

A photograph of a man from behind, wearing a black backpack with reflective white stripes. He is looking out a window with a bright light source. The background is a light, hazy color.

**I  
TRAVEL  
LIGHT**

**The  
Man  
Who  
Walked Out  
of the World**

**By A. Greenman**

**A True Story**

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This book is not based on a true story, it *is* a true story.  
Any resemblance to real people or events is probably intentional.

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**Dedicated to Vincenzo and his family:**

*When the rain came hard you gave me shelter*

*When I was lost you showed me the way*

*When I was hungry you gave me food*

~

*You are the depiction of all of the  
good people I met on the road,  
and there were many.*

~

## **A Nomad's C.V**

**Name:** *Adam*

**Born:** *Yes*

**Age:** *Varies*

**Job:** *Self-employed Wanderer*

**Accountable to:** *No one*

**Period in this post:** *10 Years*

### **Location:**

*Brazil, France, Portugal, Spain, India, New Zealand, Wales, Poland, Latvia, Ukraine, Hungary, England, Crete, Italy.*

**Skills:** *Carpenter, Bicycle Mechanic, Artist, Sculptor, Healer, Farmer, Writer, Teacher and Dream Realiser.*

**Interests:** *Walking, shelter, trees, health, anthropology, warmth telepathy, water, ambling, earth, bliss, settling down, philosophy, love, tradition, air, sea, visionaries, fire, animals, strolling, the wild, people, mountains, alchemy, freedom, water, joy, food.*

# I Travel Light

*The Man Who Walked Out of the World*

## Introduction

At parties, Adam was often asked:

“What do you do?” and he answered:

“I travel”. It was a truthful answer because for ten years, that is indeed what he had done, travelled. Between 2000-10, the young Englishman wandered the earth, on wild and adventurous journeys.

Yet how does one become a perpetual wanderer? He had been on wild journeys and adventures before, but he had only become a professional traveller at the age of twenty nine. Adam had only meant to take a gap year, but deep down, he knew that it would never be enough, and that it would be more suitable for him to try and take a ‘gap life’.

Adam’s parents had practically been modern day nomad’s, moving wherever they found work, toilers of the soil and workers of the land. The young adventurer had known a dozen homes before he had become an adult. Taking up various occupations himself, finally becoming a timber artist, constructing furniture and sculptures from driftwood, in the old barn he worked from in the heart of the Sussex countryside, England. He had moderate success, his work appearing in art galleries, his face popping up on television and his pieces being commissioned by the rich and famous. However, something did not sit comfortably with Adam, he felt trapped in the rat race and was deeply restless in his somewhat questless state. Then inexplicably, his work dried up. He had no money left and he had even borrowed to expand his business.

*What to do?* This was the question, and a solution had to be found. Adam remembered what a TV presenter had said about him when they reported his work:

*“Alchemists have tried to turn base metals into gold for centuries. This man is a modern alchemist, whilst his raw materials are free, his work sells for small fortunes.”*  
...but the question was, could he transform this situation? Could he reshape this dilemma? Let us go back to that time and find out.

~

The artist cannot settle, sleep does not come easily to him, as he worries about his predicament. The year 2000 has come and by mid-summer, Adam is at a complete loss as to what to do. Yet strangely, one night, as he lies in bed in the small hours, he feels excited about the surprise card that life has played him. It has been a while since he has been commissioned to create anything, and a strange reality is upon him - he is free, in some ways, Adam has a blank canvass in life, in which to create upon. Instead of

battling with his sleep, he gets out of bed in the middle of the night and sits, quietly, thinking. It is time, time to work things out. He is still, just breathing, waiting and emptying his mind...a few last thoughts come to him:

*If I am completely calm, the answer will come, I know you life and I know you will help me. I am ready, I am here, I am waiting. Please guide me and show me the way.*

It is a prayer, to whom, he does not know, but he believes that it will help and perhaps even be heard. Words come to him, ideas and he resonates with the potential that lie in them:

*Alchemy. Chemistry's predecessor.  
Elements interacting, transforming.  
I can find a way through this, he thinks.*

He had always been enormously positive, but now he must call upon every ounce of the power in his mind. It is a serious situation, soon he would not have enough money for food or to pay for the rent on his workshop that has increased considerably, or for that matter, on the studio apartment that he now rented.

Adam senses that he is on the edge of an enormous breakthrough, he does not know what form it will take, but he is certain that it will soon manifest.

*This is not a problem, it is an opportunity.* He tells himself.

The question is, how will he react to it? More thoughts come to him:

*Reactions to energy, that's all this is. Everything is energy, matter. Even my circumstances are charged with a hard factual reality. These facts too are energy. They have manifested in time due to the interactions of a complex scenario. It is life. It is my life. They are ingredients, that is all. If they are not giving the right result, then change them – use them. Step back from this, look at it.*

At will, he removes himself entirely from the situation and a spark of inspiration shorts across the wonder of this moment. He feels expansive, everything is possible and he remembers other times in his life when he had felt this deeply intuitive perception, relaxed and thoroughly optimistic. So much so, that he even feels slightly 'out of this world'. Usually this level of inspiration led to the creation of a sculpture, but his pieces are not selling, there is little point in making more. He owes money now and has no work, this is a bad situation. He remembers a healer that he knows, who refers to his



work as *Shamanic*.

“What is a Shaman?” Adam has once asked him.

“It is someone who takes something that is bad and turns it into something that is good. We are not dissimilar in this respect Adam.”

He remembers the ancient exercise which he often practiced, T'ai Chi, and how one could sometimes feel a tremendous energy during the gentle moving meditation. Adam saw energy as being malleable, pliable. Recently, he had been in a stage of stagnation. In Chinese philosophy, this is seen as a state of negative *Chi*.

Expectation dances about the room, his eyes still closed. He tries to relax even more and pictures the quiet night sky outside. A scene of planets comes to him, playing before his eyes, small balls of mass. They remind him of atoms, molecules, energy. He is curious to see where all of this is going, yet cannot deny the feeling of hope which now dwells within him, a hope that these ideas will lead onto a solution to his deep rooted restlessness.

*What if I could shift my situation, turn it around, move or remove the facts of my predicament, like balls of energy. Is it possible?*

He is doing all of the right things, driven by a subconscious and primitive knowing. A certainty that he is here on earth for a reason and he will discover what that is and live it. It is 3am, Adam quietens his mind again, open to the realisations that will follow.

*Payments, money, he thinks.*

*What if I had no payments to make, no direct debits, no debt? Would n't that be good!*

*....but how would I live, what would I do?*

They are good questions and beg serious answers. He will not let them go, Adam is driven and always has been. He recalls a phrase his maths teacher had once used:

“What if....?” It is designed to open the mind, provoke one to think differently. The potency of the memory is enough to bring on another expansive thought:

*What if I were to do something entirely different in my life?*

Adam dares to ask himself the question:

**WHAT IS IT THAT YOU REALLY WANT IN YOUR LIFE?** And he knows it instantly, timing is everything and this is exactly the right time to ask the question...and know the answer.

*Time. I want time. I do not have time because it always has me. What is the main thing that consumes your time? Work. To earn money. To pay for shelter, food and things that keep me healthy. Water to drink, to clean myself with, clothes to keep me warm. Fuel, to cook with, to warm my home and to run my van. Money to rent this studio apartment and for my workshop.*

*What if somehow you could provide all of these things for yourself, cut out all of your bills and monthly outgoings? It would not be easy in England. Perhaps in a warmer climate it would be? I would like to find out, it may take time, but I would like to see if I can do it. A Gap Year will not be enough though. I will need to take many years, perhaps even a decade - a Gap Life!*

Adam's realisation has been born. He knows it consciously now, he had always known it subconsciously, but now he has become fully aware of it. In time, he will see that this is a major part of his purpose on earth and the thought that there is indeed a reason for him living, other than to procreate, is a comforting one. What he cannot consider for at least another decade, is that perhaps he is running away from life. There is nothing wrong with travelling and seeing 'the other mans world', the nomad will have a wonderful adventure, but the truth is simply not ready to reveal itself yet. The world is an easier place for Adam to live in when he removes the complicating factors that confuse him, things which to most people are second nature. Ever since he had been repeatedly beaten senseless by bullies as a child, he had often felt 'punch drunk'. The sense of disorientation through his days had also increased when he fell off his bicycle and had a nasty accident, knocking himself unconscious. For example reading or writing, buying a pint of milk from a shop or asking what time a train left, these were all things he often found extremely difficult to do, to understand very simple information. He does not consider arriving in a foreign country and travelling by intuition alone to be an issue, for his sense of intuition is developing fast and will help guide him in foreign situations, in places that use different words. It will become a major factor in his life, language, when it is written in a tongue that he does not recognise, it will often cease to be a problem. As of catching buses, trains or buying food, there is much more leniency and patience shown toward foreigners, so Adam will mostly be treated with kid gloves.

So the solution nears, to simplify life, reduce anxieties. To do this, he will need to travel abroad. *Travel*, that is the indirect answer to the question he has asked himself:

*What do you really want in your life?*

*Time. Then what will you do with that time? Travel.*

*Yes, I have a vision to travel...see the world and live in the wild.*

It is a curious solution, but one, although complicated at first, will finally yield results which Adam will never regret. However, there are obstacles to cross first, a lack of money, it is where he had started from, two hours before, the problem has not gone away. No, but alongside it is now a dream, one that props up his problem, in order for him to skirt round and examine it. The spark he felt within is now a flame of a dream, one that he knows he can make into a reality. Adam can see it and so it becomes a vision, but how can he make it into a reality? Simply because he believes in it enough.

*Everything is energy, money is energy*, he reminds himself.

*What do I have that I can change into money?*

*Everything!* He thinks. *I can sell everything I own. My van, my tools, my possessions and even the goodwill of my workshop and the tonnes of driftwood there. I do not want things, I would like experiences! I can take the skills I have to create with me, for they lay in my heart, my soul and come out through my hands. I want to be free of these obligations I have, to raise so much money each week to live...it is too much. I will sell all that I own and make travel my home!*

There is no stopping him now. He will do it and do it quickly, there will not be a moment to change his mind.

*Hesitate and you give fear a chance to play its hand in the game of life and the vision of dreams, and I do not have room for that*, he thinks.

The potential nomad went to bed and when he awakes a few hours later, he feels utterly refreshed, free and inspired. The world seems like a different place when he pulls back the curtains that morning...a world full of opportunities. What he lacks in academic achievement, he makes up for with a creative resourcefulness, which will take him to places in life, both geographically and internally, beyond belief. Yet one day, he will believe it, as he will look back on the incredible journey which he will soon begin, a quest that will equate to as much acquisition of knowledge, as a Masters Degree may demand. His second step to freedom is in motion, as Adam's vision to travel the world as a journeyman, trading with his skills, light the coming weeks. The walker with joy moves at lightening speed to further fuel a catapulting start to his raw and hardcore adventures.

