go back home because he had a prison rap waiting for him. He also said he was a demolition expert working freelance for anyone who wanted him. At age twenty-three he had done a tremendous amount of traveling around the north Atlantic, if he was to be believed. At the time he said he was clearing mines from the Rhein and had to disarm two in the morning. He was asking \$600 for the job. His other interests included the flashy side of sex, as long as it wasn't taken seriously, automobile racing, and a jazz group he said he had just organized. His greatest talent, though, appeared to be getting into trouble. He promised Bob to get a tent for him through the American army. "Get," in this context meant "steal." This he mentioned as the three of us sat in his Volkswagen drinking beer about fifty yards from the hostel. I sensed that Bob was embarrassed and uneasy about the tent and about the Scot's suggestions for handling car dealers, but he went along out of need and gratitude.

Sim's favorite subject was his French girlfriend, who, he said, made a living diving for wrecks off the coast of France. She was supposed to have found quite a lot of money in one wreck, which made her financially independent. As the Scot described her, she was a rather erotic nature-girl and probably an alcoholic too.

A group of Americans touring by coach also showed up and spent the evening singing folk songs on the hostel lawn. They were followed by two German groups, one of small children. Perhaps the warden sensed my dislike for hoards of noisy kids, perhaps not. At any rate, both the warden and the cook were much nicer to me than they were to Bob and Kristina. Just before ten the warden promised to show me the best way out of town. It was the cook who had given me the directions to the cycle shop. In the dormitory I met a Dutchman with a small handlebar moustache and we joked around for a few minutes before going to bed.

### July 14, Bastille Day in France.

After saying good-bye to everyone I went down to the American Express office where I had one letter from my future wife and a second from my mother. Neither was particularly exciting, but I did enjoy reading them.

After writing another traveler's check, I began the difficult task of threading my way out of Wiesbaden. Just across the Rhein from Mainz I met the Dutchman again. He had been waiting over an hour for a ride, so we

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went to a *Gasthaus* nearby for a few beers and talked. He was studying for his doctorate in Holland, but the year before he had made a trip into Egypt and the Sudan with an Englishman, hitchhiking and taking trains where thumbing was impossible. He got some directions to a better spot from the *Wirt* and we parted.

I made it about fifteen kilometers before my cycle gave out again, next to the Opel works outside Mainz. It was getting on past noon, so I stopped at a *Gasthaus* for a good, cheap lunch and directions to still another cycle shop. I found it, after some confusion due to faulty directions and was shown two used bikes, both of which were too expensive. Then I was told it would cost thirty marks to fix mine. That I believed, especially when the shopkeeper explained that half of the protective parts on the axle were missing in the first place. Why hadn't someone said so before? I stripped and junked my bike and took a train to Heidelberg.

I regretted that train ride as soon as we got out of the station, if not before. I had always felt a sense of accomplishment in traveling by cycle, a feeling that every kilometer was earned, not with money but with honest effort. That was gone. So were the grocery store owners and the bartenders I used to meet along the way. Most of all, I missed the act of standing over my bike at an intersection, the handlebar in one hand and a map in the other, with a free choice as to which way to go. I felt out of place on the train, although I spent the first half of the trip with an amiable young mechanic from the Opel plant in Russelsheim, where I had caught the train. My saddlebags, pack, and sleeping bag were a little out of place among the attaché cases and suitcases. My clothes, while perfectly acceptable on the road, were rumpled and filthy by railroad standards. As I rode that train I knew that I didn't belong, that I was out of character.

The train arrived in Heidelberg at seven in the evening. As soon as I stepped into the street I felt trapped and helpless. I had always stayed away from streetcars and busses. Suddenly, though, I had no other way of getting out to the hostel, which was on the outskirts of town just beyond the *Heidelberger Tiergarten*.

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**PART THREE: MARKING TIME**

## Europe on Less than \$5 a Day

### CHAPTER NINE: THIS WAS MY HOME

Staying in a hostel did not make Heidelberg seem much like home. Being confined to a section of the suburbs I did not know made me feel confined, especially since I had no transportation but my feet. After I arrived at the hostel, though, with the kind directions of several people, I ran into the same two Glasgow boys I had met in Wiesbaden. With them I found another Scot named Gordon, from Aberdeen. He proved to be much more interesting. Able to speak Hebrew and Greek, he had gone to Palestine on a grant the year before. Although he was driving to Zermatt in his Morris to meet friends, he said he would be in Heidelberg until Sunday afternoon. I had gotten in late, so there was little time to talk that night before we were hustled off to bed.

Shortly after climbing in, however, I heard a band playing “Yellow Submarine.” The sound began faintly, got progressively louder until the words were distinguishable, then died away again. Much later the same thing happened, this time with a song I couldn't identify. The noise, which I soundly cursed at the time, turned out to be from one of the all-night parties the university students were having to celebrate the end of the term and the beginning of the summer holiday by hiring a cruise ship on the Neckar.

#### July 15

I met Gordon at breakfast and we decided to see Heidelberg together. I needed to get the address of a Ph.D. candidate there and he wanted to see the university. The university was easily found, mainly because I knew where it was. Otherwise we could have searched for days among the undistinguished buildings beneath the *Schloß* in search of a campus. We wandered around the halls of the administration building, visited a cafeteria, and read notices on the bulletin boards, but the information office was closed and my errand was left uncompleted. We walked leisurely through the town from the Red **Ox** past the old bridge, the Holy Ghost Church, and out along the *Hauptstraße*. After a beer in town we walked up to the *Schloß*, where we strolled through the gardens and decided with little deliberation not to go on the tour of the interior. We drove instead up to the *Königstuhle*, where there was nothing to be seen but that famous German mist, and then to the *Schloß* at Swetzingen, where, once again, we toured just the garden, which was a full day's job in itself. It was tremendous both in scope and in the demonstration of intelligent planning. A mixture of formal and informal and an exhibition of planning the appearance of not planning, the garden catered to humanity. There was a surprise at every turn and, as Gordon said, something for every age group and every kind of person. Even though it was my second visit, I enjoyed it just as much as my guest, if I may call him that.

We ate a good lunch in the town during a brief shower and then went, by a most indirect route, to the *Ehrenfriedhof*, a cemetery and monument to the German dead in the Second World War. The American youth in Heidelberg called it “the end of the world because the slightly arched walk to the monument gave the appearance of having nothing beyond it. It was also one of their favorite places to park. By the time we reached the end of the walk the weather had cleared and we had a splendid view to the west all the way to Mannheim. I showed Gordon where we had been, from the hostel to Swetzingen to Patrick Henry Village, one of the two large American ghettos in the Heidelberg area. We had driven through “PHV” earlier and I had told Gordon a little about the unnatural life the inhabitants led there, isolated and alienated from the host country. His comment, after passing row after row of dull three story eighteen unit apartment buildings was that it was certainly an atrocious way to live. I ended our stay at the monument by pointing out to him the *Autobahn* that led to Karlsruhe and giving him directions for getting on it. By then it was time to return to the hostel, where the rest of the evening was rather a waste. Even the rumors that the Jews and Arabs were at it again caused very little concern or conversation; the dining area was filled with people grouped by nationality playing cards, chess, and other assorted games, while a large American group monopolized the courtyard with a noisy hootenanny.

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### July 16

In the morning Gordon gave me a ride to the railway bridge just west of the *Bahnhof*. From there I walked to Römerstraße and then to Campbell Barracks, the headquarters of the American Forces in Europe. I had intended to visit a friend of my parents' to see about mailing some of my useless junk home, to be able to tell my parents I was there, and to bum a free meal if possible. By the time I got to the neighborhood and fished the address out of my pocket I realized that my alienation from the American Army was rather complete. I could not, for the moment, face the idea of walking up and ringing the Establishment's doorbell in my filthy clothes and unkempt beard. Instead, I sat down in a convenient bus shelter to wait until I had more courage. It suddenly occurred to me that I had walked quite a distance and that I was tired. With only a minor concern for decorum, I slouched down, put my feet up, and tried to get some rest. The shelter turned out to be extremely uncomfortable, so I walked into a vacant lot nearby and sprawled out on the ground to sleep. It was almost two in the afternoon before I woke up.

I brushed off my clothes and smoothed out my tangled hair and beard before setting out for my father's friend, the Colonel. The visit was worth the effort. I got two ham sandwiches and a beer along with some pleasant conversation. Some relatives were visiting at the time, so I knew my fond hope of finding a place to stay free for a few days was out the window. Still, when I told the Colonel about my abandoned bicycle he said he had one he never used down in the basement. He had used it for exercise back in the "physical fitness" days of President Kennedy, but had given it up for more sedentary forms of relaxation. The tires were flat, the handlebars were awkward, and the frame was a ghastly pink. I said I'd take it.

The family was going to a horse show near the hostel, so we pumped up the tires and threw the bike in the back of the family station wagon to watch the spectacle. There was a German policeman directing cars into parking places at the entrance. The Colonel spoke no German, although he had lived in Heidelberg for several years, so the cop kept giving him directions "*auf Deutsch*" and the Colonel kept shouting back questions in English until the car was parked. I saw a program for the show. Most of it was in German. I hope everyone enjoyed the outing.

The hostel was boring, probably because I had a headache. I locked up my new cycle, hoping no one would see me, and somehow survived the noise and bustle of supper. After I was feeling better I met two girls, one from South Africa and the other from Ontario. On a walk along the river we found the path lined with Mulberry trees. We needed no permission. We ate berries like pigs for about twenty minutes, then went to a *Gasthaus* by the *Tiergarten* for beer to wash them down. The conversation, mostly about hostels, was not particularly interesting. Neither, for that matter, were the girls.

But they were better than the drunk American and his cronies back in the dormitory. Beer and sex were the two themes expounded upon until well after lights out. It was annoying, not to say disgusting, especially since I and several others in the room wanted to get some sleep.

### July 17

I ate breakfast with the two girls I had met the night before. Then I checked out of the hostel and rode off to find more friends of my parents. The first family I tried, and the last, lived in a nice residential area north of the Neckar but they weren't home. For something to do I rode over to the university where I got the address I needed for the doctoral candidate, who had received substantial aid from the European PEO and had taught my mother in a course on Kafka. It was in Ziegelhausen, a town some distance up the river. Since I wasn't ready for a long ride I went to the American PX, where I used to work in the toy department. My old boss, Herr Gierg, was surprised and pleased to see me. I was happy to find him, since all of the other people I had known there were gone or on leave. He invited me to his home for the evening and I accepted gratefully.