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Within two months, he has sold everything he owns, except for a few small boxes of

personal items. Adam has not yet decided where he will go, Australia, Africa or South America, it does not really matter, he is sure he can find his way practically anywhere. He is not only extremely resourceful, but also a practical optimist, who has achieved this goal to recreate yet another lifestyle by one thing alone, the right thought, followed by the right thought and so on. The young traveller looks over the dates in his diary, to see how soon he can leave, and scribbles a note in the back:

*Like attracts like. The most useful asset a person can have is the good thought. Have enough of them and you will be living a good life. It may take many lifetimes to build up enough credit in your karmic account, remove all traces of serious wrong doing, but when you do, the perpetual positive thoughts will accrue a staggering amount of interest. Shopping list – Buy new journal.*

Adam has invested wisely with his energy and intention in recent years and now his dividends will be paid. He has learnt that good things happen to good people, but so too do bad, or at least that is how they may first appear. It is just another type of circumstance, happening or energy. Energy that can be transformed into something good, the art is knowing how to do it. Adam does not really know, he just follows his feeling and somehow it seems to be enough. This is what he will continue to do on his quest, his journey to return to nature and indeed a more natural rhythm in life. In time he will discover how to self sustainably provide for nearly all of his basic human needs. He has experienced an upbringing conducive to this way of life, his nomadic family has primed him well for the adventures that lay ahead and he has much to thank them for. Everything in his life has led to this point, it is a fact. He is free to investigate all of the things he is interested in, all of the things he will learn about and he will thoroughly apply himself in the pursuit.

When he walks into his local travel agents, Adam has still not decided where he will go. A colourful picture on the wall catches his eye, it is of a carnival in Brazil and the adventurer can imagine himself dancing there. Christmas approaches and flights may be scarce, but Adam leaves the travel agents with a six month return ticket to *Salvador*, Brazil. Anything could happen on his journey ahead and given the chance, it probably will. Adam opens his blank journal and begins to write.

*To dream is to set the spirit free  
When we dare to dream, against all of the odds  
We give our soul a chance to dance  
To dance through the ups and downs  
For dreams can soon turn to nightmares  
Yet we can look back later and see that we chose*

*Chose to take a chance and ask ourselves the question  
What do you really want in your life?  
Then we may just find the answer  
It is then that sometimes a dream may become a reality.*

Adam is a dreamer, however, he is also a dream realiser. He is beginning to unplug himself from the life he knows, prepare for an almighty leap off the grid and out of the system. Yet even dreams may be laced with nightmares when one looks deeply enough into the fabric of life. What he has not realised is that the further he goes from all that is familiar to him, the further he will have to come back to that point. The path he has chosen will be an extraordinary journey and he must play out all of the scenarios that present themselves, if he is to fulfil his destiny or utmost potential in life. First, there are just a few more practical issues to attend to.

“I would like to cancel all of my direct debits please,” Adam particularly likes asking the bank clerk to do this. He is one step nearer to being off the grid and out of the rat race. Having sold his small driftwood business and the barn’s contents as a going concern, Adam hands in his notice on the flat he lives in. He pays off every penny he owes and will be leaving England with just £700 and no credit cards or overdraft facility as a backup. In fact, he will not even look at his bank account for six months, life will be simple.

## **Brazil**

As the rush of Christmas calls in England, Adam sets off for Brazil. When his head goes back on the seat of the Salvador plane, he soaks up the thrill of being of ‘no fixed abode’ – a nomad. Naturally, those close to him have asked how long he will be gone for and he answered:

“One month, one year or maybe ten!”

Adam is open to the possibilities that may await him and like all good gapsters, he laps up the anticipation of the potential opportunities that may be born out of his courage to head off. Courage it takes, for he has laid himself down on the road that most extreme travellers do, to the chance happenings that may occur and the luck that he may surf the waves of trouble that are an equal aspect to one’s journey. Immediately, he begins to make notes about the path he treads, assuming that they will, as many travellers do, be of paramount importance one day.

*The free and clear life has much space within it to fill with all that you choose. Be careful what you attract, for the gaps in the vast void that you have worked so diligently to create, may easily soon become an overcrowded space. Only by trying time out, pushing and stretching it, can you find out how best you may enjoy it.*

He has never known such a luxury in his life to have stacks of time at his disposal. Of course, he has leisurely wandered some of the shores of England, looking for driftwood to build furniture from, but even that quickly turned into work. Certainly at some point, he will need to do some too, the amount of money he is taking with him will be hard to survive on for six months, yet this is of no concern to him, he feels strongly that all he needs will present itself on the way.

“But what will happen if you run out of money?” some asked.

“I will earn some, perhaps I will teach English,” Adam said, not knowing quite how accurate his prediction will become. Though for now, his mind gently rolls over other things, he simply looks forward to the freshness of new horizons, for he knows that the sun sets on all of them.

Adam has booked a stay at a Healing Centre called *Lothlorien*, it sits in remote dusty sunlit mountains of *Bahia*. He will help out with some of the simple day to day tasks involved with the running of the place, in exchange he will receive accommodation and food, at a much reduced rate. The centre bases itself on *Naturopathic* values and it is surrounded by fruit and vegetable gardens, inspired by a large community in Scotland, called *Findhorn*.

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The traveller helps in the gardens, the kitchen and with the housekeeping, it is a simple centre, the buildings lent much to rustic construction. Some are of a quite primitive nature, which Adam feels very much at home with. Visitors there may have a sense of perhaps being in *The Garden of Eden* and in some parts of it, one may take an outside shower and then dry off in the warmth of the sun, lying naked in the garden. Waterfalls pour within walking distance from this pure paradise, places that the adventurer will often visit.

It is an ideal place to make the transition to his new life, this will not just be a few months of travelling, Adam's journeys will take him to many lands. At first he feels lost at the centre, despite its paradisiacal nature. For a day or two, the new wanderer thinks he may have made a terrible mistake in giving up his workshop and his life in the South of England. He feels like a ship out at sea, being tossed about in unpredictable waters, unanchored, with nothing to tether himself to. To comfort himself, he jots a note in his journal:

*To jump into the void is like free falling from a plane, you are pretty sure that your chute will open, yet you cannot be certain until it does so.*

It will not take him long to realise that he has embarked on the greatest adventure of his life and that his chute will always open, just in time. Adam will become so good at travelling, so adept at moving from country to country with less and less that he will eventually discover that he is totally comfortable in the life that he has created for himself. His mother will be asked on occasions:

“What do your children do?” And she will answer:

“My first son is a Precision Engineer, my third son is an Estate Agent. My daughter, who is my fourth child is a Hairdresser. My second son is a *Free Spirit*.”

Of course, he will not only travel, he has many strings to his bow, and Adam will call upon them frequently. Having practiced T'ai Chi five times a week for three years, he is also now able to teach the art and hopes to do so on his journey. The years themselves were very little time at all, it could take a lifetime to become adept at the ancient form, if at all. However, Adam has taken to the graceful form fluidly, and is well capable of passing on the essence of the movements. Then of course there are the skills that he has learnt as a woodworker, and indeed too a natural gift he has as a healer. All in all, he will always find his way and in time Adam will also add new strings to his bow.

For now, the traveller must find a way to free his spirit, to aid the period of

transition that he is in. Outside the little cob house where he stays, sits an upturned root of a tree, its trunk has been cut off and the remainder conjures up all sorts of ideas for Adam. He asks the people in the community if he may work on the bit of wood and they happily agree. After a few days, he has cleaned off all of the earth from it, removed the stringy parts and revealed eight short tentacle-like roots. He picks out a couple of knots in the wood and these become eyes on the piece that is slowly, like him, coming to life. When he has finished the sculpture, it sits proudly displaying its smooth surfaces, guarding the driveway to the healing centre, like a giant spider. The process is a therapy for Adam and by the time it is completed, he has worked out the hiccups of doubt from his mind that he had about jumping off the grid. Finally his mind, body and soul are beginning to catch up and recover from the arduous speed in which he has reinvented his identity. His spirit will have to find its own way and will come to him when it is good and ready...incapable of keeping up with the vast distance he has come from England.

On Christmas Day, 2000, Adam sits by one of the many cool waterfall pools, emptying his mind into the liquid that fills the dark abyss. He looks into its peace and thinks about the freedom it represents to him; its ability to be unhampered by most obstacles, flowing on unperturbed. Its sounds too, washing away busy thoughts from the mind.

*It is the life to have while I can, exploring the wild.* He thinks to himself.

Crystals lay freely on the many mountain paths that Adam enjoys walking, often with friends he has made at the community. Many live there and others visit, taking part in courses that are run in this enchanting place. On afternoons off, he also walks the higher peaks of the mountains that cradle the little villages below. It is hot and he goes barefoot with only swimming trunks, a t-shirt, water and some of his new friends. One of them made money in computers and left his home in Germany to travel in Brazil, ten years from now, he will still be there. Raphael has met a girl and they have a baby together, but this day he is free, roaming the magnificent mountains. They are days of wonder that Adam will never forget, free of the concerns of business. The air is tight as he makes his way back down the slopes at sunset, the sky cracks and the first drops of rain fall, refreshing the walker's dusty bodies. Then there is more and Adam stands, arms stretched up and t-shirt off, in nature's shower. The rain too feels warm, he is far from the types of shower that he knows at home, this one has no sides to it and runs in red muddy streams around his feet.

After a few weeks of being at the healing centre, one of the visitors approaches Adam and tells him how much she would like him to work at her school. She offers him



a job in another part of Brazil, to teach Conversational English in a private school, a couple of hours away from *Sao Paulo*. He is assured that the school is in a quiet town and although he is a little taken back by the offer at first, Adam accepts the job, it will pay well. Two weeks later he makes his way by coach to his new post, it is a thirty three hour journey.

There is simple accommodation with the job, Adam is living in a store room on the roof of the school, it is very hot and the single mattress in the space takes up the entire room. It is a changing life he leads, one moment he is walking midst jungle and ancient villages, another he is in a noisy polluted town, struggling to sleep in the fume filled humid air.

Regardless of his lack of rest, he works well, his relaxed and humorous teaching methods are refreshing for both the students and his fellow teachers. The adventurer feels like it is a remarkable experience to be charged with the responsibility of teaching children, what they learn and what they see can affect the youngsters dramatically and the new teacher stands by his natural tendency to inspire the students to be freely creative whilst they try to speak English. He is permitted to use this open technique as the lady who has given him the job soon notices that when the pupils are relaxed, they seem to absorb more information. In a way, he is doing nothing more than subtly teaching *Chi Kung*, the Chinese ancient art of being, where as a student and teacher in England, he was also learning and teaching how to release tension, breath and fear. Adam thinks back to his own learning experiences at school and how, along with being bullied, he was terrified of what dictatorial technique his teachers would use next. Schooling seemed to be so out of date and Adam is pleased to be working in a private place where his boss recognises the value of giving the pupils enjoyable lessons. The new teacher uses film and music to help with the classes. The nature of his lessons mean that he does not experience problems with organising too many words and numbers, as this had always been an issue for him previously.

Yet not all is to his liking in the busy town. Away from work he is lost in the concrete jungle, baffled by the fights that he sees on the streets and the crazy pace at which everyone seems to race. This is what he has moved away from England for, but it may take him awhile before he can find his way to nature here in Brazil. The environment he finds himself in chokes the essence of his being, the town is not as he imagined, the only green things he can find are trees whose trunks are concreted in at the base, trying to grow in the park. He feels the same way, restricted, and cannot stay at the school.

All is not lost, life has brought him here for a reason, apart from the obvious monetary benefits of doing the job. One day he will look back on the experience and it will fuel ideas that he has of his own about the nature of schools and a vision he has to start his own, based on natural values. For now, he must reconsider his position to teach

for the next term. As the holidays approach, he hands in his notice to leave. There will be time for the school to replace him with someone who is more suited to such urbanisation. The wanderer jots a few thoughts down into his travel journal.

*Sometimes in life, it may feel as if we have strayed from our path, moved away from all that we are secure and safe with. It is later that we may see it is merely a stepping stone, just a moment in time that we cross to reach another point, another place. The canvas of life is made up of all the brush strokes that are put upon it, each an experience to consider. Within each brush stroke are the millions of pigments that make it, as are the seconds of the day. How we fill them will affect every moment to come, our future brush strokes. Every intention, thought and action are registered in the gallery of life, whose exhibition may be on display for a life time.*

Adam has done some work on this particular canvas, it is not a masterpiece, this urban scene. It will be a while before he can sketch in the forms of the landscape he would like to walk in. In his remaining days in the crazy town, his imagination is stirred when he goes to see a film at the cinema. It is about a castaway on a desert island and Adam is drawn to somehow make this a reality in his own life, the thought will not leave him and will pop up on his path in many years to come, when he will have the chance to have a very similar experience. Meanwhile, he leaves the job and visits some friends that he had met at the healing community, who have invited him to call in on them in *Rio de Janeiro*.

By the grace of the Travel Gods, the Universe or the luck of the Free Spirit - it is carnival time in Rio, and Adam dances day and night. In and out of bars and side streets, winding his way through the smaller events which go on around the suburbs, for days on end. It is already 2001, although as his adventures go on, it seems that *which* year it is becomes less important. The question is not *when he is*, but *where and how he is*. Now Adam is in the right place at the right time, for whilst he stays at his friend's house, whom he met at the community in Bahia, he also meets a woman who needs a cat sitter. In fact, a flat cat sitter. She has bought a flat but not yet moved in, however, she is going on holiday for a few weeks and needs someone to look after the unfurnished flat and the purring cat. Perfect. It gives Adam time to roam the mountains of Rio de Janeiro and rest his danced out body. Whilst he is there, he wanders up to *Corcovado*, the massive statue of Christ that looks over the beautiful city of Rio. There is also another figure looking over the city this day, for Adam bumps into the actor *Arnold Swarzenegger* at the top of the mountain, along with his wife *Maria Shriver*, the niece of *John F. Kennedy*.

Adam is one step nearer to the wild, but still craving pure nature, he will leave Rio when the cat woman returns, to travel the east coast of Brazil. There he will chance

upon a colourful small town called *Trancoso*. Whereupon, he will find a wonderful old balcony apartment, whilst looking for a place to stay. It is not far from the beach, where he will also, by chance, bump into his friend, Raphael, who he also met at Lothlorien, he too is staying in Trancoso.

Time flies like this for the man of the road, he has built up a purse and is set to meet his destiny in Trancoso, just south of *Porto Seguro*. He arrives at the same time as the evening mosquitoes, but there are also some other interesting arrivals. Two men have arrived on horseback, who Adam will later find out are from France and came to Brazil to buy horses and travel much of the countries length on them. The idea sounds phenomenal to Adam and is something that he may like to try himself one day, even if in another country. Raphael puts him up for the first night and in the morning shows the traveller where he may find some good low cost accommodation, around the town square. The new arrival follows his nose, until he finds a place that he likes and has a strong sense that it will be worth renting it for quite a while, and takes it for a month.

He sees that the lady who is renting him his simple and rustic new apartment is very stressed and as the small town is famous for its slightly alternative types and the gentler pace of life, Adam thinks that she might be prepared to accept some healing treatments and T'ai Chi classes to help her with whatever ails her. He offers to teach her some Chi Kung to start with, the exercises not dissimilar to T'ai Chi, in part exchange for the price of the apartment and she willingly accepts the idea. He gives her healing too and she soon begins to feel better. They are not dissimilar to Reiki healing, only that Adam was giving intuitive natural healing way before he ever took courses in Reiki, a fairly recent system. His Grandmother had also been a natural healer and her mother too.

The lady tells some of her friends about Adam, and one who has a cafe, asks for some treatments too. There he gives the owner healing and she gives him a weeks worth of tasty meals for every one hour treatment that he gives her. It is a good thing to have these trading commodities, though Adam also wants to express himself creatively and has the strong urge to make something else with wood. The end of his month at the apartment will be fast upon him, and even in the fine weather it is useful to have shelter from the elements.

It is extremely hot and Adam walks enjoys the slightly cooler sea breeze, thinking about whether or not to renew the airy space that he rents, he still has some money left, but not so much. He takes a long walk on the beach, past the area where he will normally go and onto a place that he has heard is a nudist beach. There is no one in sight and he is pleased that he may have a chance to walk naked, but as he is finding a place to settle, he spots a girl sitting tucked behind a tree. She seems to be in an unusual posture but it transpires that she is just trying to photograph herself. Noticing that she is wearing beachwear, Adam asks if she would like him to take the picture. Soon the subject of nudity comes up and both say that it is something that they would like to try.

Sometimes, in the company of strangers, such considerations are more likely to be realised, and as if reading each other's minds, they both remove the small amount of clothing that they are wearing.

The two walk further and further along the beach, miles away from Trancoso. She tells him that she has a boyfriend and makes it quite clear that she is happy in the relationship. This is good, at least Adam knows where he stands with the sprightly young Brazilian girl. She is an English teacher and is thrilled to be able to practice speaking with a native Englishman and Adam is just as happy to have such wonderful company. As they wander, they dip into the warm clear sea. They swim naked and both feel free and exhilarated, floating in the paradise that they find themselves in. At nightfall, they part company and the wonder of the day stays with the traveller all through the night and until the next morning, when he wakes with a smile of contentment. He has coffee and writes in his notepad:

*If only once in our lives we wake filled with the joy that has overflowed from the day before, then we have experienced more than many people will in their lifetimes. Thank you universe for allowing me this bliss.*

To his delight, the girl calls in on Adam the next day at his apartment and she has brought a picnic with her. They have one more day together before she must leave for her home, far down in the south of Brazil. His mind is completely relaxed as he is blessed with the joy of wandering, clotheless with the young wonder. He sees wood lying on the beach, washed up by the passing of the tides and thinks how wonderful it would be to make his own little shack to live in for a while, if only he could get permission to pop one up somewhere. Although Trancoso is a quiet little place, it is still a bit too populated to cater for this sort of project.

As the two dreamers walk ever further south, Adam tells his new friend that he has heard about a remote village that they will come to if they continue to walk another twenty five kilometres or so. It is too far to walk now, as the temperature is over 40°C, but his words seem to be taking on a strange kind of solidity, as the image he is describing of a small wooden house is becoming a magical vision, it is one that he may realise and so he continues to speak of it.

“When after the many miles of walking, the beach reaches an estuary, one must cross it with the help of one of the local fisherman, who have old wooden boats on the water. It is then you reach a tiny village, a place with no roads, cars or mains electricity. It is possible to reach it slightly more inland by bus, though even so one must take a boat across the water to get into the village, this haven called *Carieva* that I have heard about. Maybe I can build a shelter there in which to stay?” he tells the girl, who is flabbergasted with his enthusiasm and apparent belief in his dream.

The place appeals to him and as he sits on his balcony that evening, he asks himself a question:

*What is it you really want?*

His pencil runs freely over the scrap of paper on the table and Adam sketches a tree house. He imagines climbing up into it to be rocked to sleep by the gentle sea breeze, hearing it blow through the palm trees as he rests in the canopies that he feels so akin with.

Adam decides to make the walk to Carieva, but instead of trying it in one day in the heat, he pauses to make camp. On the way he sees Raphael, who asks him what he is up to.

“I am going to look for a tree in which to build a house in, I think it’s this way,” he says, pointing to Carieva and the kind German man smiles and wishes him good luck.

He carries a large plastic sheet with him, a machete and some string. Tying together bits of driftwood, he makes an ‘A-frame’ on the beach and covers it. As the sun falls ever lower, he prepares a fire and sets the pan which he has brought with him upon it. Adding rice, coconut that he finds and splits, and a little curry powder. While it cooks, Adam floats on the silver of the warm sea and smiles to himself about the picture postcard type of scene in which he finds himself in. He goes back to the fire and writes in his journal:

*What joys can be had when we walk with our dreams in our hands, away from the noise and destruction of our fellow man. Could it be that my best friend is nature?*

Early in the morning, he resumes his journey to cover the remaining distance, when he sees a lone figure walking in the distance. Soon Adam has caught up with him and falls in step with the man, who smiles at the wanderer, holding up the things he has in his hands. He is a fisherman on his way back home and carries two buckets, each one has some fish in it. The man asks the nomad where he is going, Adam has learnt a little Brazilian Portuguese and is able to explain that he is on his way to Carieva, where he hopes to find a tree to build a small house in. The fisherman gives him a big smile again and insists that he stops at his house to drink coffee.

It is a small hut on the beach, where from within appears a woman and her young children. They wave at the two walkers and the man lifts his buckets of fish with a small cheer. Adam is invited into the home and sees the expression on the faces of the family, it is one that only those who have everything to give but nothing to hide can show. They live very simply, but their hearts are rich in love and it is their nature to share it, as they

have in their greeting. Adam also accepts their offer to eat with them, they have fried fish and coconut milk. The wanderer gives them a gift and continues on his way, carrying this precious memory with him.

As he arrives in Carieva, some hours later, he catches the attention of a man in a big old wooden canoe, who asks for about ten pence to take Adam across the estuary. No sooner has he taken a step onto the opposite bank, than he sees some friends that he made in Bahia. He cannot believe his luck as they invite him to their makeshift campsite to eat with them. This is how Adam's road of travel will always be, for he seems somehow blessed on his way. He tells the friends that he is seeking a tree in which to build a little house in. They all look up and there before them is the most splendid example of such a house holding vessel.

"That will be ideal," Adam exclaims, filled with joy as he looks on at the tree, a perfect shape in which to place a simple dwelling within. They enquire with the land owner and find that it has been a life long wish of his to have a tree house. It is not long before an agreement is reached, Adam can build a simple place there and use the kitchen and bathroom of the campsite, which is little more than a fence around a sandy river bank. There will be nothing to pay, either way and when Adam leaves, the tree house will of course stay. It is a perfect exchange and one that aids the wanderer from England in his need to express himself creatively and have a place to live.