After leaving the exchange I returned to the house in Handschusheim but there was still no one there, so I left for Ziegelhausen. The address was easy to find, but the woman who answered the bell told me that Maureen had returned to the United States. She also provided me with a character sketch of the girl. She got her bachelors in

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physics in California and had gone to Germany, of all places, to push through a ridiculously broad thesis topic without bothering to get a masters. She had a plan to synthesize ideas in physics, philosophy, and religion and, although she was a top student, refused to accept the rather dictatorial tactics of German advisors. Although she was very intelligent and very well educated, she had no idea how to get along with people. She lived in squalor and refused help until she was absolutely desperate. Even after she received the PEO loan she refused to use it and wrote articles in German magazines and took odd jobs, such as teaching the Kafka course, rather than owe anyone anything. In spite of being very attractive, she refused any friendship with men and accused all she met of dishonorable intentions. She left, needless to say, without her degree and returned to America, where she probably would not have it any easier.

After trying again to find someone home in Handschusheim, I went to the *Studentenheim* to see if I could live there until I had decided what to do next. By this time I knew my money probably would not last the summer. I could have found a group of beatniks to travel with, or I could have gotten a job of some sort. Both courses had their advantages. I did not, at that time, intend to ask my parents for more money.

After learning there was no room in the *Studentenheim* I killed time until seven, when I appeared at Herr Gierg's door. He was a little on the short side, heavy and soft-looking, with a round face and short graying hair. At forty-eight he was, however, an avid mountain climber, amateur filmmaker, and father of six. He had been with the European Exchange System for seventeen years and, in the absence of the store manager, was running the entire exchange. He liked for his employees to be cheerful and frequently sided with them against the executives in the organization. He had, in fact, just received a reprimand for making disloyal comments about EES to his employees. He was not particularly happy about that, but would never have let it affect his work there, one way or the other.

We spent a very enjoyable evening, but he did not offer me a place to stay and in fact suggested that I go down to Bismarck Platz where he had heard local beatniks were spending their evenings. When I arrived around eleven the square was empty, so I crossed the Neckar and wandered up and down the bank looking for a place to spend the night. As I walked I was surprised to see so many people along the river. Most were lone men, but even after two in the morning there were some mixed couples. I wrapped myself up in my sleeping bag in the shadow of a large hedge and was still cold, although the daytime temperature had been more than hot. I don't know how those thinly-clad shadows stood it.

### July 18

Around three the police showed up. I had almost been waiting for them and they were very friendly about the whole thing. I had suspected that sleeping on the river bank was not a generally accepted activity, but then I hadn't been sleeping. They had found me sitting up, huddled in my sleeping bag, smoking my pipe. The driver of the sedan stuck his head out of the window.

"Guten Morgen."

"Guten Morgen," I answered.

"Ist es Ihnen nicht zu kalt hier?" His voice was almost cordial.

"Ziemlich."

"Fahren Sie durch?"

"So ungefähr."

"Sind Sie Landsman?"

"Nein. Ich bin Amerikaner."

"Gute Nacht."

"Darf ich denn--"

"*Nein. Hier ist nicht zu übernachten,*" he broke in without changing the mild, conversational tone of his voice.

"Danke schön."

"Gute Nacht."

"*Gute Nacht.*"

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With that over, I picked up my things and loaded up the pink monster. I walked the bike slowly upstream on the north bank and waited for dawn. The sky was light by four and by the time I decided to take some pictures and found a good place the river was beautiful. I shot a roll of film waiting for the American Express complete runaround treatment and no answer as to when it might be possible to get a room there.

By this time I noticed my rear tire was down, so I walked the mile or so into Handschusheim, where I found someone at last. They had just returned from Switzerland. Pat (the wife) seemed at first glance both intelligent and interesting. She knew Maureen, so we talked about her while she fixed me some breakfast. We were finally interrupted at three in the afternoon and the three of us went to the exchange. At last I had a place to rest for a few days, to collect my thoughts, and to make plans. And for a time it really was almost like being home.

## Europe on Less than \$5 a Day

### CHAPTER TEN: EXCURSION INTO THE ODENWALD

I stayed in Heidelberg, typing up my notes, loafing, drinking, and generally wasting time, until the twenty-sixth. The truth was that I had no idea what to do next. I had pretty well decided I didn't have the perseverance or the motivation to get a job. I didn't have the guts to go with the German beatniks, a secret desire I had had ever since I met a group of them in Vienna in 1965. I thought of cycling to Spain and even mapped out a route, but I didn't have quite enough time. Even if I had, I wouldn't have had enough money to make the trip. At the same time, it was obvious that sooner or later I would wear out my welcome where I was staying. In desperation I decided to take a short trip into the Odenwald, a large, hilly region between Frankfurt and Heilbronn and east of the Rhein. I thought I would spend about a week there, then return to Heidelberg for mail before heading back to London, perhaps by way of Bremen or even Denmark. I had yet to solve the looming problem of financing the rest of my summer, although I had toyed with the idea of working at a hostel up north. The trip was a stop-gap measure, but anything was better than looking - and feeling - indecisive.

It was, of course, strange to be back on the road again after a week of reverting to my old indolent self. As a result, pedaling was hard, but the pleasure viewing the beautiful landscape and getting back into shape gave me more than made up for it. The morning was consumed in a pleasant ride along the north bank of the Neckar from Heidelberg to Eberbach. It was a road I had taken by car many times when I had lived in Europe three years before, but it did seem quite new and interesting by bicycle.

In the town of Eberbach I missed a turn and became thoroughly confused, so I stopped for lunch. In looking for a place to eat I usually tried to find a small *Gasthaus* not given to feeding (and fleecing) tourists. Most of the time I was lucky, but here I could find nothing but expensive restaurants. I was hungry, so I stopped in one that didn't look too bad, only to be thanked by bad service, a skimpy meal, and a fat bill.

The country flattened out a bit as I approached Mosbach, my destination for the day. The farms were somewhat larger and there was less timber. Even so, when I got there I found myself once again the victim of German esthetics. The hostel was on top of a hill overlooking the city, as were those of Nidiggen, Lorch, and Wiesbaden. The whole thing was getting just a little old.

Climbing steep hills was not my only problem. Between a group from a Catholic girls' school, complete with nuns and hordes of screaming children, and a supper abominable even by German standards, I felt like crawling into some hole for the night, buying a tent in the morning, and never again entering a *Jugendherberge*. I had, in my week's vacation, forgotten what they were like.

Before and after supper one of the groups sang *Lieder*. Since it was the last night of their tour, they also put on an amateur variety show as a farewell party. By all the rules of tourism and etiquette it should have been charming, but the noise and commotion, coupled with the lack of any interesting or stimulating people to talk to made the evening almost unbearable. The only other person close to my age was a young German cyclist. He wore the traditional tight short shorts and loose shirt open in the front. I couldn't help but think that his costume was intended to show off as much as possible of his excellently tanned and muscled body. That impression was helped along by his somber and self-conscious bearing. The two of us retired at nine, he to sleep and I to catch up on the day's writing. Both of us were upset by the noise the group made until well after eleven, but this epitome of the Arian race was considerably more put out than I was. He got to sleep as soon as the kids quieted down, but I had a new problem. I wondered if this fine specimen of *Gesundheit* knew he snored.

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### July 27.

Because it was marked as a place of special interest on my map and because it was not very far, I decided to go to Amorbach. I got to the bottom of the hill the hostel was on, returned to pick up the hostel card I had forgotten, got back to the bottom of the hill, and had an accident. That is, I hit the curb because I wasn't watching where I was going and fell off the bike. I didn't seem to be hurt, but I was embarrassed. After all, what kind of an idiot would fall off a bicycle, especially when he was pretending to be an experienced cyclist? I jumped back on the bike glanced around to see if anyone had been watching. Luckily, the street was empty.

I had misgivings about my route even before the accident. I made it a practice to follow rivers or streams whenever possible to avoid steep grades. There were none on the way to Amorbach and the road was all uphill. This nonsense persisted until I got to Mudan around eleven. I ate there for DM 2.40 and started out, realizing for the first time that my accident had not been quite so harmless. My right leg was very stiff and sore when I climbed back on the bike.

As I came to the edge of the village of Mudan I got a wonderful surprise. The road turned down sharply and, for the next fourteen kilometers, all the way in to Amorbach, the further I rode the steeper it seemed to get. For a change I worried about wearing out my brakes instead of my legs. Riding with such ease through the beautifully green, peaceful valley, I came almost to believe in the intercession of some benign deity.

Before I did any sight-seeing, I thought it would be a good idea to check out the hostel, which was, of course, on a hill over-looking the town. Needless to say, it was full. I rode back down into the town for a snack and some time to figure out what to do next. There I found the main attraction. It was a very old church with six or eight excellent statues of saints, placed along an ornate staircase and veranda in front. I would have stayed to study the figures and take more pictures, but I still had to find a place to spend the night. The nearest hostel at this point was in Miltenberg, a small town on the Main river. The hostel there was on the west end of town on a main street, so I didn't have to climb a hill to find out that it, too, was full. I had come nearly 50 kilometers over hills so far and now I had no choice but to ride another thirty to the next hostel in Wertheim, also on the Main. The scenery was great, but the road was lousy - full of potholes and built like a rollercoaster even though it did run next to a river.

I got into Wertheim at six and looked up the address again to make sure I had the right town. A loose translation of *Alte Steig* 16 would be something like "No.16 on the old steep slope." I limped all 1000 yards up the steep hill to discover they had emergency accommodations only. I decided that any accommodations would be better than rolling out my sleeping bag under a tree, so I took it. I asked if the supper would be hot or cold to avoid repeating the nonsense I went through in Mosbach. Meanwhile, my leg was worse, if anything, and only the appearance of another lone cyclist (from Bremen) cheered me up (slightly).

### July 28.

I felt much better in the morning. The cot I slept on was far more comfortable than the average hostel bed and the cellar was without question the quietest part of the hostel. I ate breakfast with the boy from Bremen and left the hostel with a smile in addition to my limp.

I was getting a little far from Heidelberg, my address for mail until I started north, so I decided to turn south and later west to make sure I had time to return to Heidelberg and still get to London on the fifth of September. Since the Tauber flowed into the Main from the south at Wertheim, it was the logical river to follow in that direction. Although I expected the trip would be up a long gradual grade, I also noticed that the Tauber was very close to the Jagst, a small river that runs into the Neckar and back to Heidelberg, near Bad Mergentheim.

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As I expected, the ride was difficult and on several occasions I was forced to walk. The ten kilometers from Bad Mergentheim to the divide between the Tauber and the Jagst were just plain steep. When I got to the top, I turned around and couldn't resist taking a picture of the view that must have stretched nearly to the Main. I was struck, at that time, by the incredible green of the countryside. I had noticed the same brightness in England in June, but it was amazing to see it further south in late July. It might be worth mentioning that I was passed during a rest stop on the way to Bad Mergentheim by several U.S. Army trucks, the first I had seen since leaving Heidelberg. I could hardly approve of their intrusion into such a peaceful, beautiful section of rural Germany.