The kind Brazilian man may even be able to rent the tree house out to travellers. It is not even that Adam wants to live in it for terribly long, he just wants to make one, but naturally it will overcome the issue of paying for accommodation. He is right, there are places in the world where such dreams can be realised.

*How many more exist?* He thinks to himself.

After collecting his things from Trancoso, he returns to Carieva with some ropes, nails and a large plastic sheet for waterproofing the exciting home that he will make.

There is so much driftwood on the nearby beaches that Adam is able to collect it and swim up the estuary with it as the tide comes in. The site of his tree house is only one hundred metres from the riverbank and he drags it to the base of the tree. It is only when he has finished the project that a local man will tell him that occasionally a shark comes up with the tide too. He hauls up the large pieces of timber on ropes, with the help of the camp site owner. It is a wonder that the tree stays up, as it is growing in sand, but somehow, as all living things must meet the demands of nature, so too does the tree. Slowly the frame of the tree house develops, dictated by the shape of the branches. Adam lashes the pieces of driftwood to the arm like branches with ropes, he will not nail into the gracious holder of his new little home, but only nail some of the

driftwood together. Once the frame is complete, the local children are keen to help with the finer points of the construction and show Adam how to split palm tree leaves down their spine and lay them in a such a way that will not only keep out the sun, but also most of the rain too.

The news of the Englishman who is building a tree house in the village is spreading and Adam receives a visit from a Dutch man who lives just across the river.

“Wonderful, wish I was fit enough to help you,” the man says, who has collected far more years than Adam.

“Nevertheless, hope to see you again, do call in to visit my wife and I up on the hill across the river,” the visitor kindly offers.

Adam has worked hard on the construction and is gradually tiring with all the pulling and hauling he is doing. As he swims one morning in the river that he is lucky enough to live by, he is drawn to venture all the way across to the opposite bank. It is not his usual habit, as it is quite some distance and the currents are strong. However, on reaching the other side, he shakes off the water from his body and stands in the sunshine for a moment to dry off. Above him is a large house and for the first time he sees the Dutch man’s ranch like property that overlooks Carieva. It is a good day to climb the hill and Adam wanders up the path and along the ridge until he gets to the place.

On his arrival, guard geese ward him off, but once he is past them, he meets with the owners, who have been alerted to their visitor’s presence. They invite him to sit down to a cool drink and the wild wanderer gazes out at the view that meets him.

“Lovely to see you Adam, how is that tree house coming on?” he asks.

“Well just fine thanks, apart from the floor, which I do not have yet,” Adam explains.

“Come with me young man,” he says to Adam, jumping up from the table.

“Is this the sort of thing that you are looking for?” the man asks, as he shows Adam to a small barn, containing piles and piles of wood. It is an incredible sight to behold in such a place and one that is reminiscent of his own timber construction days in England, just one year before.

“Help yourself to whatever you want and we shall get it down to the river with my tractor and trailer. You needn’t float it across, lets pile it into one of the fisherman’s canoes, I am sure they will take it across for a few good coins,” he suggests.

It is an incredible and generous offer and one that the man seems only to pleased to make. Once the boards are down by the river, the Dutchman suggests that Adam comes up for lunch before they are loaded for the short crossing, as his wife has prepared a meal of fish salad and home made bread for them. On days like this, Adam cannot help thinking a little of the south of England, and the times when people ran about with stress, struggling to manage with the speed of life - including himself.

Adam fits the boards and cuts them to length, thrilled with how the materials turned

up at just the right time. He is keen to keep out all of the rain and anything else that may crawl or slither up the branches of this grand tree, such as spiders and snakes and lays his large sheet of plastic between the frame and the leaves. The result is that the tree house is barely visible to the eye, as it sits five metres up, blending with the canopy, covered with the leaves of the coconut trees, which the children have assisted him with. He will sleep safely and soundly, in the knowledge that there are no gaps in the place.

He climbs up his rope ladder and goes through the hatch that he has set in the floor. Looking down at the old tent he has been staying in during recent weeks, Adam is relieved to part company from the giant ants that have been visiting him in the night, tickling his arms and legs. They did not bite him and he soon became used to sharing his tent with them, but perhaps his dreams can now be free of creeping things.

A storm is coming, the wind is getting up and Adam is thrilled at the prospect of being rocked to sleep by the swaying tree. He hears the gentle drop of rain falling as he lies wrapped tightly, snug in his sleeping bag. He is warm and he is dry and soon falls asleep, dreaming deeply, a little of England and its busyness.

The tree sleeper is woken in the night by mighty gales and a torrential downpour. At first, he thinks that he is in Sussex and has woken in a tree house that sits upon a tree in his hometown. Once he realises that he is in Brazil, he lets out a breath, relieved that he is far from the madding crowd. Still dry and safe, the storm rages about him and he smiles at the thought of the small home that he has made. Perhaps if he has built a regular shape into the tree, it may have been toppled by the force of the gale, but as the frame bends to the shape of the tree, it stays put, every corner pillar sat tightly against a firm place. Although the home is a bizarre shape, its strength is bound by that which it meets, and sways firm upon its place up in the tree. It will stay there for a few years, perhaps even a little longer if it were maintained.

Tarzan takes his morning swim, diving from the riverbank just a few steps away from where he sleeps up in the tree.

*What a way to start a day,* he thinks.

Some of the local people are also there, washing, exercising and watching out for the shark that Adam does not yet know about, the man eater is rarely seen, only when the tide is coming in and very high. Even then, the river is not safe for everyone, as he will discover the following week.

When he is dressed, he walks along the bank to the little wooden shop that sells a few items. He buys corn bread and asks the lady behind the counter how she is. He has come to understand enough of the Brazilian language to make sense of some of her reply. Her husband is very unwell and has been bed bound for ten days. The village



doctor is worried, for he is no longer drinking or eating and will not let them take him to Trancoso for help. Adam knows that what he is about to offer may seem strange to the shopkeeper, but feels her desperation may absorb the fact.

“Can I see him please?” he asks.

She puts the shutter down on the shop and takes him to her husband, without hesitation. He looks awful, as if he has really given up. Perhaps it is a fever, but whatever it is, for sure he is losing the fight, for when hope goes from the spirit, the body does not recover well. He offers to give the man healing and they happily accept.

Adam is not the healer, life is, but he is a life believer. He knows that this positive force can be passed on. His hands do not touch the sick man, not because he is sick, only because sometimes the process works better from a distance. The recipient struggles, racked with pain, his breathing is erratic. He must get to a medical doctor soon. The sick man has a gentle face, it will not be good to lose such a dear soul. After half an hour or so, the man’s breathing stabilises, though he is still burning up. Adam cools the man’s forehead with a flannel and then washes his own hands. When he turns around again, the man has fallen into what appears to be a deep sleep, Adam hopes that it is not a coma.

The following morning, he goes to check on the man, but he is not there. Has he died? He goes to the small store to ask his wife and soon understands that he is much better and has gone to Trancoso, alone. He will be well, Adam is glad he took the courage to offer the treatment. Even though he cannot know exactly how this type of healing works, he has seen many times the calming effect it can have upon a sick person. When the mind and spirit can settle for a while, we often give the body a chance to focus all of its energy on the recovery process, instead of on worry. The wandering healer is pleased that he can be of some use during his days of freedom.

Getting a deep suntan is another of Adam’s past times, he makes his way along to the beach, carrying a few mangoes and some water. It is then he notices a woman waving at him from the river and he is pleased to be the subject of attention. She is close to the mouth of the estuary and the tree house builder soon sees that she is not waving, but actually trying to attract his attention, as she seems to be having some trouble swimming and is signalling for help. Adam drops his fruit and jumps into the river to assist her, unfortunately he has not been trained in life saving and makes the mistake of swimming straight for her, whereupon, she grabs his shoulders and pulls him under the water.

*Oh my God!* He thinks to himself.

*Now we are both going to drown!*

She is frantic and will not let go of him. Something tells him that it is not only her

inability to swim well that has got her into trouble, but also that her height has something to do with the problem. He instinctively stretches out his legs below him and finds that he is standing on a rock. She is not, but the place he has found allows him to stand up, clear out of the water. It is a lucky find, if there is such a thing. Now that he has the advantage, he works out that he must hold her from the back in order to bring her to the shore without giving her the chance to grab him, he is not adverse to women grabbing him, but only under the right circumstances. The plan works and once on safe ground he sees the girl's fraught look turn to utter relief, she is barely five feet tall and clearly would have had a problem reaching the rock. It is then that she embraces him firmly and for just a moment Adam shivers in bliss, as the beautiful young woman thanks him with all of the strength that she has left.

He discovers that she is from Paraguay and has travelled over to Brazil on her own. Living in a country that has no sea surrounding it, she has not been taught to swim at school and felt that she may perhaps learn here. Without question, she is one of the most stunningly good looking women Adam has ever had the pleasure of meeting. Romance will not blossom, but one must not assume such rights just for saving a life, instead, they eat mangoes and talk about their journeys. Besides, she will offer him something far more permanent than that of fruits of the body this day, she will turn out to be one of the most interesting travel mates Adam will meet on this journey to Brazil. When she hears that Adam lives in a tree house she is excited and asks if she could see it. They return to the campsite and she remarks on the home he has made.

“Praise the Lord, its wonderful,” she says.

He is not a Christian, but she is and he understands the manner in which she responds to his work. Adam does not believe in God as such, but he does have an inkling that some sort of unidentifiable force has led him through life, an unnameable guide, he has seen too much not to, but the question is, what is it? How is it that his foot just found a rock today? Chance again? There were no other rocks about. Then there is finding the tree that the owner had always wanted a little house built in and the whole thing of healing, how did that work? Stranger things happen in life, as he will find out, though for now, the notion of all objects and events in the universe being intertwined is a convenient way to honour the luck for now, that he seems to be so rich in.

The two sit at a bench on the simple campsite, but the sight that they are about to see will really be too much for them to believe. A mouse tiptoes along and stops just a few metres away from them. Then a cat follows, who also sits down, quietly by the mouse. The owner's dog follows the cat and without pestering it in any way, also sits down, next to the cat and the mouse. It is a strange world that we live in, one never knows what will happen next.

The slightly dryer girl leans over and kisses Adam on the cheek.

“Thank you again, I think it is meant to be that you passed by at that time today,

don't you think so?" she asked. Adam agrees and is pleased to share the company of someone who seems to be good in heart, humble and kind. It bothered him not whether she is *Christian*, *Jewish* or *Buddhist*, for that matter, what mattered is that she is very pleasant and seemingly not just because he has plucked her out of the water, but that it is simply her way.

Throughout the afternoon, they become deeply engrossed in conversations that will stay with the adventurer for ever, crossing boundaries on topics that he did not know were possible. Adam will see this as the real reason they has met this day, beyond the obvious fact that the girl is now alive and not drowning. Their first conversation is about how people perceived 'believers', as his new companion put it. These subjects were far removed from Adam's normal capacity and activities, which might stretch to eating a mango or finding another coconut. Nevertheless, he did not struggle in opening his mind to such talk, with creativity like this, he has no problems. There were no lines, blocks or paragraphs to try and understand in these philosophical subjects or information which confused him, the talk is from the heart, and its only measure is whether or not it feels good.

Adam only usually gave his opinion about an unseen force when people asked him, he did not speculate freely in public as it were, but if people brought the subject up, he would often take part in the discussion. If they decided to dig in and try and mock the notion of an unnameable power or God, he was not one to pretend that he is not a believer, just to save face. Besides, he has met hundreds of people in his life who did believe in the universe's intervention in our lives, daily. The more he thought about it, the more Adam began to entertain the idea that nature itself maybe the God, though even that was tricky ground, next he will be called a Pagan! Yet nature did seem to be the underpinning structure of all things, the force that controlled all of the most terrible things in life like famine and disease, lack of food and water and the spread of plague and parasites. That all seemed to make sense to him, Adam has no problem with the idea that all that is living is connected and has some kind of collective knowing.

To have a religion does not mean that a person is automatically good and neither did Adam think he were, just because he did not have one. Yet as he travelled the road in the coming years, finding out about as many things in life that he could possibly learn, the nomad will be courteous to all people he met, unless of course they were foul to him, in which case, he will forgive them for their ignorance but make sure they knew not to ever bother him again. The art he will develop in the future is that of discerning when not to make any spiritually based comments at all. Many people will rise up in anger about references to there being more to life than that which can be seen, and those people will jump at the chance to try and convince the mysterious wanderer that he is an idiot for believing so. His interest in that which he has not learnt enough about yet to understand is one of his main focuses in life. Adam could not ignore any longer the

force that he wished to study and understand more about, if the moon could control tides, then why is the idea of energy such an alien one to so many people? What were they afraid of? Is it the association with churches, temples and mosques that worried them so? Though Adam often found them to be soothing and relaxing places to be, he too felt a disturbing undercurrent in many of them and his enquiries in to *why* will continue.

That evening, he climbs up to his tree house, and sits at the stool he has inside. After lighting a couple of candles, he leans against the shelf he has set as his writing desk. There he puts down a few thoughts about the days discussions, in his rapidly filling journal.

*Perhaps man follows a faith because he is frightened not to?*

*But perhaps man feels instinctively belittled by allowing a third party to come between himself and the miracle of life? Surely it is not necessary to have to go through somebody else to reach a higher force, and especially not for just one or two days a week, when places of worship are open? What happens the rest of the time? Are we not giving away the majority of our own power and faith in ourselves by doing so? The ability to be good instinctively? Or has man lost his way, so much so that he no longer knows how to respect life and must be reminded by rabbis, priests, monks and new age spiritual teachers?*

Questions, this is what Adam is interested in, he could never be sure to know the answers. Through his T'ai Chi practice, he has learnt about *Chi*, interconnected life energy that permeates all things, which Chinese people have honoured for thousands upon thousands of years. A force that could be developed alongside another virtuous doctrine they taught, simply called the *Tao*. It seemed that the notion of God not only bound millions or even billions of people throughout the world, but that their names for him, her or it were also different. Did not humans all have the same basic human needs, identical natural requirements, as crude creatures of the earth? Then how is it that man has forgotten that and put many other things in their place? What led him away from a life of contentment? More questions, on his journeys there will be many, most he will come close to answering by simply being close to all that sustains him - the elements.

In time, as Adam continues to travel the world, he will see many more examples of unexpected inexplicable wonder coming into his life and naturally it will be a subject he will delve into and try and become at ease with the relationship he has with it. Though for now, his mind is on other things. The following day, the Paraguayan angel leaves Carieva and when the evening falls, so too do Adam's spirits, he is completely overwhelmed by the conversations that have taken place the previous day and how they

have stimulated him. For a moment, he feels lonely on the isolated peninsula that he stays on. One can be in the most beautiful place in the world, but without good company, such trying emotions can befall the best of us. Yet life will never leave the lonely too long, if they have the courage and strength to speak to those they meet. Adam sees a young couple on the beach the next day and they exchange small talk as he splits coconuts for them with his machete. He learns that they are from Switzerland and have rented a little beach house not far from where they stand. They are a friendly pair and just when Adam is thinking how nice it would be to have a female travelling companion, they break his day dream by inviting him to eat with them that evening.

At sunset he returns to the spot where they met, on the way noticing that he has a dull ache in his foot. He sees the couple sitting, watching the enormous orange ball that appears to be dropping into the sea and they all make their way to their house.

“Good of you to have me,” Adam says, as they all sit around a wooden table in their kitchen.

“We are pleased to have the company,” the girl says.

“It can get tiresome seeing the same old face all the time,” she continues, as her boyfriend pokes her in the ribs, grinning.

They make him feel so at home, yet he is distracted by the pain in the sole of his foot that is not quite so welcome. The boyfriend has a look at the aching spot and then raises his eyebrows at his girlfriend.

“I am sorry to say that I think you have exactly the same thing as I had last week. The beaches here are well known for the tiny little spiders that live on them. They are very hard to see with the human eye, but the eager little things stick to the bottom of your feet. Sometimes they make their way under the skin, usually because they want to lay eggs in your foot!” he explains.

“Urrrh!” Adam cries.

“It’s okay, we can get rid of it for you. It takes a fine sterilised needle, some alcohol based antiseptic and a great deal of patience.” He continues.

During the following hour, the patient Swiss man performs the minor operation on Adam, carefully pin pricking around the point where the little blighter had entered his foot. He explained that he has to go so slowly because if he accidentally pricked the spider, it will lay its eggs. However, if he went all around it several times, the spider will pop out. Eventually the surgeon is confident that he has the monster on his needle, he executes it outside and then cleans out the hole he has left in Adam’s foot with the antiseptic. Once the unpleasantness of the evening are out of the way, the three get down to the serious business of eating.

Adam limps home, it will be a few days before he will return to good health again. He never worries about what it would be like if he needed serious medical attention and

his positivity serves him well on his journeys, for he shall remain safe.

In the coming days, the nomad wonders how all his folks back home are doing. As the heart of England calls Adam again, he decides to try and phone them, making his way up to a large sandy plateau that the local children use as a football pitch, it is the strangest place to have a public payphone, yet it is the only one in the village and Adam checks to see if it is working. Usually it is not, but on this fine evening it is.

“Hello mum, how are you?” Adam asks.

She is always so pleased to hear from her wandering son.

“Fine, how lovely to hear from you. When are you coming home?” she enquires.

“Soon mum, quite soon.”

Six months is nearly up and Adam will go back to England, but before he returns, he will call back in to the community that he first stayed at, Lothlorien.

Days later, he bids his host, the campsite owner farewell and makes his way to the other side of the river bank, where he will catch the bus to Salvador, or so he thinks. After several hours he wonders why it has not come. A local man who is kicking dust around with his feet nearby smiles at him. Taking pity, he comes across and explains to Adam that a bridge has fallen down on the route and that the bus will not arrive until the following week, after it has been repaired. The nomad contemplates for a moment...

*One must embrace these types of obstacle upon our journey, those of travel and those in life. If we do not then we are also likely to snap, just as the bridge has.*

The local people overcome the road closure in two ways. One, they do not go anywhere or two, they go in a four wheel drive vehicle, fording the riverbed that has been bridged. Adam opted for the latter, crossing jungle to arrive at Trancoso, where a connecting bus went onto Salvador. As he got into the off road vehicle, the driver smiled and said,

“Bridge. Deixa rolar,” meaning *let it go*. We would perhaps say: “Lets not worry.”

Aptly, the Brazilians were abbreviating a longer phrase.

“Deixa rolar, que a estrada é cumprida”

*Let it roll, the road is long*, implying that life is too long to carry little worries on the way. It is one that Adam had learnt at the beginning of his journey and found that beyond all other words he has learnt, these had been the most useful.

In the community at *Vale do Capão, Chapada Diamantina*, Adam pays homage to the guardian that he created before he left, the tree root spider monster at Lothlorien. He pats it and thanks the God’s of travel for returning him safely, having found and

removed the ghastly mite that decided to live in his foot. Though for now, he must reacquaint himself with the ways of England once again. It will be a shock, Brazilian culture could not be much further from that of his homeland and he makes his way there in the giant metal flying thing, so far from the realities of the real world that he has recently experienced. Tree houses in the jungle which edge warm white sand and clear waters may not be the real world for most of the English folk Adam knows, but it has been his real world for quite a time. The one which he will soon meet in the south of England will be about as far from his recent reality as is possible.

## *France*

In England, Adam finds it hard to sleep indoors, so instead he stays in a tent in his brother's garden, feeling more at home amongst the elements. He earns his keep and some extra money by doing some building work on his brother's house. Summer is upon them and it is an ideal time to spend a short spell in England, if only to learn that he does not want to be there for too long. One day, he will spend much longer periods of time in his motherland, though for now, many other adventures are to be had.

Adam's appearance has changed somewhat whilst he has been away, and the wanderer stands out from the crowd in the busy streets of the Sussex town in which he lives. His curly hair is a sun drenched blonde, his skin dark brown and his loose fitting white cotton clothes contrast with them. An old friend from his youth notices him sitting outside a cafe, dreaming about where his next trip will be. She joins him and it is not long before they discover that they have quite a liking for each other. It is good company for the traveller and they begin to see each other on a regular basis. Adam warns her that he will be leaving in the near future, but they both decide to just enjoy the moments they have together and soon they are involved in a passionate love affair.

The up and coming nomad enjoys being back for a while, catching up with family and visiting other friends, partly as he feels that there will be an imminent departure. Whilst sitting with an old friend, chatting indoors, doing what English people do so well, drinking tea, a storm threatens to break and the air is tight and heavy. The sash window that Adam sits by is open at the bottom, yet there is not a breath of wind to cool the two who talk in the tense summer heat.

"You are becoming quite the mystical hippy," his friend says.

"Maybe so, but I don't think I will wear a feather in my hair and dance around a fire naked, just yet," Adam says.

A small white feather glides in through the lounge window, hanging in the deadly stillness for an age. It brushes across Adam's face and his hair, then settles on his lap. There is silence in the room and then laughter. The next time he sees a feather in an unusual place he will think twice about what he has said.

That time is the following week, when he buys a new tent for his next journey. As Adam opens it, he looks inside, only to find a small white feather in there.

*What on earth is that doing in here?* He thinks to himself.

*How did it get right inside this brand new tent?*

It is a mystery to the nomad, but the greater mystery is where he shall go next. He



goes outside to the larger tent in his brother's garden and as he nears, Adam sees a friend appear over the garden wall, a neighbour he knows very well, for it is his T'ai Chi teacher, Francis and naturally they begin to chat. He discovers that she will soon take her car across to France on a ferry and have a holiday there, along with her husband Michael, who teaches the ancient gentle exercise with her.

"Oh, how lovely, I don't suppose that you have an extra seat available in the car do you?" he says, partly joking, partly serious.

"Why yes we do, would you like to come with us then?" his friend asks.