The rest stop had also reinforced a lesson I had learned in practical medical therapy. As long as I kept my feet on the pedals I had little trouble with my leg. As soon as I dismounted, however, I found I couldn't bend it far enough to walk without a limp, while stairs presented a painful problem indeed. I couldn't see any difference between bending my knee to walk or climb stairs and bending it to pedal. I was too thankful for being able to travel, though, to spend too much time figuring it out. By this time my leg was much better, anyway, and I could see that I was about to enjoy another long downhill stretch.

Around two I got to the town of Krautheim, which does not mean "home of the Krauts" in any pejorative sense. The town was divided into upper and lower sections and, of course, the hostel was in the upper section, perched on a high bluff overlooking the Jagst. When I finally got up the strength to tackle the hill I found that the hostel was full. This time I was relegated to an air mattress in the day room. Still, I had a place to stay, and that was important to me after my experience on the Neckar in Heidelberg. I spent the remainder of the afternoon writing and talking to a local boy who persisted in following me about. He was very interested in my cycle, particularly in the color, which, I had to admit, was outrageous.

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### CHAPTER ELEVEN: *ZÜR ERINNERUNG EINE BELIEBTE FREUNDIN*

The hostel was not serving warm meals, so I tried my luck at the *Gasthaus zur Krone* nearby. The girl who waited on me was a lovely blonde, no doubt the wife of the *Wirt*. Wrong. She was his daughter, single, and planning to join the staff of a Heidelberg hotel. She had been studying English for six years, knew a little French, and wanted to learn Spanish, too. She talked me into ordering three beers along with the meal, then brought me three more, on her. When she first told me her name, I thought she said "Inge." I told her she well deserved the name of Thomas Mann's "Blonde Inge" but she hadn't read the *novelle*. It was just as well. Although she fit the description perfectly, her name turned out to be Irmgaard. All through the evening she sat and talked with me when she had time and, although I drank too much, the evening was an especially pleasant one.

I got back to the hostel at 9:40, still smiling at the way she had teased me about staying with the little children. I had to ring to get in and in the five minutes it took for the door to open I nearly decided to return to the *Gasthaus* several times. And if good company were not a good enough excuse, I had others. The air mattress was one. The other was caused by the absence of any other males at the hostel. All of the toilet facilities had reversible signs and all of them, without exception, read "*Mädchen*" the night I was there.

#### July 29

I had been awakened by a storm in the night, so I was awake by dawn, wondering whether I should take my chances disturbing some one by getting up or being surprised in bed myself by the kitchen help or by one of the little girls staying there. I finally rose at six and was dressed, packed, and fed by seven. I couldn't get out of the hostel fast enough, but after meeting Irmgaard I wasn't about to leave Krautheim quite yet. In fact, she had suggested that I move into the *Gasthaus* for a few days and suddenly I could see no point in hurrying back to Heidelberg. At six DM a night it wasn't so cheap (by my standards) but the weekend was coming and I knew the hostels would be jammed. I decided to bum around town while I made up my mind.

I found a bench in the center of town and started to work on a story. I then had my second encounter with the police. They led me off to the station, maybe thirty yards away, and checked my passport and asked a few questions, strictly routine, they said. They gave me directions to the local *Burg* and I headed off to find a place to continue my work. The fortress didn't have a proper place to sit, so I went back to town and, after having a coke, ended up on the same bench. After the same boy who had followed me around the day before paid me a visit I found out why the police had wanted to see me. First, the opening bugle call from Tchaikowski's *Capriccio Italien* was played over a loudspeaker in front of the station three times. Then it was announced that some vandal had set off an alarm during the night. It was said that the prank would not be taken lightly and that the villagers ought to be more responsible in the future. Then followed some more music and the wishing of a pleasant weekend for everyone. Shortly after that, one of the policemen, as if to make amends for my interrogation, gave me directions to another good view of the Jagst valley. Before I could try out his view, however, the boy was back, soon followed by one of those lonely old men who make you feel guilty if you even think of deserting them for more entertaining company. As usual, this pensioner was very deliberate, if confused, in his speech. Of Polish descent he had been living in Germany since the Second World War. He was heavy, short, and stooped. He walked with a cane and spoke a horrendous dialect, although he was proud that he could speak German, Polish, Hungarian, and Russian.

I used an approaching storm as my excuse to get away from the two and get some lunch. Then I took the walk the policeman had suggested. There was a shaded path running along the east ridge of the bluff and the view of the valley from there was magnificent. After a little more wandering I finally settled on a bench along the path. Almost as soon as I had taken out my writing equipment a woman with a baby carriage and two ambulatory children sat down beside me and began to tell me her troubles. I wondered, as she spoke, why she and the old man and others picked me to talk to. She was not bad looking, although a bit muscular. She quickly explained that she got

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her strength from doing all the chores her husband neglected. She said he beat her when he was home, but spent most of his time in *Gasthauser*. Her baby had been stepped on (by accident) some time ago and needed a series of operations. Between pro-claiming her own Christian virtues and denouncing her husband's demonic atheism she was absolutely saccharine with her children. I must confess that when I ran into her husband later he didn't really seem all that bad. But then I wouldn't know, since he didn't beat me.

I would have spent the afternoon in the *Gasthaus* with Irmgard had it not been reserved for a wedding celebration. As it was, I and the others in the village who were not invited ate supper in the *Nebenzimmer* while the guests occupied the main room all afternoon and almost all night. While I wasn't invited because I was a stranger, the others seemed to be relegated to the back room for better reasons. While the guests sang spirited *Lieder*, the back room crowd shouted obscene verses to the same tunes. The language at the table grew increasingly more coarse until several young men seemed to be engaged in a contest to embarrass Irmgard and her girlfriend, who also worked there. Finally around eleven someone produced a prophylactic and inflated it, intending to get it into the main room for the edification and entertainment of the bride and groom. I was amazed that Irmgard, when she saw it, only shook her head in obvious disgust and continued her work. Before the plan could be executed, the prophylactic burst and some time and energy was spent fighting over the pieces. Both the guests and the pariahs were going strong when I slipped up to my room.

### July 30.

I stayed in bed on purpose till 8:30. Then I got cleaned up and went down for breakfast. Irmgard fed me, but gave me a lecture as well on rising early. I ate with a family from Mannheim and later took a walk. When I came back for lunch I was invited in short order to sit with three local boys, who bought me three beers. Because of the dialect I could understand little of what they said, but we enjoyed ourselves. With a number of drinks under my belt I was prepared to talk fluid, if not fluent, German with the man from Mannheim when he came in around two. I talked for around an hour, until Irmgard announced that we were going swimming with her girlfriend.

For the rest of the day I was both apprehensive and ecstatic. Irmgard was the kind of girl that combines a very pleasing appearance with real humor and generosity. I suspected I liked her a good bit more than I should have and at the same time I told myself anyone would be a fool for not enjoying her company. As it turned out, I was the only one to swim in the river, which was not so dirty as it looked, and we spent most of the time talking on the bank. Had her girlfriend not been there, the situation would have been highly flammable. Irmgard was leading and I was following, knowing full well that I was a foreigner and twenty years old, while she was a local girl and, to my surprise and horror, only sixteen. Had I touched her even once, "Cradle-robber!" would have been ringing in my head and yet I could have sworn at times that she was older than I. That afternoon we passed awkwardly from the polite "*Sie*" form to the familiar "*du*" form of address. That afternoon I was contemplating spending the rest of my summer and longer in that remote German town.

When we got back to the *Gasthaus* Irmgard had work to do, so I parked myself in the main room to do some writing. Before long some of the rowdy "*Ungezogene*," as she called them, decided to start a conversation. Talking quickly led to drinking, which soon led to some demonstrations of physical strength. I watched, amused, as the young men handwrestled each other and even acted as referee. I was having a good time until the drunkest of them decided to wrestle me. Since his friends were for the idea I decided I was too. I was still reasonably sober, so I won three in a row right handed. We switched, on his insistence, and I won a few left handed. They got bored so they retired to a corner and I returned to my writing. When I looked up several minutes later the man I had wrestled seemed to be sleeping, his head on the table and an unlighted cigarette in his hand. I thought about saying something but went back to writing instead. I looked up again when I heard a disagreeable noise and saw that he had thrown up on the table, but made no attempt to get up or to clean up the mess. No one else seemed to notice. A moment later he slid from his chair, his arm carrying dishes and vomit to the floor with him. This time the *Wirt* strode into the room and practically threw the man out the door and into the gutter. The mess was cleaned up and the matter was settled, except for the quiet question from time to time, "Is he still there?"

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Irmgard came over to my table then and we talked. She said he would never be allowed there again and that he was being left in the ditch outside so everyone could see him. I had to agree that it was a fitting punishment and an effective deterrent to public drunkenness. In fact, this was the only case I ever saw in Germany of someone unable to hold his liquor. Irmgard noticed that I was writing and, as women will, asked to read it. I found out very quickly why she had spoken so little English and had asked me to speak German. Still, we had a lot of fun helping each other to translate the story into German. During the evening I had told her I liked one of the songs that had been playing on the juke box, so every chance she got she was selecting "I was Kaiser Bill's Batman." She smiled, she brought me fresh beer, she stopped to talk when she could, and yet, on the other hand, she kept slipping back to the polite form. She was quick to apologize when she caught herself and insisted it was just a matter of overcoming a habit, had about the same doubt-provoking effect as Desdemona's handkerchief. I lay awake over an hour that night feeling very alive and very confused. Finally I decided I would leave in the morning.

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### CHAPTER TWELVE: ONE LAST FOND LOOK

#### July 31

I left Krautheim after a very pleasant breakfast. Irmgard gave me some postcards and her picture and I promised to write. She was sixteen years old and the daughter of a *Wirt*, but she had a disproportionate place in my thoughts even before I left. Her nine-year-old brother, Wolfgang, brought out my bicycle. He had let the air out of the rear tire so no one would take it. After pumping up the tire I hopped on and rode straight through, with a brief stop for lunch and talk around 12:30, to the Neckar. The afternoon, however, was punctuated by stops for beer and ended at five in Eberbach. It was dreadfully hot and I had kept up a good pace all day. I had no trouble getting into the hostel, which was on a hillside across the river from the town and had a good hot meal at six. I spent the evening alone, although I had a brief encounter with a group of Englishmen led by a man I had met at St. Albans.

#### August 1

I didn't have enough money for breakfast, so I left the hostel early and picked some green apples along the way to keep me going. I was in Heidelberg by ten and had two letters waiting at American Express. After reading my mail I went to the Heidelberg Exchange, where I ran into two boys from Maine who were trying to sell their bicycles and having little luck. Passers-by either shuddered at the price or pointed out that their French gears were much inferior to the Italian. I must admit that \$40 apiece for used bikes - no matter how many gears - was a little steep. After killing the afternoon with these boys and spending a little time with the writer who worked at the exchange, I went to the hostel and spent the evening in rather pleasant conversation with a Texan and a man from India.