"Well perhaps only for the ride, do you think you could you drop me off somewhere in France?"

"Sure, anywhere in particular?"

"No, not really, maybe somewhere that I can get a little job."

There is absolutely no reason why he cannot go, Adam has earned some money since he has been back and he has no ties. His lady friend knows that he is destined to move on and though she is sad to see him go, she gives him her good wishes. The additional fee to add one extra passenger to the party is £2 and Adam has £280 in his pocket. The following week he is off, with just a back pack filled with dreams and a tent. Of course, he carries a little more in there, but the essential content is that which he has learned, the belief that the whole world is out there to be seen. He has been in England for less than two months, a perfect amount of time to catch up with people before setting off again. Francis is French and she gives Adam some ideas about where he may enjoy going to. They are going down to *Bordeaux*, but suggest that *La Rochelle*, further north, will be an ideal place to try and pick up some work, and so the free spirit gets out of the car there.

On the first night he pitches up on a campsite and the following morning he sets off to see if he can find a little work. His vocabulary is limited, but he is armed with a couple of helpful French phrases, which he has learnt to say quite well. One is:

"I am looking for a little job," and the other is:

"Can I put my tent here please?" which may come in handy as he makes his way around France, but for now he continues with the task at hand.

He tries the boat yards, but has no luck. Then whilst he is walking around the town, he sees some carpenters refitting a shop and tells them that he is looking for a little job. Adam shows them some pictures of things that he has made in England and to his delight, they offer him a few weeks work. The boss says that he has a spare room in his house where Adam can stay while he works with his firm.

"Tomorrow, five o'clock come here," the carpenter tells Adam, in his limited English.

When the next day comes, the traveller is there at the appointed time and the two make their way back to the carpenter's house, a place he has built with his own hands,

sitting tucked away in a forest. There are photos of the man's wife and children around the home, but the family are not in sight. During the few weeks that Adam stays at the house, he will wonder why the family have not shown up. At first his boss shall simply say that they are:

"Away," but soon he will understand a more likely truth.

Gradually, they both learn a little more of each others language, enough for Adam to perform the tasks that he is given. He lays a smart wooden floor in an artist's house and throughout the weeks generally labours for his boss, setting off to work each morning before sunrise. They do not return until after dark, but on Sundays, Adam's time is his own. He is so tired from the long days that it is all he can do to wander down to the beach that is at the foot of the woodland where he stays.

*What a place, what a position.* Adam thinks.

*Gosh, fancy having your own beautiful home, in a woodland and a beach right next to it.*

It seems that there is something amiss in his host's life and that any amount of beauty he lives amongst, will not bring peace to him at this time. Something causes his boss to be extremely unhappy and stressed, much of the time, but what is it? Adam has none of this external wealth, his only belongings are that which he carries and a few boxes in England, yet he is thrilled and happy with the life that he has now. He jots down some notes in his travel journal.

*I think I would rather have nothing, but be happy, than have all this, yet be sad and stressed.*

Some of his days ahead may be marred with isolation, yet far more will be held in bliss, wonder and smiles, as he has earned every mile he walks.

His time will soon come to an end and Adam has raised enough money to buy a bicycle and set it up for touring France. Whilst he is making his preparations, his boss gives him one final job, which is to clear out the rubbish from a dark and sad house. He is left there for the day to do the job. One never knows what will come on the path for the open minded traveller. A young man pulls up in the driveway of the house next door, he is singing and bids Adam a good morning. Later on, he offers to bring the dirty labourer out a cup of coffee and they begin to chat. It transpires that the man is a DJ and Adam immediately warms to his enigmatic nature, he has a strong presence and bright eyes.

"Come and visit me and my girlfriend sometime, you will be most welcome," the

friendly young Frenchman offers.

The cleaner finishes his job and waits for his boss to pick him up. On the way back to his woodland house, the man tries to explain why his wife is away, but Adam cannot quite grasp his explanation. Perhaps there has been some sort of separation within the family, or maybe the boss could not take time off work because he is too busy. Adam feels sad when he looks at the man's expression, who is clearly not happy.

Things begin to make much more sense, as Adam considers the fourteen hour days that he has been doing and how stressed his boss seems. Even for Adam, the pleasure of staying at such a nice setting is diminished by working amidst such tension. He feels for the man, who has acquired his dream house but does not have the company of his wife to share it with. When they return back to his home, Adam does some T'ai Chi in the woods to bring back a sense of stillness within his own mind, and invites his boss to come and join in. The man seems to enjoy the exercise immensely, immediately taking in deep breaths and moving very slowly. Adam draws close to him and asks if it is okay to help him and his boss nods in acceptance. He places his hands gently on his shoulders to indicate to the man that he can let go of his tightness for a moment and then unclenches the fists that he is holding. Clearly upset, a tear rolls down his face, but then his eyes look quieter and the tension from his forehead disappears. They walk back to the house in silence and that evening the man cooks them both a wonderful meal of lamb in garlic with roast potatoes in olive oil.

Adam thinks about the long days he has had and about the fact that two hours at lunch time is taken up by eating very slowly, chatting and having a glass of wine. Though Adam did not understand very much of what was being said between his boss, his friends and co-workers, slowly he is picking up a little more of the French language, but what he is learning more about is the culture. What a wonderful thing it is to eat and socialise for so long, once Adam returns to England, he will be back to seeing meals disappear within five minutes. Fortunately, his travel will not end, he will have the pleasure of long and calm social meals in other countries too, for months on end. In time, he will adopt this style of eating himself, one that will be noticed when he returns to England on occasion. Long gone are memories of working without a break or any food, the wanderer has never been healthier in his life than he is these days.

Adam thanks his boss for all that he has offered him and in turn he thanks Adam for a glimpse into a few minutes of calm, he seems genuinely appreciative for the moments of stillness, which seem to have remained with him throughout their meal. The traveller has no particular plans himself, other than to ride toward the south of France, it is August and he would like to get a little further down the country, before summer comes to an end. Yet even this plan is set to change, for as Adam helps clear the table, he has a feeling that it will be a good idea to phone the young man he had met in the driveway, next door earlier on in the day. Adam discovers that the man lives quite a long way from

La Rochelle, in a northerly direction, not to the south as Adam had planned to go on his new bike. He does not know what wonderful things will come out of his next meeting with the cheerful fellow and his girlfriend, but he follows his intuition to accept the invitation to stay with them. The DJ will leave the following day and suggests that Adam make his way back to the house where they originally met and he will take the nomad and his bike back to their home in *Nantes*. It is a kind offer from someone he knows so little, but the sort that Adam will find may occur frequently when travelling, as one meets like minded open souls. It is also a test for him to see how much he actually trusts his own intuition, it is a decision he will not regret.

Whilst he is visiting, they all go to a party in the countryside and Adam meets plenty of new people. One of them tells him about an organisation called '*W.w.o.o.f*', which stands for '*World Wide Opportunities (or Willing Workers) on Organic Farms.*' He volunteers with them on farms all around the world, in exchange for food, accommodation and infinite possibilities to learn. He gives Adam the phone number of a place in the south east of France where he has volunteered and thoroughly recommends, he has helped there so much, he even has a yurt put up in one of the fields.

“You may be able to stay at my place there Adam, I’m thinking of going off to do a bit more travelling myself, so it may be empty,” he suggests.

Adam finds it incredible that such things happen, it is so vastly different to be living like this than to have a business in England and he does not regret the decision that he has made to enjoy the wonderful opportunities that are available to him whilst travelling. What he does not know is that they will keep on coming for years and years, but only because he keeps on going, learning ever more on his way.

The following day, the nomad phones the farm to find out if they need any help, telling the owner about his meeting with the man at the party. It turns out that they will do in September and Adam arranges a placement there, he is able to leave his arrival date quite open and will phone again as he nears the place. Without further ado, he heads down south on his bike, it will take a while, but he has time, cycling on the quiet country roads and absorbing the peace of nature. Adam’s only criterion is to find food and shelter each day and his super simple itinerary pleases the contented and happy traveller. He will camp where ever he can find a spot big enough to place his tent, somewhere out in the sticks, but he will always ask a farmer first. As he cycles, Adam remembers that his birthday approaches, he will be thirty years old. Not a soul knows the fact, so he pulls over to phone England, so that his folks can wish him a good day, as he does not carry a mobile phone on his journey. He said goodbye to his last phone when he left England for Brazil, it was a monumental occasion, one that the wanderer is over the moon with.

After a few days of wild camping, his mind becomes clear, empty and quiet, Adam feels alert and in tune with his surroundings. When the quietness of the country lanes he

rides upon is occasionally broken, it is by the sound of an approaching car. It usually comes from behind him and as there is little else to do, he imagines what colour the next car might be.

*Red*, he says to himself and as it passes he sees that he is right.

Luck, he thinks. Minutes later another lone car hums as it too approaches.

*Blue*, he guesses and so it is. The game continues and so does the accuracy of his guessing...on the whole. *Gold*, *green* and *orange*, but the fifth car is yellow. How can he do such a thing? It is early days on his path to accepting his abilities, and he is not quite been convinced by such receptivity. In time, he will have no doubts and his perceptions will serve him well, but for a while, he will be in awe at such possibilities.

Yet something far simpler will bring him back to his other senses, it has begun to rain and he must find a place in which to shelter. As the day draws to a close, Adam sees somebody going up the driveway to a farm house and he pulls over on his dripping bike to ask if he can put his tent up in one of the nearby fields for the night. Thankfully, the lady happily agrees and he is soon inside his little dwelling drying off. A bit later, he is invited into the farmer's home for a meal with the family and the nomad is overwhelmed by their generous hospitality. After the meal, the lady of the house suggests that Adam sleeps in the spare room for the night and he accepts the kind offer. In the morning, he helps the farmer bring in some vegetables ready to sell at the market. When he does finally leave after breakfast, it is with a wide smile on his face as he rides out of the drive and back into the rain that still splatters the road.

When the second wet day comes to an end, he is naturally a little disheartened, but the sight of a tractor pottering along on the road ahead cheers him a little. He reasons that at some point it will return into a farmyard, because it is too late in the day in these conditions for the farmer to be heading out into a field to do a job. When the driver stops he will ask him the usual question,

“Is it okay if I put my tent up here for a night please?” Adam asks, in French.

There is plenty of open countryside about, but it is mostly private property and Adam thinks that it is always a thoroughly decent thing to do to ask permission.

“Yes,” the driver says.

“I have a new house where you can stay!” with a grin upon his face, leading Adam round into a concreted yard.

There before him is a brand new house for his cows, a cow shed.

“We have only just finished it, not even the cows have tried it yet!” he explains, as the cattle look on enviously from the pens they stand in across the yard. That night, the rider falls asleep to the sound of the cows talking. The ‘moos’ gradually fade, one by one as Adam's tent sits pitched on concrete underneath the comfort of the tin roof that separates him from the rain.