#### August 2

I spent the morning in the exchange snack bar reading a paper and writing. Around noon I noticed a man who had been my English teacher at the American high school in Heidelberg. We started off on the wrong foot the minute he saw my shaggy head and dirty clothes. For that matter, he seemed pedantic, opinionated, and not quite so intelligent as I had remembered him. His gripe at the time was that the irresponsible younger generation was letting the U.S. go to hell. Every time I tried to explore what he meant by that, or one of his other pat formulations, I was cut off as being too academic or philosophical. He introduced me to his wife, who didn't get a chance to say anything, and to one of the primary teachers, one year out of college, who seemed a little short on opinions, if not brains. It was a very trying ten minutes before he left.

In the afternoon, after I got back to the hostel, a violent wind, reminiscent of a hurricane, swept through the grounds to make way for a surprisingly mild thunderstorm, which contributed nothing toward reducing the heat. Later at supper I met a man from California, a student in accounting and part time plumber's assistant, who looked, dressed, and acted like a G.I. He was big and baby-faced, with short, curly, dark hair and wore his shirt open to expose his dirty white tee shirt. I tagged along with him and a boy from Boston when they went for some beers at the *Gasthaus* next to the *Tiergarten*. As will sometimes happen, we found just what we were looking for. Four Canadian girls at the next table were celebrating a twenty-first birthday. The guest of honor was a bit under the weather, but we three were just what her companions were after. My friends were delighted to see that none of the girls was very sober, but I, more strongly impressed by my Puritan heritage, had misgivings from the start. My hostess, named Carol, was medium height, slender, and very nice. About the time the party paired off, several thoughts occurred to me. As she leaned against me and clutched my arm for support as we walked, I realized more

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strongly than I thought possible how much I missed that tender, feminine warmth pressing against my side. At the same time I became aware of a very strong emotion coming upon me. Lust. It did occur to me that I was practically engaged as we stood before the hostel gate and I made what case I could for a sleeping bag and the river bank. But, as in a Jack London novel, it was not virtue, but the cold wind and her stern supervisor that nudged us through the gate.

To bed feeling somehow - teased. Anyway, in the morning I was setting out for Fulda-Bremen-Denmark.

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### CHAPTER THIRTEEN: THE WESER

Going home was all right in itself, I suppose. It was just the way I was going about it. I still had done nothing to get more money and I was getting short. At the same time, I had misgivings about the long ride north, even though the trip from London had been longer and over rougher ground. Of course, starting always is the hardest part, in this case literally. My route followed the Rhein to Darmstadt, then a tiny tributary called the Kinzig, up the mountains east to the watershed of the Fulda, a tributary of the Weser. From the Fulda on it looked like pretty smooth sailing on the map, but I had my doubts about the first few days.

#### August 3

I decided to take it easy and was in Darmstadt by eleven-thirty in spite of myself. I ate lunch there, thus avoiding a light rain, and promptly took the wrong road in leaving town. I had planned on going to Gelnhausen but ended up so far south that Aschaffenburg turned out to be more practical. The country was mostly rolling hills covered with pine forests with grassy floors. It seemed most of the traffic was made up of U.S. Army trucks. Once again I wondered just whose country this was. I got to the hostel around five, after some wandering around. Since the hostel offered only a cold supper at more than the usual hot meal rate, I ate at a nearby *Gasthaus* and talked with a great many relatively uninteresting people. Most of the people around town, I noticed with some displeasure, were American GI's.

#### August 4

It seemed to be the time of the year for making mistakes. After breakfasting with a couple of British hitchhikers, I set out on the way to Fulda. And abruptly ran into a dead end on the wrong side of the river. I got a fresh start and rolled through the countryside, just as beautiful as it had been the day before, in the general direction of Hannau. After by-passing the city, I stopped for lunch about seven kilometers short of Gelnhausen. In the afternoon, even though the weather had turned overcast and cool, I found myself stopping often for drinks and snacks. It was a slow, steady climb all the way to Flieden, and not exactly flat after that. Just before I crested the divide, in the late afternoon, I caught sight of an enormous mountain of slag, visible from some distance and rising angular and unadorned from the side of a slope.

Finally making it into the Fulda watershed was such a pleasure after my long climb that I almost wished the hostel had been further down stream. As it was, I caught sight first of the American barracks above the town and then of Fulda itself. Had the hostel not been perched half-way up the side of a mountain, I certainly would have been able to coast up to the door. Instead, I had to walk.

The hostel was full of groups of one sort or another, including one from the Congo. Membership seemed to be rather exclusive, so I ended up spending the evening with a man from Hamburg and his son. I don't really know whether the man was interesting or whether trying to hold a decent conversation in German kept me talking, and listening, as we strolled down to the town for ice cream and back. At any rate, we all enjoyed talking about Germany and the war. He, like most German veterans, had no animosity I could detect toward Americans. We returned to the hostel around ten, but it was only some time later that I managed to get to sleep, since several of the teenagers spent a good part of the night yelling at each other and throwing pillows.

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### August 5

I started out with ten Marks in my pocket and only the hope that it wouldn't rain. My plan was to follow the Fulda north. Before I got three kilometers I found myself on a detour. I wandered around in no particular hurry on the west side of the river until it started to rain, found a *Gasthaus*, and sat around and wrote until eleven. I spent fifty *pfennigs* there on a coke. Just after I got back on the main road I spent another two Marks on stamps and not long afterwards a whole pile of money on five *Bröchen* and another Coke. I had that for lunch and was soon involved in a real thunder storm. Another *Gasthaus*, eighty Pfennigs for a beer, and one Mark for cigarettes. About this time it occurred to me that the next day would be Sunday and no banks would be open. I had just over five Marks left. But instead of looking for a place to get some money, I just kept on peddling.

At Bad Hersfeld I found a poster advertising an August tenth concert by the University of Illinois Concert Choir. I decided not to stay around for it. By the way, on the way into town there were numbers descending from three-hundred to one, consecutively, painted at uneven intervals on the pavement. I have yet to figure out what they were doing there. The town was very attractive, with a fair share of parks and an unusual number of cultural events advertised on posters along the main road. The hostel, however, was up a long, steep hill and the price was two Marks, not the one Mark twenty I was usually able to get away with. Two marks was the correct charge, but this time it really hurt.

This time my financial misery had some company. There was a boy at the hostel whose family had fled from Leipzig in 1946. Although he had been hitchhiking in the West Zone, he would have to take a train though the East Zone on his way to visit relatives in Leipzig. He had intended to start out the next day, but the money being sent from home to pay for the ticket still had not come that evening. Both of us did without supper, so it was a hungry, cold night. Strangely enough, I slept fairly well.

### August 6

I got off to a late start after treating myself to a breakfast I couldn't afford. Then I was lucky enough to get my last dollar bill changed into somewhat less than four Marks by buying a Coke or something, I've forgotten what.

I decided to take it easy and save my energy and money. I figured if I went no further than Melsungen and pedaled slowly, I'd be less tempted to stop for drinks. The road had other plans. At Friedlos, just eight kilometers from Bad Hersfeld, I talked myself into a pack of cigarettes. At Altmorschen I ran into a detour that sent me up to a place called Bergheim. It fit. Between wasting time and walking it took me until four to get to Melsungen. The sign on the door of the hostel said,

“Vorübergehend geschlossen  
für Wanderer.”

The thing was signed by a doctor, so I went on to Kassell. The river seemed to flow uphill all the way.

When I finally got to the hostel, I met a Londoner named Peter Castleton and a German from Braunschweig named Hans. The two made a pretty good pair, since Hans was studying Old English at Tübingen and Peter was to begin Oxford in the fall. The two of them had the crazy notion that they were going to walk to the Bodensee in less than a month. When I met them they had been on the road just a week, both insisted they were already starved for sex and, judging from the way they acted, I had to believe them. The two of them took me out to a steak-and-potatoes dinner, after getting permission to return to the hostel after closing.

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When we did get back to the hostel around eleven, the place was rather lively. Some clown had stuck a camera out a window, hoping he could retrieve it after the owner had left. Of course the theft was discovered, and eventually the owner got his camera back.

### August 7

I sat around all morning with Hans and Peter. They bought my breakfast and I promised to look Peter up in London, or at least to write to him. I left around ten, and went straight to the train station, where there was a currency exchange. The first thing I bought with my new riches was a pack of cigarettes, followed shortly by a Bratwurst and a Coke. Since I wasn't in any hurry, I took my time on the way to Karlshafen. I had *Brötchen* and Coke for lunch and stopped later for a beer. I got into town around five-thirty, after passing two hostels on the road. The second one was up on a hill, so I knew it was a hostel before I checked in my book, but it was still so early at the time that I couldn't see any point in stopping.

At the hostel in Karlshafen I asked if they had hot meals. They said no, then promptly charged me seventy *Pfennigs* for three bowls of hot chicken soup. After paying the Mark twenty fee for the night, I had spent nine Marks for the whole day. Three of those were completely unnecessary; cigarettes and beer.

The countryside really hadn't changed drastically since I had left Heidelberg, or, for that matter, since I had entered Germany. Always the same low, forest-covered mountains with a small *Burg* occasionally along the rivers, for variety and that sense of history. The Weser and the Fulda, at least as far north as Karlshafen, had no freighter traffic on them, although the same system of dams, admittedly not as large or fancy, was to be seen as on the Neckar or Main. I was very happy to see German army trucks rolling down the highway instead of American, though.

After supper I wrote a little and then, since it was turning cold, went into the day room to read. After a short article in *Konkret* on sex in Sweden, I talked to a thirteen-year-old boy who was going to a *Gymnasium* (college preparatory high school) and wanted to grow a beard and go to sea when he was old enough. He wanted to be a ship's captain and I wondered how long the desire would stay with him.

### August 8

I got an early start and all day I thought it was later than it actually proved to be. As a result, I covered one-hundred and forty kilometers and passed by six hostels, since each time it was too early to stop. I saw some signs of river traffic in the morning, but it was a rather uneventful morning in every other respect. In the afternoon just past Hameln I watched some British troops drive APC's across the Weser for a while. The rest of the day I felt almost haunted by four British helicopters flying around the area in formation.

The hostel at Vlotha was really high above the town, but I got a meal and a bed there and a chance to watch the German children ride some small ponies around the hostel grounds. Most of them were too heavy for the animals and the ponies did their best to protest without getting violent. Everyone thought it was great fun. Later, in the washroom, two of these spirited horsemen almost got into a fight, a rarity in the hostel world, and only the efforts of friends kept them from going at it.

### August 9

The weather was nice when I started out, but I was caught in the rain four kilometers before Minden. I stayed for a while at a convenient gas station, then went on. I kept pushing myself across the plain and completely

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lost track of time. At Minden the mountains began and the plain to the north stretched all the way to the sea, flat and windblown. I stopped in at a Raststätt for my mid-morning break and discovered it was almost noon, so I had some soup there. I just got out the door and it started to rain again, so I went back in. I left again and got to Nieuburg around two. There I marked all the hostels I would be anywhere near on my map of Germany and decided to go on to Verden for the night.

It was a very short thirty-six kilometers. The roads were spotty, sometimes very good, sometimes bad, but the country was flat and the wind behind me, or at least not right in my face. The hostel was an old converted *Gasthaus* with a large garden set with tables and chairs. The atmosphere was very free there, and rather pleasant. I met a man there who was cycling with his two children, aged eight and ten, making about thirty kilometers a day. After supper we went out for a walk and a few beers at a *Gasthaus*. He was one of those who take reunification of Germany seriously. He was also too protective toward his two boys. I went to bed at ten, but things didn't get settled for the night until ten-thirty, a refreshing change for the overly-regimented German hostels.

### August 10

I got up at seven-forty and was not the last one out of bed. At eight I was eating breakfast, alone, although the meal was supposed to begin at seven-thirty and end at eight. It was the first time I saw the hostel personnel in Germany let the hostellers sleep in.

Where the *Autobahn* crossed the road I was taking to Bremen I met an American from Michigan, a hitchhiker, who had spent the last year studying at Freiburg. He had also been to Sweden and was on his way to London to go home on the eighteenth. We found a *Gasthaus* and had some Bratwurst and beer, then I went on into Bremen, leaving him to take his chances on a ride to Aachen and finally to Oostende.

Bremen turned out to be fairly large and organized more like a city than London's collection of small towns. I found the American Express office easily enough and had three letters waiting. The hostel was a bit more of a challenge, although it shouldn't have been. It was raining, and I felt just a little like "*einer von denen*" since I had no place to go and the city looked very metropolitan. When I finally found the hostel, I met three German girls who had just finished the *Gymnasium*. One of them, a tall, slender girl with brown hair and an indefinable tired look in her light blue eyes - slightly drooping lids and something deeper - was planning to study theology. I tried to explain my philosophy (always a mistake) to them and the tired one told me it was impossible to live my way. I was rather amused and annoyed at being called a moral and logical impossibility, so we talked about music, the Beatles included, and so many other things that I missed supper in the process. Just before the sun went down, another of the girls photographed the hands of a young German there - a hobby of hers - and then took a picture of me, with my unkempt beard and shabby clothes. No wonder they couldn't believe I was real. I said good-bye to them temporarily to get cleaned up, then joined them in a walk through the city. Our first stop was the German training ship, "Deutschland," a regular square-rigger docked near the hostel. The girls were talking constantly in a mixture of German, English, and French, and singing parts of English and American popular songs. They seemed about to explode with joy and energy.

But not all was fun and games. One of the girls was supposed to visit her childhood home town, but was afraid for some reason it would depress her and was thinking of telling her mother, who had thought up the idea, that she went without going. Apparently it meant a lot to both of them. This girl was planning to study philosophy. Strange, but I had thought philosophers were supposed to be above that kind of trauma. We walked through the city and stopped for some ice cream and I somehow got paired off with the "theologist," who was without a doubt the most attractive (*sympatisch*) of the three. We two walked along the river and sat for some time on the stony bank below the walkway, just talking. It was a very pleasant, refreshing evening, although I never knew whether to speak English or German with her and we spoke mostly whichever we felt like, hoping the other would understand.

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Note: Cyclists shouldn't be allowed to use warning bells except in emergencies. Freer use of them makes cyclists far too inconsiderate and brazen.

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### CHAPTER FOURTEEN: FAREWELL TO THE PINK MONSTER

Once again I was in the position of not knowing what to do next. I had nearly a month before I was due in London, and yet I had no money to do anything. It occurred to me that I could save twenty-five to fifty cents a day if I would simply quit smoking, and yet I didn't seem to have it in me to do it. I thought about working again, but since the situation was not yet critical, that is, I wasn't actually starving, I put off considering it seriously. I was ripe, in other words, for the first wind, fair or ill, to carry me off in whatever direction it pleased.

Such was my state of mind when I rode down to the American Express office the next morning.

#### August 11

I got two letters and a telegram informing me that money was on the way. I left the office to walk around the city, got caught in the rain, bought coffee on a street named *An Wall*, or "on the wall" and generally enjoyed the prospect of having money again.

I was out with the same German girl until ten that night, and enjoyed her company thoroughly. Later I talked to a Tunisian who had waited four hours a day for five days to pick up a ride to Osnabrüch on the *Autobahn* without luck. He was extremely well informed and very intelligent. We got "late passes" at the hostel and stayed out talking until eleven-thirty. At times I was nearly convinced his English was better than mine.

#### August 12

The day was spent entirely in talk. It began with a Canadian girl and a German until a short intermission at the *Waschsalon*, or Laundromat, and picked up again in the afternoon with the Tunisian. The evening was spent with a graduate student from Berkely and a history teacher from New York City. The Berkely man (philosophy) was interesting, the teacher a boor. We got into a heated, but peaceful, discussion of the superiority of the classical, synthetic school of philosophy and the somewhat newer school of the analysts. I sided with the analysts and at best, speaking from my point of view, nobody won.

#### August 13

Sunday. The man from Berkeley and I were wandering around the city, in the square by the church, when the bells began to ring. The two of us stood, dazed and bewildered at the beauty of the sound, which was irresistible even though it was so loud it hurt our ears. We went in after a while, hoping to hear the organ, but left, discouraged by an incredibly bad sermon.

In the afternoon we went to the Kunsthalle, which had the names of all the great artists represented, but nothing displayed that could hold my interest at the time. Well, back to the hostel in search of good conversation. But the Tunisian left for Marseilles by train at eight. I spent the evening in the same Gasthaus again, since it was near the hostel. I played interpreter for a Japanese man who spoke no German and a Bavarian who spoke no ~English.

#### August 14

I spent the morning lounging around the city with Bob, the man from Berkeley, and bought a copy of

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*Ausgefragt*, a book of poems and sketches by Gunter Grass. In the afternoon I went with a German named Wolfgang, to the *Autobahn* to hitchhike to Hamburg. I left the bicycle in the shed at the hostel, with the combination on a card fastened to the lock, in case someone needed it. We took a streetcar to the end of the line, near the *Autobahn*. We tried for about an hour to pick up a ride from the approach to the highway, without success. Then Wolfgang got the bright idea of hitchhiking directly on the highway. Not only was this illegal, but, with the majority of the traffic moving at better than eighty miles per hour and a good share of it over one hundred and twenty or so, it was also nothing short of ridiculous to expect anyone to stop. But, I followed him half a mile across a hay field, jumped a six-foot ditch, and climbed twenty feet up a steep bank with my sleeping bag and two saddle bags salvaged from the bike. We stood by the side of the road for about two minutes before we were picked up by the police. Wolfgang had told me to pretend I spoke no German, so I let him try to explain what we were doing there. He insisted that, since he was from Berlin, he had never seen an *Autobahn* and had no idea it was illegal to hitchhike on one. They checked with the station to make sure he wasn't wanted for any crime, checked out his passport carefully, then turned to me. "Darf Ich Ihre *Passe* sehen?" I gave him the passport immediately and I still don't know how he figured I knew what he was talking about if I couldn't speak the language. They let us go at another *Autobahn* approach after a stern warning to Wolfgang. They said nothing to me.

We stood for about an hour and were joined by a boy from Bremen before someone stopped. The three of us got a ride all the way to Hamburg in a fairly luxurious Mercedes with a stereo tape player, among other options. Still the ride was boring. There was just enough road and wind noise to make talking impractical and the scenery along the road looked just exactly like the scenery along every other four-lane highway anywhere else in the world. Flat and totally devoid of interest.

We took streetcars across the city to the Lübeck *Autobahn* where there were already five hitchhikers waiting for rides. Fortunately, the *Autobahn* was one of four exits from a traffic circle, so traffic was slow and we all got off within fifteen minutes, to another intersection twelve kilometers south of Neustadt. The driver was an old woman from Berlin who never would have picked us up if she hadn't thought the boy from Bremen, who was slender, beardless, and had long straight hair, was a girl. The woman almost got us all killed when she passed an escorted truck without enough room. The other drivers involved were alert and made room for her, including the police car leading the caravan. No one was hurt (or arrested) but the old woman, and some of us, were scared to death.

She let us off just before dusk and we stood, twelve kilometers out of Neustadt, for hours. We had had fantastic luck ever since we left Bremen, and **we** just couldn't believe it could end so abruptly, going on when we should have stayed and looked for a place to spend the night. Finally at ten we got a ride into Neustadt. We, and a friend who had also been stranded, still had no place to spend the night, since the hostel had already closed. Since it was raining off and on, it made good sense to look for some place to stay, but the boy from Bremen and a Frenchman who was with us wanted to keep going. It was the Bremen's first day of hitchhiking, so I can understand why he didn't mind pushing his luck, but the Frenchman should have known better. Wolfgang and I went back to town and found the train station closed, supposedly impossible in Germany. Next we tried the church, which is supposed to be a refuge from all sorts of things. Not from a cold rainy night, though; it was locked up tight. It was already past midnight.

### August 15

In the end we went to the police station and asked if there were a cheap place to stay in town, knowing there wasn't. The policeman protested that it was against regulations, but let us sleep in the cells anyway. Two blankets, a wooden plank bunk and a wooden pillow, not to mention the cold night, were enough to convince me that jails should always be the last resort. I got four hours of badly needed sleep, though, and the cell was a lot dryer than the open air outside.

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Around dawn Wolfgang and I went to the open-air market that was just being set up across the street and later walked along the highway to the crossroads where we had split up with the other two the night before. After two hours without luck, we walked another two kilometers down the road to a *Gasthaus* and had a good breakfast. The weather cleared and we got out on the road again at eleven, when we promptly got a lift into Oldenburg. I had made a USA sign out of the back of my map while standing there and maybe it helped. At Oldenburg we got a ride for another ten kilometers. It started to rain as soon as we got out of the car, but we made it to a *Strassen bau* (road repair) truck before we really got wet. There was another hitchhiker already inside. The driver finished his work and drove all of us within five kilometers of the ferry to Denmark, just beyond the bridge to the island of Puttgarde. There we met a number of people who had given up getting lifts into Germany and had hiked all the way from the ferry, stopping under an overpass to get out of the rain. Several decided to hitch rides back to the ferry and take trains south and almost immediately a large open truck stopped and six of us poured over the sides into the back. The truck took us right to the ferry. We had to walk ten feet to get to the entrance. The ferry cost fifteen Marks and fifty Pfennigs for a roundtrip ticket good for one month. The time from Puttgarde to Rødby on the other side was one hour.