In the morning his tent is dry and so too is the light of the sky that wakes him. There is no sign of the farmer, Adam has not heard him go out, so not wanting to disturb his sleep, the traveller leaves him a thank you note and rides on, pleased to see a dry day, cycling ever onwards towards his *Wwoof* host. When he stops to buy food a little later in the day, the shopkeeper is watching a television that hangs from a wall. A news flash is showing two towers that have been hit by terrorists in America and that many people are dead. The September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks of 2001 rock the world to its core. It is a shocking sight and one that is far removed from the idyllic countryside that Adam finds himself in, but he will hear no more of it until Christmas time when he is near a television again.

More bad news will follow in Adam's world, not of such a serious nature, but we are all affected by the impact of the events in our own lives. He finds himself needing to do some main road cycling as the tiny back country lanes have temporarily come to an end and many of the vehicles that pass him brush far too close, putting his own life in danger. There is also nowhere for him to camp for the night, however, he does come across an ugly old campsite who are charging astronomical amounts for him to pitch up for one evening and he refuses to pay it. In time, he will see that it is always worth paying for safety, but this night he will spend cooped up behind a hedge at the side of the road. No one can see him, but even once the traffic has reduced to nearly nothing, it is an unpleasant way to spend a night. He will be pleased to reach the remote farm where he is heading and the following morning, he decides to hop on a train with his bike toward the south east of France where it is situated.

The farmer comes down the many bends of the mountain on which his place is perched, pottering along in his van to pick Adam up at the base. As they go back up, the *Wwoof* volunteer cannot believe how the world seems to simply disappear away from them, as they make their way higher and higher, away from most civilisation. On his arrival, he is stunned at the beauty of the place, as he stands upon the mountain top at the foothills of the Alps.

"So you met Pierre, I am glad he told you about our farm, I am only sorry that he is not here at the moment, he has gone for a walk to Africa," the owner says casually.

*I might like to try that one day,* Adam thinks to himself.

"But that does mean that you can stay in his yurt if you like?" he suggests, pointing over to a quiet hill that ripples on the plateau of the mountain they stand upon.

The *Wwoofer* wanders to the yurt, a traditional Mongolian dwelling, much like a large round heavy duty tent. This one is about six metres across, inside it has rugs, a wood burning stove and a fresh smile that Adam brings, at the thought of staying in such a wonderful place.

With the family who live on this part of the mountain, the farm helper chops wood, makes bread and feeds the animals. There are mostly cows, but there are also two

donkeys, that Adam will often come to work alongside. He learns a little about growing ones own food and how satisfying it is to go out and collect vegetables straight from the field, and eating them just moments later. Though it is September, it is still warm and the family often eat outside, there is barely a moment goes by when the young traveller does not thank life for giving him such a wonderful opportunity, to be so close to nature and the elements. Even his sleep seems to be lined with a fine and natural quality, and he wonders if his slumber may be all the better for dreaming in nature, far from the buzz of busy towns.

Adam walks into the farmer's woods to collect sticks and make them into bundles, they are called 'faggots'. They are not heavy, but are awkward to carry, so when there are a pile of them, they load them onto the donkeys, who apparently find them of no weight at all. The gentle clip clop on the path brings them back to the farmhouse, where Adam, the farmer's wife and another farm volunteer, a young French girl, will make bread to sell at the local market. They make a hundred loaves, cooked in the old stone oven that is the central focus of the cottage, which seems as if it has changed little in five hundred years or so.

There is much to do on the farm, for the man of the house is usually so stoned by the marijuana he smokes that he cannot get on with the work that needs to be done. If he is working, he is ill tempered and aggressive. Adam does not smoke and in his spare time enjoys the comfort of the yurt, recording the experiences that are memorable to him on his journeys. One day he will have to sort through all of his notes, as he would like to write a book.

"What's it about?" the farmer asks after dinner, a delicious feast made largely from organic ingredients from their own farm, in one of the rare moments when he is not smoking.

"Travel experiences I suppose, the luck I meet on the way and that sort of thing," Adam says.

"Do you get a lot of good luck then?" he asks.

"Well yes, I guess I do, along with my fair share of problems, like everyone else," Adam explains.

"And how do you deal with them?" the farmer asks, but Adam is reluctant and careful how he answers, he is not getting a good feeling about where this conversation is going to end up. There is something odd and disturbing about this man, but if Adam does not answer honestly, he will be on very sticky ground.

"I ask for help, I speak it aloud. I don't know who to, but I ask and I believe, and sometimes it works. Maybe other times I follow my gut feeling, my intuition about how to resolve something," the visitor explains.

"I see, you have ideas about the infinite universe. Then what about the luck that you say you have, when did you last make a lucky choice then?" he asks, as he rolls another

joint of a neat green substance, staring hard into Adam's eyes from his stony face.

Adam looks at the joint it reminds him of the days long ago, when he partook in the habit, and is very glad that he no longer does. He does not need much perception to realise that if he stays too long, he too will be completely stoned from the fumes alone and he does not want that. He tells the man about his experience with the car colours as he cycled through France.

"You must have a good connection then!" he said, as he lit his joint.

He begins to mock Adam for a moment, until he realises that the nomad is not bothered by it, who instead explains that he has stopped smoking and why, making his apologies, he bids the man goodnight. Tomorrow the farmer will try new techniques to antagonise the free spirit, he does not believe a word of what he is saying. The dope smoker is also the bullying type, only he has lost most of his physical inclination to do so and now antagonises people verbally.

In the morning, there is wood to be chopped and Adam walks to the site where the work will be done, with the farmer. He pushes a wheel barrow and the angry one carries an axe. Although Adam is perhaps at heart a woodsman, he still has much to learn, and he asks the farmer how he would like the job done. They stand ten feet apart as the answer comes back, in the form of a flying axe, the tool that the farmer has thrown toward him. Its edge catches the wheel barrow and it bounces off, passing within only a few inches of Adam's leg. The farm helper is furious and tells the farmer so, even volunteers do not have to endure such physical abuse. He does not experience any more trouble from the reckless host in the coming weeks, but when the nomad hears of a family who would like some help around the other side of the mountain, Adam does not hesitate in going.

The nomad's new home is a tepee, until it blows away in a hurricane, and he then moves into an old camper van that broke down where it now stands, many years before. It is there that one evening, whilst sitting in the camper, that Adam has a vision. He takes out paper and pencil and draws what he sees in his mind's eye. It is a platform made of wood, with railings, set high in mountains with a wonderful view.

*I will make this one day, he thinks to himself.*

*But where?*

He pulls out his map of Europe and his finger hovers over many places.

*Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Italy, France and Spain.*

*I know it is here somewhere, where will it be?*

The nomad's hand rests in Southern Spain, yet it will not be for another couple of



years until a window in time presents itself for the structure to manifest. For now, he helps with restoring a small 17<sup>th</sup> century château, the wood lover will assist in making a replacement roof for it. The man who owns the building is a former paratrooper and Adam finds it an incredibly interesting experience to be working alongside someone who works with such military precision, every detail considered. The roof itself will be lined with the latest state of the art insulation boards and so the builder does not see any need to spend money, which he can ill afford, to create the new structure from the material that will have traditionally been used, oak. He is sure that the vast quantities of timber that they are replacing will be amply protected by the new waterproofing which will cover them. When the beams are delivered, Adam is very surprised at how light they are, because they are all made from wood that has come from the *Poplar* tree. However, they are still great in length and will require the two men to gently ease the timber into place with a small crane.

Adam learns many new skills and spends weeks on end at the farm, working every morning. After a time, he gets a part time job some afternoons, in a village near the bottom of the mountain, rolling down on his bicycle and riding back up, he becomes super fit. He cuts trees for an elderly man who has a grand estate and needs firewood and the money comes in handy. However, as the traveller's food and accommodation costs are met, there is little to spend it on, Adam is utterly content with just being rewarded by the riches of nature. He is also pleased not to be breathing in the smoke of dope.

There is very little to bother the nomad, as he winds his way around the idyllic foothills to the Alps. In the months he volunteers at the farms in this region, astonishingly, he only spends £40 in total. So another of his ideas has come true, it is possible to rule out most of one's financial overheads from life, if a person is so inclined to live like this for a while. The wanderer still has no idea that part of the attraction in living in this way, is that there are no forms, invoices or complex procedures to deal with. No overload of words, numbers or information to try and understand, as he still struggled to process them, in any language, since or perhaps even before his childhood blows to the head, and so the lifestyle suits the nomad well. It will do him no harm to spend years on the land, keeping notes at his own pace, even though, when he goes back to read them years later, he will be barely able to make sense of his scribble. Nevertheless, he benefits much from his writing as he wanders and pops a thought down about it.

*The world outside of the free spirit's travel is fast and complicated, I understand little of it. It is such a relief to now do simple tasks like digging turnips up, collecting wood and making bread. I wonder why there are still so many people who prefer this way of life and live it permanently, I aim to enjoy much of it myself. Writing helps me*

*make sense of the world, I struggle less with expressing my own feelings than I do trying to understand other people's abstract information on the written page. I wonder if 'people of the land' also find the fast pace of the Western race too much?*

Adam is warm while he is working on the roof, cycling or sitting by the fire in the camper, but the reality is that it is actually getting very cold. Winter is well under way and the crisp clean air will soon make way for snow. Christmas will follow and all work on the chateau will stop. Is it time to think again for the wandering spirit? He may go in any direction, but only one will answer his true calling, he must test his power of the mind to be in the right place at the right time. Of course, he will never know if he has made the right decision, only by virtue of meeting with so many chance events that are in his favour, will Adam convince himself that his intuition is to be trusted.

The image of a relative pops into his mind, an uncle who lives in France. He is many miles away, but Adam is drawn to phone his parents to get his number.

"Yes, he is coming back to England next week. He will be driving," his mother tells him and Adam takes the opportunity to call him up.

"I don't suppose you have one extra seat have you?" he asks his uncle, in the same manner as he had asked his friend when she had driven out to France and dropped Adam off.

"Actually we do, would you like a ride? How much luggage have you got?" he asks.

"Oh not much, just a couple of pannier bags and the bicycle that they are attached to!" Adam tells him. His uncle has a good sized car and is sure that he can get everything in or on top of it. The only thing Adam has to learn is that just because an opportunity presents itself in a particular country that he is in, it does not mean that the place where he will meet it is only around the corner. Distance is not really a concept which Adam quite understands yet, perhaps because he cannot really understand maps, other than to drowse places on them. As with the coach ride that he had needed to take in Brazil, that turned out to be thirty three hours long, his uncle is also quite far away, not quite as much, but the *Dordogne* will be a long cycle ride. Somehow, Adam will make the rendezvous point. His hosts had known that he would soon be off somewhere else and are grateful for the help he has given, as is the volunteer for having the privilege of being on such an awe inspiring mountain. He calls back in to the first place where he had volunteered and says his goodbyes to them too. The farmer seems a little clearer in the face and Adam wonders if perhaps he has cut down on his ten joints a day.