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### CHAPTER FIFTEEN: TOURING SCANDINAVIA BY CAR

Scandinavia, to the American hitchhiker, has several connotations. First, there is the dream of a beautiful girl, willing and able, behind every tree (and there are a lot of trees). Next there are the stories of hitchhikers who never get rides. Of high prices. Of being forced to build an igloo at the side of a deserted highway in order to keep from freezing to death during the night. It is impossible to take the ferry across to Denmark without mixed emotions and some apprehension. In fact, the first signs of trouble to come were the difficult time we were all having getting rides off the boat. When we landed, most of us ended up taking a bus from the ferry to Moribo, where we discovered the only thing to do at night was sleep in the hostel. Prices in the shop windows were high enough, and the hostel charged five Crowns. The place was comfortable enough, although it was old and undergoing expansion at the time we were there.

There I met a thirty-three year-old German, Harold Kruchen, who had been living in southern California for the last seven years. He had been a member of the Hitler Youth, quit school because of an ulcer at twenty-two, but wouldn't allow an operation, took a factory job, but quit that at twenty-five; went to Canada and learned English. At twenty-six he was a farm laborer. He moved to California and, at twenty-nine, began studying drafting at Southgate College. He had already made one trip around the world and now needed just thirty hours to graduate from college. Still, he seemed to model himself after Playboy's idea of a bachelor. His major interests were skiing, boating, and women. And his Porsche SC (95 H.P.). He financed this trip by reselling his Porsche, which he insisted was the major source of his financial problems.

He was driving alone to Oslo, and, since I had never been there, I promised to pay half the gas if he would take me along. At sixty cents per gallon, even half price was no bargain, as I would soon learn. Wolfgang decided to spend several days in southern Denmark, then return to Germany, where the living was a little cheaper, to put it mildly. Without a guaranteed ride I would have done the same, going no further north than K benhavn.

#### August 16

We bought breakfast at the hostel. Four Crowns for a small cup of coffee and two slices of bread, butter, marmalade. Not worth it as far as I was concerned.

I played navigator, but because I didn't have a good map, I botched the job pretty badly. We were lost in K benhavn for half an hour before we got back on the road to Helsing r, jumping-off point for the shortest ferry to Sweden. It was thirty Crowns for the car and driver and four Crowns for each passenger. We decided to drive along the coast all the way to Oslo, a distance of about eight-hundred and fifty kilometers. As soon as we got off the ferry we were presented with two rude shocks. First, the gas in Sweden, and later in Norway, was about seventy-five cents per gallon, not sixty. Next, we had to accustom ourselves to driving on the left-hand side of the road. We got over left-hand driving quickly and settled down to watching the beautiful scenery. The west coast of Sweden is one of the most striking in the world. On one occasion, however, we crested a hill and began the descent to an intersection below, when we were confronted with huge white arrows painted in the center of our lane and pointing straight at us. This was quite a shock to both of us and it was only several miles later that we realized that these had been painted in anticipation of the change-over to driving on the right, which was to take place September third. We saw many more arrows pointing in the wrong direction, but none so disturbing as the first.

When we got to Norway we had to drive on the right again. There was hardly any warning, just an arrow pointing to the right on the approach to the bridge crossing over. Hal had guessed we would get to Oslo about eight-fifteen, but we made such good time that that was exactly the time we reached the hostel there. It was full. So we

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spent over an hour finding the reserve hostel up in the hills above the city. It was nice when we got there. Hot running water and a sink in our six-bunk room. Very nice.

There was an American girl named Geri living there. She had been hitchhiking and working off and on for eighteen months in Europe. She looked incredibly young and innocent to have such a history. She looked about sixteen, but had to be at least twenty, since she had dropped out of the University of Washington in her second year as an art major. Geri had spent several months working in a hospital in Austria and, since I liked Austria better than most places I had been, we did have something to talk about.

### August 17

We went down to the American Express office first thing in the morning to see if one of Hal's girlfriends was in town. She had mail but hadn't picked it up. We spent the rest of the day seeing Oslo and the girls in town. The highlight of the day was eating fresh shrimp right off a fishing boat in the harbor. In the evening we went to the main hostel (Heraldsheim) to check on Hal's girlfriend again. She wasn't in, but we did meet a Swiss girl who was driving a Spitfire to Stockholm with her brother. She told us to make sure we went to the Viegeland park before we left and promised to meet us again either in Karlstadt or Stockholm.

### August 18

In the morning we went to the Viegeland park and found it very good. Viegeland was a Norwegian sculptor, who designed all his work for this park so there were no cracks or hollows where water could freeze and crack the stone. Still, the strength and expression in the figures was impressive. I could easily have spent days admiring them.

Instead, we left around eleven to go to Karlstadt. Once again we switched from right to left-hand driving. While the country, forests spotted with lakes, was beautiful, it was not as impressive as the west coast. In a country as rich as Sweden is supposed to be, however, there were surprisingly few people enjoying the area. The hostel at Karlstadt was hard to find, but fairly nice. There I met a man who lectured in geography at Aberdeen University. We talked about the English and Scottish educational systems and about the BBC. He was encouraging about writing for the BBC 1, but rather pessimistic about teaching in England without an MA. He also said that universities were required to advertise all openings in the Times literary supplement, but that most of the posts, especially the higher ones, were likely to be promised beforehand. It was his opinion that the insistence of the Swedes on conformity reflects their insecurity in an urban society. That is, up to the eighteen eighties Sweden was primarily rural and the change came too rapidly and too late to make an orderly, smooth transition.

The Engi's (the Swiss girl and her brother) didn't show up, and Hal was swearing he would give them a hard time about it if we saw them in Stockholm. I had to admit I was looking forward to seeing at least the girl again, anyway.

### August 19

We were told it would take six hours to drive to Stockholm, because of the ninety-kilometer speed limit and the traffic. We did it in three hours and forty minutes. But of course we missed a lot of interesting things along the way. We got there just in time to see the band marching to the palace for the changing of the guard at noon. We found the hostel, which was a converted training ship, three masts, white steel hull, and lights for night illumination. Although some people waiting ahead of us were told there was no room, we got beds without any trouble. We went down to the room and found that I had bed number six and Hal had bed number seven in a room with just six beds. We decided to worry about it later and went for a walk around the city. The next time I went down to the room I found that Hal had made up my bunk.

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Around supper time I found the Engi's and we went out for supper at a small cafeteria on the park. The brother was not as fluent as the sister in English but we managed to talk quite well and enjoy it. When I checked the next time on the bed situation, I got bed five and everything was all right. The Engi's had offered to let me sleep on their camp cot anyway and I never was really worried about it, but more interested in the way Hal behaved. When I finally ran into him I found he had spent the entire evening roaming around the ship; in search of some female diversion, apparently not very successfully.

### August 20

I spent the entire day with the Engi's. The morning at the National Gallery, noon at the changing of the guard - high camp, if not simply disgustingly poor. The Swedes didn't seem to know the precept "either do it right or don't do it at all." Soldiers out of step, dropping bayonets, lounging around in full sight of the audience as though they were somewhere off stage. The whole thing was half an hour late and very sloppy from beginning to end. We all had a good laugh or two before it was over. After all, the palace guard, at least, should be able to put on a decent ceremony, especially if they have to do it every day.

We had lunch at one of the few cafes open on Sunday and went on to the Millesgarden. This was a park full of sculpture depicting myth and super human aspirations, but the expression of real human feeling seemed to me to be lacking. The works seemed impressive but stiff and lifeless. Later we went to the Wasa museum, which was interesting, but rather typical of such museums; a restored, or at least re-floated sailing ship and a lot of pictorial displays. All in all, it was a rather interesting day.

Back at the hostel, I happened to pass by Hal just as he was kissing an English girl he had found. I got past as quickly and quietly as I could, but he rolled his eyes up at me as though he were more interested in watching me than in actually kissing her. When I got to my bunk, I found it was taken. A German who had slept there the night before had assumed he would have the same bunk. But no problem. As happened so often, though, he insisted on speaking English to me although I spoke to him first in German. Of course, the Engi's had done the same thing. The girl was fluent in English, French, and Italian, but spoke to her brother in something called "Switzer Dütch," or Swiss German, and to me in English.

As we had sped through Stockholm in the Spitfire, the girl driving (I believe), the brother navigating, and I bouncing around in what passed for a back seat, he kept saying "*Gradiüs*." Eventually I realized that when he said "*Links*" she turned left, "*Rechts*" she turned right, and "*Gradiüs*" he went strait. "*Gradiüs*" was "*Gerade aus*" (straight ahead) in German.

### August 21

We got a late start out of Stockholm, partly because we got lost on the way out, but managed to make rather good time and were in Denmark by six. Still we kept driving and didn't stop until Fakse. We were having engine trouble and when we stopped for gas in Sweden had to push the car to start it. It started every time after that, but we had been worried. We decided rather arbitrarily, since neither of us was a mechanic, that the problem was in the points. The car still ran well under four thousand rpm's, so we just kept driving, hoping it wouldn't quit.

The hostel in Fakse was nothing special, nor were the people in it. Of course, it was probably my fault for not trying to get to know them. Two English scouts from London who seemed dull and a little effeminate, and a group of German cyclists were all the entertainment the place had to offer.

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### **August 22**

In the morning we drove straight into Germany without eating breakfast and were roaming a German beach on the Baltic before noon.

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**PART FIVE: GOING WEST**

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### CHAPTER SIXTEEN: BACK IN GERMANY, RELIEVED

We spent the afternoon sailing and looking at girls on the Timmendorfer Strand. The sailing was interesting because Hal, although he claimed to have had his own boat, proved to be a lousy sailor and blamed it on the wind and the lack of a jib. He also stuck me with the bill, although he had agreed to split it. Later we went to the Deutsche Demokratische Republik's border just east of the beach. Somehow it failed to impress me as much as I had hoped it would. As we approached the border, however, we passed a young man who was staring slightly bewildered across to the other side. We went on to take some pictures and when we turned around again he was gone. Someone got a border guard and told him. Soon several more guards and a dog arrived and after about five minutes managed to persuade the man to come back. When he appeared from the brush he had his hands slightly raised and seemed more bewildered than ever. The guards took him to an office for questioning and we found a man who said he had been drinking and that he knew him very well, but didn't get a chance to ask any more questions. Hal had to tell everyone about how the man looked when we saw him and generally made himself annoying. We finished taking pictures and started for Hamburg.

When we arrived the main hostel was full, so we were sent out to the spare, housed out at the racetrack. It was eight before we got out of the hostel to go down to the *Reeperbahn*. Hal drove like a mad man to get there as fast as possible and combed his hair at every red light. We got there in fifteen minutes and spent half an hour parking and looking for the special street for the prostitutes. The whole area was one mass of expensive night clubs and restaurants and kiosks, each competing for the biggest and gaudiest neon sign. It was both revolting and fascinating at the same time. Hal, after combing his hair several more times, finally got us to the street. The closer we got the more girls we saw, standing in doorways and against the buildings. On the neighboring streets the average was about one every ten or fifteen feet. The street itself was blocked off at both ends with steel gates that made it impossible to see inside and told us that young people were not allowed in. Inside, most of the girls were sitting behind windows, which could be opened to discuss business. Most of them were rather conservatively dressed, considering the circumstances. Hal found several he liked and would have lost thirty Marks on one if we hadn't had to get back to the hostel by ten. We barely made it as it was and he drove as though he were trying to prove the car couldn't be turned over.

At the hostel I met Simon Fenster, who was driving toward Rotterdam in a Rover TC2000. Alone. He agreed to meet me in Bremen and let me ride with him. He was a bearded physics teacher who had been in the New York City school system for five years. He tended to be critical to a fault, especially for a high school teacher, but I decided he would make an agreeable traveling companion and the Rover is a very nice car. I guess I had better explain, though, that Hal was going south after Bremen, so I did need a new ride, unless I wanted to hitchhike, which I had decided long ago had its drawbacks.

#### August 23

First thing in the morning Hal drove back down to the Reeperbahn, found a girl he liked, and I think seriously thought of hitchhiking from Bremen to his parents' house in Neuss rather than take the train. His budget was so tight that there wasn't any other way he could afford the girl. We spent the rest of the morning at various Volkswagen dealers and at the Porsche center, where he was told he would have to ship the car from Hamburg, instead of Bremen, as he had planned. He still drove me to Bremen, where we had lunch at the hostel and later washed the car. He suggested that I wash the dirtiest parts with an air of complete innocence and then suggested that I wash my hands as though I were a child.

We went to the American Express office, where I had two letters waiting, and then to the central station, where Hal fooled around for an hour while I went through the *Ubersee* museum and tried to write a letter. He finally dropped me off about a mile from the hostel, on his way to another Porsche dealer, trying to work some angle for shipping and repairing his car.

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Si showed up after supper and we went to the *Ratskeller*, where we each had a glass of wine before it was time to go back to the hostel.

### August 24

Like Hal, Si didn't smoke, but he also preferred that people riding with him refrained. Actually, I welcomed this because I'd been smoking entirely too much while riding with Hal. Si's dominant characteristics were basic disgust for the driving habits of everyone on the road but himself and a tendency to drive too fast and blame the consequences on not being accustomed to his new car. Of course, it was an excellent car, but not good enough to correct for all the mistakes of the driver. We reached the Dutch border at noon.

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### CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: HOLLAND

We had a very simple lunch by the road just past the border and began to look for a gas station. The Rover was supposed to use one hundred octane fuel and the premium in Holland rarely exceeded ninety-seven octane, so he bought just as much as he needed, but never more, in the hope that the next station would have the proper fuel. Meanwhile he was acutely aware of every odd noise that came out of his engine or the body of his new machine.

Our destination for the day was Sneek. Si had been invited to visit a family he had met in Scandinavia there. We arrived in the late afternoon and had supper there. The man was a painter who taught school for a living. The three paintings he had hanging in the living room impressed me a great deal. The family consisted of both parents on the wife's side, the wife, of course, and six daughters from fourteen down to about seven, all of them, and especially the two youngest, very charming. While the fourteen-year old and the wife spoke passable English, the man did much better in German, so that was the language he and I spoke most of the evening. Si seemed to understand a lot of it, too, although he had never studied German. He was rather sharp and had been exposed to the language as a child.

Most of the talk was about sculpture, and mostly about the Viegeland Park and the Millesgarden. Si argued that the man ought to have liked Viegeland but wasn't too convincing. By the time we left, though, we did have an invitation to visit the Lyceum the fourteen-year-old was attending. She played piano and another played passable flute, incredible flute considering she had been studying just one year, so we also had a little musical entertainment in the course of the evening. Those five girls, who were almost always sweet and charming, made me wish I had a few of my own.

#### August 25

We had made arrangements the night before to leave the hostel at eight, but when the time came, the warden was no where to be seen. We finally got out at eight-thirty and it was almost nine when we got to the house, where we were supposed to pick up the fourteen-year-old to take her to school. The family wasn't at all upset by this, and when we got to the school we got the red-carpet tour with an English and a physics teacher, including coffee and cigarettes in the lounge. It was a very interesting and informative morning, although the school was not the best and probably a bit below American standards as far as the ratio between teachers and students and the facilities were concerned.

We went back to the family for lunch at noon and didn't get off until two-thirty. Still, we were in Amsterdam by four.

Our first view of the city was the back of the central station, a building which isn't beautiful from any angle. Our second was the hectic traffic noise and filth in front of the station. When we asked about concerts we discovered there weren't any that night and the other information (including the map of the city) was just as useless. We went to the American Exchange where Si had to wait an hour, until six, to be told there was nothing, although he had expected four or five letters. We had a dull but cheap supper and went to a campgrounds on the outskirts of the city, where we spent the evening doing nothing but talk to two couples stationed with the Army in Munich. They were young and not exactly inspiring conversationalists, but we passed the time.

The campground cost just twenty-eight cents a night per person and had all of the conveniences I had missed so long in hostels; no curfew, hot showers, washing facilities, and a store and large hall for meals, meetings, or writing. The only problem was that I didn't have a good sleeping bag or enough suitable clothes to keep warm in the shabby one I did own. The ground, too, was a bit harder and lumpier than even the average hostel bed. Si had a four-man tent just for the two of us, and that was nice, too.

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### August 26

We slept rather late and didn't get into town until the afternoon. We spent several hours in the state museum and were on our way back to the campgrounds when we noticed a poster advertising the city museum. We got there as fast as we could and were delighted to find all of the modern painters we had missed at the other. Unfortunately, we had just an hour to see the place before it closed at five.

After a luxurious supper we went to a student club for the evening. We got there around eight and nothing was happening, but in a few hours things began to pick up with the arrival of the band. There was no cover charge and the drinks weren't too expensive, so the place was rather well used. I spent an hour talking to two Germans who were planning to spend the night there (without a cover charge it was cheap) and then began to talk to two girls: Jacquilin, twenty, short, cute, blonde, and a second grade teacher with two year's experience; and Mika, nineteen, still a student, taller and not as attractive, but probably the more interesting of the two. Jacquilin's English was passable, her German a little better, so I talked with her most of the time until Si homed in on my discovery and made himself part of the conversation. Mika was being ignored, so I let Si have his way and spent the rest of the evening talking to Mika. She had a boyfriend who was supposed to meet her there, but didn't. She was living with her parents because it was very difficult, if not impossible, to find a room in Amsterdam. And, because she was living at home, her parents knew too much about her boyfriend, who, like Si and me, also had a beard, and thought things were moving entirely too quickly. She herself was planning another six years of school and only hoped she could wait that long to take off on her own. At one the police showed up. The rumor was marijuana, but they left soon without causing much commotion. At one-thirty, however, Mika left and the three of us who were left soon followed.

I had been the odd man and acted accordingly. Si dropped me off at the campground and then took the girl home and probably tried his luck at other things. I was so tired I didn't even wake up when he got back later.

### August 27

I slept until noon, but Si had made arrangements to pick up a girl who was vacationing in Sneek at ten, and had to get up relatively early. I spent the afternoon walking to and through the city museum. I discovered we had seen most of what was worth seeing the day before, but did spend some time enjoying three or four rooms of Van Gogh's; paintings and sketches.

While at Maribo, Denmark I had made a sign, "USA til K benhavn," which I had given to a man when I found out I wouldn't be needing it. I met him again at the museum. He'd been stopped cold hitchhiking just inside Sweden and had come back. I ate supper with him and a friend of his, then walked back to the campground. I spent the evening with a business man from southern California who had spent most of his time since April in southern Europe. He moaned all evening about the racial problem in the U.S., probably with good reason. His method of camping was to shove all the luggage in his Renault 4 station wagon to one side and sleep in the car.

Although Si was out quite late again, I was awake, worrying about money and dreaming fondly of my girlfriend back in States when he came in.

### August 28

We both slept till noon. Si was up for a while, but went back into the sack until three, even though he was supposed to call a girl in the morning. When we finally did get moving, it was down to a Rover dealer for servicing. Nothing could be done on that day, but we got the address of the service garage and began to wind our way toward it. We were driving down a narrow street with cars parked on both sidewalks when we found ourselves behind an ambulance parked in the middle of the street. It took five minutes, at least, for the bearers to carry a man into the building, bring the stretcher back, and clear up the traffic jam they had created. We abandoned the idea of going to

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the garage and headed for the American Express office instead. It wasn't far, but it took us fifteen minutes in the ridiculous Amsterdam traffic to get there right at five. Closing time. While waiting in line for mail until six, we met a girl named Bonny from the University of Pennsylvania. She was cycling, so we had a common ground for conversation, but once again Si insisted on taking over. She had a girlfriend and it was decided that if she was willing Si and I would rent bikes and the four of us would spend the next day cycling through the city. Her last name began with "I" and in looking for her mail she found an Inman, the same Louis Inman who had had mail waiting in Heidelberg when I was there. Si had two letters, both of which had been received at the office on the twenty-third, but had not gotten to the mailroom until the twenty-eighth. He was not happy about that. We gave Bonny elaborate instructions on how to get to the campgrounds and recognize our tent in case her other plans fell through and she agreed to call and leave a message telling us where to meet her the next day. I found out later that the office phone wasn't listed.

I spent the evening talking to the man from California again. Si was on another date with Jacki and had warned me that he might be using the tent quite late. They arrived around ten-thirty and some time later threw my sleeping bag out of the tent. I rolled it out at a discrete distance and tried to get some sleep, but they left within an hour and I moved back into the tent. Si came back sometime later and we both got to sleep after talking for a few minutes, something we had never done at night before. Somehow we didn't think it worthwhile to engage in bull sessions after wearing ourselves out all day.

### August 29

Somehow we managed to get up at eight and start for town at nine. We left the car at the Rover service station and went on the Heiniken tour. There I met an English professor from one of the branches of the University of Hawaii. He was in his sixties, with a full head of white hair and a deep tan, and a sparkling sense of humor. He told me enough about the crazy people he worked with to make me want to go to graduate school there. He took me to lunch with a number of his students at a cheap, but good, Chinese restaurant. We shared a leisurely and pleasant meal with an English couple.

Afterward, I broke down and cabled my bank for thirty dollars, bought a cup of coffee, a Guardian (which proved interesting) and looked at some pipes for a friend who was keeping a lot of my junk back at school. I had just enough time to meet Si at the garage at five. He had met Bonny at the City museum and discovered she was engaged, although why that should have stopped him I wouldn't know.