It is time to bid his hosts farewell. Adam rolls back down the mountain and rides for a few hours to the nearest train station, he will cover most of the distance he is required to in the comfort of a train. His uncle will meet him that afternoon and the weary traveller will soon wake up in the south of England. It has been nearly five months since he left, with less than a few hundred pounds. His money has stretched out like the road he has ridden before him, which the speedometer on his bicycle tells him is a total of

997 km in France. Adam is sad to see the end of his journey, but tries to inspire himself with the idea that with every end there is a chance for a new beginning, and he writes a few of his thoughts down to remind himself of how lucky he has been and to spur him on to take other journeys. He will have many more...writing all the way.

*When you can ride, ride  
When you can walk, walk  
When you can run, run  
If your legs are strong, use them  
For if one day you cannot,  
You may wish that you once had.*

*If you can lift, lift  
If you can push, push  
If you can carry, carry  
When your arms can, then do  
For if one day you cannot,  
You may wish that you once had*

*When you can speak, speak  
When you can sing, sing  
When you can laugh, laugh  
If you can smile, smile  
For if one day you cannot,  
You may wish that you once had*

*If you can see, look,  
If you can hear, listen  
If you can taste, taste  
When you can touch, touch  
For if one day you cannot,  
You may wish that you once had  
Life will wait for no man, so live now, die later.*

~

With his new zest for building, Adam is lucky enough to find a job in construction in England, where he can employ his growing skills for a while. It is an informal affair, with a friend of his, who, ironically, is restoring a French man's house in Sussex. There

is space in the nomad's mind whilst he completes some of the more mundane jobs and begins to think about the structure which is his body and what he puts in it. Certainly working on farms, Adam has enjoyed a very healthy diet, but when he returns to England, he finds that his eating becomes as erratic as his wandering journeys. It is then that he begins to study nutrition and its effect, not only on the body, but also on the mind and spirit. He experiments with different food and discovers that certain types seem to reduce his intuitiveness, others enhance it. Sugars, dairy, meat, tea, coffee and alcohol all seem to block his ability. It is very useful discovery, for sometimes his extra sensory perception is overwhelming, and it is good to have a means to dull down his awareness. He is yet to find real grounding and thrives on the excitement of all things mysterious. Yet he is learning and learning fast, but even fantastical discoveries have their natural life cycle, for one day he will mesh the esoteric with the earthly and find his place in between them. Adam is still trying to convince himself that healing really works, he knows that sometimes it has a wonderful effect, but cannot be exactly sure why or how. He is about to discover though, that it is not dependent on the recipient believing in the treatment.

The end of the week has come and after soaking his aching muscles in a lavender and rosemary bath, Adam phones a friend to see if it is convenient to pop round and say hello.

"Not terribly convenient at the moment, I cannot stand up!" his friend replies.

"My back is excruciatingly painful, I am lying on the floor, flat out," he explains.

Adam offers to try and help and describes the session that he is offering as 'Reiki Healing', as many people have heard of this. It seems that desperation can be a good vehicle for recovery, he visits him and his friend's girlfriend lets him in.

"He is in a bad way Adam, the doctor came and said that he must lay flat on the floor and could do nothing else for him," she explains and sends Adam up to the bedroom where he lays.

Adam lightly places his hands directly onto the area that it is painful, he keeps them there for twenty minutes, his friend is asleep in ten. He then moves to the upper chest and his hands hover above him, then to the head. When he has finished, he sits in a chair and waits for him to wake. When he does, his friend is smiling.

"That was lovely, thank you," he says, as he gets up from the floor and walks downstairs, apparently better. Adam no longer doubts that healing works, it is a good result and in the coming months he will do many more treatments for people, though the recoveries will not always be so dramatic.

The working nomad has saved some money. Missing the free life and reminiscing about his recent months of travel, Adam buys a van to live in for a time. Yet, it is just a plaster, for the call of the wild will soon ring clear in his ears again, his yearning to be

foot loose and fancy free is upon him. During his time of building, Adam has managed to pick up some extra jobs and he must complete them first, for they will fund him for a while. He has the fronts of small hotels to paint, that sit along the shores of *Sussex*, summer is with him and so too is the heat. There are worse things in life to be doing for a week or two than standing in shorts, painting in the sun.

When his purse is full and his work is done, he sets off in his van, heading for adventures in *Dorset*, *Devon* and *Somerset*. For a time, he enjoys the freedom of summer camps and festivals, at some he will join courses in singing, at others he takes part in dance workshops and at a few he will teach T'ai Chi and give healing sessions, in exchange for his entry ticket. He longs for the company of a woman again, but rather than be with someone for just a short time – he is without a girlfriend, soon he will travel again and it is best to keep the heart free of troubles for such endeavours. Releasing creative energy, Adam cuts the rough form of a female from a huge block of wood, far from the beauty of the real thing, it stays with him in his van, as he travels around the South of England. It will soon be time for him to shed his possessions again as he prepares for another adventure, listening closely to see where he is drawn to. Adam takes his wooden woman and places her in a forest, to honour nature and all that it has given him, a glorious summer of sleeping mostly in tents, with quietness and simplicity. Perhaps she will stay there and fade into the woodlands, become the *Greenwoman*, for all to see who pass her as she ages and blends. Maybe someone will take her, if they want her that much, or perhaps she will dissolve in some decades to come, into the earth from which she has grown. He will never know, for he leaves her and says goodbye.

## *Portugal*

There is a country that has been on the traveller's mind for some time, a place that he would love to visit; India, and Adam decides that it is time to go. As usual, not knowing how long he will be gone for or what will transpire on the way, so he sells his old van and reduces his possessions to nearly nothing again. Yet the Gods of Travel have other ideas for the wanderer, the night before he goes to London to get his entry visa to India, he receives a phone call. It is from a man who is starting a holiday company in Portugal, based on the clients receiving relaxing therapies and classes, he needs someone to offer soothing activities like T'ai Chi and Reiki healing to his guests. Adam had practiced both of these arts extensively and has given his telephone number to a friend of this man's some months before, and has thought little more of it.

The teacher and healer is short listed for the job, flown to Portugal and put up on a small yacht. He gets on well with his potential boss who is also of a deeply spiritual nature and Adam learns from him. He will always remember a saying that the man has, he likes it very much:

“Trust in God, but tie your camel to a tree.”

It is not that Adam is thinking of walking to Africa to actually buy a camel, nor does he have any concerns about it running off in the night if he did have one, but did not tie it to a tree. No, he likes the idea that destiny may unfold, but in case you have made an uninformed decision about which way it will lie, have a back up plan, something stable. Believe in the magic of the universe, but keep your feet firmly on the ground.

The believer in destiny does not get the position, but he has indeed made a back up plan and is poised with his backpack for another adventure, which is of the rooted kind, working with the soil. There is nothing to tie him to England at this time, he is free and has had the foresight to find out about other places where he can occupy himself in Portugal. It would be a shame not to make use of the position he finds himself in. It will be a long while before the nomad finds a balance between his preoccupations with esoteric and earthly matters, but he is beginning to take steps to do so. He has arranged to volunteer on a farm with the *Wwoof* organisation, which he discovered whilst working in France. This one grows plants for medicinal use and he phones the place to confirm that he can help out there. Again, he will receive food and simple accommodation in exchange for volunteering part time with the family. Relieved to have left the upmarket harbour, its glossy vessels and glitzy shops, the free spirit soaks in the thrill of the lush surrounding countryside, as he makes his way to the rendezvous point, the nearest village where his host says that she will collect him from. The farm itself is in the middle of nowhere and he is not expected to get to it under his own

steam...or so he thinks. Adam has a description of the vehicle he should look out for, he wonders if it is the one a woman has driven straight past him in, as he stands waiting at the rendezvous point. Confused, he waits for some time, but nobody comes to meet him. He has the address of the farm and so he starts to walk there, estimating that it is about ten kilometres away.

On his arrival, he is shocked to see the truck that has driven past him earlier, it is completely smashed in. He knocks at the door of the house and the woman he saw driving it is standing before him. She knows immediately that she has forgotten to pick Adam up and tells him how sorry she is. He reassures her that he is quite happy that he was not in the vehicle that she was driving, it looks as if it has had quite a crunch. Later he learns that it had come off the road and rolled over, down a hill. Her children were in the truck, but fortunately they were not injured. Adam will never know if he would have been injured or not, as thankfully his ride past him by.

The wanderer stays in an old caravan in the luscious valley it nestles in, the family live in a wooden house that they have built. Essentially, Adam is living in ten acres of wild garden. His outside shower consists of a hosepipe connected to a bucket with holes in it. The sun warms the water that lies in the pipe throughout the day and as the afternoon goes on, it is warm enough to stand under, covered by the reed screen that surrounds him...it is bliss.

It is a peaceful place, apart from the levels of stress the woman seems to exhibit and Adam wonders if it is anything to do with the fact that she does not have a husband or partner on her farm. Yet for all that is bad, there is good, such is the balance of life. Adam learns how to make some medicine and naturally based cosmetics and toiletries, from the plants that grow on the farm and he finds it an immensely enjoyable activity. *Wwoofing*, as the activity of volunteering is known, is certainly a window to another world, a different type of world than the one which he has spent much of his life. Though he has spent time on farms during his childhood, Adam's father left the land with his family when his son was ten years old, to become a carpet cleaner full time and now the nomad is transforming his own life, to return back to the soil again.

During the second week, the truck has been patched up and is ready for the road again, but it does not stay on it long. Remarkably, the woman crashes it for a second time! The wwoofer has thoroughly enjoyed his visit, yet after a few weeks it seems that Adam's host is completely bonkers, so he decides not to extend his stay. He sees from his Wwoof farm list, that there are also many places in Spain that receive volunteers. One town in particular catches his eye, *Orgiva*, in the *Sierra Nevada Mountains of Andalucia*. There are dozens of farm hosts in the area, many of which list that they are interested in a wide range of alternative therapies, so many in fact that Adam doubts whether they are actually alternative at all in this town.

The traveller does not phone ahead to arrange a placement, he has a feeling not to.

Instead, when it is time for him to leave, he goes on foot with no onward travel arrangements made. Perhaps he will not work on organic farms for a while and he considers the possibility of teaching T'ai Chi in the town. He simply walks to the end of the farm's driveway and works out which way he will go. The adventurer is facing south and knows that turning right will take him to the west of Portugal, left will take him toward Spain. At this precise time in his life he feels the true wonder of being nomadic. There is not only nothing to tie him to England, which he must return to at the moment, but he is also totally free in Portugal, Adam's slate is completely clean. Before he takes the step toward Spain, he draws a deep breath to honour the fact that he stands in no-man's land, neither at the place he has just left, nor knowing the place that he is going to. He is living by a sense of trust alone, it just feels right to head to Spain now, but until he takes his first step in that direction, it is as if the whole world is open to him, he is free to change his mind and go wherever his feet take him. Yet in his mind, he knows that he is exceptionally lucky and that if he challenges that bestowment one too many times, life may rise up and snarl at him. He has a path to walk and walk it he must, this time with a backpack, but one day he hopes to go walkabout with nothing but the clothes which he stands in. The wanderer will need a little more practice before that happens, but there are few desires he has that do not manifest.