We spent a quiet evening getting ready to hit the road in the morning. Si found it was just as cheap to ship the car from Amsterdam, so we both needed to get money in the morning and do other last-minute errands before leaving. Actually, Si spent the entire evening sleeping and I getting my journal up to date. I was awake late into the night planning my next semester at school.

### August 30

Si and I got into town around eleven, I with all my things, not expecting to return to the campground. I found out my cable hadn't come yet and Si got a post card at American Express. Then we went down to the central station to get information on trains and prices. There we met Professor Nelson, from Hawaii again, and again were invited to lunch at the same restaurant. Si was very short of money and not sure how he was going to get to Paris, so Professor Nelson got an expired Eurail pass from a member of his group and the two of them smudged and doctored it until there was a good chance Si could get away with using it. Back at the car, Si found fifty dollars he had hidden in a sack for emergencies, so he was home safe.

I put my luggage in a locker at the central station and wandered around the city, finally spending the night at a student hotel (7.50 Guildern) after finding the student club where I had intended to spend the night closed. I was up late wondering what to do if the money didn't come.

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### August 31

After breakfast I rushed down to the American Express office. I got there at eight-fifteen and found it didn't open until nine. When it did, there wasn't any money for me so I made arrangements to have it transferred to London and tried to find the bus to the airport to see if Professor Nelson's group had an extra ticket. I got to the right corner in plenty of time, but ten o'clock slipped by and I never saw the bus. I wandered around until noon, ate lunch at the same Chinese restaurant, and spent the entire afternoon talking to people and reading a Newsweek at the American Express office. I knew I couldn't leave Amsterdam without the money, so I asked about canceling the transfer and found the money had arrived. This was quite a surprise, because I had been told that bank transactions came only at night because of the reduced rate. As soon as I got the money I went back to a tobacco shop and bought the pipe for that friend.

On the way back to the train station I found Bonny waiting out in front of the American Express office for her friend, Ruth. We talked until Ruth came, then I bought a ticket to London. It almost broke me again. I had just two pounds when I went back to the station after supper, but I felt justified and was sure I could find a place with friends until the third, when I was booked at the hostel at Earls Court.

The train left Amsterdam at nine-forty and got to Hoek Van Holland around eleven. We were told there was no room on the ship for passengers without reservations, unless they paid the difference between second and first class. About six took the deal, leaving about fifteen. At midnight we were told we could sleep on the ship that was leaving the next day for four shillings, but soon all but six of us were let on the boat. Of the rest, all but I elected to pay the four shillings and I settled down to sleep in the station, where there were no benches and no conveniences.

### September 1

Somehow (I must have been pretty tired) I managed to sleep from one to almost six. I was told I could get on the boat at ten and I found three Marks, which I changed to Sterling. At eight I went into the restaurant for coffee, using the last of my Dutch money (ninety-nine cents). After leaving the restaurant, I met two Polish men who had also been left behind the night before, both students going to London. We were allowed to board, as promised, at ten, although the boat wasn't going to leave until noon. Shortly after we took our seats in the cafeteria, the first of a large group on a Polish tour came in. Their dress and behavior was rather western, as was that of the two students I had met earlier. Various explanations of this went through my mind, some rather improbable and none certain.

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### CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: TO ENGLAND AND HOME

Later in the trip I met a girl from St. Louis who was an interior design specialist. We spent the rest of the crossing talking about a variety of things and smoking her cigarettes. In the end I had an offer of a ride to London from Harwich with her and her fiancé. I had a hard time getting into the country because I had just two pounds, even though I had a ticket for my flight out on the sixth. On landing, I tried to cash in the remainder of my train ticket, since the delay in Holland had caused me to miss the train. I was told it could be done only in Amsterdam, or by mail. Neither alternative particularly satisfied my need for instant cash, so I gave up the money for lost.

On the way to London, Michael (the fiance) drove fast, with fast stops and starts, even though the traffic was surprisingly heavy. He was a mechanical engineer who owned a garage and was planning to move to the States and marry Tex (the girl). Nearly the entire trip was taken up with the discussion and plotting of ways to get more than fifty pounds out of the country when the move was made. In this discussion and in the small talk it was amazing how English Tex had become, both in speech and in her attitudes. Amazing because she had spent the entire summer on the continent and only two months in England. She had been touring with another American girl in a London taxi they had bought for sixty pounds and were reselling for the same price. It used diesel fuel, which in some countries where it wasn't taxed got as low as four cents per gallon, forty cents being the other extreme.

When the talk wasn't about money or the trip it was about the business. The degree of concern for the mechanics and their family life and, in one case, if a boy was a good enough driver for the Lotus Elan Michael wanted to sell to him. They seemed to have an even deeper concern for the wishes of their parents, a rare trait in any country today, and this concern went a long way toward governing their behavior. They stopped by the garage and let me make some calls. It was ten when we got there and I knew I would have to find a place fast or not at all. Michael had a bed-and-breakfast for three pounds a week and couldn't help me. Tex was staying in a hotel. If either of them had had a place for me they would have let me stay with them. I called Peter Castleton, whom I had met in Kassel, but he wasn't back from Germany yet. I called one of the London hostels to make sure they were all full. They were. My aunt, who had moved to London, was on vacation in Scotland and her number was unlisted anyway. I gave up and they dropped me off at Victoria Station, where I was thinking about spending the night.

Just for a change, I found a policeman and asked him where I could go. He gave me the address of a "flop house" on Drury Lane that cost seven shillings the first night and five shillings a night after that. When I got there, I found the place had become a virtual youth hostel, with a little added dirt but without any of the youth hostel regulations. I also found that almost everyone had had as much or more trouble getting into England and I heard of some who had been refused entry because they had too little money or couldn't produce proof they would be leaving again soon. There was a restaurant attached to the place, where food was reasonable, and all the other minimal conveniences were also provided.

Around midnight an announcement was made from which I learned that the entire building was used by a sports club that would return on Monday, forcing the guests to be out of the place until ten each night, when training stopped. In addition, the beds were to be removed, leaving only mattresses, since they would be impossible to store when the building was being used during the day. The main sleeping room was, after all, a gymnasium.

While I was trying to get to sleep, someone found the word "eponymous" in a Time magazine book review and only a German studying philosophy at the University of London was able to tell us what it meant.

#### September 2

I discovered just before I went to bed that I had lost my passport. That helped me sleep.

## Europe on Less than \$5 a Day

In the morning I shaved my neck for the first time in three days. The real novelty was that there was no cold water, only hot. Refreshing after my experiences elsewhere. On the way out I booked for the night.

I first walked to the American Express office on Haymarket, where I had one letter from home, one from my aunt (saying she would be back Tuesday, and leaving her number) and another card from the man who sold me the first bicycle, dated the thirteenth of June and saying in more direct language that he wanted the rest of his money. I hoped he'd gotten it. I didn't need that kind of problem in addition to my others.

I walked to Piccadilly Circus on my way to the American Embassy at Grosvenor Square. There a policeman told me I ought to check with British Railways first. I called them immediately, but nothing had been turned in and they asked me to send them a note telling them what I wanted done with it if it were found. I continued my walk and found a PanAm office, so I got my flight reconfirmed, without having my ticket with me. There was a chance that I had gotten the wrong flight number, but they said it could be straightened out easily enough on Monday. When I got to the embassy I found it had already closed for the Labor Day weekend, until Tuesday. I was also told by the Marine duty officer that a new passport would cost three photos (I had two) and ten dollars, which was out of the question. He knew nothing about getting temporary papers to get back to the States, but I assumed, and had to assume, that it could be done. I had heard of temporary passes in other cases, and I considered myself a textbook case.

There I was. No chance of any money until Tuesday, and that borrowed from my aunt. No passport and no way to check on it or replace it until Tuesday. An unused train ticket I couldn't cash in on until I got back home, because of the slow-ness of the mail, and roughly a pound to hold me over. I still had to figure on making it stretch to Wednesday, including two night's board, but gave that up as utterly impossible, through a consideration of body chemistry and other facts of life.

I stumbled onto Carnaby Street on my way back to the place I was staying and ate a cheap lunch there, giving equal time to my meal and a playful kitten that seemed to like my torn and dirty raincoat a good deal more than I did. And some thought on the absence of a letter from my girl friend at the American Express office. In addition, the friend who was keeping my things had planned a move over the summer, promising to notify my parents of his new address. Naturally I had heard nothing.

I wandered back to the mission to check on a phone number, and found my passport in with some letters and papers in one of my saddlebags. That solved one problem. I went up to the cafe to read a paper I had bought and found the manager and some of the workers talking to a boy from the University of Leningrad. He seemed a trifle opinionated and defensive, but a nice kid, until a German started giving him a hard time. The German was in an argumentative mood, and it wasn't long before they were calling each other liars and other things in a most childish fashion. The boy was touchy, but still intelligent and friendly.

About the same time I met an American named Harper who had been discharged from the Army in Germany. The last four years of his life read like a fairly good novel, especially his relationship with his married girlfriend who was seven years his senior. I should have had a tape recorder to record what he had to say. Basically, he fell for the woman running the hotel where his unit was stationed and won her over, to a degree. Then she decided she had had enough of running a GI hotel and married a fifty-year old man from San Francisco when she was thirty. Within a year she was back in Germany for four months and sleeping with Harper again, planning a divorce and a rendezvous with Harper in San Francisco. None of them had a particularly strong character, so the story's ending was a complete mystery to me, although I could think of enough possibilities. Harper was also doing a little unpaid pimping for a German prostitute he had gotten to know rather well.

In the course of the evening I was able to change some American and Swedish money into eight and a half shillings that helped a little, but not much. The cafe upstairs had a television set, so those of us who were sitting there were exposed first to a Robin Hood series that had played at least ten years before in the States, and later to a

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film about as old and not much better. It had to be England's one commercial network, since I'd never heard of the BBC doing such a thing.

### **September 3**

I slept till ten and lounged around all day, doing nothing important and listening to more of Harper's stories. Finally, I went to the Earls Court hostel and washed my shirt and my hair and trimmed my beard. I wrote for a while, then checked my money. I didn't even have enough for the third night at the hostel. Still, there was no sense worrying and nothing I could do but hope my aunt would give me a loan or accept a check from me. I also considered the possibility of getting more money I hadn't asked for from home, but not seriously. I also talked briefly with a girl named Vicki who had graduated from DePauw University two years before. Her whole appearance was British. Baggy dress, sweater, neglected hair, everything.

### **September 4-6.**

On the next day I contacted my aunt, who loaned me five pounds and took care of my wants until I left England. I bought a soprano recorder for my girl friend and spent most of my time in the care of my relatives. On the flight home I met the man who had been sitting beside me on the flight over. This time he had a wife, a charming wife, with him.

When I landed, there was no one to meet me, although they knew when I was coming and their home was no more than two hours from the airport. I had to promise the driver of the airport limousine to pay him when I got home, since, once again, I was completely broke.